



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

# Fund news

Spring 2011

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

## International Fund for Ireland announces £8.2m / €9.8m for peace building projects

In February 2011, the Board of the International Fund for Ireland approved a further investment of £8.2m / €9.8m into peace building and reconciliation. Commenting on the announcement, Dr Denis Rooney CBE, said: "This much needed funding will play a critical role in reaching many communities where the benefits of peace-building and reconciliation have yet to be felt."

Over £3.4m / €4.1m will go to the Fund's Sharing in Education Programme. £839k / €1m will go towards the Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity & Inclusion for Teachers Programme in Belfast's Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College. The Programme will provide training courses for teachers in Northern Ireland to help them develop awareness and practical skills in dealing with division, diversity, inclusion and community relations in both the classroom and the wider school environment.

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Dr Denis Rooney CBE, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland and Stella O'Leary, the recently appointed alternate US Observer to the International Fund for Ireland are pictured in advance of the International Fund for Ireland Board meeting, which was held in The Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross, County Monaghan.

## A Royal Visit

Pictured during the recent visit of HRH Prince William of Wales and Miss Catherine Middleton to YouthAction in Belfast are Fund Chairman, Dr Denis Rooney CBE with HRH Prince William of Wales and June Trimble MBE, Director of Youth Action Northern Ireland. The Fund Chairman took the opportunity to explain the benefits of the Fund supported Community Leadership Apprenticeship Project to the Prince. The Royal couple also enjoyed performances by Youth Action's Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts, and Prince William presented certificates to 11 apprentices who had completed their 18-month training and employment programme.



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## Foreword

This edition of Fund News contains an article on a recent external review of the Fund, undertaken by Deloitte, and I am very pleased that the external review was very complimentary of the funding strategy adopted by the Fund.

Even more pleasing was the validation contained within the review in terms of the outcomes to local communities from our funding initiatives.

This edition of Fund News also contains examples of how our funding initiatives deliver positive, meaningful and sustainable change at a local level in communities throughout Northern Ireland and the southern border counties. For example, the Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) strives to break down the barriers arising from our historic conflict by providing a range of opportunities for young people to learn together and reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement. One such initiative funded under the Sharing in Education Programme is Changemakers, a ground-breaking initiative that uses a collaborative approach to community relations. If the ambitions for this project are realised, the learnings will reach far beyond school into the home and wider community.

As we step outside education and into our communities, the importance of the continued success of the Integrating Community Organisations Programme and the long-standing Community Bridges Programme is evident. These initiatives rely on the courage and determination of individuals and groups to improve their own communities and to reach out to others for a better future for all of us on the island of Ireland.

All of these very real and concrete developments are testament to the courage of the many people I meet in my capacity as Chairman, and who despite setbacks - some minor, others more significant - press on with their work towards a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Recent incidents of violence are a depressing reminder of the potential for our community to slip back to a darker time. They prove that there is still much to be done to protect and consolidate the peace process.

You may have seen in recent weeks the ongoing debate about the future of the International Fund for Ireland. It is true that only a couple of years ago we looked beyond the lifetime of the Fund to a new phase when the Fund would no longer exist. Sadly, we have to be realistic and deal with events on the ground as they are and not as we would wish them to be. The external review of the Fund by Deloitte recognised the considerable impact the potential demise of the Fund would have at this critical time in the peace process.

If more funding becomes available from our donors, it would be our intention to build sustainable peace and prosperity with communities in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties that are suffering the greatest economic and social deprivation. It is within these communities, where there have been low levels of engagement in peace building and limited benefits from the peace process that there remains a continued risk of instability and violence.

## International Fund for Ireland announces £8.2m / €9.8m for peace building projects

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Seven projects in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties will receive over £2.1m / €2.5m through the Fund's Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme which is focused on community development and reconciliation through cross-community and cross-border projects.

More than £1.2m / €1.5m will support five projects under the Fund's Community Bridges Programme. One of these is the Donegal Youth Service, Beyond Borders Project which will provide a range of cultural experiences for 12-25 year olds to challenge social prejudice, segregation and division from a young person's perspective.

A further £837k / €1m will be given to Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council under the Fund's Leaving a Legacy Programme towards the Reconciliation through the Riverine Project. A Youth Participation Programme and Community Participation Programme will be funded until December 2013 and are part of a dedicated programme of reconciliation to regenerate the border riverside area and develop cross-community and cross-border relationships.

Dr Denis Rooney CBE, said: "Today's funding announcement forms part of our current strategy to focus on and support innovative work around integration in education, housing, and community organisations."

Other major elements of the latest funding included:

£648,182 and €286,090 under the Fund's Maximising Community Space Crossing Borders Programme will provide modest grant assistance to improve facilities across 18 community halls.

£543,229 / €651,874 towards a new Communities in Transition Pilot Demonstration Programme which will work with one of the new super-council areas in Northern Ireland to engage with low-capacity community groups who continue to be affected by the conflict and the associated tensions and divisions. At the same time, the Programme will work with Council personnel, councillors and other statutory and voluntary agencies to encourage them to support the Programme.



## Very positive results from External Review

In December 2010, Deloitte published a report on their external review of the Fund's activities during the period from October 2004 to December 2009 - which includes part of the Fund's pre-2006 economic based strategy and its post-2006 Sharing this Space Strategy.

Some of the main conclusions from the report were: The Fund had been successful in moving its strategic emphasis from economic development to sharing and reconciliation. The Fund had acquired

and demonstrated considerable knowledge on how programmes focused on sharing and reconciliation should be developed and delivered. At a project and programme level there was strong evidence of the Fund making positive contributions towards its strategic objectives. The Fund is acknowledged as an important element of the peace process. There is a continued need for the Fund to provide support to sustain the peace process.

To read the report in full, please visit:  
[www.internationalfundforireland.com](http://www.internationalfundforireland.com)

## Young people lead change with Sharing Education Together Project

The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust recently launched its peer-led dialogue and learning initiative called the Sharing Education Together Project with a conference for sixth-form pupils from 16 different schools.

The conference was the culmination of a series of Sharing in Education Together events held in schools throughout Northern Ireland over the past year which helped pupils develop dialogue and leadership skills so that they can make their own contribution towards a shared and better future for everyone.

Speaking at the launch, Mary Southwell, Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the conference, meeting the young people and seeing at first-hand what is essentially a practical demonstration of the Fund's strategy at work - enhancing community relations, and promoting reconciliation and sharing.

"We are committed to supporting and facilitating projects that provide opportunities for young people from different community backgrounds to come together to explore common issues and experiences."

Sinead Loughran, 18, a young volunteer from Donaghmore spoke for the many young people involved: "It's such an encouraging feeling being able to work with other young people to see how we can make a positive contribution to the future of Northern Ireland." The Sharing Education Together Project is supported through the Sharing in Education Programme of the International Fund for Ireland and is managed on behalf of the Fund by the Department of Education.

*Pictured with Mary Southwell, Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland are the sixth-form pupils from 16 different schools who were brought together recently by the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust for a Sharing in Education conference in Belfast.*





## Bringing Communities Together

The Integrating Community Organisations Programme brings together community groups from each side of the community, often, on a cross-border basis, to learn and to do things together for their benefit.

The groups, receive mentoring, training and support which helps to strengthen the partnerships.

The Programme is a key element of the Fund's current strategy and is vital in bringing members of different communities together.

Before embarking on the Programme, communities often express a sense of fear and distrust of each other as a direct result of the Troubles. As one participant from the Loughgiel Community Association in

Derry / Londonderry working with Inter-estate Partnership in County Antrim said: "I have always been suspicious of the other side and I am glad I have got the chance to get to know them and realise that we are all human."

To date 119 groups have participated in the Programme which is oversubscribed and more community groups are being recruited by the International Fund for Ireland.

## Strengthening Leadership for Sustainable Communities

The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) and the International Fund for Ireland have launched the third and final year of the Community Leadership Programme (CLP). More than 40 community groups from Northern Ireland and the six southern border counties will be taking part.

The Programme strengthens groups by developing participants' leadership capacities using action learning techniques. The focus is on putting learning into practice. Those involved often find the year-long learning journey quite a challenge, but they take inspiration from the achievements of previous participants. Here we look at the experience of Killybegs Women's Group (KWG) in County Donegal.

As part of their action learning programme, KWG organised a visit to Derry Well Women's Centre to find out how this well-established group operated and to learn from their best practices. From this initial contact, the two groups developed their connections, eventually leading to a joint project to deliver a cross-border capacity building programme around health issues.

In Limavady, a practical session on fundraising with their programme facilitator inspired Coolestown Community Association to apply for funding for their Cool 4 Hearts Project. The Project was awarded a €10,000 grant and Chairperson Sheila McWilliams explains: "We have never had the confidence before to apply and fill out funding applications of this nature. However, our CLP facilitator was with us every step of the way and the support we got from her and NICVA was invaluable."

The Programme has also given a number of those involved the confidence to take up leadership roles within their communities and one participant in the Programme has used her accreditation from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the University of Ulster to move into employment.



Representatives from Killybegs Women's Group are pictured being presented with their Community Leadership Programme certificate at the Programme's final workshop for year one.

For many groups the process has helped them identify new leaders and refreshed a dedicated but struggling committee. For others, the chance to connect with similar groups has provided encouragement and new ideas to overcome long-standing challenges.

The 27 groups that participated in year two of the Programme met to celebrate the official end of their programme in March 2011, and they used the opportunity to continue networking with colleagues and share the learning and experience gained during the year. Equipped with new skills, confidence and contacts, the end of the Community Leadership Programme is only the start of their journey.



## Touring showcase production of Far Off Fields a timely reminder of our shared past

More than 120 guests recently attended the Performing Arts showcase production of Far Off Fields which took place at the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh.

The production, is part of the cross-border, cross-community, Shared Past-Shared Future arts project.

Far Off Fields tells the story of the North West's shared heritage from the era of the Hiring Fair in Strabane. The production is part of the Project's efforts to introduce these shared cultural references and legends to new audiences and to that end is currently halfway through a tour of schools and community groups across the North West Region.

Peter Hogan, Deputy Joint Director General of the International Fund for Ireland, said: "I greatly enjoyed this wonderful drama written by Jonathon Burgess whose writing reflects our past, but we see how these events have shaped our present. And indeed it presents lessons for our shared future. The Fund is delighted to be supporting Balor Developmental Community Arts and the Alley Arts Centre of Strabane in the production and tour of this play."



Kieran Quinn from Balor Developmental Community Arts, Ballybofey, County Donegal; Michaela Boyle, Chairperson Strabane District Council; and Peter Hogan, Deputy Joint Director General, International Fund for Ireland are pictured at the event.

## Success of GRIT showcased at Stormont event

Ministers and MLAs gathered at Stormont recently for a special event which showcased the huge impact the award winning Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust (GRIT) Programme has had on its participants.

The event which was organised by GRIT called on the Northern Ireland Executive to look at this project as a cost effective and innovative way of helping the most disadvantaged young people make a positive contribution to society in Northern Ireland.

Since its launch in 2008, nearly 200 young men and women from all over Northern Ireland have been given a unique opportunity to improve their lives by taking part in the GRIT experience and results are impressive. Each programme has been oversubscribed and with a 100% completion rate it has exceeded all expectations. Nine out of ten GRIT participants remain in training following their experience.

Dr Denis Rooney CBE, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, which has been the main funder of the GRIT Programme from its inception, said: "The resounding success of the GRIT Programme is testament to the importance of supporting work that ensures the most marginalised of our young people are given opportunities to fulfil their potential and share their hopes for the future with young people from different cultural backgrounds."

The GRIT Programme is co-funded by the Department for Social Development and delivered by the Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust in cooperation with Opportunity Youth.



Pictured at the recent event in Stormont to show case the award winning Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust (GRIT) Programme are from left to right: Dr Denis Rooney CBE, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Therese Rogan, Chairman of the GRIT Board; host Minister Alex Attwood MLA and two former participants from the GRIT Programme (left) Conor McHugh and Aaron Sinclair who described to the audience the very positive effect the GRIT Programme had had on their lives.



## Local stories Straight from the Horse's Mouth enthral audience at book launch

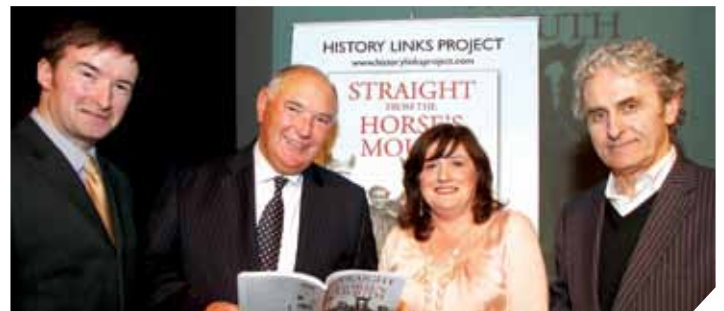
A theatre in Strabane was the setting for the launch of a book called *Straight from the Horse's Mouth* featuring a compilation of stories and pictures from the East Donegal and West Tyrone areas woven together to form a shared story of the entire area.

Winston Patterson, Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, which funded the *hlsTory Links Project*, said: "The International Fund for Ireland is proud to support this innovative and exciting project which uses information and communications technology to promote reconciliation through the exploration of local history.

"In cross-border projects we often speak about building bridges. *hlsTory Links* is working to build 'e-bridges' which are supporting communities of different identities to engage with each other. I am confident that this project will assist participants in gaining a greater understanding of their communities and of the value of mutual respect and understanding."

More information on the *hlsTory Links Project* is available at [www.historylinksproject.com](http://www.historylinksproject.com)

Pictured at the launch of the *hlsTory Links* book *Straight from the Horses Mouth* are from left: Stephen McNamee, Project Co-ordinator; Winston Patterson, Board Member, International Fund for Ireland; Kathleen Bonner, Project Administrator; and Paddy Harte, Senior Development Officer, International Fund for Ireland.



## Change Makers Programme Launched

A pioneering new Programme which aims to develop and embed a greater community relations ethos in post primary schools was launched recently.

Funded under the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme, the three-year Programme will initially be delivered to 10 post-primary schools in the Greater Belfast area with participation from a cross-section of students aged 11-18 from the controlled and maintained school sectors.

The students will explore their understanding of prejudice, discrimination, sectarianism and increase their awareness of different cultures.

The Programme will help develop a collaborative approach to community relations between schools. The learning will

be passed down to younger pupils and also nurtured within the home and into wider society.

Speaking at the launch, Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, Anne Henderson, said: "This new programme will contribute significantly to peace building and reconciliation by involving up to 2,750 pupils each year that it runs.

"It demonstrates the commitment of the voluntary sector to building a stronger community relations understanding among our young people and enabling schools to make positive changes within their own communities."

The International Fund for Ireland has invested £1,134,049 towards the cost of the Programme.



Picture shows: L-R Carmel McCavana, NICE; Lisa Dietrich, CRIS; Geraldine Stinton, YMCA; Ciara McFarlane, Changemakers; and Anne Henderson, International Fund for Ireland with students from participating schools in the Changemakers Programme; Shannon Gray, Forthill Integrated College; Amy Kerr, Friends; Sarah Heath, Priory College; Gillian McPhilips, Malone College; and Thomas Graham, St Colm's.