

Three Community Projects receive funding of €67,500 from the Ulster Bank Skills & Opportunities Fund

Youth Work Ireland, Co. Monaghan among the recipients for the 'Let's Get Ready!' youth work programme designed to develop independent living skills for young people

3rd July 2017: Ulster Bank has today announced the winners of its first round of the 2017 Ulster Bank Skills & Opportunities Fund. A total of €67,500 will be invested in three community projects across the country. The aim of the fund is to support community projects that help people access education and employment or to start a business. The fund, which launched in 2015, has to date provided over €380,000 in grants for community projects across Ireland.

One of the three projects is *'Let's Get Ready!'*, an initiative created by Youth Work Ireland, Co. Monaghan, to develop independent living skills for young people aged 15-25 who are not in education, employment or training. The group will receive €25,000 to expand the programme, including practical courses such as budgeting skills, home management, healthy eating and fitness, as well as driving, which is key in rural areas. The project aims to develop confidence, resilience, personal responsibility and engagement with the community.

Commenting on the funding awarded this year, Pauline McKiernan, Sustainability Manager at Ulster Bank said: "Providing help for what matters is at the heart of what we do at Ulster Bank. The Skills & Opportunities Fund gives us the opportunity to help community projects make a real impact in their local areas. We are delighted to be able to support the groups receiving funding this round, and help them make a real difference to the communities they serve."

Speaking about the funding received, Claire Barkey, Youth Work Ireland, Monaghan Regional Director, said: "This funding is really important to our organisation and our community. We are really pleased to be able to expand the *'Let's Get Ready!'* programme across Monaghan. Thanks to Ulster Bank, we can now reach more young people across the county and give them the essential practical and personal skills needed to help them live independently."

The other projects that will receive funding are:

1. Southside Partnership, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
2. Roscommon Women's Network

Southside Partnership, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Southside partnership works to support those experiencing social exclusion and disadvantage to find more positive ways and opportunities to improve their circumstances. The group will

receive €30,000 for the 'Mind Your Own Business' project aimed at supporting unemployed people to create jobs for themselves, and others, by developing their business and personal skills. With this funding, training will be offered to 150 people through a variety of workshops designed to help them develop the business skills needed as well as the personal skills required to sustain and grow a business.

Roscommon's Women's Network

Roscommon's Women's Network has received €12,500 to develop a programme for women who want to start their own business. The initiative will give women the opportunity to build their skills and confidence to help them start, and run their own business. It will provide a wide range of programmes including networking opportunities, one to one mentoring, training and workshops in the areas of goal setting, planning and finance.

More information on the projects being funded and information on how to apply for the next round of funding is available at www.skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com/

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