



The OUR Generation App is here!



We're getting ready to celebrate the launch of our brand new app at Dromintee Primary School on Monday 15th May to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week 2023.

The app aims to educate children & young people about mental health and well-being. It is designed as a game, featuring 5 levels with activities relating to mental health and well-being, coping and problem-solving skills, perspective taking, empathy and intergroup contact & trust.

OUR Generation partners fed into the content, and children and young people were involved in co-design by participating in workshops.

The app is divided into two age categories, 11 years old and under, and 12 years old and above. Activities include simple drag-and-drop games as well as videos and links to other sources of help and support.

Players can select from four buddies who guide them through the app - Stripey, Roby, Hoofy or Bulby. Users earn stars as they complete their journey through the levels and climb the leader board from expert, ambassador, champion to genius.

The OUR Generation app was developed in collaboration with researchers at the University's School of Psychology along with Prof. Maurice Mulvenna of the AI Research Centre in the University's School of Computing.

Prof. Maurice Mulvenna, who was involved in the app's design and development, said: "The OUR Generation App will provide a fun, free, safe, and engaging way for children, young people, and emerging adults to tackle their worries on mental health and well-being, so they can build resilience, gain confidence, and thrive."

The OUR Generation app will be available to download from the Apple Store or Google Play store on 15th May 2023.



WELCOME to Issue 5 of OG News!



Hello, and welcome to Issue 5 of our newsletter, where we aim to update you on what's been happening across the OUR Generation Project since our last edition in October '22 and to showcase some of the highlights.

I am delighted to open with confirmation that we have received approval to extend the OG Project by an additional 5 months, to the end of September 2023. During such uncertain times, this allows us to continue to meet the unprecedented demand for our programmes and activities, engaging with even more children and young people and supporting them to develop the skills necessary for good mental health and emotional resilience. This is not only vital to them in their own lives, but it is also an essential foundation to supporting them to become agents of change for the future, building peace in communities.

On behalf of the OUR Generation partnership, I would like to thank SEUPB and our match funders, The Executive Office in NI and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland, for the confidence they have shown in us, through allocation of additional funding to make this possible.

I would also like to use this platform to say thank you to everyone within our seven OG partner teams. I reflect back on where we were 3 years ago, just getting started, at the start of a global pandemic and I am immensely proud of everything we have achieved. This could not have happened, but for the strength of partnership, the dedication and enthusiasm of the OG staff teams, and their determination to find a path around every obstacle.

In this issue, you will read about some of the Project highlights from recent months, which have included TTAD22; Action Mental Health's Animations; Co-Operation Ireland's Autism Conference; Youth Work Ireland's Youth Fund Celebration; Donegal Youth Service's mural project; PlayBoard's seminar and animation launch, and much more!

Looking ahead to the immediate high points, we are excited to be launching the OG App on 15th May and we are holding our closure event on 25th May, where our Impact Report will also be released.

We look forward to updating you about those in the next newsletter. In the meantime, I trust you will enjoy reading this one.

- Carol Scullion **Project Manager**

Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day

Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day (TTAD) returned on Thursday 15th December 2022.

The theme of TTAD22 was 'Breaking the cycle', and once again OUR Generation held a free online webinar which was attended by over 90 participants from across the UK and Ireland.

This was hosted by David Babington, Chief Executive of Action Mental Health, with a short introduction from Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland Professor Siobhan O'Neill of Ulster University.

TTAD22 speakers were:

- Deirdre McLaughlin, Connected for Life
- Lorna Aitken, Senior Education Officer, Education Scotland
- Gail Nowek, Principal Psychologist, North Ayrshire Council

You can find more information on our speakers [here](#)

Download the speaker's slides from the OUR Generation website [here](#) or watch the webinar recording on YouTube.

WATCH 



The poster features a background of a sunset over a field of tall grass with a silhouette of a person in the center. On the left, a white box contains the event details: 'TTAD TALK', 'Thurs 15th December 2022', '1.30pm - 3.30pm', 'Location: Zoom', 'Cost: FREE', and 'An event to mark Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day'. To the right, three circular portraits are arranged vertically, each with a corresponding text box identifying the host and speakers.

TTAD TALK Thurs 15th December 2022
1.30pm - 3.30pm
Location: Zoom
Cost: FREE
An event to mark Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day

Host: David Babington, Chief Executive, Action Mental Health

Introduction: Prof Siobhan O'Neill, Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland

Speaker: Lorna Aitken, Senior Education Officer, Education Scotland

Speaker: Deirdre McLaughlin from Connected for Life

Speaker: Gail Nowek, Principal Psychologist, North Ayrshire Council



OUR Generation animations

Children and young people have created animations of what they have learned about mental health through OUR Generation programmes.

In total, four schools were involved in the unique shared learning exchange.

Two primary schools from different urban village areas of Belfast were paired together - Elmgrove Primary School from east Belfast (Eastside) and Christ the Redeemer from Colin, in the west of the city.

In Fermanagh two post-primary schools, Enniskillen Royal Grammar and St. Michael's College (pictured above) also worked together to create an animation about trauma that launched as part of Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day in 2022.

Kate Huddleston, a pupil at Enniskillen Royal Grammar, said that through taking part in the OUR Generation project pupils learned practical skills to help themselves and support others. She said: "We learned how to identify the signs if someone needs help and is dealing with stress or trauma in mental health."

She added: "Mental health is not something that people talk about very often, and needs to be better understood."

All pupils came together for a series of workshops with Joel Simon of Hola Lola Animations where they learned how to animate drawings using an iPad and digital stylus.



“*Mental health is not something that people talk about very often, and needs to be better understood.*”



Their creations reflect what they have learned through OUR Generation, with the young people designing and voicing the characters themselves.

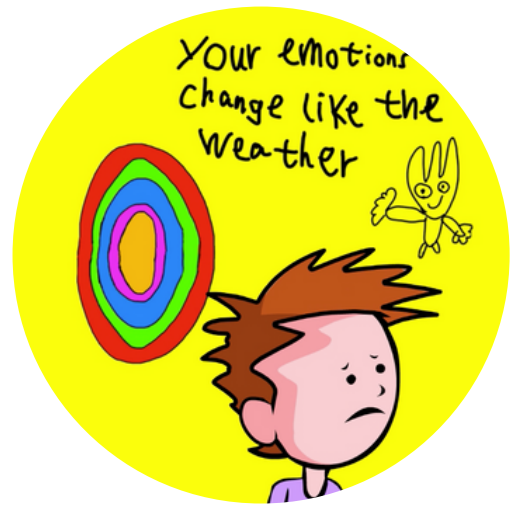
The Primary Schools animation, called "OUR Wee Thoughts and Feelings," premiered at a launch event at Christ the Redeemer Primary School back in November 2022 - it even led to pupils from Elmgrove primary school being interviewed on Radio Ulster.

Speaking at the launch event, David Babington, CEO of Action Mental Health, thanked all of the schools for taking part in the "shared learning exchange."

He congratulated pupils, and told them it would be something they could "look back on proudly in years to come."

He said: "OUR Generation and Action Mental Health will continue to use this animation when delivering our programmes to other children and young people – helping them grow up better together."

You can watch both animations on YouTube.



WATCH



L-R Joel Simon – Hola Lola Animations, Philip Magee – Local UV Co-ordinator: Colin area, David Babington – Chief Executive, Action Mental Health, Kathy Anjorin - Eastside Local Support Officer, with pupils: Abbie McGauley, aged 10, Fionn McCarty, aged 10, Archie Young, aged 10, Aimee Crawford, aged 10

Cross-border Autism conference

masking isolation/bullying/labelling

Different and managing
overwhelmingly stressful context

Relationship and intimacy –
bonding- belonging

Extreme presentation of fear and
being down (pressing)

What does this mean in practice?

The
therapy
space

On Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th January 2023, the OUR Generation Team at Co-Operation Ireland was involved in the organisation of a large-scale, in person, Autism conference at the Millennium Forum in Derry/L'Derry.

Its purpose was to discover what the challenges are for youth work and youth workers and understand better how to best support autistic children and young people on both sides of the border. The need for this large-scale conference was identified following a seminar on Community Youth Work and Autism in June 2022 organised by The Youth Work Alliance and Dr Breda Friel from Ulster University and builds upon a successful conference in 2019.

The conference attracted professionals from across the Island of Ireland including strong representation from the Education Authority, Youth Work Alliance, National Youth Council of Ireland and Donegal Youth Service. 180 delegates attended on day one and 100 delegates on day two, despite the adverse weather conditions.

There was input from NI Mental Health Champion, Siobhan O'Neill and an introduction from CI CEO Peter Sheridan on peacebuilding and mental health as well as guest speakers Chris Bonnelo – Autistic not Weird, Jude Morrow – Neurodiversity Training, Evaleen Whelton – Ausome Training and Anne Walsh from National Youth Council Ireland.

Over the course of the two days delegates had the option to participate in five workshops covering a wide range of themes including gender dysphoria, anxiety, communication, mindfulness, and creative writing.



Dr Breda Friel, UU



Prof Siobhan O'Neill, UU



Evaleen Whelton workshop

Feedback from the event was excellent, delegates highlighted that involving autistic speakers and facilitators provided a more authentic voice and allowed for the sharing of first-hand experiences and the power of the individual story.

“
The best conference I can remember going to, I loved that many of your key speakers were Autistic. An excellent model of inclusion and partnership work. - Feedback from delegate
 ”



The OUR Generation team at Co-operation Ireland: Katrina McIlmail, Claire Heaney McKee, and Laurie Ferguson,

The conference was an important collaboration, bringing together key organisations who support the sector including: Ulster University, The Youth Work Alliance, Co-operation Ireland, The Playtrail, Northwest Youth Services, Education Authority and Donegal Youth Service. Funding to allow the event to happen was provided by a consortium including The Education Authority, The Youth Work Alliance and European Union’s PEACE IV Programme, which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



Evaleen Whelton



Peter Sheridan, CEO, Co-operation Ireland



Jude Morrow



Chris Bonello



OUR Play, OUR Legacy, OUR Generation - Play is the Point



The OUR Generation team at PlayBoard NI, hosted a shared learning seminar at Girdwood Community Hub on 31st March 2023.

The event showcased the impact of the *Spaces to Be* programme that has been delivered in primary schools and childcare settings within Urban Village Areas in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

Over the past three years, through a play-based approach, the programme has supported children's mental health and well-being, building resilience, and enabling them to better manage their emotions. The programme has also supported children to become diverse thinkers by being accepting and inclusive of other communities and cultures. During the day, the OG team presented the topics explored within the *Spaces to Be* programme and showcased the impact it has had in schools and, of course, gave the attendees the opportunity to PLAY. During the event, testimonials from children, as well as live testimonials from staff, showcased the legacy of the programme and the very real impact it has had on those that have taken part. All in all the event was attended by over 30 people from the CYP sector in Northern Ireland. PlayBoard NI also launched a new animation entitled "OUR Generation, OUR Play, OUR Legacy", which follows Archie Bear as he explains how important play is for children and adults, and how it can help build resilience and bridge divisions, addressing the impact of conflict in Northern Ireland.



PlayBoard has been delivering 'Speces To Be' in a range of settings, including Longtower Primary School, Fountain Primary School, Wee Chicks, Mercy Primary School and Currie Primary School.

In April, programmes were delivered at Dundela Infant School in East Belfast and Holy Evangelist Primary School in West Belfast.

They have also been running 'Stay and Plays' – one-off sessions where parents can come along and spend time playing with their child, whilst receiving the parental element of the programme regarding the benefits of play on supporting positive mental health and wellbeing and supporting inclusion and diversity. In the last 6 months, a total of 113 parents have come through these sessions, with many parents expressing how hard it can be to find time in their busy lives to actually sit down and simply play with their child. As one parent put it: "Play is not just good for my child, it is good for me too!"

On the 31st March, PlayBoard hosted its third and final shared learning seminar, at Girdwood Community Hub in Belfast - see page 8 for further details.

PlayBoard is delighted to have launched a brand-new animation produced by Ardmore to showcase their work as a part of the wider OUR Generation project. It is a part of documenting the legacy of their work over the past few years. The viewer gets to follow Archie Bear, who explains how amazing and important play is for children and adults, and how it can help build resilience and bridge divisions. It tells the story of how PlayBoard was founded to promote play at a time of conflict in Northern Ireland and how the Our Generation programme has sought to address the impact of the conflict through play.

More importantly, it highlights the many benefits of play to promote an understanding amongst both children and adults, that play is essential to our physical and mental wellbeing. [Click here to watch the video.](#)



In October 2022, Prof Siobhan O'Neill presented at PlayBoard NI's 'OUR Play, OUR Mental Health, OUR Generation Webinar alongside Prof Helen Dodd and Dr Mike Wragg. This webinar explored children's mental health, the importance of play and how adults can support children in their lives. Additionally, the impacts of transgenerational trauma on children, specifically within the context of NI was explored.

Ulster University's App working group co-designed content and layout with AMH and the app developer Fluxguide Ausstellungssysteme GmbH. UU has also now fully completed the necessary processes and obtained ethical approval for the app.

The team produced the Annual Quality Assurance Report for 2022, providing an update on the evaluation and progress of the Project to date.

UU worked alongside project partners to capture feedback through stakeholder engagement surveys and focus groups. That information will be used to produce a report on stakeholder engagement across the Project with future recommendations.

UU are currently working alongside project partners and Young Person's Advisory Group on the development of Emotional Recovery Colleges for the OG Project.

Dr Tara O'Neill and Dr Colette Ramsey have been conducting programme observations as well as attending a number of conferences and events including:

- YANI Lifemaps Conference College Square; North Belfast 10/10/2022
- Autism: Belonging & Inclusion in Youth Work Millennium Forum; Derry 16/01/2023
- Family Voices Forum Conference Belfast City Hall; Belfast 25/01/2023
- Samaritans Mental Health Event The Long Gallery Stormont; Belfast 22/02/2023
- Generation Hope Youth Suicide Prevention Conference The MAC; Belfast 27/02/2023

Dr Colette Ramsey has been accepted to present on the OG Project at the International Association of Suicide Prevention in Piran, Slovenia, in September 2023. This will be presented under their theme of resilience. Dr Ramsey will also have a poster presentation at the same conference.



OUR Generation



Co-operation Ireland



Co-operation Ireland organised the Autism Conference on 17th & 17th January, in collaboration with Ulster University, Education Authority, Youth Work Alliance, the Playtrail and Donegal Youth Service - see pages 6 & 7 for further details.

The team delivered Art and Mindfulness workshops in UV areas and border counties. They also delivered a 4-week cross-community creative programme for 2 primary schools in the Derry/L~derry Urban Village area with Longtower Primary School and the Fountain Primary school.

The team organised a webinar on Understanding Anxiety with Shane Martin from Moodwatchers on Thursday 4th May.

On Friday 12th May they held a self care day for youth workers from Belfast at Preaching House Pottery, Killough. Participants learned how to make bao buns and created tote bags followed by a mindfulness session.



The OUR Generation team at Youth Work Ireland held a celebration event for young people who took part in the Youth Fund programme at Todds Leap activity centre in Dungannon on Thurs 23rd Feb 2023. Pupils from six schools located in the border counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo and Donegal came together to celebrate their achievements.

The schools in attendance were St Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross, Beech Hill College, St Macartan's College, St Bricin's Vocational School, Ursuline College and Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair.

St Louis Convent Monaghan also took part in The Youth Fund, however they were unable to make the celebration event on the day.



Each Youth Fund group gave a short presentation about their experiences and received hoodies and certificates. Following the presentations, young people had lunch then took part in a range of activities including archery and climbing.

Tracey McArdle, OUR Generation Co-ordinator at Youth Work Ireland, said that the event was an opportunity for all the Youth Fund groups to come together in recognition of their contribution to the project and the impact the project has had on them.

She said: "They have all worked incredibly hard over the past 5 months, showing their ability to support and encourage each other, and to make important decisions as a team.

"Taking part in the OUR Generation programme with Youth Work Ireland has empowered young people to work together to make a positive difference in their communities."

She added: "We would like to thank all of the young people and the schools who got involved with the Youth Fund."



Action Mental Health



In January, AMH attended 8 secondary/grammar school open nights across the project delivery areas to build rapport with schools and parents of transferred children. The team provided an information stand and engaged with both key contacts and young people and were able to promote dates for parent session programmes.

For Children's Mental Health Week 2023, the team developed content for a guide to support parents to become more aware of the possible impact of social media use and how to encourage a more positive approach. You can download a copy [here](#).

In response to the current Cost of Living Crisis, the OG team at AMH worked with local groups in East Belfast to create a Cost of Living Cafe day in the Carew Centre in Inner East Belfast. They delivered a parents session and provided information and support for participants.

The team also organised two Afternoon Tea events for teachers from across Belfast to come together to discuss and share their ideas on parental engagement in schools and also to share their OUR Generation experiences and learning. Two more are planned in the coming months.

In February, Artigarvan Primary School invited AMH make a video about the positive impact OUR Generation programmes have had at their school. Click [here](#) to watch.

In March, young people from Royal School Armagh and St Patrick's High School, Keady, came together to share their learning from the MH Ambassador Programmes they completed during the year. They presented action plans they had devised, explained their Ambassador roles in their schools, and talked about the changes they've made and shared ideas. The morning ended with a pizza lunch and new connections forged amongst the young people and staff alike.

AMH are currently working with young people in Belfast who will come together to create a mural that will reflect their learning and experiences on the OUR Generation Project. It is hoped that this will be unveiled at the celebration event at the end of May!

Pupils from Royal School Armagh and St Pat's, Keady



Youth Action NI

In March, Sara McKinley from UTV interviewed Keady Young Men's group for an upcoming news article, about what it means to be male growing up today.

St. Patrick's Youth Club in Keady have also been participating in a health & wellbeing programme, delivered in partnership with Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council. Each week, the instructors from Keady Recreation Centre put the young men through their paces, giving them the opportunity to try something new & gain new skills.

This included boot camps, Spin, badminton & basketball. To help recognise their achievements, a celebration event was held in the club that was attended by D.P. O'Neill from Keady Recreation Centre, Mark Doran from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council & members of the local community.

At the beginning of March, a group of 8 young women from YouthAction NI member organisation St. James' Farm made their way to Blackpool to take part in the 5th Annual Fylde Coast International Women's Day.

Also, in early March, YANI's OG team held a 'Better Together' residential at The Jungle NI. The residential brought together 26 young men from across Northern Ireland from a variety of backgrounds to build emotional resilience and facilitate meaningful conversations about negotiating identity and difference. They participated in a range of activities that challenged them, and they made new friends.

In April, 20 young women from Armagh, Derry/L~derry and Belfast spent a weekend in beautiful Gortin, Co. Tyrone. The Owenkillen Community Outdoor Activity Centre provided a brilliant space for them to be reflective as well participate in action packed activities. The residential gave the young people challenges to grow and test their abilities and gave them an opportunity to meet peers from different communities and backgrounds.



Keady Young Men's group



Better Together Young Women's Residential



DYS held a cross-border Shared Learning Event at The Junction in Dungannon, Co Tyrone on Wednesday 25th January 2023. The day was an opportunity for the Action For Children NI Fostering Team and Tusla Cavan/Monaghan Fostering Team to come together to meet, learn and share good practice.

The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the positive work that has been done - especially over the last three years. Michelle Major, founder of The Sunshine Project and more recently The Somatic Project, talked about the impact of trauma on the nervous systems in our body and how this might manifest for the children and young people. She gave a practical demonstration and techniques that staff can use going forward.

DYS have been running their Provoking Thought programme, as well as Suicide Prevention training in the form of safeTALK, ASIST & Understanding Self Harm which has been rolled out countywide and throughout the CHO1 areas with great success in 2023, reaching 200+ adults including key contacts, parents and teachers in schools, third level institutes, local business' and community organisations.

Recently, DYS worked with Peaball Graffiti School to create a mural for the new CAMHS primary care building in Buncrana, with the aim of making the space more welcoming and youth-friendly. This mural art project was a shared learning exchange between OUR Generation, CAMHS, Aspire Inishowen and Hazelbank Youth, Ballymagroarty. The group met together to develop their skills, with a spray paint workshop, and to develop their ideas of what they wanted to create. Following this, a core group from ASPIRE continued the project to fruition dedicating hours in the evening over a number of weeks to create a stunning mural, pictured below. The lighthouse represents the importance of looking for guidance with our mental health, the lion represents courage, the mask denotes personalities and individuals, the dandelion reminds us to live in the present, the sunflower reminds us to turn towards the light and the semicolon is a popular symbol used to raise awareness of personal strength to overcome an internal struggle.



About us...



OUR Generation - The Project

The OUR Generation Project provides a unique opportunity for communities, north and south of the Border, to work together to halt the intergenerational impact of trauma and to build emotional resilience and peace for generations to come. This three-year project will run to September 2023 and engage with 47,400 children, young people and their key contacts. The project is being delivered in education, youth and community settings across the 5 Urban Village Areas of Northern Ireland and the Border Region Area of Ireland.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

The cross-border partnership of 7 regional organisations is being led by Action Mental Health in partnership with Donegal Youth Service, Co-Operation Ireland, Youth Action NI, Youth Work Ireland, PlayBoard NI & Ulster University.

OUR Generation - The Legacy



5,000 key contacts of children & young people will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to support their wellbeing, including an improved understanding of mental health problems.

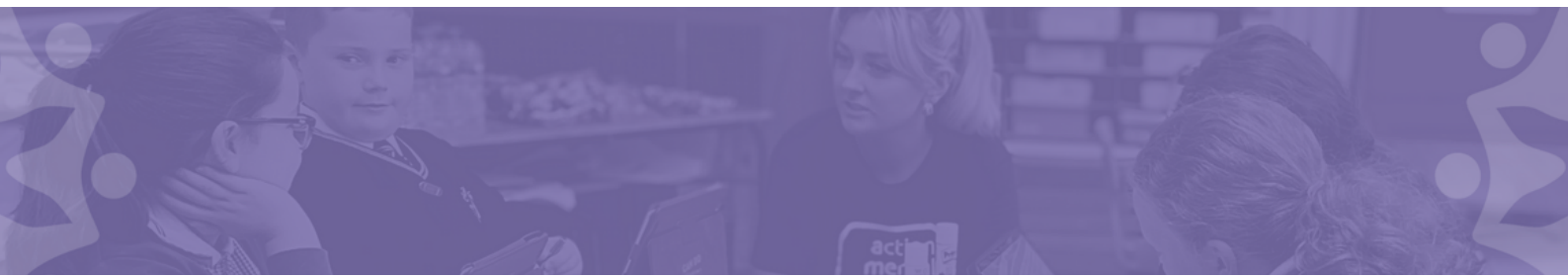


42,400 children & young people will improve their emotional resilience & empathy, building skills to help themselves & others, gaining greater intercultural awareness & community cohesion whilst increasing capacity & desire to be active citizens in their communities.



Children and young people and their key contacts are co-designing a range of digital resources including a mobile app, animations & podcasts to support their own needs and those of the wider communities on a regional & national basis.

For more information visit: ourgeneration-cyp.com/





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Donegal
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Changing for the better, together



A project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



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