

For my Laidlaw LIA role for the summer of '21, I worked with Transition Town Kinsale (TTK), a small local organization focused on hastening and smoothing Kinsale's transition towards an environmentally sustainable town.

My Work

My work focused on managing the social media, creating content for the organization, and improving the organizations online presence. This involved travelling to the different sites around Kinsale where the organization was working, listening and collecting content from the existing members and volunteers, working with a local marketing company to help establish the organizations online presence, and creating a simple system that would allow the organization to easily create and post content into the future.

My Experience

I had a blast working with the team in Kinsale. Due to the in person nature of my work, I lived with a member of the organization for the duration of my LIA experience. During our many meals, walks, journeys, and work days together with her and with the other members I learned a great deal about why they cared for the cause so deeply. One member, Suzanna, was raised in a small village in the rainforest in Peru. She remembers growing up surrounded by hundreds of different animals and plants, knowing each one by name. Their family lived off the land, with a small cabbage patch and a number of cows, using the local flora for medicine, recreation, dye, clothing, and seasoning. When she was about 14 years old the groundwater was polluted by a nearby textiles factory, killing many of the local species and rendering their only source of water toxic and undrinkable. She, along with her family, were forced to move into the city to provide for themselves, and she later moved to Ireland to study where she met her husband and fellow member of TTK, John. John too grew up in the countryside with no electricity until he was a teenager, and they shared a mutual affection for Mother Nature. They both experienced first hand the beauty of living in harmony with nature, and the severe physical and mental consequences of urban life.

This was a common sentiment among almost all of the members I met. They have all seen the cost of the luxuries of modern society, and are fighting to strike a balance for posterity. All of the members I met have children, and struggle to give their children the same quality of life that was afforded to them as children. This was the single strongest message I took away from the experience. Many of the members are leaders of other environmental groups, and I am thankful I now understand their side of the argument.

Impact

The content that we produced has created more engagement than the page has ever experienced, and the organization has brought in its first ever new members since the start of the pandemic. I was also able to put all the skills I have learned in my freelance career, through Laidlaw, and my college course, namely data analytics, graphic design, project management, team work, and leadership into action. I hope that this new engagement results in more growth for the organization, and can hopefully allow their impact to continue to grow.