

# **WCVA celebrates the contribution EU funds have made to the voluntary sector in Wales as funding comes to a close**

On 9 March 2023, WCVA hosted an event in Cardiff to mark the achievements of the voluntary sector made possible by EU funding. The voluntary sector has played a key role in delivering a diverse range of EU funded activity over the past two decades, aiming to support the people and communities in Wales that are most in need, as well as helping social businesses grow and become more sustainable.

Now as we are approaching the end of the European Structural Funds programmes, a number of those who have been involved in these programmes came together to showcase some of the fantastic work that voluntary organisations have done with the help of these funds.

In the opening address from Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy said:

‘It’s a pleasure to celebrate two decades of the WCVA and the voluntary sector in delivering invaluable services to our communities with the help of European Funds. As a Welsh Government, we recognise the enormous contribution of the voluntary sector to the employability network, and the success of projects underpinned by European funds. These projects have resulted in investment to grow and create jobs and have also had a positive impact on the wellbeing of communities across Wales through provision of crucial community services; helping tackle poverty and addressing inequalities.

‘Looking to the future, there is undoubtedly a need for long-term, sustained regional investment to address deep and persistent imbalances in the UK economy and we are continuing to make that case and we will continue to work with the sector going forward.’

Speaking of what they have achieved with European funding, Engineering Education Scheme Wales Ltd /STEMCymru said:

‘We are delighted to be invited to attend the WCVA EU Funds event to celebrate our work delivered under the European Social Fund under the Youth Employment and Attainment priority. The funding we have received has enabled us to deliver our programmes to over 14,000 young people in the West Wales and the Valleys region since 2015.

‘Our focus has been on increasing attainment and uptake of STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] subjects, as well as improving the gender balance within the STEM sector in Wales. The impact of our activity outcomes also contributes towards the skills shortage in STEM to ensure that the ambitious net zero aims can be met by our future workforce in Wales.’

Speaking on EU funding and the voluntary sector, Ruth Marks, CEO WCVA said:

‘Wales has hugely benefited from EU funds and the sector has worked in a successful partnership with EU bodies to achieve significant investment in communities. Before now, planning for the end of any programme period involved planning future EU partnerships, however sadly this is no longer possible. The sector now needs to look to the future by building different partnerships and this will take time.

‘Meanwhile, the loss of European funding leaves behind a significant gap and we have concerns over how this will impact communities and individuals in Wales who need help most. WCVA will continue to campaign for replacement funds to reach the sector as quickly as possible’.

**For more information and interviews, please contact Elen Notley 029 2043 1728 or Simon Dowling on 0300 111 0124.**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the national membership body for voluntary organisations in Wales. We exist to

enable voluntary organisations in Wales to make a bigger difference together. You can learn more at: [www.wcva.cymru](http://www.wcva.cymru)

- Video examples of European funded projects can be found here on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzxRC-u44YC2f\\_UjcCN4Uhd3w\\_XX3AkFE](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzxRC-u44YC2f_UjcCN4Uhd3w_XX3AkFE)
- Photographs of the event are available

*In order for us to promote the voluntary sector in Wales and update our press contacts about relevant news from WCVA your information is recorded on our database. Please read our privacy notice, available on WCVA's website, to find out how your information will be used, who can access it, the legal bases on which your information is held and your rights in relation to this information.*

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