

# FUND FOCUS



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

The newsletter of the  
International Fund for Ireland  
[www.internationalfundforireland.com](http://www.internationalfundforireland.com)



# Embedding Peace

## CONTENTS

- » Chairman's Welcome p2
- » Seven community groups share International Fund for Ireland support p2
- » Expert Opinion: Supporting communities to embed the gains of peace p3
- » Case Study: Fáilte Abhaile p4
- » Case Study: TASCIT p4
- » Project updates p5- 6

DONORS TO THE FUND ARE:



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EUROPEAN UNION

CANADA

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND



## CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

This year brought my third visit to Washington DC during St. Patrick's week as Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland. It is an important occasion that provides us with a chance to update Congress and the Administration on the work of the Fund and the challenges that still exist.

Many of the conversations addressed the difficult divisions that have long hindered political and community development and I was pleased to report the successes that the Fund has secured in these areas.

In a short space of time, the Fund's Community Transformation strategy has empowered communities that are still affected by the threat of violence to develop their own solutions for sensitive and complex problems. This edition of Fund Focus looks at how communities are tackling difficult issues and the reports from Fáilte Abhaile in Dundalk and TASCIT in north Belfast reflect some of the progress being made in difficult environments.

With the support of the Fund and others, community leaders are taking brave and commendable steps to neutralise some of the tensions that have previously erupted

into civil disorder. They are making a unique play to bring change at a grassroots level and support political stability.

Late last year, Dr Richard Haass chaired all-party talks and brought forward draft proposals on parades, flags and the past. While political agreement has not yet been reached, the Fund commends the political parties for their ongoing commitment to secure a deal that would be acceptable to all.

During challenging times, the Fund has committed itself to a difficult but essential scope of work and is making the first major efforts to resolve complex and potentially destabilising issues on the ground. This is only possible because of the international dynamic of the Fund and we're pleased to have U.S. Consul General in Belfast, Gregory S. Burton, share his views on the task of embedding peace in Northern Ireland.

In recent weeks, the Fund announced support for a new initiative that will enhance local and international peace building, the John Hume Tip O'Neill Peace Chair at the University of Ulster. The Chair was acknowledged by former U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to the Magee Campus where he also urged Northern Ireland to 'finish the job' of securing a lasting peace.

The backing of all our donors remains an important asset for the Fund and the communities who are working hard to make the final push for peace.

Dr Adrian Johnston  
CHAIRMAN

## Seven community groups share International Fund for Ireland support

In February 2014, the International Fund for Ireland confirmed financial assistance worth £511,056 / €613,301 to six community groups in Northern Ireland and one in County Leitrim, Ireland.

The seven projects, funded through the Peace Impact Programme (PIP), are designed to support community-led peace building and reconciliation efforts by developing new solutions to sensitive and divisive issues.

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, said: "The Fund is pleased to offer financial assistance to these projects and we commend them for their work in bringing stability to difficult environments. Many of these groups are making the first significant efforts to resolve complex community issues and tensions.

"In difficult times, the Fund is providing critical support aimed at calming the pressures at ground level and creating a foundation for lasting change."

He added: "The unique nature and credibility of the Fund means we can extend ourselves through projects like these and in ways that other funders and government bodies simply cannot.

We are grateful for the support of our international donors who endorse our careful efforts to address these sensitive issues."

PIP is a central part of the Fund's Strategic Framework for Action 2012-2015 and has awarded more than £2,185,000 / €2,622,000 to 31 projects across Northern Ireland and the southern border counties of Ireland since commencing last year.

At the most recent Board Meeting, financial assistance has been provided to:

- Stoneyford Community Association in Lisburn
- Ards Development Bureau and Community Network in Newtownards
- Upper Springfield Development Company in West Belfast
- A partnership between Springboard Opportunities Limited, Carrick Hill Residents Association and Lagan Village Youth & Community Group in Belfast
- Grace Women's Group in the Ardoyne and Glenbyrn areas of North Belfast
- Forkhill and District Development

Association Ltd and Forkhill Women's Group in South Armagh  
• Leitrim County Council focusing in Ballinamore, Kinlough and Manorhamilton

Details of the latest funding are available at the International Fund for Ireland website: [www.internationalfundforireland.com](http://www.internationalfundforireland.com)



ABOVE: The Board of the International Fund for Ireland pictured at its meeting in February 2014 in Bushmills County Antrim.



# Supporting communities to embed the gains of peace

U.S. Consul General Gregory S. Burton

One morning last June in Belfast, I had the privilege of hearing one of the most moving speeches in my diplomatic career. The individual on the podium was not a business leader, a political representative, or a community activist. She was welcomed into the world in 1996, so her prior experience in public speaking had not gone far beyond the occasional classroom presentation. Yet on that memorable morning the message of this teenager, Hannah Nelson, eloquently captured the aspirations of the fourteen hundred young people in Belfast's Waterfront Hall and thousands more right across Northern Ireland.

Welcoming President Obama and the First Lady to Belfast, Hannah talked about permanent peace as a "sincere, genuine aspiration," and described how this could only come about through "true respect for others." She said, "Barriers need to be broken down." She added, "But truthfully, we should not let the past pull us apart and stop us from moving forward."

Ten years before Hannah Nelson was born, the International Fund for Ireland set out to improve conditions for those who had been affected by conflict. With the support of a number of international partners, the Fund also sought to help unsung heroes who shared Hannah's vision of a peaceful, prosperous society.

The Fund's work has been far-reaching.

Since 1986, no less than one-hundred and twenty seven community organizations have completed the International Fund's 'Community Leadership' program for training community groups and organizations. Its capital projects throughout Northern Ireland and the border counties have helped to rejuvenate communities. As recently as last month, the Fund facilitated an exchange program in

the United States for local community leaders who empower young people and divert them from the futile pursuit of paramilitary involvement. Participants came home energized about their continued roles as change-makers. In another example, a newly launched 'Peace Walls' Program is now helping to make a genuine difference in areas like Duncairn in North Belfast where communities have shown a genuine willingness to work together to build trust and address the physical barriers that divide them.

To paraphrase President Obama, those who choose the path of peace, will be supported every step of the way by the United States of America. Since 1986, the United States' aggregate contribution of over \$530 million to International Fund for Ireland has helped the organization deliver many such innovative projects. While we can no longer offer the financial support of the past, the US will continue to demonstrate its friendship and hope for Northern Ireland's great potential to be fulfilled. Many signs indicate progress. One important indicator is the inflow of foreign direct investment. Today, 165 U.S. companies are invested in Northern Ireland and employ more than 18,000 people.

In the last year, the Northern Ireland Executive made a commitment to help improve community relations through its 'Together: Building a United Community' strategy. President Obama welcomed this initiative last June and we look forward to seeing its full implementation.

Conversely, the U.S. Government has expressed disappointment that talks initiated by the Northern Ireland Executive to address some of the region's most difficult issues have not yet reached agreement. No one underestimates the complexity of these issues, and we will continue to support Northern Ireland's

leaders as they work to find solutions to these emotive problems. Collaboration on conflict resolution, compromise to reach political agreement, and partnership for economic growth are the ingredients for Northern Ireland to reach its full potential. Collectively, they will determine the type of society that Northern Ireland's young people will live in, or opt to leave. In this light, I pay tribute to organizations like the International Fund for Ireland who are making a genuine difference to peoples' lives and are building the kind of future that Hannah Nelson so eloquently articulated.

In her conclusion, Hannah said "Our past, our future, it is all about time. It is in the present time that we really need to be responsible, accountable people; and live to make a better future for ourselves." The United States shares those sentiments and will continue to provide political support for the region's continuing progress.



ABOVE: U.S. Consul General Gregory S. Burton (Picture by Kelvin Boyes / Press Eye)

BOTTOM: In March this year, 12 community leaders from Northern Ireland embarked on a focused study visit to Chicago, Baltimore and Washington DC as part of the AMBIT Programme.

## CASE STUDY: Fáilte Abhaile

Fáilte Abhaile – ‘Welcome Home’ is a Dundalk-based support group for political ex-prisoners, displaced people and their families, predominantly located in areas of high social deprivation and unemployment in County Louth including Muirhevnamor and Cox’s Demesne, Dundalk. This is a constituency of over 2,000 people in County Louth.

The Fund provided financial assistance under the Peace Impact Programme towards the cost of running practical training and up-skilling courses based around identified employability needs.

This nine-month project addresses the problems of unemployment and increasing employability in that it focuses on tackling social exclusion amongst marginalised people residing in designated disadvantaged urban areas in County Louth. It empowers them and gives them the confidence, skills and knowledge to move forward, become self-reliant and grasp the opportunities peace has brought. It also encourages them to take up an active role in helping to create a strong, sustainable, peaceful and socially inclusive society.

The project provides practical skills that are identified by members of the group

but which may be financially out of reach of individuals and in a way that does not duplicate other statutory training courses. Fáilte Abhaile adopts an inclusive approach and participation in courses is open to non-members; allowing for increased interaction with the wider local community to help break down barriers and build increasing co-operation and mutual understanding.

Kevin Mulgrew, Project co-ordinator says that, “the International Fund for Ireland’s support for this project has had a real and meaningful impact in areas of high social deprivation and unemployment in County Louth. It has enabled a significant number of individuals to pursue academic and vocational education/training which will open up new opportunities or stabilise their present employment status. A major aspect of this funding is the ability to adapt to meet new and emerging needs. Already

we have positive outcomes in terms of employment and retention in employment in addition to people being able to participate in academic and vocational training.”



ABOVE : Fáilte Abhaile participants on the Train the Trainer FETAC Level 6 course.

## CASE STUDY: TASCIT

North Belfast is an area that suffered very badly during the Troubles and many physical barriers erected to protect properties and individuals still remain today. Furthermore, the number of so called ‘Peace Walls’ has increased since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, reflecting the continuing sectarian tensions and the fear of sectarian attack which exists.

In September 2012, with support from the Fund’s Peace Wall Programme (PWP), the North Belfast Interface Network; the Lower Shankill Community Association; and the Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne formed the TASCIT Project. It works to build the community confidence, relationships and trust needed to begin the process of barrier removal in the Twaddell, Ardoyne, Shankill and Crumlin areas of North Belfast.

Rab McCallum from the North Belfast Interface Network says this is the first time there has been a formal partnership between groups from these areas which helped create a level of confidence from the outset.

Rab says: “People want the walls to come down but only when the time is right. Our job is to try to make that right time. We



have been pleasantly surprised by the responses from local people. They want to engage in this conversation and there is optimism that movement can be made. But we have to remember that some of the walls have been in place for 40 years.”

He also points out that this is not just the simple task of removing walls or

other barriers. It must be accompanied by plans to breathe new life into the communities. There has to be investment in the areas which are among the most deprived in Northern Ireland and where many of the residents have low educational and skill attainment.

The walls were erected under special legislation and Rab feels that a similar approach is needed when moves are made to take them down. With the Fund’s support government departments and agencies are considering the best approach to create new infrastructure when the barriers fall and enable a speedy transition.

LEFT: Rab McCallum at a meeting of the TASCIT Project.

## Hume O'Neill Peace Chair Funding

The International Fund for Ireland announced in March 2014 that it will contribute a further €400,000 towards the John Hume and Tip O'Neill Peace Chair initiative at the University of Ulster's Magee Campus. The funding injection was announced during former U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to Londonderry/Derry and follows the Fund's €1million commitment in November 2011 towards the peace-building initiative. Set up in honour of both politicians, the Chair will be a full-time academic position in peace and conflict resolution studies and will help train the next generation of peacemakers from around the world. Pictured: John Hume and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.



## Templemore Avenue School – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

First Minister Peter Robinson, former pupil of Templemore Avenue School, Esther Hamilton and Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, celebrate the official opening of an ambitious €3.4 million community regeneration project in East Belfast in February 2014. The East Belfast Community Development Association received €900,000 from

the International Fund for Ireland's Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme to renovate the derelict and vandalised old Templemore Avenue School transforming it into a community hub and significantly increasing services to the local community including offices, meeting rooms, a multi-purpose hall, a café, a crèche and day care centre.



## Londonderry Bands Forum – Peace Impact Programme

In April, St Columb's Park House and International Fund for Ireland launched the Londonderry Bands Forum Peace Impact Project. Geared towards enhancing community relations and supporting a new generation of better skilled and employable leaders, the project will provide training for band leaders and young leaders; a focused conference; networking events; workshops; community festivals and musical master classes. Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, is pictured with Kenny McFarland and Derek Moore both from the Londonderry Bands Forum and Brian Dougherty from St Columb's Park House.



**Unheard Voices – Peace Impact Programme (PIP)**

Pictured at the launch of the Unheard Voices Project at Rath Mor Centre in March 2014 are: Anne Molloy, Chair of Creggan Enterprises; Carol Cunningham, Unheard Voices Project Coordinator; and Winston Patterson, International Fund for Ireland Board Member. The two-year cross-community project encourages underrepresented women from Unionist and Nationalist traditions to work together to articulate experiences and opinions and resolve difficult issues linked to conflict and division. It will run to June 2015 and received €130,799 from the International Fund for Ireland Peace Impact Programme which focuses on addressing some of the most sensitive, complex and challenging issues within areas where there have been low levels of engagement in peace building.



**Sligo Soccer Project – Peace Impact Programme (PIP)**

Pictured in March 2014 at Sligo City Hall for the official launch of the Soccer Youth Training Project funded by the International Fund for Ireland are: (front) Jimmy Blee and Robbie Kelly; (back) Ian Baraclough (Sligo Rovers); Jason McCartney (Ballinamallard United FC); Gary Stevens (Sligo Rovers); Ryan Clancy; Winston Patterson, Board member of the International Fund for Ireland; Ciaran Kelly, project manager, Sligo Young Enterprises; and Steve Feeney (Ballinamallard United FC). The year-long project will provide accredited training in soccer coaching and referring to young people aged 16-25 years. It will also promote tolerance and understanding by bringing young people together from local communities to provide accreditation in recognised and relevant qualifications that will benefit local participants and the wider community. It will be administered by Sligo Young Enterprises and will target thirty young people from seven wards in Sligo: Forthill, Merville, Mail Coach Road (MCR), Abbeyquarter, Caltragh, Glendallon and Tubbercurry.

**TDDA Border Counties Social Inclusion Programme - Peace Impact Programme (PIP)**

Pictured in Stranorlar, Co Donegal, at the official March 2014 launch of a new Border Counties Social Inclusion project to be delivered by Tyrone Derry and Donegal Action (TDDA) were (front from left): Winston Patterson, board member, International Fund for Ireland (IFI); Ian McCracken, chairman, TDDA; and Mary Moy, programme manager, IFI; (back from left) Cllr. Gerry Crawford; Goldie Martin, board member, TDDA; Albert Allen, programme director, TDDA; Alex Buchanan, board member, TDDA; and Stephanie Hilditch, project officer, TDDA. The project will specifically engage Protestant men and seek to encourage the Protestant community in Counties Donegal, Tyrone and Derry/Londonderry to participate in peace building and reconciliation through a 19-month programme of activities, events, training and shared learning.

