



YOUNG COMMUNITY LEADERS

Learn to Lead

Developing the Next Generation of Local Leaders

Young Community Leaders Programme Review 2011-2016




Cullinane Consulting
Human Resource & Change Management Consultants



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015 – 2017 is funded by the Irish Government and co-funded by the European Social Fund and includes a special allocation under the Youth Employment Initiative.

“Without YCL I would not be close to the person I am today. It has changed the way I see things and the way I live my life day to day”

YCL graduate, 2011 – 2012 programme



1. Introduction

It's the key task for communities: developing the next generation of future leaders. Northside Partnership has always believed in the potential of young people for affecting social change. This briefing document provides an overview of the Young Community Leaders Programme Review 2011-2016. The full report is available online at: www.northsidepartnership.ie/young-community-leaders.

When the Northside Partnership established the Young Community Leaders (YCL) Programme in 2011 in an effort to engage young people aged between 16 and 25 years from its Dublin 5, 13 and 17 priority districts, the concept was simple: if communities are to flourish in the future, then tomorrow's community leaders must be developed today. Five years on and five programmes later 120 graduates have experienced the joy of community involvement and understand how they can make a difference in their homes, streets, schools and communities.

2. What is Young Community Leaders?

The training programme for young people is comprised of the following:

1. The Pacific Institute STEPS programme to build their confidence and self-belief.
2. Foróige's Leadership for Life Programme, an accredited set of modules in the field of youth leadership and the cornerstone of training for our programme. Along with workshops and training, the programme features:
 - a. A Team Research Project to be undertaken on a social issue of concern to the young people
 - b. A Community Action Project: minimum 20 hours of work in a leadership role within the community
3. Restorative Practice which provides our participants with the knowledge and techniques to build strong relationships and transform conflict in a simple and emotionally healthy manner.

On completion, participants are awarded the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action. Accredited by NUI Galway, this is a QQI Level 6 award and is worth 15 ECTS (European credit transfer system) credits.

Young Community Leaders in Numbers



120 young people from our area who have graduated as Young Community Leaders



85%

Average annual attendance rate of YCL participants throughout the YCL 2015-16 programme.



17/02/2015: The day that a group of 50 YCLs were welcomed to the Mansion House by the then Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Larry O'Toole.



2,480 hours

YCLs devoted to local Community Action Projects since the programme's inception in 2011.



18/02/2014: The day that a group of YCLs and local elected representatives visited Áras an Uachtaráin as invited guests of President Michael D Higgins. The invitation was in honour of their successful, collaborative work with the Belmayne-Clongriffin community and Dublin City Council.

Over 1000

People attended the revived annual family fun day in the Northside community of Belmayne-Clongriffin on the 22nd of June 2013. The event was organised by a group of nine YCLs.



**YES
EQUALITY.
1,201,607**

People who voted "Yes" in the May 2015 Same-Sex Marriage Referendum. The YCL Programme's YCI4Equality group assisted in reinforcing the message that every vote counts.

116

Peer Mentors trained in local secondary schools to support incoming first years. These senior-cycle students were trained in key elements of the YCL programme through the Peer Mentor Training Programme, empowering them to model leadership and promote inclusion in their schools.



“Without YCL my confidence would still be hidden away under a rock”

YCL graduate, 2012 – 2013 programme



3. Programme Evaluation

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Since its inception the YCL Programme has been evaluated on a formative basis. This means that the Evaluator works with the YCL Implementation and Facilitation team members who apply suggestions for positive change during the life cycle of each YCL programme.

External evaluation of the 2015-16 Programme provided the following feedback:

- Participants enjoyed all programme elements, particularly the Restorative Practices training and the Community Action Project
- Activities such as completing Community Action Projects and helping out at the Mondeléz Easter Egg Hunt provided participants with valuable opportunities to put their teamwork and conflict management skills into action.
- Participants particularly benefitted from peer-to-peer learning from YCL graduates.
- Many participants who were completing state and college exams found that balancing their YCL commitments with their school and college workload was very challenging.

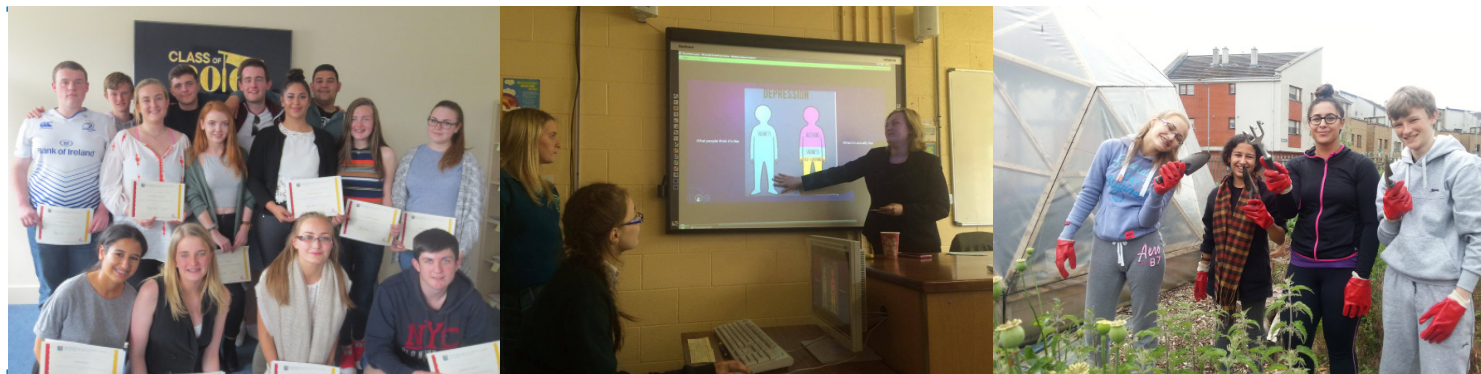
GRADUATE SURVEY

In May 2016 The YCL Programme invited 92 graduates from YCL Programmes 1 to 4 to participate in an online survey. 42 graduates completed an online survey and reported the following:

- 67% indicated that YCL benefitted them in school and/or college
- 52% reported that YCL benefitted them in interacting with the community
- 29% of the respondents are engaged either in full or part-time community activities

Respondents were asked to comment on how YCL had benefitted them. Here are some of their responses:

- *“It helped with getting a job and a better understanding of the world around me.”*
- *“I found the YCL course looks very well on a CV or application as it seems to draw the interest of colleges and places of work.”*
- *“I got offered a manager position in an interview, based on my experience with YCL and YCI. I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with myself, what I wanted to achieve or what career path I wanted. But doing YCL helped me to focus and has opened up doors for me.”*
- *“It has helped me choose my college courses.”*



4. Focus on 2015-16: YCL Programme 5

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Our most recent participants collectively dedicated over 460 hours to their Community Action Projects, covering a broad range of topics:

Mental Health Awareness through the delivery of informative presentations to peer groups.

Science and maths; generating interest among primary school students through interactive workshops.

Homelessness; interviewing Fr. Peter McVerry to highlight the crisis and the viewpoint of those affected.

Coaching sports and mentoring the next generation of coaches through train-the-trainer sessions.

Diversity and inclusion in the school community through the organisation of a Multicultural Week.

Bullying through a YCL-planned Anti-Bullying programme in a local school.

Fun for toddlers and children at a YCL-organised Activity Day at a local **community childcare** facility and recruiting volunteers to lead the games area at a local community project's annual Fun Day.

Engendering Leadership at a YCL-organised Leadership Camp for young Scouts.

WISE WORDS FROM THE CLASS OF 2016

"I have been educated on different leadership skills and have improved the skills I already have."

"I have become more enthusiastic about learning new things."

"Ciara's debating and voting schemes helped me to understand politics more and gave me more opportunity to give my opinion."

"I learned more about leadership and what it's like to take a leadership role."

"The people who influenced me the most were the two girls in my Community Action Project Group."

"I have improved my CV greatly by having this course to talk about in interviews – I have been offered four jobs since starting YCL."

"The thing I learned about myself through YCL is that I am able to speak to a large group."

"How to manage conflict."

"The importance of time-keeping."

"Confidence."

“I would recommend this course to others because it brings you out of your shell and makes you understand other people a lot more”

YCL graduate, 2013 – 2014 programme



5. Young Community Innovators

Graduates of the YCL programme also have an opportunity to progress to the Young Community Innovators (YCI) group who actively seek community involvement opportunities.

The following are some examples of the leading roles many of these graduates have played in their communities:

- YCL graduates have delivered a series of Restorative Practices Workshops and Activity Days for prisoners in the Dóchas Centre (a closed, medium security prison for females aged 18 years and over) which is part of the Mountjoy Prison campus.
- Three local community organisations have appointed YCL graduates to their Boards of Management. Two YCL graduates have acted as representatives on the Restorative Practices Strategic Forum.
- In an effort to bring about a “Yes” vote in the 2015 Same-Sex Marriage Referendum, the Young Community Innovators took their “YCI4Equality” campaign to the social media platforms, the streets and even to the mansion house. Their successful campaign attracted national recognition.
- YCL graduates attended and delivered presentations at the 2015 and 2016 Youth Advocacy Programme (YAP) Ireland national conferences. One YCL graduate was a guest speaker at Foróige’s international conference.
- Local organisations continuously seek the views of YCL graduates and participants to help inform their research into how their organisations can remain relevant to young clients.

“It opens young people’s minds up to the wider world. It helps them to think critically (...) it makes them look at who they really are and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings”

YCL graduate, 2014 – 2015 programme



6. Co-facilitation Model

The 2015-16 programme saw the introduction of a co-facilitator model with YCL graduates assisting with the delivery of the programme content. In the latter stages of the year the Co-facilitators also provided a great deal of encouragement and support, sometimes on a one-to-one basis, to help participants to complete their project work.

Reflective feedback from the entire facilitation team indicated that the model is a win-win situation for the programme; while Co-facilitators are a vital support to the team, they themselves have now gained valuable experience in delivering YCL training and providing mentor support. The Co-facilitators reported that they have drawn on their experience this year in job and higher education applications and interviews.

7. Schools Peer Mentor Training

Our Peer Mentor Training Programme is a perfect example of how we can help to develop leadership skills for young people in our local schools. Senior-cycle students are trained in key elements of the YCL programme through the Peer Mentor Training Programme, empowering them to model leadership and promote inclusion in their schools. In an evaluation of the 2015 Pilot Programme mentors indicated that the training developed their capacity as leaders in the following ways:

- **Empathy**-building exercises helped mentors to put themselves in the shoes of a first year.
- **Confidence** was developed, empowering mentors to provide advice and reassurance.
- **Responsibility** to help and provide support was embraced and enjoyed by mentors.
- **Tools** such as ice-breaker games were found to be useful for forming connections.

“This has by far been the greatest year of my life thanks to all the amazing new people I’ve met and the opportunities that have come my way ... wouldn’t change a single second of it! So thanks to all of you for being so amazing!”

YCL graduate, 2015 – 2016 programme

8. Together we can Transform our Community

It has often been said that the people who effect the greatest change in a community are those who actually turn up: to the sports pitches on wet wintry evenings; to committee meetings to get new ideas off the ground; to the streets and shopping centres to share news about local events and to public meetings to ensure that the voices of our community are heard.

And so reader, here is our challenge. We are always keen to hear from people who wish to make a difference. If you are a YCL graduate, your engagement is widely valued and there is always work to be done. If you are a member of a local organisation or community group consider how our young leaders might help. If you are interested in being part of the next generation of local leaders, please come and talk to us. If you wish to provide support in the form of sponsorship, donations or sharing your expertise, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can transform our community.



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