

# EFFECTIVE PEACE BUILDING

The International Fund for Ireland Experience



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

# ABOUT THE FUND

The International Fund for Ireland was established as an independent international organisation in 1986 by the British and Irish Governments. Financial support for the Fund has been provided by the United States of America, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.



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1 In 2008, the International Fund for Ireland hosted a conference designed to share innovations and best practice in youth reconciliation. The event brought together 25 community groups from across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to share experiences, learn from each other and celebrate achievements.

Pictured at the event were: Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland (centre) with Joe Hinds, Community Relations Council, Ivan Cross, Tara McHugh - Logan and Robert Deignan of Corrymeela Community.

The objectives of the Fund are to promote social and economic advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland.

The Board of the International Fund for Ireland is appointed jointly by the Irish and British Governments. The administration of the Fund is provided by a Secretariat, headed by Joint Directors General, based in Belfast and Dublin.

The Fund's programmes are characterised by:

- a clear focus on reconciliation as the over riding objective
- an independent and credible approach with strong international backing

- a cross-community, cross-border approach
- a willingness to take risks on behalf of the communities we work with
- early support for community initiatives through 'first money on the table'
- co-operation with other funders and leveraging of funds from other sources
- a willingness to innovate and to break new ground in support of reconciliation
- and a responsive approach to donor priorities



# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

**For almost thirty years, Northern Ireland was synonymous internationally with violence, political instability and economic stagnation with a significant spill-over effect in the border counties of the Republic.**

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1 Fund Chairman Denis Rooney.

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2 The International Fund has been working with Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle, Co. Down since 1988 to support its community relations work and the development of its residential facilities.

Pictured are young people enjoying the Summer Adventure Camp at Greenhill YMCA.



This conflict, or 'The Troubles' as it is often referred to, had an impact on every part of society. The Troubles were marked by issues such as segregation, intimidation, social deprivation, and failure to attract economic development. Communities became isolated and that isolation formed a barrier to civic and political progress.

Since 1986, the International Fund for Ireland has worked to promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland. For more than twenty years, the Fund has been responsible for many groundbreaking, innovative and often risk-taking projects in the pursuit of its objectives.

During the last twenty years, huge progress has been made through the peace process in Northern Ireland and there now is a cautious optimism about the future. The Fund has kept pace with the changing times and is once again moving into new areas. While Northern Ireland and the border counties have seen considerable economic growth, the unpalatable fact that we still live, work and learn

in a largely segregated society remains unresolved. Northern Ireland is still divided by our so-called 'peace lines' and sectarian prejudices are still evident across our society. As we move forward, the Fund's work in promoting integration and challenging these attitudes is once again at the forefront of community relations and peace building.

Sadly, Northern Ireland and the border counties have not been alone in dealing with life in the midst of conflict and unrest. Other regions of the world are also dealing with conflict. Given its history over the last twenty years, the Fund is committed to sharing its experiences as a model for intervention with other organisations and regions seeking to move beyond conflict to creating more stable civic societies.

It is our hope that this document "Effective Peace Building" will provide some insight into the Fund's history, achievements and work, with a view to encouraging others to continue to strive to build sustainable peace for this and future generations.

A handwritten signature of Denis Rooney in black ink.

# THE FUND'S EARLY WORK

**In its early years, the International Fund for Ireland concentrated on achieving its objectives of economic regeneration and reconciliation mainly through economic projects.**

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1 The International Fund for Ireland began working with the Seacourt Community Council in Larne, Co. Antrim in 2002, facilitating a long term programme of change in the area. Previously a troubled, divided and unsettled area, the Seacourt area now has a flourishing youth club, community centre and a range of partnerships with statutory agencies. Further funding for the area has also been leveraged as a result of the Fund's involvement

Pictured is four year old Kaci Shaw at the Summer Scheme/Seacourt Youth Club fun evening.



**Building economic stability in disadvantaged areas struggling to attract investment and employment was a key priority for the Fund. Activities in support of this objective served as a means of promoting greater civic stability, building community confidence and providing opportunities for people to work together for a peaceful and prosperous future.**

Economically focused activity during these years included encouraging community groups to work together to develop properties into thriving centres which combined work space units and retail outlets with much needed neutral community facilities. As well as building community confidence and bringing people together, such projects helped to bring life back to many towns and villages seriously affected by violence and instability.

Given that much of this work was new to the community, the Fund invested considerable time and resources in its earliest days to working in partnership with local communities. Many needed support and encouragement to come together, plan and develop ideas. The Fund supported this process, taking a partnership approach to developing new projects and ideas. The Fund was frequently the first to support such projects, enabling communities to access more funding and build new relationships with partners in the statutory and not-for-profit sectors.

In its first years of operation the Fund put in place initiatives which would enable economic

development to advance. These included the following:

- Local micro finance programmes to encourage entrepreneurship;
- A small business task force to review local industry sectors and identify opportunities for development;
- Support for the development of workspace to encourage business start up;
- Development of major infrastructure for tourism;
- Establishing cross-border partnerships and links to support economic activity;
- Using development in urban areas as a means of stimulating community confidence;;
- Identifying common concerns in the Agricultural and Fisheries sectors and establishing appropriate support programmes to respond to these issues;;
- Supporting innovation and research and development in the Science and Technology sectors.

Throughout all of this work, the Fund sought to foster cross-community and cross-border relationships, exposing individuals and communities to new opportunities to learn and work together.

As well as economic programmes, the Fund was one of the first major supporters of cross community and cross border contact programmes for young people. Its Wider Horizon Programme provides opportunities for young people

# MOVING FORWARD

**In 2006, the International Fund for Ireland launched its 'Sharing this Space' strategy following an independent review of its progress and achievements.**

to come together on a cross border and cross community basis to improve their skills, build their confidence and increase their long term employment opportunities. Similar schools-based projects such as Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth (KEY) and Learning and Educating Together (LET) bring teenagers together to learn about common themes such as enterprise while providing them with opportunities to meet peers from a wide variety of backgrounds.

One of the many challenges facing the Fund in its early days was the issue of poor community capacity. Years of sectarian violence and isolation meant that many communities needed to grow in confidence and ability to deal with problems within their own areas, before they could begin to consider cross community or cross border relationships. In many areas, there was a lack of leadership. Many of the projects supported and funded, particularly in the Fund's early years, required very sensitive handling and support. Many of the now longest established community groups were formed by individuals taking very courageous steps in order to bring about change in their community.

The Fund invested substantial resources in programmes such as the Community Leadership Programme, the Communities in Transition Programme and the Community Bridges Programme to build capacity and confidence so that progress could be made. Funding was also made available to resource communities to tackle issues in their own areas, develop community groups and to take the first steps towards cross-community and cross-border relationships.



In recognition of the changing context in which the Fund is operating, the strategy places a very strong focus on promoting integration, reconciliation and a genuinely 'shared future' for Northern Ireland and the border counties.

While the promotion of economic regeneration still remains part of the Fund's work, there is now an even greater focus on tackling issues such as sectarianism and segregation, and this has once again positioned the Fund at the forefront of major new initiatives.

The Fund is already leading in new approaches that promote integration through new programmes focusing on education, housing and community groups.

In addition, there is a greater emphasis on sustainability in the Fund's work. The Fund has invested considerable resources in major projects that will have a long term impact on peace building and integration. The lessons learned over the last two decades can be shared by the Fund with other regions emerging from conflict.



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1 Developed and supported by the International Fund for Ireland, in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Sharing Education Programme offers students from across the community in Northern Ireland the chance to share enhanced educational and development opportunities and develop positive relationships with those from different backgrounds and cultures.

Pictured at the Sharing Education Programme launch are (from left) Denis Rooney, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland; Professor Tony Gallagher, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast; Padraic Quirk, The Atlantic Philanthropies and a pupil from Limavady High School, one of the participating schools.

2 Integrating Community Organisations is a new support programme which aims to help community organisations throughout Northern Ireland and the border counties to co-operate on a cross border and/or cross community basis to work for the benefit of their community. Pictured at the launch are Denis Rooney, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland and Caroline Breakey, Chairman, Rural Development Council which will deliver the Programme for the Fund.

# THE FUND'S ACHIEVEMENTS



## SINCE 1986 THE FUND HAS:

- committed over £600m/€870m to specific projects
- completed over 5,700 projects
- created more than 55,000 jobs
- engaged more than 15,000 young people on training programmes
- helped leverage additional funding on a ratio of 1:2.2 which has resulted in total investment of around £1.5b/€2b

Throughout the Fund's existence external reviews and evaluations have been carried out, with the latest by Deloitte MCS Ltd in April 2005, providing the following independent comments:

"IFI has a unique standing within all communities in Northern Ireland and the South, notably within areas regarded as most difficult to reach and it has been able to transcend 'political' disputes and tensions. IFI has a connectedness to communities and structures which other funders do not and is regarded as distinctive, innovative and risk taking. The flexibility of the Fund's operating approach was universally acknowledged and positively endorsed by stakeholders, other funders and communities, especially in relation to being 'first money on the table'."

"IFI has developed and supported a number of innovative community development models which have addressed a range of politically sensitive issues. These community initiatives have also evidenced reconciliation benefits between nationalists and unionists."

"There is also evidence that aside from leveraging funding, IFI involvement has raised the profile of areas and fostered multi-agency approaches to addressing needs."

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1 The International Fund for Ireland was the main funder of the Community Network Services (CNS) Project - an innovative and ambitious initiative to bring wireless broadband internet access to the North-West border region through cross-border partnership.

Pictured at the launch are from left: Paddy Harte, International Fund for Ireland, Denis Rooney, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland and Colm McColgan, ERNACT at the launch of the community broadband scheme in Castlefin, Co. Donegal.

2 The International Fund's Community Bridges Programme has been running since 1996. It aims to help communities in Northern Ireland and the border counties to use innovative and ground breaking community projects to address issues of difference and division. Pictured at the launch of a further £9m/€13 million investment are Liam McCusker, Roisin Brennan, Neil McMaster and Rebecca Bell from the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust.



# REACHING OUT

**The International Fund for Ireland has already shared its experiences and expertise with delegations from other conflict areas including Sri Lanka, Croatia, Iraq and Timor Leste.**

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1 Denis Rooney, International Fund for Ireland Chairman is pictured with Nawaz Rajabdeen, (right) President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka, who led a delegation of members of Sri Lanka's Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry. The delegation's trip to Ireland included visits to Fund supported projects.

Rice, Congressman Crowley said "I have strongly supported US investment in the IFI, whose efforts have been tremendously successful facilitating relationships between the two communities in conflict in Northern Ireland, putting their economies back on track."

During the Chairman's visit to Washington in March 2008 he met with Congressman Crowley and discussed the call for assistance by the US for efforts in the Middle East. The International Fund offered its support for this initiative in terms of sharing the Fund model with other interested groups.

Pictured in Washington are from left: Eamon Hickey, Joint Director General, International Fund; Congressman Joseph Crowley; Denis Rooney, Chairman, International Fund and Sandy Smith, Joint Director General, International Fund.

The International Fund's Secretariat participated in a visit by the Irish Government's Special Envoy, Dame Nuala O'Loan, to Timor Leste (East Timor), in May 2008. The Secretariat briefed members of Government, including Vice Prime Minister José Luis Guterres, the staff of the UN mission and NGOs, on the Fund's experience as a vehicle for economic progress and reconciliation.

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2 Mr Sjtepan Mesic, President of the Republic of Croatia, is pictured with young people from Youth Action. The President led a group of business people from Croatia in a visit which focused on peace, reconciliation, regeneration and economic development in Northern Ireland. The group's tour included a visit to YouthAction, an organisation which the Fund has supported for a number of years and which aims to enable disadvantaged young people to achieve their full potential and be active and equal citizens whose voices are heard, respected and valued. The group also heard from participants in the Fund's Community Leadership Programme.

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3 US Congressman Joseph Crowley cited the International Fund for Ireland's successful promotion of reconciliation as a model for a proposed International Fund for the Middle East. Writing to US Secretary of State Condoleezza

# USING FUNDING EFFECTIVELY FOR PEACEBUILDING

## Lessons learned from the International Fund for Ireland experience.

The International Fund for Ireland has, since 1986, engaged in activities in support of peace and reconciliation in Ireland. The following paragraphs describe the significant features of the Fund's operation for the purpose of enabling the International Fund model to be shared with other regions of the world that are experiencing or emerging from conflict. It is not suggested that the International Fund is the sole model for success but rather that it has some unique elements that could be applied successfully in other regions.

This document is intended to signal the Fund's willingness to share its experience with places where the International Fund model could be helpful. The document should be of interest to countries that provide financial intervention in other regions experiencing or emerging from conflict.

The International Fund has been a unique initiative in many ways. Born out of a desire by the international community, and especially those countries where there is a significant Irish diaspora, to help pragmatically with the Northern Ireland conflict and strongly supported by the two sovereign governments directly affected, it was established in 1986 under the Anglo Irish Agreement.

The basic concept was the establishment of a Fund under the control of an independent Board to undertake projects using the donations provided by the Governments of the US, European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The administration of the

Fund is managed by a Secretariat comprising seconded civil servants provided jointly by the British and Irish Governments. The Fund was therefore a milestone in North-South cooperation on the island of Ireland.

The key element to the operation of the Fund was the creation of an independent Board comprising a Chairman and six Board Members from the community. Of the six Board Members, three are normally domiciled in Northern Ireland and three in the Republic of Ireland. A conventional rotation arrangement was put in place to allow Members to serve on the Board for no more than two terms of three years. The initial agreement was that the Fund should target projects in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland with a desired funding ratio of 75% to the North and 25% to the Southern border counties. This ratio reflects the size of the population in those areas.

The stated aim for the Fund is to:

- (i) promote economic and social advance in Northern Ireland and the Border counties; and
- (ii) promote contact, dialogue and reconciliation between unionists and nationalists throughout the Island of Ireland.

Over the 22 years of the Fund's existence, it has invested over £600m/€870m supporting some 5700 projects. The strong emphasis in the early years was on economic interventions. The approach taken was that regardless of political viewpoint, the high levels of

unemployment prevailing in the late 1980's were intolerable to both communities and any efforts to improve the situation could be supported by all.

The International Fund was initially viewed with considerable suspicion by some Unionists in Northern Ireland, many of whom regarded it as an attempt to induce them towards political change against their will. Over time, however, the Fund's even-handedness in decision-making and its independence from political influence have won it the trust of all communities.

There have been several independent evaluations of the work of the Fund and these, together with local politicians, community leaders and the media, have endorsed the Fund's actions as an exceptionally effective and vital initiative and a very important contributor to the Peace Process.

The main features of the International Fund which could have wider global application are as follows:

Firstly, the fact that the Fund was international in terms of its funding, diplomatic support and accountability meant that the local community understood that it was not direct Government intervention.

This enabled the Fund to avoid the suspicion of partisanship attached to Government funding. This had the additional benefit of enabling the Fund to have direct involvement in projects on which the two sovereign Governments could not easily act. The international



donors appointed Observers to the Board to assist its work. The Observers have offered the Fund diplomatic support as well as an independent perspective which has greatly enhanced its effectiveness.

The second key element has been the independence of the Board. This has been vitally important in ensuring that the choice of projects for investment has been based on an objective view of perceived need and potential impact and has been an important aspect in building trust at community level. The Board's diverse range of skills has also contributed to the success.

The third key element has been the development of a rigorous but flexible process of identifying, assessing, monitoring and evaluating projects. The International Fund has always been willing to nurture projects, which although difficult, were deemed important in the overall context. Whilst being strong on procedural controls, it has often acted as "first money on the table". This vital flexibility has enabled promoters of projects to have time to gather support from the community and to secure other funding sources.

A fourth important element has been the strong administrative support provided by the Joint Secretariat which has offices in Belfast and Dublin. The offices are headed by Joint Directors General on secondment to the Fund from the Northern Ireland and the Irish administrations. The Fund has also benefited from assistance by an Advisory Committee

comprising senior officials of the two sovereign Governments.

The final key element was the fact that the International Fund did not build up a large bureaucratic organisation to administer projects but worked in partnership with a small number of regional development officers, agents and appropriate sections of local government to generate and develop projects. This provided an unique opportunity for public officials on both sides of the border to work together for the first time, building trust and sharing common experiences.

The conflict in Northern Ireland had its own unique features as all conflicts do. Resolving the conflict required intense engagement by the two sovereign Governments as well as the support of the international community. Nevertheless, the key elements of the International Fund model outlined above should be applicable to most conflict situations.

The International Fund experience suggests the following principles for success;

(a) an independent Board comprising people representative of the various strands of the community in conflict. Ensure that the Board is truly independent of the local sovereign government but that it is capable of constructive collaboration with government agencies;

(b) select a strong and independent Chair and Board who will command trust from all but retain demonstrable independence;

(c) provide active donor participation to ensure accountability and offer diplomatic support;

(d) ensure that the administration is as streamlined and effective as possible with the body engaging with partners as much as possible;

(e) provide appropriate accountability and evaluation but in a manner that does not restrict the potential of the body to be flexible and effective;

(f) set out a clear initial vision and strategy but be prepared to adapt to evolving needs and review at appropriate intervals;

(g) ensure that investment is targeted to the greatest extent possible towards sustainable projects. These are often "bricks and mortar" community facilities with income streams that help local economies or strong organisations to carry on the work successfully long after the body has ceased. It is important to remember that some investment may be required in building communities' skills and expertise before this can be achieved.

In the view of the International Fund for Ireland, these elements provide the greatest opportunity for efficient and effective donor input to conflict areas and can deliver far and away the best value for money for donors and the greatest impact for recipients.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF FUND SUPPORTED

# PROJECTS/ PROGRAMMES

### Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project Ltd:

**Suffolk is a small Protestant estate with some 850 residents; Lenadoon is a Catholic estate with almost 9,000 residents. The two adjoining communities are separated by the Stewartstown Road in West Belfast.**

In a pattern that is familiar from other areas of inter-communal conflict, the early days of the Troubles saw substantial movements of population as a result of insecurity, intimidation, or violence. This was the experience across both communities in significant



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1 Pictured at the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project are Renee Crawford and Jean Brown.

areas of Northern Ireland. The inevitable outcome was the creation of highly segregated, single-identity communities which had little contact with each other but which often contained legacies of bitterness arising from their experiences. This was the case with the Suffolk and Lenadoon estates in West Belfast which divided into separate Protestant and Catholic communities. The experiences of the two communities made them highly suspicious of each other and reluctant to cooperate. The Suffolk Estate was further disadvantaged by its small size and isolation which hindered the development of new community facilities.

When in the late 1980s a sizeable area of land fronting the Stewartstown Road became available, the Suffolk community association contacted the International Fund for support. The Fund's Development Consultant began to work on opportunities for using the site. The concept originally developed was to refurbish an existing block of shops to provide employment and as a better location for community work for the Suffolk Estate. However, when this idea was appraised in detail it was found not to be viable due to the small scale of the market provided by Suffolk.

The idea was then tentatively mooted that the project might be undertaken jointly with the adjoining Lenadoon Estate.

The idea was not easily accepted by the community in Suffolk. Discussions took place throughout 1996 although disrupted by major violence. In late 1997 separate meetings approved cooperation on the project on the basis that its purpose was to improve the social and economic well-being of both communities.

The International Fund remained supportive throughout the whole process. The Fund also put the first money on the table in terms of an offer of funding of almost £0.5 million. The fact that the project had attracted International Fund support of this magnitude provided the regeneration company with additional credibility in dealing with other funding organisations.

The Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project has not resolved the tensions between Suffolk and Lenadoon but it has provided these two antagonistic communities with a way of working together for mutual benefit and it has provided two disadvantaged communities with employment and facilities which they could not otherwise have achieved.

Source: Assessment of the International Fund for Ireland's impacts to 30 September 2000: KPMG Consulting

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1 Over 900 young people graduate each year from the KEY. Pictured at the 2007 graduation event are some of the young people who were selected to go to the Canadian Junior Achievement Conference in Montreal.

From left: Rory Maguire, O Fiaich College, Dundalk; David Maye, Dungannon Integrated College; Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Deidre Dolan, Community School Carrick on Shannon and Philip Trueman, Aghnacloy College

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2 In 2008, KEY launched new residential camps. Pictured at the launch are (from left) Della Clancy, Executive Director, Junior Achievement Ireland; Denis Rooney, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland; Valerie Ingram, CEO, Young Enterprise Northern Ireland; Jackie McManus, Carrick-on-Shannon Community School, Co. Leitrim.



## The KEY Programme:

**KEY stands for 'Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth', and was launched in 1999 as an IFI funded initiative to assist disadvantaged young people aged 14-16 on a cross-community and cross-border basis. The concept was developed by Young Enterprise Northern Ireland (YENI) and Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI). The Programme has been identified as an exemplary project in the field of business and education contacts.**

The Programme works on an annual cycle. YENI/JAI identify the most disadvantaged areas and the most disadvantaged schools within those areas. They then seek to recruit the lowest achieving class in those schools for the Programme. The children selected tend to be low achievers with low self-esteem, poor literacy and numeracy, limited attention span and limited life-experiences. The entire class is recruited and schools are targeted to provide a balanced cross-community and cross-border mix of participants.

The class travels as a group accompanied by their class teacher. Over a school year KEY establishes three 3 day residentials and one 5 day residential all held in a remote rural location. The activities consist of a mix of personal enterprise related activities and outdoor team and confidence building activities. Throughout

all activities there is a zero-tolerance regime in relation to alcohol, drugs, anti-social and sectarian behaviour.

In the final five day residential, participants identify a business idea and run their business selling the products or services to people at a local shopping complex. They then distribute the profits of the business amongst themselves and reflect on the learning processes they have undergone, producing outline financial accounts, production, marketing, staff and management appraisals.

For many of the participants, the KEY Programme is a life-changing experience, often representing one of the few occasions when they have been put in a situation requiring self-discipline and team work to make real achievements. Peer pressure progressively becomes the main means by which discipline is enforced in the group.

A recent independent academic evaluation of young people who participated in KEY found very positive results. An interesting side effect of the Programme has been to improve relationships between teachers and pupils, who would not otherwise have spent protracted time together outside a classroom environment. The KEY Programme has been found as an effective intervention in helping young people to realise their true potential.

Source: Assessment of the International Fund for Ireland's impacts to 30 September 2000: KPMG Consulting



## The Community Leadership Programme:

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1 Pictured at the launch of the Rural Community Leadership Programme at Parkanaur College, Dungannon in April 2007 are clockwise from top: Martin McDonald, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Rural Development Council, Earl Michael St. Aldwyn, The Rank Foundation, Caroline Breakey, Youth Action Northern Ireland, David Gould, Chairperson, Youth Action NI and Anne Henderson, Board member, International Fund for Ireland.

**The Community Leadership Programme (CLP) provides an illustration of the Fund introducing innovative and effective programmes in response to identified needs. The Fund's flexibility of approach enables it to introduce new approaches, test and prove their effectiveness and then seek to mainstream their provision in national funds or EU Programmes.**

The CLP was originally introduced as a pilot programme in 1993. The rationale for the Programme was the observed failure of some communities, particularly in Protestant areas, to take advantage of the opportunities for community-led economic regeneration. This was despite the availability of significant International Fund,

EU and other funds for such purposes. Those already involved in community leadership roles approached the Fund arguing that in particularly disadvantaged communities, individuals with the necessary skills, vision, and experience to lead community development were not coming forward. This meant that those communities were not able to participate in community-led regeneration and development processes.

The CLP is a cross-community and cross-border Programme which focuses particularly on community based organisations in disadvantaged areas. The CLP has operated in a number of phases and independent evaluation has found it to have demonstrated its value and relevance.

Source: Assessment of the International Fund for Ireland's impacts to 30 September 2000: KPMG Consulting





## The Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Co. Wicklow

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1 Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Congressman Richard Neal, Chairman of the Friends of Ireland Group in the US House of Representatives; with three members of YouthAction. The US Congressional Delegation (CODEL) visited Glenree in April of 2007.

The Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was founded in 1974 and since that time has engaged with thousands of participants in peacebuilding and reconciliation activities. People from diverse sectors have come together at Glenree during a time of conflict and during the peace process to learn to listen, to tell their stories, and to grow as individuals. The International Fund for Ireland has supported several of these key projects, which have resulted in greater understanding and changed attitudes towards issues related to violent conflict.

### Peace Education Programme

The International Fund has supported Glenree's Peace Education Programme (PEP) which aims to provide opportunities for young people

to learn to deal with conflict and diversity in healthy pro-active ways. The one, two and three day courses use participatory activities and interactive methods to help build positive intercultural communities in which young people are active participants for change. Over 3000 young people each year took part in this programme.

The programme integrates training on leadership with practical elements of understanding and dealing with conflict at inter-personal, inter-group and inter-community levels and also exploring the positive and beneficial aspects of working and learning across cultural differences to build stronger and healthier intercultural communities.

"The children have never had to do this kind of soul searching when





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1 Glenree Centre for Reconciliation

they explore their own attitudes. They wouldn't do this in school. This was the first time in their lives" (Teachers Focus Group).

So far the PEP has added great value to Glenree's international work, especially in Afghanistan. Glenree facilitators, in response to a request, trained third-level educators in peace education in Afghanistan. They created and wrote together a peace education module for three universities in Kabul.

### **Education Development and Training**

The Education Development and Training Officer was a new position created at Glenree and supported by a grant from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in 2005. The EDT Officer, Eamon Rafter, is responsible for the development of sharing the learning of the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation through appropriate accreditation systems and the establishment of a Centre of Learning.

The position enables the development of curricula for programmes at Glenree through innovative approaches to recording and documenting peacebuilding within our context, and of course materials, establishing learning methodologies

and sharing such learning. As a result of this position, Glenree has become a Centre of Learning recognised by FETAC.

### **A Shared Vision 2010**

This Legacy project by three partners - the International Fund for Ireland, the Office of Public Works, and the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation - will result in new offices at the historical Glenree Centre site, as well as other building work. This project is taking place at an important time in Glenree's history; it is a time of transition and planning for new growth. The building will provide top quality office space, as well as new bedrooms, to hold the staff, participants and volunteers as they embark on new programmes and new challenges.

An important part of Glenree's future is the international work that is has started. Already, we have shared experiences from these islands with people dealing with violent conflict in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Haiti, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Liberia and the Basque Country. While it is not possible to import solutions from the outside, Glenree's experience has proved to be valuable in terms of sharing practical lessons learned in effective responses to violent conflict.





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PO Box 2000 Belfast BT4 1WD  
PO Box 2000 Dublin Ireland

[www.internationalfundforireland.com](http://www.internationalfundforireland.com)