

€87,500 gift for communities from Ulster Bank Skills & Opportunities Fund this Christmas

12th December: Ulster Bank has announced the five winning community organisations set to receive a share of €87,500 of funding from Round two of its Skills & Opportunities Fund. In total, 18 not-for-profit organisations entered projects that help people in communities in the Republic of Ireland to improve their long-term prospects through financial capability and enterprise opportunities.

Seven organisations were shortlisted and the public then had their say, with over 3,000 votes cast to help decide the winners. The five winning organisations, which are set to receive grants of up to €35,000, are:

- **Citywise Education** aims to inspire young people in under-served localities in Dublin to take their education seriously and to set their sights higher by developing personal skills in a fun way. Its *Citywise Means Business* project will engage around 200 young people aged 10 – 18 in an out-of-school environment with business-related programmes to encourage financial capability and entrepreneurship.
- **Good Shepherd Cork** works with women and children who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness, through projects including Edel House emergency shelter, the only homeless shelter in Cork that can accommodate children. Its *Making Homes, Making Change* project will deliver a package of literacy and numeracy resources, lessons and mentoring to give women moving on from the shelter the financial skills necessary to sustain their new tenancies.
- **Partas** is a social enterprise with more than 30 years' experience in local enterprise development in Tallaght, South Dublin. Its *Start Smart* project is a short but intensive introduction programme to becoming self-employed, which will target both men and women living in Tallaght.

- **Innovate Dublin** is a social enterprise committed to social innovation for community regeneration by sourcing new solutions to unmet social needs. Its *Youth Academy Enterprise Programme in Design Thinking and Project Management Skills* will provide a 12-week training programme for local unemployed young people, supporting them towards self-employment.
- **The National College of Ireland's Early Learning Initiative** was developed to address educational disadvantage in marginalised communities, through an integrated programme of activities, training and support for children, parents and educators. Its *Early Learning Initiative - Financial Literacy Programme* will adapt and implement its primary school literacy programme to four more after-school clubs within disadvantaged communities in inner city Dublin.

To read more about the winners and their inspiring projects, please visit the [Ulster Bank Skills & Opportunities Fund website](#).

Eddie Cullen, Managing Director of Ulster Bank's Commercial Banking Division, commented today; *"There are hundreds of grassroots community organisations across Ireland doing fantastic work to help disadvantaged communities. By working together with these organisations through the Skills & Opportunities Fund, Ulster Bank is able to help more people to improve their money or business skills, while supporting really worthwhile initiatives."*

Applications are now closed for 2017, but the Fund will reopen in early 2018. To receive a reminder nearer the time, as well as other relevant updates, subscribe to the [Ulster Bank mailing list](#).

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