

KEY YOUTH PROJECTS AT RISK AS NO DEAL BREXIT HANGS OVER ERASMUS+ FUNDING – BORIS JOHNSON MUST COMMIT TO ITS CONTINUATION

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Ahead of the International Digital Youth Work Summit in Glasgow tomorrow, Scotland's national agency for youth work unveils new European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work and re-iterates their call for the UK Prime Minister to commit to the continuation of Erasmus+ youth funding.

The Digital Youth Work Project and new European Guidelines, aim to build capacity to deliver digital youth work at local, national, regional and European levels. It is a transnational Erasmus+ project with seven partners from six different countries across European Union.

The project demonstrates the crucial role Erasmus+ funding has in the training of youth workers and access to life-changing opportunities for young people from some of our most disadvantaged communities. Next week's summit will highlight some truly groundbreaking work being carried out with young people across the EU, to support them to navigate the online aspects of their lives.

In Scotland taking youth work online is supporting young people from the LGBTI school community, allowing teenagers from across the country, who are either socially or geographically isolated to connect with each other through social platforms, while being supported by youth workers from LGBT Youth Scotland.

"The main advantage of young people being able to share their experiences and resources online is they can access a large support network without having to travel and meet other people. For some young people, especially being LGBT, they can be quite isolated in their own area, so being able to speak to people on the internet is a lot easier." Young Person, LGBT Youth Scotland

The MY WelcomeGuide in Munich is an innovative film project, created by local young people for young refugees and asylum seekers arriving to live in the city. These films provide new arrivals with information to help them settle in to their new home, suggestions on how to cope with everyday life in a different country and how to get involved in their community.

In Denmark, youth workers are helping vulnerable young people through a virtual clubhouse, which offers online counselling in a safe space.

Commenting, International Project Lead, Liz Green of YouthLink Scotland said:

"The European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work and the other materials developed through this project demonstrate the crucial role of youth workers as educators in the 21st Century. Youth workers are ideally

placed to help young people to navigate the online aspects of their lives and be empowered in an increasingly digitalised world.

"In the midst of uncertainty on our future relationship with Europe, this project, yet again, demonstrates the value of the Erasmus+. We ask Boris Johnson to make a commitment to the continuation of Erasmus+, a programme that already involves non-EU members, including Iceland and Norway."

Suvi Tuominen, Manager, Verke, the Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland believes working together benefits young people:

"We have gained new insights from international colleagues, something we can use also in our national work in the future. We have had very fruitful co-operation with YouthLink Scotland on the topic of digital youth work over the past few years. Scottish and Finnish youth work principles and practices resemble each other in many ways, so it opens up many possibilities for collaboration also in the future."

Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

"On behalf of the Scottish Government, I would like to thank YouthLink Scotland for exploring Digital Youth Work internationally and the benefits this could bring to young people in Scotland. I feel the guidelines for Digital Youth Work are a significant development, which has the potential to broaden the experiences of young people."

Over the past 30 years, 600,000 people from the UK have taken part in Erasmus+. Between 2014 and 2020, Erasmus+ will have been worth £793 million to the UK.

Scotland's youth work sector reaches in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week.

The International Digital Youth Work Summit will be held on Tuesday 3rd September 2019 in Glasgow.

For more information regarding the new European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work:

<https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu>

Ends

For media enquiries and further information please contact Sarah Paterson, Communications and Public Affairs Manager at YouthLink Scotland on 07804 603762 or 0131 313 2488 and at spaterson@youthlinkscotland.org

Notes to editors

About YouthLink Scotland

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing over 100 regional and national youth organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of both the voluntary and statutory sector. Our vision is of a nation which values its young people and their contribution to society, where young people are supported to achieve their potential.

The project partners

YouthLink Scotland, Centre for Digital Youth Care (Denmark), Verke – the Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work (Finland), wienXtra MedienZentrum (Austria), JFF – Institut für

Medienpädagogik (Germany), National Youth Council of Ireland and Camara Education Limited (Ireland).

As a partnership, we believe that quality youth work that meets young people's needs must, in this modern era, include digital considerations. This does not mean that every youth worker should be a technical expert, but that a recognition that young people are growing up in a digital era and that they need support to navigate the online aspects of their lives and critically analyse online information/ interaction is becoming increasingly central to youth work.

There is also huge potential within the youth work sector to enhance and innovate practice through the use of digital technology and media and to use non formal and informal learning to help young people to create digital content and shape the digital world of the future.

However, alongside these needs and opportunities there is also a lack of confidence, competence, strategic planning and investment to enable the youth work sector to fully embrace these developments. This project aims to increase capacity of the youth work sector to engage with these two areas by offering training, guidance and best practice sharing to practitioners and managers to help incorporate digital youth work into their planning. It also creates opportunities to raise the profile of and showcase the value of digital youth work.

The project produces three outputs:

- Good practice collection of 36 good practices in total
- Digital Youth Work Training Resources to be used in youth worker trainings
- European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work

The methodology to create these outputs includes an innovative Training Jam process as well as training, networking and consultation within the sector. There will be national multiplier events in each country and a final International Digital Youth Work Summit in September 2019 to showcase innovative practice in digital youth work and launch the European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work.