



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND



The Difference the Fund is Making

March 2018



Introduction

Since it was established by the British and Irish governments in 1986, the International Fund for Ireland has successfully developed and delivered a wide range of economic, peace building, and reconciliation interventions in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Thousands of individuals living in hundreds of communities affected by sectarian violence have benefited from the support of the International Fund for Ireland.

Over many years, evaluations by donors and independent assessors have found the Fund's interventions to have successfully brought real and meaningful change. Its in-depth knowledge of the issues on the ground, long-standing relationships with community organisations and activists, and a reputation for neutrality and independence, collectively give the Fund unique latitude of action.

As such, the Fund has been able to take necessary risks in the cause of peace and effectively pushed political and administrative leaders towards the adoption of policies that it has shaped.

In recent years, the Fund has been instrumental in:

- opening alternative pathways to marginalised young people who are vulnerable to recruitment or attack by paramilitaries;
- securing agreements between communities to begin the process of removing physical divisions (Peace Walls);
- establishing new models for statutory authorities, community organisations and funder steering groups to effectively pool resources and develop effective strategies for unique community issues;
- shaping the Northern Ireland Executive's strategy to address interface divisions; and
- enabling ground-breaking engagement that has supported individuals and communities, who are still affected by sectarian violence, to take part in peace building activities for the first time.

Despite a decade of progress, political structures in Northern Ireland remain fragile. The rapid deterioration of trust between the two largest

political parties and subsequent collapse of the power sharing Executive, in January 2017, have raised serious concerns about the durability of the political institutions.

In the year that has passed, talks to restore power-sharing have not borne fruit and continued stalemate has the potential to unsettle the journey towards sustainable peace. These issues have been further compounded by complexities and uncertainties of the UK's post-Brexit relationship with the European Union and, in particular, the future of cross-border relations with the Republic of Ireland.

During previous periods of political upheaval and uncertainty the Fund has provided a steady, consistent and independent presence. Our support has enabled communities to remain engaged with peace building activities and to realise positive transformation.

The current deadlock underscores the compelling continued need for the Fund as an independent, internationally supported organisation that can support communities on the journey towards lasting peace.

The support and encouragement from our donors has enabled the Fund to consistently underpin the Peace Process and assist the British and Irish governments in their efforts to deliver a lasting peace on the island of Ireland. The Fund's hard won reputation, flexibility and credibility among all communities make it the only vehicle that can continue work of this nature.



Support from the Fund has helped foster new dialogue and understanding between communities.

Current challenges

While Northern Ireland's devolved institutions face an uncertain future, certain realities for society remain including:

More people have died from suicide in the 20 years following the Good Friday Agreement than were killed during 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland. The region now has the highest rate of suicide in the UK and has the world's highest recorded rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹

The official position of the British government is that the security threat from paramilitaries in Northern Ireland is 'severe'²

x2

paramilitary punishment-style shootings doubled in the last year³

300

punishment attacks have taken place in the last four years⁴

1,300

Households were forced out of their homes by paramilitaries in the last three years⁵

75^{kgs}
/165^{lbs}

of explosives seized by police in Northern Ireland in 2016-2017⁶

Political instability

NI has been without a functioning government since January 2017⁷

Government commitments to tackle paramilitary activity could be constrained due to political stalemate⁸

Funding for many public services and projects have been interrupted or postponed⁹

In January 2017, Northern Ireland's power sharing government collapsed prompting a snap election in March. However, the largest parties remain at odds on a number of issues and talks to restore power have proven fruitless and raised concerns about the future of a devolved government.

The Fund is acutely aware of the impact that

political uncertainty has on society, particularly in areas that have yet to realise a direct dividend from the Peace Process. The absence of a functioning Assembly and impact of reduced public spending will add new pressures to many of the most marginalised communities, eroding confidence in the political process and expectations of a better life.



OUR RESPONSE:

Community Consolidation – Peace Consolidation Strategy 2016-2020

Launched in November 2015, the Community Consolidation – Peace Consolidation 2016-2020 Strategy has expanded and extended the Fund's work into essential areas and delivered a series of critical interventions that no other organisation has been able to deliver.



It capitalises on our capacity and unique standing within all communities to develop solutions to some of the most divisive issues in our society. Specifically it has intensified efforts to address the needs of young people who are at risk of radicalisation and recruitment to organisations determined to undermine the Peace Process.

Through the 2016-2020 Strategy, the Fund is concentrating resources towards the areas where it can make the most significant and urgent contribution to stabilise the Peace Process with an emphasis on the following objectives:

- promoting reconciliation and integration in interface areas;
- continuing to engage communities and individuals, particularly young people, who have only recently or have not yet participated in peace building and community reconciliation activities; and
- maintaining the longstanding approach of

the Fund in promoting economic and social advance in communities suffering from very high levels of economic and social deprivation.

The benefits of having our donors remain politically engaged while also providing financial assistance are vital not only to the success of this strategy but in relation to delivering a sustainable peace across the island of Ireland. The international dimension is a vital key to access communities where suspicions and misgivings have stymied government and other interventions. It has also proven to be a critical factor in leveraging funding from other sources.

Whatever additional financial support donors decide to provide will enable the Fund to deliver real and meaningful transformation – particularly in areas where there is a risk of a return to sectarian violence.

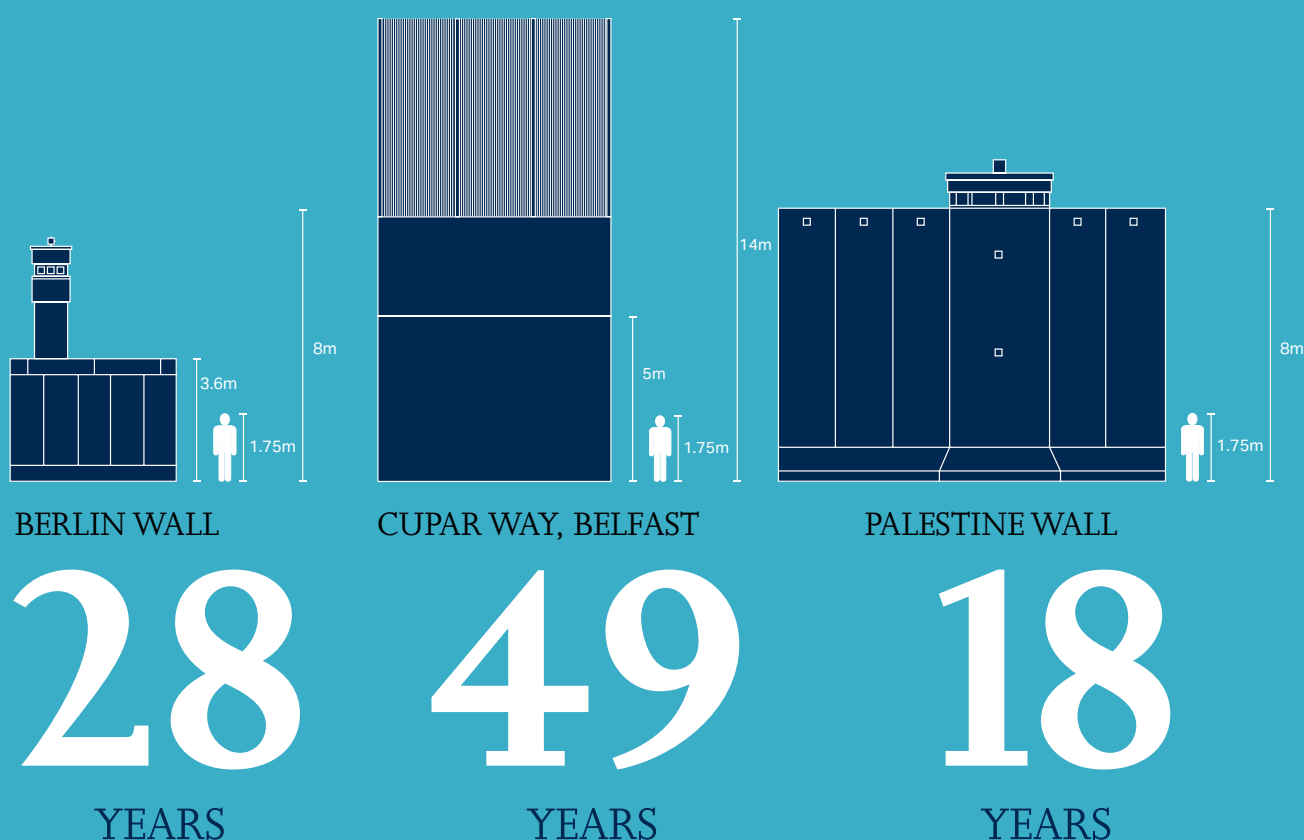
MAIN: The Chairman of the Fund pictured at the launch of new baseline surveys that collected the views of residents who are most affected by their proximity to Peace Walls.

LEFT: A participant paints children's faces at a community event.

ABOVE: The Fund is creating opportunities that improve the lives of young people and their communities.

Peace Walls Programme

The Peace Walls Programme is breaking new ground in interface areas and assisting communities to imagine life without barriers.



Between January 2016 and June 2017

1160

People have taken part in site specific consultations

184

Confidence building activities have taken place

7

Agreements for change or removal have been reached

29

Ongoing conversations across seven projects

DID YOU KNOW:

Peace Walls are usually constructed from a mix of materials including concrete, barbed wire, iron and steel. The position, height and length of most Peace Walls is based on security assessments made during the Troubles.

The 2017 Peace Walls Programme Attitudinal Survey surveyed the views of peace line residents and found that:

68% are in favour of the barriers being removed within the lifetime of their children or grandchildren.

66% agree that no change to the barriers would have a negative impact on community relations.

71% of all respondents said that cross-community interaction is 'always' or 'mostly' positive.

54% feel that the key functions of the Peace Walls are related to safety/security functions.

'Improved safety measures' is ranked as the primary factor that could influence positive attitudinal change to the removal of the Peace Walls.

Life in the shadow of the Peace Walls

Academic research completed over the last 10 years has indicated that:



Nearly 70% of Troubles-related murders took place less than 500 yards from interface barriers and almost 85% of the killings occurred within 1,000 yards.¹

10%

Each of the neighbourhoods with Peace Walls in Belfast, are in the top 10% of the most socially and economically deprived electoral wards in Northern Ireland.²



There is a higher incidence of mental health problems for those living in closest proximity to the walls. Suicide is the biggest cause of death of people under the age of 35.³



There is a correlation between the Peace Walls and the local communities' ability to access services, low levels of educational attainment and unemployment.⁴

1. Shirlow, P. and Murtagh, B. (2006) Belfast – Segregation, violence and the city

2. Byrne, J. Gormley Heenan, C. and Robinson, G. (2012) Attitudes to Peace Walls

3. O'Reilly, D (2011) Give my head peace: psychotropic drug uptake around the 'peace lines' in Northern Ireland, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, Vol 65, Issue Supplement 2

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/revealed-significant-numbers-of-young-people-in-northern-ireland-worry-about-their-mental-health-35826054.html>

4. Hall, M. (2010) Death by Postcode (Island Pamphlets No.94), Newtownabbey: Island Publications

Peace Impact Programme

Launched in 2013, the Peace Impact Programme (PIP) has achieved significant success within communities where there has been limited or no previous participation in peace building activities.

In the last year:

36 Peace Impact Projects were started

Projects started in southern border counties **8**

28 Projects started in Northern Ireland

£4.7m / €5.8m

Grants committed to the Peace Impact Programme

Between January 2016 and June 2017

13,299

People participated in PIP projects

95% Positive satisfaction rating

81% Of participants reported increased confidence

90% Said it had helped to positively change attitudes

Key outcomes of PIP Projects



Increased contact, dialogue, sharing and integration among project participants



Development of sustainable, exemplar community organisations



Underpinning of the Peace Process

Characteristics of PIP projects



Enable individuals and communities, who are still affected by sectarian violence, to take part in peace building activities for the first time



Offer new support to marginalised young people



Operate in areas suffering from high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where engagement in peace building has historically been low



Create more inclusive communities



Build relationships



Develop local leadership

“This is equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to become advocates of change and build a more positive future for themselves and others. We’ve been impressed by how each participant has applied themselves within the project and within their communities.”

Ewan Morgan, coordinator of the Digging Deeper Safer Driving Peace Impact Project led by Community Restorative Justice Newry/Armagh (CRJNA).

Personal Youth Development Programme

Launched in November 2015, the Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) is designed to help young people build and develop life skills that foster good relations, build confidence and resilience and make them more employable.

In the last year:

30 Personal Youth Development Projects were started

24 Projects started in Northern Ireland

6

Projects started in southern border counties

£3.3m / €3.9m

Grants committed to the Personal Youth Development Programme

Between January 2016 and June 2017

366

People participated in PYDP projects

16

Young people secured employment

147

Completed employment related training

32

Strategic partnerships have been formed

9

Young people completed work placements

178

Completed accredited training

19

Young people progressed on to education and training

134

Completed good relations training

Characteristics of PYDP projects

PYDP engages 16-25 year olds that are vulnerable to polarisation and face barriers to participation in mainstream provision. It is designed to engage young people who may have:



Left education with no or low qualifications or who left the education system early



Been or currently are involved in substance abuse



Become affected by homelessness



Come from a difficult family background



Been in, or close to, the criminal justice system



Suffered from poor health including mental health issues



Mistrust of statutory institutions



Not participated in civic society in a positive manner



Come from communities with a negative view of their future

“I left school with nothing but the PYDP Programme has given me the support I needed to complete qualifications including; OCN in Youth Work, Good Relations, Health and Safety and First Aid certificates. Initially, when I joined I was very anxious about meeting people but now my confidence has grown and I enjoy getting to socialise with others. I plan to stick with the project for the next two years to continue my progress.”

Scott, a 25-year old participant on the Building Brighter Futures PYDP Project led by Limavady-based Roe Valley Residents Association



Overview

Despite the enormous progress that has been made in recent years, the current political impasse and tensions that remain between communities are playing into the hands of individuals and groups that are intent on inciting violence and radicalising a new generation of young people.



The Fund is acutely aware that some communities have had limited engagement in peace building and reconciliation activities and there are a number of dissenting voices to the political and peace processes.

The Fund is actively seeking further financial support from its international donors to deliver peace building and reconciliation interventions in areas where sectarian violence and its consequences have the potential to destabilise the Peace Process.

The Fund, on behalf of communities throughout the island of Ireland, is very grateful to our international donors for their very generous financial and political support. Independent evaluations of the Fund's many successful

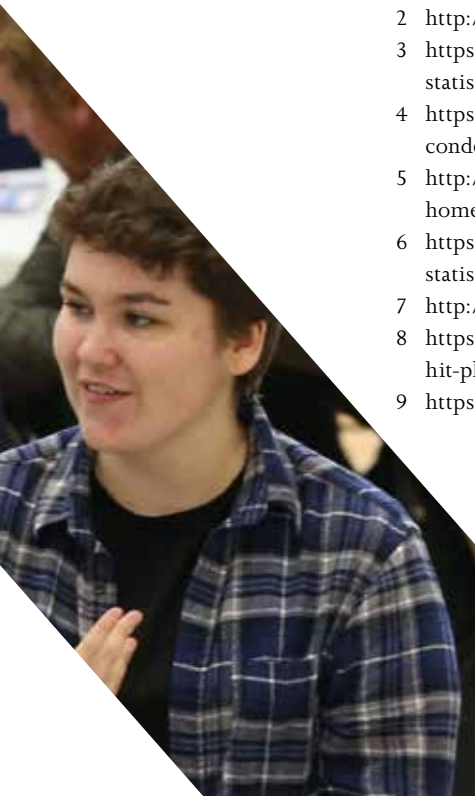
interventions clearly indicate that it is possible to deliver real and meaningful change. The Fund will continue in its efforts to positively influence policy makers and other funders about the need to mainstream or further develop such interventions.

During an uncertain time for the Peace Process, the Fund is committing to a difficult but essential scope of work that other funders or government bodies simply cannot undertake. With the support from the international community, the Fund is the only vehicle that can effectively address the most difficult challenges to a sustainable peace on the island of Ireland.

It is critical to stay with this work and continue to take necessary risks for peace.

MAIN: The Clanrye Group PYDP Project challenged young people to identify a social issue that they could help address by working together as a team. Participants and coordinators are pictured with Fund Board Member, Paddy Harte.

ABOVE: Children take part in events organised by Clones Family Resource Centre in Co. Monaghan.



1. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-has-highest-rate-of-suicide-in-the-uk-but-mental-health-funding-is-25-less-36418579.html>
<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2011/december/ni-has-worlds-highest-rate-of-post-traumatic-stress-disorder>
<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/01/11/news/more-have-died-by-suicide-that-were-killed-during-troubles-378739/>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36267052>
3. <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/security-situation-statistics/2017/annual-security-situation-statistics-report-2016-17.pdf>
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/2017/11/20/news/rise-in-paramilitary-attacks-condemned-1191533/>
5. <http://www.thedetail.tv/articles/paramilitaries-in-northern-ireland-forcing-hundreds-from-their-homes-each-year>
6. <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/security-situation-statistics/2017/annual-security-situation-statistics-report-2016-17.pdf>
7. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-northern-ireland-politics-38635708>
8. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/concerns-political-instability-could-hit-plan-to-tackle-paramilitary-activity-35490378.html>
9. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/stormont-standoff-wm7xgsxss>

Notes



“The great unsung hero of the Northern Ireland Peace Process was not actually a person, but a fund. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI), by supporting intercommunal civil society engagement from 1986, contributed hugely to the support given by majorities of Nationalists and Unionists to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

The Fund promoted economic and community development; stimulated dialogue and cooperation within and between divided communities; tackled the underlying causes of sectarianism and violence and fostered reconciliation. I am in no doubt that the Fund was essential in consolidating peace.”

JONATHAN POWELL, CHIEF OF STAFF TO PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR, 1995 TO 2007

The International Fund for Ireland is an independent international organisation, established by the British and Irish governments in 1986. The Fund's main objectives are to promote economic and social advance and encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists throughout Ireland. Donors to the Fund are: the United States of America, the European Union, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

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