

FUND Focus



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

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



Legacy

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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

It is 15 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and this issue of Fund Focus reflects on the legacy of peace building secured during this time.

The fact is that peace in Northern Ireland remains fragile. In April, Dr Paul Nolan's second Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report mapped the extent of on-going incidents of violence, issues of sectarianism and separation of communities.

We are grateful to Dr Nolan, for his insightful contribution to this edition of Fund Focus. His research shows that there is much work still to be completed at ground level and I encourage you to read both his article here and the report which is available online.

Confirmation this summer that former US Envoy to Northern Ireland, Dr Richard Haass, will return to chair all-party talks on divisive community issues is welcome news and we share his desire to find new ways to encourage further change and make peace more resilient.

The need to stimulate positive change at grassroots level is a central driver in the Fund's Strategic Framework for Action 2012-2015: Community Transformation. It seeks to tackle segregation and promote reconciliation in interface areas and areas where there are low

levels of peace building activities or where the Peace Process has delivered limited benefits.

It outlines how the International Fund for Ireland will build on its legacy and harness its unique independence to address some of the most sensitive and, complex challenges that threaten to destabilise the Peace Process.

Throughout its lifetime, the Fund has developed successful programmes that focus on critical issues including shared housing and education, engaging marginalised youth and building community cohesion. We are pleased and encouraged to see many of these areas are prominent factors in the 'Together: Building a United Community' strategy which the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) developed to progress a united society in Northern Ireland.

Education is a key part of the OFMDFM plans and remains very important to the Fund's legacy. In April the Ministerial Advisory Group for Advancing Shared Education in Northern Ireland recommended that shared education be enshrined in legislation. This

is an important development and the Fund's success in developing new shared models was positively acknowledged by the Group's report.

Prior to the peaceful G8 Summit in Enniskillen while speaking to an audience of school pupils in Belfast, President Obama captured the importance of building a legacy of peace saying: "This work is as urgent now as it has ever been, because there's more to lose now than there has ever been."

Collaboration between government, community groups, and individuals will be critical to achieve greater cohesion at a community level and prevent a return to the past.

The International Fund for Ireland is ready to play its part and will continue to be a catalyst for positive change.

Dr Adrian Johnston
CHAIRMAN

International Fund for Ireland commits £1.5m/€1.77m towards peace building projects

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

The financial commitment includes £774,058/€903,511 within the Fund's Peace Impact Programme (PIP) which will be distributed among community groups based in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan, Coleraine and Dundalk.

The Peace Impact Programme was launched as part of the Fund's Strategic Framework for Action 2012-2015 and 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.

Commenting on the announcement, Dr. Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, said: "This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and the beginning of real political transformation. Yet the fact is that a lot of work is still needed to transform communities, increase trust and create new opportunities for people to work together. A truly integrated, shared and peaceful society can only be realised by involving all communities and constituencies.

"Our new strategic framework identifies some of the biggest remaining challenges and the majority of this funding allocation looks to support communities that have not yet fully realised the dividends of the Peace Process.

"The projects within the Peace Impact Programme are designed to develop creative and innovative approaches that deal with sensitive and contentious issues. Many seek to engage with young people that are vulnerable to recruitment or attack by paramilitaries and open new pathways to training and employment. Projects such as these are critical to generate greater momentum for positive change and deliver stability and prosperity."

Details of the latest funding are available at the International Fund for Ireland website:
www.internationalfundforireland.com



LEFT: A delegation from the International Fund for Ireland's Board Meeting in June 2013 visits the Workman Avenue interface in West Belfast. The delegation had the opportunity to speak with several community groups supported through the Fund's Peace Walls Programme.

How are we doing? Measuring peace in Northern Ireland

Dr Paul Nolan, Community Relations Council.



The G8 summit in Fermanagh in June succeeded in the aim set for it by David Cameron: to show the world that the Northern Ireland Peace Process is successful and that the economy is open for business.

It is, said Barack Obama, a 'blueprint' for peace processes the world over. That's not all he said. In his speech in the Waterfront Hall he felt the need to enter some qualifications. "For all the strides you have made, there is still much work to do." The reality of a troubled Peace Process had been made clear to his Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, when she visited Belfast in December 2012 just as the flags dispute had erupted, and just a month after the prison officer David Black had been killed by dissident republicans.



The Americans were not the only ones to qualify their praise. David Cameron, who had taken the risk of bringing the G8 summit to Northern Ireland and who had combined this bold gesture with an economic aid package, also felt the need to speak some home truths to Northern Ireland's politicians: "I have been frustrated by the speed of progress. I want these things to go faster", he said in an interview with the Belfast Telegraph on the day the summit opened. "We've had seven years of devolved institutions and the political progress is there. Now all we need to see is the economic and social progress".

The difficulties in marking economic progress were underscored by the fact that the venue for the G8 summit, the Lough Erne Hotel, happens to be in receivership – a point noted by the French news agency AFP and the Canadian Globe and Mail, the latter paper going into some detail in its account of the travails of the hotel. The metaphor of a bankrupt hotel served a double purpose – reflecting on both the G8 and on the state of the Northern Ireland economy.

Which reality is the more important, the progress made on the political front or the lack of progress on social and economic issues? And is it in fact the case that there has been progress in politics? How are these things measured? Is there an overall assessment to be made that takes all these factors into account? The Northern Ireland peace process in its current phase can be difficult to read. At times it appears to be moving forward, at other times it seems to be going backwards. Most confusingly it can sometimes appear to be doing both at once, like those optical illusion drawings by Escher where the people who are ascending the staircase appear, mysteriously, to be descending at the same time.

In order to get a better fix on the movements of the Peace Process a new project was launched by the Community Relations Council (CRC) in 2010 under the title of the Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Survey. The funders of the project are the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, an English charity with a strong tradition of social research, and its sister organisation, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which has invested heavily in peace building in

Northern Ireland. The aim of the project is to issue an annual state-of-the-nation style report on the Peace Process, and to date two reports have been issued. An indicator framework has been created which not only tracks political violence, or its absence (sometimes described as 'negative peace') but also social cohesion, equality, and political progress.

This type of deep analysis may help provide an understanding of whether the Agreement has delivered a permanent peace, or simply a generational truce in a centuries-old conflict. The first report was issued in Spring 2012 and the second in Spring 2013. Both reports are available in hard copy from the CRC and can be accessed online on the CRC website.

TOP: Flag protestors take to the streets in Belfast.
LEFT: President Obama addresses an audience in Northern Ireland in June 2013.



Paul Nolan is the Research Director at the Community Relations Council and author of the Peace Monitoring Report which can be downloaded from: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/peace-monitor>

CASE STUDY: YMCA Lurgan

Lurgan in County Armagh remains a deeply divided town where the threat of violence and mistrust between the two communities is still evident.

The International Fund for Ireland provided €856,000 for a €1.7million project that has brought the work of Lurgan YMCA from separate sides of the interface area into one new purpose built centre.

Hugo Dale, Chief Executive of Lurgan YMCA, said it was "one of the most exciting projects in the Lurgan area in years".

"It opens up many opportunities to meet the needs of various groups and individuals and to build good relations and social inclusion within our community," he said.

"The extra space also means that we can now organise more than one activity at any time.

"We will work towards providing more experiences and challenges to inspire all our users to meet their full potential."

The new building enables Lurgan YMCA to significantly increase its work with young people in the town and deliver activities to tackle sectarianism and gang involvement while promoting understanding between communities.

Jamie King, a volunteer at the Lurgan YMCA said: "About two or three years ago Lurgan got a really bad name for itself. Then we got the go-ahead to build this building. We are going to be using it for the youth and community."

The new centre opens up capacity for a range of new and much-needed outreach work with people of all ages and abilities including: training on diversity, conflict management and leadership; mothers and toddlers sessions; senior citizens groups and a YES Programme for disabled children.



ABOVE: Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland Dr Adrian Johnston (back left); with Education Minister John O'Dowd (front right); Lurgan YMCA Chief Executive Hugo Dale (back centre); Carla Lockhart, Mayor of Craigavon Borough Council; and St Mary's High School pupils.

CASE STUDY: Reconciliation through the Riverine Project

The town of Strabane lies on the east bank of the River Foyle in Northern Ireland and on the western side of the river lies the town of Lifford in County Donegal. The overall aim of the Reconciliation through the Riverine Project is to develop a shared space for the people of these two neighbouring towns and their hinterlands, on a site that has been for so long associated with division.

"It will be a lasting legacy to the peace process", said Catherine Anne Kelly, Reconciliation Officer for the project.

The project is a joint initiative between Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council with strong support from the local community through the Riverine Forum.

"This project is an excellent example of public, private and local community collaboration, in this instance through a three strand

approach," said Catherine Anne.

The first strand is the regeneration of the border riverside area into an iconic shared green space including features such as a tree lined boulevard, meeting spaces, public art, interactive play areas and a leafed arched walkway along the old railway track. The second strand of the project is the Youth Participation Programme which is aimed at ensuring ownership of this space by young people and to strengthen relationships between young people from different communities and across the border so as to address sectarianism. The final strand, the Community Participation Programme, will deliver a range of on-going community based projects that will build positive relations at a cross-community and cross-border level.

"Our first programme, the inaugural 'Reconciliation through the Riverine Autumn School' proved to be a huge success," says Catherine Anne. "We had a week long array of events spanning the arts, literature, heritage, fishing, writing and music which appealed to the wider community

in the greater Strabane and Lifford area. A week long calendar of events focused on sharing and promoting new thinking, perspectives and knowledge on peace building and reconciliation." Currently, the Forum is engaged in over 40 Youth and Community participation projects which will conclude by the end of September.

During the month of October a number of celebration and showcase type events will be hosted to highlight the positive impact of the project and showcase the good work led by the wider community in the Strabane and Lifford area.

The International Fund for Ireland provided funding of one million euro for strands two and three of the project.



LEFT: Participants at The Reconciliation through the Riverine Autumn School with local community leaders and International Fund for Ireland Board Member, Winston Patterson (centre row, second from right).

Inaugural CREDIT Awards – Sharing in Education Programme

The Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT) Project Awards recently recognised the achievements of more than 50 teachers who have improved mutual understanding, reconciliation and community relations within and beyond schools. The project is organised by Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College and has worked with more than 160 teachers providing

training and development that focuses on diversity, inclusion and community cohesion issues in school environments. International Fund for Ireland Chairman Dr Adrian Johnston (centre right) is pictured with Dr Patricia Eaton, CREDIT Project Director; Aithne Kerrigan, Ashfield Boys' High School; and Sir Bob Salisbury.



Maghera Parish Caring Association – Community Based Economic & Social Regeneration Programme

In May 2013, Maghera Parish Caring Association officially opened the doors to its new £800,000 Cross-Community Facility. The modern facilities at the Lurach Centre will enable the organisation to roll out a sustained and effective series of community relations initiatives that support the social and education activities offered to

all sections of the community. Funding was provided by the International Fund for Ireland, the Department of Education and the Church of Ireland. Pictured at the opening with Fund Board Member David Graham (centre) is Elizabeth Clarke, Maghera Parish Caring Association Project Manager; and Rev Isaac Hanna, Rector at St Lurach's Church of Ireland.



Upstanding: Stories of Courage from Northern Ireland – Sharing in Education Programme

A film featuring 10 diverse stories of people who stood up to violence, discrimination or prejudice in Northern Ireland was launched at Belfast's Queen's Film Theatre in May 2013. A similar launch also followed a few weeks later at Boston's Irish International Immigration Centre. The film was produced as part of 'Facing our History, Shaping the Future', a Corrymeela Community project in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves. It is accompanied by an educators' guide for use in schools and community education settings. The International Fund for Ireland provided funding through its Sharing in Education programme, managed on behalf of the Fund by the Department of Education. Pictured are Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal; Sean Pettis; and Susan McEwen from Corrymeela Community with International Fund for Ireland Board Member, Billy Gamble (back right).



Goal For Peace – Community Based Economic & Social Regeneration Programme

In May 2013, local children from across Leitrim and Fermanagh welcomed the Republic of Ireland Football Team Manager, Giovanni Trapattoni, to a cross-border sports day at Leitrim Gaels Community Pitch as part of the Goal for Peace project. Mr Trapattoni got to see first-hand the important work

being undertaken by the project, which integrates children from both Protestant and Catholic traditions through the medium of sport, primarily soccer. During his visit he met with Catherine Ryan of the International Fund for Ireland, students and teachers from participating schools as well as the programme organisers and coaches.



KEY Graduation – Building Bridges Programme

900 young entrepreneurs from 78 schools marked the completion of the Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth (KEY) Programme in May 2013 at a special graduation ceremony in Belfast's Waterfront Hall. The cross-community, cross-border business programme brings together young people from schools, many of which are located in disadvantaged areas on both sides of the border, to develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and enhance their understanding of other traditions. International Fund for Ireland Chairman Dr Adrian Johnston presented awards to high fliers and a group of 12 top performers will now go participate in Junior Achievement's Next Generation Leaders Forum to be held in Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 11 – 17 August 2013.



Lurgan Town Project – Community Bridges Programme

Segregation remains one of the biggest concerns for Lurgan's young people according to the Community Dialogue Tool launched in May 2013 by Lurgan Town Project which was funded by the International Fund for Ireland. The study also found that many young people felt that the older generations' 'bitterness' and

focus on the past was a key inhibitor to building cross-community relationships. Pictured at the launch of the Lurgan Town Project's Community Dialogue Tool report are: Dr Duncan Morrow, University of Ulster; Colm Fitzpatrick; Eamonn Fleming, Lurgan Town Project; Education Minister John O'Dowd MLA; Saffron Lyness; Billy Gamble, International Fund for Ireland; and Plunkett Campbell, SELB Chairperson.



Apprenticeship in Peace Building Project – Community Bridges Programme

The completion of the two-year Apprenticeship in Peace Building Project was marked with a celebration event at Belfast's Youth Link's Springfield Road Resource Centre in May 2013, which coincidentally was also established with financial support from the International Fund. The project, coordinated by Youth Link NI, involved more than 60 community and church organisations and helped bolster employment options for 120

young people and support peace building efforts in interface areas. Pictured at the event are David Devlin, Youthlink Apprentice; Greg Burton, US Consul General; Danielle Truesdale, Youthlink Apprentice; David Graham, International Fund for Ireland Board Member; and John Peacock, Youthlink Community Relations Manager.



Exploring New Directions – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

A major conference in Buncrana, Co Donegal, recently celebrated the successful completion of 'Exploring New Directions' – an innovative peace and reconciliation programme targeting women across Inishowen, Mid Ulster and Derry/ Londonderry. Over a two-year period, the initiative brought together women from the North-West to build relationships and break down historic barriers through a series of workshops with a mix of social, peace building and reconciliation elements. The conference was attended by about 150 guests including International Fund for Ireland Board Member, Dorothy Clarke (front right).

