Donegal
Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland

Annual Report

2025

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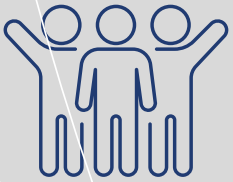
DYS

In Numbers 2025

20,309

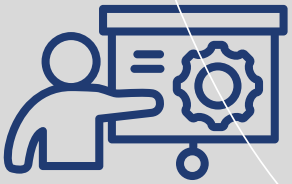


Young People Engaged

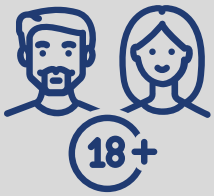
613

Volunteers

2,993



Young People Trained



235

Adults Trained

1,354

One To One Hours

Mission Vision & Guiding Principles

Vision

"A society where every young person is safe, fulfilled and reaching their full potential."

Mission

"To engage young people in a process of learning and development where they are valued and supported to be the best they can be."

Guiding Principles

Donegal Youth Service ...

1. Works to the guiding principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. Creates youth friendly services, keeping voluntary engagement at the core of what we do.
3. Keeps young people and the adult volunteers that support them central to the work we do.
4. Treats young people with respect, dignity, empathy and unconditional positive regard.
5. Builds and maintains partnerships that address the needs of young people.
6. Provides an accessible, inclusive and integrated service.
7. Continues to develop supportive relationships that nurture meaningful engagements and outcomes for young people.
8. Values flexibility, innovation, creativity and supportive learning environments.
9. Advocates on issues that impact on the lives of young people.
10. Adopts best practice, gathering data and critically reflecting on our work.

A message from our Chairperson & CEO

As we reflect on 2025, we find ourselves thinking less about statistics and more about the people behind them. A young person who showed up to Daybreak nervous and unsure, who ended up making friends, sitting their Junior Cert and cooking their own lunch for the first time. A trans teenager who attended her first disco. A boy from Ukraine, struggling in a classroom where he couldn't keep up, who found his footing through a youth club in Bundoran. These are the moments that 2025 was made of.
Over 20,000 young people engaged with DYS this year. That's a number worth pausing on but what it really represents is 20,000 doors opened, 20,000 chances taken, and an extraordinary number of small, quiet moments of connection and courage that we'll never fully be able to count.

2025 was a year of real breadth. Our ATLIC project brought young people to the Azores and Santiago de Compostela and hosted young people from across Europe right here in Donegal. BreakOuT celebrated ten years of Marriage Equality and gave young LGBTQ+ people a youth disco that was, for some, genuinely life-changing. Our Ukrainian Integration project built real friendships between communities. Our Elevate 55 team walked into Milford College and held space for young people still carrying the grief of Creeslough. And through CLYP, five of our staff travelled to Greece to train in a programme now being delivered in youth clubs right across Donegal.

We won't pretend 2025 was without its difficulties. Volunteer numbers are declining. Early school leaving is rising. Waiting lists are growing. Rural young people are leaving. These are not abstract policy problems, they are real young people not getting what they need, and we feel that. But what we are proud of is how this organisation met those challenges not by looking away from them, but by doing the work anyway, thoughtfully, professionally, and with the young person always at the centre.

None of this is possible without people. Our staff, who bring creativity and genuine care to everything they do. Our volunteers over 600 of them this year who give their time to young people in clubs and communities the length and breadth of this county. And the young people themselves, who trust us enough to walk through our doors.
On behalf of the Board and the wider DYS team, thank you to everyone who made this year what it was. The work we do here matters more than we probably say out loud. This report is evidence of that.

Marina Carlin, Chairperson
Lorraine Thompson, Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

2025

Chairperson: Marina Carlin
Vice Chair: Stephen O'Donnell
Secretary: Ciaran Maguire
Treasurer: Aoife Louise McCullagh
Shaun Dorrian
Beibhinn Mullins
Frank Dooley
Davin Crawford
Suzi Roarty
Séan McGee
Marie Donnelly
Tussie Mc Fadden

Frank Dooley- FD, Suzi Roarty- SR, Ciaran Maguire- CM, Davin Crawford- DC, Bebhinn Mullins – BM, Tussie Mc Fadden – TMF, Marie Donnelly- MD, Stephen O'Donnell- SOD, Marina Carlin – MC, Aoife McCullagh – AMC, Séan McGee- SMG, Shaun Dorrian – SD.

✓ Present
A Apologies
X Absent

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July AGM	Aug	*Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
MC	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SOD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CM	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	
AMcC	A	✓	A	A	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SD	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A	A	
BM	✓	X	X	A	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
FD	✓	A	A	✓	A	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	
DC	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
SR	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	
SMcG					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MD	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
TMcF	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	

DYS Staff

2025

Lorraine Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

Charlene Logue
Outreach Manager

Gareth Gibson
Information Manager

Frankie McGreevy
OG Manager

Maria Crossan
Finance Manager

Lee Stephenson
CE Supervisor

Michelle Sweeney
Administrator

Dominic McGlinchey
Youth Worker

Sinead Murray-Lynch
Youth Worker

Laura Byrne
Youth Worker

Pauric Bell
Youth Worker

Billy Banda
Youth Worker

Áine Bogle
Youth Worker

Aideen Shiels
Administrator

Elaine Begley
Youth Worker

Megan Rushe
Youth Worker

Bernie Cunningham
Youth Worker

Shauna Spence
Youth Worker

Karolina Olchowska
Youth Worker

Daryl Law
Youth Worker

Lauren Waters
Youth Worker

Una Quinn
Youth Worker

Ferdia Donohoe
Youth Worker

Frank Hicks
Youth Worker

Ruairi Campbell
Youth Worker

Katarzyna Kurzeja
Youth Information Officer

Eve King
Youth Worker

Pearl Johnston
Youth Worker

Fadl Mustapha
Youth Worker

Riana Mallon
Youth Worker

Mark Reader
Youth Worker

Adrian Begley
Youth Worker

Michelle Wylam
Youth Worker

Helen Simms
Youth Worker

Polina Pakhomova
Youth Worker

Roisin Gallagher
Youth Worker

Adam Leonard
Youth Worker

Paul Anderson
Youth Worker

Molly McMenamin Boyce
Youth Worker

Helene McGlone
Youth Worker

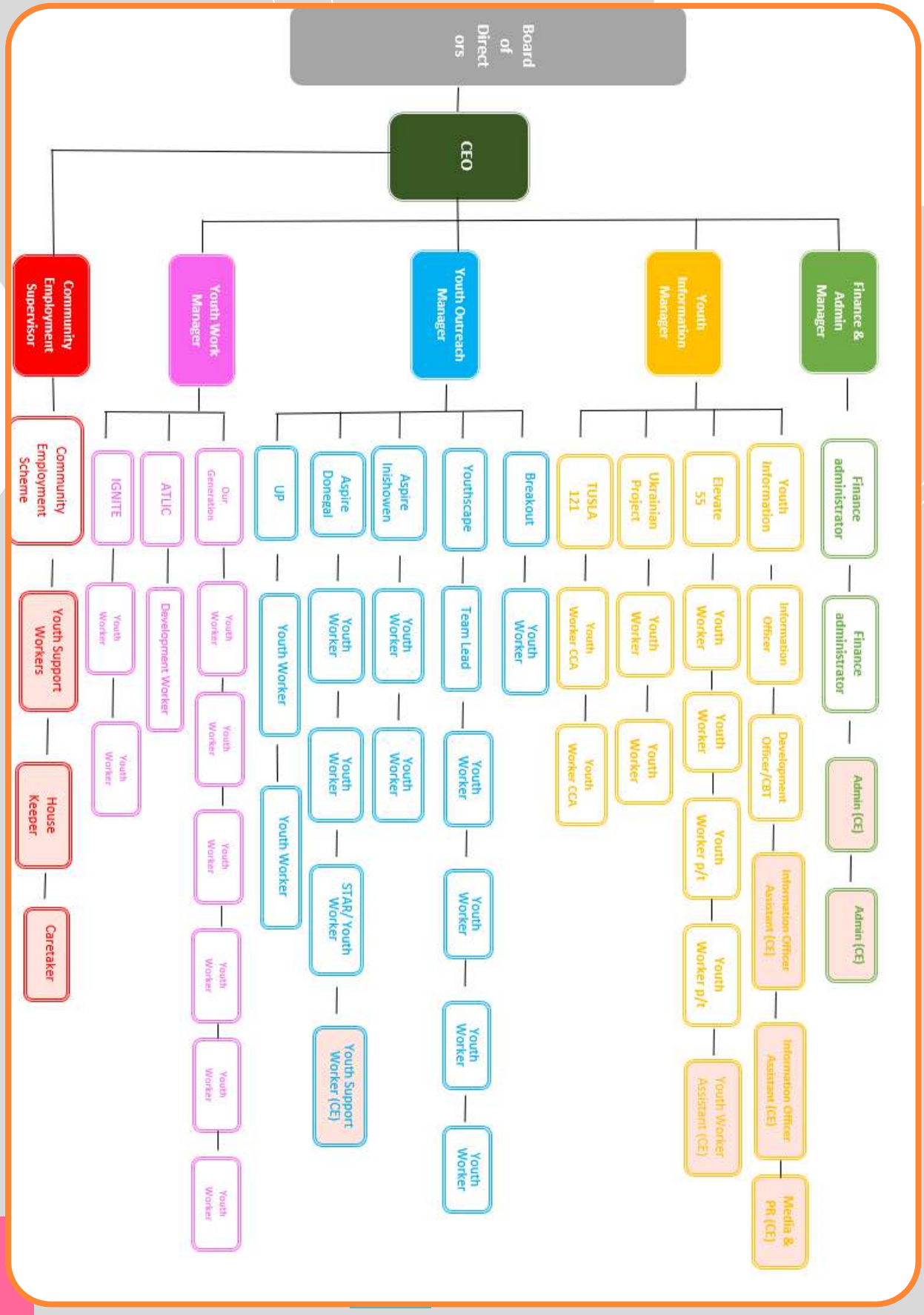
Terri Logue
Youth Worker

Yuliia Melnyk
Youth Worker

Sean McCloskey
Youth Worker

Peter Howard
Youth Worker

Organogram


Board of Directors
CEO
Finance & Admin Manager
Finance administrator
Finance administrator
Admin (CE)
Admin (CE)
Youth Information Manager
Youth Information
Information Officer
Development Officer/CBT
Information Officer Assistant (CE)
Information Officer Assistant (CE)
Media & PR (CE)
Elevate 55
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker p/t
Youth Worker p/t
Youth Worker Assistant (CE)
Ukrainian Project
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
TUSLA 121
Youth Worker CCA
Youth Worker CCA
Youth Outreach Manager
Breakout
Youth Worker
Youthscape
Team Lead
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Aspire Inishowen
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Aspire Donegal
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
STAR/Youth Worker
Youth Support Worker (CE)
UP
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Work Manager
Our Generation
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
ATLIC
Development Worker
IGNITE
Youth Worker
Youth Worker
Community Employment Supervisor
Community Employment Scheme
Youth Support Workers
House Keeper
Caretaker

ASPIRE Donegal

ASPIRE Donegal supports young people aged 10-24 across County Donegal through targeted youth work programmes, youth club development, volunteer support, training, and early intervention services. Operating under UBU: Your Place, Your Space, the project works with early school leavers, LGBTQ+ young people, young travellers, young people not in education, employment or training, and young people participating in local youth clubs. We, like all our projects continue to be grateful to all our Community Employment Staff and the support of the CE Project.

Target Groups

Young people aged 10-24 across Donegal, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups, as well as youth club volunteers and leaders.

Active Youth Clubs
31

Purpose of the Project

To provide safe, inclusive and supportive opportunities that promote wellbeing, participation, personal development, leadership, education engagement, and community connection.

Core Activities Delivered

Daybreak alternative education programme, youth club support, volunteer training, Garda Vetting, Child Protection Awareness Training, Youth Leadership Training, First Aid training, seasonal camps, youth club workshops, competitions, volunteer forums, and the Summer Meals Initiative.

Young People Engaged:
807

ASPIRE Donegal

Adults Trained
115

Reflection

ASPIRE delivered 39 Daybreak sessions, supported 13 young people experiencing school disengagement, and welcomed two new youth clubs into membership. The project successfully delivered summer camps, youth leadership training, volunteer development programmes, and the Department of Education Summer Meals Initiative. Strong engagement from youth clubs demonstrated the continued importance of local youth work provision, although challenges remain around volunteer recruitment, retaining older youth members, and increasing levels of school disengagement.

Young People Trained
64

Challenges & Learning

Increasing demand, rising numbers of early school leavers, volunteer recruitment challenges, and lower participation among older young people remain key challenges. Continued investment in targeted outreach, volunteer support, and flexible programmes will be important moving forward.

Volunteers Supported
505

Impact Snapshot

Daybreak provided a supportive learning environment where young people could reconnect with education, develop confidence, build friendships, and reduce feelings of isolation. Participants reported improved attendance, increased self-belief, and stronger connections with peers and the wider youth service.

One to One Support Hours
18

Breakout

BreakOuT provides a safe, inclusive and affirming youth work service for LGBTQ+ young people aged 12-25. The project creates opportunities for connection, support, personal development, leadership and social engagement while also offering guidance to parents, professionals and schools.

Target Groups

LGBTQ+ young people and their peers aged 12-25.

Purpose of the Project

To provide a welcoming environment where young people can be themselves, build confidence, develop friendships and contribute positively to their communities.

Core Activities Delivered

Weekly drop-ins, study groups, after-school groups, one-to-one support, residentials, camps, Pride participation, youth discos, social events, educational visits and community awareness activities.

Young People Engaged

1193

Breakout

Reflection

2025 was another busy year for BreakOuT, delivering regular group work alongside residentials, camps, educational visits and Pride events. Young people participated in activities including Carlingford Adventure Centre, LGBTQ+ youth discos, arts programmes, study supports and social outings. The project also marked the tenth anniversary of Marriage Equality through local events and heritage initiatives. Engagement levels remained strong, with particular growth in after-school provision.

Adults Trained
30

Impact Snapshot

Participants reported increased confidence, improved mental wellbeing, stronger friendship networks and a greater sense of belonging. Many young people described BreakOuT as one of the few places where they felt fully accepted and supported to express their identity.

Volunteers Supported
3

Challenges & Learning

Growing negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ communities online highlighted the need for continued resilience-building and support. The project also identified a need for more flexible provision for older members transitioning into adulthood.

One to One Support Hours
16

ASPIRE Inishowen

ASPIRE Inishowen supports young people aged 10-24 across Buncrana, Carndonagh, Clonmany and Moville through one-to-one support, group work, youth leadership initiatives, STEM activities and community participation opportunities.

Target Groups

Young people aged 10-24 across the Inishowen Peninsula.

Young People Engaged

663

Purpose of the Project

To help young people develop confidence, resilience, wellbeing and leadership skills while creating opportunities for participation, inclusion and personal growth.

Core Activities Delivered

One-to-one support, LGBTQ+ groups, STEM and Lego League activities, transition programmes, youth advisory groups, environmental projects and community engagement programmes.

ASPIRE Inishowen

Adults Trained
15

Reflection

ASPIRE Inishowen delivered a diverse range of programmes throughout 2025. Young people achieved national recognition through the First Lego League competition, participated in documentary and social innovation projects, developed environmental campaigns, and took part in Pride events and creative activities. The project continued to create inclusive spaces where young people could build skills, confidence and positive peer relationships.

Volunteers Supported
11

Challenges & Learning

Transport and funding continue to present challenges in rural areas. Improved planning, stronger partnerships and flexible delivery approaches have helped reduce barriers and ensure young people can access opportunities regardless of location.

Impact Snapshot

Young people from rural communities gained access to opportunities that broadened their horizons and increased their confidence. Success in national competitions demonstrated that geography need not be a barrier when young people receive the right support and encouragement.

One to One Support Hours
225

Elevate 55

Elevate 55 provides youth work support for young people aged 8-21 through group work, one-to-one support, advocacy, outreach programmes and youth activities. The project promotes wellbeing, inclusion, resilience and positive community participation.

Target Groups

Young people aged 8-21 across North Central Donegal.

Young People Engaged

6517

Purpose of the Project

To support young people to overcome challenges, build positive relationships, improve wellbeing and participate fully within their communities.

Core Activities Delivered

Youth groups, one-to-one support, drop-ins, advocacy, school-based programmes, outreach activities, summer programmes and wellbeing initiatives.

Elevate 55

Reflection

The project experienced significant levels of engagement during 2025. Summer outreach programmes in Milford and Mevagh successfully brought activities directly into communities, while strong partnerships with schools supported the delivery of workshops on vaping awareness, friendship building, resilience and inclusion. The project also strengthened supports for young people affected by isolation, trauma and social disadvantage, including those living in IPAS accommodation.

Volunteers Supported
20

Impact Snapshot

Young people developed stronger relationships with staff and services, increasing their confidence to engage in youth work programmes, educational opportunities and community activities. School partnerships helped identify and support young people who may otherwise have remained disconnected from services.

Challenges & Learning

Reduced budgets required creative use of resources and staff skills. The project adapted by maximising in-house expertise, strengthening partnerships and combining funding streams to maintain a diverse and responsive programme for young people.

One to One Support Hours
276

Ignite

Ignite Community is a youth-led social innovation programme that empowers young people to identify issues affecting their communities and develop practical solutions. Delivered in partnership with Youth Social Innovation (YSI) and organisations across Ireland and Northern Ireland, the programme promotes creativity, collaboration, active citizenship, and community cohesion.

Target Groups

Young people from a range of community, school and youth work settings.

Purpose of the Project

To support young people to understand social issues, develop leadership skills, and take meaningful action to create positive change in their communities.

Core Activities Delivered

Social innovation workshops, community action projects, youth leadership activities, staff and volunteer training, and partnership work with schools and youth groups.

Young People Engaged

160

Ignite

Reflection

Momentum increased significantly throughout 2025 as delivery expanded beyond DYS groups into Transition Year programmes and community settings. Young people explored issues affecting their communities and developed projects addressing social inclusion, wellbeing, and environmental concerns. Staff collaboration strengthened across the organisation, allowing the programme to connect with Climate Action, Autism, and other youth groups. Programme materials were adapted to better suit local needs, resulting in increased engagement and stronger outcomes.

Volunteers Supported

2

Impact Snapshot

Young people developed confidence, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills while completing community action projects. Participants reported a greater understanding of social issues and increased confidence in their ability to make a positive difference.

Challenges & Learning

The length of the programme and limited project resources presented challenges. Greater flexibility in delivery and early engagement with established groups proved successful in increasing participation and completion rates.

Adults Trained

8

Our Generation

Our Generation is a PEACEPLUS-funded partnership programme supporting young people across Ireland and Northern Ireland through mental health, resilience, peacebuilding, and leadership initiatives. The project promotes positive relationships, emotional wellbeing, and active citizenship.

Target Groups

Young people across participating counties, youth workers, and community organisations.

Purpose of the Project

To build resilience, strengthen mental health, promote peacebuilding, and support young people to become active contributors within their communities.

Core Activities Delivered

Healthy Me, Better Together, Peer Mentoring, Provoking Thought, Social Action Projects, youth leadership activities, and one-to-one support.

Young People Engaged

1972

Reflection

The project experienced significant growth during 2025, particularly in Cavan and Louth. Staff developed a stronger understanding of programme requirements and increased delivery across all strands. Young people engaged in a wide variety of wellbeing, leadership and social action programmes that encouraged resilience, confidence, and community participation.

Adults Trained
23

Impact Snapshot

Young people gained confidence to step outside their comfort zones and take on new challenges. One youth band successfully performed at a major music festival, demonstrating the confidence, resilience and personal growth developed through the programme.

Challenges & Learning

Staff transitions, administrative requirements and participant registration processes created challenges during the year. Strong team support and continuous learning helped maintain programme quality and delivery.

One to One Support Hours
116

Ukrainian Integration Project

The Ukrainian Integration Project supports young people and families who have relocated to Donegal as a result of the war in Ukraine. Through youth work activities, cultural experiences and community engagement opportunities, the project promotes belonging, friendship, confidence and integration.

Young People Engaged
498

Target Groups

Ukrainian young people aged 7-19 living in County Donegal.

Adults Trained
7

Purpose of the Project

To provide safe and inclusive opportunities that support social integration, participation, friendship development, and community connection.

Core Activities Delivered

Youth clubs, arts programmes, environmental projects, outdoor activities, cultural trips, integration events, volunteer development, and community celebrations.

Ukrainian Integration Project

Volunteers Supported
50

Reflection

Activities were delivered across Bundoran, Kilcar/Carrick and Killybegs, providing consistent opportunities for young people to connect with peers and local communities. Programmes focused on creativity, environmental awareness, teamwork, and cultural exchange. Joint activities between Ukrainian and Irish young people strengthened friendships and supported meaningful integration.

Adults Trained
23

Impact Snapshot

Young people reported improved confidence, stronger English language skills, new friendships, and a greater sense of belonging within their schools and communities. Cultural trips and shared experiences helped ease the transition into life in Ireland.

Challenges & Learning

Transport, rural isolation and changing family circumstances affected participation levels. Flexible programming and responsive youth work approaches helped maintain strong engagement throughout the year.

One to One Support Hours
116

Unlocking Your Potential (UP) supported young people aged 16-25 who were not in education, employment or training. Through intensive one-to-one support, the project focused on building confidence, resilience, independence and employability skills.

Target Groups

Young people aged 16-25 experiencing barriers to education, employment or training.

Purpose of the Project

To support personal development, improve life skills, and help young people progress towards education, training and employment opportunities.

Core Activities Delivered

Individual support sessions, personal development planning, employability supports, life skills development, advocacy and signposting.

Young People Engaged
37

Reflection

As the project approached completion in 2025, the focus remained on delivering intensive, personalised support to participants. Young people received assistance to address barriers relating to housing, education, mental health, employment, and independent living.

Impact Snapshot

Participants developed stronger coping skills, increased confidence, improved decision-making abilities, and greater independence. Many progressed towards training, employment or improved personal circumstances.

Challenges & Learning

Complex personal circumstances including addiction, homelessness, mental health challenges and involvement with the justice system required highly flexible and individualised support approaches.

One to One Support Hours

305

Youth Information Centre

The Youth Information Centre provides free, confidential and accessible information services to young people aged 13-30. The service supports informed decision-making through information provision, online supports, educational programmes, and European mobility opportunities.

Target Groups

Young people aged 13-30 and those who support them.

Young People Engaged

7647

Purpose of the Project

To ensure young people have access to accurate, reliable and impartial information that supports their personal, educational and social development.

Core Activities Delivered

Information provision, YIC Chat, Eurodesk services, European opportunities promotion, internet safety workshops, cyberbullying awareness, Time to Move events, and European Youth Week activities.

Young People Trained

2829

Youth Information Centre

Reflection

The service continued to build strong relationships with young people through trusted and confidential support. Demand remained high for information relating to education, employment, accommodation and international opportunities. The service maintained its ERYICA Quality Label, reflecting high standards of youth information practice.

Impact Snapshot

Young people increased their awareness of volunteering, travel, education and European mobility opportunities. Many reported greater confidence in pursuing experiences they previously thought were beyond their reach.

Volunteers
6

Adults Trained
297

Challenges & Learning

The growth of AI-generated misinformation and the ongoing housing crisis highlighted the importance of providing accurate information and maintaining expertise in areas such as tenancy rights and housing supports.

One to One Support Hours
305

Youth Talk CBT

Youth Talk CBT provides one-to-one Cognitive Behavioural Therapy support for young people aged 8-25 experiencing emotional or mental health challenges. The service helps young people develop practical coping strategies and improve emotional wellbeing.

Target Groups

Young people aged 8-25.

Purpose of the Project

To support young people to manage anxiety, low mood, stress, and emotional difficulties through evidence-based therapeutic interventions.

One to One Support Hours

216

Core Activities Delivered

Individual CBT sessions, emotional regulation supports, coping skills development, problem-solving, and resilience-building interventions.

Reflection

Demand for the service remained high throughout 2025, reflecting growing mental health needs among young people. The service continued to provide tailored interventions that supported emotional wellbeing and personal resilience.

Young People Engaged

101

Impact Snapshot

Young people reported improved emotional regulation, healthier coping strategies, reduced anxiety, and increased confidence in managing challenges within daily life.

Challenges & Learning

Increasingly complex referrals and growing waiting lists highlighted the need for continued investment in early intervention and mental health supports for young people.

Youthscape+

Youthscape+ is a cross-border, cross-community programme supporting young people aged 14-24 who are not in education, employment or training. The programme focuses on personal development, citizenship, employability, and positive community relationships.

Target Groups

Young people aged 14-24 who are NEET.

Purpose of the Project

To support young people to build confidence, develop skills, strengthen relationships and progress towards education, employment or training.

Core Activities Delivered

Group work programmes, one-to-one support, citizenship projects, employability training, personal development activities and community engagement.

Young People Trained

37

Young People Engaged

48

Youthscape+

Reflection

Youthscape+ continued to provide intensive support for young people facing multiple barriers. Staff demonstrated flexibility and creativity in adapting programmes to meet diverse needs while maintaining strong partnerships with referral agencies.

Impact Snapshot

Participants reported significant improvements in confidence, self-belief and motivation. Several young people progressed back into education, training and other positive pathways.

Volunteers

6

Adults Trained

12

Challenges & Learning

Transport barriers, recruitment challenges, behavioural needs and staff turnover impacted delivery. Strong partnership working and flexible outreach approaches helped overcome these obstacles.

One to One Support Hours

180

ATLIC

ATLIC supports young people to explore innovation, entrepreneurship and opportunities within the Blue Economy through international collaboration, creative learning and practical project development.

Target Groups

Young people, students and emerging innovators.

Purpose of the Project

To inspire entrepreneurial thinking and equip young people with skills that support future employment and innovation opportunities.

Young People Engaged

48

Core Activities Delivered

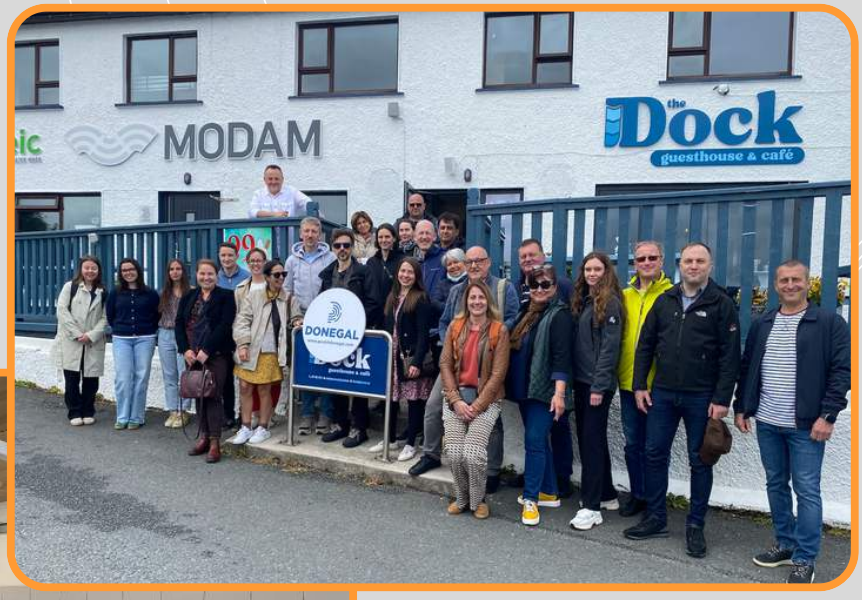
Innovation labs, international exchanges, creative jams, project development, industry engagement and entrepreneurship training.

Reflection

2025 included significant international activity, including exchanges in France, Spain and the Azores. The introduction of Transition Year students broadened participation and strengthened links with schools and stakeholders.

Impact Snapshot

Young people gained international experience, developed innovation skills, and accessed opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable in rural areas.



Challenges & Learning

International travel and project logistics created significant demands. Improved planning and stronger partnerships enhanced delivery and participant experience.

Young People Trained

37

CLYP

CLYP promotes civic participation and active citizenship by equipping young people, educators and youth workers with practical tools to create positive change in their communities.

Target Groups

Young people, educators, youth workers and community organisations.

Young People Engaged
60

Purpose of the Project

To strengthen youth participation, leadership and civic engagement through innovative learning and action-based approaches.

Adults Trained
30

Core Activities Delivered

Development of civic engagement tools, European partner collaboration, staff training, Small Wins Programme trials and youth participation initiatives.

Reflection

During 2025, partners finalised key programme resources and delivered international training events. DYS staff participated in European learning opportunities and subsequently piloted activities with local youth groups.

Volunteers
2

Impact Snapshot

Young people developed leadership skills, confidence and a greater understanding of how they can influence issues affecting their communities.

Young People Trained
12

Challenges & Learning

Working across different cultures, backgrounds and abilities highlighted the importance of flexible programme design. The partnership successfully developed tools capable of supporting diverse groups of young people across Europe.

Reflection

STAR continued to establish itself as a valued and trusted service within the Creeslough community during 2025. Participation remained strong across all three youth groups, with volunteers playing a central role in delivering high-quality supports and creating welcoming, inclusive environments for young people. Engagement through the Creeslough Response Working Group and the North Central Child & Family Support Network strengthened partnerships with statutory and community organisations, ensuring that young people's needs continued to inform local recovery efforts. While staff changes and uncertainty around future funding created challenges, the project-maintained continuity through the commitment of volunteers and wider Donegal Youth Service staff. Recruitment of new members and plans to refresh existing groups provide a strong foundation for future development.

Active Youth Clubs

1

Impact Snapshot

STAR has helped create lasting opportunities for young people to reconnect with their community following the Creeslough tragedy. Through youth clubs, additional needs groups and one-to-one support, participants developed confidence, communication skills, friendships and resilience in a safe and supportive environment. Funding also enabled young people to enjoy educational and recreational trips, purchase new equipment and participate in activities that promoted inclusion, wellbeing and positive shared experiences. These opportunities have strengthened community connections while helping young people continue their recovery journey.

Challenges & Learning

Recruiting staff into a specialist part-time role resulted in periods of reduced service continuity, while some older participants naturally progressed beyond the age profile of existing groups. The experience reinforced the importance of stable, long-term funding and increased staffing capacity to expand one-to-one support, sustain existing groups and respond to emerging needs within the community.

Adults Trained

2

Go Green

New Learning Path for Promoting Green Entrepreneurship

GoGreen is an Erasmus+ partnership led by Donegal Youth Service, working with organisations across Ireland, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Spain. The project supports young people and youth workers to explore green entrepreneurship, combining environmental awareness with creativity, practical skills and social enterprise.

Through international collaboration, the project is developing a new learning programme that helps young people build the confidence, knowledge and skills to turn environmental ideas into positive action.

Young People Engaged

50

Target Groups

Young people (aged 15-30) and youth workers/practitioners across six partner countries

Purpose of the Project

To develop and pilot an innovative, iterative learning path that builds green entrepreneurship skills, social competencies, and environmental agency in young people through the Pyramid of Learning methodology

Core Activities Delivered

International partner meetings, development and testing of learning resources, youth and youth worker activities, green entrepreneurship workshops and hackathons, and the development of the GoGreen Ambassador Programme.

Go Green

Reflection

The project consists of strong cross-partner collaboration and shared understanding. This has resulted in the development of the Pyramid of Learning methodology which continues to be iteratively improved through the facilitation of in-person hackathons as the project continues. This experimental approach to module and material co-development is working well, with partner contributions becoming more integrated and pedagogically aligned. The GoGreen Ambassador programme concept has gained traction, with clearer framing now in place around the "taking the first step" model that keeps the role accessible and grounded in the funded indicators.

Young People Trained

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Impact Snapshot

Youth workers and young people across six partner countries (Ireland, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Spain) engaged in co-design of the learning path and Pyramid of Learning methodology

Practitioners across partner organisations developed a shared vocabulary and a structured, evidence-based framework for green entrepreneurship education which moves from disparate national approaches to a co-owned transnational methodology

Green entrepreneurship education for young people remains underdeveloped in many partner contexts; this project provides a replicable, non-competitive model that centres social skills and environmental consciousness alongside practical enterprise skills. The aim is that the young people will continue to engage with sustainability built in through the Ambassador programme

Challenges & Learning

Managing the scope of deliverables across a six-country partnership, particularly as the partnership discovered new components of huge benefit to the resources being developed which were not initially anticipated within the remit of work.

What we learned / adapted: Structured assessment of drafts and regular updates at monthly partner meetings proved essential for catching misalignment early. The iterative approach to the learning path development also reinforced the value of piloting before finalising, and the importance of keeping the elements of youth engagement achievable to ensure the indicator targets remain realistic and meaningful.

Adults Trained

20+

TYESI

Targeted Youth Employability Support Initiative

The Targeted Youth Employability Support Initiative (TYESI) is a transformative programme for young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education, or training (NEETs). It empowers hard-to-reach young people by developing essential skills, building confidence, and expanding access to education and employment opportunities for a brighter future.

Young People Engaged

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Target Groups

Young people (aged 15-24) who are not in employment, education or training.

Purpose of the Project

TYESI is about supporting young people who may be struggling to find their next step. The project provides a safe and supportive space where young people can build confidence, develop practical skills and explore opportunities in education, training and employment. The approach is flexible and tailored to each young person, recognising that everyone has different experiences, strengths and challenges.

Core Activities Delivered

TYESI delivered a mix of group workshops, one-to-one support, mentoring, coaching and practical activities. Sessions focused on areas such as CVs and job applications, interview skills, digital skills, resilience, teamwork, communication and personal development. Driver theory sessions and practical activities also gave young people opportunities to learn in a more informal and engaging way while developing confidence and independence.

TYESI

Reflection

The project continues to show the importance of taking a flexible and personal approach when working with young people. Some participants need time to build trust and confidence before they are ready to take their next step. Having the ability to offer one-to-one support alongside group activities allows the programme to respond to what young people need at the time, rather than expecting everyone to follow the same pathway.

Young People Trained

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Impact Snapshot

The impact of TYESI can be seen in the increased confidence, participation and willingness of young people to engage with learning and future opportunities. Through practical activities, mentoring and positive relationships with staff, young people have been encouraged to recognise their strengths, try new things and think more positively about their future.

Challenges & Learning

One of the main challenges is that young people come to the project with very different experiences, levels of confidence and support needs. This means that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. TYESI has shown the value of being patient, flexible and responsive, allowing young people to engage in a way that feels comfortable for them.

Building strong relationships and listening to what young people actually need has been central to the success of the project.

TUSLA Intensive One to One

Intensive one to one work with young people through a direct partnership with TUSLA to support the young person to develop with a methodology of including creative community alternatives.

CCA is a tool for high level prevention work aimed at delivering wraparound supports for children and families within their own community. It refers to a holistic service designed to meet the identified needs of children, young people, caregivers and siblings and to address a range of life areas through the team-based planning and implementation process, within the community. CCA also aims to develop the problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-efficacy of the young people and family members. There is also an emphasis on integrating the youth into the community and building the family's social support network.

Young People Engaged

28

Target Groups

Children and young people who are either on the edge of alternative care, or currently in alternative care due to complex factors

Purpose of the Project

- To support the young person to remain in their care placement
- To integrate young people into the community, support engagement in positive programmes and activities identified by them
- Help young people in care to communicate how they feel with the hope they will be better equipped to manage their care placement and challenges they may be facing.

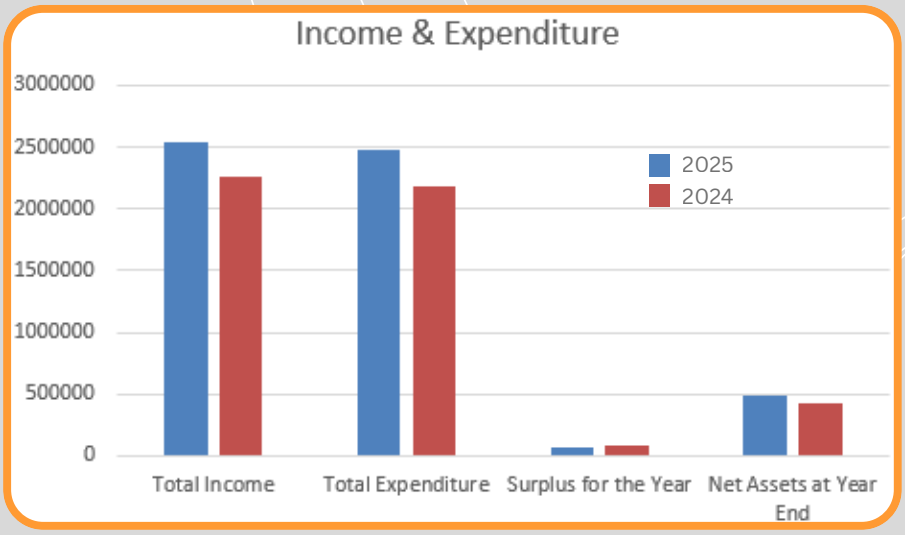
One to One Support Hours

1054

Finance

Expenditure Areas

Staff Costs	€1,851,384
Youth Activities & Programmes	€290,878
Travel & Subsistence	€77, 963
Expertise Services & Mentoring	€59,396
Premises & Facilities	€83,587
Equipment, IT & Communications	€25,163
Others -operating &admin costs	€60,809
Depreciation	€27,952
Total	**€2,477,132**



2025 was a year of continued growth and investment in youth services across Donegal. Total income increased to €2.54 million, supporting an expanding range of programmes, projects and services for young people. Expenditure for the year was €2.48 million, with almost three quarters relating to staff costs, reflecting the people-led nature of youth work and the importance of skilled staff in delivering quality services. Significant investment was also made directly in youth activities and programmes, alongside travel, specialist supports, premises and operational costs. DYS ended the year with a surplus of €65,834 and net assets of €492,991.

16 – 18 PORT RD
LETTERKENNY
Co.Donegal

www.donegalyouthservice.ie
074 9129630
F92 N2KC