



DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY

**Report of
Dublin Youth Assembly
28 June 2023**



**DAOINE ÓGA
NA hEIREANN
HAVE YOUR SAY**

THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

The Commission on the Future of Ireland (the Commission) was established by Sinn Féin in 2021. Its Chairperson is Declan Kearney MLA and vice chairperson is Seanadóir Lynn Boylan.

The Commission's remit is to undertake a grassroots consultation with the people of Ireland and internationally on the future of Ireland.

This is being achieved through the hosting of public People's Assemblies across the country and internationally; the collection of written contributions; hosting sectoral meetings and private engagements.

To date four People's Assemblies have been held in Belfast, Derry, Donegal and Louth & reports of each event have been published

These events attracted people from the business, community, health, Irish language and education fields and there was a significant and welcome participation from people from the Protestant tradition.

In addition to Dublin Youth Assembly, the Commission has held other sectoral initiatives, one at Balmoral Agricultural Show in May 2023 and the Belfast Women's Assembly which was held on 27th June

The Commission is seeking written contributions from interested individuals and groups and 170 such contributions have been received to date. Contributions can be made by email to **commission@sinnfein.ie** or via the following webpage **www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland**

In the period ahead The Commission will hold an event focussing on the Protestant tradition in a new Ireland, this takes place in Derry on 13th September; it will also host an event entitled 'Rural Communities in a New Ireland' at the National Ploughing Championship in Co. Offaly on 21st September and People's Assemblies are planned for Waterford on October 12th and the Connemara Gaeltacht on November 27th.



Declan Kearney MLA is Chairperson of the Commission



Senator Lynn Boylan is Deputy Chairperson of the Commission

DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY OPENING ADDRESS



THE COMMISSION
ON THE FUTURE
OF IRELAND

AN COIMISIÚN
UM THODHCHÁIRÍ
NA hÉIREANN

Sinn Féin

The Dublin Youth Assembly took place in the Communication Worker's Union on 28th June 2023.

The meeting was addressed by Commission vice chairperson Seanadóir Lynn Boylan and a video of the Dublin Youth Assembly and other events which the Commission has held can be found on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PohxICNH4&t=9s>

In her opening remarks Senator Boylan said:

'Young people have been to the forefront of major constitutional changes in our country, not least here in Dublin

'The marriage equality referendum was one example of change that has been achieved by young people.

'Ireland's youth will have a pivotal role to play in the future of Ireland as a united country

'You, young people living in Dublin today, have the chance to live in a united Ireland, something that was denied to those who came before you. You have the right, and also the responsibility, to help shape that new united Ireland and make it a place we can all be proud to live in.

'Those of us who aspire to a united Ireland need to create the space in this conversation for those who disagree, or who need reassurance.

'All ideas and concerns deserve to be heard, especially those at the coalface of our communities such as all of you here today

'I encourage you all to play a full role in our conversation here today and into the future and help shape a new and changed Ireland.'



OBJECTIVES OF THE DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY

The lead facilitator of the event was veteran youth worker Daisy O'Brien.

The objective for the session was to introduce the concept of Irish unity in a way that would stimulate the young people and facilitate them to process the idea through a series of activities designed to bring Irish unity from an abstract concept to a tangible and doable project.



The event was opened with some warm up Menti questions which generated the word cloud below.

[illegible]

Then the young people considered the question 'A New Ireland is for Everyone' – what does it mean?

In this activity a map of Ireland had been prepared in advance and the participants were asked to populate it with the types of people who will call the new Ireland home.

HERE ARE THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED:

UNIONISTS	People with disabilities
Orangmen	Gaeilgeoirí
International Students	Emigrants /diaspora
Black Irish	Public transport
Health Care Workers	PEOPLE STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION / IN REHAB
Ethnic minorities	Prisoners
English language learners	Protestants
Travellers	Renters
Elderly	Rural Citizens
Non binary individuals	PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
Carers	Millennials
Non Catholics	ESSENTIAL WORKERS / NURSES / MIDWIVES / TEACHERS / PARAMEDICS
Lower socio economic groups	Victims of clerical abuse
Immigrants / refugees / People in direct provision	MICA VICTIMS
Women	Apprentices
YOUNG PEOPLE	Autistic people
Farmers	Border communities
Social workers	West of the Bann and Shannon
LGBTQI+ Community	Artists and performers
Homeless	Families
REFUGEES	Small business owners
Working classes	A child being born into flats
Sick people	SINGLE FATHERS / SINGLE PARENTS
Fire fighters	
Trans community	
Unions	



Next the young people were asked 'What do we want to take with us into the New Ireland/ What do we want to leave behind?

Take with us:

An all-island NHS	Irish medium education
Culture (Language, sports, music, dancing, theatre etc)	National anthem
TG4	Sinn Féin
Luas	Foreign aid programmes / International solidarity
IRISH FOOD AND PUBS	NEUTRALITY
Traveller culture	Marriage equality, abortion access
Toy show	Equality in higher education
Storytelling, craic agus ceol	High employment
THE ABILITY TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL AT HOME	Anti discrimination policies
Heritage & history	EU membership & free movement
GAA	Our educated youth
Education system	LGBTQI+ people
FREE EDUCATION (INCL. HIGHER EDUCATION)	YOUTH CENTRES
Community belonging	6 Counties
Good education	Proportional representation
School help with mental health	OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS
Collectivism	Work ethic
Trade union movement	Artistic expression
Protestant community	Secularism
TOLERANCE	Good Friday Agreement
	Resources for disadvantaged

Leave behind:

Education fees	Energy company price increases
Racism	Ryan Tubridy
Bigotry	Lack of public transport / feeling unsafe on public transport
PARTITION	Misunderstanding of the link between economic indicators and actual welfare
Rugby anthem	REGIONAL INEQUALITY
Homelessness / housing crisis	Sectarianism
ECONOMIC INEQUALITY	Reliance on FDI
2 tier health system	Lack of mental health services
Erosion of public services	Lack of trade unions
NATO	Highest TD salaries in Europe
High Cost of Living	Gender separate schools
Fianna Fáil & Fine Gael	Bad city planning
State exams	VIOLENCE
Inclusivity for autistic people	Religion in schools
Corruption	Destruction of historical buildings
Discrimination (sexual orientation/ race/ethnicity)	RTÉ
POVERTY	CLERICAL ABUSE
Northern conflict	Direct Provision
Lack of resource centres	Partitionist mentality
Anti-social behaviour – drugs & car robbing	Sexism
Reliance on fossil fuels	Paramilitarism
€9 pints	Conversion therapy
Excessive construction	THE BORDER
HSE / waiting lists	Junior cert
Heroin / Crack abuse	DEPRIVATION
Rugby	

Building on the conversations generated by the previous question, the next question posed was 'What are the Challenges and Opportunities in building the New Ireland?'

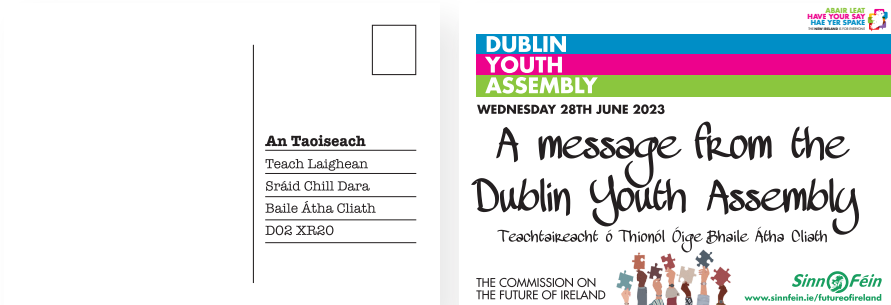
Challenges:

Compromise / differing views	Commemorations / marches
Our place in the EU	OPPOSITION TO UNITY
CLIMATE CHANGE	Inclusion of communities and cultures
Agriculture	Transition period, economic hardship, currency
Managing hate speech and freedom of speech	Momentum – keeping integration
Riots / risk of violence	GENERATIONAL TRAUMA
CHANGE OF LAW	Integrating schools
Taxation	Politics will become more divisive
COLLEGE FEES	Legal systems – privy council
Cultural integration	Voter turnout
Environmental issues	GETTING PEOPLE ON BOARD – PARTICIPATION
Unionists feeling left out / unionist reaction	Partitionism
IT systems	Acceptance of British people living in Ireland
TWO POLICE FORCES	
Government structures	
Tayto	
The flag and anthem, symbols	

Opportunities:

Chance to address mistakes in 26 county state	Northern representation in the EU
END OVER RELIANCE ON PRIVATE SECTOR	Freedom of travel – non EU citizens
Chance to re-evaluate community safety	ALL ISLAND FOOTBALL TEAM / SPORTING OPPORTUNITIES
Health – greater efficiencies	Potato farl in fry
End cycle of division of past 800 years	Constitutional reform – increase rights / New constitution
Increase democratic representation of minorities inc unionist/loyalist communities	Improve logistics
Chance to broaden Irish identity	RIGHT A HISTORICAL WRONG
Reform our institutions	No suspended government
Equality	Active participation / increased civil engagement
Transport – railway	Brexit
Agriculture	POLITICAL REFORM
FAIRER EDUCATION	Lower price chicken fillet rolls
Better housing	Building a new state
BETTER ECONOMY	INCREASED DIVERSITY
Universities – more options	Secular education
Nature – single system	Comprehensive, balanced, history education of troubles
INCREASE IN TOURISM NORTH AND SOUTH	All island health & mental health supports

The final activity was 'A letter to An Taoiseach' outlining the young person's hopes and aspirations for the future. For this activity postcards were produced for the participants to write on, here is a flavour of the notes which people wrote:



An Taoiseach,

In my lifetime Ireland has underwent a series of changes, these include things like marriage equality and the Repeal of the 8th amendment. The desire for change across Irish society is strong and the reunification of our country is the next step in building the Republic we all want to see. So I encourage you to get serious and start to plan for constitutional change, if you don't, it will happen without you. Is mise le meas,

A Taoiseach,

Your party fought for a UI. That country has not been delivered. Give the Irish people a chance to discuss this. Call for a Citizens' Assembly

We need an improved version of the Ireland our freedom fighters fought for. We need to realise the vision they dreamed of but take on board the change our country has gone through and learn from our mistakes and when we are creating our new Ireland we make appropriate changes. Mise le meas,

An Taoiseach,

I love this country but I want better for it. I think as a society we deserve a country in which every citizen, north and south, are equal. A country in which trans and non-binary citizens get basic respect throughout the law. In which our young people don't have to leave. But its not me that can do it, it's you. Please do what's right, Please listen to our citizens, Sincerely

On ???????? Seanadair Lynn Boylan delivered these postcards to
An Taoiseach at Leinster House

CONCLUSION

The Dublin Youth Assembly was an excellent session as evidenced by the feedback which participants left as the event was closing.

'Eye opening for someone who isn't always surrounded by those who advocate for a united Ireland. I feel like I have a better idea of what it means and what it can be.'

'Very nice to be included. I felt welcomed and listened to. Today was also fun and I hope we can do it again some time.'

'Brilliant event, informative and inclusive, positive. I am leaving here inspired to push forward for a united Ireland.'

'It was a great event, loved how there were so many young people here. The travel was a bit tough so I'd like if you did days in small areas – Coolock or Ballymun or talk to children in schools.'

The main takeaways from the event are that young people are engaged on this issue and want to take their place in the discussions. They are living with the cost of living and housing crises which are not of their making and they are aware of the injustices faced by some in society.

The young people present also displayed sense of wanting better for the people of Ireland and they were very generous regarding who could claim ownership of Ireland – all who call the island home.

They are knowledgeable regarding the outworking of British policy in Ireland and its detrimental effect on the people here. Those in attendance desire an end to partition and the establishment of a national democracy in which all citizens are equally cared for and supported.



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REPORT OF THE DUBLIN YOUTH ASSEMBLY, 28 JUNE 2023





