

Causeway
British - Irish Exchange
Youth Programme

Léargas Review of the Causeway Programme
2012-2016

Context

With the Causeway programme facing an uncertain future, it was clear to Léargas that a review of the programme through consultation with current and past participants was imperative. This review also offered us a timely opportunity to support organisations in gaining information about the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme.

This review was carried out with beneficiaries from the Republic of Ireland through the following methods:

- an online questionnaire
- a review of submitted Final Reports
- a one-day evaluation event in the Léargas office, Dublin.



Participating Organisations

A range of youth organisations participated in the review process. These included national youth organisations, regional youth services, local youth projects and those based in the community in both rural and urban locations.



Questionnaire Results

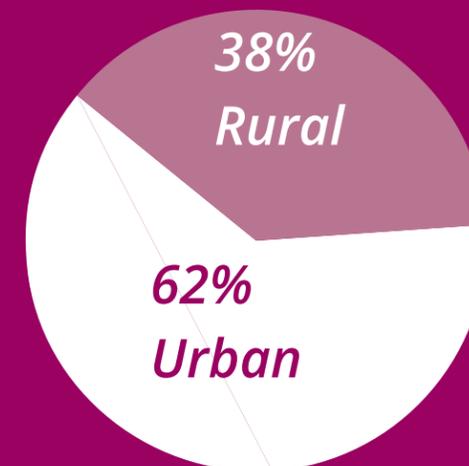
The results from the questionnaire are compiled in this [Prezi](#) presentation. The questionnaire was sent to all projects active between 2012 and 2016. On average, organisations availed of Causeway programme funding once a year with a maximum of 3 projects held in one year. Of the respondents, 62% were urban based and 38% rural youth clubs. Three quarters of projects engaged in Youth Exchanges. The remainder of respondents engaged in Special Projects, with very little uptake of Contact Exchanges.



2012 2013 2014 2015 2016



31 Projects
between 2012 and 2016



26 Youth Exchanges

4 Special Projects

1 Contact Exchange

Respondents provided a rich bank of information on the strengths of Causeway, highlighting the following:

- **It is easy to use**
- **It makes travel and experiential learning affordable**
- **It has a strong emphasis on personal and social development**
- **It is a mechanism for taking the first steps into international travel**
- **It challenges perceptions, breaks down stereotypes and promotes youth participation and unification of cultures.**



Organisations noted a big change in young people's attitudes and behaviours following their participation in the programme.

"It was beautiful to see youth who would struggle socially or in a school setting flourish, become more confident, make friends and increase their personal development."



Respondents also noted that there were marked benefits to the local community through participation in Causeway, such as:

- **Providing a sense of identity and community pride**
- **Raising the profile of the youth club's activities and the positive participation of young people in the area.**

Respondents identified some challenges in implementing the programme. Despite all respondents stating they had a very good relationship with Léargas and that they felt supported, they did encounter some operational challenges during the lifetime of their projects. These included limited staff resources and time, working with challenging behaviours, sourcing extra funding and the level of administration required.

Respondents provided some operational recommendations as follows:

- **Review the timelines for application and project dates**
- **Consider firming up a decision date and time frame for issuing of contracts and finance**

Overall the questionnaire demonstrated that youth organisations had a very positive experience with the Causeway programme and wanted it to continue as an opportunity.



"Causeway has made a very significant impact on our ability to build relationships and partnerships."

Reported Impact

We undertook a short review of Final Reports received for the same time frame of 2012-2016. The review showed similar results to those documented in the questionnaire and at the evaluation event.

Below is a small selection of the feedback from both project coordinators and participants, giving an indication of the impact the programme has had to date.



"I have a greater understanding of youth work across the five nations and the commonalities in terms of young people's concerns. What struck me was the shared need to promote young people and the value of youth work across the five nations."

"Some of the youth had never travelled before so this was a major trip for them and they thoroughly enjoyed having the opportunity to travel and learn about other cultures in a fun and safe environment."



*The Surf Project,
Youth Exchange 2015*



*Youth Work Ireland,
Special Project 2015*

"The experience can have a positive impact in terms of tackling xenophobia in the community as this is often the first time the young people have had a positive meaningful experience with someone from a different country or culture. This positive experience can feed back into the community and the effects can be long term."

"Life-long friendships were made, young people became more aware of themselves and others throughout the project. Throughout the workshops cultural and social awareness and knowledge of similarities in each country were raised. Young people were also given strategies and ideas on how to live a healthier life and also how to make healthier life choices. The young people became more and more empowered throughout the project which enabled them to achieve personal and group goals."



*Clondalkin Youth Service,
Youth Exchange 2014*



*Clondalkin Youth Service,
Youth Exchange 2014*

"The project has opened the group up to a new and diverse experience(...)They now have an understanding of the history of Northern Ireland. The group are now confident in working with groups from a different youth project. Individual young people emerged as leaders whilst participating in the team challenges."



*Kilmore West Youth Project,
Contact Exchange 2014*

Evaluation Event

In June 2016 Léargas hosted a review morning for Irish-based organisations that had recently taken part in Causeway. The aim was to evaluate their experience of the programme and to share with them information on Erasmus+ Youth in Action.

Similar to the questionnaire respondents, the organisations represented included national youth organisations, regional youth services and some community based youth groups.

All present had completed Causeway projects between 2012 and 2016. The majority also had some experience of Erasmus+.



Participants engaged in reflective activities that allowed them to map their overall Causeway experience and share their views of the programme and the impact it had on their participants, organisation and local community.

In summary, participants appreciated that Causeway was easily accessible and a positive first step to engaging in international youth work activities.

They highlighted both positive and negative differences between the Irish and UK groups—such as too many or too few resources, strict child protection and risk assessment requirements, and the challenges faced in securing extra funds to supplement the Causeway grant they received.



The organisations highlighted how inspiring it was to watch confidence grow within the young people who had participated in Causeway, and how their values were changed and challenged by the experience.

They also emphasised that Causeway provided the opportunity to take those first important steps into international youth work. It has allowed for the professional development of their young people while also adding a strong element of professional development for staff involved in the projects. It has led to a sense of community identity and pride, and a greater awareness of the positive work carried out by youth services.

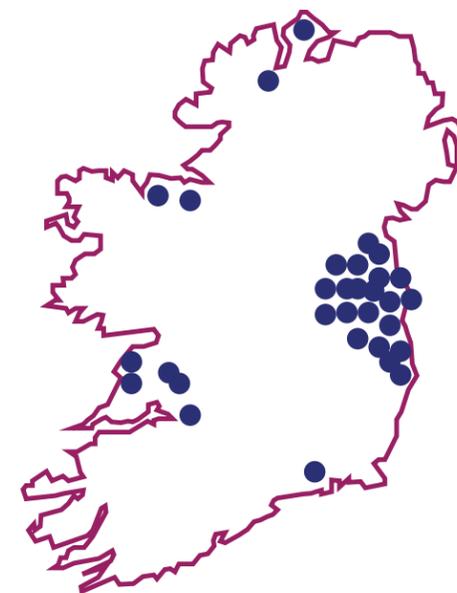


“Keep up your good work. You are making a difference in the lives of so many young people.”

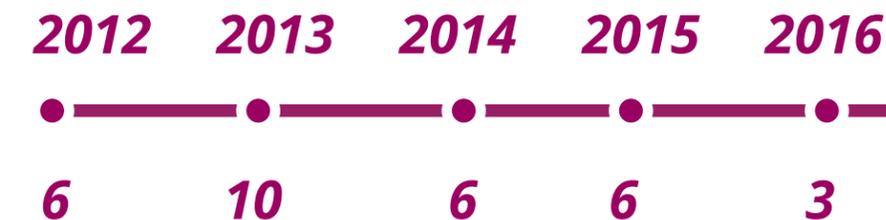


Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Lobby for the continuation of Causeway between Britain and Ireland. It is clear that those who use it find it very valuable in their work with young people. The evaluation indicates that youth workers and organisations credit Causeway activities with increased youth participation and attach strong value to this aspect. Also for newcomers it was seen as a 'safer and simplified' way to start international youth work.
2. Restoration of the funding framework across all participating countries and regions participating in Causeway.
3. Projects and participants value the level of support and flexibility available within Causeway, which is not always available in other programmes such as Erasmus+ (particularly in terms of consultation with Léargas during the application process). This was seen as a strong, supportive and developmental aspect unique to Causeway.
4. National Agencies should review the timelines for application contracts and payments as these can put pressure on applicants.
5. National Agencies should continue to provide support to beneficiaries at all stages of Causeway projects.
6. Projects would like more networking and training opportunities to build new projects and follow up on old ones. With limited funds available for Causeway, these have not been available for some years now.



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Annex 1

List of Republic of Ireland organisations funded through the Causeway Programme 2012-2016

2012	6 Projects
Youth Exchange	Clondalkin Youth Service
Youth Exchange	Southill Area Centre
Special Project	Meath Comhairle na nÓg
Youth Exchange	CYC-Swords Baldoyle Youth Service
Youth Exchange	Little Bray Youth Project
Special Project	Dundalk Institute of Technology

2013	10 Projects
Youth Exchange	Youth Work Ireland, Galway
Youth Exchange	Finglas Youth Resource Centre
Youth Exchange	Dublin City Council
Youth Exchange	Brú/Clay Youth Service
Youth Exchange	TAYP International Programme, c/o St Andrews Resource Centre
Youth Exchange	Donegal Youth Service
Youth Exchange	Ballywaltrim Youth Project
Youth Exchange	Clay Youth Project
Youth Exchange	Clare Youth Service-Ennistymon Youth Stack
Youth Exchange	Assemblies of God Ltd-Liberty Church

2014	6 Projects
Contact Exchange	Kilmore West Youth Project
Youth Exchange	Clondalkin Youth Service
Special Project	Fishbowl Youth
Youth Exchange	Clonmany Youth & Community Resource Centre
Youth Exchange	Waterford YouthBank
Youth Exchange	Talk About Youth Project

2015	6 Projects
Youth Exchange	Brú Youth Service
Youth Exchange	Little Bray FRC
Youth Exchange	Talk About Youth Project
Youth Exchange	The Surf Project
Youth Exchange	Drumstrand Community Partnership
Special Project	Youth Work Ireland

2016 to date (July)	3 Projects
Youth Exchange	Connect Bray NYP
Youth Exchange	North Connaught Youth Service
Youth Exchange	Talk About Youth Project