



Annual Review 2005-2006

Contents

About Foróige	1
Foreword by the Minister for Youth Affairs, Síle de Valera, T.D	2
Message from Séumas O'Brien, Chairperson, National Council of Foróige	3
Report from Séan Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of Foróige	4
Foróige gets a Brand New Look	5
Coosan Foróige Club's Trip of a Lifetime to Zambia	6
Youth Participation in Foróige's Youth Cafés	7
Working in Communities – Garda Youth Diversion Projects	8
A Canadian Adventure for Foróige Members	9
The National Foróige Citizenship Awards 2005	10
Young People from Blanchardstown and Tallaght Get Active in their Communities	12
Galway Junior Certificate Students Celebrate in Style	13
Foróige Leads the Way with Addition to Drugs Guidelines	13
Empowering Youth Enriching Communities - The Views of Foróige's Reference Panel	14
Big Brother Big Sister Highlights	18
Meet Some Former Foróige Members	20
Levels Leadership Training is Up and Running	21
Putting Young People First - Foróige Neighbourhood Youth Projects	22
Cultural Integration in Tallaght	23
Foróige in Pictures	24
Foróige's Special Projects for Youth Having Real Impact	26
Foróige Projects/Services	27
Contacts	30



About Foróige, National Youth Development Organisation

Foróige is a leading national voluntary youth organisation engaged in youth development and education. It is an organisation infused with values which form a rich philosophy of human growth and development, a philosophy based on a belief in the dignity and creativity of each individual person. The fundamental purpose of the organisation is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society.

Foróige, National Youth Development Organisation, provides a comprehensive range of youth work services through the operation of Foróige Clubs, Local Youth Services, Local Youth Development Projects and Youth Information Centres. This multi-pronged approach enables the organisation to meet the developmental needs of young people in general and in particular circumstances to focus on vulnerable young people with specific needs.

Foróige Clubs

The Foróige Club is the basic unit of the organisation and consists of young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years and adult leaders, in a ratio of approximately 10 to 1. There are 421 Foróige Clubs in Ireland, each of which is "owned" by its members. The Foróige Club enables young people to experience democracy at first hand through the election of their own club committee and the management and operation of the club in co-operation with their adult leaders.

Local Youth Services

These are locally based and enable their communities to foster youth development. They provide general youth work services to, and promote the development of, the various voluntary youth organisations. They also provide specialised services to vulnerable young people. Foróige operates three such Services: Tallaght Youth Service and Blanchardstown Youth Service in Dublin and West Limerick Youth Service.

Youth Information Centres

These Centres provide a free, confidential information service to young people and adults on a wide range of youth-related topics. Foróige operates four such Centres. These are located in Tallaght and Blanchardstown in Dublin, in Donegal Town and in Castlebar, Co Mayo.

Foróige operated Local Youth Development Projects

These concentrate on the provision of specialised services directly to specifically targeted young people. They assist young people in developing confidence and communication skills and foster

participation, collective action and the voluntary activity of young people within their communities. Foróige operates 98 Local Youth Development Projects as they are located in 14 counties around Ireland, in both urban and rural settings.

Structure of the Organisation

National Council / Executive

Foróige is governed by a National Council which determines its policy, and controls all business and affairs carried out by, or on behalf of the organisation. The National Council meets at least twice a year. It is made up of one Club Leader for each county where there are Foróige Clubs and four Reference Panel members. The National Council elects, from among its Members, a National Executive which meets regularly and is accountable to the National Council.

The Reference Panel

At Regional Conferences – held in 11 designated regions throughout the country for Club Chairpersons and Secretaries – 22 members are elected to form a Reference Panel. This Panel meets twice yearly and is designed to give members a direct input into the running of the organisation at national level. Four members of the Reference Panel are elected to the National Council.

District Councils

Foróige Clubs in a particular area may, with the approval of the National Council, form District Councils. Each Club may appoint two voting delegates to sit on the District Council. The functions of the District Councils include: exchanging ideas; co-ordinating and stimulating the activities of the Clubs; helping in the formation of new Clubs and making representations to the National Council and National Executive on matters relating to Foróige.

Management / Staff

Foróige employs a full-time professional staff to assist and enable communities and voluntary youth workers in their youth work endeavours, and to work directly with young people as necessary and appropriate. The Organisation employs a total of 188 staff.

Foreword by the Minister for Youth Affairs Síle de Valera, T.D.



I am once again pleased to provide the foreword to Foróige's Annual Review as it gives me the opportunity to show my appreciation of the valuable work of your organisation.

As I have often commented, I am impressed by the committed manner in which Foróige meets the ongoing challenges of modern youth work, both in urban and rural settings. I believe that Foróige's success is largely due to its recognition that society is constantly evolving and that this needs to be responded to in a positive and proactive manner.

One of the strengths of Foróige is its continued commitment to adapting and developing its programmes to suit the changing needs of young people. This benefits your young members, your organisation and most importantly, society as a whole.

The youth work sector is one of the most dynamic areas in the social arena. The many changes - physical, emotional and psychological - which take place between the ages of 12 and 18 are enormous. The Big Brother Big Sister mentoring programme where an older person helps to guide a younger person through this change is a prime example of Foróige's willingness to enthusiastically try new approaches to meet the needs of our young people.

In November 2005, I was delighted to present the Foróige Citizenship Awards. This occasion afforded me an opportunity to publicly acknowledge and recognise the achievements of so many Foróige clubs. I was greatly impressed by the work undertaken by the young people from Cavan, Cork, Longford, Monaghan, Roscommon, Westmeath and Wexford who received Citizenship Awards that evening. Foróige's long established commitment to the promotion of citizenship and the conscious and active involvement of members in their own development and in the development of their communities ensures that the purpose of the organisation is translated into practical achievements by young people at local level.

Looking at the broader picture, I am pleased that the additional funding secured in 2005 for the youth work sector allowed me to invest further in the development of programmes and projects. In particular in 2005, once-off funding was made available to youth work organisations, including Foróige, to assist them in preparing for the implementation of the Youth Work Act, 2001. The capacity development of Vocational Education Committees (VECs) to carry

out the responsibilities set out for them in the Act is also a vital area which is receiving priority attention. Also in 2005, I was pleased to sanction extra resources for Foróige to employ additional staff to support the implementation of your programmes and services and to enhance current support of youth workers at regional and local level.

Further progress has also been made in the past twelve months in the implementation of the National Youth Work Development Plan, 2003-2007 including the establishment of ten new projects for disadvantaged youth, the up-grade of twenty single worker special projects to two-worker projects, continued support for the Child Protection Training Programme and reviews of Youth Work Funding and Youth Information Provision. In addition, the recruitment process for an Assessor of Youth Work is well under way. The additional funding made available from the Government in 2006 will enable us to build on the achievements of 2005 and to progress the youth development plan agenda.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the staff and leaders of Foróige. The successful development of young people involved in Foróige is due in no small way to the dedication and commitment, not to mention energy, of all those who act as mentors and who work continuously to meet their needs. A special note of thanks is due to the volunteer leaders who together with staff, have met the many challenges presented to them and have continued to lay a firm foundation for the future development and progress of Foróige. Your involvement in mentoring, coaching and encouraging personal and social development of young people is one of which we can all be proud.

To Séan Campbell, CEO, and his team and all those involved with the work of Foróige, thank you for your work and commitment and I wish you every success in the coming twelve months.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Síle de Valera'. The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Síle de Valera T.D.,
Minister for Youth Affairs

Séumas O'Brien

Chairperson of the National Council of Foróige



As my time as Chairperson draws to a close, I reflect in celebration of the great achievements of Foróige and look forward to witnessing what the future holds for the organisation with a sense of excitement and optimism.

Our sustained emphasis on development and growth has continued apace and it is wonderful to report that club numbers increased again this year. This demonstrates very clearly the commitment and vitality of Foróige's wonderful and expanding team of volunteers, who are working in communities to transform the lives of young people in a time when many claim that volunteerism is dead. They refute this hypothesis with every minute they spend in their clubs or projects and I salute them for it. Make no mistake, volunteerism is alive and well and it is Foróige's absolute intention to ensure that our leaders are better supported than ever. The imminent appointment of a new Area Manager, two new Regional Youth Officers and a new administrative support person, will undoubtedly benefit development in the mainline area enormously.

We have continued to work at fostering greater unity of purpose and service within the Foróige family. New projects and services are coming on-stream all the time and we are continuing to develop and grow Big Brother Big Sister in Ireland. Headquarters was successfully relocated in October and we launched our new corporate identity and website. Yes, a very busy and successful year.

Looking forward, I believe that our new logo tagline, *empowering youth enriching communities*, speaks for what we are and what our aspiration really is. It strongly states that Foróige believes that young people are an asset in a time that many commentators view them as a problem. All of our drive, initiative and creativity must focus on making sure that we provide the best service by the best trained and committed volunteers and staff in the country. Foróige is, and has always been, an organisation that leads the way - nothing must ever deflect us from this path.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the scores of volunteers and staff who make this organisation great, it is not an easy time to be young, and your guidance is needed now more than ever. It is vital that our young people have such positive role models in their communities, promoting the spirit and value of volunteerism, which we hope will continue into their adult lives.

I have worked hard over the last two years to make my vision of a further unified and strong Foróige a reality, but I realise that I have only made a start, I hope that the stone that I have dropped in the lake will continue to create ripples which will spread into every crevice of the organisation to carry on the process of renewal and reinvigoration.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to everyone associated with the Clubs and Projects around the country who have been so welcoming to me during my term in office. It has meant a great deal to me. I regard my role as a Foróige leader to be an honour and a privilege. I would hope that other leaders, whether in Foróige clubs or projects, would feel the same way.

Go n-éirigh go geal libh sa mbliain amach roimh.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Séumas O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Séan Campbell

Chief Executive Officer of Foróige



It gives me great pleasure to report on some of the highlights of what has been a fantastic year in Foróige. Anyone reading this Annual Review cannot help but be struck by the new logo, tagline and corporate image, which reflect the vibrancy and vitality of Foróige.

The tagline, *empowering youth enriching communities*, reinforces our steadfast belief in the goodness of young people and in their potential to influence change for good in society. The corporate colours are bold and confident, creating a sense of energy, creativity and youthfulness. This is a unique mark, which aptly symbolises a unique organisation committed to quality, excellence and action.

This update in corporate image was a long process involving all aspects of the organisation including the Reference Panel, District Councils, National Council and Staff. I want to acknowledge these contributions, but I especially wish to recognise the dedication of the sub-committee who oversaw the project from concept to finished product over an eight-month period.

The roll out of the corporate image is well under way and was greatly complimented by a new and improved website which we launched in December.

November saw Foróige's headquarters move to new premises in Park West. We spent over thirty happy and successful years in the Irish Farm Centre but had outgrown it and needed additional space to allow us to continue the pace of growth and development of recent years.

We were delighted to host the International board of Big Brothers Big Sisters and an International Leadership Conference involving 16 nationalities in October. It provided us with the opportunity to showcase Foróige internationally and to help strengthen the International Big Brothers Big Sisters movement. The programme, which we have piloted in the west over the last few years is now ready to expand nationally and will become a major part of Foróige.

Through out the year the organisation continued to grow and develop and we again witnessed an increase in the number of clubs and projects. This is testimony to the hard work and

devotion of numerous volunteers and staff throughout the country. Your work has enabled us to reach out and engage many more young people in developmental youth programmes.

I want to thank our many funding agencies and partners for their ongoing support and for the faith they place in Foróige on a daily basis. I particularly pay tribute to Minister for Youth Affairs, Síle de Valera TD and the officials from the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science, for securing additional funding for the mainline organisation. Foróige Clubs are the backbone of the organisation and this significant move will positively impact on the quality and quantity of Foróige Clubs around the country.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the young people, volunteer leaders, staff & management of Foróige for their commitment and the true excellence of their work to achieve the fundamental purpose of the organisation.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the members of the National Council and National Executive who lead and govern Foróige in unselfish dedication to the young people we serve.

I wish you all continued success for the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Séan Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the text "I wish you all continued success for the year ahead."

Foróige Gets a Brand New Look

Foróige launched a new corporate identity this year, which was developed in conjunction with Red Dog Design Consultants, to represent the organisation's core purpose, philosophy and values.

The result is a memorable, dynamic mark that reflects the vibrancy, strength and diversity of Foróige. The new tagline *empowering youth, enriching communities* is a bold and powerful statement of the organisation's commitment to young people and communities.

Speaking at the launch of the new look Foróige, Séumas O' Brien, Chairperson of the National Council of Foróige, said that "the identity we replaced had been in position since the early 1990's and has served the organisation very well, but in the intervening years Ireland has changed significantly and Foróige has changed in response. So while our mission, which is *'to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society'* remains absolutely steadfast, the ways in which we fulfil this mission have changed and evolved – this is what our new mark represents – it is a mixture of old and new – keeping the arrow of development that has been a familiar part of our brand image since the organisations founding in 1952, but presenting it in a way that reflects the changing environments in which we work and the vibrancy of the young people we work for."

Foróige Website gets a Make-over

Foróige's website has undergone a dramatic make-over to reflect the new corporate identity. There are lots of new and interesting features, so make sure you check it out on www.foroige.ie



Foróige Headquarters has Moved!

Foróige Headquarters has made a much needed move to specifically designed premises at;

Block 12D : Joyce Way : Park West : Dublin 12

t: 630 1560 f: 630 1568 e: info@foroige.ie



Coosan Foróige Club's Trip of a Lifetime to Zambia

"Moni alendo, mabwera kuno", which means welcome visitors to our home in Zambia, is a greeting that will ring in the ears of Members and Leaders of Coosan Foróige Club, Co. Westmeath, for a long time to come. Fr. James McKiernan, a voluntary Leader with the Club, recalls how the trip came about and how it changed the lives of people from two small communities on two different continents forever.

"In November 2004 I returned from a trip to Zambia and was quickly asked by the members of Coosan Foróige Club if they could go to Zambia and make their own contribution to the developing country. I explored the possibility with Fr. Martin Mc Gowan from Petauke, Eastern Zambia and after he consulted with his Parish Council, the Club received an invitation to visit. The Club quickly set about fixing a date, organising flights, passports, vaccinations and fundraising for the once in a lifetime trip. Through the enormous help and support of individuals and groups, €30,000 was raised, €9,000 towards subsidising the trip and the remainder we brought with us to fund a variety of projects in Petauke. We also collected computers, educational equipment, toys and medical supplies, which DHL transported to Zambia free of charge.

After an 11-hour flight we arrived in Lusaka airport and set out on the 7-hour journey to Petauke. The buzz of excitement was palpable among the 21 members and leaders who had travelled. We arrived at our destination at 11pm and were warmly greeted by our host families. Two members were adopted by each host family and in the dark of night each group left for their African home. It wasn't until sunrise on the following morning that reality hit us, as a completely different way of life un-folded before our eyes.

Projects had been pre-arranged and all the girls were dispatched to begin painting the Out-Station Church. The boys were assigned to collecting bricks, stones and sand for a new Grinding Mill, which would generate income for the Parish, and then to digging

foundations. On the second day a group of the girls went to the local hospital to begin painting cots, beds and the children's ward and the others set about purchasing curtains, mattresses, bed linen and blankets for the hospital.

In the three weeks we were allowed one day off during which we travelled to Chassa Parish as guests of the local priest, Fr. Noel, and some local young people. We travelled to Nyanje and had a picnic on top of a small hill. I still don't know whether digging foundations or climbing the hill in intense heat was the most difficult, none the less it was a very enjoyable diversion.

In the days before we left, we had a memorable 'handing over ceremony.' I will never forget, first of all the fear, and then the joy, on the faces of the young children in the hospital when they received the toys – they had never had toys before and they were scared of them.

Naturally enough we couldn't spend all the money in three weeks, so we directed that it be used to purchase and then grind maize for the local people, buy furniture for a new pre-school, help renovate a Church and help an AIDS orphan project.

The trip has greatly impacted and even changed our lives. One can only experience the plight of these people by being with them. We have helped in a small way, but the bonds forged, the experience gained, the dreams fulfilled, the impact made, has changed us forever"



Youth Participation in Foróige's Youth Cafés

Foróige Youth Cafés are centres that provide a safe place for young people to be themselves, meet friends, share concerns with each other and staff and access appropriate information and services to enable them to lead happy, healthy and connected lives. Foróige manages three such cafés, The Zone in Blanchardstown, EXIT in Tallaght, both of which are funded by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency and the C.R.I.B in Sligo, funded by the Health Service Executive. Anne-Marie Kelly, Project Leader, the C.R.I.B. Youth Project & Health Café, reports on how youth committees play a real and meaningful role in the operation of the Cafés.

Since the C.R.I.B. opened its doors in January 2003 young people have been involved in a significant, practical and upfront manner. Some of the structures that enable this to happen include youth forums, feedback systems and the youth committee.

The C.R.I.B. youth committee is becoming an institution and not beyond the reach of any young person who is willing to give it a go. The young people on the committee believe in their participation because it is real, they see and hear the value of their role in the project and, to make it even better, they enjoy themselves too!

Being a committee member means that young people have a say in what goes on in the Project, they organise and run events, they work the café, they make choices, give ideas and opinions so that the Project can implement a better service. Not only do the committee contribute to the internal working of the Project, they also represent the C.R.I.B. at conferences and events.

At the moment an ex-youth committee member volunteers with a Project Worker in the C.R.I.B. to have weekly meetings with the young people. The youth committee operates like a Foróige Club with Chair, Secretary and so on. Staff put issues onto the committee agenda for discussion and feedback is taken at staff team meetings, and vice versa. The personal skills they develop as a committee member empowers the young people involved in other areas of their lives and proof of this can be seen in case by case examples.

The youth committee remain one of the key parts of what makes the Project special. They are living out what CRIB stands for.....making Choices being Responsible, giving their Ideas and Belonging to something that is bigger than themselves as individuals.



Working in Communities – Garda Youth Diversion Projects

Garda Youth Diversion Projects are community based, multi-agency crime prevention initiatives which seek to divert young people from becoming involved (or further involved) in anti-social or criminal behaviour by providing suitable activities to facilitate personal development and promote civic responsibility. The Garda Youth Diversion Projects are funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and administered through the Garda Community Relations Section.

Foróige currently operates and manages 18 Garda Youth Diversion Projects. Each project is managed by a multi-agency and community based committee, which is responsible for the strategic direction of the project. Annette Flemming, Co-ordinator, Bandon Justice Project, reports on the very effective work methods adopted by these special projects.

Bandon Justice Project has been in existence since 2001 and the area hasn't looked back since. It is a very active project and there is always something creative going on to stimulate learning and channel the energy of the young people involved in a positive manner. Young people often need some help to reach their full potential and the project does this by showing them more positive ways of enjoying their leisure time, involving them in safe developmental activities and encouraging them to contribute to the needs of the community.

Both educational and recreational activities are used as tools to help in the prevention of criminal and anti-social behaviour. These are fun activities that range from fishing and arts and crafts to drama, cookery and rock climbing. Each activity has specific learning objectives.

Personal development is an important part of the work of the project and young people learn valuable life skills including how to assert themselves, conflict resolution and positive decision-making skills. Intensive one to one work is also used to deal with difficult and sensitive issues to enable the young person lead a healthy and productive life.

The project plays an important, supportive role in the community by offering guidance and advice to parents. It encourages the establishment and maintenance of positive and productive relationships with young people and their families and equips young people with skills to lead healthy lives. Where necessary, referrals are made to family therapists and counsellors.

Volunteerism is a crucial part of the work of the project in Bandon, which trains volunteer youth leaders to support and guide young people. Torlac O'Reilly, a volunteer with the project, says that "Volunteering is a fantastic experience and it's a great way of giving something to the community. It's a good opportunity to be a positive role model for local young people, but I also have to say that I get great fun out of it too. The training provided by the project really helps, it gives you the confidence to get stuck in and work with groups or individual young people as need be."



A Canadian Adventure for Foróige Members

“If you had one shot, one opportunity, to seize everything you ever wanted in one moment would you capture it, or just let it slip?... you only get one shot, do not miss your chance... this opportunity comes once in a lifetime”
Eminem

Four very talented and lucky Foróige members had their lifetime opportunity this year when they spent two weeks in Canada as part of a cross border initiative, entitled **Breaking Borders Building Bridges**, with members of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, National Youth Council of Ireland and the National Youth Federation. Daragh Clancy, Edel Burke, Miriam Hallahan and Eoin Rogers, all members of Foróige's Reference Panel, were part of a team of 20 young people and six leaders who took part in the programme, which was funded by the Ireland Fund of Canada. Colin McAree, Foróige's Area Manager, Eastern Region, Reports.

The purpose of the trip was to enable participants to engage with and take an active lead in the development of their local community. The programme challenged the young people and directed them onto a voyage of self-discovery through a series of workshops including conflict resolution and negotiation skills, communication, diversity and uniqueness, leadership skills and world vision. Through these sessions the young people developed their own competencies and grew to become people who passionately care about the lives of others and their communities.

Edel Burke, Newcastle Foróige Club, Co. Galway commented "It has given me the self confidence and self belief to follow through on my ideas. Prior to this, I wouldn't have felt that I could inspire change on my own, now I have proved to myself that I can do it."

The trip consisted of three days camping in Halliburton Forest where the group experienced the extremes of Canadian weather, canoeing and a camp fire sing song that will live long in the memory.

Five days at Muskoka Woods, a dedicated camp for young people, was the highlight of the trip. Group work, beach activities, outdoor pursuits and a motivational speech from camp director Joe Mc Cauley were all highlights. Eoin Rogers, Knocklyon Foróige Club, Co. Dublin said that "the welcome at Muskoka Woods was amazing, the trip gave me the opportunity to get to know others really well, but also to know myself better and to look at how I interact with others, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Daragh Clancy explained "I was a bit nervous at first, but I felt so comfortable around the group, I could be myself. I learned that I can do whatever I set my mind on and to share my views. It has made me more self confident and motivated. It made me see that I can be an example to others."

The final three days were spent in a comfortable downtown hotel in Toronto; with a must do visit to Tim Horton's cafe; a soccer match against a local Canadian team, a trip to celebrity chef Mildred Peaces' Restaurant and an amazing outing to Niagara Falls.

Miriam commented "I had such a great time and never thought learning new skills would be so much fun and so enjoyable!"

The overwhelming feedback was that the programme was a life changing experience for the members that enhanced and honed their skills, enabling and empowering them to deliver youth participation projects in their respective local communities.



The National Foróige Citizenship Awards 2005

The Royal Hospital in Dublin's Kilmainham was the place to be last November when eight excited Foróige groups were honoured for their outstanding work demonstrating good citizenship in their local communities at the National Foróige Citizenship Awards 2005.

Singers and dancers entertained an upbeat audience, who were also treated to creative stage presentations from all eight of the award winners on the content and impact of their projects. The Foróige Citizenship Awards, which are sponsored by the Wrigley Company, are open to Foróige's 421 Clubs and 98 Projects nationwide.

Citizenship is at the very core of Foróige's work, it is a key component of the organisation's purpose – which is to enable young people to involve themselves, consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society. The programme empowers young people, it enhances their human

development and it enables them to realise that they do have the power to make a difference in the world in which they live.

Séumas O'Brien, Chairperson, National Council, Foróige, speaking at the Awards said "Foróige has been involved in promoting the value of active Citizenship since 1969. Since then young people involved in the organisation have been a major force for good in communities all over Ireland – they have reached out to the most vulnerable people in society, they have raised millions of Euro for various charitable causes and have improved the quality of life for so many communities in both urban and rural areas."

And the winners are...



Monamolin Foróige Club, Co. Wexford : The members of Monamolin Foróige Club researched, wrote, designed and funded a publication on the culture and heritage of their local area entitled 'The Rare Auld Times.' The publication is a wonderful collection of old cures, local stories, old wive's tales and songs that the members feared would be lost if they weren't written down.



Boher Foróige Club, Co. Westmeath : Young people from Boher Foróige Club renovated the historic St. Brigid's Well after it had fallen into disrepair following the death of the local man who had taken care of it for many years. The club members built a wall around the well, cleared the water of rubbish and algae, painted the entrance gate and planted shrubs to restore the well to a place that the whole locality could enjoy.



Killeevan Foróige Club : Leaders and Members of Killeevan Foróige Club ran a summer camp for the younger kids of their area. The weeklong programme involved lots of sporting activities, arts and crafts workshops and dance, music and drama classes.



Castletara Foróige Club : In response to the growing problem of drug misuse among young people, a member of Castletara Foróige Club wrote a drama about drugs awareness. The Club then produced the drama and staged it in Foróige Clubs and schools in the area to promote drugs awareness to their peers.



LEAP Project, Co. Longford : The young participants in the LEAP Project decided to run a 'Youth Bank' so that they could help a number of needy groups or clubs in their local area. They engaged in an intensive fundraising campaign and raised €8,000, that they divided into a number of small grants and awarded to local initiatives after a rigorous application process.



Skibbereen Foróige Club, Co. Cork : The Foróige Club in Skibbereen, West Cork, organised a spectacular charity variety show that celebrated the culture and heritage of their local area. The young members organised every aspect of the show from designing the tickets to lighting the stage.



Moore Foróige Club, Co. Roscommon : Members of Moore Foróige Club tidied up the area outside the parish hall in which they meet. They painted a mural, planted shrubs and greenery and cleaned the area up. They also hosted a big celebration for the oldest woman in the area who was turning 100 and on the night of the party she officially opened the garden (as she had lived in Moore all her life.)



Loughglynn Foróige Club, Co. Roscommon : Loughglynn Foróige Club teamed up with Crumlin Hospital and fundraised over €3,500 through a variety of methods including a foodfair and a table quiz. They also decided that instead of buying each other Christmas presents they would donate the money to the fund.

Young People from Blanchardstown and Tallaght Get Active in their Communities

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has" Margaret Mead

ABC Awards

In 2005 the inaugural ABC Awards (Active in Blanchardstown Communities) took place in Blanchardstown. The programme was developed by the Foróige managed Blanchardstown Youth Service and enabled young people to investigate their communities, identify areas for improvement and take action to improve them. This initiative was based on Foróige's Citizenship Programme. Rachael Murphy, Senior Youth Officer, Blanchardstown Youth Service, Reports.

Projects ranged from raising money for local charities to organising a community sports day to designing and painting a mural to raising awareness about disability. In many ways, it was not the action that was most important but the process that the young people went through. A special awards night for participants was held in October and was attended by Minister of State for Children, Brian Lenihan T.D.

The recognition the young people received from their community for their work has inspired all the groups to become more active in their local area. In total over 100 young people, representing nine different groups, participated in the programme. They have seen that they can make a significant difference. Young people who were involved in the programme have changed from being passive to active members of their communities. The programme allowed members to develop a sense of identity and realise the positive impact of their actions on their community.

Community Spirit Awards

The Tallaght Youth Service Community Spirit Awards are an annual youth awards scheme that allow local youth groups enter a citizenship project under one of four categories, services to the community; environment; social issues/human rights and culture. Valerie Scully, Senior Youth Officer, Tallaght Youth Service, reports on this year's event.

The Community Spirit Awards are a great opportunity for young people to develop citizenship skills, impact on their community and become actively involved in its development. The programme is based on the belief that each young person can make a difference to the world around them, and contribute to the development of society.

Projects had to include three sections, awareness, action and evaluation. Each club that participated received a framed certificate recognising their achievement and participation. Each category winner and runner up received a cheque as their prize.

Celebrity guest Ray D'Arcy was particularly impressed with the 2005 projects and with the overall winner – Little by Little Club from Kilnamanagh. This group undertook a project to say thank you to their community, they planted flowers and distributed them to the elderly, to the local church, to businesses and to new comers to the area.



Galway Junior Certificate Students Celebrate in Style

Junior Certificate results night has become synonymous with media reports of the drunken antics and bad behaviour of young people. In a bid to redress this, Foróige Galway, in partnership with the Health Service Executive, Galway City Partnership, An Garda Síochaná, Galway City Council and the Galway City Secondary Schools, organised a huge party night that gave the young people of the area a chance to celebrate in a safe, drug and alcohol free environment. Paul Tannian, Project Leader, Ballinfoile Neighbourhood Youth Project, reports on how things went on the night.

Every Junior Certificate student in Galway City, on receipt of their results, got a free invitation to the celebratory party night. The night, which kicked off at 8.30pm and ended at 12am, proved a resounding success, with over 500 young people attending the disco. Security was tight and all revellers were searched on entering the venue and no alcohol or drugs confiscated at the door. Happily, there was no evidence of drink or drugs inside, before, during or after the event. Parents were contacted if the young people left the disco early, but very few did leave, as the fun was so good inside.

After the event, both young people and Parents commented on how well the event was run and how enjoyable it was for the students. Reports from the Gardaí were also very positive, with a major reduction of incidents and accident and emergency admissions compared with previous years.

The success of this initiative was due to a number of factors, one of which was how well the organising partners worked as a team. The system where students had to complete an application form proved to be another great idea as the form included a passport photograph, contact details for their parents and was stamped by the school. The disco was very well supervised by volunteers from youth and family support agencies and a group of staff members from Hibernian Insurance on the night.

The event will definitely go ahead next year and really highlighted the need for alcohol and drug free facilities for young people.

Foróige Leads the Way with Addition to Drugs Guidelines

Foróige is committed to the prevention of drug misuse among young people, but in the harsh reality of modern Ireland, the organisation must also recognise that some young people are already misusing drugs, so it is important that we go beyond prevention alone and broaden our approach to include Harm Reduction. Harm reduction reaches out to these young people and uses prevention and education strategies to significantly reduce the harm resulting from drug misuse. Fiona Casey, Foróige's Drugs Misuse Prevention Officer, reports on the initiative.

For some young people involved in substance misuse, evidence suggests that the traditional approach of focusing solely on prevention is not effective. For this reason, Foróige has examined its whole approach to drug education and a sub-committee was formed comprising of staff and members of the National Executive to look at introducing harm reduction procedures.

The sub-committee worked very hard and has drawn up a comprehensive set of harm reduction guidelines, for staff and volunteers, which have been approved by the National Executive. The group is currently working on designing a harm reduction programme to accompany the document. The primary target group will be young people involved in Foróige's special projects and services.

Foróige is the first youth organisation to draw up such procedures and the development of our Harm Reduction Guidelines is a very positive step.

Empowering Youth Enriching Communities : The Views of Foróige's Reference Panel

The Foróige Reference Panel is made up of 22 Foróige Club Officers, democratically elected at Regional Conferences all over the country. At their first meeting they elect four members to the National Council of Foróige. The main function of the Reference Panel is to make recommendations on the future development of the organisation.



**Kamen Reilly : Secretary
Burtonport Foróige Club, Co. Donegal**
Is the Reference Panel a good idea?
"The Reference Panel is a really good way of making sure that young people have a say and get involved in how Foróige is run. I feel great about being elected and I can't wait to get stuck in and make sure that our voices are heard."



**Lisa Harnett : Chairperson
Abbey Devils Foróige Club, Abbeyfeale,
Co. Limerick**
Has Foróige made a difference in your area?
"Foróige has made a big difference in Abbeyfealeas it brings the young people of the area together and gives us a chance to prove that we're not as bad as some people think we are. We do lots of good things in the community and we always help out at local events."



**Aaron Leonard : Chairperson
Aghabog Foróige Club, Co. Monaghan**
Why did you join Foróige?
"I joined the Foróige Club for something to do on a Friday night. We have great fun. We have our meeting, then usually play football for a while, listen to music and chill out. We have lots of inter-club events, which are great because they give us a chance to get to know members from other Clubs. The Disco in Emyvale was the best one."



**Michael Curtin : Chairperson
Celbridge Foróige Club, Co Kildare**

Do you think Foróige is a good thing?

"Foróige gives young people an alternative to just hanging about on the streets. There are lots of sports Clubs in the area, but if you are not into sports or if you fancy something different, then Foróige is a great thing to get involved in. The members run the Club, so that means that we choose what we do ourselves and aren't pushed into doing activities that we aren't interested in."



**Geraldine Flaherty : Chairperson
Ballymacward Foróige Club, Co. Galway**

Is it good to have Foróige in your area?

"On our Foróige nights we play soccer, pool, darts, table tennis, air hockey and we organise fund raisers. We also take part in lots of inter-club events, District Council sports days and drama and variety competitions. I wouldn't be able to do any of these activities if I wasn't a member of the Club – so I'm definitely happy that it's in my area."



**David Raftery : Chairperson
Clarinbridge Foróige Club, Co. Galway**

What has been the highlight of your Foróige year?

"One of the best things that we have done in our Club is water safety training. We have our meetings beside the local swimming pool, so it was handy for us to organise. I really learned a lot from it and am much more careful around water now. We have also started to do self-defence, which is good to have – I hope that I never have to use it though!"



**Chloe Walsh : Secretary
Curry Foróige Club, Co. Sligo**

Tell me something about your Club?

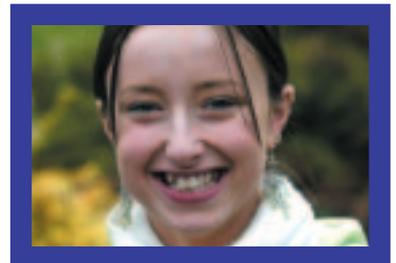
"Our Club has been up and running for over 30 years now. We put together a book on the history of the Club for our 30th anniversary last year. It was hard work, but we had loads of fun and it was really worth it in the end. I think that every area should have a Foróige Club to give young people a place to go and hang out."



**John Starrs, Chairperson
Act-up Drama Foróige Club, Co. Dublin**

What do you get up to on your Club nights?

"There's a satisfying feeling about being involved in something that is fun, but where you learn new things. We do lots of drama in our Club and it's brilliant. My acting has definitely gotten better since I joined, so if I keep on improving, you never know, you might even see me on the telly some day!"



**Edel Walsh : Secretary
Lacken Foróige Club, Co. Mayo**

Why did you join Foróige?

"I joined Foróige because it sounded fun and there is no other Club like it in our area for young people. I get a great sense of achievement out of being secretary of the Club, it's a fun place to go during the week and it's great to meet your friends."



**Sinéad Smith : Chairperson
Killygarry Foróige Club, Co. Cavan**
What has been your best Foróige moment so far?

"My best Foróige moment so far was when we went bag packing to raise funds last year. We didn't think that it would be a fun activity, but we ended up having great craic and gathered lots of money. Our Club has been running for over 8 years now and is going great. I was really happy when I was elected Chairperson this year."



**Christopher McGlynn, Chairperson
Burtonport Foróige Club, Co. Donegal**
What do you get out of being a Foróige member?

"I was kind of Shy when I joined Foróige and then through taking part in meetings and getting to know the other members I became more confident and then it didn't bother me to speak in public any more. The best thing about Foróige is making new friends and taking part in projects that help other people. You feel great when you do something good."



**Gráinne O'Reilly : Chairperson
Ballisodare Foróige Club, Co. Sligo**
What type of activities do you do on your Club nights?

"Our Club only started up this year, so it's great to have a place like the Reference Panel where I can meet other members from all around Ireland and get ideas to bring back to my Club. We have great fun and do lots of different activities like origami and debating."



**Heather Ging : Secretary
Ratheniska Foróige Club, Co. Kilkenny**
Why did you join Foróige?

"My sister was a member of Foróige and she said that it was mad craic, so I couldn't wait to join. We meet on a Friday evening for a few hours and I've met some really great people and loads of new friends through the Club. I love having somewhere to go and something to do on a Friday when the school week is over and you can relax."



**Mark Whelan : Chairperson
Monamolín Foróige Club, Co. Wexford**
What has been your best Foróige moment so far?

"My best Foróige moments have been winning three Citizenship Awards in a row. We work hard on our projects all year and it's great to get recognised for it. The ceremony is always good fun and it's nice to do stuff that benefits the whole community."



**Lisa O'Shea : Chairperson
Davidstown Foróige Club, Co. Wexford**
What are the main pressures on young people these days?

"There is pressure put on young people from all directions these days. We have to be the smartest, best looking, most perfect person – but we can only do our best. Sometimes the pressure can really get to young people, so having somewhere like Foróige to go is helpful. The reference panel is brilliant too as we can discuss these issues and look at what can be done."



**Pdraig Heavin : Chairperson
Mount Temple Foróige Club, Co. Westmeath**
Why did you join Foróige?

"I joined Foróige so that I could do something good with my time. We get involved in all sorts of things that are happening in the community and lots of local groups call on us if they need help with an event or anything. It's good to show that young people can be mature and responsible – we're not all bad."

“The Reference Panel is a really good way of making sure that young people have a say and get involved in how Foróige is run.”



**Kieran Murphy : Chairperson
Abbeyfeale Foróige Club, Co Limerick**
What has been your best Foróige moment so far?

"My best Foróige moment so far was beating a rival band in the battle of the bands competition. It was great. Foróige has definitely made a difference in my area. I think that the community have a more positive image of Young People because they see us making an effort to fund raise and get involved in local activities."



**Maria Conlon : Secretary
Tang Foróige Club, Co. Westmeath**
Does Foróige make a difference in your area?

"Foróige makes a difference in my area because not only do the members of the Club help out in the community, but it also helps keep young people occupied and out of trouble. We have fun and sometimes it's just good to have somewhere to go to just chill out with your friends."



**Daire McGee : Chairperson
Lacken Foróige Club, Co. Mayo**
Is the Reference Panel a good idea?

"I think that the Reference Panel is a really good thing because you get a chance to meet other members, share ideas and talk about things that we would like to see Foróige doing. All my friends joined at the same time as I did, so it's always a great chance to hang out and do stuff together, like when we raised money to buy Christmas lights for our area."know how to conduct proper meetings.

This year's Reference Panel met for a weekend on the 10th – 12th February in NUI Maynooth. They focused on the theme *empowering youth enriching communities*. This is Foróige's new tagline and captures the essence of what the organisation is all about. The main question they discussed was

"How can Foróige best empower young people to live more fully and to have a greater influence on their community and society?"

Initially the Reference Panel explored what empowerment meant to them. They had interesting views. They saw empowerment as becoming more independent and "being able to do things on your own". They saw it as "having the strength to believe what you choose to believe", "having the courage to voice your true opinion" and "feeling good about yourself."

The group examined how they themselves had become empowered through Foróige. Looking back on their own experiences they identified the following factors as being highly significant.

- Being able to speak out in front of the group
- Being listened to
- Taking responsibility for their own actions
- Learning through challenging club projects
- Making their own decisions in the club
- Meeting new people and making new friends
- Respect for the uniqueness of each member

The Reference Panel then made recommendations as to how more Foróige members could become empowered in the club. The following is a flavour of their ideas:

- More small-group activities where members could mix with people they don't know.
- More challenging projects "where every member gets a job"
- Special activities for older teenagers within the club
- A special sub-committee and mentoring system for junior members
- Using message boards on the web site to exchange ideas and involve members

The Reference Panel also discussed ways that clubs could have a greater influence in the community and local politics. Some of their ideas included:

- Building on-going relationships with local politicians.
- Inviting politicians to functions and to club meetings.
- Presenting their ideas/research on what should be happening in the area to politicians, community councils and other relevant institutions.
- Having representation on parish/community councils and other relevant bodies.

Overall, the Reference Panel came up with a rich variety of recommendations and it was also obvious from these discussions that the club could be, and often is, a substantive force in the community and in local politics. Foróige clubs have the correct structure to be the place where members learn the important political skills of influencing a democracy.

A more detailed report on the Reference Panel meeting is available from Foróige Headquarters and is well worth reading.

Big Brother Big Sister Highlights

Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) is a preventive mentoring programme that matches an adult volunteer to a young person who needs a little extra support. The programme, which is operated by Foróige, began in Ireland in 2000 and has expanded rapidly since then. The volunteers are recruited from the communities in which the programme is offered and they are matched to young people based on their interests and personalities. BBBS currently operates in Counties Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo.

Big Brother Big Sister Recognises Excellence

It was with great anticipation that volunteers and young people from all parts of Galway, Roscommon and Mayo converged on the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Galway for the first ever BBBS Recognition Event. Peter Duffy, Co-ordinator, BBBS programme in Mayo, reports.

There was great excitement as BBBS Ireland formally recognised the dedication and commitment of over 100 volunteers and young people who have participated in the programme since it was first piloted back in 2000.

Programme participants, Orla Higgins and Tanya Ryan, were the MC's for the evening and they got proceedings off to a great start with an enthusiastic welcome for representatives of youth organisations, schools, Gardaí, and Health Service Executive (HSE) to the special event. Séumas O'Brien, Chairperson of the National Council of Foróige and Dr. Trish O Flynn, Family Support Manager, HSE, presented certificates of achievement to both past and present BBBS Matches. Also in attendance was Minister Frank Fahey, who formally launched the BBBS Evaluation Report, which was conducted by the Child and Family Research and Policy Unit, HSE / NUI Galway during 2005.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Mr. Séan Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of Foróige and Director of BBBS Ireland, spoke of his delight at the expansion and success of the Programme: "It is an honour to be here at this recognition event. I want to sincerely congratulate all of the volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters for their dedication to the programme and to the young people to whom they are matched."

"The BBBS Programme is still in its infancy in Ireland – but in the past year it has really started to take grip and capture the imagination. Foróige is absolutely committed to ensuring that the BBBS Programme is rolled out nationwide over the coming years and we are honoured that so many funding agencies have recognised the potential of this initiative and are partnering us to realise this goal. "

"It is my desire that BBBS continues to flourish as the premier mentoring programme in Ireland, providing the highest possible standards of service to young people. To achieve this, it is important that volunteers are recognised for their commitment and effort, and are always afforded the highest levels of support and guidance. Already, plans are at an advanced stage to roll out the programme nationally. We will shortly appoint a BBBS National Manager and publish a Strategic Plan for the Programme as it develops over the next number of years."



Foróige Hosts Momentous Big Brother Big Sister International Event

Last October Foróige extended a Céad Míle Fáilte to the BBBS International family. A meeting of the Board of BBBS International and a coinciding leadership meeting of BBBS programmes from no less than 15 countries made a truly memorable and historic occasion. The highlight of the event was a banquet that brought all of the international delegates together with matches from the Irish BBBS Programme and members of Foróige's National Executive. It was a night to remember for all present and proved to be a wonderful international showcase for the work of Foróige and BBBS Ireland.

Big Brother Big Sister Ireland Evaluation Report 2005

In 2005, the HSE and NUI Galway, Child and Family Research and Policy Unit, to evaluate the BBBS Programme in Ireland, undertook an extensive research.

This is a hugely important document for BBBS Ireland as it formally underlines the benefits for young people participating in the programme. In addition to the obvious gains made from developing a positive friendship, the study also documents how young people gain confidence, improve their communication skills and develop more positive outlooks on life and the future as a direct result of their involvement in the programme.

The study also makes several key recommendations for the operation of the Programme as it continues to expand and develop.

In its conclusions, the report states, "the Programme has been extremely successful in terms of the spread and support it has achieved over the past three years. It is culturally appropriate, well integrated into local structures and highly valued among young people, mentors, parents and staff. The Programme should be continued and expanded."

Congratulations must go to the research team, which consisted of Bernadine Brady, Dr. Pat Dolan, Maeve O'Brien and John Canavan, for their professionalism and expertise in compiling this report

Newest Addition to the Big Brother Big Sister Programme

BBBS is now operating in Sligo town with the appointment of a new co-ordinator, Yvonne McManus, in October 2005. The programme is developing rapidly with many volunteers already on board who are just about set to become Big Brothers or Big Sisters.

"The enthusiasm from young people, parents and volunteers for the BBBS programme has been amazing in the North West and we are all very excited to see the first matches coming on stream" says Yvonne of the newly established programme.



Meet Some Former Foróige Members



David Stanton T.D., Cork East and former member of Ladysbridge Foróige Club, Co. Cork.

"I am a T.D. today because I joined Macra na Tuaithe (now Foróige) when I was 13 years old. We had great fun and also developed important skills in leadership, citizenship, public speaking and teamwork. It was because of my experiences and personal satisfaction in helping younger members as a Leader that I became a teacher and guidance counsellor, prior to becoming a T.D. We were also very lucky in Ladysbridge that we had a talented and dedicated leader in Mrs. Bridie Bailey who sadly passed away recently. Under her leadership we achieved Best Club of the Year twice and a National Citizenship Award. I appreciate the great contribution Foróige makes to youth work in Ireland. That is why, as a T.D. I continue to call for increased resources for our youth services and why I want to see the Youth Work Act 2001 and National Youth Development Plan fully implemented."

Thursday night for four years and I loved it, I really developed as a person during that time and we had so much fun as a group that when I became too old for the Club I just didn't want to leave. I then became a junior leader and I was really happy to be able to give something back, at that time, I didn't realise that I personally would get so much out of being a leader. I have had the opportunity to do some great training courses through Foróige, it has been a brilliant learning curve for me and I have definitely sharpened my organisational skills. When young people first join the club they are normally shy and quiet, but we find that the interaction with their peers breeds self-confidence. Little responsibilities like collecting subs also add to their self-esteem and it certainly gives them the opportunity to do things that they would never have done previously."



Pat Bennett, Chief Executive Officer, Family Support Agency and former member of Hillbillies Foróige Club, Portlaoise.

"Being a member of Foróige is just one of those things that you really enjoy at the time, but don't quite recognise the significance of until you look back on it. It most certainly gave me the confidence to speak in front of people and express opinions, but most importantly it taught me the importance of listening to others. Taking part in meetings also gave me a very good grounding for future activities. I still remember one leader in particular, Mrs. Moran, with great fondness, she was a wonderful role model for us. There was a real camaraderie between the group and some of my best friends today are people I met through the Foróige Club, it bonds you as a group and it empowers you to realise that you can make a difference."



Sarah Cooray, leader and former member of Foróige Flames Club, Blanchardstown Youth Service, Dublin.

"All of my mates were in the Foróige Club when I was younger, so it was a natural thing to do for me. I went to the club every

Levels Leader Training is Up and Running

A new system of Foróige leader training, which consists of a series of levels through which leaders can progress, got under way this year. The overall purpose of the new system is to enable leaders to become more self confident and more skilled at working with and empowering members.

If members are to grow and develop into more confident, caring and creative human beings in the club, then the influence of the Foróige leader is crucial. This influence, as a significant adult in the lives of members can be profound and lasting. That is why it is so important to put time and effort into the development and training of leaders. Gerry Mc Donald, Foróige's Head of Training and Programmes, reports on how it's all going.

The new system of training is based on the belief that the leader's role in the Club is crucial and fundamental to its success, so as well as developing members, leaders themselves can engage in their own process of development. In fact, both processes are complementary.

Level I training focuses on how to start a Foróige club and is aimed at new leaders who are about to set up or work in a Foróige club that is currently operational.

Level II training is about strengthening relationships, club structures and activities in order to facilitate learning and development among members. Over 200 volunteer leaders have attended level II courses throughout the country and the feedback from leaders has been very positive.

Level III training is about ensuring that leaders have the inter-personal skills to empower young people to think for themselves, direct their own action and take charge of their own lives. The content of level III focuses on:

- Affirming the work of leaders in the club
- Building rapport with members
- Communication skills
- Facilitating the involvement of members in planning and decision making
- Problem Solving

90 leaders have attended level III training so far and the overall response has been very positive. What leaders found most useful about the training was the opportunity to work on problems and develop new ways of dealing with situations. Developmental exercises introduced on the course were deemed very useful ways of facilitating learning and of building relationships with members.

Level IV training is in the process of being developed and is likely to be run next autumn. It will be a progression of level III training and will focus on improving facilitation and inter-personal skills so that leaders will be better able to lead group discussions to draw out members and get them thinking for themselves. The training will also focus on leaders developing their own personal effectiveness and assertiveness skills.



Putting Young People First - Foróige Neighbourhood Youth Projects

Neighbourhood Youth Projects are community based adolescent and family support services with a particular emphasis on working with young people between the ages of 10-18 years, who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, personal or social difficulties. They are joint ventures between Foróige and the Health Service Executive and run on a joint management basis with the support and guidance of local community representatives through a local advisory committee. Susan Mc Loughlin, Project Leader, Ballyshannon/Bundoran NYP, reports on the goings-on in one of Foróige's NYP's.

Currently celebrating its fourth anniversary, the Ballyshannon/Bundoran NYP continues to go from strength to strength. Having recently moved to new premises just off the main street in Ballyshannon and on the fast lane from the local secondary school to the main shopping centre, the NYP is now perfectly placed to offer young people an exciting and modern venue in which to engage in a wide range of programmes and activities. Thanks to the support of the Irish Youth Foundation, with a grant of €10,000, they can now offer NYP participants and the Ballyshannon Foróige club a host of new resources and equipment.

Project staff and Foróige club leaders recognise that in order to work effectively with young people, they must first develop a positive relationship with them, which will give them a sense of their own uniqueness, creativity and dignity. Central to this process is how the Project and the club involve young people at every stage of planning, organising and evaluating a programme or activity. It is important to remember that learning is not necessarily in the outcome of an activity, but in the process through which the young people go through. It is during this process which includes the highs and lows of working with their

peers, staff and volunteers that young people begin to develop, take responsibility, and think for themselves.

The NYP provides a range of developmental programmes and activities for all young people aged 10-18 in Ballyshannon and Bundoran, while offering intensive support for young people when they may be experiencing adversity in their lives. Interventions used by staff with young people play an important role in both contributing to their well being and developing their coping skills as well as accessing support that they need from their own social network.

In the true sense of community spirit, the NYP provides much needed meeting space for community and family support groups in the area. The Women's Domestic Violence Service, the Social Work Department, the Education and Welfare Board and Opportunity Youth are now in a position to offer an outreach service for those who need it in the Ballyshannon/Bundoran area for the first time because of the space provided by the NYP.

So one thing is for sure, the future looks bright for everybody associated with the new look Ballyshannon/Bundoran NYP.



Cultural Integration in Tallaght

Cultural Integration of Tallaght Youth (CITY) was developed by volunteers and staff associated with Tallaght Youth Service as a creative response to the growing non-national population in the area. Valerie Scully, Senior Youth Officer, Tallaght Youth Service, reports on how and why the initiative came about.

CITY aims to integrate and inform local young people of the services and clubs available to them in Tallaght and give non-Irish young people the opportunity to inform others about their cultures. €10,000 to fund the project was accessed through the Community Linkage Fund.

Three workshops were planned and run by local Foróige leaders, staff and a member of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism for volunteers and parents to;

- assess the participants level of awareness on the issues of other nationalities and cultural integration
- look at barriers to integration
- explore participants assumptions and stereotypes
- challenge misconceptions in relation to asylum seekers and refugees.

Following on from this, 12 young people and 3 leaders took part in an intensive training weekend in Carlingford Adventure Centre. The weekend focused on the barriers to the integration of young people from other cultures into youth groups in Tallaght and identified ways of overcoming these barriers.

A follow-up weekend in May brought a group of 20 young people from Angola, Iraq, Nigeria, Germany, Lithuania, Congo, France, South Africa and Ireland to Glendalough to learn about each others cultures and traditions in order to discover differences and similarities between them.

In October, the committee hosted a 'Reunion' for all of the young people who attended the Glendalough weekend. They discussed how they would like to strengthen the group and further what had been achieved on the two training weekends. The Staircase Foróige Club, which is made up of unaccompanied non-national minors, was invited to take part and talk about their experiences of integration.

One of the main ideas from this brainstorming session was an 'International Quiz and Disco' to allow non-Irish young people to

meet members from Foróige clubs in a social environment and become aware of the different clubs available to them in Tallaght. Young people were very much involved in the planning of this large scale event, deciding on the date, venue, questions, posters and prizes. The non-national young people were encouraged to bring friends and almost 100 young people in all attended. The event was deemed a great success by the young people and leaders involved.

The young people involved in CITY have expressed a desire for more in depth anti-racism training, with the intention of visiting clubs and teaching their peers the importance of integration and toleration of different cultures. It is hoped to begin this peer education training in January, with trained facilitators in anti-racism and peer education.



Foróige in Pictures



A 'Novel' Idea - Canary Foróige Club, Co. Wicklow, were the lucky beneficiaries of almost €3,000 raised by a library for second hand books in the local recycling centre, which was the brainchild of one of their leaders, Myles Doyle.



As part of the celebrations of the European Year of Education through Citizenship, Ballyagran Foróige Club, Co. Limerick, were one of almost 40 Foróige groups who received recognition from President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, for their outstanding Citizenship work.



Clowning around at the unveiling of a series of mosaics by the young people of Blanchardstown Youth Service, entitled Blanchardstown old and new, which are on permanent exhibition in the Blanchardstown Centre.



John McDermott, former Regional Youth Officer, North Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim, pictured at his desk on the day of his retirement from Foróige after 34 years of dedicated service to the organisation. All in Foróige wish John and his family well for the future.



Séumas O'Brien, Chairperson of the National Council of Foróige, pictured with young people from clubs and projects at the launch of Foróige's new corporate identity in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, in October.



Foróige Leaders from Co. Longford pictured at last year's National Leaders' Conference in Athlone.



A busy bunch - The Officers of the National Executive of Foróige pictured on a break during one of their meetings.



The girls from Newcastle Foróige Club, Co. Wicklow, pictured with the project for which they were honoured by President Mary McAleese, with a 'Young Citizen Award.'



The girls from Ballinfoile Neighbourhood Youth Project, Co. Galway, just hanging around during the project's summer activity week last year.



Lights, Camera, Action - Young people from the Foróige managed Monaghan Neighbourhood Youth Project take a break during filming of their production, 'Who's Your Daddy,' in conjunction with Calipo Theatre Company.



(l-r) Maurice Kennedy, Michael B. Cleary and Séan Campbell, the only three men to have held the position of Chief Executive Officer of Foróige, pictured in conversation at last years National Leaders' Conference.



Chairpersons of the Foróige Clubs in Co. Meath take a break during the Committee Skills Training Day 2006 in Dunshaughlin.

Foróige's Special Projects for Youth Having Real Impact

Foróige manages a number of Special Projects for Youth nationwide, which are funded by the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science, through the local Vocational Education Committees. The projects aim to equip young people with the knowledge skills and attitudes necessary for their appropriate and full participation in society.

The projects are community based and have a particular focus on young people who may be disadvantaged or at risk. Foróige has been involved in the management of these projects since 1988 when the Mahon and Glen projects started in Cork City.

Activities in these projects are chosen based on the needs and interests of the young people, who are themselves involved in planning for their own groups. These activities include, drama, outdoor pursuits, personal development programmes, community action, environmental work, sport, and issue based programmes on topics such as loss, anger, drugs and health. Declan Cassidy, Youth Officer, Mahon Community Development Project, reports on how the project's health programme is making a real difference to the young people in Mahon.

Focus on Health in Mahon Community Development Project

Health is a major issue for everybody in Ireland today and for young people it is about getting into good habits relating to fitness and healthy eating at an early age and hopefully, continuing the pattern into adult life.

Mahon Youth Development Project has developed a practical Health Programme, which includes assessing young peoples fitness levels, setting achievable fitness goals, healthy eating,

cooking healthy dishes, teen gym, dance, inputs from amateur and professional sports stars to name but a few.

The programme can be adapted to help all groups add an element of health education into the mix, so for instance a special interest group focusing on arts and crafts can get as much from the programme as a soccer or badminton group can.

The project is also addressing community issues regarding young people and weekend youth involvement. To this end, Youth Officer, Katherine Holland has trained 14 local volunteers including some local Gardaí, to work with young people on the Project's Friday Open Youth Night. This Open Night will give local young people the opportunity to meet and develop programmes in a safe and fun environment. This initiative has sparked great support from local community projects and businesses and will start at the end of March 2006.

To compliment this programme, a new Pilot Project "Late Night Basketball" will run on a Saturday night in partnership with the local VEC and Cork County Council.

All exciting new initiatives with great community involvement, not to mention the Champions League "Live" Football nights every Wednesday where young people can watch their favourite team on TV and just chill!!!!



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Blanchardstown Early School
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INTEL Computer Clubhouse
BASIS Riversdale Programme

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