

FUND Focus



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

The newsletter of the
International Fund for Ireland
www.internationalfundforireland.com

Contentious Issues

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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

This edition of Fund Focus is penned as former US envoy to Northern Ireland Dr Richard Haass chairs all-party talks aimed at dealing with some of the most contentious matters in Northern Ireland.

The importance and potential of these talks cannot be underestimated and, as an independent organisation that is concentrating on resolving sensitive issues that continue to divide communities, we recognise how peace building efforts could greatly benefit from any agreement on the divisive topics of parades, flags and the past.

The last few months have been very busy for the Fund and, looking at the theme of contentious issues, this edition carries details of some of the exceptional and courageous progress being made by community groups with the Fund's support.

Fund Focus reports on two powerful projects developed and led by communities that are still affected by sectarianism and the threat of violence. They encapsulate some of the very sensitive challenges which the Fund's current strategy is seeking to resolve.

In Londonderry/Derry, as part of the Peace Impact Programme, the Time2Choose Project is providing vital support to young people who are vulnerable to paramilitary attack or recruitment. Similarly the Fund's Peace Walls Programme continues to go

from strength to strength and Fund Focus looks at how the Duncairn Community Partnership is building community confidence to tackle physical divisions in north Belfast.

We are thankful to Prof Frank Gaffikin from Queen's University Belfast, who kindly outlines his view of how urban regeneration can be a tool for positive social and economic transformation. His insight is thought-provoking and underlines how a new approach to planning can help avoid contests over spaces.

A shared society does not come within a guaranteed timescale nor is there a clear blueprint to follow. However, since its inception, the International Fund for Ireland has developed and delivered a very extensive range of peace building and reconciliation interventions which have tackled sensitive topics like housing, interface cohesion and education. The Fund's many successful interventions have proved what can be achieved and the lessons remain freely available to support policy makers.

Though not on the agenda of the Haass talks, advancing sharing in education

remains important to the Fund. Over the past seven years, the International Fund for Ireland and The Atlantic Philanthropies have developed projects and partnerships that clearly demonstrate how cross-sectoral collaboration can be an integral part of school life.

In October the Fund welcomed a statement from the Education Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, outlining how shared education will be enshrined in legislation in Northern Ireland. Establishing meaningful collaboration between schools must now be a priority for everyone. We cannot delay in giving pupils the chance to take part in high quality educational experiences that promote positive academic, economic and reconciliation outcomes.

Providing young people with opportunities to learn together and about each other will help ensure divisive issues can truly be resolved.

Dr Adrian Johnston
CHAIRMAN

International Fund for Ireland commits €1.2m/£1m to 12 peace projects

In November 2013, the International Fund for Ireland confirmed financial assistance for peace-building and reconciliation projects in Northern Ireland and four southern border counties of Ireland.

The financial commitment includes more than one million Euros (€1,194,978/£995,742) towards a dozen peace projects in Northern Ireland and four southern border counties.

The financial commitment will be distributed among rural and urban projects designed to resolve complex and sensitive issues and re-engage communities in peace building activities.

All 12 projects are supported through the Fund's Peace Impact Programme (PIP) which aims to build peace and prosperity within areas where there have been low levels of engagement in peace building and also places emphasis on engaging with disaffected and marginalised young people who are vulnerable to recruitment or attack by paramilitaries.

Commenting on the announcement,

Dr. Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the Fund, said: "The Peace Impact Programme is an important and timely aspect of our Community Transformation strategy and this is the first time in almost 28 years that the Fund has allocated a funding round commitment through just one programme.

"The projects we have made commitments towards today are dealing with the hard issues and complex problems that threaten to undermine political stability and the gains of the peace process. Many of these projects are making the first efforts to engage with marginalised individuals – particularly young people – and groups who remain disconnected from government interventions.

He added: "This assistance strategically concentrates on some of the root causes of sectarianism and supports communities to resolve difficult issues. These projects are

about developing positive solutions that are agreeable for communities and statutory authorities and which can deliver stability and prosperity." Details of the latest funding are available on the International Fund for Ireland website: www.internationalfundforireland.com



ABOVE: A group from the International Fund for Ireland's Board Meeting in November 2013 visits the Breesy Centre in County Donegal.

Heeding Einstein: Tackling Poverty and Segregation Differently

As the demography of places like Belfast changes to a more 50-50 share between the two traditional communities, a new approach to planning is needed to avoid contests over spaces, argues Prof Frank Gaffikin

Einstein's famed definition of insanity involves doing the same thing repeatedly, while irrationally expecting that the next time will somehow produce different results. When it comes to tackling deprivation and the linked issue of good relations between the contending tribes in Belfast, that's exactly what we have been doing for over 40 years. We need to stop. We need to try something different. The intractable persistence of urban poverty, social and religious residential segregation, and related territorial contests in places like Twaddell Avenue, confirm this imperative.

Any hope of developing a coherent regeneration strategy for Belfast has to address its long-standing sectarian division. Too often, planners have tried to airbrush this dimension out of their calculation, as beyond their remit and competence. Such apparent 'neutral' planning is not impartial.

Planning is not some apolitical, technical activity. It is meaningless, if it disregards the underlying social processes which shape space. In this context, three key processes uniquely combined to create Belfast's current patterns of de-population and deep segregation:

1. Following the Matthew Plan, 1963, the decision was taken to de-magnetise Belfast, in terms of both investment and population, and to de-cant many former residents to new satellite towns of Antrim and Craigavon, as part of an economic modernisation, based on the attraction of transnational capital to new greenfield-sited industrial estates. This strategy was enshrined in the 1969 Belfast Urban Plan.
2. The other key aspect of this strategy related to the comprehensive redevelopment of inner city Belfast at

the same time, and the lower density housing and new roads infrastructure that accompanied this 'slum clearance' demanded that many former inner city residents moved elsewhere.

3. These intended two major 'pull' factors in population were unexpectedly supplemented by the 'push' factor caused by the emerging Troubles at exactly the same time, inducing some to leave a city that quickly became the primary location for the violent conflict. By the same token, many of those remaining, particularly in the most troubled areas, moved into tighter ghetto communities of their co-religionists for greater security, accentuating the long-standing pattern of city segregation.

Massive population change and re-composition were involved in these three processes. Thus, a city that peaked in population in the early 1950s at 440,000 now stands at 281,000, a decline of 36%. Given the 'sprawl' effect of some of this de-centralisation, some 140,000 commuters come into Belfast every day, half of the city's total resident number. Many of these commuters take up the most skilled jobs in the city, which on a comparative basis with similar cities in Britain produces a high GDP per head. So, a city that has been doing quite well economically in the recent past is also one where a substantial section of its residents is failing to share fully in that success, producing a 'tale of two cities' effect.

This social fragmentation is augmented by ethno-national division. While there is no simple causal relationship between segregation and deprivation, there is an interactive relationship. Moreover, the continued inter-communal contest in relation to

territory and identity contributes to the damaging fragmentation of the city, and thereby to its under-development.

As the demography of places like Belfast changes to a more 50-50 share between the two traditional communities, contests over spaces are likely to intensify rather than abate. In such circumstances, we need a set of principles to guide the use of, and access to, the city. It cannot be proper that any group can claim part of the city as 'their territory' that other citizens can only access by compliance with their approval criteria. Such 'balkanisation' denies a view of the whole city as everyone's neighbourhood. To work at its best, contemporary urbanism needs to be fluid, permeable, accessible – a pluralist place for a pluralist people. However, such principles can only take root in a shift from the politics of coercion to the politics of persuasion.



Prof Frank Gaffikin works in the School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering at Queen's University Belfast and has specific expertise in planning and divided cities, urban regeneration, and regional planning. For an extended version of this article visit www.internationalfundforireland.com

CASE STUDY:

North Belfast Peace Walls Project

A major project aimed at building the required community confidence to tackle physical community divisions in north Belfast officially launched earlier this year at Groundwork NI.

The Duncairn Community Partnership was awarded £480,000 from the International Fund for Ireland's Peace Walls Programme to provide opportunities for direct dialogue between residents on both sides of the interfaces within the target area.

The project aims to deliver a coordinated and collaborative approach to dealing with the multitude of sensitive issues associated with the removal of Peace Walls and create conditions where residents can feel safe discussing their potential removal.

Ciarán Shannon from Groundwork NI, manages the Duncairn Community Partnership and said: "Once, this area was a focus for division with regular bouts of violence marring the streets. Now, we have created a new spirit of co-operation based along real, achievable goals which will enhance the lives of all our residents and families."

"Dialogue aimed at creating better community cohesion and confidence will be encouraged as part of this initiative, as will engagement with those who may not have previously participated in community development activities. All partners in the Duncairn Community Partnership want to see a vibrant, economically active and secure north Belfast and these goals are well on their way to being achieved."

Speaking at the project launch, Billy Gamble, International Fund for Ireland Board Member, said: "The Fund's Peace Walls Programme is aimed at supporting interface residents to take the necessary first steps to address the physical barriers that divide communities. The programme delivery model provides a unique link between community groups, local residents, other funders, government departments, and statutory authorities to develop bespoke

community based solutions to the complex issues associated with the removal of Peace Walls. Ultimately these solutions will transform neighbourhoods."

The partners in this initiative are the Tigers Bay and Mountcollyer Concerned Residents Group, the Greater Newington Residents Association, Groundwork NI, Intercomm, North Belfast Community Development and Transition Group, and the North Belfast Interface Network.

ABOVE : Pictured at the launch of a Peace Walls Project in north Belfast are (left-right) Liam Maskey, Intercomm; Sylvia Gordon, Groundwork NI; David Ford MLA, Minister for Justice; Harry Smyth, North Belfast Development and Transition Group; and Billy Gamble, International Fund for Ireland Board Member.



CASE STUDY:

Time2Choose

A community intervention project funded by the International Fund for Ireland is working with teenagers as young as 14 to resolve threats of violence in Londonderry/Derry.

The Time2Choose Project was established in June by Rosemount Resource Centre in response to increasing calls for support from people facing intimidation and at risk of violent attack. The project secured £188,926 through the Fund's Peace Impact Programme to help support and offer new opportunities to young people vulnerable to attack from threat making agencies.

John Donnelly, Time2Choose Project Coordinator said: "The sad reality is that people as young as 14 are being embroiled in complex and dangerous situations

that expose them to all forms of risk including drugs, violence and intimidation. This project is about supporting people to take control of their situation and providing critical interventions that can resolve difficult issues with positive solutions that are agreeable for communities and statutory authorities.

"In our first three months, more than 60 people have asked Time2Choose for our assistance because, for whatever reason, they are unable to seek support from authorities and simply don't know where else to go. We deal with all forms of risk and mediate between young people and any agency believed to be making threats. To date, the project has been successful in resolving 90 per cent of the cases referred to us."

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland said: "Time2Choose is attempting to deal with a number of very complex and challenging

issues, some of which statutory authorities and political representatives are unable to fully address. This is an important project that brings critical support and opportunities to marginalised individuals and groups who remain disconnected from government interventions.

"Like other projects in our Peace Impact Programme, Time2Choose seeks to engage with young people that are vulnerable or at risk and open new pathways to training and employment. Projects that can develop innovative approaches to deal with sensitive and contentious issues are critical to generate greater momentum for positive change and deliver stability and prosperity."

LEFT: John Donnelly, Time2Choose Project Coordinator; Tommy McCourt, Rosemount Resource Centre; Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland and Claire Kelly, Time2Choose Project.





Kilkeel JIMS Project – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

In September, two of Kilkeel's biggest youth clubs marked the achievements of the ground-breaking JIMS cross-community project with a special celebration event held at JIMS Youth Centre. JIMS Youth Centre and Kingdom Youth Club teamed up to deliver a wide range of joint activities to up to 200 young people that addressed important issues including relationships, drugs and antisocial behaviour. Pictured some of the young people from Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association and JIMS Youth Centre are Megan McIlveen, JIMS Youth Worker and David Graham, International fund for Ireland.

Cromac Regeneration Initiative – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

Pictured at the official opening of the new £1.25 million Cromac Regeneration Initiative premises in south Belfast in September are Gerard Rice, Cromac Regeneration Initiative Chairman; Nelson McCausland MLA, Social Development Minister; David Graham, International Fund for Ireland Board Member and Gerry McClory, Project Manager. The International Fund for Ireland provided £800,000 towards the cross-community development which is located on the junction of Ormeau Road and Donegall Pass in south Belfast. The centre provides state-of-the-art office space, the leasing of which supports the centre's outreach and development work in the area including a wide range of activities within and between communities to help reduce tensions and address common issues like drugs, unemployment and community safety.



The Gathering of the Gales – Leaving a Legacy Programme

Over two days in September hundreds of brass and wind musicians took part in the cross-border 'Gathering of the Gales' festival at Strabane's Alley Theatre. The celebration was part of the Reconciliation through the Riverine Project funded by the International Fund for Ireland and was a key highlight of this year's wider North West Music Festival. Pictured with St. Joseph's Brass

Band, Strabane; and the Britannia Concert Band, Londonderry/Derry; are Eamonn Browne, Project Coordinator; Mary Devlin, Programme Manager, International Fund for Ireland; Winston Patterson, Board Member International Fund for Ireland; Dr. Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Cllr. Ian McGarvey, Mayor of Donegal; and Paddy Harte, Chairman of the Donegal Gathering Committee.

Official Opening of the Bush Old Schoolhouse – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

Rose Mary Farrell, International Fund for Ireland Board Member, performed the unveiling ceremony at the official opening of the restored Bush Old Schoolhouse in September with Bush Old Schoolhouse Trust members Alan Bothwell, Rodney McDowell, Muriel Grill, Bill Elvin and Eddie Armstrong. Originally built in 1844 and located on the Cooley Peninsula, the Old Schoolhouse had sat unused for almost 40 years since the school closed

in the 1960s. However, in 2006 plans were put forward to restore the building as a cross-community resource to promote good relations, shared history and reconciliation in the area. The restoration received help from various financial contributors including the International Fund for Ireland.





Rooting for Change Together Project – Community Bridges Programme

In August, community groups from Ballymoney, Coleraine and Moyle came together at the Tower Hotel, Londonderry/Derry to mark the conclusion of the three-year cross-community Rooting for Change Together Project. Part-funded by the International Fund for Ireland

the project helped to build confidence and capacity of local groups and individuals and promoted understanding between communities. Pictured are Kate Carroll, founder of Steve Carroll Foundation with Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland and Lyn Moffett, Centre Manager Ballymoney Community Resource Centre.

Border Youth Summer Camp – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

An audience of over 150 people from Donegal and Tyrone came together in August at the Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey, for a special night of theatre showcasing the talented works of local participants of the Border Youth Summer Camp, funded by the International Fund for Ireland. They were treated to two productions by the project's younger and older participants - BestBeat and The Blame. Both were a culmination of a four-week cross-border youth summer camp organised as part of a cross-community 'Shared Past – Shared Future' arts project, which used the medium of drama to explore issues around the shared past of

the North West region and was delivered by the Balor Developmental Community Arts (DCA) Group and the Alley Arts Centre, Strabane. Over the past six years more than 250 young people, from both sides of the border and on a cross-community basis, participated in the programme. Pictured are Andrew McNulty, Co-ordinator Balor Developmental Community Arts (DCA); Caroline Bell, Project Manager Balor DCA; Winston Patterson, International Fund for Ireland Board Member; Cllr. Ruairí McHugh, Chairman Strabane District Council; Kieran Quinn, Chairman Balor DCA; and John Kerr, Manager of the Alley Theatre, Strabane.



Official Opening of Windsor Women's Centre – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

Pictured at the official opening of Windsor Women's Centre in October is International Fund for Ireland Board Member Siobhan Fitzpatrick CBE with Windsor Women's Centre Chief Executive Eleanor Jordan. The new Tate building replaces the Windsor Women's Centre's previous Ebor Street premises. It will operate as a women's education, therapy and well-being centre and seeks to make a major impact on community relations through an extended range of reconciliation training programmes. The new building houses an onsite counselling and family support room, two individual treatment rooms, a training and meeting room and a training room replicating a real working salon for complementary therapies.

Reach Across Celebration event – Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP)

In October, schools in the North West gathered to celebrate the Reach Across Project which gave 1,700 children in the region a chance to learn in shared environments through the Community Learning and Social Skills project (CLASS). The project combined classroom sessions, workshops and residential courses to help young people explore common issues, differences and divisive issues like flags, parades and policing. Hundreds of

participants gathered at St Cecilia's College to share their experiences and celebrate their successes. Pictured are: Nicole Connor, Limavady Grammar School; Aimee McLaughlin, St Mary's College; Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of International Fund for Ireland; Luke Scott, Foyle College; Megan Cooke, Limavady High School and Siobhan Doherty from the Reach Across Project.

