

## PROGRESS REPORT - AUTUMN 2020

When in July 2020, we commenced the drive to recruit Ambassadors to support the new Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Programme, young people were getting used to the idea of coming out of lockdown, preparing for return to schools and universities with good prospects of part time work to help fund some social interaction with the friends they had missed so much since early Spring. Now in mid-October as we enter the winter months, young people once again prepare to bear the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic, with some schools closing, universities restricted to virtual learning, no socialising, and the hospitality industry, which provided their part time employment, shut down indefinitely. Simultaneously, the negotiations between the UK and the EU to reach a positive compromise Brexit deal, continue to be challenging and the end result remains uncertain.

Co-operation Ireland prepared for this very situation by developing and seeking private financial and professional support to create 500 Future Leaders over the next five years. We have made a very encouraging start by recruiting 29 Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Ambassadors and numerous one-off donations, to be in a position to pilot and design our Future Leaders' Programme. It gives me great pleasure to be able to announce that we will launch the programme on 11 November 2020 and are in the process of recruiting the first one hundred participants to undertake this unique on-line, all-island initiative. The programme will equip these young people with the skills and confidence to work with others from diverse backgrounds to take an active role in peace building and maintaining good relationships, becoming leaders for positive change among their peers and in their own local communities.

Co-operation Ireland wishes to thank you for responding positively and agreeing to support our young people at this time of great need. I look forward to keeping you regularly updated on progress for the duration of the programme.

With every best wishes

**Peter Sheridan**  
Chief Executive  
Co-operation Ireland

### Design Team

The Programme Design Team was set up in August 2020 involving Co-operation Ireland programme staff and 16 young graduates from a range of our youth programmes, which had formed the development of the Future Leaders' initiative eg Republic of Ireland Youth Leadership Programmes, Amazing the Space Project, Together Apart, a Brexit youth led programme, NCS (National Citizen Service), Young Advocates and the North West Ministry Project. The group held a series of online meetings which focused on programme content and the potential to develop wider international links.

Based on their recommendations, we are continuing to work with this group to pilot two learning cluster themes to be decided in consultation with the group.

Creating Future Leaders



### Recruitment

We are currently working with local youth organisations to recruit young people for the first phase of the Future Leaders' Programme.

In the Republic of Ireland we will be working with a group of 24 young people in Cork from Knocknaheeny, Bishopstown and Cobh, with a group of 12 from across Finglas in Dublin and a group of 12 from Limerick city centre.

In Northern Ireland, we will be working with a group of 20 from Belfast and another group of 23 from across the North West region.

### Programme Delivery

Currently the focus of the programme activity is on group formation, bringing the groups together to learn to work in partnership with each other. The initial programme will focus on skills development with the young people in the Republic of Ireland undertaking a Sports Leadership Level 1 training with the Local Community Sports Partnerships.

Young people in Northern Ireland are focusing on developing their skills for participation, working with the local council developing their advocacy skills.

Due to the current restrictions this work is being delivered locally in small group activities and the collaboration will be delivered on-line.

### Next Steps

Once the young people have completed their training they will come together on-line, where they will explore their role in the community, the positive contribution they can make and exploring issues in their communities they would like to address. These issues will then be clustered into several themes, with groups of participants from across different communities working on a number of themes depending on their interest. They will prepare a plan of action for change which will be presented at several local advocacy events and programme webinars, where the young people will present and lobby for change on their chosen issue.

### Recognition

We are actively pursuing formal recognition for our Future Leaders' Programme, exploring a range of modules that may be developed in partnership with Further and Higher Education Institutions. Ongoing discussions are taking place with the Institute of Technology Limerick, University College Cork and the Education Training Boards.

If you would like to get involved in the Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Programme, and have particular skills that you feel would benefit young participants on the programme, such as mentoring, training, presentation skills, please email [futureleaders@cooperationireland.org](mailto:futureleaders@cooperationireland.org).

### Date for your Diary

On Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 4pm (11am New York time), Co-operation Ireland will host a Virtual Launch 'Creating Future Leaders'. The event will give participants an insight into the Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Programme and offer an opportunity to see at first hand some of the work that the young people are involved in.

If you are interested in attending the Virtual Launch, and to ensure you are sent a link, please email [futureleaders@cooperationireland.org](mailto:futureleaders@cooperationireland.org) to register.

### JOINT PATRONS

Her Majesty The Queen  
President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins

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