

**Smashing Times – Theatre for Change  
Performance, Training, Participation**

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PRESS RELEASE  
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**LAUNCH OF ‘ACTING FOR PEACE’ PROJECT TO PROMOTE RECONCILIATION  
IN SOUTHERN BORDER COUNTIES**

An innovative arts based programme ‘Acting for Peace’ was launched today, utilising drama and theatre to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding within the southern border counties of Cavan, Leitrim, Louth and Monaghan.

Funded by the International Fund for Ireland, the two-year project will be implemented by the Smashing Times Theatre Company.

The project uses drama and theatre activities within Cavan, Leitrim, Louth and Monaghan to bring people together to explore themes that are a consequence of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Southern Border counties. The project promotes equality, diversity and the coming together of different communities in mutual understanding and respect.

As part of this project the company will roll out a series of exciting events:

1. 30 Reconciliation through Drama Workshops conducted with local community and youth groups in the southern border counties.
2. Four Seminars for Dialogue & Training with cross-border and cross-community participation
3. Creation of a Professional Performance and all performances followed by post-show discussions to discuss issues raised

Speaking at the launch, Gwen Lanigan, Development Officer, International Fund for Ireland said: “The Acting for Peace Project has the potential to make real and sustainable impacts. It is an innovative, imaginative and interesting way in bringing people together through using theatre, workshops, discussions groups as well as other activities.

This project fits well with the Fund’s overriding objective of promoting peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland. ‘Acting for Peace’ will offer the opportunity for community groups and young people to come together with their peers from across different communities and build friendships. These shared experiences help young people overcome fear and suspicion and create the building blocks for a shared future”.

Speaking about the project Mary Moynihan, Artistic Director of Smashing Times said: “I would like to express our gratitude to the International Fund for Ireland for the vital financial support to make this project possible. The work of Smashing Times connects and resonates with audiences through its sense of truth and deep emotional engagement and through our commitment to promote participation and empowerment for citizens through high quality artistic processes. **Acting for Peace** connects and engages with audiences through work that is both entertaining and challenging bringing together different communities through creative processes and performances. As the American theatre practitioner Viola Spolin said, we are aiming to break through walls that keep us from the unknown, ourselves and each other.”

Funding of €192,440 has been provided by the International Fund for Ireland for the 'Acting for Peace Project.

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### **About the International Fund for Ireland**

The International Fund for Ireland is an independent, international organisation established by the Irish and British Governments in 1986. The Fund's main objectives are to promote economic and social advance and encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists throughout Ireland.

Contributors to the Fund are the United States of America, the European Union, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Since its inception, the Fund has committed more than £695m/€869m to a wide variety of projects in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties. Developing and funding initiatives that tackle segregation and promote integration to build a lasting peace in Northern Ireland and the southern border counties is a key priority for the Fund.

### **Further information:**

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