

INSPIRING TOMORROW'S FEMALE LEADERS

IMPACT
REPORT
2023



SistersIN

SistersIN Board

Peter Cochrane,
Ciara Mageean,
John Healy,
Oonagh O'Reilly,
Peter Dobbin (Chair),
Aisling Press,
Yi Kang Choo,
Professor Karen Morrison
(absent from photo)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It all started with an idea in 2018, and a small pilot at Assumption Grammar School in 2019/2020. Then, a global pandemic brought everything to a stop.

But we came back in 2021 and with the full support of our Foundation Partners we were able to get SistersIN up and running as a registered charity in May 2022.

Since then, we've been blown away by the energy, support and enthusiasm of everyone who's been involved. The 10 schools who implemented the SistersIN Leadership Programme, the 188 girls who participated in the programme, the 188 mentors from across 130 different organisations, all of whom have contributed to making a difference and have helped to "Inspire Tomorrow's Female Leaders" as part of a one-of-a-kind leadership development programme.

Northern Ireland has just recently celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. 25 years ago, SistersIN would have been an impossible dream. As well as addressing gender equality through quality education, SistersIN is bringing people together from different backgrounds, communities and beliefs, both in schools and in industries, playing our part in ensuring peace and reconciliation is well and truly embedded in the fabric of Northern Irish society.

As a board, we are exceptionally proud of the impact SistersIN has had on pupils, mentors, businesses, schools and communities in its first year and we're excited to share with you our very first SistersIN Impact Report 2023.

Peter Dobbin,
CEO SistersIN

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Mary McAleese

Former President of Ireland shared a personal address to the SistersIN class of 2023



Over 100 hours

of leadership lessons delivered



256 female leaders

in industry applying to be mentors



ICC celebration event

run for the pupils and organised by 10 of the pupils. Attended by over 800 people



93% of participating schools

say that their pupils have grown in confidence as a result of the SistersIN programme.



SistersIN class of 2023

invited to attend the Queens University 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement Conference



130 different organisations

supporting the programme



188 female students

participating in the first year



99% of pupils

felt as though the SistersIN programme was a worthwhile investment of time

The SistersIN Programme taught me to believe in myself and that I am just as worthy as everyone else.

Pupil

It helped me keep my feet on the ground and my head in the stars.

Pupil

Leave the door open and the ladder down.

Mentor

A positively inspirational leadership programme, that promotes the development of personal and professional skills, to open both minds and doors, by augmenting leadership capabilities.

Teacher

THE CHALLENGE

Why SistersIN focuses on gender parity

According to the Gender Gap Index, it will take another

132 years

to reach gender parity across four key dimensions:

- Economic Participation
- Educational Attainment
- Health
- Political

For women, this can mean barriers to:

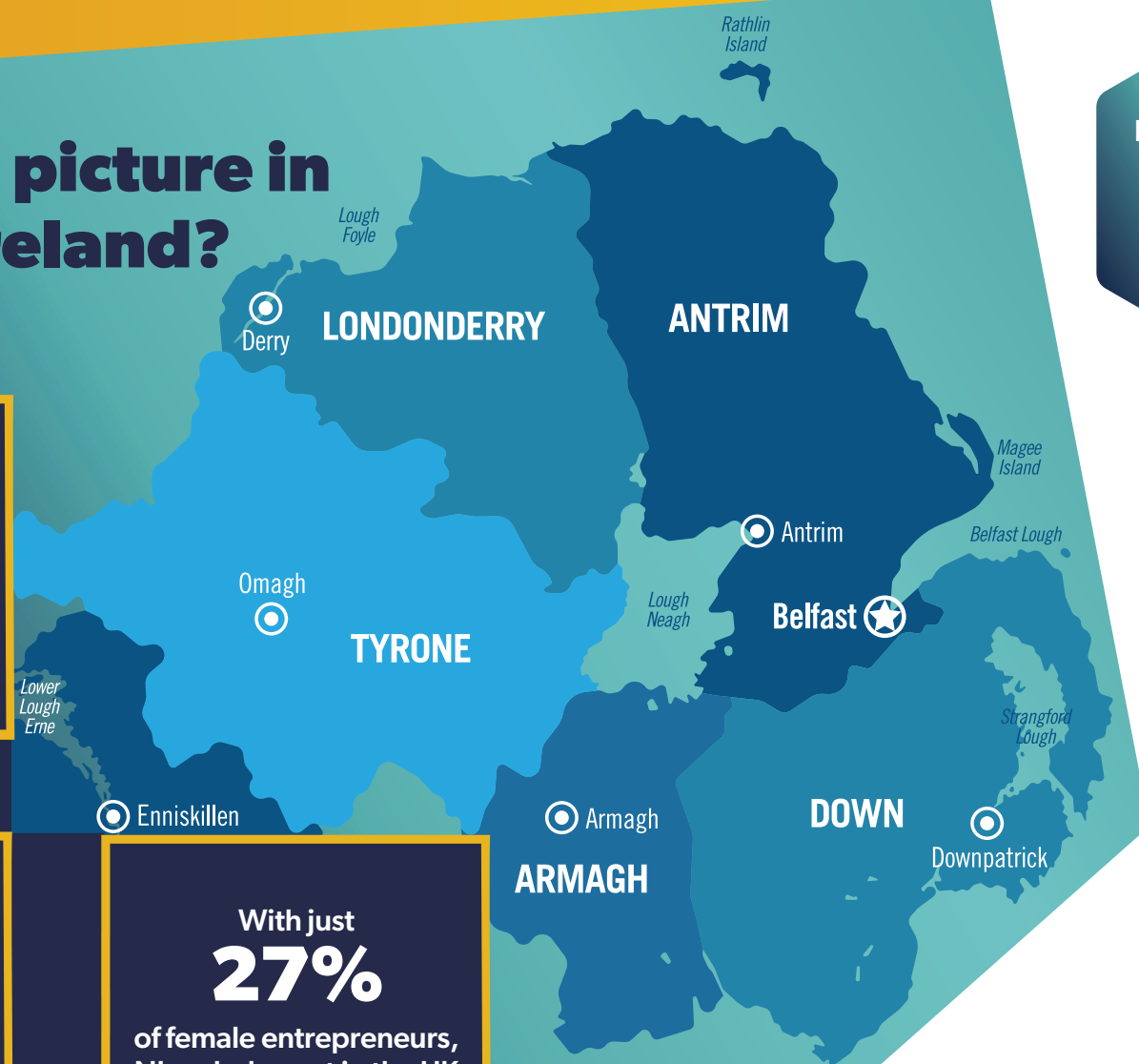
- Learning opportunities
- Promotions
- Leadership positions
- Pay equity and more

What is the picture in Northern Ireland?

Only **3 of the top 100** companies are led by female chief executives (2019)

Women represent only **26%** of local councillors

With just **27%** of female entrepreneurs, NI ranks lowest in the UK



We know...

that girls at 14 are 20% more confident now

than they were 5 years ago but their confidence levels drop steadily from ages 14-18

36% of 13 year old girls

describe themselves as confident compared to only 23% of 18 year olds

Why does it matter?

Diverse & Inclusive leadership teams:

make better business decisions up to **87%** of the time

have a **47%** higher rate of return on equity of their business

are **27%** more likely to outperform the national industry average

Advancing gender equality is critical to all areas of a thriving society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health, education, protection and the well-being of girls and boys.

We are the future. It's on us to carry it on and create legacies for the women who come after us.

Pupil

I have really valued this opportunity to engage with our future female leaders - seeing the quality of the mentees and their drive and commitment leaves me optimistic about the future.

Mentor



THE SOLUTION

How SistersIN is advancing gender parity

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enable, empower and develop female pupils in education to become the leaders of tomorrow;

to help them discover their full potential & open new possibilities for their professional journeys by building leadership capability and confidence.

THE PROGRAMME

SistersIN has created the signature SistersIN Leadership Programme, an 8-month development journey for sixth form girls to help build their confidence and broaden their career perspectives.

As part of the SistersIN programme:



We build skills

The Leadership Skills Curriculum, is delivered by teachers in schools. This 10-week programme was intensive and challenging for the students involved.

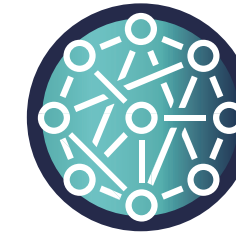


We give opportunities

The Leadership Project, undertaken by each girl, unearthed a wealth of innovation, creativity,

and talent. The wide range of projects enriched the school curriculum and had an impact on both the school and the local community.

We build networks



Each girl was matched with a female mentor in a leadership role. This mentoring was to prove as powerful and rewarding for the female leader as it was for the student.

Regular virtual and face-to-face meetings took place, including a job shadowing day, when the girls

followed the role of a senior leader in each organisation. This sparked professional conversations between mentors and

mentees leading to

connections that we hope will endure.



WE BUILD CONFIDENCE

It's been such a journey. At the start, we both were a bit unconfident in our own abilities and unsure of the experience, we feel like we both could lead a team effectively. It's been good, it's been amazing.

Pupils

It is an excellent programme. The girls involved have grown in confidence, they have stepped out of their comfort zone and have reaped the rewards. The transformation in the lead student has been phenomenal.

Teacher

When we first met, my mentee shared openly with me how she held back from putting herself forward for things. Even though she had great ability, she didn't offer herself for things. Just in the short time we've been working together, she's now out there, she's putting her hand up, pushing herself and she's saying yes. That's what it's all about.

Mentor

THE PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

Who we reached and what we delivered

RATING PROGRAMME ELEMENTS



MASTERCLASSES



LEADERSHIP SKILLS CURRICULUM



FINAL PRESENTATION



JOB SHADOW DAY



LEADERSHIP PROJECT



MENTORSHIP



CELEBRATION EVENT



PARTICIPANTS



188

PUPILS



10

SCHOOLS



6

DISTRICTS ACROSS
NORTHERN IRELAND



188

MENTORS



130

ORGANISATIONS



43

INDUSTRIES/SECTORS

THE PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS



940

HOURS of
1:1 MENTORING



20+

MASTERCLASSES



188

JOB
SHADOW DAYS



OVER

800

PARTICIPANTS ATTEND
A CELEBRATION EVENT



100

LEADERSHIP LESSONS
OVER 10 WEEKS

OUR IMPACT

How we have impacted our pupils

SistersIN was created with female pupils at the heart and centre

In crafting the programme, we sought to create something that would have a long-lasting impact. Each element of the programme was designed to be practical and provide an opportunity for pupils to apply the skills they learned.

The programme exposed the students to different careers that exist today, connected them to the world of work and to female leaders who have shared their career journeys and personal leadership stories with them.

A critical part of the SistersIN programme is to boost the pupils' self-confidence. We want them to leave the programme inspired as to all the career opportunities that lie in front of them and knowledgeable that they can choose to step up as leaders in whatever path they pursue.

58%
of pupils agreed that their level of clarity around career options had improved

93%
of pupils applied the leadership skills that they learnt during the programme in their project

87%
of participants would recommend the programme to someone else

There was an uplift of **42%** in pupils' levels of confidence

Pupils saw a **63%** increase in levels of insight into the world of work

71% of mentors saw an improvement in four or more leadership skills in their mentees

In our first meeting she talked about not being confident enough and not feeling confident in public speaking. She's now given two major presentations. Her confidence and self-belief has grown. I helped her realise maybe it wasn't a weakness but just a skill she hadn't practiced. It's been rewarding to see her unlocking that talent that was within her already.

Mentor

The SistersIN Leadership Programme has exceeded my expectations. The students learned so much from their mentors, which has enriched their school and personal lives. The programme also gave them opportunities to meet with students from other schools on their own leadership journey. This was an added benefit that was both unexpected but highly rewarding.

Teacher

Not only has she made me realise my worth in the career world, but my worth in the world of women.

Pupil

I grew in confidence, and it taught me skills I never knew I had. Amazing!

Pupil

It has made me feel really inspired, the project really taught me better social skills and helped me become more independent.

Pupil

I learnt to 'do what you like.' She always tells me to go with my gut which has helped me learn to be more confident in myself and believe that I know what is best for me.

Pupil



**WOODSIDE
HAULAGE
LIMITED**

OUR IMPACT

How we've impacted Organisations & Mentors

Businesses, and specifically Mentors play a key role in the SistersIN Leadership Programme and we extend a huge thank you to all those involved.

The 130 different organisations across a range of sectors and industries have provided time for mentors to volunteer as part of SistersIN and access to pupils as part of the job shadow day.

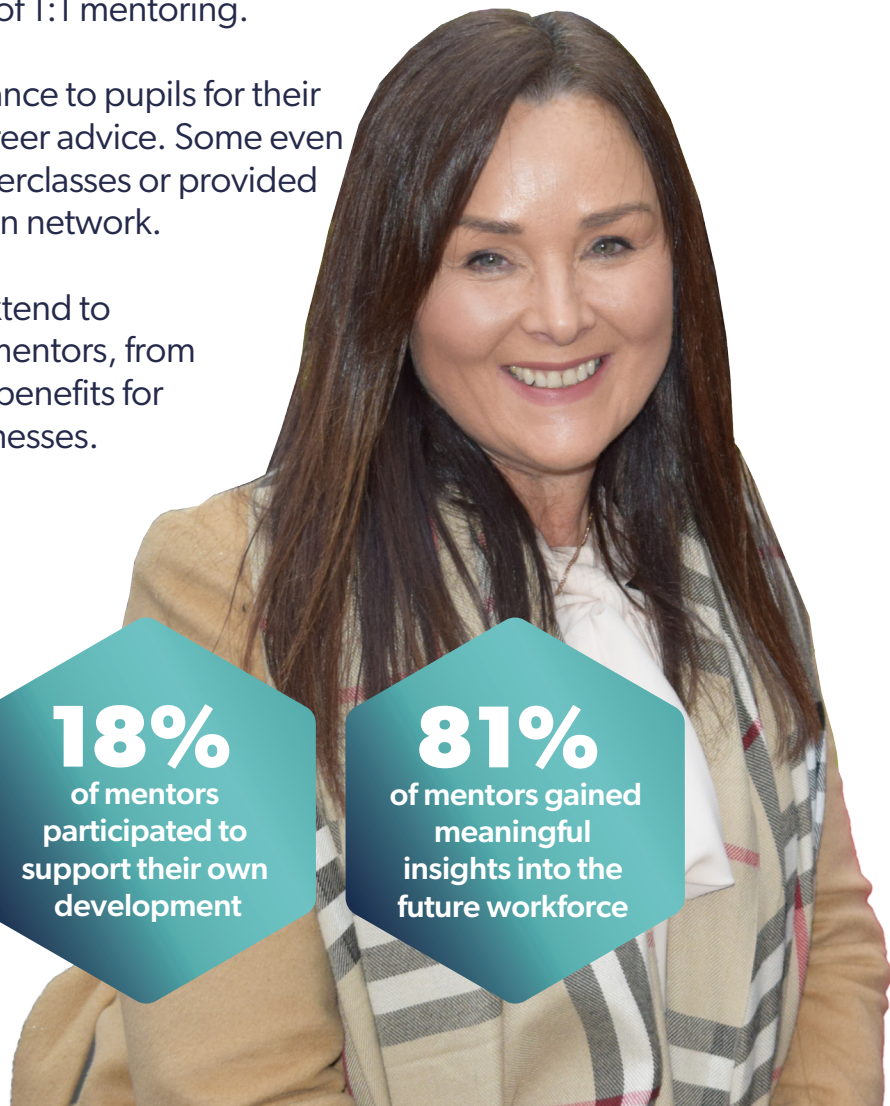
Some organisations even went a step further and provided unique leadership project opportunities, like the ICC, Belfast who supported a team of 10 students with the organisation of the SistersIN Celebration Event.

Our 188 mentors generously shared their time, insights, and personal learnings with pupils over a 5-month period and delivered over 940 hours of 1:1 mentoring.

This included giving guidance to pupils for their leadership project and career advice. Some even delivered leadership masterclasses or provided connections from their own network.

The benefit doesn't just extend to participating pupils. Our mentors, from all sectors, have reported benefits for themselves and their businesses.

The Impact



I thought it was all about giving back when I joined the programme but I have also been so inspired by my mentee. She's inspired me by stepping outside of her comfort zone and putting her heart & soul to the programme.

Mentor

Being part of the SistersIN experience has had a major impact on our organisation. I have learned so much as a mentor and as a team member!

Mentor

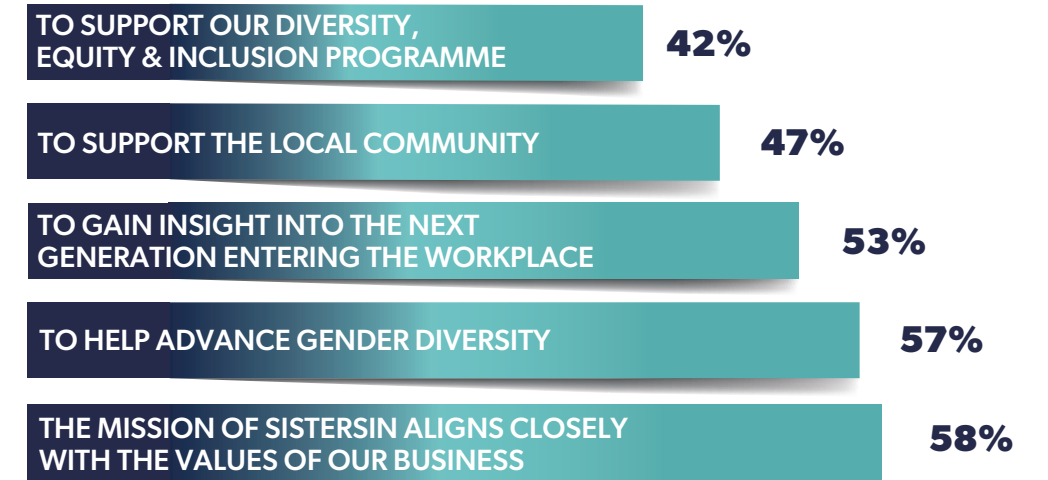
Truly inspired by the resilience, courage and potential shown by the SistersIN Class of 2023. NI leaders must now work better together, to deliver the transformation needed, to keep this future workforce / talent pool in NI.

Mentor

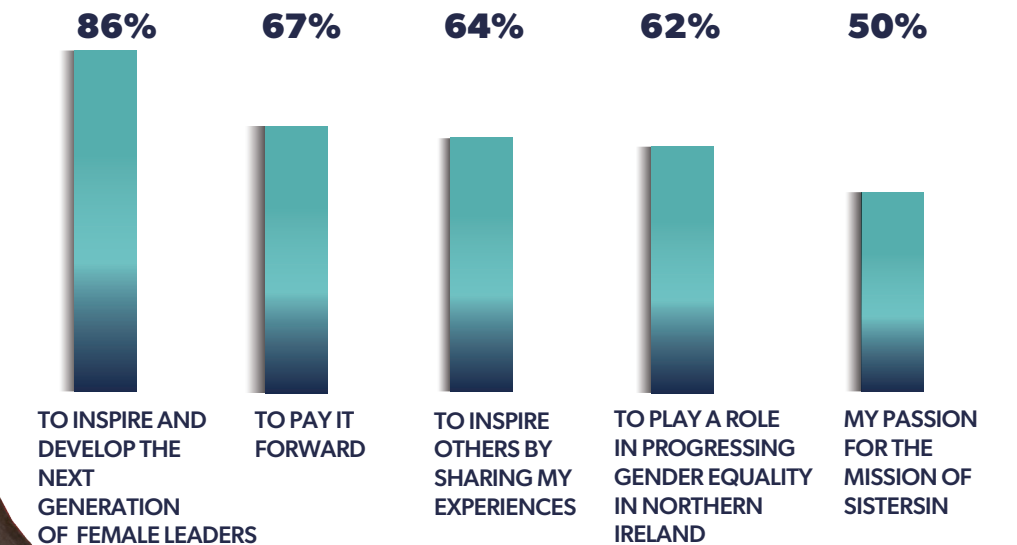


Why Organisations & Mentors got involved:

TOP 5 REASONS WHY BUSINESSES GOT INVOLVED



TOP 5 REASONS FOR MENTORS TO JOIN SISTERSIN



The programme gave me a real sense of satisfaction, outside of my normal job role, and was manageable in terms of demands on time. It is also a great connection for my wider organisation, who are actively encouraging a more diverse workforce in a field which has been historically quite male dominated.

Mentor

OUR IMPACT

How we've impacted Communities

Beyond the direct impact SistersIN has on the pupils, leaders and organisations involved, we have seen the programme create a ripple effect of positive impact in communities and beyond.

Let us share a few specific examples that are contributing to the progress against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals:

Secured funding to build an outdoor classroom with raised beds, a wild flower meadow with benches and seating to create our forest feeder school.



SistersIN has given us the opportunity to build on our skills and leave a lasting legacy for our school. Thornhill Pupils



One team organised a Donation Drive gathering personal items such as hats, gloves and personal hygiene items for the 'Welcome Organisation' charity which provides a range of life saving services to around 1400 people affected by homelessness every year in the greater Belfast area.



One team took part in a bereavement training course called Healing Hearts in partnership with a local hospice. The students then delivered this training to their teachers to provide them with greater knowledge and to ensure all students in school get the proper support they deserve while they are experiencing grief.



The dress for success clothing drive was centred around providing women in domestic violence situations with appropriate clothing for upcoming job interviews.

Our data also showed that the three schools where the girls had the lowest level of confidence at the start of the programme have seen the biggest increases (each well over 45%).



Several projects included a food appeal at Christmas time for local food banks.

One team also led the Breakfast Club at their school, providing a safe, warm and comforting environment for pupils to form connections over breakfast.



One pupil helped raise awareness for students diagnosed with dyslexia or having dyslexic traits, to help them see how gifted they truly are. This gave them a new level of confidence when it comes to speaking about their learning disability.

Across a range of schools, pupils provided mentoring, tutoring and support to younger pupils in their schools on topics such as science, maths, technology, history, debating, politics, crafts, coding, Spanish French, etc over the course of 5 months.



One team has set up a successful gardening club. They taught younger students about plants and helped create their own 'mini gardens'. This raised a lot of interest from many across the school and in the local community to support with donations to help develop a garden patch. This helped the school create a more pleasant environment and increase environmental sustainability.

To find out more about some of the different projects schools delivered, check out the videos from:



Ashfield High School



Assumption Grammar School

SistersIN has given us the opportunity to build on our skills and leave a lasting legacy for our school.

Thornhill Pupils



St Cecilia's Dress for Success Project



St Cecilia's Food Bank Drive



Strathearn Pupils teaching STEM topics

SOCIAL MEDIA & PRESS COVERAGE

How we've created conversations

SistersIN'S Post

An inspirational day! Thank you **Danske Bank UK** and **Aisling Press** for creating this amazing opportunity for our **SistersIN Class of 2023!**

Danske Bank UK
9,015 followers

As a foundation partner of **SistersIN** we have been helping to mobilise this fantastic programme across Northern Ireland, with 10 schools, over 140 sixth form girls and 140 senior female leaders in Business, Education and Public sector already involved in its first year.

The ambition is simple - to enable, empower and develop female pupils in education to become the leaders of tomorrow, to help them discover their full potential and open up new possibilities for their professional journeys.

Colleagues from across **Danske Bank UK** have been mentoring 13 girls from the 2023 cohort and on Friday we invited them to join to hear from an inspirational line up of world-class speakers at the **Management & Leadership Network Summit**, followed by a private Q&A session with one of those speakers, business titan **Cathriona Hallahan**. The Q&A was facilitated by our Managing Director of Personal Banking and Vice-Chair of **SistersIN Aisling Press**. The recording is available here: <https://lnkd.in/g/SRzjBw>

This was a fantastic, unique opportunity for our **SistersIN** mentees - a huge thank you to **Cathriona** for her time.

There are some exciting dates in the diary in the coming days and weeks as the first programme draws to a close. Watch this space...

#Wd2023 #Leadership #Education

ConferenceNews

Home » News » ICC Belfast partners with SistersIN to support female event leaders

ICC Belfast partners with SistersIN to support female event leaders

Approximately 10 girls from various secondary schools across Northern Ireland have been selected to run a large-scale **SistersIN** celebration event at ICC Belfast on 24 March

Louisa Doley
Last updated March 8, 2023

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Sister's Celebration: more than 800 attend to support student event at ICC Belfast

March 28, 2023

SistersIN'S Post

A job shadowing experience Katie will never forget!!!

Inspiring tomorrow's female leaders **Maria Bradley** and **Gilbert-Ash**.

Thank you!

Maria Bradley
Human Resources Director at Gilbert-Ash
2mo

It's boots and a hard hat today for Katie, as she joins me on a visit to the team at Eastbourne Terrace construction site in London #team #construction #SistersIN #notjustforboys

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
STUDY RESEARCH

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All News Media contacts Find an Expert Queen's insight Podcasts

Queen's hosts SistersIN event to enable and empower female pupils to become future leaders

20 January, 2023

Pupils from Assumption Grammar School, Glenlola Collegiate, St Cecilia's College, St Ronan's College, Strathearn School and Victoria College joined Queen's University for a 'SistersIN' event this week.

SHARE

ea Education Authority

Home / News / EA CEO congratulates female students of 10 schools at SistersIN celebration event

EA CEO congratulates female students of 10 schools at SistersIN celebration event

30 March 2023

EA Chief Executive Sara Long was a panellist alongside other key female leaders in Northern Ireland for the **SistersIN** event in ICC Belfast, on Friday, 24th March 2023.

The Responsible Business Network Northern Ireland

WHAT WE DO LIBRARY EVEN

New 'SistersIN' initiative launches with mission to empower NI's future female leaders

A new collaborative initiative which aims to empower future female leaders in education, has been launched at an event in Danske Bank's Belfast headquarters attended by schools, business people and local leaders.

20 Jun 2022

icc BELFAST

WELCOME AN EVENT PLAN YOUR VISIT BOOKENR RECENT

SISTERSIN PUPIL SHARES FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Published on 22 Mar 2023

SistersIN lead pupil **Coolimhe Roe** shares her five key takeaways from the **SistersIN** Leadership programme.

THE COUNTY DOWN Outlook
NEWSPAPER FOR THE LOCAL NEWS IN BARRIBOGE, BAYBEL AND A'BOINNE DISTRICT

Hilltown's Niamh to represent her school at future female leaders event

Hilltown student **Niamh McSherry**.

SistersIN'S Post

Amazing experience for our **SistersIN** girl! Thank you **Lisa Kavanagh**!

Lisa Kavanagh
Vice President Global Delivery Practices | Trust & Safety | Global Wellness | Language Services
2mo

Today we celebrated #Wd2023 in the most meaningful way. We invited our mentees from the **SistersIN** programme into our **Concentric Belfast** office to meet some of our wonderful female leaders.

Each leader shared their own genuine story of their career (and life) journey.

Some common themes across all of our leaders who shared their most vulnerable stories:

1. Planning doesn't always bring you to where you are meant to be. Follow your own path.
2. Life throws curveballs - go with them
3. Be brave and take all opportunities that come your way.
4. Travel (safely) - learn about different cultures, learn new communication skills, experience new perspectives.
5. EVERYONE has impostor syndrome! Don't think you are the only one.
6. Work hard
7. Be your authentic self!

Girls, you are awesome! Go create your own journeys & have fun!

Sarah McKay Sarah Russell Amy Dickson Katrina O'Dowd Gabby Martin Shauna McKee Valerie Fulton

#mentorship #diversity #femaleleaders

SistersIN'S Post

Thank you **Clare Sinanan** for an inspiring day!

Clare Sinanan
Recruitment Specialist with 20 years experience, Director, Cala Consulting. #weconnectpeople
2mo

I spent today with **Jacinta King** from **Assumption Grammar School** as part of the **SistersIN** mentoring programme. **Jacinta** and I enjoyed meeting some of the team at **Queen's University Belfast** and then onto an **#embracetheequality** themed event hosted by **#UWomennetwork** to celebrate #Wd2023. Thanks to all the panel members for sharing their stories. We had a great discussion at our table with one of the panel members **Maura Doherty**. Thanks to all involved.

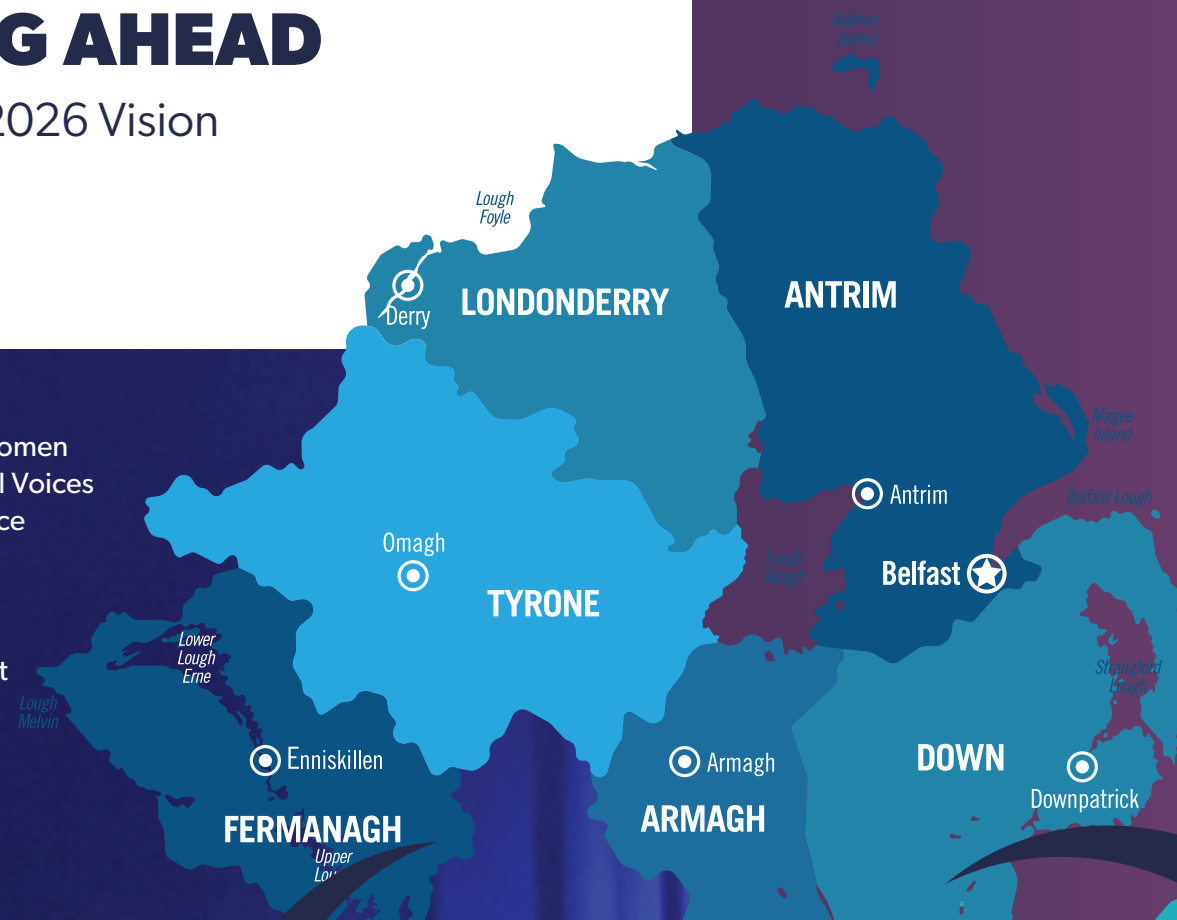
#mentoring #leadership #networking #wd2023 #futureleaders



LOOKING AHEAD

Our SistersIN 2026 Vision



Pupil speaking at the Women In Business International Voices of Leadership Conference in Queen's University, Belfast as part of the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement



2022/2023 was all about getting the basics in place, piloting the SistersIN Programme across 10 schools and gathering valuable experience and feedback from our partners, mentors and pupils to help us take the programme to the next level.

We've also established a visionary and skilled Board of Directors who have been instrumental not only in the success of this year's programme but who have worked hard to help shape the future vision and roadmap for SistersIN.

Our Vision for 2026 is to make the SistersIN Leadership Programme available to:

-  any girl from any school or college at Post 16 level in Northern Ireland who wants to engage in the programme
-  any female mentor, in any organisation, no matter how big or small, who wishes to mentor the female leaders of tomorrow

Our focus on Northern Ireland initially will ensure that the programme can be rolled out and scaled in a successful way and to high quality standards.



At the same time, we will be reaching out to different countries to grow SistersIN in line with our mission.

What about SistersIN ... England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, America?

Aiming wider, imagine the impact we could create with SistersIN in Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, Africa, India, China ...

We have just begun our journey and our ambitions are great. To help us achieve our Vision and unlock the full potential and impact SistersIN can deliver, we need your support.

So, are you ready to join us?

To find out more about becoming a Partner, go to: www.sisters-in.org
For schools looking to join SistersIN in 2023/24, please contact: Info@Sisters-in.org

THE PUPILS

These are the 10 schools that participated in the 2022/23 SistersIN programme:

Assumption Grammar School

BALLYNAHINCH



Ashfield Girls High School

BELFAST



I learned that the key key to success is taking the initiative and not shying away.

Pupil

I think it has proved to me that the harder I work the luckier I seem to get. SistersIN has given me to opportunity to see this with my own eyes.

Pupil

Our Lady's Grammar School - NEWRY



St Cecilia College

DERRY



Glenola Collegiate

BANGOR



St Genevieve's College

BELFAST



Strathearn School

BELFAST



Thornhill College

DERRY



Victoria College

BELFAST



St Ronan's Grammar

LURGAN



THANKS TO PARTNERS AND MENTORS

A huge thanks goes out to all of our Partners who have supported us throughout our first year and of course the leaders who have played an active role as mentors.

We couldn't have done it without you.

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Partners who help us get off the ground and continue to thrive

Danske Bank

JK

The James Kane Foundation

ea Education Authority

ICC
BELFAST

WATERFRONT
HALL
ULSTER
HALL

QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

IMPACT PARTNERS

Partners who help us scale and increase our impact

George Best
BELFAST
CITY AIRPORT

CONCENTRIX™

MCSGROUP
INTELLIGENT RECRUITMENT SOLUTIONS

HONEYCOMB

HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS

GROWTH PARTNERS

Partners who help us to grow the SistersIN community

DELL
LITES

dwf

GA
Gilbert-Ash

VERSION 1

ALMAC

Collectively we can play a part in giving each girl the opportunity to shine to their fullest potential.

If you are passionate about playing a part in positively impacting gender diversity in the world of work in Northern Ireland, please get in touch using the details below.

Get in contact:

Website: www.sisters-IN.org

Email: info@sisters-IN.org

Follow us on:

 [the-sistersin-leadership-programme](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-sistersin-leadership-programme)

 [@SistersIN_HQ](https://twitter.com/SistersIN_HQ)

The SistersIN Impact Report 2023 was developed by Emer Brady, Chispa Consulting & Christina Taylor, Learn to Grow

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