

Fund



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

FOCUS

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Chairman's Introduction

Building positive relationships at a community level is a core part of the IFI's peace and reconciliation work. That being said, some communities continue to feel left behind and detached as they have received few benefits from the Peace Process.



Whilst a lot has been achieved since the Good Friday Agreement, we must acknowledge that the journey to lasting peace requires ongoing investment, patience, and time.

Existing tensions can often create deep divisions in society. Challenges remain around threatened identity, flags, bonfires, and sectarian behaviour as well as ongoing political instability, the fallout from Brexit and the contentious NI Protocol. As we approach the winter months the new cost-of-living crisis will undoubtedly impact marginalised communities who need our support the most.

For over 35 years the IFI has been providing the necessary interventions through our programmes to ensure that communities can thrive and encourage positive relationships and leadership. We want to ensure that grass roots voices are heard and that's why we believe that peace and reconciliation efforts must work to transform local leadership to build a better society.

This edition of Fund Focus takes a closer look at the theme of leadership across the island of Ireland and beyond.

Our guest contributors Brandon Hamber and Eliz McArdle from Ulster University discuss the successful Youth, Peace, and

Security Leadership Series. We have collaborated with Ulster University, the John and Pat Hume Foundation and Interpeace to run events that raise the visibility of the role that young people can play in peace building and how their unique influence can build capacity and leadership at a local level.

We've involved young people from our IFI projects to share their own experiences on a global peace building platform. They have engaged with a range of influencers and peace activists from Northern Ireland, Somalia, Libya, former Yugoslavia, and Sri Lanka. This powerful partnership continues to provide meaningful engagement and the development opportunities for future leaders.

Our annual AMBIT outreach programme in the United States brings together individuals to share experiences and deepen understanding of issues that affect communities. Beth Carragher from Louth shares her own AMBIT journey. Many participants involved with AMBIT work with young people at risk and in communities that live with the legacy of The Troubles. This successful initiative has been running for over 20 years and I look forward to seeing it evolve and build new relationships for many years to come.

We also catch up with Brian Caskey from Duncairn Community Partnership and Limestone United Partnership.

He explains how using sport as an engagement tool across interface communities is uniting and empowering young people in North Belfast. Giving these young people the means to move forward allows them to play a positive role in the community and peace building across the city.

Thanks also to our international donors - the British and Irish Governments and the Government of the United States of America and our international observers, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Their continued support enables us to tackle the most difficult issues to help create sustainable peace and a truly reconciled and shared society.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, who was a steadfast supporter of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. We remain grateful for the significant contribution she made to reconciliation efforts on these islands. Her passing brought many people from diverse backgrounds together in grief and respect.

This is a timely reminder that we have much more that unites than divides us. I hope that recent events can be used as a platform to build reconciliation efforts further in Northern Ireland and beyond.

Paddy Harte, Chairman

Funding update

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) has committed a further **£917,765 / €1,055,430** to peace and reconciliation efforts across NI and the southern border counties.

The latest funding package will be shared across two key programmes. Six projects under the new Communities in Partnership Programme (CiPP) will receive **£570,341 / €655,892** and two projects with the Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) will be given **£347,424 / €399,538**.

IFI Chairperson Paddy Harte said; *“The border on the island of Ireland stretches for more than 300 miles and it remains a psychological and physical barrier for many communities. These communities suffered tremendously during The*

Troubles, even today many towns remain deprived with residents leaving to find opportunities elsewhere.

“The IFI has been a strong advocate of building border connections and development since its inception. From the restoration of the Shannon Erne Waterway in 1991 right through to the present day, we support many projects operating in the border region.

“At the moment, we know communities are feeling isolated and facing many challenges at a political, social and economic level. The IFI has a unique role to play now to bridge the divides and encourage outreach within border communities especially. Through our experience, we know that with the right support on the ground, we can ensure the connections painstakingly built up across borders and across communities are protected and nurtured.

“Projects receiving this funding are instrumental in developing positive, local leadership. Our support gives

communities and individuals the tools and skills they need to prosper and grow to create a more inclusive, shared society for all.”

Communities in Partnership Programme (CiPP)

£570,341 €655,892

Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP)

£347,424 €399,538

TOTAL FUNDING

**£917,765
€1,055,430**



A IFI Board Members pictured L to R back row; Avila Kilmurray; Peter Osborne; IFI Chairman Paddy Harte; Ross Mealiff; Anne Carr; L to R front row; Bernie Butler and Sadie Ward-McDermott.

Youth, Peace and Security: Fostering local and global exchange

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 a landmark resolution recognising young people's positive role in conflict and post-conflict settings. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres commissioned a global study on youth and peacebuilding entitled "*The Missing Peace*" authored by Graeme Simpson which was presented to the Security Council and then the UN General Assembly in 2018¹. The report calls for a move away from a deficit model that sees young people as a threat to security. A key message is the importance of recognising and supporting young people as positive contributors to peace. Building on this report, the UN has continued to promote a Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda.

By:
**Brandon
Hamber
&
Eliz
McArdle**

As a contribution to the YPS agenda, the Ulster University authors of this article initiated the Youth, Peace and Security Leadership Series with partners The John and Pat Hume Foundation, the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), and the global peacebuilding organisation Interpeace. The main aim behind the series is to connect Northern Ireland youth work with the global YPS agenda. The specific objectives are to raise the visibility of the role that young people can and do play in peace building and to build local capacities in terms of YPS and leadership.

Launched in March 2021, four public seminars have taken place so far, with 620 attendees across the events. The series has featured young leaders as speakers from Northern Ireland, Libya, Somalia, former Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka². Graeme Simpson, author of the "*The Missing Peace*" Report, played a crucial role in identifying the international youth leaders who emerged during the report's development.

Although the seminar turnout has been heartening, awareness-raising alone is limited as it requires those in positions of power to listen and take young people's work seriously. For this reason, the seminar series has also utilised a capacity-building



component using closed facilitated dialogue between youth workers and local and global peer leaders. The seminar series has effectively coupled the public online seminars with private dialogue sessions.

However, meaningful engagement with and between young people requires time and investment. Before the private dialogues, we worked with individual young leaders to help them plan and prepare to meet other local and global young leaders,

¹ "*The Missing Peace: Independent progress study on youth, peace and security*" available at <https://tinyurl.com/missingpeacereport>

² The Youth, Peace and Security Seminars can be viewed on YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/ypschannel>

The John & Pat Hume Foundation

HUME

FIRE IN THE BELLY

Lessons from young women peacebuilders from Somalia, Libya and Northern Ireland

Hajer Sharief, Libya (*Top Left*), Ilwad Elman, Somalia (*Bottom Left*), Emma Johnston, Northern Ireland (*Top Right*) with Monica Mc Williams, Chair (*Bottom Right*)

1 October 2021, 3:30pm – 5pm, UK time, Online

Youth, Peace and Security Leadership Series

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

Interpeace INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PEACEBUILDING

INCORE International Conflict Research Institute

focusing on the specific seminar themes (e.g. women and peace building, methods of youth work). Once ready for the private session, a closed meeting between young people from Northern Ireland and border counties and the global peacebuilders took place.

IFI helped select young people for these private sessions through their various projects. Young people joined from IFI-funded groups, including Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (CCRF), Limestone United, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and Focus Family Resource Centre.

While there was some initial anxiety about being in the spotlight with adult spectators watching, a curated, private and facilitated approach helped to mitigate any concerns and gave space for the participants to voice their opinions. This approach resulted in a rich discussion and helped identify issues that could be taken to the public seminars.

One of the most notable of these private sessions was with the UN Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake,³ who met with 23 young people online for a private session before the public seminar. Prior to meeting the UN Envoy, young people in Northern Ireland and border counties explored the theme of the role of youth in peacebuilding.⁴

In the private session, participants shared perspectives on the leadership acts and actions they undertake and their visions for peace. The UN Envoy helped link their work and the global YPS agenda. The meeting was valuable in discussing strategies for addressing YPS issues and local youth workers and participants said that they felt affirmed by being listened to by the UN Secretary General’s Youth Envoy. The participants then took this learning into the public seminar that followed.

Overall, a considered dialogue ensued in all the private sessions and public events. Global and local considerations were interwoven with a respectful listening and sharing tone. The presence of outsiders with different perspectives was valuable. There is little doubt that the eminence of the global young peacebuilders was important for the local young people. Activism was stimulated by interacting with international YPS advocates.

This type of international sharing was the hallmark of many earlier programmes during the peace process in Northern Ireland and Ireland but has decreased in the last few years. The experience of the YPS Seminar Series suggests it is vital to support this type of work. Northern Ireland and Ireland has much to share and gain from being more centrally keyed into global processes such as the YPS agenda.

Professor Brandon Hamber is John Hume and Thomas P. O’Neill Chair in Peace based at the International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) and the Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University.

Eliz McArdle is a Lecturer in Community Youth Work at Ulster University and Course Director for the Certificate in Youth Studies with franchised partner, YouthAction Northern Ireland. She is member of the Centre for Youth Research and Dialogue at Ulster University.

³ Find out more about the Envoy on Youth visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/about/>

⁴ This was collected on Padlet, view at https://padlet.com/UU_CYRD/young_people_peace_security_leadership

CASE STUDY

AMBIT

AMBIT (American Management and Business Internship Training) is an annual outreach and capacity building programme in the United States with the IFI. It has been a successful initiative for 20 years and is facilitated by the US consulate in Belfast and coordinated by the Washington Ireland Program (WIP).

Individuals across a range of sectors and from Northern Ireland and the southern border counties come together to take part. Many of those involved with AMBIT work with young people at risk and in communities that live with the legacy of The Troubles.

Each year the Programme explores a series of themes and participants have the chance to see how these challenges affect communities in some of the most deprived inner city areas in the US. This year guests visited El Paso and Washington DC where collaboration was encouraged alongside shared experiences to deepen understanding around issues that regularly affect communities.

Beth Carragher is a Senior Youth Worker with the Mid Louth Youth service and was one of 16 people who took part in this year's AMBIT Programme. She was keen to use this as an opportunity to examine how similar issues can impact people and communities across the world.

"In my job, I work with young people who are not in education, employment or training and I see at first-hand the range of issues affecting them on a daily basis. I meet each young person and provide a support structure that helps them work on their personal development skills, qualities, aspirations and goals. This often includes mental health support, family support, education guidance, skills building or accessing additional services and support where needed.

"Through the support of the IFI's Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP), we are able to engage young people in services and programmes at a crucial time in their lives. Without the IFI's support this simply would not be possible.

"My experience of working in towns and villages along the border has taught me that many young people are experiencing intergenerational trauma as they live with the legacy of The Troubles. Understanding the impact of trauma is crucial so young people here continue to receive tailored support and development opportunities.

"The themes for the AMBIT Programme really appealed to me this year. I thought that it would be an important addition to my own career development, giving me more experience to share with the young people that I work with. Examining areas such as trauma, democratic renewal and living in areas with shared identities are all familiar topics to me. I really wanted to explore how these issues affect others and are interchangeable across the world."

AMBIT offers insight around how other organisations deal with everyday challenges on the ground. This year, participants received practical advice from professionals on effectively dealing with trauma. Beth believes that AMBIT has been instrumental in her own personal development journey.

She adds; *"Youth work is ever changing and it is critical to my personal development to learn and evolve. AMBIT offered the right set of circumstances that enabled me to reflect on models of best practice. Meeting various organisations in El*

Paso and then key stakeholders in Washington DC is something that would never have been possible without AMBIT or the IFI. This engagement empowered me to provide a well-rounded approach to youth work when I returned home.

"AMBIT has been my career highlight to date. It allowed me to explore my abilities, knowledge and successes. It also importantly gave me a platform to advocate for the essential work of the IFI and how AMBIT creates shared experiences that can be transferred into our own roles."

Since returning to Ireland after her AMBIT experience, Beth has taken time to reflect and believes a newfound confidence allows her to speak openly about the need for youth work in border areas to continue.

"Youth work is not the same in any two organisations nor any two people or any two experiences. I am now more aware of different tools to approach areas such as trauma and democratic renewal. My voice has the potential to have a positive impact on the young people I work with. One act of kindness and support can have a life altering moment for someone.

"Positive leadership is really important to me. I want to leave an impression on young people in Louth to follow similar paths so they too, can become leaders of tomorrow."



A AMBIT Participant, Beth Carragher

CASE STUDY

Duncairn Community Partnership and Limestone United

Duncairn and Limestone United PYDP Community Partnership in North Belfast is working to empower young people to deliver good relations within their local community.

Funded through the IFI's Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP), Duncairn Community Partnership (DCP) leads the project with Limestone United as an outreach partner. It was initially formed to respond to community issues and high levels of youth violence at interfaces. It currently works with communities in Duncairn Gardens and Limestone Road, two areas of the city which have witnessed the worst of The Troubles over the years.

The PYDP targets marginalised young people who typically come from complex backgrounds facing challenges including low educational attainment, poor mental health, family issues, criminality and more. The Programme is unique in its approach with specific plans tailored to the needs of the individual that help to increase their skillset, boost confidence and ultimately make them more employable.

The challenges around interface violence negatively impact communities and young lives. The Project team uses sport across the interface as a way to unite young people to break this cycle of violence, bring about positive change in their lives and give back to their communities.

Brian Caskey, one of the youth workers says; *"We are so privileged to be supported by the IFI's PYDP. It's giving participants the chance to evolve into young leaders and help the next generation make good life decisions, get involved in the project and move away from anti-social behaviour near interfaces."*

"We use sport as a method to engage the young people initially but this is combined with other elements such as personal development, training and practical life skills to help them gain employment and ultimately give them the confidence to play an important role within their community."

The Project is making great progress in North Belfast and has established a number of partnerships with other youth clubs, local primary schools and statutory agencies. Much of the work on the ground links to community safety as the project is working hard to tackle violent and anti-social behaviour in the area.



A Limestone United players involved with the project.

"We pride ourselves on engaging with a range of partners to tackle issues within the community to offer positive alternatives. Some local primary schools have designed a cross-community school badge which we wear proudly on our tops."

"Residents are seeing positive outcomes and parents of our young people see them driving positive interventions and activities in the area. They in turn are endorsing the community relations work as they can really see the impact the project is having on young lives."

Those involved have become community champions for their local area encouraging a number of positive activities. These include environmental improvements, creation of a shared football pitch and youth room in the heart of the local community, creating new friendships and engaging with other young people who are involved in anti-social behaviour.

Brian continues; *"Leadership is being developed everyday by conversations. We are so proud of the journey that some of our champions have made from involvement in interface violence to peace building and supporting the next generation. One of the lads involved is receiving an award from Nationwide Building Society for his work in using football to deliver positive change in his community."*

"Through the PYDP, we have also witnessed progression with one participant who was previously very demotivated and disengaged. Five months on, he now leads a media project for us, volunteers at his local youth club and engages regularly through community events. He has made fantastic progress and is demonstrating positive leadership to his peers."

Looking ahead, Brian hopes to continue to bring people together to benefit the local community.

"When we see individual, positive changes in people and a reduction in violence, this is what makes us so motivated to continue the work. It's our ambition to see our young people move forward and have a bright and successful future. We want them engaged in decision making and play an active role in community development and peace building in the city."

YOLO Celebration Event - Personal Youth Development Programme:

YOLO (Youth Outreach Learning Opportunities) is part of Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (CCRF). It has been funded through the IFI's PYDP Programme since 2017. To date 151 accreditations have been achieved, 18 participants have secured employment, 16 have progressed to education/training and two started apprenticeships.

A recent celebration event was held at Girdwood Hub in North Belfast for participants who were involved in leading a project to create a new pop up café on site. Young people from both sides of the community saw a real opportunity to offer a new experience and social enterprise for visitors. Training included researching and developing a business plan, alongside more practical learning such as how to cook and how to become a Barista. They have also worked alongside industry experts as part of their training and development and the event will showcased their new skills and hard work.

Pictured are: Yolo Participants with IFI Board Member, Peter Osborne (top right).



CHANCE Launch Event - Personal Youth Development Programme:

The C.H.A.N.C.E project is a targeted youth development programme that will provide personal one-to-one support for young people from Inishowen who are not currently in employment, education or training and want to explore the different options that might be open to them in life.

It is funded through the IFI's PYDP and stands for 'Creating Hope and Aspirations, Nurturing Change and Empowerment. It includes a wide range of personal advice, mentoring, training, work-experience, team building, personal development activities and other supports that are designed to meet each person's individual needs. The launch event, which was held at Tullyarvan Mill also hosted international delegates from the IFI. Guests were introduced to the project, its development work and its impact on young people from the Inishowen area.

Pictured at Tullyarvan Mill are: IFI Chairman, Paddy Harte and International USA Observers Stella O'Leary and Tom Foley.



TASCIT, Challenging Conversations event – Peace Barriers Programme:



TASCIT (Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities in Transition) is a partnership consisting of a number of community groups based in North Belfast. It aims to develop cross-community relations through increased dialogue and engagement, with a particular focus on peace walls / barriers.

They recently held an event for participants involved in the 'Challenging Conversations' initiative at Belfast City Hall. 'Challenging Conversations' is a cross-community course that has been delivered by TASCIT since 2018. To date, the course has been delivered to almost 200 local residents from across upper North Belfast. It raises awareness and understanding of identity, politics, and cultural heritage. Participants explore a range of issues and develop a knowledge and understanding of each community through educational and historical trips, including visiting the City and Shankill cemeteries to explore the diverse history of Belfast

Pictured at the event L to R: IFI representative John Carson, Belfast Lord Mayor Christina Black and TASCIT Co-Ordinator Sean Oliver.

The Fund delivers peace and reconciliation work across Northern Ireland and the six southern border counties as illustrated in the map.



The International Fund for Ireland is an independent international organisation established by the British and Irish Governments in 1986 with the objectives of promoting economic and social advance and of encouraging 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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