

Co-operation Ireland's **Rory McDonagh Cross Border Leadership Project** *"EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SPORT IN DEVELOPING GOOD RELATIONS AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS"*

REPORT



BACKGROUND

Co-operation Ireland is the leading peace building charity on the island of Ireland. The charity creates opportunities for groups from the two main traditions within Northern Ireland and from both sides of the border to come together to help build a society based on tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity. Joint Patrons of Co-operation Ireland are Her Majesty the Queen and President of Ireland Michael D Higgins

The Rory McDonagh Cross Border Leadership Project was established to help build positive futures for young people who have the potential to be leaders in their community but are currently vulnerable to involvement in high-risk and criminal activity. The programme aims to divert participants from crime and anti-social behaviour by providing them with a support structure to address personal and social challenges in their lives. Key outcomes include personal development, building pathways to further education/employment, and promoting belonging and participation in the wider community. This targeted intervention works in partnership with local communities to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

Co-operation Ireland work in partnership with the local partners to develop a programme of intervention with the most vulnerable young people, assisting them to re-engage with their local community and education, and to develop their potential to develop positive leadership skills.

The young people:

1. Explore themes such as personal & group development, teambuilding & communication skills, power & influence in their community, Leadership skills and community engagement
2. Work across their communities and cross border to learn about each other's lives, sharing their own sense of identity and community, and perceptions held of each other and each other's communities.
3. Take a leadership role to identify an issue in the community important to them, work with leaders locally to identify possible solutions.
4. Showcase their community action locally

The 2018 project involves:

Cork: 23 young people from Cobh, Knocknaheeny, and Bishopstown, with Community School (Cobh), Terence MacSwiney Community College (Knocknaheeny), and Bishopstown Foróige youth clubs the local delivery partners.

Belfast: 26 young people from East Belfast: The Doyle Youth Club (Short Strand), Willowfield Youth Group (Woodstock Rd) and Youth Initiatives (Newtownards Rd).

The leadership training is delivered by local facilitators, Cork Sports Partnership and Peace Players Belfast, with the young people in Cork receiving a Level 1 Sports Award in Leadership.

PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall **aim** of the Rory McDonagh Cross Border Leadership Project is:

To build the capacity of young people to take on an active leadership role in their communities and to engage positively with others from different backgrounds, including cross-border

Specific **objectives** included:

- To promote positive personal development among participants, building confidence and life skills
- To enhance young people's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the potential role of sport in developing good relations and leadership skills
- To nurture the young people's leadership potential, promoting their development as active and positive members of their communities
- To facilitate the young people to meet and work with peers from different backgrounds, locally and cross-border, developing positive relationships and deepening their respect and understanding for cultural diversity.

PROJECT DELIVERY

1. Recruitment

Participation in the project was broadly targeted at young people from disadvantaged communities, aged 15-16, with leadership potential. Within these criteria, the local partners were given discretion to nominate young people who they believed would benefit most from involvement.

2. Project Outline:

The project involves a number of Key components:



Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership

The young people undertake a Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership originally developed by Sports Leader UK and being rolled out in the Republic of Ireland by the Irish Sports Council through local sports partnerships. This training provides them with the opportunity to develop leadership skills for the delivery of sporting and recreational activities while contributing more generally to their personal development. The course content is based around activity rather than organised sport, ensuring it is

accessible and enjoyable for all including those who do not normally participate in sport. The training is delivered by the local Sports Partnerships with venues alternating among the local partners. The initial sessions focus on planning and leading a sports activity and developing leadership skills. Participants then explore the qualities needed to be a leader and learn practical skills such as motivating a group and dealing with disruptive behaviour. Further sessions build capacity to deliver activities for health and well-being and explore the meaning of fair play and the role of officials in sport. The young people undergo a practical assessment of their leadership skills, organising and delivering a one-hour sporting activity for local primary school children.

Social action

The young people are given the opportunity to apply their learning and develop practical skills for leadership and community activity. In preparation, the young people participate in workshops to identify issues in their communities related to Health and Well Being, providing them with tools and skills to develop an action plan for change.

The Cross Border Partnership

Prior to the Cross Border residential, the young people from Belfast and Cork engaged in a series of workshops within their own communities exploring their sense of identity and belonging, the role that sport plays in bringing people together to build positive relationships, and developing their capacity for leadership.

During the Cross Border Residential the young people visit each other communities giving them the opportunity to share learning and work together on issues of importance to them.

Their First exchange took place in Cork on the 27-29 April 2018 in Trabolgan Holiday Centre, Whitegate Cork, the majority of young people (49) who participated in this exchange had never been across the border before. They participated in a number of team- building exercises and workshops where they presented their group and community profiles sharing aspects of their culture and role of sports in peace-building.

They were also hosted by Cork City Council for a welcome reception where they were addressed by Mick O'Driscoll former Ireland and Munster Rugby Player on how participation in sports gave him the courage to take a lead in other areas of his life.

The second exchange took place in November 2018, with both groups travelling to Greenhills YMCA in Newcastle, Co. Down for a two-night residential. The young people took part in a series of workshops, examining issues affecting young people in their communities, and identifying opportunities for young people to make a difference by addressing these issues. They also took part in team-building facilitated by Peace Players and social activities. Both groups visited Belfast for a guided tour planned by the Northern Ireland participants to give the Cork group a greater insight into local history and community divisions. The tour included a tour of the Peace Walls and a visit to the Titanic Centre. In total, 45 young people took part in the first exchange.

APPENDICES

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**Co-operation Ireland Youth Leadership Cork/Belfast exchange 27-29 April
2018
Trabolgan Holiday Village Whitegate Cork**

FRIDAY 27 APRIL 2018

- 5.30 pm: Arrival of Cork & Belfast Groups
- 6.30 pm Dinner in Trabolgan
- 7.30 pm Ice-breakers and contract for residential
- 8.30 pm: Update on leadership training

SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2018

- 9 Breakfast
- 10 am Project update
- 10.30 Transfer to Cork
- 11.15 am Welcome reception by Cork City Council
- 12 am Workshop Council chambers City Hall Mick O'Driscoll
former Ireland and Munster Player will address the group
- 1.30 pm-3.30 pm: Lunch in town and free time to tour the city in mixed
groups
- 3.30 pm Transfer to Trabolgan
- 4.15 pm Free Time in trabolgan
- 6.15 pm Drama workshop – sharing perceptions and working in
partnership
- 7.15 m Dinner in Trabolgan
- 8.30 pm-9.45 pm: Social activity – group
- 10 pm-11.30pm Quiz/ game/concert

SUNDAY 29 APRIL 2018

8.45 – 9.30 Breakfast

9.30 am Check out and clean up

10.15 am Transfer to Cobh

11 Titanic Experience Cobh

12.30 lunch in Supermacs

1 pm Debrief / Evaluation workshop

1.30 pm Depart Cobh





**Co-operation Ireland Youth Leadership Cork/Belfast exchange 23-25 Nov
2018**

Greenhill YMCA residential Centre

Address: Donard Park, Newcastle BT33 0GR
Phone: 028 43723172(NI) 048 43723172 (ROI)

Draft agenda

FRIDAY 23th November

9.15 am: Depart from Kent Station, Cork
6.30pm: Arrive at Greenhills
6.30pm-7.30pm: Settle in/Dinner
7.30pm-8.30pm: Icebreakers/ teambuilding games
8.30pm-9.15pm: Me and my community profiles
9.30 -10.30pm: Board Game Challenge

SATURDAY 24th November (we will be filming elements on the residential)

9 am breakfast
10 am-11.30 am: Peace Players workshop
12 noon: Depart Greenhill to Belfast (packed lunches)
1pm-2.30 pm: Free time Belfast
3 pm-4.30pm Titanic Belfast Tour (head phones can be purchased)
4.30pm-5.15pm: Tour of Peace Walls
5.30 pm Travel Back to Greenhills for dinner and team building activities
10 pm-11.30pm Game of Charades

SUNDAY 25th November

9 am: Breakfast
10am-11.30 Workshop - Issues impacting young people in their community, role of young leaders as a positive influence addressing these issues
11.30 am: Evaluation/ reflection
12 am Depart Greenhill with packed lunch

Drop in Cork & Cobh



Feedback from the Young People

What I learned

- Leadership Skills * You can be yourself
- Friendship * Everyone is equal
- Confidence * Responsibilities
- Teamwork * Independence
- Communication * New Comfort zone
- Don't be afraid to Talk to New People
- Trust * That I love Prods
- You can be yourself

How we worked as a team

- Great * Worked well together
- We couldn't understand each other's accents
- Learned sign Language * We worked together from the beginning
- Fabulous we used our teamwork skills
- We respected each other * We got to know each other better

What Surprised Me...

- When I said hello to people they said they loved my voice
- They were very friendly * Everyone got along with each other straight away
- We all got closer * The Prods were great
- That everyone got on so great we all co-operated
- No arguments * I couldn't understand everyone's accents
- Everyone got involved * I showed up
- I didn't get angry
- I didn't know who the Protestant and who the Catholics were

Final word

- Great experience and good chance to get to know new people
- Very fun * I spoke in front of a group
- Feel more motivated to do sport
- I meet new great people * We should all speak slower and clearer
- A brilliant project and will always remember this experience
- I would recommend this programme highly
- The prods were great, I want to Become one