co-operationireland

working for a future together

CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS' PROGRAMME

CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS WILL HAVE:

- RECEIVED ACCREDITED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
- IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH
- INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM
- ENHANCED RELATIONSHIPS AND A STRONG SUPPORT NETWORK
- THE KNOWLEDGE TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY WITH AUTHORITY
- BECOME A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL AMONG PEERS
- THE ABILITY TO ACT AS A CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADER IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY

CO-OPERATION IRELAND PATRONS
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

CO-OPERATION IRELAND IS THE LEADING PEACE BUILDING CHARITY ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND - WWW.COOPERATIONIRELAND.ORG

Founded in 1979 by Shannon based entrepreneur Dr Brendan O'Regan, Co-operation Ireland is the leading peace building charity on the island of Ireland, and now delivers over 30 programmes annually between communities in Northern Ireland, on a cross border basis with people in the Republic of Ireland, and internationally with Global partners in GB and the USA. Most of these programmes are targeted at the young people who will decide our future.

In preparation for considerable changes in relationships in Europe, between Ireland and Great Britain and on this island, Co-operation Ireland will give young people their voices in maintaining and strengthening these key relationships by providing a bespoke online all island Future Leaders' Programme for 14-17 year olds.

120 young people will be recruited in Phase 1 of the fully accredited 5-year initiative.

CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS' PROGRAMME

RATIONALE

The network of relationships which underpin the Irish peace process have become increasingly strained since the 2016 decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. The slow progress over the past two decades in transforming relations within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between Ireland and Britain is now at risk of being reversed, with a return of old suspicions and stereotypes.

While the current focus is on future trading arrangements between the UK and the EU (including the Irish Republic), and their implications for the economy and employment North and South, Brexit has already set in motion a series of events which have the potential to fundamentally reorder political relations across these islands. Constitutional questions have returned to centre stage, with a renewed focus on issues of identity and sovereignty. The special arrangements agreed for Northern Ireland are seen by many unionists as weakening the Union and leading towards greater integration with the Republic. The increasingly vibrant conversation among the nationalist community across the island about the possibility of re-unification adds to unionist unease and fears of betrayal. In this context, there is an urgent need to repair relations and rebuild trust by creating opportunities for engagement and dialogue, with a view to deepening mutual understanding and refocusing on common interests.

120

young people will be recruited in Phase 1 of the fully accredited 5-year initiative.

'Northern Ireland's young people 'frightened of losing identity'.'

Press Association, Sept 25, 2019

Co-operation Ireland believes young people need to be at the forefront of these efforts and is committed to developing the next generation of community leaders and peacebuilders across the island. Across our programmes, the young people we work with are highly socially aware and motivated to contribute to their communities and wider society but, in our experience, often do not know how to go about getting their voices heard and addressing issues that concern them. In addition to building skills for civic participation and social activism, young people across the island also need to be supported to navigate the legacies of the conflict and to effectively collaborate with others from different backgrounds in an increasingly diverse society.

Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Programme will help to address these challenges by equipping young people with the skills and confidence to work with others from diverse backgrounds and to take an active role in peace building and the development of their own communities. We will create opportunities for young people from across the island to build relationships and work together on shared goals, deepening trust and understanding and laying a foundation for future good relations both on this island and with our neighbouring island.

We also recognise that young people today are growing up in a time of great uncertainty, with many having their future plans cast in doubt by the coronavirus outbreak. While the impact of the economic and social dislocation caused by the virus is unknowable at this stage, there are significant concerns about the scarring effect any long-term downturn could have on the future employment prospects of younger generations. Our programme will include measures to support young people's well-being and, by providing opportunities for accreditation and skills development, help them to face the future with optimism.

Co-operation Ireland has extensive experience of designing and delivering effective youth interventions across the island of Ireland, ranging from largescale regional programmes such as National Citizen Service and Amazing the Space to localised, focused support projects for young people living in marginalised communities in areas such as Lurgan, Shantallow (L'Derry), Knocknaheeny (Cork), Finglas (North Dublin) and Ardoyne (North Belfast). Our programmes, based on youthwork best practice and highly aligned with government policy, provide participants with structured opportunities for personal development, good relations, and social action.

'(After Brexit) Northern Ireland faces what might be an even bigger identity crisis.'

The Atlantic, Jan 29, 2020

CO-OPERATION IRELAND'S EXPERIENCE IN PILOTING FOR THE NEW PROGRAMME

TOGETHER APART PROECT

Co-operation Ireland's Together Apart project provided over 100 young people from across the island with a platform to engage with policy makers and get their voices heard as the UK negotiated its withdrawal from the European Union during 2017-18.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss the impact of Brexit on their lives with peers from different backgrounds North and South, highlighting common concerns and increasing understanding of other viewpoints.

Based on their discussions, participants developed an agreed set of proposals which they presented to policy makers in Stormont, Leinster House, Westminster and Brussels, including senior members of the EU's Article 50 Taskforce.

Participants also organised a youth event in Belfast to raise awareness of the implications of Brexit and to address any concerns they might have, with the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People attending.

Through the project, participants gained confidence in their ability to make a difference around issues that concern them and gained unique opportunities to develop skills for leadership, social action, and working with others.

Issues of identities, sovereignty and borders will be addressed in addition to mental health, well-being and dealing effectively with all the negativity facing young people at this time. Uncertainties and fears about further education, employment and prospects of a peaceful and prosperous future have been heightened by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic with its lockdowns, isolation and social distancing.

YOUTH ADVOCATES PROGRAMME

Co-operation Ireland, through many of its programmes, enable young people from across the country to engage in making a difference within their communities. The Young Advocates Programme gives young people the ability to go much further in terms of addressing social justice issues. As part of the programme, young people from across Belfast have embarked on a journey of personal development, personal growth, and community relations, identifying and lobbying for change on some of the most relevant areas affecting all communities and giving them an opportunity to make a lasting impact in their own community. The aim of the programme is to enable a new generation of community change agents, where young people will have the capacity to identify and challenge decision makers across Belfast city for the benefit of all communities.

"Young people are scared, bored and want to be heard"

Young people's Survey, BBC NI News Headlines, 11 May 2020

CONNECTED

91%

Of young people used social media to stay connected with friends and family

INFORMED

70%

Of respondents felt Government could have done more to keep young people informed in terms of education, benefits, support services and engaged in activities to keep them active

HEALTH

16%

Of young people surveyed felt that the Government have done enough to support the needs of young people

52%

Of young people surveyed felt that they may need support for their mental health post isolation

POST ISOLATION

Concerts Events Fun Free Positive Youth Clubs People come together Activities Mental Health Support Groups

CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS' PROGRAMME

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the programme is to empower the next generation of young leaders and peacebuilders across the island of Ireland, equipping them with the skills, confidence and networks to make a positive contribution to the future development of their communities and their relationships on and between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In seeking to achieve this aim, we have set the following objectives for the programme:

- To create an inclusive platform for engagement and dialogue between young leaders from all backgrounds and traditions on the island, deepening mutual understanding of their priorities and visions for the future
- To equip participants with the skills, confidence and motivation to take the lead in addressing challenges in the world around them and to contribute to building positive relationships between communities across the island
- To facilitate participants to meet and work with peers from different backgrounds across the island, building sustainable relationships and promoting respect and understanding for different cultures and identities (including partnerships between Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, Ireland & Great Britain, as well as global links with USA)
- To promote positive personal development among participants, building personal and social skills

OVERVIEW

The programme will be delivered in a layered approach, building on the learning and experience gained at each key stage, with the young people working locally to develop their capacities and understandings, before developing a collaborative North/South partnership which will challenge young people to share, build relationships, negotiate and help to develop a greater understanding of difference and perspective taking. They will work collaboratively on an action for change across the Island, building on this to establish partnership in GB. The final stage of the programme will be global learning clusters on shared themes (social change, mental health, environment issues, globalisation etc) with young people in the USA. These learning clusters will provide opportunities to share their learning in relation to responsible citizenship and civic engagement in a global or international context, which will provide all participants a greater understanding of each other's identities and communities.

Participants will also be given the opportunity for accreditation for the training and learning gained from their involvement through partnerships developed with Further Education Institutions. Currently we have young people achieving a Level 1 Sports leadership Award, we are a registered Training organisation with OCNNI and can offer Peer Mentoring and Diversity and Good Relations as separate courses.

SINGLE IDENTITY
Building personal capibilities & skills

FUTURE LEADERS
Leadership training & social action

BUILDING & MAINTAINING RELATIONSIPS
- Locally
- Cross Border
- East/West

GLOBAL LEADERS & ACCREDITATION
Themed learning clusters on social change, health & wellbeing, economic deprivation

RECRUITMENT

The target group will comprise of young people (aged 14 to 17 on average) from designated disadvantaged areas across the Island of Ireland, who have experienced social exclusion, segregation or feel disengaged from democratic processes. Co-operation Ireland will work closely with youth organisations across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to recruit young people who will benefit most from participation in this initiative, who have had little or no opportunity to engage in similar programmes:

Year 1: 8 cross border partnerships with approx. 15 in each group
Potential areas ROI: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Dundalk, Drogheda, Donegal.
Potential areas NI: Belfast, L'Derry, Lurgan/Portadown/Craigavon
These 8 N/S partnerships establish E/W links.
Potential areas: London, Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool
Global links established with New York and New Jersey with the potential to grow.

The potential is to recruit on these numbers for each year of the programme.

METHODOLOGY

This managed contact model will be delivered through a blend of on-line and social media platforms enabling participants to work remotely and independently while coming together collaboratively in facilitated online workshops. These sessions will be facilitated by programme staff as well as several Programme Mentors, leaders or inspirational figures in Business, Sports, charitable work etc. as well as the potential for Programme Ambassadors to become involved.

Key Programme Activities

1. **Capacity building** with the groups, developing the skills of the young leaders as well as the leaders and support workers locally, to provide a support network for the young people throughout the programme.

2. Facilitated interactive online sessions to develop the young people's **confidence and leadership** skills and exploring their potential to make positive change in their community.

3. Putting into practice the young people's leadership skills where they undertake a **practical social action project** where they identify issues of importance to their lives and develop a plan of action to address these issues in partnership with their local communities.

4. Working with a **cross border partner** in online collaborative workshops to develop their teambuilding skills, developing an awareness of diversity and acceptance, communication skills, learning to articulate their own views and opinions, listen to others and respond, challenge perceptions or misconceptions held of others, and lobby for change.

5. To give the young people **a voice,** encouraging and facilitating them to share their learning internationally through their participation in learning clusters. These learning clusters will be themed and directed by the young people themselves.

6. **Accreditation** for participants who complete the training programme and access to further education opportunities.

Programme mentoring and professional development with educational institutions.

• 18+ months
• Co-operation Education

All-Island programme development. Young people have the opportunity to explore wider culture, identity, globalisation and the world in which they live

• 12-18 months
• Co-operation Countries

Local engagement programmes enhancing community relations, capacity building and development of leadership potential, ie National Citizen Service, Morgan Stanley Banking on the Future Programme, Cork Youth Leadership Programme, Finglas Sports Leadership, TBUC Young Leaders and Ambassadors

• 0-12 months
• Co-operation Communities

Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders will have:

1. Increased confidence and self-esteem, a greater understanding of themselves, their communities and of others with differing views and identities.
2. Improved relationships and a strong support network established on a cross border basis and internationally creating a greater sense of our shared belonging and identity.
3. Increased skills and confidence to actively participate and express their views and opinion, with enhanced personal and life skills and an ability to have their voices heard and engage effectively with authority.
4. Raised aspirations and more positive outlook on life, with awareness of opportunities for further development and act as a positive role model among their peers.
5. The ability to act as a Co-operation Ireland Future Leader in their local community.

CO-OPERATION IRELAND FUTURE LEADERS' AMBASSADORS

To ensure the success of this innovative leadership programme for our young people, Co-operation Ireland seeks the help and support of individuals and corporates committed to a shared and cohesive society on this island, where people can live together in peace and prosperity.

Co-operation Ireland asks you to consider becoming a Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders' Ambassador by providing $5,000 per year for a five-year period. The charity aims to create 500 Future Leaders on the island over the first 5 years of the programme.
Ambassadors will be investing in the future of our young people, creating a network of Future Leaders, knowledgeable on all relevant issues, prepared to have their voices heard for all the challenges ahead and a huge resource on steering a steady course in the development of new and lasting positive relationships on the island.

Ambassadors will be updated regularly on the progress of the programme at both a national and local level, through reports, newsletters, Future Leaders personal presentations, invitations to community outreach activities and Future Leader webinars, bringing together young people with those of authority.

Corporate Ambassadors will realise a good CSR fit, can avail of staff mentorships, employability training and recruitment opportunities and participate in local social action activities creating positive PR and local goodwill.

TO REQUEST FURTHER DETAILS:

Email: futureleaders@cooperationireland.org

To discuss your interest in becoming a Future Leaders' Ambassador/Corporate Ambassador, call Co-operation Ireland on +44 (0) 7771542288.

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www.cooperationireland.org