



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 ONWARDS





STRATEGIC PLAN 2022

JONNY CURRIE
CO-CHAIR

LEANNE YOUNG
CO-CHAIR

Forward by National Co-Chairs

In the past three years, YMCA Ireland has faced huge challenges; changes in government policy, staff turnover, funding shortages and the impact of the pandemic. We have embraced these, seeing them as opportunities to evolve and adapt and continue to

support local associations and deliver high quality programmes and services across the island.

This strategy details the way we shall go forward, and is specific, actionable and accountable. Thank you to the young people, staff, local associations, and volunteers for their input. It's an ambitious strategy,

reflecting our shared commitment to delivering programmes and services and how we support our local associations. As always, we will hold true to our vision, creating a world where young people, their families and communities flourish in body, mind and spirit.

JOHN PEACOCK
NATIONAL SECRETARY

National Secretary's Comments

Welcome to YMCA Ireland's strategic plan for the coming years. The speed of change in the world around us is challenging, but we are committed to making bold strides forward for the sake of those we serve.

Our aim through this process of strategic review is to make the YMCA movement in Ireland better equipped to serve the needs

of young people, their families and their communities throughout the island.

National YMCA's place in this is to become more resilient, adaptable to change and better resourced to both **deliver** programmes regionally and **support** local associations to serve their communities in their areas.

The YMCA is a global movement and we have worked closely with our colleagues at YMCA Europe and the

World Alliance of YMCA's as they seek to approve their Vision 2030 at the World Council in Denmark in July, 2022.

Thank you to everyone, young people, board members, volunteers and staff, who have taken the time to participate in the consultation process. As we articulated our shared vision and mission, it has generated a real sense of unity of purpose across the movement in Ireland.

Underpinning this new Strategic Development Plan is a commitment to building extra capacity which will strengthen staffing and support and reduce dependency on Statutory funding. In the development of this plan, time was invested to consult with varying stakeholders including staff, young people and local associations at various stages.

During the period of the last Strategic Development Plan, YMCA Ireland has been significantly impacted by not only the impact of the COVID pandemic but also changes to statutory funding and policy, leading to reduced capacity and staffing hours.

The process was to encourage the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the development of this plan. Feedback and consultation events took place at various stages focusing on both the vision, mission and values of the movement as a whole, as well as on the strategic pillars that YMCA Ireland should focus on moving forward. The opinions of individuals and groups were sought both at a national and local association level, through written feedback using online feedback systems as well as local focus meetings with young people, staff and Local Board members.

In working towards a renewed vision and mission, YMCA Ireland affirms the following:

- ▼ The Paris Basis, the Kampala Principles and Challenge 21 as the ongoing foundational statements of the YMCA.
- ▼ The need for continued reflection on our Christian identity in light of today's global realities.
- ▼ The place of volunteers as pre-eminent in the governance of the movement.
- ▼ Commitment to children and young people's participation as outlined in the Lundy model.
- ▼ Respect and support for solidarity within the YMCA worldwide whilst respecting the autonomy of each local association to build their strategy based on the local context.
- ▼ Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations as Agenda 2030 and the Youth Climate Charter as drawn up in collaboration with NYCI.

World YMCA four key Pillars of Impact



Community & Wellbeing First



Meaningful Future of Work



A Sustainable Planet



A Just World



"The world needs the YMCA more than ever"

Despite the threat of disconnection, YMCAs have connected and collaborated in unprecedented ways. We have adapted, connected and reset globally. Our vision, mission and goals have been co-created for greater global impact. Let's step up, and into our future. Let's allow young people to shape it. Now is the time for one vision. It's time for our Vision 2030."

Carlos Sanvee, Secretary General, World YMCA

Our global vision is a world where every person lives in harmony with self, with society and with creation.

The YMCA's mission is to empower young people and communities worldwide to build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive world, where every person can thrive in body, mind and spirit.



WORLD YMCA

*YMCA IRELAND'S
VISION IS:*

A world where young people, their families and communities flourish in body, mind and spirit.

*AS A FAITH BASED, ALL ISLAND ORGANISATION
OUR MISSION IS:*

To create inclusive communities where everyone feels welcomed, accepted and inspired by social justice and peace for all.

To provide life enriching opportunities for young people, their families and communities.

*OUR VALUE BASE IS THAT
EVERY YMCA IS A PLACE OF:*



WELCOME



OPPORTUNITY



WELLBEING



PEACE & JUSTICE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▼ An all island approach.
- ▼ Collaborative & partnership working.
- ▼ Being progressive & responsive.
- ▼ Listening & Learning.
- ▼ A holistic approach to young people.
- ▼ A whole family approach.
- ▼ Working in ways that are stimulating and enjoyable.
- ▼ Being trauma informed and flourishing.
- ▼ Climate action and the sustaining of our environment.
- ▼ Global justice and international development.

IMPACT PILLARS We renew our commitment to measuring the impact of our actions based on these shared pillars:

**PROMOTING
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT**

**PROMOTING
HEALTHY
LIVING**

**PROMOTING
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

5 STRATEGIC AIMS

WILL DETERMINE OUR
WORK PROGRAMMES FOR
2022 - 2025

1 Strengthening our Organisation to ensure we remain sustainable and relevant

WHY?

In order to fulfil our Vision and Mission, and to sustain our ethos as a Faith Based organisation, we recognise the need to strengthen our organisation to be more sustainable in terms of finance, people and ethos, becoming more resilient and adaptive to our changing environment.

This is an expression of our Values of Welcome and Opportunity and will enable us to adhere to our Guiding Principles, specifically:

- An all-Island approach.
- Collaborative & partnership working.
- Being progressive & responsive.
- Listening & Learning.

HOW?

By exploring options for increasing diversity in funding streams including alternative statutory/grant funding, development of social enterprises, fundraising opportunities.

Through developing a clear governance structure, effective and purposeful leadership, and focussing on the wellbeing of a strong staff and volunteer team.

By staying true to our foundations while exploring ways and means to be accepting and inclusive in our modern world.





3 Ensuring Effective and Relevant Movement Support

WHY?

Our Vision and Mission commits us to supporting the development and capacity of our local associations, recognising our role as a National organisation to build a strong network of YMCA's across Ireland who deliver excellent local and regional services.

This is an expression of our Values of Welcome and Opportunity and will enable us to adhere to our Guiding Principles, specifically:

- An all-island approach.
- Collaborative & partnership working.
- Being progressive & responsive.
- Listening & Learning.

HOW?

By providing a range of shared services in response to the needs of local associations.

By providing quality assurance, youth work, personnel, financial & health & safety support as required.

By facilitating relevant support to local Boards of Management and General Secretaries and other staff to facilitate cooperative working and strategic thinking.

By providing a suite of training and learning opportunities through the Workforce Development Group, to promote best practice, shared learning and staff/volunteers who feel connected and confident in their roles.

2 Taking Steps towards sustaining the Planet and Global Justice

WHY?

Our Mission and Vision commits us to take action for the protection and regeneration of our Planet, preparing for a Just Transition to a world where humans live in full harmony with Nature.

This is an expression of our Values of Opportunity, Wellbeing, Peace and Justice and will adhere to our Guiding Principles, specifically:

- Being progressive and responsive.
- Climate action and the sustaining of our environment.
- Global justice and international development.

HOW?

We will take steps towards becoming a climate neutral Movement, building a roadmap that will allow all YMCAs to make measurable and meaningful progress in their policies and practices based on the Youth Climate Justice Charter.

We will inspire our members, staff, volunteers and community stakeholders to practice social justice and champion environmental responsibility while also integrating climate education components for young people and communities in our programmes.

We will provide Global Citizenship training to ensure young people, staff and volunteers become active global citizens committed to a fairer and more sustainable future for all.





4 Deliver Effective Youth, Family & Community Services and Programmes

WHY?

In order to achieve our Vision and Mission, we will continue to deliver effective services and programmes that ensure better outcomes for the young people, families and communities with whom we work.

This delivery will be an expression of our Values of Welcome, Opportunity, Wellbeing Peace and Justice, and will adhere to our Guiding Principles, specifically:

- Collaborative & partnership working.
- Being progressive & responsive.
- Listening & Learning.
- A holistic approach to young people.
- A whole family approach.
- Being trauma informed and flourishing.
- Working in ways that are stimulating and enjoyable.

HOW?

By facilitating local & regional needs-led programmes that are youth led and inclusive.

By developing collaborative expertise in thematic areas such as Global youth Work or Peacebuilding.

By demonstrating clearly the effectiveness of our services and delivery of programmes.

By researching & piloting new tools for measuring the impact of our services.

By the development of curriculum resources which support the provision of services at a local and regional level.

5 Develop Effective Communication:

WHY?

In order to achieve our Vision and Mission, we will promote the image and values of the YMCA in Ireland by ensuring that relevant information is communicated to both our internal and external stakeholders.

This is an expression of our Values of Welcome and Opportunity and will enable us to adhere to our Guiding Principles, specifically:

- Collaborative & partnership working.
- Being progressive & responsive.
- Listening & Learning.
- Working in ways that are stimulating and enjoyable.

HOW?

By increasing collaboration and knowledge exchange among YMCAs.

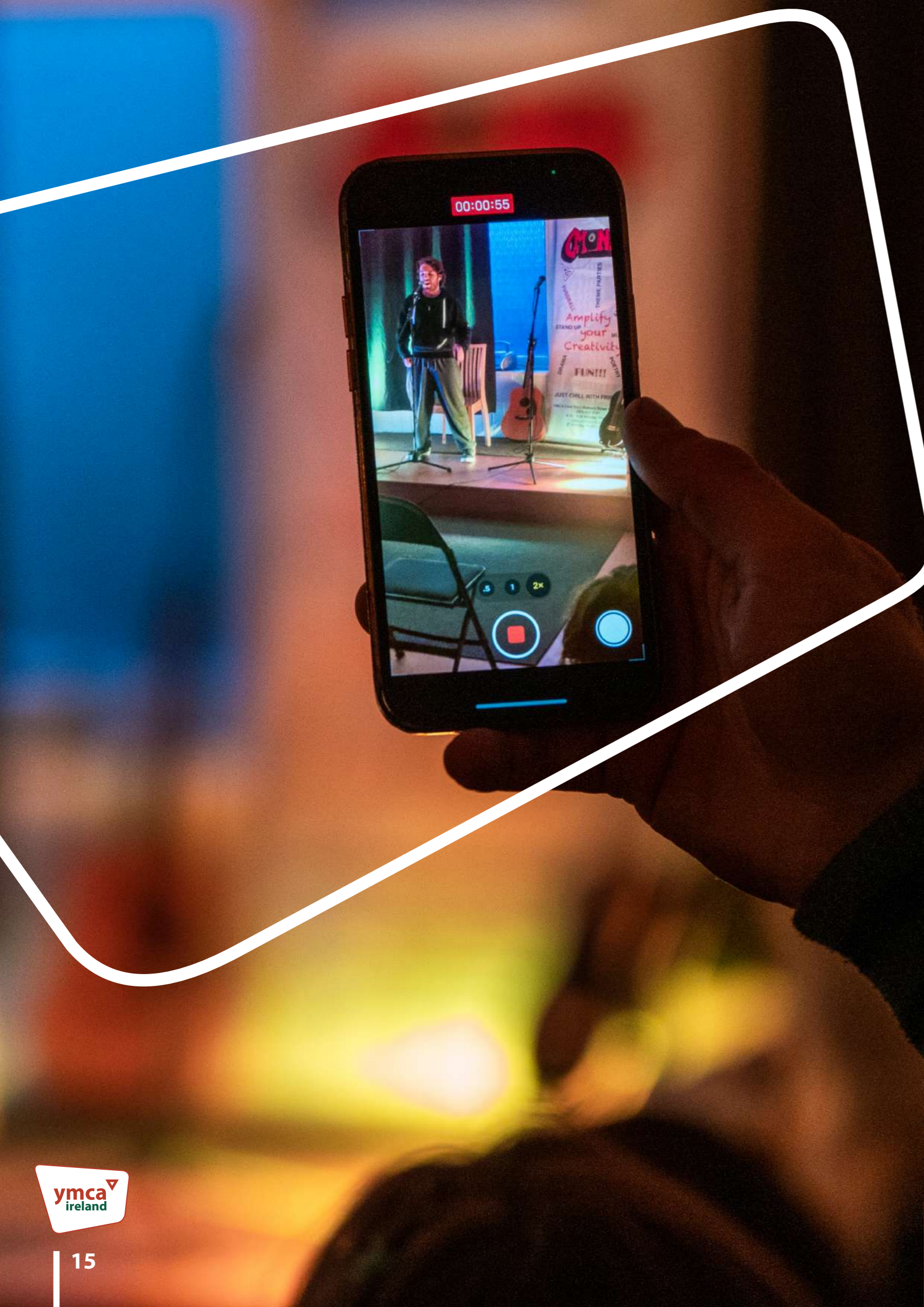
By representation on a range of external bodies of influence whose policies and strategies impact our services.

By amplifying the voices of young people by representing their views as well as enabling young people to participate in existing and new fora.

By providing links between local, national, European & World YMCA networks.

By building a renewed communications strategy to ensure that the work is communicated internally and externally.





Welcome By Cathal McCann | YMCA Newcastle

I got involved with the YMCA Newcastle through the school based youth work in 2016 as part of the local youth provision in Newcastle. It was through the youth worker Denise that I learned about the YMCA Newcastle youth project & Youth Council. She indicated this would be a great programme for me during a time when I was struggling with my identity and coming out as a gay young man. The programme was integral to supporting and building my confidence and esteem following a very challenging and uncertain time in my life.

Following joining the youth council in 2019 and through the support of the team, I was given a platform to advocate and support other young people just like me who needed a safe and nurturing environment where they could be themselves and valued for who they were, not judged based on the gender of the person they loved.

My leaders encouraged and supported me to set up the Starts with the Heart inclusion group and cafe in YMCA Newcastle which is an LGBTQAI+ support group. It was also during this time I achieved my accredited youth work qualification and part time employment. The project has gone from strength to strength and recently became an accredited referral centre through Cara Friend.

Based on my ongoing works and achievements I was recently given the opportunity through the National YMCA to attend the World YMCA Summit in Denmark July, 2022. The conference brought together Global YMCAs from over 100 countries to share and agree Vision 2030.

This gave me the opportunity to be open and honest about the importance of meaningful work in supporting equity, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that the rights of all young people are fully

met and they are free to be and to love as they see fit.

“The YMCA Newcastle has changed my life for the better, they supported me through the rain and helped me see the rainbow.”

YMCA are life changers and game changers for young people. I am excited for what the future holds for me in this amazing organisation.



Opportunity By Mark Healy | YMCA Cork Region

My name is Mark Healy. I have been involved with YMCA Ireland for six years. Opportunity has always been a buzz word for young people, with many seeking it out throughout their teenage years. I have been lucky enough to have been given many opportunities because of my involvement with YMCA Ireland. As a young person, I got the opportunity to be involved in youth councils such as Comhairle na nOg and many different YMCA groups focusing on Sustainable Development Goals and Global Youth Work.

Since then, I have also been given opportunities on a national level to organise and host YMCA Ireland's National Youth Assembly in 2021. Following that, I received the opportunity to be involved in Ireland's Youth Assembly with many other passionate young people from around Ireland.

I strongly believe in creating a community and connecting young people from around Ireland and around the world. I like to think I got some of this belief from the YMCA community.

YMCA Ireland has given me many international opportunities to meet like minded people from around the globe. I attended YMCA175 in London in 2019 and YMCA World Council in Denmark in 2022, where I got the opportunity to expand my community of people. I have also been involved with YMCA Europe's Roots for Peace project where I have made lifelong friends. Most importantly, YMCA Ireland has given me and many other young people the opportunity to make meaningful friendships and lasting connections.



Wellbeing

By Gabriela Ferreira | Greenhill YMCA

To tell you a bit of my story as a volunteer in Greenhill in a few words, there is no better expression than 'life changing'.

We receive excellent programme training that gives us the possibility not only to be great at our job as outdoor leaders, but to improve in things that I was never aware that I was capable of. One example is when I was able to learn how to swim and become a pool lifeguard. This was a highlight in my training that gave me confidence and showed me that if I don't compromise and work hard I can accomplish anything.

All Greenhill staff are very supportive and care about what we have to say

and about our wellbeing. They help me everyday to overcome my fears and improve myself in many aspects.

Whether with the job of outdoor instructor or maintenance duty, the different tasks in Greenhill have given me a sense of responsibility, altruism and leadership that I know is going to make me a better professional in any field I choose to work in after my time here as a volunteer.

One of the main things that I have learned and also would like to share is that we don't fail, we defer. Because we can always try again!



Peace & Justice

By Aoileann Conway | YMCA Lurgan

I have been a part of the YMCA family for around eight years and throughout that time I have had many opportunities and experiences. YMCA Lurgan supported me in gaining my first Youth Work Qualification onto my first International experience, taking part in Leadership training with YMCA Kosovo and England.

I continued my commitment to YMCA Ireland when I was invited to join the Global Justice and International Development Committee, which I am still a proud and active member of today. From representing YMCA Ireland at Brussels on Reflecting on Peace Practices Workshop, World YMCA and the launch of the Roots Peacework Guidebook to leading on an exchange with YMCA Netherlands where I led the Irish group.

This exchange saw people come from YMCA Europe's Roots for Peace Project, YMCA Scotland, YMCA Ireland, YMCA France, YMCA Netherlands, YMCA Georgia and YMCA Kosovo and the main objective was to discuss and think about commemoration and remembrance, and how to build towards a more peaceful world. Parallel to this journey, I have gained my Professional Youth Work qualification and now work within YMCA.

I have been able to witness first hand the impact of war and violence across Europe, and have learned to recognise the significance that reflection and remembrance has on individuals and communities. I have been inspired by strong, courageous leaders and relished to be in the presence of changemakers. Previous to these experiences I had the ability to recognise the marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable but what I have been able to develop are fine critical reflective tools to identify how we can all be facilitators of change in issues that impact us locally, nationally, globally through injustice, climate change, poverty and more.

Closer to home, these experiences with YMCA Ireland enlightened me to the reality that we do not live in a 'peaceful' society, rather we live in a divided, segregated society that keeps itself safe through sophisticated ways of 'dodging' and avoiding the 'other'. To the outside world, The North of Ireland may look peaceful, unified for the majority. However, simply because we live in a society absent of sectarian violence does not equate to a peaceful society.

I have been very fortunate to experience the variety and wealth of opportunities that YMCA have

to offer. It has opened my world to experiences that otherwise would not have been possible to me and opened my eyes to different perspectives that have enabled me to develop personally and professionally. My journey with YM has provided me with the tools to identify this 'negative peace' and in turn inspired me to continue peace building work in our society.

I have had the joy of meeting people from all over the world, learning about different cultures and lifestyles, and hearing stories of injustice, peacemaking, leadership and life. From the South of Ireland, to Mexico, Scotland to Kosovo, I have been inspired by the journeys of others and often I am amazed that with all the differences that can often define us, it is the similarities that unite YMCA people. This unity comes from a place of peace, belonging, justice, family, connection and love to name a few.

In my own experience, YMCA has been transformative in my professional career and in my personal life. The YMCA genuinely makes a difference in the lives of those who are involved with the organisation. I am proud to be along for the journey and to continue to support the lives of young people and their families.





NI +44 2843723172 | ROI +353 21 4270187
admin@ymca-ireland.net | www.ymca-ireland.net

