



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

Imagine Project

Peace Walls
Attitudinal Survey
Summary of Results
October 2017



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The terms PUL and CNR are commonly used in Northern Ireland when referring to both communities. They have been used in this report:

PUL Protestant Unionist Loyalist

CNR Catholic Nationalist Republican

Foreword

Today, almost 50 years since the first Peace Wall was built, more than 100 physical structures remain as visible symbols of continued division and segregation. The IFI Peace Walls Programme is currently working with local communities impacted by approximately 66 of these barriers. There should be no place for physical separation barriers in a truly reconciled society but we have not yet reached that stage and, given that the risks associated with barrier removal processes lie almost exclusively with those residents and communities most impacted by their presence, it is right that we prioritise their views and concerns while supporting them to bring about positive change if and when they decide the time is right.

The vast majority of physical barriers are located within communities that have suffered disproportionately during the conflict. These interface areas continue to endure high levels of multiple deprivation including educational under-achievement, mental and physical health inequalities, inadequate facilities, poor delivery of public services, physical blight and neglect. Investment potential remains limited with significant Agency and political collaborative will and effort required to change this negative dynamic. At this stage in our Peace Process, and four years since the Together Building a United Community (TBUC) pledge on the removal of barriers by 2023, local communities deserve to know what is planned in terms of delivery, how they will be involved in the decision-making and what protections will be offered to them.

This Imagine baseline attitudinal survey report is one of six carried out in local communities impacted by physical barriers as part of the International Fund for Ireland's Peace Walls Programme. Unlike other studies, these surveys concentrate on the views of those most affected by change to the barriers, the people who live closest to them and who would be taking the biggest risks. The surveys show that fear continues to be a key issue for many, yet most want to see physical change in place for future generations. Positive change will only be enabled when agencies work together to ensure local voice is prioritised and after-care protection of life and property is in place and effective.

The findings from Imagine include:

- While only 5% indicated that they would like the walls to come down now with 37% wanting no change at present, an encouraging 66% would like to see change in the lifetime of their children/grandchildren.
- In terms of the purpose of the peace walls, 70% of the PUL community felt they enabled them to exist as a community and to celebrate their culture freely while in the CNR community, 86% felt they inhibited access to other areas and services. That said, 95% felt that the barriers protected them from the 'other' community.



- However, most respondents reported that the removal of barriers and the investment in the Girdwood Shared Space project had been positive for the areas and both communities identified the need for increased community engagement with young people through targeted programmes to give them a stake in their community.
- Only 14% recorded regular contact with their neighbours on the other side of the barriers with a significant 44% recording no contact at all. Clearly this is a challenge but one that the locally embedded PWP can and will tackle in the coming period.

These results are significant and indicate that communities are willing, with support, to work towards positive change. While challenging, it underscores that if progress is to be realised, community goodwill and ambition must be met in full by tangible action from relevant statutory authorities backed by strong political leadership. Ring-fenced resources and funding is part of delivering change as is the need for a detailed and considered strategy that aligns the efforts of those who own the physical structures, including the Department of Justice, local authorities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and others. Without this, we may ultimately be taking communities to a place where they cannot advance any further, causing frustration and anger and effectively negating progress made.

Adrian Johnston

Chairman, International Fund for Ireland



Imagine Foreword

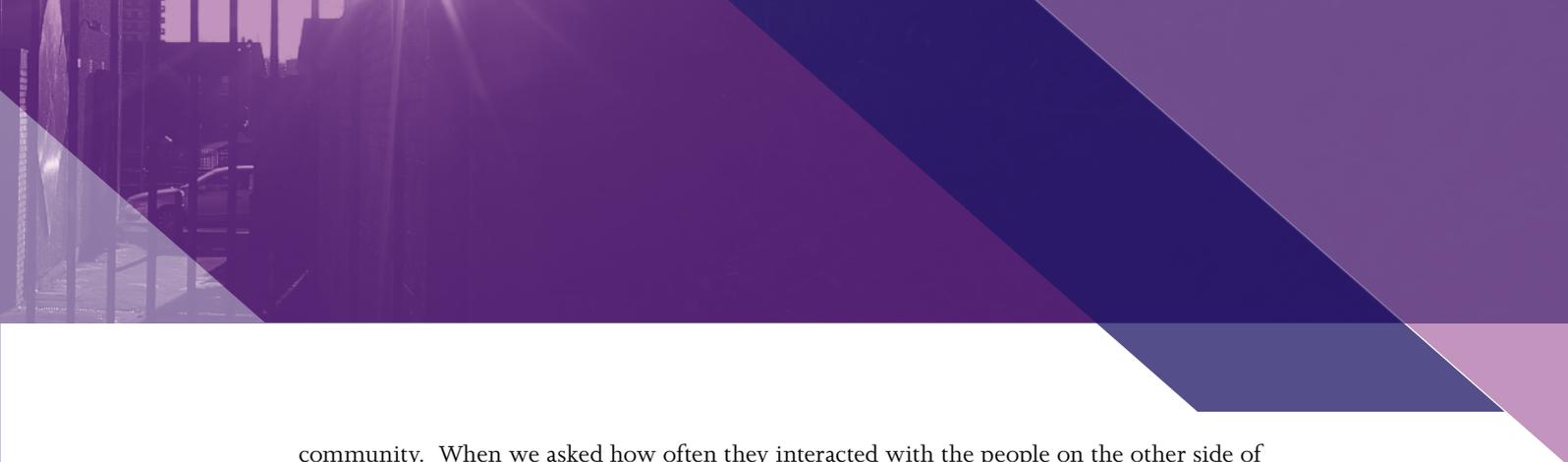
The Imagine Peace Walls Programme started in January 2014 and was the last of the IFI peace wall programmes to come on board.

The University of Ulster conducted two surveys across Northern Ireland exploring Public Attitudes to Peace Walls. Their findings showed that there was a toughening of attitudes around peace wall removal. The 2012 survey indicated that 44% of participants would like to see the walls come down sometime in the future, in their 2015 survey, this statistic dropped to 35%. On the back of this research we wanted to conduct our own survey to see how the Lower Oldpark and Cliftonville communities responded and to give every resident an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Many put this change in attitude down to tensions around flags, emblems and parading. We believe that the government announcement in 2013, that the 2023 deadline for the removal of all Peace Walls, was a key factor in the hardening of attitudes.

We decided to survey 50 homes on each side of our Peace Wall and due to a high interest we ended up completing 100 on each side (219 in total). We wanted to know and record local views of those most impacted by the Peace Walls.

Some of our key findings of our survey were firstly around interaction with the 'other community.' Over 50% said they did occasionally, often or very often interact with the other



community. When we asked how often they interacted with the people on the other side of the Peace Wall the figures dropped significantly to 14%. These findings indicated to us that we have a role to play in providing opportunities for residents to meet across the wall.

The starkest finding in our survey was that less than 5% would like the peace walls removed now and 36.2% would like them to be removed sometime in the future. 66% of residents expressed the desire that the barriers would be removed in the lives of their children and grandchildren. Young people were not represented fully in this survey and we are addressing this through our youth programmes. Moving forward we are due to complete a youth survey with young people living directly at the interface.

The project has had many successes in removing blight in both areas and engaging with communities around peace wall removal. The project allows for local residents to drive forward changes they would like to see and improve the quality of life for local people.

Our Attitudinal Survey has helped us to plan ahead for our work with residents most impacted by the barriers and therefore most affected by any potential changes. It has also enabled us to plan for good relations work and enhanced youth engagement.

Sincere thanks to those residents who gave us the time needed to complete the face to face surveys. Without your input, we could not have extracted the data needed to inform our Action Plan for the coming period. We will keep you regularly informed of our work and our many planned activities and events.

Sarah Lorimer and Malachy Mulgrew,
PWP Project Officers.

Introduction

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, considerable progress has been made to address the legacy of division with successive Northern Ireland Life & Times (NILT) surveys signifying public approval of improved community relations and a desire to move towards a fully-realised shared society.¹

However, Northern Ireland remains a society dominated by the existence of the 'Peace Walls' with such structures providing a constant physical reminder of the divisions that remain.

The Peace Walls Programme (henceforth PWP) is an initiative developed and funded by the International Fund for Ireland (The Fund) since 2011/2012 to assist communities most impacted by the peace walls and physical barriers due to their proximity to these structures.

It aims to empower these residents to reach a position where they feel safe and ready to begin the dialogue necessary for the successful dismantling of interface barriers and have confidence in and a positive attitude to barrier reduction and/or removal.

The PWP operates within a policy context dominated by the 'Together Building a United Community' (TBUC) Strategy' (NIE, 2013). Central to this strategy is a policy commitment to remove all interface barriers by 2023 in consultation with those most affected (i.e. those living closest to the barriers) and the implementation of an 'Interface Barrier Support Package' to enable this to happen.

Gormley-Heenan et al. (2015) have highlighted that the TBUC strategy faces a number of difficulties regarding its capacity to realise this commitment. This is in part due to the continuing inconsistency as regards what constitutes a 'peace wall' with the figures differing between 53 (Department of Justice figures, 2013) and 116 (Belfast Interface Project figures, 2017).

Moreover, there is a lack of clarity in relation to the role communities can actually play in the process, how their viewpoints can be measured over time and how 'confidence' and 'consensus' can be considered to have been met.

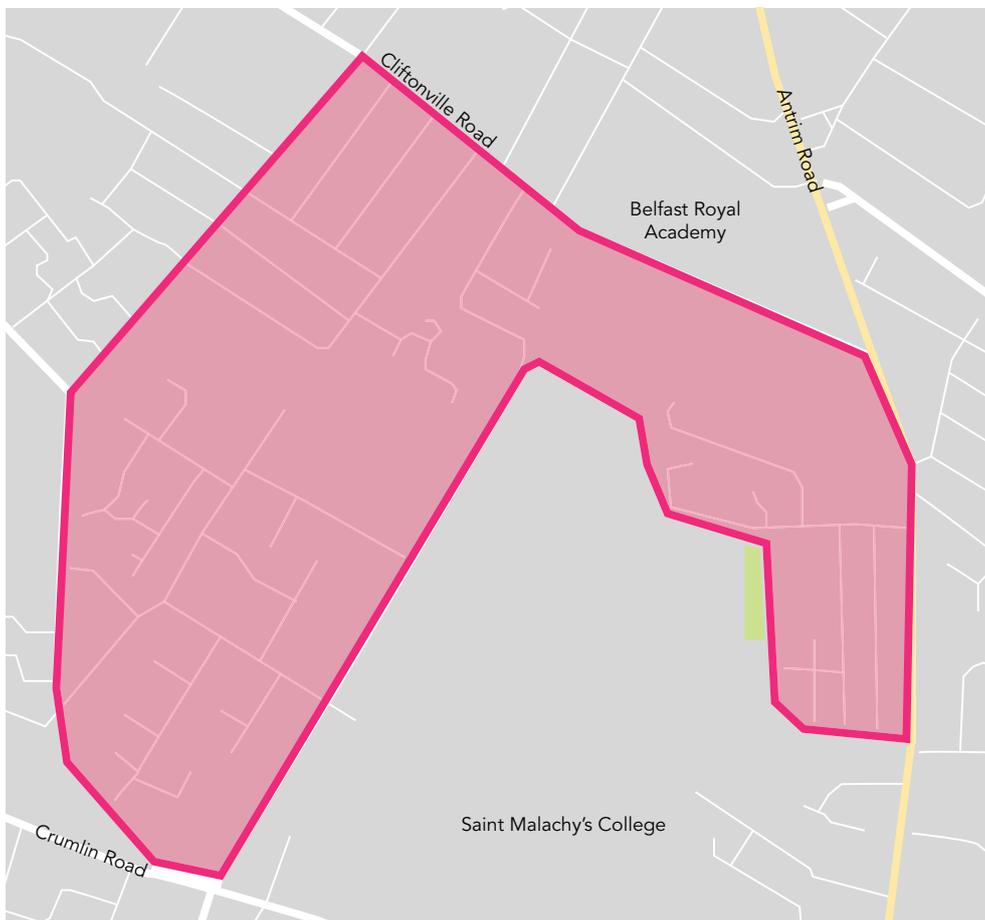
Naming a deadline has raised a concern within some communities that implementation of the strategy will occur from the 'top-down' and be acted on without relevant consultation and input from those most affected.

Additionally, as of June 2017, the NI Executive has failed to agree on the value of an

'Interface Barrier Support Package' which underscores scepticism within communities that resources will not be made available for change to occur.

These concerns are strengthened by the current political instability caused by the absence of a power-sharing administration at Stormont.

Map 1: Imagine Engagement Zone



The Peace Walls Programme

Engagement with the PWP occurs through grassroots programmes aimed at developing and delivering a range of confidence and relationship-building interventions within and between interface communities. These are facilitated by community representatives in collaboration with relevant statutory agencies.

The Programme has been in operation in the Lower Oldpark and Cliftonville areas since 2014 and delivered through the IMAGINE programme, a partnership between Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (CCRF) and Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA).

Respondents from this survey are resident across four separate Super Output Areas (SOAs). The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) (2010) ranks all four of these SOAs within the top 10% of most deprived areas in relation to multiple deprivation measures.

To date, IMAGINE has delivered substantial interventions leading to the successful alteration/removal of some interface barriers and the amending or re-imaging of others.

The project has reported such success has only been possible with full consultation with residents most impacted at every stage of the process. Residents have given favourable reviews of the changes thus far.

IMAGINE has conducted a range of community consultations/community surveys and has engaged residents in focussed and progressive development workshops around issues relating to the peace walls, the environment, community safety and the conditions needed to transform barriers without compromising security.

The project has also engaged the Ulster University to create a visioning tool of what sites would look like with proposed changes and have conducted Information days in both communities for resident feedback.

This on-going engagement and consultation has already resulted in both physical and attitudinal change.

IMAGINE has been heavily involved in the regeneration of a former Army Barracks at Girdwood and the development of 'The Girdwood Community Hub' which was officially opened in January 2016. This former contentious space was designed to generate a peace and reconciliation centre, using leisure based activities to bring people together in a shared space.

Additional work has resulted in:

- Removal of an unused fence close to the interface at Cliftonpark Avenue in consultation with the local community and assistance from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE);



- Removal of a wall running adjacent to the Peace Wall at Manor Street in June 2014 following community consultation and in conjunction with the Department of Justice (DoJ);
- Replacement of a brick wall with metal cladding on top with a new paladin fence running along Cliftonpark Avenue.
- Removal of metal railings and other blight at same site.
- Re-imaging of palisade fence at Manor Street;
- Re-imaging of area at the Antrim Road end of the former Girdwood Barracks site with a new paladin fence of 2.4mtrs in height and open access into the Girdwood Community Hub;
- Removal of a large military-style metal fence running the full length of the former Girdwood Barracks site and Replaced with a new paladin fence 2.4mtrs in height;
- Removal of an old army sangar and concrete bollards at Cliftonpark Avenue; and
- Replacement of a brick wall with cladding and barbed wire on top at the former Girdwood Barracks site with a new see through paladin fence running the length of the

new Girdwood site. There is open access at each end of this new fence for vehicles and pedestrians.

IMAGINE reports that on-going engagement has enabled and empowered residents to express their hopes, fears and aspirations as well as comment on the state of community relations, their sense of safety and confidence levels.

It has provided a deeper understanding of the aspirations of those living in this interface area and encouraged a greater desire by residents for partnership working and to become more active in leading and influencing the change they wish to see within their area.

Despite commitments in both the Programme for Government (2011-2015) and within the TBUC strategy document (2013) that change to the barriers will only happen in consultation with communities most affected, there remains limited quantitative data on residents' views to such change.

To address this and in order to aid planning and development of the second phase of the programme and deliver the wider outcome of the PWP, IMAGINE carried out a comprehensive, site-specific community survey in 2016 and gathered survey data from 219 of the most impacted residents at seven identified sites.

This summary report highlights the findings of this main report.

The objective of the survey is to baseline attitudinal positions from residents of both community backgrounds in order to establish an area-specific profile and provide PWP staff with information to aid the development of future initiatives from an evidence base.

This research briefing paper outlines some of the key findings from the survey in relation to residents' key concerns about the peace walls, their current attitudes towards the role of the peace walls, the current status of community relations in the area and views on the future status of the barriers. They are presented in relation to results from all respondents and from both communities (when relevant) and are discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this briefing paper.

They indicate both the opportunities and challenge that IMAGINE face in meeting the aims and objectives of the PWP within this area.



Community Safety: Perceptions & Realities

Key Finding 1: Safety And Security Concerns Remain An Issue In The Area

56% of all respondents have lived in the area for over fifteen years.

81% feel 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' living in the area.

92% of the CNR community report that they feel 'very' or 'fairly' safe in comparison to 73% of the PUL community.

63% of all respondents name 'youths loitering' as a major cause for concern.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is also identified as a key concern at the interfaces including speeding vehicles (59%), dumping of waste and rubbish (59%) and vandalism/graffiti (52%).

58% of all respondents identify interface incidents as a key concern in their area.

51% of all respondents identify community safety as a key concern in their area.

96% of all respondents identify that the peace walls made them feel safe.

95% of all respondents identify that the peace walls protected them from the other community.

37% do not want any change to the barriers at the present time.

A key finding within the data is that community safety and security remains a central issue in this area and as such presents an obstacle to the reduction and/or removal of the peace walls and the progress of the PWP. Over half of all respondents identified concerns about interface incidents (58%) and community safety (51%) as key concerns in their areas. Although feelings of safety regarding living in this area were reported at 81%, almost all respondents identified that the main functions of the peace walls were their security and safety roles which implies that the existence of the barriers are related to these high reported levels of safety.

Residents also indicated a concern about the behaviour of young people in the area. These opinions focused predominantly on 'youths loitering' (63%) and reported anti-social behaviour. These findings indicate that there is a need for greater inter-generational contact and youth programmes to both address this perception and resolve issues. These activities may be helpful in encouraging younger people to feel they have a stake in their communities and showcase the positive contributions they can make.

It should be noted that in relation to both key concerns and the main functions of the barriers, the question in this survey was 'closed' so respondents did not have the opportunity to express opinions outside of the options given. However, residents did report that the barriers made them feel safe (96%) and protected them from the other community (95%) much more heavily than the non-security option (segregation of communities) which was reported at a much lower level of 69%.

This suggests that the earlier high reported levels of safety may be in part reliant on the existence of the peace walls. This need to 'feel' safe is understandable given that over half of all residents have lived in this area for over 15 years and may have witnessed sectarian violence, interface incidents, seasonal tensions and contentious parading.

The data overall indicates that a significant number of respondents hold issues of trust relating to barrier removal. This is supported by 37% of all respondents reporting that they want 'no change' to the barriers at the present time. Building greater trust in the positive aspects of barrier removal and providing evidence of alternative and adequate security arrangements is essential for progress to be made which underscores the necessity for the TBUC Barrier Interface Support Package to be agreed and put in place as soon as possible.

There are challenges for the PWP in that 'feelings' of safety are both subjective and open to influence. However, as the PWP is facilitated at a grassroots level, IMAGINE is in a position to gauge how they can work with local communities to most effectively address these safety fears and security concerns.

Key Concerns in the Area and the Impact of the Peace Walls

Key Finding 2: There Are Significant Differences Between Both Communities In Relation To Issues Of Concern In The Area And The Positive Impact Of The Barriers.

The PUL community identified 'dumping of waste' (69%), youths loitering (58%) and vandalism/graffiti (57%) as their three main issues of concern within the area.

CNR respondents identified youths loitering (69%), speeding vehicles (68%) and interface incidents (63%) as their three main issues of concern within the area.

The PUL community linked the impact of the peace walls primarily to identity concerns with 69% stating that the barriers enabled their existence as a community in the area to continue and allowed them to celebrate their culture freely (70%).

This was much lower within the CNR community at 13% and 14% respectively.

The CNR community identified the impact of the peace walls by what they 'prevented' – namely greater investment in the area (86%), greater access to other areas (58%) and greater access to services (58%). These issues were reported at 53%, 21% and 26% respectively by the PUL community.

The CNR community named greater political and local leadership on a cross-community basis (87%) and more youth programmes (85%) as the primary, secondary and tertiary factors that would need to be in place before change could happen to the barriers [Data analysis].

The PUL also named more youth programmes (60.2%) but the primary and secondary factors were improved safety measures through better policing (68%) and the installation of CCTV cameras (57%).

There were significant differences of opinions between the two communities about both the issues of key concern in their area and the impact of the peace walls on their daily life.

Both communities identified issues with young people 'loitering' (PUL=58% and CNR=69%), and the need for more youth programmes as the key factor that would encourage movement towards change to the barriers. However, they disagreed widely regarding the extent of other issues identified with at least ten percentage points between them on each issue.

The PUL community identified 'dumping of waste' (69%) and vandalism/graffiti (57%) as their other main issues of concern whilst the CNR community identified youths speeding vehicles (68%) and interface incidents (63%) as theirs.

These differences were even greater in relation to the impact of the walls with a difference of 50+ percentage points between the issues identified. The PUL community linked the impact of the peace walls primarily to identity concerns with 69% stating that the barriers enabled the continuation of their existence as a community in the area and allowed them to celebrate their culture freely (70%).

This is a significant finding for IMAGINE indicating, as it does, the difficulties they may face in encouraging and persuading the PUL community to participate in and support the PWP

if they continue to view the barriers as inextricably linked to protecting their community identity and existence.

These issues were not identified to any significant extent within the CNR community at 13% and 14% respectively. Rather, the CNR community identified the impact of the peace walls by what they 'prevented' particularly in relation to inward investment and access to services/ other areas. This indicates a path for IMAGINE to encourage the CNR community towards considering barrier removal if it could be shown that such action would enable regeneration of the area and greater accessibility.

The two communities also differed on what they felt was necessary to be in place before change could happen/encourage change to happen. The PUL community focused strongly on improved safety and security features and better policing which may lead to increased feelings of safety living in the area. Naming these as the key factors that could impact on changing attitudes indicates that the PUL community has specific safety and security fears. This is supported by 71% of the PUL community reporting as feeling 'very' or 'fairly' safe living in the area in comparison to 92% of the CNR community.

The CNR community focussed on the need for greater political and local leadership on a cross-community basis (87%) as the factors that would need to be in place before change could happen to the barriers.

IMAGINE may wish to consider why such disparities exist between the two communities in relation to these concerns and if these are simply indicative of area-specific issues or if there are underlying reasons why one community holds greater concerns about particular issues in comparison to the other. This may require the PWP to deliver parallel single identity work to address such disparities.

Interaction and Community Relations

Key Finding 3: Quantity And Quality Of Community Relations Is Poor Across Both Communities But Poorer Within The CNR Community

31% of all respondents stated they had contact with the 'other' community on a regular basis (very/fairly often) whilst 45% stated that this rarely or never happened.

This declined sharply to 14% of all respondents reporting regular contact with the community on the 'other side of the peace wall' with 64% stating that such contact rarely or never happened.

49% of all respondents reported that interaction was 'always' or mostly positive with only 6% responding that interaction was 'always' negative.

36% of all respondents reported a level of ambivalence in relation to interaction.

If no change to the barriers occurred, the second most impacted factor identified was community relations.

Respondents from both communities reported greater levels of 'poor interaction' (rare/never) than regular interaction.

43% of PUL and 47% of CNR respondents naming interaction occurring with the 'other' community as happening on a 'rare' basis or never happening at all.

CNR respondents were much less likely to report regular interaction with 24% doing so in comparison to 37% of PUL respondents.

Significant percentages of both communities (PUL=19% and CNR=29%) indicated 'occasional' interaction.

Differences between the two communities lessened in relation to regular interaction with the community on the other side of the peace walls.

18% of PUL respondents naming regular interaction occurring in comparison to 10% of CNR respondents.

Almost half (48%) of Protestant respondents reported 'never' interacting with those on the 'other side of the barriers' as did 40% of CNR respondents.

Across the two communities, PUL respondents reported much higher positive experiences (61%) with a small 6% considering such interaction as 'always' negative'.

Respondents from the CNR community reported lesser positive experiences (37%) with 6% stating that interaction was always 'negative'.

The CNR community report higher levels of positive experiences regarding interaction between the two communities.

These findings indicate both challenges and opportunities for IMAGINE. At present, it is clear that poor inter-community relations are a significant issue across this area given the high levels of non-interaction with the other community. These are poor overall in this area and significantly lower in relation to the community on the 'other side' of the barriers. Almost two-thirds (64%) of all respondents reported 'rare' or 'no' contact with their neighbours.

Across the two communities, 43% of the PUL community and 47% of the CNR community describe interaction with the 'other community' as 'rare' or never occurring. However CNR respondents were also much less likely to report regular interaction with 24% doing so

in comparison to 37% of PUL respondents. It should be noted that significant percentages of both communities indicated 'occasional' interaction. This indicates an opportunity for IMAGINE to increase interaction overall by focusing on increasing interaction within this group.

When considering interaction with those on the 'other side of the peace walls', regular interaction declined and non-interaction increased significantly. Differences between the two communities lessened in relation to regular interaction with 18% of PUL respondents naming regular interaction occurring with the community on the other side of the peace walls in comparison to 10% of CNR respondents. However, there was further stark reporting regarding both communities in relation to 'never' having interaction with those on the other side of the barriers with almost half (48%) of PUL respondents maintaining that this was the case and 40% of CNR respondents reporting the same.

These figures indicate that there seems to be a 'dramatic' gap between interaction with the 'other' community and the community on the 'other' side of the peace wall which may indicate that improving cross-community relations needs to be focused specifically on increased relationship-building between the two communities living directly beside the peace walls. IMAGINE also needs to be mindful of the larger percentages within both communities who report no interaction at all.

Added to this, across the two communities, PUL respondents reported much higher positive experiences (61%) in comparison to the CNR community. Changing these attitudes presents a challenge to IMAGINE, although it should also be noted that 45% of CNR respondents and 29% of the PUL community reported interaction as 'neither a positive or negative experience'. This indicates potential for positive attitudinal change towards the 'other' by each community should sustained interventions aimed towards this end continue to happen.

An essential future focus for the PWP is the need to work to promote better inter-community relations given this significant percentage of respondents. Providing more opportunities for the two communities to meet each other at community events or social activities may help with the building of greater inter-community trust. The significant level of ambivalence in relation to interaction (37%) could be developed into better community relations and is within the capability of IMAGINE to develop.

Given that there is also significant awareness within the area that retention of the peace walls has a marked impact on community relations, building on the successful work as illustrated by the regeneration of the Girdwood Hub is essential. Emphasising the positivity of this change, coupled with developing further shared spaces, wider regeneration and a renewed focus on relationship-building, may well increase the potential for positive attitudinal change to the peace walls.

Looking to the Future

Key Finding 3: Quantity And Quality Of Community Relations Is Poor Across Both Communities But Poorer Within The CNR Community

37% of all respondents wished the barriers to maintain their current status.

36% of all respondents wanted the barriers to be removed 'sometime' in the future

20% of all respondents were content to see the barriers reimaged or providing greater accessibility.

48% of respondents could not envisage a time when the barriers would not be there but 18% were unsure if they could envisage this scenario.

66% of respondents were in favour of the barriers being removed within the lifetime of their children or grandchildren.

Respondents identified public and private investment in the area to aid regeneration as being significantly impacted if the barriers were retained.

Respondents identified more youth programmes, greater cross-community political leadership and cross-community local leadership as the primary factors that could contribute to positive attitudinal change towards the barriers.

40% of the CNR community did not want any change to the barriers in comparison to 34% of the PUL community.

Only 4% of the CNR community wanted change to the barriers 'now' in comparison to 6% of the PUL community.

22% of the PUL community wanted change to the barriers 'sometime in the future' in comparison to 53% of the CNR community.

31% of the PUL community wanted to change the barriers looked in comparison to only 1% of the CNR community.

57% of the PUL community could not envisage a time without segregation barriers in comparison to 39% of the CNR community.

Only half of PUL respondents wanted to see the barriers removed within the next generation but a further 13% remained undecided.

Conversely 87% of CNR respondents wanted to see the barriers removed within the next generation whilst only 4% remained undecided.

29% of PUL respondents expressed interest in further involvement with the PWP compared to 57% of CNR respondents.

The final key finding from the survey is an extremely important one for IMAGINE in that there remains a level of caution regarding any change to the barriers in this area with 37% of all respondents stating they wanted 'no change' at the present time. This is supported by only 5% of all respondents stating they wished to see the barriers removed 'now'.

However, despite an existing pessimism that the barriers would ever be removed, there was also a level of cautious welcome for change to the barriers in the future. Thirty-six percent of all respondents reported that they wanted to see the barriers removed at some point in the future and a further 20% were willing to see change to the structures in the interim which provides a route-map for IMAGINE towards longer-term removal.



Based on the survey attitudinal responses, there is also a suggestion that the PUL community believe that the barriers are needed to protect their cultural identity and guarantee the continuing existence of their community within this area. Identifying and addressing the reasons underpinning these opinions may have a corresponding positive impact on their attitudes towards the removal or reduction of the barriers. However, it does imply that much greater relationship-building and developing trust between the two communities is essential before change can occur.

This caution towards change exists side-by-side with an expressed hope that more permanent change could happen within the next generation with two-thirds of all respondents clearly stating they did not wish for their children/grandchildren to live with the structures. This is supported further by respondents naming 'more youth programmes' as the key factor towards attitudinal change by addressing issues of trust and greater relationship-building within this younger generation.

The data suggests that overall the PUL community prefer a slower pace towards removal of the barriers whilst just over half remain unconvinced that change needs to happen. This is supported by the much lower percentages of this community reporting an interest in becoming directly involved in the PWP. This finding indicates the need for IMAGINE to focus on reducing fear within the PUL community in order to convince them that change is both viable and worthwhile. This may require the PWP to deliver significant collaborative work to break down barriers and build greater levels of trust.

The context within which the PWP is operating must also be considered. This survey collated the views of people living in some of the most high-profile areas in terms of the impact of the conflict. Tensions remain a part of their lived experience and there is a strong feeling within the community that they have not received the investment and regeneration that other parts of Belfast have undergone. This is coupled with a reporting by respondents that the area needs stronger cross-community political and local leadership to address issues.

Attending to security fears and brokering agreement on appropriate security measures could also help to reduce fear within and between communities and potentially create the conditions where people feel ready to consider barrier reduction or removal.

Comments about the need for greater regeneration and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the area provide IMAGINE with an opportunity to highlight the positives that such change has brought and could continue to bring to this area. This would require significant political and stakeholder buy-in to transform the areas sufficiently to enable barrier removal and site regeneration. This would take a much greater level of political will and cross-community agreement (as identified and called for by respondents) than has been present to date.

Conclusion

The survey data presents clear challenges for IMAGINE in developing their work in this area but also offers them a clear baseline position to both extend their work and measure future change from initiatives developed to deal with the pressing concerns raised by residents in the area.

A key challenge is to develop work that can help to change the current mindset within the PUL community that the barriers are essential for the protection of their culture and existence in the area. Only when this is achieved will there be any real desire to consider alternatives to segregation barriers. Parallel work is also required in the CNR community as there are huge challenges to overcome to encourage positive attitudinal change towards the other community, particularly in relation to improving inter-community relationships and trust-building.

Poor inter-community interaction in both communities with those living on the other side of the barriers needs addressed to begin the process of better relations and provide for opportunities to plan for further community regeneration together.

The data also highlights opportunities for development and progress. Hope stills exists that change to the barriers will happen for future generations. The strength of respondents' views in relation to ongoing consultation underpins the validity of the PWP approach and the continuance of this at every stage of the process will be key to enabling future change. IMAGINE must continue to build greater community confidence and consensus that change to the barriers can and will bring positive outcomes for this area. This however is tempered with the reality that any such change will require much greater inter-agency collaboration, political leadership and resource support. Positive change as illustrated by the Girdwood Hub can be utilised by IMAGINE as symbolic of what is possible in this area through community consensus and working together towards change.

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Footnotes

1. Morrow, D. et al. The Long View of Community Relations in Northern Ireland: 1998 – 2012 (2013) p.1.
2. Ulster University have carried out such studies in 2012 and 2015.
3. Safety concerns are included in this as qualitative evidence from the surveys indicates that this is a fear of potential violence rather than actual violence.



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To view an electronic copy of this summary report or the full survey findings for all projects in the Peace Walls Programme visit www.internationalfundforireland.com or contact the local Peace Wall Project directly at:

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