

BACKGROUND PAPER: INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) is an independent international organization established in 1986 by the British and Irish Governments. The IFI's objectives are to promote economic and social progress and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland. The IFI has launched over 6,000 projects, roughly 90 percent of which target economically disadvantaged and socially marginalized areas, and created the potential for 55,000 jobs. The IFI also supports programs and projects which aim to facilitate the sharing of educational experiences among young people on a cross-community basis. Over its lifetime, IFI funding has leveraged almost £1.4 billion (\$2.2 billion) in additional resources.

The IFI is administered by a board of directors appointed jointly by the British and Irish governments, and two Joint Directors-General. IFI Board meetings are regularly held three times a year. All donors participate in IFI Board meetings through a non-voting observer(s). U.S. Observers represent the U.S. government at IFI Board meetings, communicating U.S. policy and positions on matters of interest to the U.S. government to the IFI, and report back to USAID and the State Department on IFI Board proceedings. In addition, the USAID grant manager is in regular contact with the IFI (via phone / e-mail) and makes periodic site visits to US-funded IFI projects in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Contributors to the Fund have included the United States, Canada, the European Union, New Zealand, and Australia. Over the life of the Fund, donations have totaled over £600 million (\$1 billion). The United States, Republic of Ireland and EU have contributed the vast majority of funds and have been the sole contributors since 2010. The EU has not indicated that it will provide any funding to the IFI after 2015 beyond a previous 3 million Euro grant that is finally in the process of being disbursed for construction activities.

The IFI had previously announced that it would not seek additional international funding after 2010. However, beginning in 2009, government leaders from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom all raised with the U.S. the importance of continued funding for the IFI given resurgent dissident violence. The U.S. agreed and is now providing funding (through USAID) to the IFI for the Peace Impact Program (PIP), formally launched March 2013. PIP aims to build sustainable peace and prosperity within the communities of greatest economic and social deprivation, where there are low levels of engagement in peace building and limited benefits from the Peace Process. Projects address a range of core conflict related issues including the ongoing problem of paramilitary domination in these communities, internal tensions and conflicts, sectarianism, the lack of engagement with the Peace Process, issues around cultural identity and disaffected youth. PIP has three primary goals: 1) increased contact, dialogue, sharing and integration among project participants, 2) the development of sustainable model community organizations and 3) underpin the Peace Process and promote economic prosperity by increasing the skills base within interface communities.

U.S. Funding – Future U.S. funding for the IFI remains uncertain, especially beyond FY 2018.

U.S. funding for the IFI by appropriations year (Fiscal Year):

FY 1986	\$50	million
FY 1987	\$35	million
FY 1988	\$35	million
FY 1989	\$10	million
FY 1990	\$19.7	million
FY 1991	\$20	million
FY 1992	\$19.7	million
FY 1993	\$19.7	million
FY 1994	\$19.6	million
FY 1995	\$19.6	million
FY 1996	\$19.6	million
FY 1997	\$19.6	million
FY 1998	\$19.6	million
FY 1999	\$19.6	million
FY 2000	\$19.6	million
FY 2001	\$25	million
FY 2002	\$25	million
FY 2003	\$25	million
FY 2004	\$18.5	million
FY 2005	\$18.5	million
FY 2006	\$13.365	million
FY 2007	\$13.365	million
FY 2008	\$14.8785	million
FY 2009	\$15	million
FY 2010	\$17	million
FY 2011	\$2.5	million
FY 2012	\$2.5	million
FY 2013	\$2.09	million*
FY 2014	\$2.5	million
FY 2015	\$0.75	million
FY 2016	\$0.75	million
FY 2017	\$0.75	million

Total: \$543,748,000

Notes: *This figure accounts for the impact of the U.S. budget sequester in FY 2013.

FY 2015 - FY 2017 - The Administration did not request funding for the IFI. However, funding levels of \$750,000 for these years were approved through the 653(a) budget process.

Evaluation

USAID commissioned Consensus Research, through the IFI, to carry out an independent evaluation of the Peace Impact Program over a ten-month period (July 2014 – April 2015). It involved a review of all active projects supported up to that time, an in-depth analysis of 15 projects spread across urban and rural areas of Northern Ireland and the Southern Border Counties of Ireland and the input of over 500 stakeholders. Consensus Research submitted their final evaluation and associated case studies of the PIP in June 2015. The Final evaluation concluded that: *“The work of PIP on core issues related to the conflict and in communities that are recognised as the most disadvantaged is particularly relevant and important in the current context. Projects have addressed a range of core conflict related issues including the ongoing problem of paramilitary domination in some communities, internal tensions and conflicts, sectarianism, the lack of engagement among certain groups and communities, issues around cultural identity and disaffected youth. This evaluation has identified important progress in these areas and can conclude that the PIP programme is making a valuable contribution to peace building and is clearly underpinning the Peace Process.”*

Other key highlights from the evaluation report include:

- **Dealing with conflict and division.** 58% of young people felt the community was better able to do this.
- **Improved cross-community relationships.** Project personnel felt the work had achieved this with 29% strongly agreeing and a further 62% agreeing. 81% of young people stated that they had improved relationships with people from different communities/backgrounds.
- **The engagement of the community in peace building.** 92% of project personnel felt it had: 44% strongly agreed and 52% agreed.
- **Promoting dialogue at local level.** 91% of project personnel felt the projects had achieved this with 39% strongly agreeing and a further 52% agreeing. 75% of young people felt it had improved relationships in their community.