



glencree

centre for peace & reconciliation

ionad síochána agus
athmhuintearais gleann crí

Newsletter

ISSUE 6

JANUARY 2008

*Committed to peacebuilding and reconciliation
within and between divided communities*

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Glencree Welcomes new Chief Executive

On 2nd January Glencree was delighted to welcome Dr. David Bloomfield, the organisation's new Chief Executive.

Originally from Belfast, David has worked in the field of conflict and peacebuilding as a trainer, practitioner, policy advisor, analyst, author, academic, consultant and NGO director in a variety of contexts. Since 1990, he has lived in England, the US, Sweden and Germany, and travelled widely in many conflict areas including

Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine. Most recently, from 2004-2007, he was director of the Berghof Research Centre for Conflict Management in Berlin. He holds an MA and PhD in Peace Studies from Bradford University (UK), and has published several books on Northern Ireland, reconciliation, conflict management and other peace-related issues.

David's skills and experience are invaluable to Glencree as we begin this new chapter of our history, which is characterised by three areas of activity: Reconciliation and dialogue within and between these islands; Managing and promoting integration in Ireland; and International peacebuilding.

These activities represent a natural extension of our virtually unique strength: three decades of experience in bringing people together in dialogue to cultivate relationships across social, economic, political and psychological divides.

david.bloomfield@glencree.ie



Annual German Remembrance Day

On the 18th of November 2007 Glencree was delighted to host our annual German Remembrance Day in partnership with the German Embassy in Dublin.

The Annual Remembrance Day is an opportunity for the German community in Ireland and for all of us to reflect on the terrible human cost of war and any opportunities we may have to build a society free from violent conflict.

The day began with an ecumenical service in St. Kevin's Church with music from the choir of the Goethe Institut and a stirring homily from Lutheran

Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp.

Afterwards a seminar on the Contribution of Culture to Peacebuilding was held, with contributions from Director of the Goethe Institut Mr. Rolf Stehle and Acting Glencree CEO Mr. Colin Murphy. Chaired by Helen Browne, the seminar explored the ways in which a culture of inclusion and equality can help prevent and alleviate conflicts.

We would like to thank the German Ambassador H.E. Mr. Christian Pauls and his team for all their help in organising this important event.



Goethe Institut Director Rolf Stehle
with Glencree's Helen Browne

Opening of the Japan Room at Glencree

14 December 2007 - The outgoing Japanese Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Mr. Keiichi Hayashi, opened the new Japan Room at the Glencree Centre. Refurbishment of this room, which will be used as a meeting room for programme participants and staff, was made possible by a generous donation from the Ambassador himself, to mark his departure from Ireland. As an added bonus, the Ambassador also invited Sony Ireland to contribute to the room, and they came through in style in the form of a brand new Sony Bravia LCD Television with a 52 inch screen, and a Playstation 3. These new gifts will be invaluable for all users of the Centre in the future. Ambassador Hayashi also donated a beautiful traditional Japanese lacquerware clock for the room.

To mark the occasion the Ambassador made a short speech in which he outlined the commitment of the Japa-

nese Government to peace and reconciliation work around the world. He expressed his wish that the Glencree Centre would continue to have a close relationship with the Japanese Embassy in Dublin.

We would like to thank the Ambassador and also Mr. Sushil Teji, MD of Sony Ireland for their generosity.



Acting Glencree CEO Mr. Colin Murphy and H.E. Mr. Keiichi Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador to Ireland

"Afghanistan Has So Much to Teach Me"

I am a member of the Irish Traveller community and had been working happily as a Traveller activist in the Galway Traveller Movement when I met Ian White (Director of Glencree's International Programme) one fateful afternoon in June 2007. I had always wanted to do some overseas work so I asked Ian for advice. Ian had been to Afghanistan in January 2007 and was on the look out for a volunteer to work with the Afghan Women Skills Development Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan. I jumped at the chance to go to Kabul. From then on, there was no turning back.

After much fundraising, sorting out visas and shots, extensive talks with and briefings by Glencree I was well on my way to Kabul. I left Ireland on the 9th of September 2007 and even though I was well prepared I still had no idea what lay ahead of me. Now over four months later I feel quite the expert, relatively speaking, and am very much at home here with my new family and friends.

Working in Afghanistan is a challenge for everyone so I am not experiencing anything new in that respect. However, my experience is fairly unique in many ways; for security reasons most ex-pats are far removed from Afghan people. I on the other hand am working, eating, hanging out and living with the locals. In my opinion that is the best way to see and experience Afghanistan.



Hannagh McGinley in Afghanistan

I have only a few weeks left here and every time I think about the time coming to an end I feel immense sadness. Af-

ghanistan is under my skin. The resilience of Afghan people is to be admired and respected. Even after 30 years of conflict and many years of drought these people are still hanging on and doing so in a way that the rest of the world could learn from. I have never in my life been privy to such hospitality and kindness. In Ireland, we are renowned for our hospitality but in my opinion Afghans beat us hands down.

Afghanistan has by far been the most humbling experience of my life. Not having instant access to basic things such as water and electricity takes a bit of getting used to. It maddens me when I think that people from my own community continue to live without access to these basic facilities in a country with so much. Here I can understand it somewhat, but what is Ireland's excuse? We should feel deeply ashamed of ourselves. On a positive note my years on the side of the road have prepared me for life here in the third world so I have adapted pretty well and am quite happy to go without. I only have to look out my window to be reminded that I am one of the lucky ones. When you see how others are being forced to live it seems petty to complain.

Afghanistan has taught me more than I could have ever imagined. My time here has been well spent and though I have made a small contribution I have gained more than I have given. I have learned about survival and humanity and to some degree what it is like for Afghan people to live through these hard times. I know I can leave at any time and that is a great comfort that the majority of Afghan people do not have. I will always return to Afghanistan-not only because I have something to give but because Afghanistan has so much to teach me.

Hannagh McGinley is volunteering with the Afghan Women Skills and Development Centre (www.amsdc.org) as part of Glencree's International Volunteer Programme.

Promoting Cultural Understanding and Social Cohesion

In recent years there has been a significant rise in immigration to Ireland and there are now diverse cultures represented in all parts of the island. It is important that the new communities have the opportunity to participate in the development of a society that respects diversity and offers equal opportunities to all its citizens. Integration presents a huge challenge if we are to involve the skills, abilities, attributes and wisdom of all in a really positive way.

Glencree has a role to play in supporting integration and bringing our experience of dialogue for reconciliation to this process. Since March 2007 we have been working with Spirasi (an intercultural, non-governmental organisation that works with asylum seek-

ers, refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups) on a pilot project to develop a process of intercultural dialogue. We have hosted two weekend residentials with the aim of promoting real cultural understanding and social cohesion between the host Irish community and the new communities.

During these weekends we utilised a number of different creative group work methodologies. These included creative visualisation using photographs and visually based group tasks that promoted group discussion on difficult issues. We have learnt that drama based work using Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed methodology is the most effective way of generating discussion and promoting meaningful change within the group in a non-

obtrusive but powerful way. It is envisioned that the future project will continue to use this methodology.

The process has brought together members of the host community and immigrants from a wide range of countries and cultures. The workshops have facilitated participants to speak from their own experience about the challenges and opportunities of integration and the chance to hear and be directly engaged with each other.

This can help, in a small way, to build diverse communities based on justice and equality. We hope to continue this programme and focus on communities to embrace dialogue and develop real understanding and relationships.

Eamon Rafter

eamon.rafter@glencree.ie

The Journey to Peace - A Message from Tilestyle

20 December 2007 - Robin McNaughton, Managing Director of Tilestyle Ltd, presented the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation with artwork by Michele Hannan commissioned in honour of his late father, Jim McNaughton, a long term friend of Glencree. Tilestyle has also made a generous donation towards the running costs of the Glencree Centre which is greatly appreciated. Robin's message called "The Journey to Peace" states: "An invincible spirit of trust and commitment has led to the historic compromise between Unionism and Nationalism, and the restoration of power sharing in Northern Ireland."

"Shortly before his death on 13th April this year, our chairman, Jim McNaughton undertook one last project to commemorate these momentous times, a gesture which would articulate his delight and satisfaction at our Island's historic journey on the road to peace. He commissioned Michele Hannan to create a limited edition of drawings in porcelain, which would celebrate this new understanding between Catholics and Protestants and our complex shared history.

"The piece features two doves turning in the same direction, facing the future, together. Also incorporated into the design is a walnut leaf. The walnut tree has become richly symbolic of the new optimism being nurtured between North and South. The walnut sapling planted by Mr. Ahern and Dr. Paisley at the Battle of the Boyne site, was done so, in the words of Mr. Ahern "in the spirit of friendship and respect". Such gestures of reconciliation would have been unthinkable a few years ago, suppressed by the burden of the troubles and the weight of history. The planting of the walnut sapling is a metaphor for a new chapter in our Island's history taking root. From the old battleground of the Boyne has emerged a new vibrant symbol of peace, trust and hope.

"It has taken a giant shift in the mindset of the political leaders on this Island to cast aside the shackles of suspicion which have obstructed peace and stability for so long... The journey is still ongoing, but in the words of Dr. Paisley 'How good it will be, to be part of a wonderful healing in our Province'. Indeed, how wonderful for all the people of the Island of Ireland."

Our thanks to Robin, to his late father Jim, and to all at Tilestyle for their support.



The artwork by Michele Hannan commissioned by Tilestyle.

Glencree
Co. Wicklow
Ireland

Phone: +353 1 2829711
Fax: +353 1 2766085
E-mail: info@glencree.ie
Web: www.glencree.ie



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Committed to peacebuilding
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between divided communities

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that is committed to peacebuilding and reconciliation in Ireland, north and south, Britain and beyond. From the context of the protracted conflict experienced in and between these islands, Glencree works towards understanding complex relationships, as well as cultivating new ones, between all people from all parts of society.

Current work includes: The Women's Programme, Survivors and Former Combatants, The Education Programme, Sustainable Peace Network, The International Programme, Political Dialogue Programme and the Churches Programme.

Thank You to the Friends of Glencree, Business Club, 100 Club and other supporters who make our work possible. If you wish to become a Friend, you can join on-line www.glencree.ie.

Training: for more information on our training courses, please see our website.

The Newsletter is issued quarterly. Please send your feedback and comments to:

sheila.cannon@glencree.ie

Celebrating 100 Years of International Women's Day

We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day with a one-day conference on the 8th of March 2008 at Glencree. The Glencree Women's Programme celebrates this day each year with a workshop bringing together programme participants and others.

We will look at International Women's Day from the perspective of 2008, projecting our Dreams, Needs and Actions 100 years into the future. What world do we want for 2108 and what kind of leadership do we need going forward? This event will be part of the story of International Women's Day, an international movement that has an online platform at www.internationalwomensday.com.

A global movement of solidarity began in 1908 when women in New York and Moscow decided to protest to-

gether the rights of women workers. Milestones, large and small, have marked our journey bringing us to this celebration of 100 years of International Women's Day. Glencree's history includes the actions of Una O'Higgins O'Malley who protested the violent conflict in Ireland in the early 1970's, leading to the founding of the Glencree Centre.

The Glencree Women's Programme intends to organise this conference in partnership with AkiDwa (Akina Dada wa Africa is Swahili for African sisterhood) a national network of African women living in Ireland. We are still looking for other possible partners.

For more information, contact Phil Kileen, phil.kileen@glencree.ie

International Volunteering at Glencree

I am a volunteer from Afghanistan living at the Glencree Centre as an International Volunteer for one year. So far I have learned about different cultures, different people, and most importantly for me, about peace and conflict. I have taken part in the Women's Programme and have shared stories with women from Northern Ireland. My wish is that when I go back home I can take the experience that I have had and work with the people I serve at home as an active citizen.

Nadia Hanefi, Noble-Tyrell Programme for International Volunteers, nadia.hanefi@glencree.ie



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