



Students at the International Youth Conference Taipei 2015. Included are Victoria Wilson and Olaide Anjorin (seated third and fourth from left); Terence Heeney (back, second from left).

Taiwanese link opens doors for students

BY CATHERINE COOK

LINKS forged between Letterkenny Institute of Technology and the Taiwanese government over recent years are beginning to open doors for students here.

Last week LYIT Student Welfare Officer, Olaide Anjorin returned from a major global youth conference where Donegal and the college were presented to an international audience. Final year student Aaron Gillespie has also just returned from a three-month scholarship placement in Taipei.

The Donegal News spoke with both students to hear their views on how the opportunities they have been given will benefit them in the future.

Laide was part of Team Ireland at the Seminar on Youth Public Participation and International Humanitarianism in the Age of Globalization organised by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China.

DISCUSSIONS

Students from Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Korea, Japan and Thailand took part in the conference.

"I spent ten days in Taiwan as a delegate at the conference and had a real opportunity not only to find out more about the country but also to network and meet other students from all over the world.

"We took part in a number of discussions and I learned a lot about different cultures. It opened my eyes to a completely different world and in particular I had a great relationship with the Israeli delegates."

ISRAEL

Laide explained that she has definite plans to develop links between LYIT and a college in Israel and perhaps develop a cultural exchange programme between the two institutions.

She has already been appointed as the Team Ireland leader for next years conference and is hoping to encourage more students from Donegal to take part.

"This is such a fantastic opportunity, not only to see different cultures but also to make connections with people that you would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet."

Aaron Gillespie is currently in his final year of Administration and IT

studies at LYIT. He studied Mandarin Chinese at evening courses at the college and has developed a passion for the language. In September he returned from a three-month scholarship at National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei. He is the fifth Donegal student to have taken part in the scholarship programme offered by the Taipei Representative Office in Dublin.

"I arrived in Taipei in June and met up with John McClean from Convoys who was studying there already. It was such an incredible experience, the best thing I have ever done."

He continued: "The three months were really intensive and I had classes nearly every day but I have really improved my Chinese and can read more than 400 characters now."

Aaron would love to return to Taiwan to continue his studies and was even offered a number of jobs during his last visit.

"There are so many opportunities there for work and for studying and I would appeal to students here to find out more about the study programmes being offered by the Taipei Representative Office."

Donegal man left in 'total shock' by events in Paris

Describes mood in aftermath of mass murders

BY LOUISE DOYLE

A BUNDORAN man who narrowly escaped being caught up in the Paris terrorist attacks has spoken of his relief.

Joe Chapman was speaking out after the series of multiple separate attacks in the French capital on Friday night, which killed 129 people and injured hundreds of others.

Following the unprecedented explosion and gun attacks - carried out by Islamic State Militant Group, ISIS - a formal state of emergency was declared by the French Government.

The 29-year-old had just arrived in Paris late on Thursday night with his girlfriend, Monika Karmosin Skjoberg Staven to stay with some French friends for the week.

Having spent Friday in the city centre, the couple returned to their friend's home located a few metro stops away from the city centre.

Speaking to the Donegal News, Mr Chapman said he was in "total shock" after witnessing the terror unfold on television.

"On Friday we had spent the day with friends and got home just a little after 7pm. My friends had been watching the football match on television when we heard the explosion. I went online and came across the early news postings. I was in total shock, I just couldn't understand it."

The Dublin City University (DCU) bio technology graduate described the mood in Paris as "sombre" but added that despite the awful events, he will be staying on in the city until the end of the week as planned.

"There are still lots of ambulances going past and helicopters flying overhead. It's sombre but people here appear to be trying to go about their normal business. However, many places are closed.

"I'll be staying here for the rest of the week and then travelling on to Leon as part of our European trip and then on to South of France and home for Christmas."

Elsewhere, Mr Chapman's father, Alan said he was relieved when his son contacted him to let him know that he was safe.

"I work as a musician and I was setting up in a pub when the footage came on the television screen. I stopped everything and I was just glued to the screen. I instantly went into panic mode but he soon got in touch with us to let us know that he was safe.

"Joe's a great fella and a seasoned traveller. He's travelled all over the world since 2009 and has seen some amazing places.

"We're so lucky. So many families have lost loved ones. It just doesn't bear thinking about."

Gold medal for student

Ireland's only government-accredited eLearning college, Hibernia College, celebrated the graduation of its 2015 class in the RDS. Hibernia College specialises in postgraduate and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and is now the largest provider of teachers in Ireland. Right, Mary Elizabeth Cannon, from Lettermacaward, who was conferred with Higher Diploma in Primary School Education and was awarded the Religious Studies Award.



Maps, Stats and Apps wins for Council led project

SPACEial North West picked up a prestigious Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award last Thursday night at the Chambers Ireland Annual Excellence in Local Government Awards ceremony in Dublin.

This, the 12th annual awards ceremony, recognises and celebrates the best of Local Government.

SPACEial NorthWest is a cross-border project with Donegal County Council being the lead implementing council, working closely with the Derry City and Strabane District Council, Limavady Borough Council and Magherafelt District Council in responding to the need for crossborder data to inform and shape policies and decisions within the entire region.

Chambers Irelands Excellence in Local Government Awards showcase best practice in local government, highlighting some of the great projects that local authorities are undertaking. The Awards are judged by a panel of expert judges working in the

field of Local Government and have been taking place since 2004.

The SPACEial North West project has won first place in the Joint Local Authority Initiatives category.

The project is a response to the need for cross border spatial data to inform and shape policies and decision making within the region. It has worked with key stakeholders providing them with the combination of spatial datasets which are most relevant to their needs and provides them with the technical skills to enable them to use this data to develop policies, plans and strategies for the enhancement of the entire region.

The project produced a dedicated website, www.spaceialnw.eu which is essentially a one stop shop for Maps, Stats and Apps in the North West Region Cross Border.

Congratulating the project team Mr Seamus Neely, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council said the SPACEial project was all about plac-



The Donegal Project team with Mr Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland and the Minister, Alan Kelly.

ing data at the heart of decision making.

"It provides both public sector and non public sector agencies with 159

cross-border spatial datasets to help inform their plans and policies and equips them with the necessary skills to use different GIS technologies to

make best use of the data available."

He added: "This project has provided a much needed platform in the North West Region in using geographical information to develop plans and policies and has the potential to impact on the lives of 317,518 people who live in this cross-border region".

Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland said: "In spite of the many challenges they have faced in recent years, Local Authorities continue to deliver innovative and necessary projects that benefit and support local communities. It is an honour to host these awards and recognise the hard work that takes place at the core of local government across the country. I want to congratulate Carlow County Council, the sixteen winners, the many shortlisted organisations but also just as importantly, the people who made all these projects and activities happen."