

# FUND Focus



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

The newsletter of the  
International Fund for Ireland  
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# Delivering Meaningful Change

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## CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The end of August marked the 20th year since the Provisional IRA declared its ceasefire with the loyalist paramilitaries following them two months later.

While remarkable successes gained in the two decades since 1994 have brought a level of normalcy, uncertainties still remain over the stability of the hard earned peace. Unresolved community divisions and complicated issues linked to our past continue to challenge political structures and hold the potential to derail the positive progress society has made.

Following stalled all-party talks, community workers are providing the way forward and undertaking difficult work to resolve issues before they have a chance to escalate. It is still all too easy to imagine how community tensions could erupt into violence.

Earlier this year, Former US President Bill Clinton urged Northern Ireland to resolve the outstanding issues in the Peace Process and this edition of Fund Focus looks at some of the efforts being made to deliver meaningful change.

With Fund support, many communities

affected by the threat of violence have been able to develop their own solutions for sensitive and complex problems. Reports from Cox's Demesne in County Louth and the Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association in County Derry/Londonderry reflect some of the progress being made in difficult environments. This type of ground-breaking work is only possible because of the support from our overseas donors and the unique ability of the Fund to reach some communities that government interventions cannot.

In recent weeks, we have been pleased to welcome a number of significant developments including the launch of the Londonderry Bands Forum's Maiden City Accord, which aims to reduce contentions around marching bands. Their achievements, and those of other groups like them, cannot be taken for granted and they cannot be expected to do it alone.

This edition includes our view on the urgent need for a comprehensive funding

package if the Northern Ireland Executive is serious about meeting the ambitious Peace Walls target set out in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

In this pivotal phase of the Peace Process, there is an opportunity to make serious progress, but there is also a real risk that momentum could be lost if the experiences and models developed by independent organisations, like the Fund, are not effectively and appropriately utilised.

With the backing of all our donors, the Fund remains focused on securing and sustaining the remarkable progress that has been achieved and supporting communities and statutory authorities to secure a lasting peace.

Dr Adrian Johnston  
CHAIRMAN

## International Fund for Ireland commits £1.3m/€1.56m towards 17 community projects

In June, the International Fund for Ireland confirmed £1.3m/€1.56m of financial assistance for a range of new projects aimed at addressing contentious issues and community tensions in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties.

The 17 projects are supported through the Fund's Peace Impact Programme, which was launched last year as part of the Fund's Community Transformation Strategy. In 18 months, the programme has assisted communities with limited peace building experience to establish effective ways to reduce local tensions and support young people who could be drawn towards unlawful activity.

Commenting on the announcement, Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, said: "We are proud to partner with 17 groups in this latest round of funding. Many are making the first efforts to engage with marginalised individuals – particularly young people – and groups who remain disconnected from government interventions. These projects will challenge root causes of sectarianism and we recognise their potential to positively impact on social stability and prosperity.

"In its first 18 months, the Peace Impact Programme, which is funded by the US, has brought forward ambitious new approaches to deal with complex topics like parading, interface tensions and encouraging young people away from paramilitaries. Community groups are willing to take necessary risks and their attempts to encourage positive change in difficult areas has brought impressive results."

He added: "Many communities simply can't afford to wait for political parties to reach agreement on divisive topics and, with the support of the Fund and others, are undertaking brave efforts to deal with contentious issues on the ground."

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the international donors to the Fund – the European Union and the Governments of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – for their support.

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



ABOVE: Pictured at the International Fund for Ireland's recent Board Meeting in Dundalk, County Louth are Board Members: (Back row L-R): Winston Patterson; Rose Mary Farrell; David Graham; Billy Gamble; (front row) Siobhan Fitzpatrick; Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the Fund and Dorothy Clarke.





# Comprehensive funding package required to match NI Executive's ambitious Peace Walls target

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland

While there is no denying the scale or complexity of the challenges which the 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy' seeks to address, the absence of NI Executive funding to support the removal of Peace Walls remains a deep concern.

With the support of its international donors, the IFI directed its 2012-2015 strategy towards the most significant challenges to lasting peace, with a clear emphasis on those communities living at interfaces. The credibility and flexibility of the IFI has enabled it to access communities and constituencies that are currently beyond the reach of government departments and statutory agencies.

Peace Walls are the most visible remaining physical symbols of sectarian division in Northern Ireland. The IFI has invested nearly £3 million in a range of confidence and relationship building interventions, within and between interface communities, to help residents get to a point where they feel it is safe and appropriate to proceed with the removal of the barriers that separate them. This funding has managed

to lever £5.9 million of additional funding from a range of sources.

Positive transformations are underway, but the community appetite for this programme is much greater than the resources currently assigned to it. What is now needed is a comprehensive funding package to build on this work.

In less than two years, the IFI Peace Walls Programme (PWP) has delivered significant progress in terms of confidence and relationship building measures, and has begun a schedule of works to transform interface neighbourhoods.

The PWP delivery model has received widespread acclaim from community groups, government departments and statutory agencies. It has generated considerable momentum for positive physical transformation. However, positive and sustainable physical transformation cannot be delivered without a comprehensive funding package for the social and economic regeneration of these neighbourhoods as the Peace Walls are removed.

Interface communities that have engaged with the IFI have demonstrated courage to re-imagine their neighbourhoods. The NI Executive needs to back that courage with financial support and resources to match the ambition of the communities. Interface communities are willing to take brave steps to build a new and shared future, but they need meaningful support to do so.

The international community has been very supportive of efforts that seek to build confidence, trust and relationships between communities living near Peace Walls. European funding can have a critical role in removing physical divisions, but the scope and ambition of PEACE IV must be refocused to deliver physical transformations that will complement and supplement the advances made through the IFI's initial intervention.

While there is an opportunity to make serious progress, there is also a real risk that the existing momentum could be lost if the NI Executive does not quickly address the funding shortfall.

## CASE STUDY:

# Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association

Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association was established in 2011 and operates across the Sperrin region of Northern Ireland. It works to resolve disputes related to parades, raise mutual understanding of cultural traditions, engage with marginalised young people and develop communities.

The Fund provided €98,200 financial assistance to SCAA under the Peace Impact Programme for a 20-month project that would open new discussions on sensitive and divisive issues and seek to improve development and employability options for young people who may be at risk of engaging in antisocial or unlawful behaviour.

Focusing on community groups that have had limited or no involvement in peacebuilding activities to date, the project has also established seven new working groups to help communities address contentious issues across counties Derry/Londonderry and Antrim. They are based in Garvagh, Castledawson,

Tobermore, Randalstown, Maghera, Magherafelt and Upperlands.

Darren Richardson, Development Officer at Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association, said: "This project focuses on making progress in a number of very sensitive and challenging areas. The seven locations have been selected because of the nature of the divisive and contentious issues that are present locally and the potential for communities to agree on positive resolutions. Many of these locations have only had limited involvement in other peace building initiatives and we are realistic about what can be achieved.

"Division and disaffection are complex issues that continue to affect communities and young people in particular. This project will coordinate new community responses that can create fresh opportunities for dialogue and establish training and employment support. We have been greatly encouraged by the discussions

and support we've received and invite anyone with an interest in becoming involved in this project to get in touch."



ABOVE : Dr Adrian Johnston Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland joins Darren Richardson and Raymond Love from the Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association at the launch of its Peace Impact Project.

## CASE STUDY:

# Cox's Demesne

Cox's Demesne Youth and Community Project, based in Dundalk, delivers training, support and a suite of interventions to the local disadvantaged and socially excluded community. The group has real links to the local community and projects are developed and delivered by experienced staff based on the identified needs of local people.

In March 2013, the International Fund for Ireland provided €50,601 under its Peace Impact Programme towards the cost of two six-month projects that would work with at-risk young people.



The first activity was an early intervention drama project that promoted tolerance and understanding among young people and sought to increase the self-confidence and self-expression from an early age. Workshops explored the themes of diversity, bullying, dealing with conflict and dealing with difference. The project culminated in a production staged in Dundalk Town Hall.

The second activity used football training to up-skill young people isolated from traditional education such as early school leavers and those involved in local Garda diversion projects. Modules of the training included conflict management and promoted tolerance and understanding. As a result, young people have begun to play positive voluntary roles in their community through their involvement with local football clubs and some have gained employment as referees. This project is also providing employment related training and life skills to young people including tiling, copper beating and outdoor pursuits which can be translated into employment in the future.

Clodagh O'Mahoney, Project Manager, said:

"We are very grateful to the International Fund for Ireland for their financial support. There was a tremendous amount of interest in these projects and in bringing together local communities. It played an important part in giving young people the confidence boost they needed as well as an opportunity to learn new skills providing them with valuable training to help enhance their employment and further and higher educational prospects."

In November 2013, the Fund provided a further €32,623 for an additional project aimed at working with young people, in particular young men, who are currently on probation or who have come to the attention of the Gardaí in the recent past.

LEFT: Aoife McCormick, International Fund for Ireland (Left) pictured with Mick Neville, Football Association of Ireland; Clodagh O'Mahony of Cox's Demense Youth and Community Project; Paul Johnston, Dundalk FC; Peter McGinn, Muirhevna Mor FC and Stephen Fisher, Redeemer FC.





### Holywell Trust Opening – Leaving a Legacy Programme

International Fund for Ireland Chairman, Dr Adrian Johnston, joined Holywell Trust Chair Eamon Deane and Mayor of Derry, Councillor Brenda Stevenson in June 2014 to officially open Holywell Trust's new DiverseCity premises at Bishop Street, Derry/Londonderry. The new shared community facility received over £2.1 million financial assistance from the Fund's Leaving a Legacy Programme towards the overall cost of circa £4 million. The redevelopment of the Derry city centre facility for use in reconciliation and community work transforms it into new office accommodation and meeting space for a range of community groups and organisations serving the city and wider North West area in a single location.

### Sparkle Project – Peace Impact Programme

On July 11th, 2014 local residents and community representatives joined together to recognise the achievements of participants in the Sparkle Project run by Louth Leader Partnership. Funded by the International Fund for Ireland under the Peace Impact Programme (PIP), the project works to help women from Cox's Demense and Muirhevnamor in Dundalk develop new personal and creative skills through a twelve-week course focusing on personal development. The target projects focus on young people, families, training and education and include elements designed to encourage participants to up-skill and increase learning, qualifications and employment opportunities. Pictured are Frank O'Brien, Louth Leader Partnership, Belinda McGurk, Maryann McGlynn, CEO Louth Leader Partnership and David Graham, International Fund for Ireland.



### Grace Women's Development Limited – Peace Impact Programme

Fund Board Member Billy Gamble with Grace PIP Project Co-ordinator Mary Ellen Campbell, service user Maureen Doherty, and local clergy Rev Dr Lesley Carroll and Fr Gary Donegan pictured at the official launch of the new North Belfast IFI funded PIP project. The 17-month collaborative effort will see groups in the predominantly Nationalist Ardoyne area collaborate with those in the largely Unionist Glenbyrne area to engage women and young people in activities that focus on improving employability, community development and everyday living. Historically there has been significant unrest at the interface and the cross-community PIP Project, led by Grace Women's Development Limited, will open new discussions on complex issues relating to identity and the conflict. It will also seek to provide practical training and support for young people who may be at risk of engaging in antisocial or unlawful behaviour.





### Londonderry Bands Forum – Peace Impact Programme

Members of the Londonderry Bands Forum receive City & Guilds awards from International Fund for Ireland Chairman, Dr Adrian Johnston, (third from left) Kenny McFarlane (second left), Trainer William Matthews (back right) and Brian Dougherty, St Columb’s Park House (right). The training course, completed by 17 band members, is designed to help people manage events and community processions safely and successfully. It was delivered by Specific Training Ltd, Ballykelly, and organised by Londonderry Bands Forum as part of its Peace Impact Project which seeks to enhance community relations and support a new generation of better skilled leaders.

### Driving Forward Project – Peace Impact Programme

As the World Cup got into full swing in July, representatives from the International Fund for Ireland, Leitrim County Council, the FAI and Leitrim GAA teamed up to launch the Driving Forward Project. It aims to bring 25 participants from the ages of 18-25 together through the medium of sport. This year-long project will work with early school leavers and people with literacy difficulties in Ballinamore, Kinlough and Manorhamilton in Co Leitrim. The project promotes the personal transformation of individuals through training, up skilling and confidence building. Pictured are (Back Row L-R): Nollaig Whyte, Leitrim County Council; Cllr Paddy O’ Rourke, Cathaoirlaeach of Leitrim County Council; Gordon Burke, Driving Forward Project; Damon Kearney, FAI Development Officer; Frank Curran, CEO Leitrim County Council; Catherine Ryan, International Fund for Ireland; and Cllr Martin Kenny, La Nua. (Front Row L-R) Thomas Keenan, Games Manager Leitrim GAA; Sgt Brian Lee Garda Siochana and Enda Lyons Leitrim GAA.



### Border Arts 2000 – Peace Impact Programme

County Tyrone community group, Border Arts 2000, launched an ambitious project aimed at addressing sensitive issues relating to parading, flags and the past. The 20-month Castledearg PIP Project will open new discussions on the history and impact of the Troubles and establish new ways to resolve tensions and unrest around bands and community parades. It has already established three active forums for local businesses, clergy and community leaders and has resulted in both communities signing up to the village’s first Parades Calendar. The project will also provide practical training and support for young people who may be at risk of engaging in antisocial or unlawful behaviour. Pictured at the launch of the Peace Impact Project is Gordon Speer, Project Coordinator; Dorothy Clarke, International Fund for Ireland Board Member; and Eamon Dolan, Chairman, Border Arts 2000.

