



# Fund news

Autumn 2007

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

## US Congressional Group sees fruits of peace funding

Read the full story inside on page 2.



The US Congressional Group is pictured at the Spectrum Centre with Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Alexander Smith, Joint Director General of the International Fund for Ireland and Jackie Redpath, Chief Executive, Greater Shankill Partnerships.

investment in the Programme will be £698,000 / €1,019,080 and it is hoped this will result in up to 30 Shared Future Neighbourhoods being created over the next three years.

The Fund also launched a £550,000 / €803,000 Integrating Community Organisations programme that will offer community groups a chance to mix on both a cross community and a cross border basis, developing mutual respect and confidence and ultimately leading to greater integration between organisations of different backgrounds.

A further £1.6m / €2.34m was announced by the Fund for a range of initiatives through its Community Bridges Programme. This includes over £300,000 / €438,000 funding for Sesame Workshop which will produce up to twenty 15 minute episodes of a Northern Ireland version of Sesame Street, addressing issues of conflict, discrimination, prejudice and sectarianism supported by educational materials and a website.

Support was also extended for a pilot programme designed to maximise community use of rural halls in Northern Ireland on a cross community basis with funding of £249,744 / €364,626.

## £4m / €6m to promote integration and peace building



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At its last meeting in June, the Board of the Fund approved £4m / €6m of funding to support a number of projects to promote integration and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties. It brings the Fund's total commitments since it was established twenty one years ago to £580m / €855m.

Among the initiatives to benefit from the funding is a new Shared Future Neighbourhood Programme which will support the development of integrated housing in Northern Ireland. The Fund's

Speaking at the Board meeting, the Fund's Chairman Denis Rooney said: "This latest funding announcement is a clear demonstration of the Fund's commitment to supporting innovative, ground breaking projects. All of the initiatives we have agreed to support are clearly focused on building a sustainable and lasting peace in our society. We regard all of these projects as meaningful steps on the road to ensuring that this generation and the next can live, work and learn together."

Donors to the Fund are:



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# Foreword



When the International Fund was established in 1986, the goal was to make a real contribution to providing people living in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties with a peaceful, stable and prosperous way of life after years of political unrest, instability and violence.

Speaking to some of those who were involved in those early days, there was always hope that one day, such a way of life would become a reality. However, few would have predicted that events would have unfolded as they have, leading to the return of devolved government and a commitment by the political parties to work together to build a shared future for everyone.

As we celebrate our political progress, I am mindful that the work of the Fund is far from over. In fact, our work now becomes more important - we must do everything we can to make the most of our current situation, to promote long term, sustainable change in our communities. We may well have devolved government and have left behind the worst days of violence, but we still have a society which learns, lives and often works in a segregated manner. Sectarian attitudes will not disappear overnight but we do have an opportunity to educate and support a generation that will hopefully grow up in a society free from the scourge of sectarian violence.

The Fund is increasingly focusing on programmes and initiatives that will help to secure a shared future for everyone in Northern Ireland and the border counties. In this edition of Fund News, you will find information on our Community Bridges Programme and a major new housing initiative. At the time of going to print, we are also celebrating the first recipients of our exciting new Sharing Education Programme which brings together students in secondary education, across communities, to learn and grow together. In short, there is much that we must do to make sure we do not slip back into our own history.

We would be unable to do this without the continuing support of our donors and it has been encouraging for us to be able to host visits from so many international visitors in the last few months. We are entering a tremendously exciting period in our history and we thank you for continuing on the journey with us.

## US Congressional Group sees fruits of peace funding

The International Fund for Ireland co-ordinated a visit by a senior US Congressional Group to Ireland in April.

The delegation, led by Congressman Richie Neal, the current Chairman of the Friends of Ireland met with Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland and visited a number of IFI funded projects across the island of Ireland.

The week long visit was an opportunity for the 9 members of the US Congress, all of whom have been particularly supportive of the peace process and the work of the Fund to see first hand how the Fund is making a real difference to many communities across Ireland.

Speaking at the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Co. Wicklow, Fund Chairman, Denis Rooney welcomed the visiting delegation and paid tribute to the key role each of the Congressional Delegation has made in maintaining US support for the work of the International Fund for Ireland. Referring to the three "R's" in his speech to the delegates, Rooney said, "The support of the US is Required, Relevant and Recognised."

The group also visited the Spectrum Community Enterprise Centre on the

Shankill Road in Belfast which provides a focus for social and economic regeneration in the mid Shankill area and offers a wide range of services to the whole local community of 26,000 people.

Commenting on the visit to the Spectrum Centre, Congressman Richie Neal, said: "We are absolutely delighted to visit this centre on the Shankill Road and to see the efforts of so many people over the years towards building a lasting peace. The young people that we met from the Wider Horizons Programme have given great encouragement and a sense of optimism for a bright future for Ireland, North and South."

The delegation also met participants of the IFI funded Springboard Wider Horizons Programme.

The United States has contributed to the International Fund for Ireland since it was established in 1986. To date, the US has pledged over \$482million towards activities of the Fund promoting economic and social advance and encouraging contact, dialogue and reconciliation between unionists and nationalists throughout Ireland.

## European Commissioner sees Fund's work in Northern Ireland

During her recent visit to Belfast, Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner for Regional Policy met Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland and Mr Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body which manages the PEACE Programme.

Commissioner Hübner was in Belfast to begin work with a new task force at the European Commission to support

Northern Ireland's peace process. Commenting during her visit Ms Hübner said:

"Both the IFI and the PEACE Programme have helped to bring communities together across the island of Ireland. They have played a key role in providing economic opportunities to marginalised and divided communities, contributing to the process of economic development and regeneration in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties."



## Cross border Community Bridges Programme re-launched

The Community Bridges Programme, which was established in 1996 to build on the community relations, reconciliation and cross-border ethos of the Fund, is to receive a further £9m / €13m to encourage community relations, reconciliation and cross border activities over the next three years.

Speaking at the announcement of this new funding at the Ballymascanlon Hotel in Dundalk on May 5th, Fund Board member, Deirdre Ryan, said: "While much has been achieved in recent years by the Community Bridges Programme, divisions do remain within and between

our communities which must be addressed. The allocation of £9m / €13 million under the Community Bridges Programme is a very clear indication of the commitment of the IFI to achieving lasting and sustainable peace on this island."

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern, T.D., attended the event along with Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council which manages the Programme on behalf of the Fund.

Community organisations from across the island of Ireland attended the event.



## US Special Envoy meets young Fund beneficiaries

Dr. Paula J. Dobriansky, Under Secretary, Democracy and Global Affairs and Special Envoy to Northern Ireland recently visited two projects supported by the Fund and met some of the youngest beneficiaries of its work.

Fund Chairman, Denis Rooney and Dr. Dobriansky visited Young Enterprise to meet participants of the Fund supported KEY Programme. KEY (Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth) brings together 14-16 year olds from marginalised communities on both sides of the border to teach them enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.

Among the students that Dr. Dobriansky met were those selected on the basis of their exceptional entrepreneurial skills for a trip to the Canadian Junior

Achievement Conference to be held in Montreal in August.

Dr. Dobriansky and Mr Rooney also visited Youth Action's new multi-million pound premises in Belfast. The facility is part funded by the Fund and provides support services for thousands of disadvantaged and socially excluded young people in a cross-community venue.

Dr. Dobriansky said: "Since my appointment as Special Envoy to Northern Ireland I have heard a lot about the valuable role that the International Fund for Ireland has played in building peace and prosperity throughout the island. The United States has been contributing to the IFI since its inception in 1986 and it is encouraging to see some of their funded projects in action."

"The Knowledge Through Enterprise for Youth (KEY) scheme is an excellent example of how young people from diverse backgrounds can interact and learn from each other."

Speaking about Dr. Dobriansky's visit, Denis Rooney, said: "We were delighted to have this opportunity to show Dr. Dobriansky some of the valuable work of the Fund. The projects we visited are strong examples of how the Fund is working to create opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to come together, exchange views and learn from each other.

"We could not continue to fund projects such as Youth Action and KEY without the support of our international donors, particularly the US and Dr. Dobriansky's visit provided us with an excellent opportunity to express our appreciation of this support."



Pictured at the launch of the Fund's Community Bridges Programme from left: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern, T.D. with Deirdre Ryan, Fund Board member and Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive, Community Relations Council.



Pictured are (from left): Dean Pittman, United States Consul General, Dr. Dobriansky, Under Secretary, Democracy and Global Affairs and Special Envoy to Northern Ireland and Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland.

## IN BRIEF

### Fund supports pilot training programme for community policing

The Board of the Fund has approved financial support for a pilot training programme to develop the capacity of the District Policing Partnerships (DPP) in Northern Ireland to engage with the community.

With £267,000 / €390,000 from the Fund, the programme will be designed and implemented with the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The training is intended to develop the capacity of the DPPs to work with diverse communities in Northern Ireland and assist them in dealing with difficult issues such as sectarianism and racism. Its aim is to enable the DPPs and the community to work with the police to create stronger, safer communities.

Commenting on the Fund's decision to support the programme, Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland said: "The Fund is committed to supporting efforts to build strong and safe communities. The proposed pilot programme is an innovative approach designed to equip the members of the DPPs with the skills to work with the community in partnership with the police."

Welcoming the funding, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Professor Sir Desmond Rea, said: "I am delighted that the International Fund for Ireland has approved the Policing Board's application for funding, and I am confident that it will allow us to promote a greater partnership working between local people, DPPs and the PSNI, empowering people to help make their communities safer."

### International Fund Website

The Fund's newly revamped website is now live and can be viewed at [www.internationalfundforireland.com](http://www.internationalfundforireland.com). The new site reflects the Fund's new five year 'Sharing this Space' Strategy which emphasises its work in reconciliation and integration particularly. It provides information on how and where the Fund's money is allocated, including case studies of IFI funded projects and details of how the Fund can help in your area.

You can also subscribe via the website's publication section to receive Fund News electronically.

# Boost for Donegal's tourism industry

A new holiday hostel in Bundoran, Co. Donegal supported by the International Fund is promoting the well-being of socially disadvantaged people from all communities and on both sides of the border.

Ozanam House officially opened its doors in May to provide affordable accommodation to people who would not otherwise be able to consider a holiday. The Fund contributed £267,500, almost 20 per cent of the total project costs.

The regeneration of this formerly derelict site provides a boost to Bundoran's tourism industry, offering 32 bedrooms and 4 self-contained family apartments. The facility is a focal point for the area and provides neutral space in the form of meeting facilities and retail units in which people from all traditions can engage with one another in an open and friendly environment.

The centre is run by the Bundoran St. Vincent de Paul Conference who promote the facility through an extensive network of voluntary and charitable organisations, as well as to the general public.

Speaking at the opening, Fund Board member, Anne Bonner, said: "The Fund applauds the work of Ozanam House and their cross-border approach to tackling social exclusion. Their vision for the project is to be commended and will go a long way towards making a lasting difference to the people of Bundoran and to the lives of those who will travel here from all over Ireland seeking respite from the trials and tribulations of everyday life."

Mr. John Campbell, President of the Conference, said: "The project is of huge importance for people living on both sides of the border. The facility provides people from all strands of society with an opportunity to come together and enjoy a carefree break, an opportunity which otherwise they wouldn't have. The support received from the International Fund for Ireland was of major significance in bringing this project to fruition."



Pictured at the opening of the new holiday hostel in Bundoran are l-r: Paddy Harte of the International Fund for Ireland, Mary Coughlan T.D. Minister for Agriculture and Food, Fund Board member Ann Bonner and Brian O'Reilly National President of Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

## Leading motivational speaker hosts KEY ceremony

One of Europe's leading speakers on motivation, leadership and personal excellence recently joined the Fund's Chairman on stage at the KEY graduation ceremony in Belfast in May.

Kevin Kelly was the special guest as over 900 young people from across Northern Ireland and the southern border counties celebrated their achievements on the Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth (KEY) programme.

KEY, which is run jointly by Young Enterprise Northern Ireland and Junior Achievement Ireland, brings together young people from communities on both sides of the border to teach them enterprise and entrepreneurial skills as well as building their motivation and confidence and allowing them to gain

a greater understanding of their peers' background and culture.

Ten participants in this year's programme who displayed exceptional entrepreneurial skills were rewarded with a trip to Canada's Junior Achievement Conference held in Montreal in August.

Speaking at KEY's graduation ceremony, the Fund's Chairman Denis Rooney said: "KEY continues to be a phenomenal success. To date over 5000 participants have successfully gained a greater understanding and tolerance of the religious and cultural backgrounds of their peers and, putting these aside, have forged firm friendships and working partnerships in the spirit of enterprise."



## East Donegal celebrates new community centre

A new multi-purpose centre supported by the International Fund for Ireland is promoting economic and social regeneration in East Donegal.

The Castlefinn Partnership Initiative Ltd's centre, offers a multipurpose hall and conference rooms, child and healthcare facilities, a computer suite, a pharmacy and space for new local businesses.

The development is the work of umbrella organisation, Castlefinn Partnership Initiative (CPI) who represent various interest groups in the community.

Pasty Callaghan, CPI Chairman, said: "The official opening is a significant moment in the work of CPI and I look forward to welcoming all the communities

of Castlefinn and beyond to this new complex."

Emphasising the commitment of the local community, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mary Coughlan T.D. said: "This is a milestone day for Castlefinn. The extent of local cooperation in the cause of developing this superb facility is a credit to the community. In my view, the centre has already established itself as a focal point for the development of Castlefinn and the surrounding area over the years ahead."

Funding for the Resource Centre's development came from within the community and from a number of different state and voluntary organisations including; the Government's Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, administered

by the Office of the Minister for Children; National Lottery Funding administered by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism; Border Action; the International Fund for Ireland; North West Region Cross Border Group; Donegal County Council's Peace II Taskforce and Community Development Fund; Donegal Local Development Company; and LEADER.

Fund Board member, John McDaid, said: "The International Fund for Ireland has always been about helping people to help themselves. It is inspiring to see how Castlefinn Partnership Initiative has harnessed the spirit and energy of the local community and channeled it into providing a centre that will address a wide range of the community's needs. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to support them in this."

## Fund hosts delegation of senior MEPs in Dundalk

The Fund's Chairman, Denis Rooney, met a delegation of senior MEPs from the European Parliament's Committee on Budgets during their recent visit to Ireland.

Denis Rooney briefed the delegation on July 6th about the Fund's work in bringing together the nationalist and unionist communities in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties.

The visiting party also met members of the New Border Generation Group, a community organisation based in Carlingford, Co. Louth. The group initially concentrated on providing safe spaces

for dialogue and co-operation between nationalist and unionist communities in the interface areas of East Belfast but has since broadened its network into South and West Belfast, Craigavon, Portadown and South Down. The delegation met with representatives of groups from these areas who have benefited along with New Border Generation in recent years from IFI funding, contributed in large part by the EU.

Paying tribute to the generous contribution and continued support that has come from Europe, the Fund's Chairman Denis Rooney said: "I am delighted to have had

this opportunity to meet directly with the EU Parliament's Committee on Budgets and to present first hand the valuable work of the Fund and in particular, the activities currently carried out through the New Border Generation Group."

While Denis Rooney highlighted the achievements of the Fund, he also noted that "much remains to be done to deliver a sustainable peace." He commented that "the International Fund for Ireland's strategy is now committed to a stronger focus on reconciliation and integration across the community."



The Fund's Chairman, Denis Rooney and Joint Directors General, Maeve Collins and Alexander Smith, met the then Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Peter McKay, P.C., M.P. during his visit to Belfast on May 31st. (Mr. MacKay has since been appointed Minister of Defence). The meeting was held on Board HMCS St. John's which anchored in Pollock dock during the Minister's visit. Canada has been a strong supporter of the Fund since it was established. In May, the Fund was particularly pleased to host a number of visits by Canadian officials including a delegation from the Canadian Senate.