



2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

- P5** CEO and Chairman’s report
- P6** Belfast/Good Friday Agreement Anniversary
- P9** Future Leaders Programme
- P11** Women’s Leadership
- P15** Deliberative Democracy
- P19** Pride of Place
- P20** Fundraising
- P22** Patrons and Board
- P23** Finance

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

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 2022/23, 11 cross border programmes were in operation.

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 2022/23 Co-operation Ireland delivered nine 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 2022/23 Co-operation Ireland delivered 10 programmes involving people from marginalised communities, from ex-prisoners to ethnic minorities.



Involvement in our 2022/23 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.



Sir Julian King GCMG KCVO
Chairman



Peter Sheridan
Chief Executive

CEO AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Co-operation Ireland's long tradition of working to bring people together continued throughout the 2022/23 period against a backdrop of political instability both nationally and domestically.

Political gridlock, the Windsor Framework, shrinking budgets, and the cost of living crisis are all challenges facing Co-operation Ireland (CI).

Firstly, the framework is largely unsupported by one section of the community which has challenged relationships – something Co-operation Ireland exists to improve.

In addition, with no ministers in place, outside of Peace Plus and existing programmes already agreed, no new programme funding can be signed off without ministerial approval. Existing budgets have also been squeezed leading to reduced funding for many charities including CI.

In spite of these ongoing issues, Co-operation Ireland has been able to continue its long tradition of peace and reconciliation work through adopting new ways of working.

Funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund NI operated by the National Lottery Community Fund has allowed us to adapt to future challenges and improve financial resilience – support that is very much appreciated.

Co-operation Ireland has invested £100K in improving working conditions for our staff by adopting a hybrid work model and moving into a new Belfast city centre office.

The charity has emerged from the Covid lockdown period restructured and better placed to embrace challenges ahead.

Our flagship Future Leaders Programme entered its third year and by 2025 we are on track to have worked with 800 young trailblazers.

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.

This year our programmes have again focused on peacebuilding, but with increased emphasis on the environment and young people.

Co-operation Ireland's flagship Local Authority Programme (LAP) held a climate summit in Kilkenny Castle in November which was addressed by Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan before he flew to the COP27 Climate Conference in Egypt.

Minister Ryan addressed local council chiefs from Northern Ireland and the Republic of who take part in the programme.

Co-operation Ireland looks forward to bidding for some of the new Peace Plus funding for which applications are now open. By December 2023, Co-operation Ireland will have applied to operate seven new programmes under Peace Plus.

The Peace Plus programme provides €1.1 billion in funding from the European Union including the Irish Government and the British Government, which is more than the previous PEACE IV programme.

The charity is also investing resources in how we leverage Artificial Intelligence to drive reconciliation by empowering peace through innovation.

Co-operation Ireland receives significant funding to deliver programmes from our governmental partners but we rely on the generosity of supporters and fundraising events to fully deliver on our objectives. More about this can be read on P21.

Co-operation Ireland's communications continues to take place across our internet and website channels. Engagement is led by CEO Peter Sheridan.

In 2023 we saw Dr Christopher Moran step down as Chairman of Co-operation Ireland after two decades of outstanding work developing Anglo Irish relations. Board member Sir Julian King GCMG KCVO has been elected to replace Dr Moran who will take up a new role as Honorary President.

It was with great sadness that Co-operation Ireland learned of the death of our joint patron, Queen Elizabeth II. Along with President Michael D Higgins she was a constant supporter of our peace and reconciliation work, contributing immeasurably to better relations on these islands.

We were honoured to accept an invitation and to attend the funeral service of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on 19th September 2022.

Co-operation Ireland continues to work with our partners in the Department for Foreign Affairs (DFA), Irish Football Association (IFA), Department for Communities (DFC), SEUPB, and The Executive Office (TEO) to continue existing programmes and develop new ones.

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 on these islands is respected.

We are indebted to the continuing support of DFA, TEO, SEUPB and other NI, ROI and GB government departments and our private, charitable trusts and corporate donors.

#FILM25

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, Co-operation Ireland in partnership with British Council Ireland, British Council Northern Ireland and the British Embassy in Dublin commissioned a short film to ask young people born in the year of The Agreement how it continues to resonate a quarter of a century on.

The collaborative effort featured 25, 25-year-olds from across Ireland and the UK, capturing their voices and sentiments.

A series of workshops were carried out in Dublin led by Co-operation Ireland staff members Margaret Lucey and Matt Gamble to explore themes of peace and how the group looked at The Agreement 25 years on.

Filming took place the following day exploring those themes on camera.

To view scan the QR code:



TBUC



THE OUR GENERATION PROJECT

The OUR Generation project is a Peace IV-funded initiative designed to foster collaboration to mitigate the intergenerational impact of trauma and to foster emotional resilience and peace for generations to come.

Targeted at communities both north and south of the border, Our Generation is a partnership between lead partner Action Mental Health and Co-operation Ireland, Donegal Youth Service, Youth Action NI, Youth Work Ireland, PlayBoard NI, and Ulster University.

From June 2022 to June 2023, Co-operation Ireland's Claire Heaney-McKee and Katrina McIlmail delivered tailored programs to children, young people, and key contacts.

Co-operation Ireland organised successful shared learning events, including a webinar on managing anxiety in September 2022, and a large-scale, in-person conference at the Millennium Forum in Derry/Londonderry in January, titled 'Autism - Belonging and Inclusion in Youthwork'. This expert-led event was attended by over 200 delegates.

In other instances, Claire and Katrina provided training in LGBTQI awareness, managing challenging behaviour, trauma-informed practice, and neurodiversity.

Match funding was provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland. The project is scheduled to conclude in September 2023.



Uniting Communities

Uniting Communities Young Leaders and Ambassadors is a cross-community, good relations program designed to bring about fundamental, long-term change in our young people.

It offers young people the chance to develop their leadership and ambassadorial skills, enabling them to become agents of social change within their communities through sports and creative activities.

Co-operation Ireland leads the delivery of this dynamic and inspiring program in collaboration with the Department for Communities, as part of the Together: Building United Communities (TBUC) strategy.

Over the past year, Uniting Communities has engaged with over 40 young people aged 16 to 24 years old in south Belfast and Lurgan/Portadown.

Participants are awarded an OCN Level 2 Award in Uniting Communities Through Leadership. They earn this qualification by supporting and leading the delivery of training sessions for other young people aged 11 to 15.

During this process, they cover topics such as personal development, good relations, sports and creativity, first aid, and child protection – safeguarding.

In March, the young people were awarded their qualifications at a graduation event held at PwC's Belfast headquarters.

Participant Mohamed Ahmed from East Africa Youth NI said the program played a significant role in helping their members.

"I would like to thank Co-operation Ireland for giving me this opportunity. For young people from East Africa Youth NI, I believe this is the first program designed for people coming from Africa.

"Taking part in the TBUC program... from day one, the ambassadors, especially Ryan Cuddy and Colm Fanning from Co-operation Ireland, have been flexible and adaptable in engaging our young leaders, particularly those who went through the OCN qualification without English as their first language. I want to express my gratitude to them for their effort."



AMAZING THE SPACE

Amazing the Space is a youth-led peace-building initiative empowering young people both locally and internationally to become ambassadors for peace in their communities.

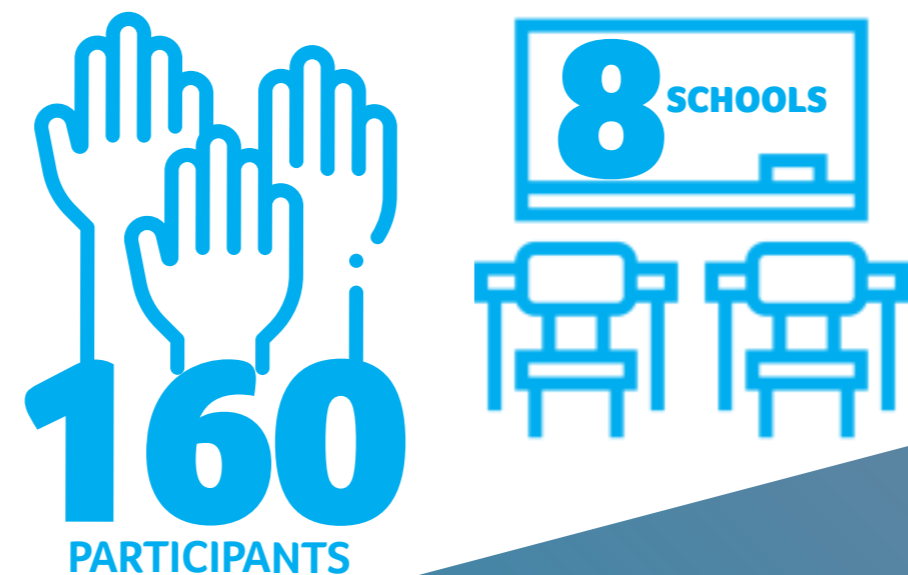
This year's programme involved school partnerships working together across four Regional Clusters including Ballycastle, Ballymena, Bangor, and Newry and South Armagh.

The key themes of art, migration and the movement of people, participation in sport, and advocating for human rights were undertaken by the students who worked tirelessly together on their joint project.

Through a series of facilitated workshops and engagement events young people on Amazing the Space completed their joint project with their partner schools prior to sharing their learning with peers at a Showcase and Conference Event which took place in W5 at the Odyssey Belfast.

Two hundred young people across nine schools completed Amazing the Space in 2022-23 gaining skills in meeting new people, working effectively together, and building confidence through making presentations in front of peers and having their voice heard.

Describing their experience, a participant from Newry recorded that, "it was very beneficial to work alongside peers from across the three schools on our Amazing the Space project. We got on so well with the students from our partner schools and we learnt from each other during the project both on our field visit and our workshops together." It was a pleasure to work with all the students and schools involved in Amazing the Space and we look forward to building on the programme going forward.



ENTWINED FUTURES

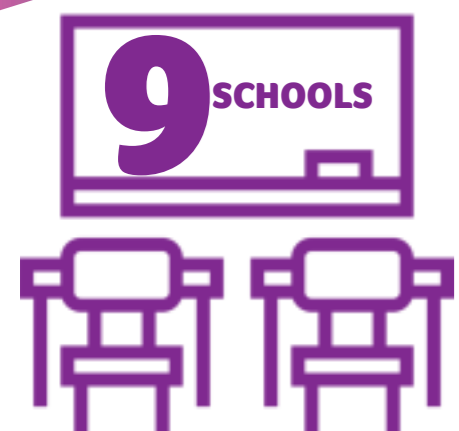
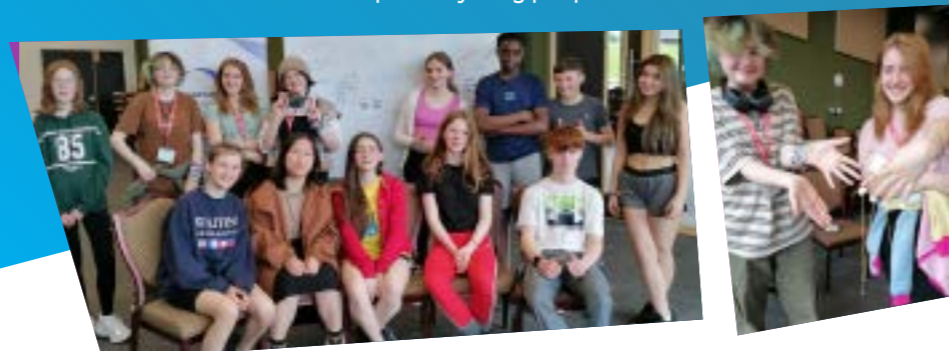
"Entwined Futures" is a cross-border program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, which brings schools together from counties Down, Antrim, and Louth.

Year One was launched in the autumn of 2022, with students exploring the key themes of Citizenship and Identity. They collaborated to address what these themes mean to them as young people in 2022 and researched how these themes and issues were perceived one hundred years ago in Ireland. They then formulated their vision for how these issues will evolve in the future.

Once again, we partnered with the Nerve Centre in Derry/Londonderry as our creative media partner, enhancing the students' experience in the Entwined Futures program. A total of 160 students from eight schools participated in a variety of activities, including a team-building day, interactive workshops on the key themes, and script development. They created storyboards before recording their ideas together at a film-making residential. Schools from the north and south were paired together, resulting in the production of eight short films during the residential, with four addressing Citizenship and four addressing Identity. Within these key themes, students tackled issues such as identity through passports, equality in sports, women's rights, and the relationship between British and Irish identities.

A Digital Showcase, documenting the students' collaborations through their short films, was produced. Each school pairing hosted an in-person showcase event to celebrate the accomplishments and friendships formed through the program. An additional aspect of Entwined Futures involved 13 students participating in peer mentor training. This training equipped them with new skills in leadership and confidence-building, preparing them to work alongside students who will participate in Entwined Futures Year Two in the autumn of 2023.

In Entwined Futures Year 1, 160 students were involved, representing 8 cross-border schools. Of the respondents, 74.2% reported forming new connections and friendships with young people from different religious/cultural backgrounds, and 79.4% reported forming new connections and friendships with young people from across the border.



CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS

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

A total of 186 young people participated in the 2022/23 program. As part of their social action projects, the young leaders tackled issues such as mental health, environmental protection, homelessness, equality, and personal safety among teenagers.

Central to the program is the development of relationships across our islands and internationally. This work continued as young people from Luton and Manchester joined the initiative.

Links have also been established with the Hawaii-based educational charity 'HawaiiKidsCan'. Engagement included participation in a number of virtual workshops focusing on sharing identities, collaborative social action, and youth engagement.

The success of the participants in completing their Future Leaders Program pathway was celebrated at the Future Leaders Showcase in May at W5 in Belfast.

The day-long event provided the young people with the opportunity to present their projects to an audience including their peers, leaders/teachers, invited guests, program ambassadors, as well as to receive their certificates and peace awards.

AMBASSADOR'S PROGRAM

The Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders Program would not be possible without our donors, ranging from socially conscious individuals to some of the world's largest brands including PwC, Deloitte, Bloomberg, and KPMG.

We were delighted to welcome Ambassadors to the May showcase, where they had the chance to meet the participants and discuss their work.

They also witnessed the launch of the Paul Kavanagh Award which from 2024 will be presented to the most committed programme participant.

Paul was one of Co-operation Ireland's most enthusiastic supporters before his untimely death in 2020. We were honoured to welcome his brother Ciaran and daughter Aisling to the showcase to present the award and announce the donation of a funded place on a leadership voyage in association with Sail Ireland. Over the course of the year, a total of 40 volunteers from 12 organisations volunteered their time, experience, and expertise.



OUR KIDS FUTURE LEADERS

Our Kids Future Leaders is a cross-community programme based in south Belfast.

Designed to address issues impacting on relationships between young people coming from different traditions in the Lower Ormeau and Donegall Pass areas, the programme took 30 participants through a transformative process that was built on reflection and self-awareness of attitudes, perceptions, language and behaviour.

Funded by The Executive Office, Our Kids Future Leaders was delivered along with Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) and South Belfast Alternatives to bring the neighbouring communities together through peer-to-peer learning.

Through the programme, those taking part were provided the opportunity to visit each other's communities, participate in away from home experiences and work together on a social engagement project.

The programme finished with Queen's University Belfast hosting a graduation event for the participants and their parents with each young person awarded a certificate in leadership.

Brian Armstrong from South Belfast Alternatives said the programme had made a big difference.

"The project provided young people from Donegall Pass with the opportunity to positively engage with young people from the lower part of the Ormeau Road an area of influence in the South Belfast Urban Village area.

"Linking the educational workshops in with Queens University highlighted the possibility of access to university for those living in the shadow, which in turn lifts future aspirations of those involved."

Natasha Brennan from LORAG said the programme had been a huge success.

"LORAG enjoyed being part of this programme bringing together young people from neighbouring communities to develop friendships, build skills and raise aspirations.

"The young people completed a range of workshops and a residential and it is great to see how their confidence has grown. It was also fantastic to develop relationships with Queens University and invite parents to the university to be part of the programme celebration."



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

The 'Women in Leadership programme: Building your Potential' developed from the All-Island Local Authority Forum which successfully delivered it firstly as a pilot programme.

Women in Leadership 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.

Designed in conjunction with Chief Executives and Directors of local authorities, the programme focuses on the specific issues faced by female leaders within this sector, assisting them in the development of leadership capability which is key to the women taking part in this training.

Feedback from the programme has been very positive and through word-of-mouth applications have doubled since the programme's foundation. In 2023 we welcomed 129 participants.

The development of the programme has already resulted in the establishment of a cross-border learning network amongst past participants.

This has led to the development of the programme aimed at mid-career females within the local government sector and potentially opening this up into other sectors in the future.

The 2022 programme concluded with a conference in Queen's University Belfast in March 2023 where participants took part in workshops included High Performance Management, Well-Being, and Image and Brand and Creativity.



CATCH

The CATCH project (Challenging Attitudes, Changing Horizons) in 2022/23 brought together 30 young people from five secondary schools in north Belfast to try and foster positive attitudes with regards to their neighbours in interface areas and different schools.

The pupils who took part were from Boys Model, Girls Model, Mercy College, St Malachy's College and Edmund Rice College, with a mix of 50 per cent female and 50 per cent male.

The project examined reconciliation and storytelling through a series of workshops which culminated in an activity day at which the pupils were encouraged to tell a heartwarming, positive story involving a connection made with another group.

From these exercises they were able to identify similarities and build connections.



CROSS BORDER CIRCLE OF LEARNING

The Cross Border Circle of Learning Project was designed to build connections between community groups in the border area and foster effective networks to support the ongoing work the groups are involved in.

In 2022/23 we were delighted to welcome a new group to the project - Dundalk Youth Centre group.

They joined our current hubs Clones FRC, Confederation of Community Groups, Newry and County Armagh Community Development, and Markethill in supporting and mentoring 16 community groups.

The groups carried out social action projects in their own areas and organised and took part in study visits to each other's areas. Participants visited the Crisis Café in Newry, Brownlow House in Lurgan, Redeemer FRC in Dundalk, and Peace Link in Clones. Each study visit showed the groups the variety of work that is going in their communities.

Existing networks were strengthened throughout the project through this activity. Participants rounded off the project with a day at the beautiful An Tobar Wellness Centre in Silverbridge, Co Armagh where they took part in wellbeing workshops in their outdoor classroom in Brian's Wood (Northern Ireland National Lottery Project of the Year 2022).

It was a wonderful finale to a very successful project for 2022/23.

Cross-Border Circle of Learning is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund.



CONNECT:ENGAGE:TRANSFORM

The Connect: Engage: Transform project was created as a direct response to community organisations within the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community feeling abandoned by local government when it comes to capacity building and social engagement.

The aftermath of Brexit and the Windsor Framework has created destabilisation, with groups reporting there is a general feeling within their communities of a sense of being 'forgotten and abandoned'.

The increase in community tensions following the Brexit referendum required an increase in engagement to build trust and positive relations.

CET was created to support groups to help develop a vision and explore their priorities for the future. Additionally, the aims of the programme were to help build confidence and capacity to take part in society-wide conversations.

All participants have taken part in the CET project on a voluntary basis. The project is split into three separate strands with each strand focusing on a particular element of the project:

Strand One: Identifying Community Needs
Strand Two: Conflict Transformation Training
Strand Three: Community Conversations.

Strand Three introduces a cross community element and conversation topics include Brexit / Windsor Framework, Youth at Risk, Paramilitarism and Legacy of the Conflict.



4
AREAS



75
PARTICIPANTS

FUTURE INNOVATORS

Future Innovators is a ground-breaking cross-border project established to introduce social innovation into peace-building, led by Co-operation Ireland.

Over a period of 12 months, Co-operation Ireland worked with community programs from the five Urban Village areas of Northern Ireland, as well as from Donegal and Arranmore Island in the Republic of Ireland.

The communities were offered training and mentoring support to develop social enterprises that would create employment and provide income.

Those who completed the training were then eligible to compete for a Future Innovators support package of around £8,000, along with mentoring support to help bring their social innovation idea to life.

Thirteen social innovation projects were established, ranging from a rural crafters' social enterprise to a removals service creating opportunities for homeless people.

7
CROSS BORDER
AREAS TARGETED



The projects were able to learn from each other, as well as benefit from a study visit to Preston to witness real-life social innovation in action. The project concluded at the end of June, with participants showcasing their projects at an Innovation Conference at Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast.

Minister of State for Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien TD, praised the project. "I would like to congratulate Co-operation Ireland and all the project partners, including Belfast Interface Project, University of Essex, Donegal Youth Service, and Animorph, on the successful delivery of the Future Innovators Project, which received funding of over €1 million under the EU PEACE IV Programme.

"I am delighted that my Department of Rural and Community Development was able to provide funding and support for this

very important and meaningful groundbreaking project. It gives me great pleasure to see these five regional organizations working together in a cross-border partnership for the benefit of the wider community, allowing all members of the community a chance to use their voice to progress social innovation and to build positive relations in their communities, while also influencing the decisions that affect their lives and the communities where they live.

"I am confident that the learnings from this project will assist in identifying further supports to be delivered under the new PEACEPLUS Programme and that these Social Innovation projects will continue their excellent work, further establishing ongoing Peace and Reconciliation for generations to come."

Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary in the Executive Office, congratulated everyone involved in the Future Innovators project, commenting: "Identifying innovative ways to improve and transform communities is a vital contribution. "The Digital Platform developed through the program will be an important tool in creating a self-sustaining network of support for these groups and their communities. These activities and relationships are at the heart of building good relations and will leave a positive lasting legacy."

Co-operation Ireland CEO Peter Sheridan said: "Community Interest Companies are good for the economy and good for society, and we are proud to be supporting these efforts to increase their number with our partners."





ALL-ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY FORUM

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

In addition to the development of a bespoke Leadership Programme for Chief Executives, CE “Think Tank Sessions” were added to the work programme in 2022. Think Tank Sessions were delivered on the following topics: Leadership: Personal Resilience, “Leading when the Going Gets Tough” and The Future of Work. The Climate Action sub-group continues to share information and cross jurisdictional learning on climate action through engagement with the CARO structure, The Irish Climate Change Advisory Council, The NW Region structure & Belfast Climate Commission.

The Town/Town Centre Regeneration sub-group continues to build on its 2021/2022 research report: **Vision and Voice, A Post pandemic Vision for the Future of Ireland’s Towns & Cities**. In April 2023, The Forum hosted a delegation of Central and Local Government personnel on a study visit to Scotland to learn about Scotland’s approach to regeneration, towns strategy and Scotland’s Town Centre First Principle.

Co-operation Ireland’s All-Island Local Authority Programme continues to serve as a best practice model of cross border co-operation.



THE PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS - EXPLORING OUR HERITAGE

The People, Places, Events - Exploring Our Heritage project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is an awareness initiative focused on exploring our diverse heritage.

The programme, led by Co-operation Ireland, saw four regional projects delivered. A total of 300 people took part across Northern Ireland in 2022.

In Belfast Co-operation Ireland teamed up with iAssist NI and Diverse Youth NI to complete a project entitled ‘Who lives here?’ which celebrated the wealth of new communities living in NI today.

In August 2022 over 150 people from a wide range of communities across Belfast attended a Showcase and Celebration Event which included cultural displays, presentations, and culinary taster dishes from the many cultures represented on the project.

In Derry/Londonderry, the Holywell Trust facilitated a project focused on St Columb’s Hall where participants organised guided tours shining a light on the rich heritage of the building including its significance in the social and political life of the city.

In Kilkeel, the Schomberg Society hosted a series of workshops exploring the Ulster-Scots Heritage in Mourne around the Decade of Centenaries and the creation of Northern Ireland.

The final project was based in Enniskillen, where Fermanagh County Museum designed a project celebrating the rich sporting heritage of Fermanagh and the border counties. 25 participants joined together at the Showcase Event hosted in Enniskillen Castle where a special unveiling of the Lipton Peace Cup took place.

This historic soccer trophy was only played for once in 1913 prior to the outbreak of war and was loaned to Enniskillen Castle for display as part of their ‘Your Sport, Your Family, Your Community’ heritage project.

We are greatly encouraged by the engagement across the four regional projects on People, Places, Events - Exploring Our Heritage and we look forward to working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund on future projects connecting people to the heritage around them.

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 of the project to be applied to improving mental health service provision and outcomes.

Young people from Derry 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.



COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

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 are 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.



FUTURE WORK: DOJ BENEFITS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

In March 2022 Co-operation Ireland won a contract from the Department of Justice to provide specialist advice to support the adoption of a benefits management approach within the Executive Programme on paramilitarism and organised crime.

This includes activity to improve understanding of benefits management and how it can be used through the programme to enable systemic change in how paramilitarism and organised crime are addressed in Northern Ireland.



ALL ISLAND SCHOOLS 4 CLIMATE ACTION

All-island Schools 4 Climate Action (AIS4CA) 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 students, parents, teachers, and citizens to promote behavioural change through communicating practical actions that can be implemented immediately.

In February, 16 schools from all corners of the island of Ireland gathered in Belfast on for the inaugural AIS4CA Climate Conference. Held in the state-of-the-art W5 Interactive Discovery Centre, the conference focussed on three core themes: Inspiration, Imagination and Impact.

The participants were able to engage with leading climate academics and activists including Duncan Stewart from RTÉ's Eco Eye show.

Meeting new schools also afforded the young people a chance to collaborate and share ideas for shared education projects, with training in how to run campaigns delivered by Co-operation Ireland.

A key part of the day was the 'Marketplace' session. This involved students pitching potential social action projects and exploring collaboration with cross-border partner schools.

Conference organiser Morgan O'Toole from Co-operation Ireland said; "We're incredibly proud that the All-island Schools 4 Climate Action programme has offered schools across the island an opportunity to connect, share ideas and take collective action to tackle the climate emergency.

"We're connecting schools on a North/South basis, whilst also breaking down barriers in Northern Ireland through enhancing Shared Education partnerships. There's a strong appetite with schools to network and engage across the island and our team at Co-operation Ireland will be focused on expanding the amount of schools involved in the year ahead."

All-island Schools 4 Climate Action (AIS4CA) is a cross-border educational collaboration between Co-operation Ireland EcoEd4All, and Alison supported by the Education Authority for Northern Ireland Shared Education (EANI), Galway Roscommon ETB (GRETB) and Cork (ETB).

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.



PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS – DUBLIN 2023



Ireland’s largest community awards were hosted by Dublin City Council for their 20th anniversary in January with hundreds of delegates travelling from across the four provinces to celebrate the unsung heroes of local society.

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 2023 awards were hosted by RTE’s Marty Whelan.

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. The competition culminates with a Gala Awards Ceremony.

Dublin Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy said the importance of the awards couldn’t be overstated.

“Having pride in where we live is so important and it’s crucial that everyone plays their part in making our community somewhere we can all be proud of. But it’s also vital that we recognise the great work of the dedicated people right across the island of Ireland who actually do make that happen”.

“I am delighted that Dublin was chosen to host this year’s IPB Pride of Place 20th Anniversary Awards

Peter Sheridan Chief Executive Officer, Co-operation Ireland said organising the awards was one of the charity’s most important roles.

“Co-operation Ireland has no other programme that embodies the charity’s ethos better than Pride of Place.

“We work to build relationships across the island and Pride of Place plays a critical role in that work. The impact the awards have had in towns and villages across the island since they started in 2003 cannot be underestimated, and the continuing success of the awards is down to the dedicated volunteers and their love of where they live.

Chairman of award sponsors IPB Insurance George Jones said: “On behalf of our local authority members we are proud to be associated with the Pride of Place awards as title sponsors. This competition provides a fitting platform to recognise the great strides volunteers across the island of Ireland are making in building more sustainable and liveable communities.

Pride of Place Chairman Tom Dowling said two decades after their inception, the awards continued to hold an important place in Irish society.

“It is 20 amazing years since the very first awards ceremony and the ethos of the awards has never changed. It continues to be about acknowledging and recognising in a meaningful manner the important caring work of all our communities as they continue their daily journey of making the path of life easier for all.

“This fabulous journey could not have happened without the far-sighted vision of Co-operation Ireland, the local authorities, and IPB, who all recognised the importance of communities participating in such a prestigious competition embracing and demonstrating their pride in their place.”

FUTURE PROGRAMMES



Co-operation Ireland has a long track record of being at the forefront of peacebuilding but with an ever-changing society and developments in technology, resources continue to be invested on preparing for the future.

In the short term, Co-operation Ireland has developed seven programmes which have been submitted to the Special EU Programmes Body for funding under the new Peace Plus arrangements – a joint fund financed by the British Government and European Union.

In addition, Co-operation Ireland is at the forefront of exploring innovative ways to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of new peace-building strategies. In an ever-evolving landscape of conflict resolution, harnessing AI's potential offers promising avenues for promoting dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation.

One of Co-operation Ireland's most exciting AI initiatives is the development of a virtual peace tour of Belfast. This pioneering project aims to create an immersive experience that transcends physical boundaries, enabling people from around the world to explore the complex history, culture, and narratives of this historically divided city.

Through cutting-edge AI technologies, visitors will be able to navigate Belfast's streets, interact with historical accounts, and gain insights into the city's transformation from a conflict-ridden past to a more peaceful future.

The virtual peace tour of Belfast not only showcases the organisation's commitment to peace education but also reflects its innovative approach to utilising technology as a tool for conflict resolution. By providing a platform for individuals to virtually engage with the city's rich history and the stories of its people, Co-operation Ireland hopes to foster greater empathy and understanding among diverse audiences.

Co-operation Ireland's foray into AI-driven peace-building strategies underscores the charity's commitment to adapt and evolve in a rapidly changing world. By combining the power of technology with its deep-rooted dedication to reconciliation, Co-operation Ireland is poised to make significant strides in its mission to promote understanding.

FUNDRAISING

Co-operation Ireland, a dedicated peace-building charity, has been instrumental in bridging divides and fostering unity in Ireland and Northern Ireland for decades. Its pivotal work in this region has only been made possible through the unwavering support and generosity of its donors.

In a world where peace remains elusive in many places, Co-operation Ireland stands as a testament to the profound impact that charitable giving can have on the pursuit of harmony and reconciliation.

Peace-building initiatives, by their very nature, require resources, dedication, and a sustained commitment. Co-operation Ireland has been fortunate to have a network of generous donors who believe in the power of reconciliation and are committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals and communities affected by conflict.

One remarkable example of how Co-operation Ireland relies on its donors is the annual charity golf event featuring former footballer Pat Jennings. This event serves as a prime illustration of how the organisation leverages the goodwill of supporters to fund its essential programs.

Pat Jennings, a legendary figure in the football world, has been involved with Co-operation Ireland for four decades. The charity golf event is a platform where donors can participate, both by taking part in the tournament and contributing to the cause. Funds raised from the event are channelled into Co-operation Ireland's diverse projects aimed at building bridges and nurturing understanding between communities with a history of conflict. These projects include youth programs, cultural exchanges, and initiatives that promote dialogue and co-operation.

In October 2022 the biennial Consular Corps/Association of Northern Ireland (CA-NI) took place in Belfast with Co-operation Ireland chosen as the official charity partner. Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Senior Diplomats, and Honorary Consuls based in Northern Ireland attend this special networking dinner to celebrate diversity and increasing multiculturalism. The dinner is supported by Invest NI with all proceeds going to the Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders Programme.

In addition to events like the charity golf tournament, Co-operation Ireland's reliance on donors is vividly evident in initiatives like the charity cycle to the Rugby World Cup that took place in September.

50 supporters flew into Bordeaux where they took in an Ireland rugby game before spending a week on the road riding north to Nantes, where they watched Ireland's second group game.

To take part each of the cyclists had to raise money for Co-operation Ireland.

Outside of sporting events Co-operation Ireland is also supported by friends in the corporate world.

June 2023 again saw our Legal Dinner held in London's Waldorf Astoria Hotel. This 'Bloomsday' themed event is a highlight of the London legal calendar.

Later that month DUP Leader Jeffrey Donaldson travelled to Dublin to join Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris at a special event held by Co-operation Ireland to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.

An invited audience of business leaders engaged with the politicians following a discussion hosted by former RTÉ correspondent Tommie Gorman.

In conclusion, Co-operation Ireland's indispensable role in peace-building is made possible through the generosity of its donors. Events as have been outlined exemplify the organisation's reliance on the goodwill and financial support of individuals who share a vision of a more peaceful and united future.

Through their generosity, Co-operation Ireland continues to bring communities together, foster understanding, and promote reconciliation, creating a lasting legacy of peace for generations to come.



PATRONS AND BOARD



JOINT PATRONS

Her Late Majesty The Queen	President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins
-------------------------------	--

CO-OPERATION IRELAND BOARD MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN

Sir Julian King
Former Northern Ireland Office Director and
UK Ambassador to Ireland and France

VICE CHAIRMAN

John Bruton
Former Taoiseach

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Terence Brannigan
Former Chairman, Tourism Northern Ireland

Jim Clerkin
CEO, Demeter & Co

Pat Farrell
CEO, Irish Institutional Property and former
Fianna Fáil General Secretary.

Dame Arlene Foster
Former First Minister of Northern Ireland

Charlie Flanagan
TD for Laois-Offaly and former Minister for
Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Sir George Hamilton
Former PSNI Chief Constable

Ossie Kilkenny
Special Olympics International, Washington

Sheila McClelland
Chairperson - Consumer Council NI

Dr Sir Malcolm McKibbin
Former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Daithi O'Ceallaigh
Director General, The Institute of International
and European Affairs

Sir Jonathan Phillips KCM
Former Warden, Keble College, Oxford

Trevor Ringland MBE
Partner, Macauley & Ritchie Solicitors

**Baroness Margaret Ritchie of
Downpatrick**
Former SDLP Leader

Rt. Hon Peter Robinson
Former First Minister

Sir David Wootton
Former Lord Mayor of London

CO-OPERATION IRELAND USA BOARD

CHAIRMAN
Jim Clerkin
CEO, Demeter & Co

TREASURER
Richard Pino
Chief Financial Officer, New York Residence, Inc.

**MEMBERS OF THE CO-OPERATION
IRELAND USA BOARD**
Stephen Colvin
Chief Commercial Officer, Bloomberg Media

Nigel Eccles
CEO and Co-founder, Click Inc.

Irial Finan
Executive Vice President, The Coca-Cola Company and
President of Bottling Investments and Supply Chain

Sean Gaffey
Senior Financial Advisor/First Vice President, Merrill Lynch
Wealth Management

Donard Gaynor
President Donald P. Gaynor

Shane Greer
Owner, Campaigns and Elections

Liam Lynch
Founder and Managing Partner at Studio.VC; Owner, Irish
Central

Ian McLernon
President and CEO, Remy Cointreau Americas

James Morrissey
Founder and CEO, East Houston Holdings

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 2022

	Dublin €K 2022	Belfast €K 2023	Dublin €K 2021	Belfast €K1 2021
INCOME				
Donations	945	1,325	759	1,470
Other Income	540	939	267	536
	1,485	2,264	1,026	2,006
EXPENDITURE				
Programme Costs	1,398	2,217	843	1,961
Administration	38	41	90	42
	1,436	2,258	933	2,003
Surplus	49	6	93	3

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



co-operationireland
working for a future together

Co-operation Ireland

Co-operation Ireland
The Carmichael Centre
4 Brunswick Street North
Dublin D07 RHA8
Tel: +353 (0) 1 819 7692

Co-operation Ireland

Unit 4, Murray's Exchange
1-9 Linfield Road
Belfast
BT12 5DR
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9032 1462

Email: info@cooperationireland.org
www.cooperationireland.org