

# Shaping the Future: Purposeful Participation with Children & Young People

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*BY PRECIOUS FREGENE*

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# The importance of Child and Youth Participation

## Benefits of Child & Youth Participation

- ▶ Provides empowerment by giving young people a voice in decisions that affect their lives
- ▶ Enables various social skills such as leadership, communication and teamwork
- ▶ Increases self-esteem and sense of belonging
- ▶ Encourages overall community involvement
- ▶ Reduces the risk of anti-social behaviour
- ▶ Improves mental-health and productivity



# Personal experience

- ▶ An active member of **Foróige** for 8+ years - involvement in various projects such as Leadership, LEAD, Citizenship, Peer Mentorship, etc
- ▶ Obtained **constant support** – Theory test, CV writing, advocacy & more!
- ▶ Led to an interest in law, human rights and the Irish legal system (**third-level education**)
- ▶ Confidence and security in authority figures and State bodies (through LEAD)



# What is LEAD and what do you do?

- ▶ LEAD stands for the 'League of Equality and Anti-Discrimination'
- ▶ Established in 2020 across North Dublin
- ▶ Commenced with a collective of 7 young people from different ethnic and minority backgrounds
- ▶ Advocates and promotes diversity and inclusion
- ▶ Listen to the voices of Ireland with an emphasis on young people
- ▶ Creates action plans and eagerly work towards a safe and healthier community

# How has LEAD impacted the community?

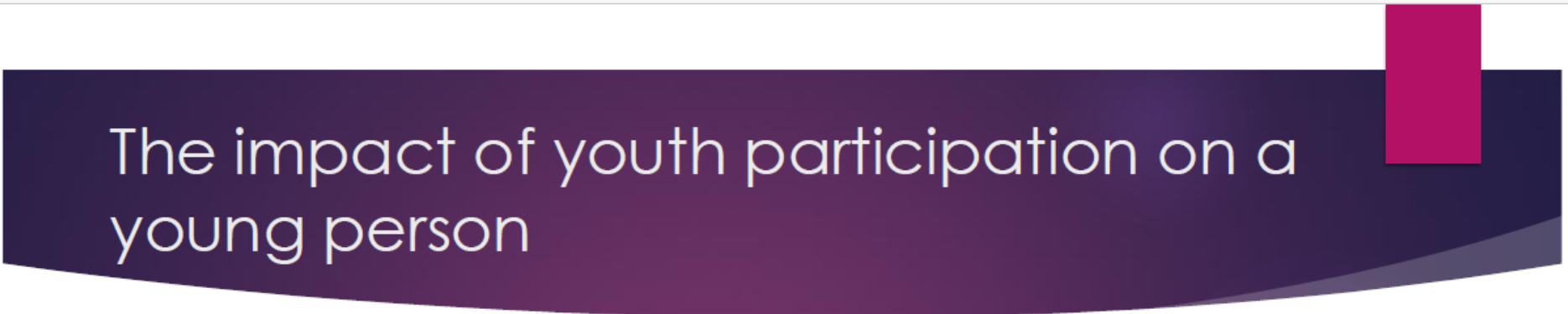
- ▶ In **February 2021**, LEAD held a panel interview which gained positive traction from Social workers, Gardaí, Ministers, school principals and over 100 students
- ▶ In **September 2022**, LEAD won the Western Division Garda Award – This is a prestigious recognition of outstanding work done throughout the year within communities
- ▶ In **November 2022**, we won the 'Foróige LEAD' Garda National Youth Award.



# How has LEAD impacted Ireland?

- ▶ Ireland's official 'National Action Plan Against Racism 2023-2027' published by TD Joe O'Brien has taken many concerns raised to him by LEAD into account
- ▶ LEAD has collaborated with various like-minded bodies to build community and has been invited to various podcasts and events to raise awareness and minimise discrimination
- ▶ LEAD has become an official Foróige project, supported by the Department of Justice
- ▶ LEAD further supports the next generation of young people called YAD (Youth Against Discrimination), progressively working to overcome issues that young people are experiencing in their daily lives.





# The impact of youth participation on a young person

Child and Youth Participation is something that can often be taken for granted as a young person, but as you get older you see how beneficial it has been in your critical thinking and development as an adolescent.

There is so much help offered to you as a young person, with utmost good faith and with your best interests at heart.

Foróige has taught me how to use my voice for the greater good and encouraged me to take necessary action in various ways. I have witnessed the philosophy of Foróige both as a young person and young adult. It is an organisation that not only says, but does.

**"Our vision is an Ireland that believes in all young people. To give to Foróige is to change a young person's life for the better."**



Thank you

Please feel free to ask any questions related to this topic.