

Press Release

Date: For immediate release

Press Enquiries

Emma Boden (0121 212 8925)

ORGANISATIONS across Wales are tackling youth unemployment and helping young people to gain experience abroad after receiving EU funding.

Vale of Glamorgan Council are just one of the organisations to have been successful in receiving funding through Erasmus+, a major European programme.

Managed in the UK by the British Council and Ecorys UK, Erasmus+ is the European Union's (EU) programme for education, training, youth and sport, with the EU committing £12 billion to the programme between 2014 and 2020. The British Council Erasmus+ team are based in the Cardiff office and Ecorys UK team are based in Birmingham.

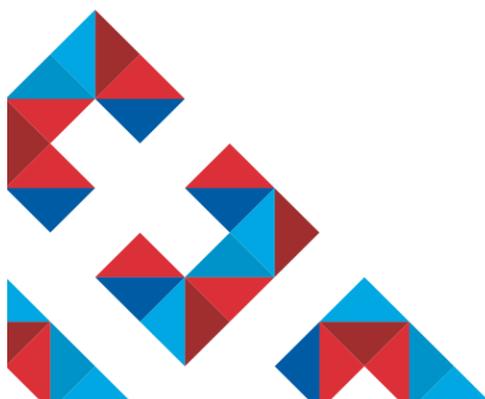
Their project - Achieving Success in Education Employment and Training - works with young people across South Wales who are not in education, training or employment (NEET). Young people from the region aged between 16 and 24 meet with other people in their situation from France and Germany to take part in a range of activities throughout South Wales helping them to boost their confidence, learn new skills and make them more employable.

Nearly 30 professionals took part to share best practice and tools for engaging with young people and reducing NEETs in the Vale of Glamorgan. These activities range from visiting politicians at Cardiff Bay Senedd to learn more about political issues to team building and self esteem courses.

Jennifer Hill, Director of Learning and Skills for the Vale, said: "Engaging young people is a top priority for the Council and one where we are making real progress. Working with international partners through Erasmus+ brings new insights and perspectives to our work."

Vale of Glamorgan Council also works with another organisation which has received Erasmus+ funding to encourage international volunteering opportunities for young people.

UNA Exchange, a voluntary organisation based in Cardiff, has been supporting international volunteering for almost 40 years.



It provides opportunities for hundreds of people to go abroad, broaden their horizons and learn new skills each year.

Through Erasmus+ UNA Exchange has been running European Voluntary Service, (EVS), projects where 18-30 year olds have the chance to volunteer in Europe and beyond.

The organisation provides long-term EVS projects across Wales working in close partnership with local youth organisations and other not for profit organisations in Wales.

A spokesman from Pembrokeshire Youth Service said working with UNA Exchange enabled them to offer a range of exciting opportunities to young people.

He said: "As we are a predominantly rural county on an extreme peninsula of Wales it is often difficult for young people to overcome barriers such as transport and funding to access opportunities such as these so our partnership with UNA is invaluable and critical to increase young people's confidence and mobility within the EU.

"Positive outcomes from previous attendees on the programmes include two young people who are now both mid-way through their first semester at university undertaking their BA (Hons) in Youth & Community Work. They were previously known to our service as 'NEETs' and were not engaged in any education, employment or training, struggling with motivation and confidence.

"Accessing overseas volunteering opportunities through Erasmus+ empowers young people to be aspirational, achieving outcomes they had not previously thought possible due to personal circumstances, barriers and low confidence."

To date, Welsh organisations have received €6.5m* in Erasmus+ funding. The proportion of total funding from the total funding pot (5.8%) was more than the Welsh share of the UK population (4.8%).

Many of these organisations will meet others from around the UK to discuss their projects and how they are meeting the aims of the Erasmus+ programme, such as building employability skills, at a Learning Networks event organised by the UK National Agency, which takes place in Cardiff on December 3 at Wales Millennium Centre.

The Learning Networks event, which is held twice a year, brings together practitioners and policy makers to share good practice and discuss key policy developments on cross-cutting themes of the Erasmus+ programme.

For more information about funding opportunities visit see www.erasmusplus.org.uk or use the hashtag #epluspeople to see what other projects are doing across the UK.

ENDS

Further information on current statistics for Erasmus+ in the UK can be found at: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/about/programme-statistics>

Notes to Editors

*The €6.5m figure quoted is based on statistics publications SR06-2015 and SR07-2015 provided in September 2015. The final figure may differ once all organisations are contracted.

1. About Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. It significantly increases EU funding (+40%) with an overall budget of €14.7 billion (£12 billion) for the development of knowledge and skills and aims to increase the quality and relevance of qualifications and skills. Two-thirds of its funding will provide grants for more than 4 million people to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad in 2014-2020 (compared with 2.7 million in 2007-2013). The period abroad can range from a few days up to a year. In the UK, it is expected that nearly 250,000 people will undertake activities abroad with the programme. Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of Lifelong Learning, including schools education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector. Erasmus+ provides funding for organisations to offer opportunities to students, teachers, apprentices, volunteers, youth leaders and people working in grassroots' sport. It will also provide funding for partnerships between organisations such as educational institutions, youth organisations, enterprises, local and regional authorities and NGOs, as well as support for reforms in Member States to modernise education and training and to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and employability. Erasmus+ replaces the former Erasmus, Comenius, Youth in Action, Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes which ran from 2007-2013.

The programme is managed in the UK by the Erasmus+ UK National Agency, which is a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK.

Further information from www.erasmusplus.org.uk or follow @erasmusplusuk on Twitter.

2. About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide. We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes. We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publicly-funded grant provides 20 per cent of our turnover which last year was £864 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, such as English classes and taking UK examinations, and also through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally. For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can visit the British Council Wales website for more information and Welsh language content: <https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/erasmus>

3. About Ecorys UK

Ecorys UK, part of the international research, consulting and management services company Ecorys, provides high-quality communication, research and technical assistance services across education, economic and social policy areas. Ecorys employs over 150 staff in the UK specialising in education and culture, employment and labour markets, economic and international development, communications, public grant managed programmes and capacity building. Our mission is to add value to public service delivery through our experience of the entire policy cycle. Further information from www.uk.ecorys.com