2018–2022
Strategic Plan

Inspiring young people
Tackling inequalities
Investing in communities

Charity number NIC106365
Company number NIO35317
Foreword

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, members and young people, I am delighted to present our strategic plan for the next five years.

Our planned actions and outcomes have been identified from our ongoing work with young people and our research and will contribute to informing Government priorities. Increasing opportunities, building life skills, tackling disadvantage and addressing inequalities remain at the core of what we do.

The significant investment from the Peace IV programme throughout this 5 year plan, revives our ability to build positive relations and contribute to a stable civic society through young people’s efforts. We are pleased to work strategically and locally with thirteen partners to share new methods of participative democracy, as well as distribute significant funds.

As a youth work charity, the Department of Education’s Priorities for Youth (2013) continues to provide a framework for our work. Our contribution to the parameters, defined as improving the well-being of all young people living in Northern Ireland, in the draft Children and Young People’s Strategy 2017-2027 is clear.

In 2019 our charity will celebrate 75 years of successfully tackling issues most critical to young people across Northern Ireland. From 1944 as the Federation of Girls’ Clubs; to 1953 Federation of Girls’ Clubs and Mixed Clubs in NI to 1961 NI Association of Youth Clubs and in 1990 YouthAction Northern Ireland, there have been many challenges facing young people. In 2023 I look forward to reporting back on the many challenges ahead.

Professor Ann Marie Gray
Chairperson - YouthAction Northern Ireland
Our vision: young people are happy, healthy and hopeful.

Our mission: YouthAction Northern Ireland is a membership-based youth work and arts charity, with a 75 year history of working with young people to tackle inequalities in their lives; improve their life chances; inspire them as activists; and contribute to flourishing communities in a peaceful and shared society.

• **The potential of young people** – we strive to develop young people’s capacity to improve the quality of their own lives and to affect change in their communities.

• **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – we seek to respect the rights and responsibilities of each individual, and to challenge inequalities that exist within society.

• **Peace building** – we want to contribute to a society that is shared, peaceful, stable and fair; and in which there is no place for violence.

• **Volunteering** – we promote voluntary commitment as an integral and vital contribution to economic and civil society.

• **Participative democracy** – we actively encourage the involvement of young people in civic engagement, recognising active democracy as a way of life.

• **Building Leadership** – we inspire leadership qualities and skills in young people and adults.
Strategic goals
for 2018 – 2022

1. Raise **2 million pounds** each year to achieve high quality youth work and value for money outcomes.

2. Invest in **1500 communities** to embed quality youth work to support young people’s development.

3. Improve the mental health, well-being, aspirations and opportunities of **15,000 young people** aged 10-25 years, each year.

4. Increase the skills, qualifications and employability of **1000 young leaders** each year.

5. Build local and strategic **partnerships** with charities, the business sector, academia, government and civic society across the UK and Ireland to meet the needs of young people.
Outcomes for young people

Young people will:

- Be more active in communities by volunteering and leadership.
- Build their positive mental health and well-being.
- Increase their creative expression.
- Improve their life and work skills.
- Increase their political engagement, citizenship and peace-building.
## Strategic plan 2018 - 2022

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for young people</th>
<th>Youth work actions</th>
<th>Strategic actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be more active in communities by volunteering and leadership.</td>
<td>Promote and utilise ASDAN Youth Achievement Awards as a framework to recognise and accredit young people’s active participation in their communities.</td>
<td>Grow our strategic network &amp; local membership to improve opportunities for young people.</td>
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<td>Secure programme resources for local members such as Money4Life, Generation Code &amp; LIFEMAPS.</td>
<td>Continue to build strategic relationship with Irish Youth Foundation to roll out Youth Bank as a youth-led citizenship-based model.</td>
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<td>Deliver a range of recognised and accredited training in youth work (level 1 – 4) to develop the skills of young leaders, volunteers and part time youth workers.</td>
<td>Encourage wider investment in youth work via our relationship with Irish Youth Foundation (UK) &amp; Coca-Cola Thank you Fund.</td>
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<td>Through the National Citizens’ Service, CSN Front of House teams, Techie Crews, youth work in communities and Young Men’s Volunteer Scheme.</td>
<td>Grow strategic partnership with Ulster University and expand our out centre status to widen access for young leaders.</td>
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<td>Promote the Coherent Training Route (CTR) as the recognised training and progression pathway for the youth work workforce.</td>
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<td>Continue to support the regional voluntary youth network &amp; plan for future.</td>
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<td>Build positive mental health and well-being</td>
<td>Deliver our suite of LIFEMAPS training and activities to young people; youth leaders; youth groups and clubs; and partner organisations to build positive mental health in young people.</td>
<td>Promote our evidence based, positive psychology LIFEMAPS as a youth work framework to build positive mental health in young people across education, arts and health sectors.</td>
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<td>Support LIFEMAPS partners NI Youth Forum, Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster and Bytes.</td>
<td>Disseminate our LIFEMAPS report, research, workbook and toolkit.</td>
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<td>Support young people with severe mental health issues through youth work, in Action Mental Health weekly partnership across NI.</td>
<td>Assist those who work with young people to understand how to build positive mental health through youth work.</td>
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<td>Work with Ulster University ~ Taking Boys Seriously 2 longitudinal research and dissemination initiative.</td>
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<td>Increase creative expression</td>
<td>Support young people’s artistic development through our creative arts and learning hub (<strong>Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts</strong>). Develop the youth arts model that supports young people from a range of minority ethnic communities to better integrate and to increase understanding of difference among local young people. Bring creative programmes into communities through <strong>Perform4Life</strong> outreach. Provide platforms for young people to excel through <strong>productions &amp; performances</strong>. Explore critical issues with young people through <strong>issue based theatre</strong>. Youth led festivals and events to provide opportunities for creative expression.</td>
<td>Contribute to UU, NUIM <strong>Youth Work eLearning Partnership</strong> in supporting newly developing digital forms of expression and sharing. <strong>College Square North</strong> (Belfast) recognised as youth led hub for young artists, civic dialogue and youth work. Produce a model of youth work/youth arts to improve well-being. Work with <strong>ACNI &amp; PHA</strong> to assist in integration of youth work &amp; the performing arts to build positive mental health in young people.</td>
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<p>| Improve life and work skills | Deliver regional youth employability programmes for young people aged 16 – 24 years who remain outside education, training or employment. Building skills for living, learning and work through youth work. <strong>GET Set for Work</strong> ~ 900 young people across N Ireland will be better able to progress to employment and further training. <strong>AMPLIFY</strong> ~ 960 young people across NI and border counties able to better navigate life and build purposeful relationships. <strong>Beacon</strong> ~ 236 young people in the North West gain entrepreneurial skills and build positive relations. | Build partnerships with employers and <strong>business</strong> in key growth sectors where there are skills in demand to progress young people into employment. Produce practice and policy briefs to inform Government of the impact of employability programmes underpinned by youth work. |</p>
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<td>Increase political engagement, citizenship and peace-building.</td>
<td>Our youth <strong>Network for Peace</strong> will support 10,000 young people to have meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact with other young people from different communities. Connect to <a href="http://www.radionyp.com">www.radionyp.com</a></td>
<td>Share the <strong>AGENDA</strong> for peace model as a framework through the ONE SMALL STEP youth campaign. <strong>Youth Network for Peace</strong> will work in partnership with 13 partners and <strong>NI Assembly</strong> and local government to nurture participative democracy among young people. Invest in <strong>British - Irish 5 Nation</strong> partnership to increase civic engagement opportunities for young people. Disseminate <strong>Still Shouting</strong> Research and toolkit to improve skills and understanding of LGBT young people. Disseminate <strong>Status</strong> toolkit to improve services for young travellers.</td>
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<td>Contributes to: Draft Programme for Government ‘to have a shared society that respects diversity.’ Draft Children and Young People’s Strategy 2017 -2026 parameter 8 ‘Equality and good relations.’ Shared Education Act (NI) 2016. EA Outcomes Framework ‘development of positive relations with others.’</td>
<td>Our <strong>Critical Youth Research</strong> Hub will create dialogue and conversation spaces for young people to have a voice, ask questions and to further develop their curiosity. Reduce violence in the <strong>Everyday Life</strong> of young men. <strong>Out &amp; About</strong> initiative for LGBT young people across NI. Implement the Peace First Challenge with young people to tackle injustices.</td>
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**Network for Peace** will support 10,000 young people to have meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact with other young people from different communities. Connect to [www.radionyp.com](http://www.radionyp.com)
Organisational Goals

Ensure YouthAction Northern Ireland operates to the highest governance standards, within a clear constitutional and legal framework.

Strive for a sustainable and robust financial base for the work of the charity.

Inspire leadership, learning and growth in staff and volunteers to maximise their contribution to our charity and society.

Raise quality standards in youth work through partnerships, research, training, resource development and demonstrating impact, to influence a flourishing youth sector.

- Evidence based practice – our youth work is based upon research, reflective practice and evaluation.
- Community development and area based strategies – community owned solutions with young people and local partners as key informants to address identified needs.
- Partnership – local and strategic partnerships to best meet the needs of young people.
- Voluntary relationships – young people will more readily participate in voluntary processes.
- Young people led – young people are more likely to engage in initiatives of which they feel real ownership.
- Innovation and creativity – to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of young people we strive to be responsive, flexible, creative and pioneering.
Equality and diversity work with young women – encourages young women to value themselves, develop their abilities and potential and helps them to understand and challenge the prejudice and inequalities they may encounter in their lives.

Youth arts – offers young people of all abilities, opportunities to develop their performance and artistic potential, as well as their social and educational skills, through the medium of performing and allied arts.

Work with young men – develops, implements and supports strategies to work with young men, in which young men can learn and develop alternatives to outdated and restrictive masculinities.

Training – formally recognises and accredits young people’s participation in and contribution to youth work within communities and creates pathways to employment.

Peace-building and citizenship – leads on a range of partnerships which commit to transparent peace-building with young people in Northern Ireland and the border counties as well as nurturing young people as assets and active citizens within civil, social and political life.

Rural development – enables marginalized rural young people to become active citizens in their own community and develop processes through which they can articulate their needs and influence policy development and service provision.