



USAID
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COUNTRY PROFILE

Northern Ireland/ Ireland

MAY 2009

OVERVIEW

USAID administers USG assistance (annual congressional appropriation) to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI or Fund). The IFI was established in 1986 pursuant to an agreement between the United



Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Its objectives are to promote social and economic advancement and to encourage contact, dialogue, and reconciliation between nationalists (Catholics) and unionists (Protestants) throughout Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland. Implementation of those objectives is achieved through projects financed and overseen by the Fund. To date, the U.S. has contributed a total of \$457 million to the IFI, making it the largest donor.

The primary U.S. interest in Northern Ireland and the border counties is promoting an end to sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. The decommissioning of the Irish Republican Army and the Northern Ireland Assembly's resumption of operations in 2007 are positive steps toward achievement of that goal. Yet, much remains to be done, especially in the areas of education and housing.

PROGRAMS

IFI's five-year (2006-2010) strategy document, "Sharing This Space," describes three program areas used to achieve Fund objectives:

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

Building foundations is comprised of three components: regeneration, transition, and leadership. The regeneration program uses IFI's model for community-based economic regeneration in both rural and urban areas to address the root causes of deprivation and unemployment. The transition program fortifies social cohesion and infrastructure within divided and marginalized communities where legitimate leadership is weak. The leadership program strengthens the skills and capacity of community leaders in some of the most divided communities to make those communities sustainable and establish a basis for cross-community dialogue.

NORTHERN IRELAND SNAPSHOT

Capital: Belfast
Population: 1.7 million (2003 est.)
GDP per capita: \$27,650 (2004)

IRELAND SNAPSHOT

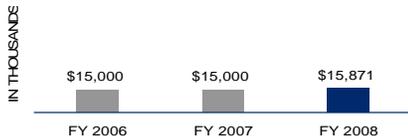
Capital: Dublin
Population: 4.2 million (2008 est.)
GDP per capita: \$43,100
(2007 est.)

**For more information,
see www.usaid.gov
Keyword: Ireland**



COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO IRELAND



Based on Economic Support Fund funding to meet U.S. Foreign Assistance Peace & Security Objective.

BUILDING BRIDGES

This aspect of the Fund's work focuses on youth development programs and community bridges. Youth programs address obstacles to mobility and contact at an individual level by bringing together young people of different ages from both communities and on a cross-border basis for study and work training. "Learning and Educating Together" brings 12- and 13-year-old children together for outdoor, cultural and learning pursuits. "Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth" brings 14- to 16-year-olds together to develop business skills. "Wider Horizons" provides job training and work experience to youth ages 18-28 from deprived backgrounds in both communities on either side of the border. The community bridges activity works across divided interfaces and promotes reconciliation between entire communities.

BUILDING INTEGRATION

In this new area of work, a small number of pilot programs support integration in gaps identified in the education and public housing sectors. In the education arena, IFI support will identify best practices in integrating education and seek to introduce those practices more widely across the education sector. In the housing arena, the IFI will support the development of integrated housing and integrated community organizations.

RESULTS

Since its inception, the IFI has committed over \$1.152 billion for 5,700 projects across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. In keeping with its objectives, 87 percent of all projects targeted economically disadvantaged and socially marginalized areas. IFI-supported projects have created the potential for approximately 55,000 direct and indirect jobs. For every \$1 spent on projects, IFI leveraged \$2 from other public and private sources; nearly three-fourths of IFI-supported projects will continue on a self-sustainable income generation basis.

NON-PRESENCE RELATIONS

PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

With reconciliation as the overarching consideration in its selection of projects, the IFI continues to make a major contribution to a sustained peace in Northern Ireland. Through support to integrated education and housing projects, the Fund is working to overcome key obstacles to this goal. The U.S. Government is proud to support an organization devoted to improving the quality of life of nationalists and unionists and contributing to regional stability in Western Europe.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.