



CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY  
AND PEACE BUILDING

# Annual Report 2024

[democracyandpeace.org](https://democracyandpeace.org)

# Table of Content



Chairperson's Remarks	03
-----------------------	----

Acknowledgments	04
-----------------	----

About	05
-------	----

Directors and Executive Team	06
------------------------------	----

Projects and Highlights	
-------------------------	--

<i>Fellowship Programme</i>	07
-----------------------------	----

<i>GFA Online Course</i>	09
--------------------------	----

<i>Cultural Diplomacy</i>	10
---------------------------	----

<i>Alumni Series</i>	13
----------------------	----

<i>TEDxStormont</i>	14
---------------------	----

<i>International</i>	16
----------------------	----

Contact Details	20
-----------------	----

# Chairperson's Remarks



We find ourselves in a cultural moment of uncertainty as domestic and global challenges persist. Whether it is the cost of living crisis, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, leadership is required more than ever and the importance of peace building critical. This year has been dubbed the year of voting, with more than two billion people heading to the polls in 2024. Quite simply, it is the biggest election year in history. And yet, democracy has never felt so fragile; it seems to be on the ballot itself.

Nevertheless, we have welcomed the restoration of the democratic institutions here in Northern Ireland, reminding the world of the imperfect Irish peace process; the hope it offers to peacebuilders around the globe and the potential it has to play a meaningful in peace processes that are yet to come to fruition.

The Centre for Democracy and Peace Building (CDPB) continues to be involved in vital work across these islands, most notably with the Fellowship Programme.

Now going into its fourth year, the Fellowship Programme has over seventy alumni, including Finance Minister Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland Dorinnia Carville, and Jason Bunting, whose participation in the programme contributed to his enrolment at the prestigious Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. The Fellowship Programme invites twenty-four ambitious leaders on a seven month journey to reimagine and pave a new, prosperous future for Northern Ireland. The programme seeks to support the peace process, foster innovation and capacity building, and encourage collaborative decision-making so that leaders across society are strengthened and equipped to navigate complexity and deliver real change for the benefit of all. A special note of thanks must go to John Healy who stepped down as advisory board chair in March upon his appointment as chair of Invest NI. We are delighted to have CEO and Founder of FinTrU, Darragh McCarthy, assuming the role.

This year's work also included the launch the Good Friday Agreement Online Course, the delivery of various cultural diplomacy symposiums, and our continued partnership with the John Smith Trust. We were also delighted to welcome Ciarán Ó Cuinn to the CDPB board. Ciarán is head of mission at MEDRC, the sole surviving institution of the multilateral Middle East peace process.

**Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**



## Acknowledgments

Our work would not be possible without assistance from many public, private, and community partners. We are truly grateful for all the support we have received this year.

*Special thanks to:*

**Allstate Northern Ireland**

**Bauer Media NI**

**Biopax Ltd.**

**Brown O'Connor Communications**

**Camlin Group**

**Coca-Cola HBC Ireland and Northern Ireland**

**Community Relationship Council**

**Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Republic of Ireland**

**Dormant Accounts Fund NI**

**FinTrU**

**Fujitsu NI**

**Hinch Distillery**

**Irish American Partnership**

**Irish Museum of Modern Art**

**Northern Ireland Electricity Networks**

**Polish Cultural Institute in London**

**PSNI**

**Royal Irish Academy**

**The John Smith Trust**

**Ulster Carpets**

**Ulster Screen Academy**

**Ulster University**

**University of Oxford**

**Victoria and Albert Museum**



## About

The Centre for Democracy and Peace Building (CDPB) is a charity based in Northern Ireland. Its purpose is to uphold and share the values and principles of democracy in order to build peace, stability, and reconciliation. CDPB is committed to supporting the peace process; changing attitudes; building a normal society; and sharing our experience with others in conflict.

CDPB's mission is to provide innovative programmes and solutions, based on lessons from the Irish peace process, that enable leaders from across society to respond effectively to social, political, and economic challenges across the globe.

The charitable objectives of the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building are



**To advance citizenship and community development** by upholding and sharing the values and principles of democracy in order to build peace, stability, and reconciliation; and to support leadership within civil society and political parties to address grievances and to build confidence in political institutions.



**To advance human rights, conflict resolution, and reconciliation** by the removal of fear from and the offering of hope to divided communities and to create a society with a shared sense of responsibility, opportunity, community, and above all a shared sense of humanity, based upon respect for and tolerance of diversity; and to empower and enable communities to develop bespoke solutions that address and remove the causes of division and violent conflict.



**To advance education by providing a knowledge exchange platform in democracy** and peace building to facilitate research and discussion in partnership with government and civil society on the development and implementation of policies and programmes that build a shared and united community; to host a fellowship programme to pass on learning from the peace process generation to current and future leaders; and to capture and document the lessons and experiences from Northern Ireland and other places which have experienced violent political conflicts.



## Directors and Executive Team

### ***Chairman Emeritus***

The Lord Alderdice

### ***Chair***

Baroness Margaret Ritchie

### ***Directors***

Ciarán Ó Cuinn

Chris Maccabe CB

### ***CEO and Company Secretary***

Eva Grosman

### ***Programme Manager***

Zachary Hutchinson

### ***Website and Graphic Designer***

Irka Laskowska

### ***Associates***

Alannah Millar

Melanie Romero

### ***Senior Advisors***

Professor Harvey Maylor

Dr Janet Smart

Saul Betmead de Chasteigner

Sinead O'Sullivan

Stacey King

Dr Tom Kelly OBE FCIPR



# Fellowship Programme

This year's Fellowship Programme saw a significant increase of applications and consistent high interest on social media, some of the evidence marking the increased profile of the programme. Fellows this year included senior leaders from across NI society including the Comptroller and Auditor General, MLAs from various parties, as well as senior business and charity leaders. Fellows engaged with sessions in Oxford, Derry/Londonderry, Belfast and Dublin, focusing on topics such as systems thinking, complexity, communication, sustainable leadership, diplomacy, and identity.

We are once again truly grateful from the support of our partners who have helped curate sessions and residencies, and facilitated the overall delivery of the programme: Allstate Northern Ireland, Bauer Media NI, Brown O'Connor Communications, Camlin Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Republic of Ireland, FinTrU, Fujitsu NI, Irish American Partnership, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Northern Ireland Electricity Networks, PSNI, Royal Irish Academy, Ulster Carpets, Ulster University, and the University of Oxford.

The programme would also not be possible without the vital support of our advisory board:

**Darragh McCarthy** – Chair of the advisory board & CEO and Founder of FinTrU

**Nick Coburn** – Managing Director and Deputy Chairman of Ulster Carpets

**Derek Hynes** – Managing Director, NIE Networks

**Peter Cunningham** – CEO, Camlin Group

**Christina Bates** – CFO, Allstate NI

**Dalreen Buchanan** – Business Support Manager, Ulster Carpets

**David Clements** – Client Director, Fujitsu NI

**Gordon Parkes** – Executive Director, People & Culture, NIE Networks

**Karise Hutchinson** – Professor of Leadership at Ulster University, Founder of the Illuminaire Institute

**Professor Harvey Maylor** – Associate Professor at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

The response of this year's Fellows has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting both the strength of the programme and its impact on individual Fellows and wider society.

Here are a few examples:

In Oxford one Fellow remarked,

“ *[I] can honestly say this has been one of the most intellectually stimulating, challenging and fun weeks of my career.* ”

Another stated after the Dublin residential,

“ *It's hard to put into words the gratitude and appreciation for CDPB and everything that comes with it. The people, the learning, the connections, and my own development as a leader; returning back from Dublin with a wealth of knowledge and new perspective.* ”







## GFA Online Course

To mark the International Day of Peace, CDPB launched a brand-new online, interactive course on the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Designed for educating a global audience on Northern Ireland's peace process, the course is open to anyone interested in British-Irish history and the Good Friday Agreement.

With support from Dormant Accounts NI and developed by renowned journalist and broadcaster Mark Devenport, photographer Frankie Quinn, and with academic input from Professor Peter Shirlow of the Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool, the interactive course takes participants on a journey through Northern Ireland's peace process, exploring the Agreement's historical context (with particular focus on the Troubles), the negotiation process from which it emerged as well as the successes, failures, and lessons of the Agreement, twenty-five years on from this landmark moment in British-Irish history. It features thirteen interactive online lessons across four modules and immerses its students in one of the world's most renowned peace processes.

The course is offered for free to the Asian University for Women, representing seventeen different nationalities, including a cohort of Afghani women. Students from the UK, mainland Europe, and the Middle East have also undertaken the course so far.

Mark Devenport, broadcaster and political commentator, said



*The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement is not just a historical document to be studied, it is a living testament to the power of diplomacy and conflict resolution, and its lessons remain profoundly relevant for today's world. Looking back over the 25 years since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement was signed, I am reminded of the beacon of peace and reconciliation that it is in British-Irish history. I trust that this online course, curated for the benefit of a diverse range of people from all walks of life, will be accessible and helpful in explaining the complexities of the history of this place and the dynamics of peacebuilding.*

# Cultural Diplomacy

Page **10**

## V&A Cultural Diplomacy Symposium June 2023

The Centre for Democracy and Peace Building hosted the Cultural Diplomacy Symposium in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute in London and the V&A. The day centred on hearing insights from former and current diplomats, art professionals, and academics. Together, we examined the role of cultural diplomacy in international relations, learnt how to foster effective diplomatic practices, explored positive stakeholder engagement, and finally, delved into how arts and culture can enrich social cohesion in Britain and beyond. Speakers included: Dan Mulhall (former Irish Ambassador to US, UK and Germany; Parnell Fellow, Magdalene College, Cambridge), Adriana Sandoval (Cultural Attaché, Colombian Embassy), Cian Smyth (Ulster Presents), Roisin Inglesby (William Morris Gallery), Seunghye Sun (Director of the Korean Cultural Centre, London), and CDPB emeritus chairman, Lord Alderdice.

A special thank you to the V&A and the Polish Cultural Institute in London for their vital support in making the event happen.

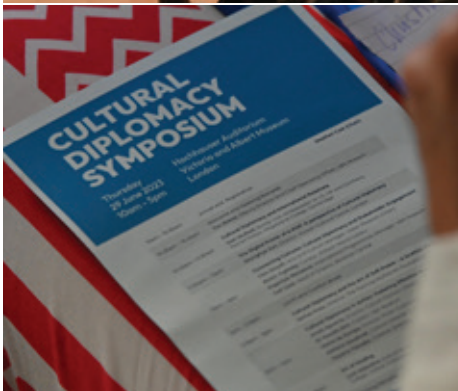
## Queen Jadwiga Fellowship Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

CDPB is delighted to partner with the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford and the Polish Cultural Institute in London to announce Queen Jadwiga Fellowship in Polish Studies.

The Queen Jadwiga Fellowship in Polish Studies supports a research visit of one University of Oxford term (or for a shorter stay of at least one month), for research in Polish studies. Applicants are invited to submit research topics related to any aspect of Polish culture and history which can be supported with reference to the collections of the Bodleian Libraries, including the Taylorian Library. The Libraries would particularly welcome applications which draw upon resources not readily available elsewhere.

Relevant collections connected with the history and culture of Poland include, for example, but not exclusively, medieval manuscripts, early modern documents, maps and letters, modern archives and the 'Libri Polonici' special collection of printed books, mostly of the 16th century. Polish studies at the University of Oxford are represented in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and in the Faculty of Modern History.









*Part of Imagine! Belfast – Festival of Ideas and Politics.*

## Cultural Diplomacy and the Art of Soft Power, Imagine! Belfast: March 2024

During this seminar we examined the role of cultural diplomacy, learnt how we can foster an effective cultural dialogue, and examined the role of art and artists in shaping the island of Ireland's image (North and South) in the international context.

The seminar featured a keynote address from Evgeniya Ravtsova, International Programmes Manager at the Victoria and Albert Museum, on the Art of Soft Power, followed by a panel discussion with Sheena Barrett, Head of Research and Learning, Irish Museum of Modern Art; Dr Kim-Marie Spence, Lecturer, Arts Management and Cultural Policy Queen's University Belfast; and Richard Williams, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Screen. Part of Imagine! Belfast – Festival of Ideas and Politics.



# CDPB Alumni Series

## DFA Reception November 2023

CDPB were delighted to be hosted by Joint Irish Secretary Laurence Simms at his residence in November for the annual reception and networking event. We are truly grateful for the continued support of the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. It was wonderful to gather with current and past participants of our programmes, advisory board members, and associates of CDPB, as well as having HE Ambassador Roy Barreras and his delegation with us. It was a fantastic evening with our friends and supporters marked by hope and inspiration!

## Mastering Difficult Conversations with Dorcas Crawford January 2024

CDPB facilitated a Mastering Difficult Conversations workshop with conflict management consultant Dorcas Crawford and the CDPB alumni network. The workshop was hosted by Fellowship Programme partner, Allstate Northern Ireland. The workshop focused on how to approach and master difficult conversations within both the professional and personal spheres. We are grateful to Fellowship Programme advisory board member Christina Bates (CFO, Allstate NI) and Allstate Northern Ireland for hosting the workshop.





# TEDxStormont January 2024

TEDxStormont returned in January 2024 for another day full of hope and optimism. The event explored the theme of Restore. Attendees were taken on a journey of discovering innovative ideas, inspiring stories, and thought-provoking discussions on how to rejuvenate our world, revive our communities, and rekindle hope for a sustainable and harmonious future. The daylong event, supported by Biopax Ltd, Camlin Group, and Coca-Cola and compered by presenter and broadcaster Sarah Travers, saw nearly two hundred guests fill the Great Hall at Parliament Buildings. The Ulster Screen Academy also partnered with TEDxStormont for the first time as the production partner. The event itself brought individuals from an array of backgrounds such as academia, journalism, music, business, and sport.

TEDxStormont speakers included:

**Alex Kane** – Political Columnist and Commentator

**Celtic Psalms** – Music Group

**Ed Lindsay** – Custodian and Owner of Finnebrogue Woods

**Jamie Duffy** – Musician and Songwriter

**Jane Shaw** – Therapist, Writer, and Educator

**John Martin** – Head of Policy and Advocacy at RSPB NI

**Justin Lowry** – Antique Dealer and Reuse Revolution Enthusiast

**Kiran Young Wimberly** – Presbyterian Minister and Co-Founder of Celtic Pilgrims

**Matthew Taylor** – Mental Health Campaigner

**Michael Boyd** – Sport and Business Specialist

**Michael O'Sullivan** – Economist and Author

**Paula Kennedy Garcia** – Customer Experience Thought leader, Innovator, and Strategist

**Romav Ali** – A-Level student

**Sinead Sharkey-Steenon** – Leadership Career Coach

**Susan Lagdon** – Lecturer in Psychology (Mental Health)

**Declan Keeney** – Professor of Screen Technologies & Innovation

**Heidi McIlvenny** – Marine Specialist





# International

## CRIC September 2023

CDPB were honoured to help facilitate the tenth addition of the Conference on the Resolution of Intractable Conflict (CRIC) led by CDPB emeritus chairman, Lord Alderdice. The conference held at Harris Manchester College brought together a diverse group of over forty academics and practitioners from across the world to discuss the changing character of war and peacebuilding.

The conference featured a packed schedule full of fascinating presentations, from artificial intelligence monitoring of conflict regions to the book launch of Padraig O'Malley's *The perils and prospects of a United Ireland*.

## Resilience and the road to peace in Syria challenges and opportunities: October 2023

In October CDPB hosted a webinar focusing on the current situation in Syria. Ex-BBC correspondent Mark Devenport hosted a conversation with Dina Melhem, Programme Management Officer - Leading the National Agenda for the Future of Syria, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

The insightful discussion highlighted the challenges Syrians currently face as well as the opportunities the situation provides.





## Visit of the Women Weavers of Mampuján and Colombian delegation November 2023

CDPB had the pleasure of working closely with the Colombian Embassy to the United Kingdom in November. The week of engagements began with co-organising a discussion in the House of Lords with CDPB emeritus chairman and host, Lord Alderdice, in conversation HE Ambassador Roy Barreras and the Women Weavers of Mampuján, exploring lessons of the Irish and Colombian peace processes, reconciliation, and the art of healing. The women are part of a group of displaced women from the community of Mampuján in the Montes de Maria region of Colombia which was destroyed from the conflict. Drawing on Afro-Caribbean storytelling and local textile art traditions, the group depict the atrocities they had suffered as a community and document their displacement, a central component to their process of healing and re-building.

Later in the week CDPB had the honour of hosting the Ambassador and his delegation in Belfast for a day full of engagements and fruitful conversations concerning the shared learnings from the Colombian and NI peace processes, including being welcomed by the Speaker of the Assembly, Alex Maskey, at Stormont before engaging with a delegation of political leaders from Northern Ireland. The Women Weavers of Mampuján engaged with various individuals from across Northern Ireland in a workshop at Ulster University, *Stitching our Stories: Displacement, Healing, New Possibilities*, in partnership with Conflict Textiles. The Ambassador was welcomed to Ulster University later in the day by Vice Chancellor Paul Bartholomew to open the new Conflict Textiles exhibit and gave a lecture on the vital role of empathy in the process of reconciliation.

A special thanks to the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council for their vital support in making the workshop possible, Conflict Textiles, and Ulster University and Ulster Presents, especially Professor Duncan Morrow, Professor Brandon Hamber, and Cian Smyth.



## John Smith Trust Belarus Diaspora Fellowship Programme Dec 2023 – March 2024

CDPB was delighted to partner with John Smith Trust and help to co-design and deliver their Belarus Diaspora Fellowship Programme, which supported six Belarusian professionals living in exile.

The programme included bespoke individual action plans and a collective action plan for the group, residential programmes in Warsaw, London, and Oxford, five online learning sessions, and individual mentoring and coaching.





## Polka 21, Warsaw March 2024

CDPB's CEO Eva Grosman was delighted to attend the annual Polka 21 conference in Warsaw, joining 400 women (and men) marking the International Women's Day. Eva spoke on the panel representing Polish diaspora and joined the discussion on shared heritage, identity, UK-Poland relations, and the future of global Poland.



## Contact details

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