

PEACEPLUS funded Shared Faith, Shared Futures launched at Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

A new peacebuilding initiative, Shared Faith, Shared Futures, delivered by Utopian Training Solutions, was launched at Lisburn Civic Centre on 17th June. The PEACEPLUS Project will connect churches, interfaith groups and local communities to promote community relationships and build trust across the different faiths and beliefs in the area. The project will engage 160 participants through a programme of cohesion, integration, cultural awareness and cross-community learning.

The project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The Shared Faith, Shared Futures project will support churches and faith groups to come together, share experiences and build a greater understanding of the role faith communities play in local life. Through a series of activities, relationship building opportunities and training sessions, participants will learn from one another, share ideas and resources and explore how churches and faith groups can support peacebuilding, good relations and community wellbeing. The programme will encourage collaboration across faiths, support cross border and cross community learning and provide training opportunities including mental health training.

Announcing the project, Edward Hanna, Managing Director of Utopian Training Solutions said, "Shared Faith, Shared Futures recognises that some of the strongest foundations for peace already exist within our churches, faith communities and local organisations. This programme will create safe spaces where people can build relationships, challenge perceptions and learn from one another in a spirit of mutual respect. By bringing together people from different faiths, traditions and backgrounds, we want to strengthen trust, encourage collaboration and empower local leaders to make a lasting contribution to peacebuilding and community wellbeing. We are delighted to be delivering this important PEACEPLUS initiative in partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and look forward to seeing the relationships and opportunities that emerge over the next three years."

Speaking at the event, Adrian Bird, Deputy Chair of the Lisburn & Castlereagh PEACEPLUS Partnership thanked all those working on the project said: "This is a much needed programme, that will bring people from different faiths and backgrounds together in a friendly and welcoming way. It's about giving people the chance to chat, share experiences and build trust together. Shared Faith, Shared Futures adopts a process that places wellbeing, trust and belonging at the heart of leadership and shared action. It will build on the partnerships already forged, broaden its appeal and strengthen collective capacity across the council area."

The Shared Faith, Shared Futures project will run until April 2028 across the council area. For more information on the project and courses, please contact Utopian Training Solutions on daphne@utopianlearning.org

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a North South Body with the statutory remit for managing EU funding programmes within Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.
2. PEACEPLUS is a cross-border funding Programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland and has a total value of €1.14 billion.
3. PEACEPLUS is co-funded by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive.
4. Information on the work of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) can be found at www.seupb.eu. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's website is <https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/>