The International Fund for Ireland proudly presents AMBIT 2019

Managed by the Washington Ireland Program

AMBIT

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SHARED LEARNING
The International Fund for Ireland, an independent organization founded by the British and Irish governments, has worked since 1986 to help heal Northern Ireland and the southern border counties of Ireland during and after 40-plus years of sectarian violence. With support from the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand the Fund promotes economic and community development, dialogue and cooperation across sectarian lines of animosity.

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The Washington Ireland Program (WIP) inspires and develops promising leaders through a program of personal development, policy debate and community service. Our aim is to support leaders committed to building a future of peace and prosperity for Northern Ireland and Ireland.

For over two decades, WIP has played an important role in post-conflict Ireland by bringing together leaders from a wide range of communities and backgrounds for outstanding leadership and skills-development programs.

www.wiprogram.org
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AMBIT 2019:
Communities dealing with division

Since it was established by the British and Irish governments in 1986, the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) has successfully developed and delivered a wide range of economic, peace building and reconciliation interventions in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Each year they invest in a select group of leaders and influencers, to learn from innovative practice in the US, through a program called AMBIT. AMBIT is managed by the Washington Ireland Program (WIP).

In 2019, the AMBIT group is travelling to Detroit and Washington D.C. to explore how US communities are dealing with division. The group range in experience from practitioners and community leaders to those involved in policy and policing. Throughout their visit they will be exploring US policy and practice aimed to improve outcomes for communities dealing with division. These communities may be dealing with physical division (peace walls), social division (sectarian boundaries) or regional division (border regions).

Upon completion, they will join the AMBIT Alumni, an ever growing body of community leaders from 16 years of successful study trips to the US, all continuing to serve their communities in Northern Ireland and Ireland.
**Donna Blaney**
Policy Lead – Good Relations
Northern Ireland Civil Service

Donna Blaney is policy lead for the Northern Ireland Executive Office’s good relations strategy, Together: Building a United Community. In addition to managing funding programmes of over £9m/year Donna provides policy support and advice to Ministers on a range of good relations and peace building interventions. She also has responsibility within the Executive Office for European Union PEACE IV good relations themes and represents the Department on a number of inter and cross departmental steering groups on good relations issues. She will take up a new post in April 2019, on promotion to Department for the Economy, where she will have responsibility for policy, delivery and transformation of further education in Northern Ireland.

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**Sandra Buchanan**
Communications Officer
Donegal ETB

Since 2002 Sandra has been employed by Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB), Donegal’s largest education and training authority, as a Further Education and Training (FET) Coordinator, specifically with its Youthreach programme for early schools leavers. Since 2017 she has also held the role of Communications Officer and is also currently rolling out a two year Peace IV funded Restorative Practices Project with organisations across the county. Previously she worked for Co Monaghan Vocational Education Committee (VEC) as their EU and International Projects Officer on a wide range of Peace, INTERREG and IFI funded projects, many on a cross-border basis. Sandra holds a PhD from Ulster University which focused on conflict transformation through social and economic development in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties (published by Manchester University Press in 2014).

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**Kathleen Bonner**
Project Coordinator
Finn Valley Men’s Project

Kathleen Bonner is project coordinator with Finn Valley Men’s Project, an IFI funded project supporting the development of men’s groups and promoting cultural awareness in the rural border region of Donegal and Tyrone. The project recently launched the first all-male cross border /community choir in the North West. Kathleen is passionate about community development and has worked in the community and voluntary sector over 20 years and has vast experience of social inclusion work focusing on cross border/cross-community relationships.

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**John Carson**
Program Manager
International Fund for Ireland

After a period in Department of Finance and Personnel, John then joined the Central Community Relations Unit working to develop cross-community and mutual understanding projects with voluntary and community groups across Northern Ireland. Since 2007 he has been employed by the International Fund for Ireland as program manager for several funding streams focusing on initiatives that tackle segregation and promote integration in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties. From 2015 John has co-led the Fund’s AMBIT study visits to the United States.
Janice Cherry
Coordinator
Carrickfergus Community Forum

Janice has been involved in Community Development for over 22 years, living and working in East Belfast. She has been a board member of Castlereagh LSP 1995-2006 and EBDC A 1997-2019. Janice completed her undergraduate in Community Development at the University of Ulster between 2003-2006. In addition, she graduated with an MSSc at Queens University in 2013. Janice loves working at the grassroots level to develop communities by transferring skills to others to make their communities better places to live.

Nuala Finn
Inspector
An Garda Síochána

Nuala works in the Garda Bureau of Community Engagement in Dublin Ireland where she holds the rank of Inspector. In her current role Nuala has responsibility for the Garda Youth Diversion Programme including Garda Projects. She is currently leading out on a Child in Care initiative with the object of preventing the criminalisation of children in the care of the state. Nuala has extensive experience in the area of youth justice and has regularly contributed to conferences in this area both nationally and internationally. Nuala sits on a number of interagency committees in the area of legislative policy and reform. She has a keen interest in mediation and conflict resolution. She holds a masters degree in mediation studies from Queen’s University, Belfast and a post-graduate diploma in conflict & dispute resolution from Trinity College, Dublin.

Kevin Coyle
Finance and Program Manager, Peace Impact and Personal Youth Development Program
International Fund for Ireland

Kevin is a career Civil Servant who joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1979 and worked in a number of roles in the department including the Minister's Office and Passport Office as well as serving a two year post in London. In 2007 Kevin was seconded to the International Fund for Ireland. He is the finance and program manager on the Peace Impact and Personal Youth Development Programs for the Dublin office of the Secretariat. From 2017 Kevin has co-led the Fund’s AMBIT study visits to the United States.

Kevin Hippsley
Manager
Creggan Enterprises

Working with Creggan Enterprises (CE), a charitable company based at the Rath Mor Centre in Derry, Kevin and his team deliver grassroots community development interventions within the local community and beyond to create inclusive opportunities to reconcile communities and bring about social change, through mediation, peacebuilding and capacity building interventions. Working within one of the North’s most deprived, marginalised and conflict-ridden communities - CE’s aims to regenerate and revive the area economically, socially and culturally. Kevin is also founder of Hive Studios at Rath Mor a Creative Digital Hub specialising in Digital Social Innovation. He is a former designer and production manager with the Derry Journal Newspaper and Guildhall Press (Publishing House).

Nigel Duke
Youth Coordinator
Edgarstown Residents Association

Nigel Duke is the Youth Co-ordinator for Edgarstown Residents Association and is currently responsible for the delivery of the Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP) Changing the Landscape Portadown funded by the International Fund for Ireland. This project engages 24 at risk young people from across the six Protestant housing estates in Portadown to make these young people more employable and give them a more positive and confident outlook on life.
Jonathan Hodge
Project Manager
Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association

Jonathan Hodge is a Project Manager for Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association in Belfast. He also manages The Hope Centre, an addiction support and mental health charity in Ballymena. He has recently completed postgraduate research on conflict and film at Ulster University and is a Fellow of the Social Change Initiative. He has a particular interest in the role of the arts in social change, community development and peace-building. He is co-organiser of the Woodvale Festival in Belfast. He has spent over 15 years working in communities across Belfast and Mid and East Antrim.

James Kee
Project Manager
Bready & District Ulster Scots Development Association

James has been actively involved in Cross-Community and Cross-Border projects and events for over ten years. He has developed a solid reputation as a proud advocate for Ulster-Scots arts & culture and has promoted the use of Arts and Culture as a credible and substantial contributor to peacebuilding.
James is currently the project coordinator on a Peace Impact Programme that helps promote cultural engagement and cross-community inclusion, including mentoring and working with highly marginalised Loyalist youth at risk of paramilitary recruitment.

Melanie Jones
Superintendent
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Melaine has been a Police Officer for 26 years, having been with the PSNI for 3 years and previously served with West Yorkshire Police. She has a passion for working with communities and a strong belief that policing interventions only work with community support and assistance.Melaine has a proven track record of developing and implementing innovative solutions to traditional crime and anti-social behaviour issues that truly bring about long term improvements and improve outcomes for communities. She brings a wealth of experience in bringing together strategic key stakeholders and developing a common vision and purpose.

Maria McGuinness
Community Development Worker
Ait na nDaoine/Cuidigh Linn

Maria has been involved in Community Development for the past 25 years. Maria oversees the administrator and finance of the Ait na nDaoine/ Cuidigh Linn CSP. Maria was one of the founder members of Strengthening Families programme in Dundalk and facilitated the programme for five years then becoming a member of the steering committee. Maria is also a member of the PIP Programme (Peace Impact Programme) steering group and she is also a facilitator of the women’s group which was initiated as part of the PIP programme. She is a director of the local Credit Union which is situated in the Muirhevnamor area of Dundalk which is a RAPID area and a designated area of disadvantage, Maria is a founder member of this credit union which was set up to discourage the abuse of money lenders on families.
**Damien McKenna**  
Youth Worker  
New Leaf Programme

As part of the DeeHub and newly established “New Leaf” Programme Damien has helped to grow a much needed service for young people in a wide community setting encompassing "targeted" and "at risk" young people as well as looking to deliver programmes that will engage young people across broad spectrums such as LGBTi+ and early school leavers. In his role Damien has also looked to shine a light on a community that until recently has been starved of services and agencies in the locality while working also to develop programmes that look to tackle drug misuse, criminal activity and anti-social behaviour derived from paramilitary and crime families with an eye at looking to building a service that can continue to help the communities of mid Louth grow through sustainability.

**Clare McMillan**  
Program Manager  
International Fund for Ireland

Clare has been a civil servant for 33 years. Before joining the IFI in September 2018 she worked in a number of roles within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Her roles included working in the Ordinance Survey of Northern Ireland, the Land and Property Services within the Department of Finance as well as the Public Sector Reform Division. Clare has also worked on a Welfare Reform project within the Department of Communities. Since joining the IFI, Clare’s responsibilities have included the program management of the Peace Walls Programme and the Personal Youth Development Programme (PYDP).

**Karen McLaughlin**  
Project Coordinator  
Lettershandoney and District Development Group

Karen has worked in the community and voluntary sector for over 20 years in different capacities and has been with L&DDG for four years now. She balances her managerial role with on the ground delivery. As Project Coordinator on a Personal Youth and Development Programme (PYDP) Karen works with young people who have experienced various difficulties in their lives that prevent them from progressing into education or employment.

Karen is from Derry and graduated from the University of Ulster with a BSc Hons in Social Work and also holds a Level 4 Certificate in Counselling Studies from the University of Ulster. She is passionate about community, social justice and how mental health difficulties affect the individual, family and community. Karen plans to embark on a Post Graduate Diploma in Trauma Studies through the University of Cork which will help her continue to develop support and empowerment programmes for people in the community.

**Nicola Molloy**  
Trainee Development Worker  
Bogside and Brandywell Initiative

Nicola studied Childhood and Youth Studies for her undergraduate and have always been a keen interest in volunteer in youth services. She began volunteering with The Peace Walls Project in 2016 as a Fountain resident. Most recently Nicola became a trainee development worker with the project and currently work to bring together the Protestant Unionist Loyalist Fountain area and Catholic Nationalist Republican Bishop Street. Her organisation works to promote dialogue between these areas and to get residents to agree on physical changes to the peace wall, through consultations in the area.
Rachel Mullan
Peace Walls Development Worker
Bogside and Brandywell Initiative

Before joining the Peace Walls team Rachel was a dedicated volunteer within her local area. She has been a community development worker as part of the Peace Walls Project in Derry for over five years and studied at University of Ulster obtaining BSc Community Development in 2017. The Peace Walls Project in Derry, funded by the International Fund for Ireland aims to remove structures and normalise life within these areas.

Robert Williamson
Employment & Skills Coordinator
REACH UK

Robert worked for 30 years in the business sector in sales, management and training. As Coordinator with REACH UK, Robert’s principle role is providing training and skills to enable employment for those in deprived working class areas, often with a background as loyalist ex-combatants. His role also involves mediation and liaison with the Police Services of Northern Ireland, politicians, republican and loyalist ex-combatants. The REACH UK offices serves as a public access point relating to social issues such as suicide, drugs use, alcoholism, housing and benefits.

Robert is also the founder of the Daladia Historical Society, which promotes a theme of common identity by understanding our shared past to create a shared future.

He has been involved with the Loyalist Communities Council, which was co-founded with the key UK Labour Party figure Jonathan Powell. It aims to address neglect in loyalist communities focusing on education, employment and crime.

Alan Ralph
Program Leader
Washington Ireland Program

Alan Ralph is a Program Leader with EIL Intercultural Learning, an Irish not for profit organisation that provides intercultural learning experiences that enrich lives and inspire global citizenship. Alan holds a bachelor’s degree in Business and Law from University College Dublin and an LL.M. master’s degree in Law and Economics from the University of Hamburg in Germany. Alan is a proud alumnus of the WIP Class of 2008 and since completing WIP, has done extensive voluntary work with the SVP charity in Dublin. Alan has previously worked with The Ireland Funds philanthropic network, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin, the European Commission in Brussels and the World Bank Group in Washington DC. Alan is co-leading the 2019 AMBIT study visit to the US.