

"I want to remember everything"

"I learnt I had courage"

"Now I feel like they are my friends"

"We are all the same"

"It felt safe to have those kind of conversations"

Uniform Sector Consortium

Overview of the

"These three days have been the best days of my life"

CRED Collaboration Projects

2011 to 2017

"The experience of meeting new people who are now friends"

"People from different communities working together to achieve a goal."

"Everyone was so supportive and the conversations were so good"

"We learnt so much and grew together"



INTRODUCTION

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland has funded a consortium of 6 organisations from the Voluntary Uniformed Youth Work Sector, to carry out Cross Community, Equity and Diversity projects for the last 7 years. Those organisations are, Girl Guiding Ulster, Catholic Guides of Ireland, Boys Brigade NI, Girls Brigade NI, Scouting Ireland, Scout Association NI. These organisations between them are engaged with over 55,000 young people and have 12,000 volunteers operating in 1,500 local groups. This is not a completely new report but a brief overview of each of the areas, that the Uniform Sector has been involved in. The source material was the much fuller reports on this work. This report includes the numbers taking part, the type of activities that young people and volunteers took part in, feedback, outcomes and challenges for the future. Appendix 1 sets out how the consortium has supported the delivery of the Department of Education's Priorities. The title of the report, **"We are all the same"**, comes from graffiti a young person wrote on one of the peace walls and illustrates the thinking of the young people after taking part in one of the projects. The report is the story of the CRED work during this time.

1. **Core CRED Projects** involving both young people and volunteers
 - UNIK
 - UNITE
 - CROSS CONNECTED
 - FUSION
 - EQUATE
 - LINKED
 - ALL IN THE SAME BOAT
2. **Peer Education** Project involving young people X1
3. **Accredited CRED Training** for volunteers X2
4. Production of **CRED resources** for volunteers x4.
5. **Conference** for volunteers x 2

1. **Core CRED Projects involving both young people and volunteers**

It seems appropriate to start with the words of a young person. During the evaluation of the last weekend of one of the programmes one of the young people said **"these have been the best 3 days of my life"**.

The Core CRED project has been run annually during the period of this report. Each project was given a different name by the participants taking part, as listed above. To date approximately 500 young people and 130 volunteers have taken part in the programme. The participants took part in a range of challenging activities based around addressing CRED issues. At various times during the programme young people and volunteers addressed issues including, identity, diversity, symbols and flags, conflict, reconciliation, social inclusion and breaking down prejudice.

The various programmes have also included visits to The Indian Community Centre, Stormont Buildings, a tour of murals and visits to various different churches. Participants also took part in a series of exciting outdoor adventure sports such as kayaking, climbing, caving, high wire, archery and banana boating!

Each of these elements of the programme were designed to empower the young people, give them skills to work together and to build their confidence so that they could discuss the

challenging issues being addressed in the programme. It created an atmosphere where not only self-confidence and respect for others could grow but also real and lasting friendships.

These same aims and methods were used to encourage the volunteers attending with the young people to engage in the same processes and learning.

Feedback

Each of the 4 projects has its own report and evaluation and they are available to interested parties. The reports have demonstrated the positive impact of the projects on the lives of the young people and adult volunteers that took part. A flavour of the feedback from the participants is set out below. More details are contained in the individual reports.

- 96% of participants enjoyed the learning activities provided
- 98% said that a residential helped them understand more about flags and symbols in Northern Ireland
- 92% said that the programme helped them know more about diversity in society
- 91% of young people said that the programme helped improve their team-work skills
- 97% of participants said that the programme helped them understand more about solving conflict
- 96% felt the programme made them more knowledgeable about their own group
- 96% said it was good to share a bit about their identity with others
- 98% made new friends during the programme
- 100% felt the experience was worthwhile

Young people who participated in the programme said:

"I learnt to not judge people when you haven't met them"

"I learnt that any religion can make good friends"

"Conflict can be solved when you work together"

"I was a bit fearful of offending Catholics by talking about the British flag I lifted it and said why I liked it and it was fine and there was no tension"

"I thought they would be cheeky to me as I am a Catholic and that I'd feel awkward around them, but I felt like they did accept me and we got on well".

Volunteers said:

"I know they will be talking about all the weekends for years to come"

"Brilliant atmosphere of listening and respect...."

"I have noticed a change in the young people in terms of confidence, attitude and acceptance"

"...my skill base, knowledge and youth workers tool box was now overflowing compared to the half empty one I started with."



2. Peer Education Project

In 2012 the Uniform Consortium ran a **Peer Education Project**. This was a progression project following up on the UNIK Project that had run previously. The consortium wanted to give a number of young people the opportunity to learn new skills that would enable them to engage in CRED issues within their own setting, to act as Peer Educators. This would help ensure a legacy beyond the current CRED projects. Youth Action delivered this programme using their Youth Achievement Awards. The programme was tailored to the individual needs of the young people taking part. 14 young women and men took part in the programme. The projects aims and objectives are set out below.

- Equipping young people to act as peer educators
- Enabling young people to meet other young people from different backgrounds and cultures in a safe environment
- Promoting equality and social inclusion for all
- Creating new partnerships within the uniformed sector
- Encouraging new/developing and existing friendships

Expected Outputs & Outcomes

- Young people will meet in a safe environment and have the opportunity to further develop their understanding of their own culture and that of others.
- Young people will develop new skills to assist them in the delivery of peer education projects in this area.
- Volunteer leaders will be supported to look at new ways of developing community relations programmes within their organisations and support young peer educators.
- The young people will develop their understanding and respect of other cultures and diversity.
- The residential experiences will provide non-formal learning and fun activities.
- Young people will have the opportunity to continue to develop their new relationships and friendships after the programme is completed and will be encouraged to develop peer education on this issue within their own organisations.
- Subject to funding, the programme will provide the opportunity for the participants to gain an accredited qualification

Feedback

Whilst there were challenges in getting all the participants to both weekends this was overcome by follow up by the facilitators afterwards. The participants reported that they found the programme challenging but rewarding and liked the fact that they got an accredited award at the end of the programme. The feedback from the young people was extremely positive and they were all able to show how the project has had an impact on the own setting.

'One of the best guide nights ever!!!'

'I now have friends from everywhere...'

'I never realised that so many people were disabled.'



"It taught me to treat everyone equal"

3. Volunteer Accreditation Project

The consortium has run two OCN Level 2 courses, '*Contributing to a Divided Society*'.

This was an important strand of the consortiums work. These courses were important to ensure that volunteers would gain skills to enable them to carry on this type of work back in their own setting. This ensures that the projects will continue to have impact into the future, beyond the life of the projects themselves. The training supported volunteers to develop additional skills to those they already had and leaves them in a stronger position to do this type of work in the future. To date 35 volunteers have taken part in this programme.

Learning Outcomes for the accredited training

1. Understand the meaning of the term community and what it means to self and others
2. Recognise the range of communication and leadership skills needed for youth work
3. Understand child and youth worker protection issues
4. Understand the meaning of diversity
5. Recognise how sectarianism impacts our lives
6. Recognise cultural, religious and political symbols and emblems
7. Know how to plan, prepare and deliver a session with young people

The training involved the volunteers working in small groups during residential courses. They addressed issues of Identity, Community Relations, Symbols and Emblems, Racism/Sectarianism, Child Protection and Games Training. The groups consisted of a mixture of volunteers from each of the 6 Uniformed Organisations. Between the 2 weekends the volunteers had to implement the training back in their own setting, providing evidence of how they got on. They were given the opportunity to discuss their work and learning with other volunteers and the tutors running the course.

This strand of the Uniform Consortiums CRED work has helped to consolidate and embed CRED values and approaches into the work that each of the 6 organisations undertake with young people. It gave volunteers an opportunity to learn and practice additional skills that they can use in their youth work generally and in CRED work specifically.

To mark the achievements of the volunteers, they were presented with their certificates during a celebration at Stormont on the 7 April 2014.



“[The most memorable thing was] the friendships we developed during the programme. We kept in touch through texts and met up socially”

4. Production of a CRED resources for volunteers

The Uniform consortium worked with NICE and PlayBoard to produce a range of resources that could be used by volunteers in their work. This would help them to begin to address CRED issues within their own setting. The resources are not seen as a replacement for high quality training, but rather as an additional tool to help volunteers try CRED work at an introductory level and enable them to start on a CRED journey for themselves and the young people that they work with. The resource includes:-

“CRED Resource” – This is for volunteers working with 12 – 16 year old young people and focuses on sectarianism and cross community and provides:-

- ✓ An introduction to CRED
- ✓ Some useful tools and games
- ✓ Icebreakers

This is followed by 4 sections with games and tools to address the following issues.

- ✓ Identity
- ✓ Diversity
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Reconciliation

As a young person completes each of the 4 sections above they will be awarded a badge in recognition of their achievements and learning.

“preparing to be inCREDible”

This resource provides further games and activities for volunteers working with young people 12-16 years of age. It begins the process of addressing issues relating to

- ✓ Sectarianism
- ✓ LGBT
- ✓ Racism
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Equality

“INCREDIBLY it’s Child’s Play!

This resources looks at how to use the concept of play with 6 – 10 year old members to address issues of CRED. This is done through a variety of games and activities. The resource contains:-

PART 1 – Some play theory

PART 2 – Resources

Who am I? Activities to explore your own identity

Who are we? – Activities to explore each other’s identity and build relationships and cohesiveness.

Play & More Snakes than ladders

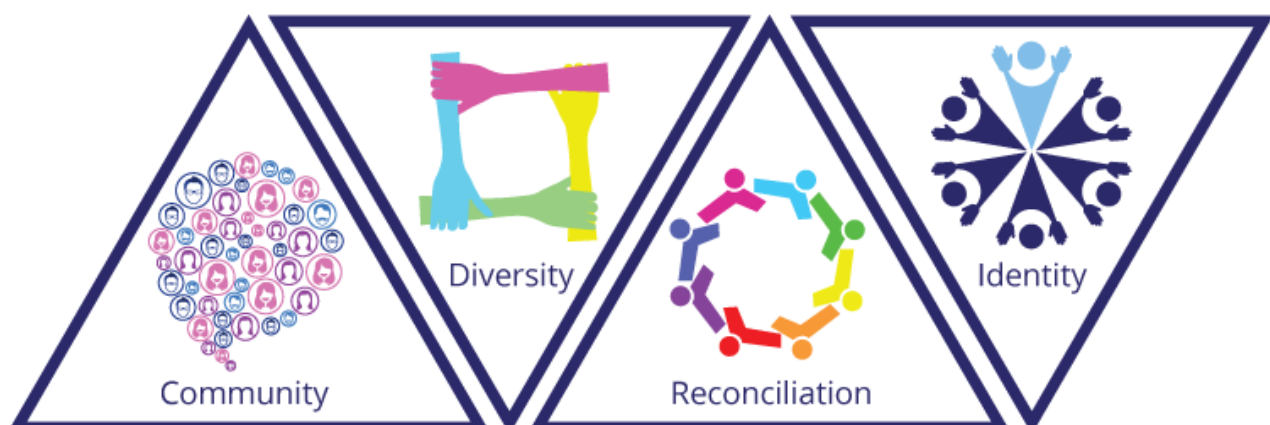
A sample programme plan for a group of children exploring inclusion

“Let’s Talk....”

This is a resource for helping communication with those who may have poor communications skills. It provides communication images for those with no spoken language and phrases in a variety of languages e.g. Arabic and Chinese.

The approach of producing resources and running conferences and workshops helps the Uniform Sector to embed the CRED ethos and work within the sector as a whole, and each of the individual organisations themselves. This gives each organisation the ability to reach beyond those who take part in the main CRED Projects themselves and to reach a much wider audience, engaging with increasing numbers of young people and volunteers. Given that the Uniform Sector in Northern Ireland works with in excess of 70,000 young people and 12,000 volunteers this is an extremely useful tool.

This approach to supporting the personal development of young people, through providing a framework of progressive personal challenges, that young people choose to take part in, also fits in with the ethos and approach of the Uniform Sector and will therefore be easier to embed.



5. Conferences / Workshops

The work of the sector has also included the running of 2 conferences.

1. Preparing to be inCREDible

This conference was run in conjunction with the release of the second resource and addressed issues of working with people from different backgrounds including:-

- ✓ Sectarianism
- ✓ LGBT
- ✓ Racism
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Equality
- ✓ New comers to a country

2. INCREDIBLY it's Child's Play!

This conference was run in conjunction with the release of the third resource and focussed on using play as a means to address CRED issues.

6. Additional Learning from the work

Whilst the Uniform Sector has undertaken many CRED type projects in the past they were usually bilateral or trilateral projects. This work has been the first time that all six, of the main Uniformed Organisations in Northern Ireland, have been involved together, in sustained work of this type over a prolonged period of time. This has borne fruit in terms of the achievements in the CRED arena as discussed above. There have however been other benefits. These are listed below.

- Shared organisational learning from 6 organisations working together
- Development of new skills and knowledge
- Increased capacity to manage shared resources
- Development of personal relationships between volunteers
- Development of personal relationships between staff
- Networking opportunities
- Development of shared programme resources
- Raising the profile of the sector
- Building and sustaining relations with new partners to enable delivery of this work

All these, when added to the CRED developments coming from the projects, have greatly increased the capacity of the sector and has enhanced the positive impact that its work has on the lives of young people in Northern Ireland.

7. The Future

Given the challenges faced by young people in Northern Ireland society, the undoubted success of the projects and the clear positive outcomes from the work, it would be of significant benefit for the sector to keep delivering this type of work to support young people. It will help them in facing the challenges of living in a divided society, and enable them to deal with these issues in a safe and caring environment. The challenge will not only be, to resource the work in the future, but also to ensure that the programme is refreshed and renewed from time to time. Whilst the programmes at first glance may appear expensive, the value, in terms of the number of young

people reached and the potential for reaching even more through the Uniform Sector cannot be denied.

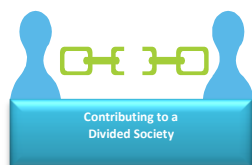
8. Conclusion

The Uniform Consortium has tried through the work of the last few years to foster mutual understanding that is reflected in an inclusive approach to youth work practice. This in turn helps promote acceptance and understanding of our rich cultural diversity and also fosters communication, trust, tolerance and respect among young people of different cultures, faiths and traditions. The consortium has provided significant opportunities for young people and volunteers to engage in meaningful work and interaction together. This report demonstrates that, while there is more work to be done, the sector has gone a significant distance on this journey. The report is concluded by the words of a volunteer who has taken part in the projects over a number of years **“This programme was not a one-time thing or a fluke because they had great kids the first year. This is a programme that works and that makes a difference to all who attend.”**



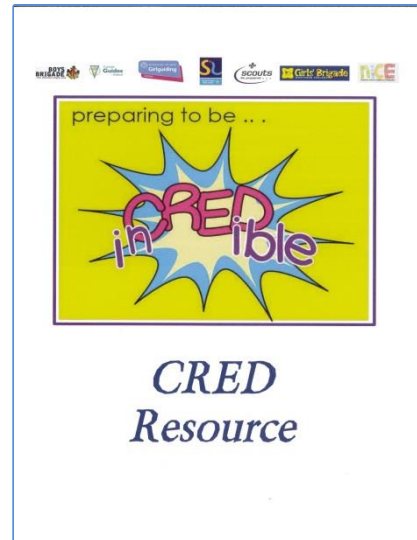
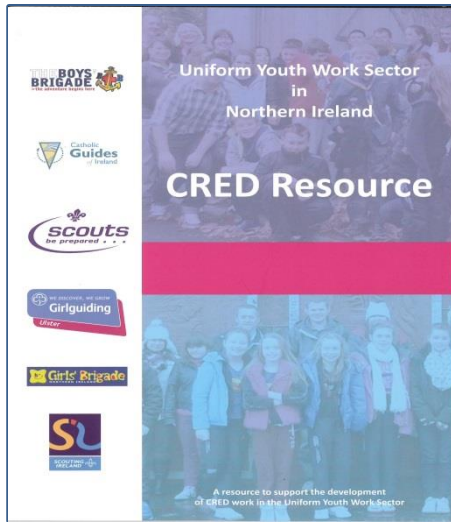
inCREDibly...
it's Child's Play!

addressing CRED issues with our younger members



APPENDIX 1

Department of Education Priorities	Uniform Consortium Outcomes
Raising Standards For All	The consortium has worked to reach a significant number of young people and volunteers delivering new programme and helping raise the standards of our volunteers and young people.
Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equity	The Consortium has significantly increased access to this type of programme through its work, whilst ensuring access to a wide group of young people and volunteers.
Developing The Education Workforce	By provision of suitable events to broaden the experience of our volunteers. Through the provision of accredited training for volunteers.
Improving The Learning Environment	By provision of additional exciting youth work experiences for young people and volunteers taking part in the programmes.
Transforming Education Management	The collaboration between 6 organisations in this sector is unprecedented and has transformed the delivery of these programmes.
Department of Education CRED Policy	Uniform Consortium Outcomes
Key Action 1: CRED Integrated within Education	This series of programmes by the consortium have gone a long way to ensuring that CRED work continues to be integrated within the sectors non-formal education programme. In particular the development of the CRED Resource and associated badges help cement this approach.
Key Action 2: Support for Effective CRED Planning in Education	The work has enhanced the consortiums strategic ability to deliver on this work. It has also developed connections across the uniform sector and beyond that has enhanced the quality of the work and how it is delivered. The work has allowed the consortium to share good practice across the sector.
Key Action 3: Enhancing Links to the Curriculum in Formal and Non-formal Settings	The consortium has addressed this issue by developing the CRED Resource and associated achievement badge scheme. This is easy to integrate into the sectors current curriculum, the delivery of a progressive, challenging programme framework to young people.
Issue 4: Training for the Education Workforce.	The sector has increased volunteers ability to deliver on CRED Programmes by enhancing their skills and knowledge through the Core Programme, the accredited training courses and the CRED Resource.
Issue 5: Accreditation and Progression	The sector has delivered accredited training for both young people and volunteers thus enhancing the sectors ability to reach those not involved directly in any of its programmes.



Uniform Sector Resources for Supporting Cross Community, Equity & Diversity Work

PARTNERS

The Uniform consortium has been fortunate to work with a number of partners in the running of these projects

The projects could not have taken place without funding and support

from



&



Delivery Partners



YouthAction
Northern Ireland

