



**co-operationireland**  
*working for a future together*

**2021-2022**  
ANNUAL REPORT



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# OUR IMPACT

## WHAT WE DO

Co-operation Ireland is an all-island peace-building organisation. We work to build a shared and cohesive society by addressing legacy issues of the conflict and facilitating contact and collaboration between people from different backgrounds across these islands.

Under our current strategic plan, our programmes are primarily targeted at young people and marginalised communities which have experienced the worse impacts of the conflict

## YOUTH PROGRAMMES

Co-operation Ireland delivers a range of youth programmes which facilitate young people from different community backgrounds in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to meet, work together and build positive relationships.

Our programmes aim to prepare young people for living in a shared society by widening social networks, challenging negative attitudes and behaviours, and developing skills for working with others from diverse backgrounds. In 2021/22 Co-operation Ireland delivered 11 youth projects.

Programme themes included positive youth development, youth leadership, shared history and preparation for further education and employment.



## MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

We support marginalised communities to take the lead in their own development and to capitalise on the opportunities for social and economic renewal created by the peace process. Our programmes aim to build leadership capacity and to encourage greater openness to networking and collaboration, including on a cross-community basis.

In 2021/22 Co-operation Ireland delivered 10 programmes involving people from marginalised communities, from ex-prisoners to ethnic minorities.

## ALL-ISLAND CO-OPERATION

Co-operation Ireland continues to support co-operation for mutual benefit between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and works to facilitate strategic leadership for the building of good relations and collaboration across these islands. In 2021/22, 12 cross border programmes were in operation.





Involvement in our 2021/22 helped participants to build links with other communities, improve their understanding for other traditions, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for living and working in a shared society.

**97.2%**

of participants reported new links/friendships with others from a different community background.

**74.8%**

of participants demonstrated improved understanding of other traditions.

**90.8%**

of participants indicated better ability to work with others from different backgrounds.

**72.7%**

of participants socialised more frequently with young people from a different community background.

**86.1%**

of participants were more confident about working with others in a team.

**65.4%**

of participants were more confident about being the leader of a team.

**79.3%**

of participants were more confident about speaking in front of a group.

Our community programmes helped to build the capacity of local leaders and facilitated networking and exchange of learning between communities emerging from conflict across Northern Ireland. Community capacity and networking programmes were delivered in 26 areas across during 2021/22.

**1601**

People from communities across Ireland and Northern Ireland took part in our programmes in 2021/22, gaining skills for local development and good relations.

## CEO AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Dr. Christopher Moran  
Chairman



Peter Sheridan  
Chief Executive

**Co-operation Ireland's long tradition of working to bring people together continued throughout the 2021/22 period against a backdrop of political instability both nationally and domestically.**

As Ireland's leading peacebuilding charity concerned with developing relationships on a cross border basis primarily but with increasing focus on relationships across the Irish Sea in the wake of Brexit, the issue of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland dominates the political and civic landscape.

Faced with these challenges, Co-operation Ireland could accept things are they are, or take responsibility to change things for the better.

We chose to address issues through establishing new programmes and have now emerged from the Covid lockdown period restructured and better placed to embrace the future.

An audit carried out by EY outlined several strategies as to how the organisation can be more effective. Among the most consequential has been the creation of Board sub-committees for members to lend their significant expertise to guiding our future strategy.

**These sub-committees are:**

- Finance and Financial Sustainability
- Governance, Risk and Audit
- Strategy
- Marketing and Communication
- Nominations, Tenure, Skills and Succession Planning
- Stakeholder Relations
- Centenary/Legacy
- Protocol/Brexit
- Future Leaders Programme.

The flagship Future Leaders Programme entered its second year with an increase in numbers recruited. The innovative development strategy designed by our staff seeks to offer practical training and support to young people across the island to prepare them to take on leadership roles in the future. Recruitment is now underway for the next intake.

Future Leaders was just one of 27 programmes operated by Co-operation Ireland in the last year.

We were pleased to be able to relaunch our face-to-face fundraising events starting with the Pat Jennings Golf Classic returning to Royal County Down. This was the first of the annual events that took place, with the Legal Dinner following in June. We now look forward to the Diplomatic Dinner returning in October, where representatives from 40 counties will celebrate growing multiculturalism across the island.

The Stormont Assembly ceased to operate in February 2022 when the Democratic Unionist Party withdrew from the structures over the protocol.

While the collapse of the Stormont Executive cannot be underplayed, for Co-operation Ireland it merely increased the importance with which we carry out our work and presents opportunities.

Whatever the future holds, Co-operation Ireland will continue to use its experience and influence to build consensus around our shared future and work to create a shared space where the diversity of identities and traditions is respected.

We are grateful for the continuing support of Department for Foreign Affairs, The Executive Office, SEUPB and other NI, ROI and GB government departments and our private, charitable trusts and corporate donors.



# AIS4CA

All-island Schools 4 Climate Action is an ambitious new educational collaboration between Co-operation Ireland, EcoEd4All, the Education Authority for Northern Ireland (EANI) and Alison.

The aim of the programme is to enhance environmental education through schools across the island, while at the same time fostering cross-border collaboration.

The programme is making environmental education accessible and freely available to all students, parents, teachers and citizens, to promote awareness, understanding, and encourage behavioural change by communicating small, practical actions that can be implemented immediately.

During the 2021/22 programme, Co-operation Ireland engaged 12 second-level schools across the island in the programme; six schools from Northern Ireland and six from Ireland. Through our partnership with the Education Authority of Northern Ireland, we have enhanced relations within Shared Education clusters across Northern Ireland.

The programme connects schools on a cross-border level, to take collective action to address climate change.

We are proud that for many of the schools involved in the programme, it was their first time participating in a cross-border initiative. All-island Schools 4 Climate Action is being delivered alongside our partner Alison - one of the world's largest free learning platforms for education and skills training.

Alison is a for-profit social enterprise dedicated to making it possible for anyone, to study anything, anywhere, at any time, for free online, at any subject level.



## PARTNERSHIPS



# CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS

The Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders programme is the organisation's flagship young leadership programme, connecting and empowering emerging leaders from diverse communities across the islands of Ireland and Great Britain.

A total of 146 young people participated in the 2021/22 programme. Throughout the year young people engaged in Sports Leadership training, OCN courses in Communication, Lobbying and Leadership; Peacebuilding/Good Relations, and climate change workshops.

Since our last report in March, the Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders programme hosted an EU Region Network Meeting in April, bringing together graduates of the Active Citizens Programme (Social Action for Climate Change) to share best practice and explore the potential to develop an international element to their projects.

As we emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic during this programme year, we were pleased to deliver four cross-border 'Connect Days', where our young people had the opportunity to spend time in each other's communities, sharing experiences, engaging in leadership workshops and hearing from leading civic and business keynote speakers.

We were also delighted to hold the first in-person Showcase event in the EPIC Museum in Dublin, bringing together participants from across our programmes to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements and learning over the year.

### INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

This year the programme has developed strong partnerships and relationships with external organisations in England, Scotland, Hawaii and Boston.

The programme team continued working on the comparative study undertaken with young people from Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Boston on the views and opinions of young people to peace-building and good relations. The study was extended to Luton, England and Scotland with an online workshop delivered on May 11 by our young mentor trainers. A final report on the study will be generated and published over the summer.

We have launched a formal partnership with HawaiiKidsCan, beginning with a design group involving six young people representing ROI, NI and Hawaii. This design group will help to develop a programme plan for an international youth led exchange focusing on global citizenship and social action.

As a follow up to the successful delegation visit to Boston in March, we have established a link with a number of schools and colleges in the US, with a design group being set up to develop a framework for an international exchange on the theme of shared learning in relation to peacebuilding/good relations. The design group will involve young people from Notre Dame Academy and Hingham Boston who were involved in the initial research project undertaken in relation to young people's views of peacebuilding and good relations in different communities.

### AMBASSADOR'S PROGRAMME

We completed this year's Ambassador programme with an invitation to the Showcase event and were delighted to facilitate conversations between some of our supporters and the young people. Over the course of the year, we had a total of 40 volunteers from 12 organisations volunteer their time, experience and expertise.



## 5 GLOBAL LOCATIONS



## PARTNERSHIPS





## AMAZING THE SPACE VI

Amazing the Space VI was taken on by Schools in three regional clusters based in Ballycastle, Ballymena, and Bangor. The major themes explored by students were better understanding different cultures and traditions, and inclusion in Sport.

Our Regional Cluster in Ballycastle designed a project exploring the migration of people which included case studies, a trip to the Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin, and hearing real life stories from facilitators who have made Northern Ireland their home having emigrated from places like China, South Africa, and Syria.

Students from Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College presented their project together at the Amazing the Space VI Showcase Event at Titanic Belfast in March 2022 in front of 200 students from seven schools involved in this year's programme. Students at the Showcase heard from an experienced panel from the world of sport and community relations who encouraged the students in their achievements in working together on their joint good relations projects.



200  
PARTICIPANTS



## NORTHERN IRELAND NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE REVIEW PROJECT

Co-operation Ireland and NI NCS delivery consortium delivered a research exercise with 58 young people across six NI NCS teams in Belfast, Ballymena and Armagh.

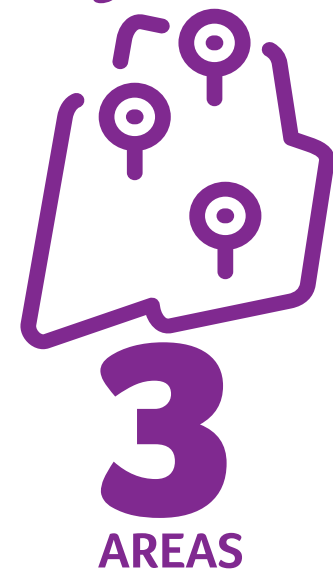
In order to gather a good range of feedback and ideas, the young people involved were a mix of those who had taken part in NI NCS before and those who were new to this type of work.

In Spring 2022, each team was given the opportunity to complete the traditional NI NCS model – three phases comprising team building, skills development and social action, whilst taking part in facilitated activities to gather their impressions about NI NCS as a programme and make recommendations for future youth volunteering programmes.

One NI NCS graduate commented:

*"The summer after I did NCS I volunteered with another group of young people who had learning disabilities. I was able to work with the group and the workers commented that the young people engaged in a way they don't normally, and I think without having the NCS experience I wouldn't have had the skills or confidence to do that."*

Co-operation Ireland and Consortium are continuing to advocate for this valuable programme and hope to be back to delivery soon.



3  
AREAS

58  
PARTNERSHIPS

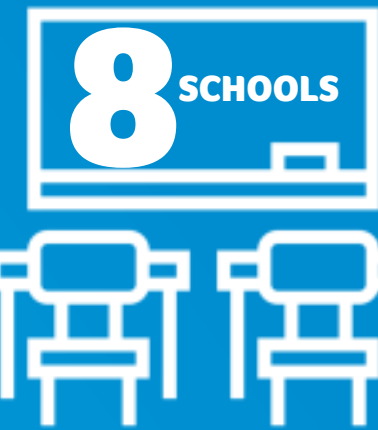
## ENTWINED HISTORIES 11

Entwined Histories 11 took place between September and December 2021 with 160 students from eight post-primary Schools exploring the year 1921 and the Partition of Ireland.

Students learned about the key events which took place in Ireland during 1921 with each school assigned a major player from the time to research before telling their story and assessing their legacy one hundred years on.

Co-operation Ireland once again partnered with Nerve Centre in Derry/Londonderry who worked alongside our students in developing their character's story and creating a script prior to filming. A digital Showcase which included all the short films from the students was premiered in December 2021 with each of the eight schools involved in the project hosting their own showcase in school due to Covid restrictions still in place.

It was very encouraging to be able to bring school groups together again during the project and participants have cited the importance in learning about the history of the island and the opportunity to meet new people and build positive friendships together.



160  
PARTICIPANTS



## OUR GENERATION

The OUR Generation project is a Peace IV funded project that has been providing a unique opportunity for communities, north and south of the border, to work together to halt the intergenerational impact of trauma and to build emotional resilience and peace for generations to come.

This three-year project will run to December 2022 and engage with 36,000 children, young people and their key contacts.

The project is being delivered in education, youth and community settings aimed at the five Urban Village Areas of Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The cross-border partnership of seven regional organisations has been led by Action Mental Health in partnership with Donegal Youth Service, Co-operation Ireland, Youth Action NI, Youth Work Ireland, PlayBoard NI and Ulster University.

Funding for the OUR Generation project has been awarded through the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), match-funding for the project has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.



36K  
PARTICIPANTS





# YOUTHPACT

**YouthPact was the Quality and Impact Body for the EU PEACEIV Children & Young People's Programme.**

The programme was delivered via a partnership involving four organisations – Co-operation Ireland (Lead Partner), POBAL, National Youth Council of Ireland and Ulster University. YouthPact was funded by the European Union's Peace IV programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and supported by the Department for the Economy (NI) and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (Rol).

The core remit of YouthPact was to work with the eleven funded PEACE4YOUTH delivery agents across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, to promote and support a culture of continuous improvement; and to provide training for practitioners that enhanced the impact of the work, for participating young people.

During the final year YouthPact Development Officers continued to provide support to Project Coordinators and facilitated a range of bespoke training to PEACE4YOUTH Workers. Other notable achievements by YouthPact from May 2021 to its closure on 30 April 2022 included:

- **Young Voices report, 'Something to Say about PEACE PLUS'** that captured the voice of young people on the investment and spending proposals for the upcoming EU PEACE PLUS Programme.
- **Kicking**, a ten-session youth work programme, that explores mental health and wellbeing themes with young people; and
- **YouthPact Evaluation:** Relationship, Relevance and Rigour, to Maximise Impact within PEACE4YOUTH

YouthPact would like to thank everyone who contributed to and supported the work over the four years.

**446**  
PARTNERSHIPS

**86**  
TRAINING EVENTS



# YOUNG ADVOCATES

**Young Advocates was a programme designed to develop the next generation of leaders in the City of Belfast and was operated in conjunction with Belfast City Council.**

The programme lasted for three years and was designed to give young people a say at the heart of local government.

Young Advocates gave young people a voice who would not normally have an opportunity to address their concerns to councillors and officials in Belfast City Council.

In March, the participants contributed to the development of an animation to raise awareness of sexual harassment. Launched at Crumlin Road Gaol by then Minister for Justice Naomi Long, the 'Share2BAware' campaign was rolled out across Northern Ireland.

Co-designer Lauren McAreavey from the Young Advocates programme said: "As a cross-community youth led project for young adults from across Belfast, we felt we could play our part in tackling the issue and show that it is a society wide issue in need to radical change."

**800**  
PARTICIPANTS



**80**  
YOUNG LEADERS

# YOUNG LEADERS AND AMBASSADORS

**TBUC Uniting Communities this year has seen recruitment of two new cohorts from both South Belfast and Lurgan/Portadown/Craigavon. This has led us to work with over 60 young people across both areas with a rich diversity of cultural backgrounds including, Poland, Portugal, Hungary, Lithuania, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and more.**

We work with these young leaders on a weekly basis where they engage in our weekly sessions to develop their skills and understanding in youth leadership to a level where they can lead delivery of sessions. They also take part in supporting our partners in the delivery of the 11-15 aspect of the programme.

Additionally, the young leaders have taken part in several opportunities such as TBUC Tree Planting at Stormont with the Northern Ireland Executive, Delivering a mental health workshop to staff from Department for Communities, and much more.

We currently engage around 60 young people across both areas on a weekly basis. Since the start of 2022, we run weekly sessions for our 16-24 Young Leaders as well as supporting weekly sessions where the YL's support our partners delivery (Scotch Street Youth Centre & Todds Leap) on the 11-15 programme. This will continue until March 2023.

Our Young Leaders have taken part in multiple residentials and activity days since the start of the year where they have developed their confidence & team building skills as well as undertaking key training (First Aid & Safeguarding). With even more opportunities on the way for communication and confidence building workshops.



**60**  
PARTICIPANTS

**9**  
NATIONALITIES



# OUR KIDS OUR VOICES

**Our Kids Our Voices provides a range of opportunities for young people aged 14 to 16 living across inner South Belfast to come together to build positive relationships across what has historically been a divided part of the city.**

The project aims to provide the young people from Sandy Row/Donegal Pass and Lower Ormeau Road areas with the opportunity to challenge negative historic positions, encourage debate and discussion whilst providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to explore the various issues that are having an impact on them and their communities today.

Ordinarily the young people on this programme would have little to no opportunity to meet their peers either in an education or social setting and for most, will have their first opportunity to meet other young people from their neighbouring communities.

From late 2022 the name of the programme will change to Our Kids Future Leaders.

**2**  
PARTICIPANTS

**20**  
PARTICIPANTS



# OPEN DOORS

The three year Open Doors project designed to address barriers ex-paramilitary prisoners continue to face 25 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement came to a close in October 2021.

Open Doors was a three year €1.7m regional initiative designed to build positive relationships between the ex-prisoner/former combatant community and wider society. Funded through the European Union's PEACE IV Programme and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, the project was led by Co-operation Ireland working in partnership with Charter NI, the Ex-Prisoners Interpretative Centre, Teach Na Failte and the Plough Historical and Cultural Group.

Match-funding was provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

The aims of Open Doors was to encourage members of the ex-prisoner/former combatant community to participate in a range of activities which:

- Promoted re-integration with other sections in the community.
- Connected with services established to provide for those impacted by the legacy of conflict.
- Played a positive role in the healing of community divisions and the future development of our society.

To meet these objectives the ex-prisoner/former combatant groups organised six seminars covering topics which included, aging among the ex-prisoner population, Brexit, anti-sectarianism, anti-racism, mental health and legacy. In addition, over 400 participants underwent conflict transformation training, with 20 completing a sustainable leadership training programme designed and delivered by Liverpool University.

Welfare and benefit support clinics set up through the programme engaged over 11,000 people.



PARTNERSHIPS

EX-PRISONER GROUPS



4

# EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME ON PARAMILITARISM AND ORGANISED CRIME

Co-operation Ireland, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast, are supporting the Executive Office to deliver the Communities in Transition project, which seeks to build community resilience in eight areas where there is a history of paramilitary activity, criminality and coercive control.

Since 2017 we have shaped the development of the Communities in Transition project through community engagement and participatory design, development of projects and contract management.

This year we have been focused on enhancing the evidence base available to understanding the impact of the Communities in Transition project and positively influence the way paramilitarism is discussed and addressed in Northern Ireland. This has included the development of a benefits framework to measure the impact of CIT initiatives on Community resilience, delivery of training and development support to CIT delivery partners and area based research in each CIT site intended for publication in the autumn. Further research and learning events are planned for next year.



# PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS

The 2021 all-Ireland Pride of Place community awards returned after lockdown in with Kerry County Council hosting the awards in Killarney in May 2022.

This year's master of ceremonies was RTE's Marty Whelan, with the awards taking place in the majestic INEC centre. A reduced attendance of 400 community volunteers were in attendance as Covid-19 protocols were still in place. It is hoped 2023 will see attendee numbers return to 1,000.

Established to promote and celebrate the best in community development, the awards recognise the selfless efforts of people in making their local neighbourhoods better places to live, work and socialise.

The 2021 awards recognised the efforts made by community groups over the pandemic period.

Pride of Place is an All-Island competition whereby local authorities from across the island of Ireland nominate groups in their communities who they feel have made a significant contribution to improving their neighbourhood, working collectively.

President Michael D. Higgins, who is Joint Patron of Co-operation Ireland with Queen Elizabeth praised the impact of the awards.

"The Pride of Place awards are a most important initiative, reminding us that creating societies that are ethical and inclusive is a task for all of our citizens, of all ages and circumstances."

Pride of Place founder and Chairman Tom Dowling said; "These Awards continue to be as important as ever as we are about to start judging the 20th year of the competition. The purpose of the awards has never changed. They are about recognising and celebrating the extraordinary, inspirational, and tireless work being done by communities all over the island of Ireland as they strive to make their place a better place in which to live."

George Jones Chairman, IPB Insurance said: "The IPB Pride of Place Awards are an ideal platform to recognise the positive social impacts being made in communities across the island of Ireland. I would like to take this opportunity to commend all the communities involved for their spirit of collaboration and camaraderie in making it to the finals.

"It is also important to recognise the role of local authorities across the island of Ireland who work closely with their communities to support inspiring voluntary initiatives. These awards serve as one of the important ways that we can recognise those involved in working to make a difference in society".





# CHALLENGING ATTITUDES CHANGING HORIZONS PROJECT (CATCH)

CATCH is a six-month programme that engages with a group of youths from the nationalist community in Ardoyne in association with Ardoyne Youth Club.

A second strand is carried out on a cross community basis in Strabane.

Over the last five years, the emphasis in North Belfast has been to engage with at risk young people to provide meaningful opportunities through personal development while exploring the issues of choices and consequences.

In Strabane, the aim was to develop trust and relationships between the participants before encouraging them to explore and discuss the deeper issues which affect their lives and their communities.

Issues such as mental health, social media bullying, leadership, and sectarianism were raised. CATCH in Strabane and Ardoyne was funded by the Northern Ireland Office, with a second strand, funded by The Executive Office, operating a good relations.

15  
PARTICIPANTS

20  
WORKSHOPS



# ALL-ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY PROGRAMME

The All-Island Local Authority Forum is a strategic cross-border partnership comprising 10 Council Chief Executives from the CCMA (County & City Management Association) and SOLACE NI (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, Northern Ireland).

The Forum is facilitated by Co-operation Ireland and operates across the following priority areas of focus:

- Climate Action & Mitigation
- Town/Town Centre Regeneration
- Leadership
- Tourism
- Relationship Building

2021/22 was an action-packed year for the Forum, which provides a platform for Chief Executives to share information, international best practice, and ideas.

The Tourism working group ran a series of webinars during 2021- 2022 and in April this year a webinar took place entitled; GREENWAYS: Maximising their economic, social and visitor potential. A workshop of knowledge-sharing and idea development to an audience of over 100 Local Government personnel from across the island. The webinar shared the international best practice example of the Parenzana Trail in Croatia.

The Town/Town Centre regeneration sub-group completed the report; Vision & Voice. A post- pandemic vision for the future of Ireland's towns and cities. The Vision & Voice project aims to tell a unique story of our places through data. In August 2021, the Vision & Voice project was initiated as a practical data scoping exercise, to research and assess the current sustainability, economic performance and strategic direction of our towns and cities.



The Climate Action Subgroup continued its work on climate action through the delivery of the All-Island Local Authority Climate Summit – Local Government Leading on Climate Action : Delivering the Transition to a Green Future in October 2021.

The event was live streamed from Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle and attracted participation from approximately 150 senior officers from local authorities across the island, plus senior civil servants and other stakeholders, participated in this event. Planning is currently underway for this year's climate summit which will take place in November 2022 and will continue valuable conversations which were started at last year's event.

During 2021 & 2022 the work of the Leadership Subgroup of the Forum has focused on the development of a significant new leadership programme for Chief Executives – "Leading Authentically into the Future" to be rolled out on an all-island basis. The subgroup worked closely with the target audience, through the CCMA and SOLACE NI networks, to ascertain interest levels for such a programme and also to identify the key strategic issues to be addressed through the programme. Content and delivery details for the programme are currently being finalised and delivery is planned for 2023. It is hoped that 15-20 local authority Chief Executives will participate on this programme.



## SMALL CAPITAL GRANTS

£ 337  
GRANTS AWARDED

The Small Capital Grants Programme was created by the Department for Communities in 2018/19 to support voluntary and community organisations in providing services to the local community.

The programme has been delivered since 2018 by Co-operation Ireland, acting as an Intermediary Funding Body.

The programme has the following objectives:

- Improving the range and quality of services for the local community
- Promoting partnership and collaboration in the local community and voluntary sector
- Enhancing good relations within and/or between local communities, including by promoting collaboration between groups from different backgrounds
- Building capacity of voluntary organisations to deliver services in their local community

£ TOTAL FUNDS  
£1,133.941





# FUTURE INNOVATORS

The Future Innovators project promotes community-led social innovation and social enterprise. Our aim is to build the capacity of local communities to apply innovative thinking to social problems and develop creative solutions that foster a greater sense of community cohesion, and where possible, sustain these solutions through the adoption of a social enterprise model.

Co-operation Ireland are the lead partner, working in consortium with Belfast Interface Project, Donegal Youth Service, University of Essex and Animorph.

We are delivering the project in the five Urban Village areas in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, and in Donegal. The project is funded until March 2023 through the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

To date we have undertaken substantial community outreach in the target areas using an appreciative inquiry approach. We are currently delivering a bespoke social innovation training and development programme with community members and organisations. The project also includes development of a digital toolkit that will enable community members and organisations to collaborate on proposing, designing, and delivering community-led social innovation projects.



# VOICE MATTERS

Voice Matters was designed to improve civic engagement and utilise deliberative democracy to deliver change based on issues determined by citizens. This year, citizens voted for the framework for the project to be applied to improving mental health service provision and outcomes.

Young people from Derry/Londonderry participated in series of custom workshops focused on peace building and deliberative democracy during three weekends last October to work as dialogue facilitators during the public events held in January 2022. 100 per cent of the youth strongly agreed they were, "very confident in the tenets of peace building and facilitating productive dialogue" after participating.

30 participants were randomly selected from 4,500 households in Derry via a civic lottery process to participate in the Voice Matters People's Panel events. These events were delivered over one weekend in May 2022. After participating, 100 per cent of the selected citizens agreed that decision making should be based on small-scale citizens assemblies, such as the People's Panel events.

A report featuring the citizens' recommendations for improved mental health outcomes will be presented to the Western Trust, PHA, and Derry City and Strabane District Council's Civic Forum in late 2022 in an attempt to support and implement the recommendations.





# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – BUILDING YOUR POTENTIAL

**A new leadership training programme for female officers in local government was launched during 2021 and delivery started in June.**

The programme, “Women in Leadership: Building Your Potential”, which is a bespoke development programme for Grade 6 & 7 / Tier 4 female officers, has the following core aims;

- To build confidence among future female leaders within the sector by developing effective leadership styles and resilience in the workplace
- To establish a supportive all-island local government sectoral learning community
- To assist the local government sector to foster and develop diverse leadership teams for the future across all levels of local authorities

100 participants from local authorities across the island participated on this programme, completing

their training during 2021 and early 2022. A further 2 intakes (70 participants) are planned for this year (2022).

The 2021 programmes culminated in a women's leadership conference which took place on March 10 2021, during International Women's Week. 70 participants attended this event and continued their learning and skills development through a number of facilitated workshops.

The group was joined by Former President of Ireland, Mrs Mary Robinson, for an inspirational pre-dinner address to the delegates.

Training is being delivered in partnership with Anne McMurray Leadership & Team Development and feedback so far from participants is exceptionally positive.



**100**  
PARTICIPANTS

# CROSS-BORDER CIRCLE OF LEARNING

**The Cross-Border Circle of Learning Project built upon a successful first year expanding the number of hubs involved to four and the number of groups involved to 16.**

Our existing hubs – the Clones Family Resource Centre and Confederation of Community Groups in Newry – were joined by Teach na nDaoine Resource Centre in Monaghan and County Armagh Community Development in Markethill.

Each hub mentored and supported four lesser capacity groups from their area. We ran networking events where we visited the hubs in each other's areas. These were great experiences as not only did the groups continue to build relationships with each other but they also got to have a flavour of the work that is carried out in the hubs and to see the facilities they have.

The groups were also supported in designing and running their own social action projects. The support and training offered to the groups is bespoke to their particular individual needs, for example: some groups received help to improve their governance, policies and procedures, others requested assistance with applications to the Charity Commission (NI) which resulted in two of our groups gaining charitable status. The hubs and the groups in the project have built great connections with each other throughout their involvement in the project.

We are grateful to the Department of Foreign Affairs for their continued support.



**4**  
HUBS

**16**  
GROUPS

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY IN ACTION

**The PUL community has felt increasing alienisation exacerbated by the BREXIT Protocol which is perceived to put the Union under threat.**

Community Capacity in Action has been designed to address this, and is being delivered in the PUL majority Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus, and Rathcoole areas, through a bottom-up approach. The programme will build personal and community capacity, produce alternative leadership, and allow positive community initiatives to develop based on what the communities themselves see as their needs and desires.

Co-operation Ireland partnered with Utopian Learning to deliver the programme and the work to date has focused on governance, leadership, decision making and lobbying, with all candidates achieving an OCN Level 2 qualification in Lobbying and Governance.

This has been a very successful start to which should be a successful project which has an impact on the PUL community in the East Antrim Area of Northern Ireland. As the programme continues other guests will be invited to take part in such discussions.



**3**  
AREAS

**2**  
PARTNERSHIPS



# DISENGAGED COMMUNITIES

**In 2020 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council secured EU funding for a PEACE IV Local Authority Action Plan titled Beyond Tolerance.**

The main objective of the programme is the creation of a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services and a reduction of Troubles related segregation, that continues to be an issue in the area.

This is evidenced by residential segregation, peace walls, sectarian graffiti, public display of flags and emblems in a manner aimed to mark territory and intimidate. As well as increasing social division and tension, segregation also inhibits the potential for economic development and the efficient delivery of public services.

In partnership with Utopian Learning, people from across these diverse communities in Newry have been brought together to develop relationships and learn more about the local history, cultures and where to seek help and support.

**3**  
PARTNERSHIPS



# PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS – EXPLORING OUR HERITAGE

**‘People, Places, Events – Exploring Our Heritage’ is a National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project being carried out in four regional locations across the country – Belfast, Kilkeel & Mourne, Enniskillen, and Derry-Londonderry.**

Projects are targeted at those who have not previously been involved in heritage as our lead organisations aim to engage their participants with the rich heritage of their local area through workshops, training, and field visits.

Key themes from the four regional projects include learning about the culture of new communities who live in Northern Ireland, the story of St. Columb’s Hall Derry/Londonderry, the Ulster-Scots heritage across Mourne, and the sporting heritage in the border counties of Fermanagh, Cavan, and Donegal.

Over 100 participants have been recruited to the project to date.

A key highlight of the project has been seeing people from different backgrounds coming together to explore the shared heritage across their local area as they bring fresh and innovative ideas in how to present their learning together to a wider audience.



## ERASMUS

**Co-operation Ireland’s participation in the Erasmus+ programme saw staff members and partner organisation employees travel to several European locations to enhance learning and build relationships between communities.**

The first Erasmus+ training took place in September 2021 in Copenhagen, Denmark, entitled ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’

The second was held in Zagreb, Croatia, at the end of October/start of November 2021. Again 10 adult learners were involved and took part in ‘Getting Visual’ Training

The learning from this informed subsequent staff training days within Co-operation Ireland and formed the basis of the charity’s ‘Reconnect Day’ where employees came together for the first time since lockdown to meet and plan for the future.

Erasmus+ finished in May following a course held in Porto, Portugal on ‘Creating Positive Community Change’ and a work-shadowing course in Split, Croatia Attended by three senior staff members.



# FUNDRAISING

**The 2021/22 period witnessed the return of face-to-face fundraising events – a critical income generator for Co-operation Ireland that allows the charity’s programmes to be developed and facilitated..**

We were delighted to welcome back the annual London Legal Dinner in June, which featured a James Joyce Ulysses theme due to its proximity to the annual Bloomsday celebrations.

We were also excited to welcome back the Pat Jennings Golf Classic which will take place in October. Football legend Pat has been a supporter of Co-operation Ireland for decades and we look forward to working with him again following the Covid period.

Looking ahead, the biennial Diplomatic Dinner will also return in October, where representatives from 40 counties will gather to celebrate Ireland’s growing multiculturalism. Organised by The Consular Corps/Association of Northern Ireland (CA-NI), the dinner is supported by Invest NI with Co-operation Ireland official charity partner. All proceeds will go to the Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders Programme. The Diplomatic Dinner will attract visiting Ambassadors from London and some of the top businesses in Northern Ireland and provides an opportunity for guests to network and build business relationships between Northern Ireland and international markets. It is expected that around 250 people will be in attendance.





# PATRONS AND BOARD



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Arlene Foster was First Minister of Northern Ireland from 2016 to 2021 and is a former leader of the DUP.

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

# FINANCES

The following figures show the operating income and expenditure for the Dublin and Belfast companies, extracted from the annual accounts audited by KPMG.

## Income and Expenditure Accounts for Year Ended 31 December 2020.

	Dublin €K 2021	Belfast €K 2021	Dublin €K 2020	Belfast €K1 2020
<b>INCOME</b>				
Donations	759	1,470	498	1499
Other Income	267	536	212	116
	<b>1,026</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>1,615</b>

	Dublin €K 2021	Belfast €K 2021	Dublin €K 2020	Belfast €K 2020
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Programme Costs	843	1,961	631	1,591
Administration	90	42	74	21
	<b>933</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>1,612</b>
Surplus	93	3	5	3

Results are after transfers between companies and adjustments for deferred income.





**co-operationireland**  
*working for a future together*

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