

Young European journalists visit Derry as part of an international programme

Students from Northern Ireland and Ireland were called to come together to create films highlighting their views on critical issues facing young people across the island of Ireland today.

15 students from Northern Ireland and 15 from Ireland, taking Media, Journalism and Performing Arts courses at North West Regional College in Derry, gathered over five days to reflect on their viewpoints around key issues and produce short films about them.

Led and hosted by [Nerve Centre](#) – the Northern Ireland’s leading creative media arts organisation – and by the college, the ‘Citizenship Workshop’ is part of the [EU/UK Youth Stronger Together](#) programme from the British Council.

One of the biggest issues impacting on the lives of the youth is, naturally, post Brexit and everything around its consequences, but there are other subjects that are not only related to the UK’s exit from the EU, like the cost of living, health problems and the environment. The purpose was precisely to look at how their questions impact differently on each side of the border and how **collaboration across border** might help to address them.

The big challenge given to the students was to make stories with a strong local flavour, but at the same time accessible and **engaging to audiences from across Europe**, resonating with a wider public through their messages.

During the week, they went through intensive days of brainstorming, planning, writing and filming their works, which were presented on Friday 10 November at the Nerve Centre. Besides being able to express their worries and voices, one of the best parts

of the week was being able to work alongside professional filmmakers, who were chosen to guide and mentor all the process.

The students were divided into four teams, each one with one mentor. They could choose the genre of the film, and just had to follow the 3-minute maximum guideline. The result was a variety of subjects and paths: **the tough cost of living crisis, a comedy about border control, the impact of connections when calling an ambulance, and even reaching The Troubles.**

Reporting from this event in Derry were Francisca, from Portugal, and Gabriela, from Bulgaria. We are the young journalist grantees of the EU/UK Youth Stronger Together programme to create follow-up stories of this workshop. We have really enjoyed this opportunity and getting to know Northern Ireland.

From my part, Francisca, from the Porto region, I have to say that **people from Derry are the nicest that I have ever met** – no overstatement – so I want to thank the conviviality, helpfulness and openness from everyone across the city.

It was a very pleasant stay, in a beautiful and easy-to-walk city. I noticed and appreciated the good conditions for people with physical mobility disabilities – an aspect that is still largely lacking in too many European cities. Despite the stores closing quite early (especially compared to my country!) I always found a market open when I needed it!

We hope to come back one day! Stay safe.

By Francisca Valentim