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Our History

Formed in 1952, Foróige was formerly known as Macra na Tuaithe, the youth branch of Macra na Feirme. In 1981, the organisation changed its name to Foróige to demonstrate its move from a rural based organisation to one that works with young people with a wide variety of needs in both rural and urban settings across Ireland. A booklet with a more detailed history of the organisation is available [here](#) [1].

The name Foróige is derived from forbairt na hóige, which means *development of youth*.

Forbairt na hóige = Development of Youth

For + óige = Foróige

1952 The first Foróige Club ? then called ?Macra na Tuaithe? is founded in Mooncoin, Co Kilkenny on March 14th.

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https://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/c_1952_the_opening_of_the_first_macra_na_tuaithe_-_later_foroige_club_-_at_mooncoin_vocational_school_14th_march_1952.jpg

?There can be no remedy for our manifold national ills if we cannot create a spirit of courage and enterprise in our young people,? says then Minister for Education, Sean Moylan.

1953 A further 12 pilot clubs come together under the name 'Macra na Tuaithe', later to be called Foróige. The voluntary organisation is built on principles pioneered by the 4H (Head, Heart, Hands and Health) youth movement in the United States, those of individual empowerment and *?learning by doing?.*

1958 A £30,000 grant secured from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of America helps fund an expansion of Macra na Tuaithe activities. New education programmes and a system of awards are launched.

1963 The organisation receives its first funding from Department of Education.

1969 Seven new educational programmes are introduced. These programmes - covering such areas as Citizenship, Leadership, Family & Life Skills, Culture and Science & Health - mark a major advance in the provision of out-of-school education in Ireland.

1969 The reach of the organisation expands with the employment of a network of Regional Youth Officers, thanks to a £62,650 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of America.

1971 Traditionally identified as a rural organisation Macra na Tuaithe - later Foróige - begins its expansion into urban areas with the opening of a permanent headquarters in Dublin and builds on this strategic decision

with the development of new Foróige clubs in urban areas.

1971 First national conference for the organisation's volunteers takes place in Ternmonfeckin, County Louth. The conference becomes an annual event which continues today.

1974 Despite achieving both a 700% increase in the numbers trained by the organisation and a very substantial increase in membership, fiscal pressures forces the organisation to reduce investment in staff and training.

1979 Marks a turning point for Macra na Tuaithe. The Government increases funding to the organisation and for the first time recognises that youth work is an integral part of the national education system.

1981 Macra na Tuaithe is renamed Foróige, the National Youth Development Organisation. The new name is aimed at facilitating further expansion into growing urban areas.

1982 Foróige is the first organisation to provide general youth work services in disadvantaged areas with the establishment of youth services in Tallaght and Blanchardstown.

1991 Foróige partners with An Garda Síochána to roll out one of the first Garda Youth Diversion Projects in the country. The projects aim to divert young people from becoming involved or further involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

1996 Foróige partners with the Health Service Executive to develop community-based early intervention and prevention Neighbourhood Youth Projects.

1998 Foróige develops a dedicated sexual health programme focused on developing positive and healthy relationships.

2000 Foróige brings the internationally proven one to one mentoring programme, 'Big Brothers, Big Sisters', to Ireland.

2001 Foróige brings the first Intel Computer Clubhouse to Europe.

2002 In partnership with the HSE, Foróige establishes Ireland's first youth café. 'The Gaff' in Co. Galway is a space for young people to chill and hang out with their friends in a safe and secure environment.

2006 Foróige secures the largest sponsorship of youth work in Ireland to grow and enhance its Youth Citizenship programme.

2009 Foróige's Best Practise Unit is established to facilitate the development of the organisation in becoming a leader in the field of youth work. It is the first of its kind in Ireland.

2009 Foróige takes over the operation of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), which was launched in Ireland in 2004. The cutting edge, world recognised, youth entrepreneurship education and development programme is affiliated to NFTE International which originated in the USA.

2009 Foróige brings the Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life programme to Ireland and runs the first international leadership conference for young people in Ireland.

2009 Foróige becomes a partner organisation in the UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement. It is the first UNESCO Chair to be awarded to the Republic of Ireland.

2010 Foróige develops a 10 year vision to be the youth organisation of choice among young people in Ireland.

2010 A nationwide celebration of young people and their active citizenship achievements is celebrated with

the first ever Foróige TV show, 'Ireland's Top Teens'.

2011 A study by NUI Galway concludes that Foróige's mentoring programme 'Big Brothers Big Sisters' - is an 'extremely valuable, low-cost intervention for young people who need support'. It becomes the first proven youth work programme in Ireland.

2012 Foróige celebrates 60 years of expertise in youth work and we also merge with Cork based youth organisation Ógra Chorcaí. At the heart of this merger lies the best interests of young people and we know it will lead to better, more cohesive services for the young people of Cork and ultimately, it will build a stronger organisation for all of us. Foróige Chief Executive Seán Campbell described the merger as the largest of its type in the history of Irish youth work.

"This is a first. This will be transformational for young people," he said. "It is a brave step by Ógra, who wanted to improve outcomes for young people in Cork. This is about a merging of minds, a coming together of two proud traditions. It is a difficult time for youth work and this doesn't make the challenges any less. But it gives us a much more coherent message to funders, both State and corporate."

Ógra Chorcaí's chief executive Declan O'Leary said: *"It was about ambition for the youth sector. Sure, there is an emotional tug, given Ógra's massive history and the impact it has had over the years. There is nostalgia that I'm sure will hit us in the weeks and months ahead. But this merger makes absolute sense given the similarities and synergies between both organisations."*

2015 Foróige changes its governance from an association into a company limited by guarantee. This change enhances the role the volunteers play in the organisation and has resulted in a more inclusive Foróige that is representative of volunteers and young people from all aspects of the organisation.

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Links

[1] https://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/pictures/For%20Download%20-%20History_Booklet_2002.pdf