



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND



The Difference the Fund is Making

March 2019





Introduction

In its 33-year history, the International Fund for Ireland has overcome a number of obstacles aimed at destabilising communities participating in the peace process in Northern Ireland and border counties. However, the unprecedented challenges the organisation and society as a whole is facing today cannot be underestimated. There is a need for certainty, and decision making from across government and statutory agencies to ensure the progress that has been made does not unravel.

Looking back, Northern Ireland has faced many challenges, in recent years, flags, parades and the legacy of the past have been the subject of independently led negotiations.

Despite these challenges, the Fund has facilitated strong community relations with some of the most hard to reach disengaged communities, working with individuals and groups who are committed to reconciliation, building sustainable cross community relationships.

Challenges faced by the Fund today, however, have the real possibility of destabilising this progress. Two years without a government and with it any decision making structures along with the uncertainty over what the border will look like post Brexit has led many to feel uneasy and isolated.

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.

Many border counties have only recently initiated community reconciliation, after years of

engagement with the Fund on the benefits it could have for their community and the local people who live and work there. To see any kind of 'hard border' in place would surely put this progress back considerably. Without the free movement of people across the border, these communities will be at risk of continued isolation.

This uncertainty has already led to tensions within communities, particularly those along the border. Some individuals and groups, who are opposed to the political settlement, are using this uncertainty, as well as the insecurity of the wider political process in Northern Ireland to incite violence and recruit a new generation of young people into paramilitary activity. Their willingness to embrace sectarian violence is an urgent reminder of the pressing need to tackle the underlying causes of sectarianism.

Many border counties have suffered from high levels of economic and social deprivation with previously low levels of peace building. For those who have actively engaged and sought alternatives aimed at building sustainable peace and prosperity – the solid foundations need to be maintained.

Political uncertainty

Northern Ireland has been without a functioning government since January 2017.¹

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

Funding for many public services and projects interrupted or postponed.²

No decision making structures have been put in place

Plans being put on hold by partner organisations until 'certainty'

Loss of funding for many community groups has led to lack of capacity to continue work

Brexit

Uncertainty around the future of the Irish border

Subsequent impact this is likely to have on communities working and engaging in these border areas

Risk to existing cross border community relationships

The Border Region has experienced the most long-lasting economic and social consequences of the violent conflict³

The emotional and psychological (as well as social and political) significance of the border should not be underestimated⁴

Threat of a No Deal Brexit

Violence

IN 2017/2018

87



PEOPLE WERE
VICTIMS OF
PARAMILITARY
STYLE ATTACKS

1.3KG
of explosives found
during the past
12 MONTHS

90%

of the population of
Northern Ireland still
live in segregated
communities

THERE WERE

17

CASUALTIES FROM
PARAMILITARY
STYLE SHOOTINGS
DURING THE LAST
12 MONTHS

64

PARAMILITARY-
STYLE ATTACKS
IN 2018



286 PEOPLE WERE
MADE HOMELESS
BY PARAMILITARIES

300

PUNISHMENT
BEATINGS IN
THE LAST
FOUR YEARS

2

SECURITY RELATED
DEATHS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

Paramilitary gangs
carried out on average
more than one attack
a week in Northern
Ireland in 2018

In the last five years,

417*

people have been
shot or beaten by
so-called paramilitaries

93%

OF CHILDREN
STILL GO TO
SEGREGATED
SCHOOLS



The work of the Fund

The International Fund for Ireland has worked effectively within communities across Northern Ireland and in southern border areas to facilitate and encourage peace building and community cohesion. Since it was established in 1986 by the British and Irish governments, the Fund has provided significant and much needed support to communities affected by sectarian violence and by the legacy of the conflict.



Over the last thirty three years the Fund has seen some incredible stories through a range of projects, which have centred on some inspirational individuals who have worked tirelessly to make a better future for their communities.

During the past twelve months alone, the Fund has committed 11.4m/€12.8m to communities, progressing some of the most important reconciliation work. The Fund continues to play a valuable role in challenging all stakeholders responsible for reconciliation efforts across the Island of Ireland to meet their obligations.

Through the Funds' main programmes, Peace Impact Programme (PIP), Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) and Peace Walls Programme (PWP), continued work has been made addressing key concerns that face local communities and prevent them from thriving and developing.

Examples of some of this work includes

- 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
- Establishing first time engagement with previously disengaged communities and strengthening relationships between these communities
- Establishing new models for statutory authorities, community organisations and funder steering groups to effectively pool resources and develop effective strategies for unique community issues
- 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

- Development of new transformation projects in areas deeply impacted by the legacy of the conflict

Ongoing uncertainty around Brexit and the lack of a governing Executive in Northern Ireland are putting pressure on a range of service provisions, which in turn affects communities across Northern Ireland, particularly those most deprived and isolated in society.

A new sense of uncertainty is also being experienced within the southern border counties, unsure of how Brexit will affect its surrounding communities. There has already been evidence of those opposed to reconciliation using Brexit as an opportunity to encourage paramilitary recruitment at a time when projects are working hard to provide peaceful alternatives.

This current impasse highlights the continued need for the Fund, an independent internationally supported organisation. However, it equally highlights the importance of partnership working and support from statutory agencies and Government to ensure the good work that these communities have undertaken is not lost.

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.

ABOVE: Participants and guests attend a project celebration event to hear more about the success and transformation of young lives through the Fund's PYDP Programme.



COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATION

Peace Consolidation 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.

ABOVE: Local women embarked upon a 10-week programme with architects to design an innovative 3D model, which looks at how the area could be redeveloped to benefit the whole community.

Peace Walls Programme

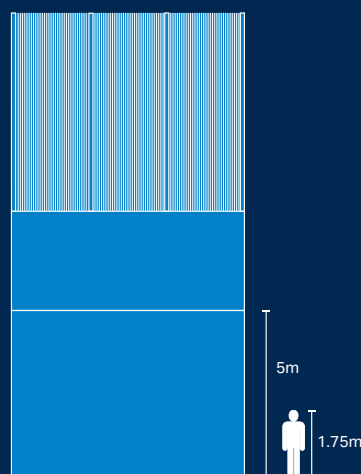
The Peace Walls Programme focuses on helping interface communities to bring about the conditions that can allow for the removal of Peace Walls through engagement and other initiatives. The Fund will continue to engage with these communities, facilitating conversations and developing

a confidence that will one day lead to communities no longer feeling they need a barrier to live their daily lives. To do this, the Fund will work with partners to show leadership – however for this to be truly achieved a government in Northern Ireland will be central.

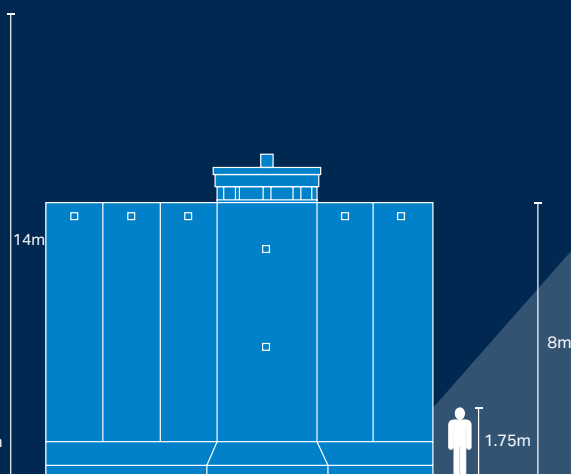
The Peace Walls Programme is breaking new ground in interface areas and assisting communities to imagine life without barriers.



BERLIN WALL



CUPAR WAY, BELFAST



PALESTINE WALL

28
YEARS

50
YEARS

19
YEARS

BETWEEN JULY 2017 AND JUNE 2018

1670

People involved in site specific consultations

1148

Engaged in 89 INTRA community events

2749

Engaged in 107 INTER community events

11

Site specific agreements completed



1644

local people have engaged in Peace Walls discussions

14

AGREEMENTS REACHED

31

ongoing community negotiations with 943 PEOPLE

6

PROJECTS

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



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**.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

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

Peace Impact Programme

The Peace Impact Programme (PIP) works with communities to build sustainable peace and prosperity in areas suffering from high levels of economic and social deprivation, where there are low levels of engagement in peace building and where the Peace Process has delivered limited benefits.

The Fund has worked hard to develop relationships with hard to reach communities, as an independent mediator, the Fund can engage directly with those who can influence real change within their communities. Maintaining and building on these relationships to ensure more communities turn to

peace building and reconciliation and avoid the potential recruitment by those opposed by the peace process will be a major challenge for the Fund and partners. Building on the progress made to date will be vital in ensuring real sustainable change.

Cross community, relations (particularly cross border community relations) will continue to be vital in progressing the potential of these communities, allowing them to grow and develop in their own right. Access and ease of movement will be imperative for this to happen.

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:



48,544

PEOPLE PARTICIPATING

45

PROJECTS IN TOTAL

31

PROJECTS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

14

PROJECTS BASED IN
SOUTHERN BORDER
COUNTIES

BETWEEN JULY 2017 AND JUNE 2018

61%

experienced positive
attitudinal change

17%

of total participants
are new

1489

in training

62.5%

reported an increase
in confidence

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

Personal Youth Development Programme

The Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) focuses on the needs of young people who are at risk of isolation, polarisation and/or recruitment to organisations opposed to the Peace Process. It enables each participant to take control of their own personal development through a multi-tiered approach that offers significant individualised support with community, social and economic elements.

A major challenge will be to ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for our young people to grow and prosper in all communities. Employment, training, skills development will play a part in improving the lives of our young people. Certainty around what impact Brexit will have on employment opportunities for those border counties is vital in planning for real sustainable solutions.

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.



BETWEEN JUNE 2017 AND JUNE 2018:



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:



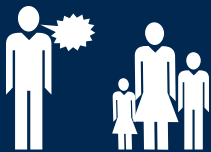
Left education with no or low qualifications or who left the education system early



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



Overview

Despite the progress that has been made in recent years, the current political impasse and tensions that remain between communities in Northern Ireland and border counties 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 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. In 2018, the Fund has been successful in encouraging further engagement from the most disenfranchised communities who have to this point, experienced a sense of ‘being left behind’.

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 current context has only served to strengthen the Fund’s resolve to support communities to remain engaged in peace building activities and resist polarisation. In recent months, our approach has enabled communities to move forward and secure significant progress on a number of complex issues. This progress must not stall

particularly at such a critical stage for so many of our communities; they need our support and guidance now more than ever.

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.

ABOVE:
Participants share their experiences with Mid-Ulster based PYDP project Glasgowbury, the I AM (Inclusive Accessible Multimedia). It empowers individuals to take better control of their lives by exploring cultural identity, personal development and employment opportunities.



1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-northern-ireland-politics-38635708>
2. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/stormont-standoff-wm7xgsxss>
3. https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/137861639/Bordering_On_Brexit_full_report_Nov17.pdf
4. The emotional and psychological (as well as social and political) significance of the border should not be underestimated
5. Ending the Harm Campaign
6. Ending the Harm Campaign
7. <https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/security-situation-statistics/2018/annual-security-situation-statistics-report-2017-18.pdf>





“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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