



Future Leaders was established in 2020 as a leadership training programme to enhance participants skills & knowledge, community engagement and relationship building.

### Personal Learning



CIFL raises aspirations and helps young people build important skills, knowledge and capabilities for life & work

### Good Relations



CIFL allows young people to meet new people from different backgrounds, building understanding & positive relationships across the island and beyond

### Social Action



CIFL inspires and supports young people to make change through social action and contribute positively to the world around them

This year (2023) Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders launched it's Peace Awards. The awards provide 4 levels of engagement; Bronze, Sliver, Gold & Platinum, where participants build on the learning and experience gained as they progress through each level. As a young person progresses through each phase of the awards, they will be developing the core skills necessary to become a successful activist for peace. At each level of the programme, the young person will have the opportunity to engage in personal learning, travel across the islands, engage with programme ambassadors and create change for a shared passion. In September 2023 we launched a pilot for our Platinum Peace Award introducing an international element to the Future Leaders Programme.

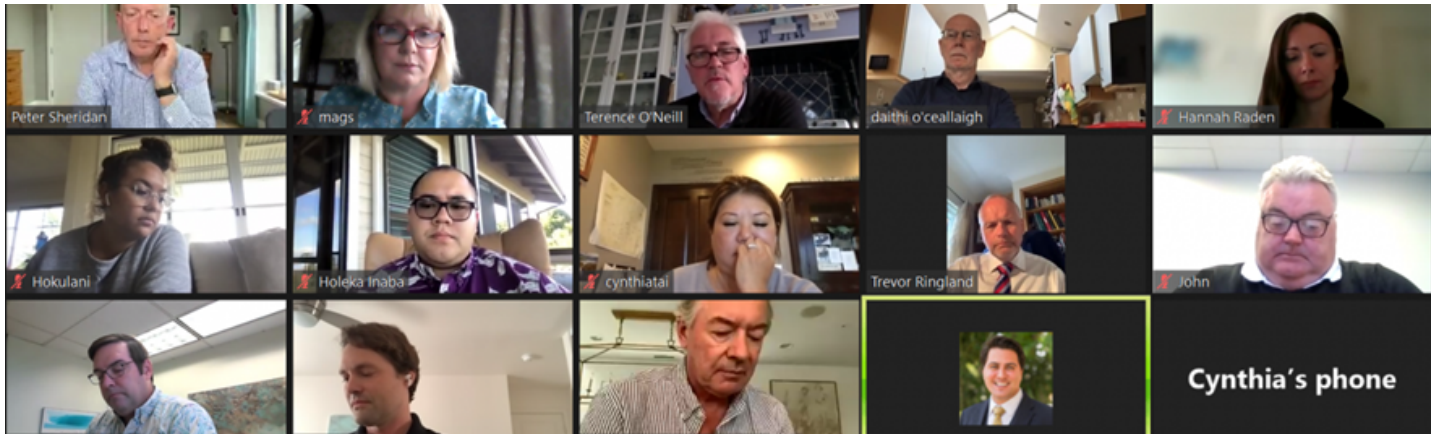
**PLATINUM** >>> International Residential >>> Internship >>> 8-10 YP

**GOLD** >>> Corporate East/ West Residential >>> Mentoring >>> 15-20 YP

**SLIVER** >>> Corporate NI/ROI Residential >>> Accredited Award >>> 25-30 YP

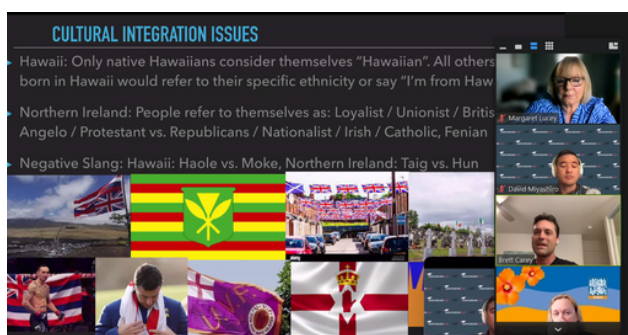
**BRONZE** >>> Cross border Residential >>> Certificate Award >>> 150-180 YP

The International partnership with Hawaii was set up in 2021 when an international working group met to explore the potential to establish a meaningful partnership between the Islands. The partnership would share learning in relation to cultural identity and youth engagement across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Hawaii. Several programme ambassadors, legislators and educators from Hawaii as well representatives from Co-operation Ireland Staff and Board took part in the meeting where the commitment was given by all to explore the potential for an initial virtual youth exchange, but with further to engage in potential delegation visits and youth exchanges.



In 2021 Co-operation Ireland partnered with a similar youth organisation HawaiiKidsCan to develop this international youth engagement initiative. The initiative was to collaborate, share ideas and challenges faced by young people in communities, and increase the local/international impact of positive advocacy in communities.

An international youth based design group was established where young leaders explored the opportunities for a collaborative youth project to take place. This was initially online, with a view to potential in person reciprocal visits. The programme was based on the 3 pillars of our CIFL programme; Personal Learning, Relationship Building and Social Action/Civic Engagement.



After a series of online workshops and collaborative sessions we finally had the opportunity to meet in person. Four of our young leaders (from the original design group) travelled to Hawaii as part of an international delegation, the first leg of our island to island exchange programme.



## Our delegation visit to Hawaii took place from 1st – 9th September 2023.

On **Day 1** we were guests at the 78th Commemoration Ceremony to mark the end of WWII on the USS Missouri at Pearl Harbour. There was true a sense of walking in the steps of great peace making when we listened to the voice of General MacArthur, spoken 78 years ago.

*“Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won. The skies no longer rain death -- the seas bear only commerce men everywhere walk upright in the sunlight. The entire world is quietly at peace”.*

**Day 2** we had the opportunity to engage in a local social action initiative by contributing to the restoration of the He‘e‘ia Fish Pond. Connecting both Native Hawaiian and Irish cultural, while learning about the parallels with Hawaii as another island facing the impact of climate change.



**Day 3** we visited the Bishop Museum and learnt about the history of Hawaii, and spent the afternoon discussing peace and history with Ashleigh Loa, Executive Director of Ceeds of Peace, at the Bishop Museum.



**Day 4** We were delighted to engage with local public and private school students to discuss the vision of young people for their role in communities across both Islands. This was facilitated through Rediscovering Hawai'i's Soul with the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative, Duane Kurisu, and Mehana Hind.



On **Day 5** First Lady Jaime Kanani Green welcomed us into her home (Washington Place) for tour and lunch discussion with local public and private school students. Followed by a visit to Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Middle School where the group worked with the students as part of their After-School All-Stars Hawaii initiative.



**Day 6** the group had the opportunity to visit Waianae High School, learning about their Marine Science Centre and aquaculture CTE program. There were discussions on youth engagement with local students and teachers. We then headed to Kamaile Academy, working with one of the Hawaiian design group leaders, who is now a teacher at the school. We had a tour of the Navigators Centre and community garden.



**Day 7** was spent at the Davis Democracy Initiative at Punahou School, where the group spent the day shadowing some of the students. They engaged in facilitated discussions on topics such as climate change and they also had the task of teaching a senior European History class about the peace process on the Island of Ireland.



It was an amazing visit and great opportunity for the 2 organisations to collaborate and explore the potential to grow this partnership further.

During our visit not only did we experience a sense of “Aloha – Spirit of Hawaii” but we explored together our sense of identity; our different cultures but shared commitment to a better future to our island communities; commitment to building & maintaining peace; and supporting each other to protect our natural environment.

Several key themes arose during our discussions and engagements, which will inform the development of the partnership moving forward; such as diversity & inclusion, civic engagement, global empathy - a shared sense of Island identity, and an awareness of the need for our international partnership to foster a greater understanding of each other’s identities and communities, the importance of community engagement and shared learning. We look forward to sharing our Island during the Hawaii delegation visit planned for September 2024.



*“This once in a life time opportunity will hopefully be the beginning of a new programme that young people from Hawaii and Ireland will soon have access too. Surprisingly, our islands have so much in common despite being so far apart!”*

Aron Hughes CIFL Peer Mentor