

The Challenges of Community Foundations in Supporting Third Sector Activity in Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from Northern Ireland

Gráinne Kelly, Emerging Leader, International Fellows Program ~ 2005

Abstract

Gráinne Kelly explores the role that community foundations can play in supporting peacebuilding initiatives in regions emerging from violent conflict. Her discussion focuses on the example of Northern Ireland, a society struggling to come to terms with a thirty-year conflict that has caused underdevelopment, political instability, and social division. She draws on lessons from other post-conflict regions, including South Africa and Israel, and considers the work of community foundations in the United States that address racial tensions.

Ms. Kelly identifies several key questions:

- What challenges do community foundations face when working within divided societies?
- How do community foundations ensure adequate accountability and transparency in post-conflict societies?
- How do community foundations achieve adequate representation from all constituencies, many of whom have had antagonistic relationships?
- How do community foundations balance long-term needs, while addressing the immediate, often urgent, situations that are likely to erupt as a region moves from conflict to peace?

Employing the characteristics developed by the Worldwide Initiative of Grantmakers (WINGS) to identify community foundations, Ms. Kelly concludes that the value of a community foundation lies in its ability to bring people together. Having identified the challenges that community-based foundations may face, Ms. Kelly moves on to consider the many benefits that such a structure can bring to a community emerging from conflicts.

To request the full version of the paper, please click [here](#)

