

SICAP 2019 Case Study
Comhar na nOileán CTR



Oileánaigh Faoi Sheol
Young Islanders Under Sail

Case-Study Background

As part of our SICAP annual plan for 2019 we have attempted to get a young person to take a seat on the West Cork Islands Community Council (WCICC). This was something we had also tried to do in 2018, but for various reasons we have so far been unable to find a suitable youth representative. Our ultimate aim for this SICAP G:2 Action is to support a youth member from the Islands to actively become involved in the West Cork Islands Community Council. Youth groups and other committees, where young people are active, will be supported to nominate a person to represent them. It was our intention that this person would then be facilitated through a youth leadership course, and the relevant governance and inclusion training, to be a youth representative on the WCICC.

In October of last year a meeting was held with young people on Oileán Chléire in order to get the views of island youth on what living on an island was like for them. In regards to having a youth member representative on the WCICC, many members of the group stated that this would be difficult as young people from all the islands ‘never get together’ with each other, and as a result knew very little about other young peoples’ day-to-day lives on the other West Cork islands. The difficulties faced by young islanders in getting together and discussing their day-to-day lives, and common problems in regards to island life, has been a recurring theme when attempting to move forward with this particular action.

The Views of Young people from Oileán Chléire on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Island Life

Advantages / Likes	Disadvantages / Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swimming;• Being able to drive;• The library (although it’s too small);• Freedom and a sense of safety; and• Knowing one another – friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited hours of commercial premises, especially during the winter;• The unsightliness of certain buildings – particularly one unfinished project;• The cancellation of sailings during the winter (due to storms);• Changing nurse personnel; and• Litter / rubbish (in certain places).

The above table represents the views of young people living on Oileán Chléire as to what they see as the advantages, and disadvantages of island life. Some of these advantages, such as a sense of freedom and safety, are often given by islanders when asked as to what benefits there are to living on an island. Restrictions on mobility and a shortage of local amenities are also common complaints amongst all age groups of islanders, particularly so in winter time. After further discussions it quickly became apparent that, as a team, we would need to come up with some new initiatives in order to bring young people from the various islands together.

In an attempt to bring young people together from the various West Cork Islands we began to look into the possibility of providing a Sail Training Ireland course titled 'West Cork Islands Sail Training Voyage'. Sail Training Ireland offered an option that isn't focused on the qualification as such, but uses the sailing experience as a method of communication; skill set buildings, personal development, and group work all through the medium of sailing. Our hope was that a course, such as this, would allow island youth to connect with each other through their shared experience of island living, in addition to developing key skills in the maritime industry and the possibilities to further develop those skills. As we have been having difficulties in finding a willing candidate to sit on the WCICC, we felt that this activity would be an opportunity for young islanders to work together, and to also share and discuss the common problems facing young people on the West Cork Islands.



What is Sail Training?

Sail Training is a self-development & non formal educational training programme, which is run on board tall ships. The experience provides an excellent environment for personal and social development. It is not so much learning to sail, as learning from sailing, from the vessel, the sea, fellow crew members and perhaps most importantly from the trainees themselves. Skills such as confidence, communication, leadership, teamwork, understanding of diversity, and resilience are learnt. The group start the voyage as a collection of strangers

but end it as a tight knit crew. A trainee's first voyage can often prove to be a turning point in their lives.

Sail Training Ireland are the national Sail Training Organisation and in association with Comhar na nOileán CTR were responsible for co-ordinating and delivering the trainee programme.

Recruiting the Trainees.

The voyage was advertised through the West Cork Islands Community Council and Island Development Companies. Island Development Workers and Comhar na NOileain staff spoke to all the families who may have young folk within the specified age range. The Voyage was posted on Facebook through Sail Training Ireland and shared by Comhar na nOileán Project Officers with Island Networks. In addition, the voyage was also posted online on Sail Training's Website. Booking was completed online through them. There was a lot of interest through Development Companies, Sail Training Ireland and Comhar na nOileán. One or two of the interested young people were over the age, and were facilitated on other voyages through Sail Training Ireland.

Place allocation

Two spaces were allocated to each of the five West Cork Islands who had young people within the specified age range, with a total of 10 participants. On the recommendation of the Island development companies we operated a first come first served basis for these spaces. Two young folk applied from Heir Island, Sherkin Island, and Oileán Chléire while four young folk applied from Bere Island. All four young folk got the opportunity to participate as there were no applications from Whiddy within the specified age range. All applicants had the chance to participate as there was no waiting list.



Funding

Funding for the voyage was secured through a grant from the Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme (FLAG) under the sub-theme of Lifelong learning, attracting young people into fisheries, aquaculture, and marine related careers and activities.

The FLAG funding we received was essential, as without it, we would not have been able to proceed with this project.

Setting Sail

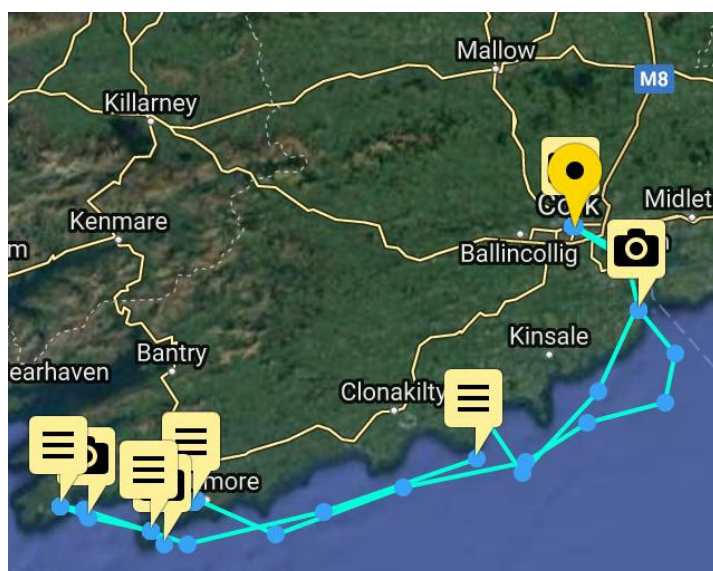
Trainee Log (compiled by the trainees as part of their watch)

During the course of their voyage the young participants were asked to keep a log of their journey aboard the 'Maybe'. The following section is a collection of the participants' experiences during their six day trip.

This was a live log in and available for the parents, relatives and islanders to see the young sailors' current position and the ability to, not only track their journey, but to also view the blog, and leave comments. You too can log in and view online as the blog is still available at <http://www.maybe-sailing.com/our-ships/follow-our-ships/>

Monday 26th August

On Sunday evening after their safety briefing, the crew set sail down the river to Ringabella Bay. This is where they would spend their first evening at anchor getting to know each other, and planning their next few days exploring the wonderful islands of West Cork.





The 'Maybe', a 1920's Dutch sailing ketch, made out of wood, launched in 1933, was designed for round the world cruising. She has been completely restored recently and returned to the Tall Ships races. A major milestone in 'Maybe's history is that she took part in the first ever Tall Ships Race in 1956! Since then, Maybe came third in her class in the 2014 Tall Ships Race. Maybe can accommodate 12 trainee crew members and 3-4 permanent crew.

Tuesday 27th August

We had an early start at 0530 this morning. Fuelled with mugs of tea we hoisted the sails. It took all of us working together to put them up!

We watched a beautiful sunrise as we cruised along the coast. The boat and some of our crew hit a few rough patches as they suffered sea sickness.

Some very friendly visitors came to say hello today. Plenty of passing dolphins came to play underneath the bow while we sat a few metres above in the bow sprit net! We got fairly splashed but it was well worth it.

As we started to near our destination of Baltimore we got hit by a bout of typical Irish weather. We dropped and stowed sails in the heavy rain. Soon, Beacon Point and Barrack Point loomed out of the rain and fog. We sailed between the two dramatic cliffs into Baltimore harbour.

After dropping anchor, the dingy zoomed ashore to pick up our final crew member Rachel. We all had a tasty dinner of chicken pasta bake and have been reunited with our beloved phones for 20 minutes. We are ready for a well-deserved rest in our bunks, while being rocked to sleep by the gentle waves.

28 August 2019

We started the day with some breakfast and a quick happy hour to get the 'Maybe' in ship shape before heading to visit the beautiful Sherkin Island. One of our trainees, who is a Sherkin local, gave us the tip for the best swimming spot. After a visit to some ruins we headed down to the pier for a swim. A wander around the island brought us to the hotel for a game of pool and skipping stones by the shore. We then returned to Maybe and started hoisting sails in preparation to sail off the anchor to Cape Clear. We had an amazing day sailing through some tiny channels with great wind and sunshine. When we arrived to Cape Clear we sailed on to the anchor and prepared for a BBQ in the scenic bay. 'Maybe Baby' (the dinghy) then started taking us to shore to start making the fire to cook the food. We built a big fire pit lit with firewood supplied by Callum's parents (Thanks guys!). After we ate our fill, we sat around the fire playing guitar and singing as the sky grew darker and the stars grew clearer. Our journey back on Maybe Baby was filled with excitement and surprise as we were surrounded by glowing, sparkling water that was lit by bio luminescent plankton. All in all, it was a busy day filled with fun.



29th August

Jimmy's Jams

We had a lie in until 07:30 today and then it was time to set sail to Crookhaven. Pulling on a halyard, a domino effect occurred as trainee after trainee hit the deck.

Some of us had great fun on bowsprit today. It was a bit of a rollercoaster. We were being carried up in the air then almost touching the top of the water.

After dropping anchor in Crookhaven we had a swim off the boat. We had a great time jumping in off the bowsprit. It wasn't long before we needed a round of hot chocolate. Then, we had some unreal showers, the first and last of the week! Sailors are dirty folk!

We had a warm welcome into Crookhaven. We paid a visit to O'Sullivan's. Jimmy, one of the local musicians, played Galway Girl. After we had enough of trad music, we requested a few ABBA tunes and had a dance around the cosy pub.

Today has been a fun filled day!



30th August 2019

A seal sent us off from our anchorage in Crookhaven this morning. We reefed the main sail and hoisted the jib. We flew along the coast sailing downwind.

Today we enjoyed discos by the helm, lots of naps and looking at some dolphins from the bowsprit. There was also a cooking disaster in the galley today, after an hour of trying to boil water the pan decided to empty itself into the sink after a big wave.

After the pasta well and truly defeated us we moved on to cans of soup and bread. We all had a few extra showers as the waves crashed against the side of the boat! We avoided a floating tree today that was passing a few hundred meters away allowing us to see the importance of keeping watch.



Keeping a watch!

Sitting in the bow sprit with the sea below rising and falling with dolphins cutting through the water underneath!

After arriving anchoring under sail, we tidied the boat after a rolling sea threw a few of our belongings around.

However, the sun shined throughout smiles and laughs had and shared.

31 August 2019

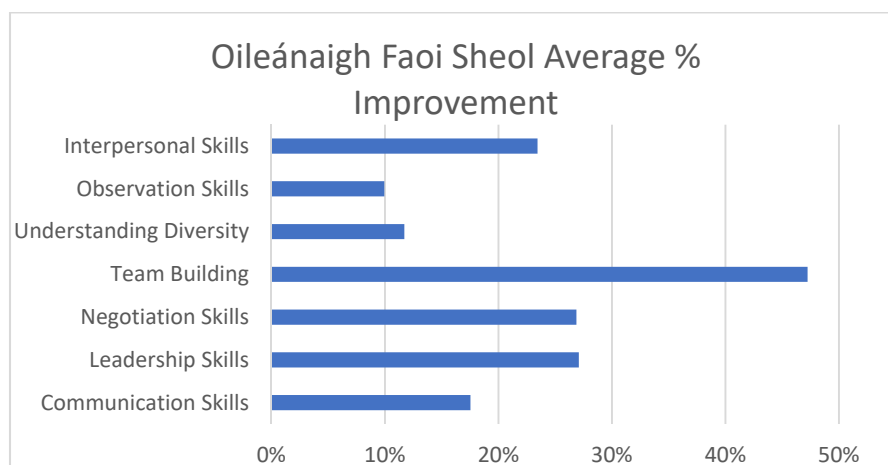
Today we had a well-deserved lie in until 0730 before lifting the anchor and setting sail on our journey back to Cork. We hoisted the sails for the last time and had an amazing sail down the sunny Irish coast under full sail. We were greeted by many dolphins and a few squalls along the way, but it didn't stop the chefs down in the galley preparing for the tomorrow presentation by baking some goodies and making pizza dough for the evening. We got to the mouth of the river into Cork city where we started to prepare the boat for being around in civilisation again. After making 'Maybe' look ship shape again we waved to the passing locals and busted some moves to ABBA as we made our grand entrance to our destination in port of Cork marina. After securing our lines ashore we got to work making the pizzas. We finished the evening off with a quick happy hour a cup of tea before going to bed for the last time before everyone leaves the next day.

Key figures & Conclusion

Here are a few key facts and figures from the project.

- A total of 10 trainees from the West Cork Islands participated in a six day voyage around the Islands.
- The gender mix of 3 male and 7 female trainees.
- They ranged in age from 14 – 17.
- The trainees were nominated by local organisations through Comhair Na nOileain. These were from Heir, Sherkin, Clear and Bere Islands.
- Each trainee was awarded a certificate of participation.
- All trainees were advised of progression routes and further training opportunities with Sail Training Ireland.

From reading the travel log of the young participants, it is clear that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience. There was also great excitement amongst the families of the young sailors who were able to follow the voyage online, and were waiting to greet the 'Maybe' on her return to shore. After returning to shore the young participants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to ascertain what benefits they felt the sailing course provided them with.



The above table clearly demonstrates that the young participants felt that there were a number of positive outcomes from their journey. The majority of participants felt, that the ability to work as a team was one of the main benefits gained from the journey, and that their negotiation and leadership skills were also improved.

As a team, we firstly felt that it was very important for the young people who participated in the voyage to have enjoyed the experience. Also, another important point of this voyage was to provide young people from the West Cork Islands the opportunity to get together with each other, and to work as a team. As stated previously, there have been difficulties in getting young people from the different West Cork Islands together, and we feel that this voyage was a tremendous success in achieving that.

In conclusion, this case-study is based on our G:2 action of having a youth representative on the WCICC board. For reasons already mentioned, this has proved to be a difficult task to achieve, and it was our opinion that we needed to think 'outside the box'.

By working together as a team, and sharing responsibilities, it was felt by all involved that this will hopefully lead to young Islanders' getting together more often. This will hopefully help the young people on the West Cork Islands to recognise the benefits of being more civically involved in their island communities, and that it would benefit both local youth, and the West Cork Islands Community Council, to have a full-time youth representative for the Islands. Also, the success of this voyage has led us to believe that we should design and propose more actions that involve getting young Islanders' together and sharing experiences such as this one.

