

# Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2021	1
Strategic plan 2018-2021	2
Corrymeela: transforming division through human encounter	2
Developing a Strategic Approach in A Changing Landscape of Peacebuilding and Reconciliation.	4
Corrymeela: Vision, Mission and Values.	5
Programme Focus Areas:	7
Strategic Plan Outline, 2018-2021	8
Strategic Aim 1 Programmes of Peace and Reconciliation	8
Strategic Aim 2: Communications about Peace and Reconciliation.	11
Strategic Aim 3: People of Peace and Reconciliation	12
Strategic Aim 4. A Place of Peace and Reconciliation.	14
Strategic Aim 5. Governance for Peace and Reconciliation.	16
Strategic Aim 6. Financial Sustainability for Peace and Reconciliation.	17

# Strategic plan 2018-2021

## **Corrymeela: transforming division through human encounter**

Corrymeela began in 1965 and is today the oldest peace-building organisation on the island of Ireland. Corrymeela works to transform division through human encounter: repairing relationships within and between fractured communities, as well as addressing the relational, societal, structural and power dynamics that contribute to sectarian conflict. Corrymeela's work began before the Troubles, and has, over more than 50 years, been a constant witness to a different way of responding to division.

The past twenty years since the landmark 1998 Peace Agreement have seen Northern Ireland move further away from sectarianism, a process supported by individuals, communities, politics, organisations and economic incentives. The achievements of this work are undeniable and unfinished.

Despite various political agreements since 1998, Corrymeela's work remains relevant and essential in 2018, as we strive to promote reconciliation between people of differing backgrounds and beliefs. Corrymeela works alongside groups as they respond to established and emerging conflicts, guided by values of relationships, welcome, reconciliation, communication and honesty.

Our belief is that our society — at both grassroots and leadership levels — will continue to embed the truth that peace is demonstrated in respectful and creative engagement across our common life. Arguments that once were deadly can occur within a framework of dignity. Disagreements can open a pathway to deeper democratic dialogue rather than sectarian entrenchment.

Corrymeela provides a high quality residential centre that hosts over 10,000 participants per year, and provides facilities for a lived community of volunteers and staff. Groups from many parts of the world visit our site, learning and sharing with us, as we deepen transformative practices that address the divisions impacting societies.

Our participants come from diverse social and economic backgrounds to experience the truth that sectarianism and conflict can be transformed by a genuine commitment to relationship, conversation and encounter. Division, scapegoating and violence prevent local and global change. By working with community leaders Corrymeela helps embed understandings of power, leadership and transformation as part of an overall vision for societal reconciliation.

Corrymeela works alongside youth and school groups, family and community organisations, faith communities and political parties. In order to transform the legacies of our divided past, we believe in the power of people meeting to share their stories with honesty about the present. These encounters require time, trust, relationship, vulnerability, risk and creativity; they can transform division and contribute to a shared future.

Corrymeela's structure of being both an agency of peace and an open ecumenical Christian community gives us a voice to address contemporary conflicts where history, belief and politics are

often uneasy collaborators. Almost 80% of the world's population has a religious affiliation. Globally, we see the creative and destructive contribution of theologies to questions of land, borders, politics and belonging. We believe that religion, and religious people, can be a vital part of transforming violent divisions. We know this is difficult — we do not stand outside of sectarianism looking in; we are part of a society in which sectarianism flourished. We are part of the problem and we work hard to be part of the solution.

## Developing a Strategic Approach in A Changing Landscape of Peacebuilding and Reconciliation.

This strategic plan has emerged from a wide range of in-depth discussions on the role and priorities of Corrymeela in the challenging world that we inhabit. The key issues for Corrymeela to address are:

- **Continued sectarianism, prejudice and division within Northern Ireland:** the consequence of the Good Friday Agreement has not been reconciliation. Education and housing is as segregated as it has ever been. Corrymeela’s work in this area is as important as it has ever been, but there are much fewer resources available to do this vital work.
- **The legacy of the Troubles:** many people are still trying to cope with the trauma and victimisation that happened to them and their families during the violence. Many others feel that they have not benefitted from the changes brought about by the Good Friday Agreement, and have disengaged from political processes. The power-sharing Government arrangements agreed has proved to very unstable, with political parties unwilling to recognise their inter-dependence and reach compromise for the common good.
- **Brexit:** the decision by the UK to leave the EU has raised the prospect of the return to a border — whether a ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ border — between two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, potentially setting back relationships on the island by decades.
- **Societal Change in Ireland and Britain.** While Ireland’s faith affiliation statistics remain among the highest in Europe they have declined enormously in the past 30 years, mirroring trends elsewhere in Europe. With the revelations of abuse in the churches, the reputation of trust has diminished and in the midst of this, we notice a hunger for belonging in populations. Corrymeela responds to this need by providing inclusive ecumenical experiences of faith, diversity, dialogue and learning about faith/s. Bearing witness to the truth that many people — because of gender or sexuality — have been excluded, Corrymeela focuses particularly on faith experiences that empower those previously disempowered.
- **Migration:** Conflicts and poverty around the world have substantially increased the number of people coming to Britain and Ireland from developing countries, as refugees or asylum-seekers, bringing different needs, languages, cultures and religious traditions and often facing racism and exclusion.
- **Population dynamics:** the structure of society is changing with a rapid increase in the number of older people and increasing awareness and concern about mental health and suicide, particularly among young people. Rapid changes in technology are having a marked effect on how people communicate and learn, providing both opportunities and challenges for many institutions and organisations.

# **Corrymeela: Vision, Mission and Values.**

## **MISSION:**

Transforming division through human encounter

## **VISION:**

A society where divisions are not destructive, where people live, learn and work well with each other.

## **VALUES:**

The following enacted values guide all aspects of our work, both delivery of projects and internal functioning:

### **Relationships:**

At Corrymeela, we believe that relationships — between those involved at Corrymeela; between programme participants; between grassroots and political communities; between new arrivals and settled communities — are vital to the flourishing of work, change and reconciliation. When relationships are valued, dignity and trust can be communicated and deepened.

### **Welcome:**

At Corrymeela, we value hospitality: shared meals; time to get to know each other; and time where we are not only working with each other. We engrain our programmes and meetings with opportunities for hospitality. We are also deliberate in asking structural questions about our hospitality: who is missing at the table? who assumes they are host? who is not invited to the table? who is excluded? who is restrained from participation?

### **Reconciliation:**

No project is achieved without experiences of argument, division and conflict. At Corrymeela we are not surprised when conflict occurs, and we work hard to maximise the creativity inherent in conflict for shared and positive outcomes, both for individuals as well as for communities. We practice the skills of conversation, understanding, collaboration, compromise, apology, forgiveness and reconciliation. Such commitment to practice embodies our mission and deepens the trust between all constituent members of Corrymeela, particularly across positions of responsibility and power.

### **Communication:**

At Corrymeela we engage with over 10,000 people a year. We have volunteers who contribute over 80,000 hours per year and we have both paid staff and temporary support from volunteers. None of this happens without communications systems that are both efficient and gracious. We will never

achieve the perfect practice of communication. Until then, we communicate regularly, are quick to name mistakes and quick to practice forgiveness with each other.

Honesty:

In programme, co-working, financial and accountability structures, we value listening to and telling the truth. We evaluate our programmes, our working relationships, our communications, our feedback systems, our capacity for change and our reporting to our funders. We also bear witness to the truth on matters that matter in our society, and we speak this truth in word and action. This practice is more than a requirement for us, it's a value, and one that enhances our mission to transform division through human encounter.

## Programme Focus Areas:

Since its founding in 1965, Corrymeela has existed to transform divisions through human encounter. With this aim, we have worked with community groups and youth groups; faith structures and educational structures; politicians and pupils; individuals and families. Our work creates temporary communities of people who, together, explore matters that divide them, or cause marginalisation, or impact on their safety and participation. We believe that how we think about politics, community, religion, identity and nationality can influence the daily reality of peace, belonging and reconciliation. So we collaborate with groups for positive impact, not just in what we think, but on we act.

In 2017, we conducted a review of our programmes and discerned four distinct — but overlapping — threads of our work’s focus. These continue to influence our programme development, interventions and collaborations for societal change towards a deeper reconciliation.

**1. Sectarianism** — We recognise that belonging is a fundamental human need and understand sectarianism as ‘belonging gone bad’, where dominance, superiority and exclusion are practiced, leading to entrenchment, threat and lack of opportunity. Our Sectarianism programmes build capacity between diverse groups to deepen mutual interdependence and belonging by addressing fears and differences, building capacity for difficult conversations and collaborating together in active change at the community level and beyond.

**2. Marginalisation** — As we understand it, marginalisation is not simply an experience of feeling on the margins, but a power structure that excludes. With this understanding, our Marginalisation programme seeks to support people who find themselves being pushed to the edges, and also works with groups to help them deepen their practice of inclusion, and dismantle power structures that lead to exclusion.

**3. The Legacies of Conflict** — The Good Friday Agreement is now 20 years old. At Corrymeela we are often challenged by those who wonder why the ongoing work of reconciliation is needed, two decades after a peace accord. The reality is that the Belfast Agreement was a political agreement, but not necessarily a social one. We need to find new ways to address old divisions, and as such, we work with groups to explore the legacies of conflict, repair relationships in the present and rebuild the structures that continue to address violence and division. Our Legacies of Conflict programmes focus on individuals as well as key institutions (particularly education), supporting all to build the capacity and confidence to address the impact of conflict and prevent future outbreaks.

**4. Public Theology** - Public Theology understands that matters of private religion have a public impact. People of faith have been inspired to do all kinds of good work in the world for public good. People of faith have also, unfortunately, contributed to structures that keep people apart rather than draw people together. The last twenty years alone have seen a rise in public consciousness about the impact of fundamentalism, and with it much truth and untruth about the nature of belief. With this in mind, we use the texts, traditions and practice of faiths to help us find ways towards each other, using faith to build bridges of understanding and mutual collaboration rather than walls of distrust.

**Partnerships and Networks:** At Corrymeela’s founding event in 1965, Tuilio Vinay (1909-1996), noted that Corrymeela should be “an open village for all people of good will”. In this way, he set the vision out: to be a collaborative community with a vast array of fruitful partnerships. Corrymeela’s work has always been in partnership with other agencies, organisations and individuals from within and outside our borders.

# Strategic Plan Outline, 2018-2021

## Strategic Aim 1 Programmes of Peace and Reconciliation

**We are in a context — in Ireland, the UK, Europe and globally — where identities, relationships and borders are being challenged and redefined. We will deliver programmes that deepen human encounter across existing and emerging divisions.**

### Priorities:

1.1: Sectarianism. To facilitate the transition of **Youth and Community Groups** from sectarian-driven conflict towards a shared future. We will deliver reconciliation programmes that enhance relationships; deepen social trust; identify alternatives to division; and facilitate participatory leadership.

Over the period 2018-2021, we will:

- Deliver a comprehensive programme on sectarianism which focuses on youth and community groups.
- Build the knowledge, technical skills and expertise in the sectarianism programme area.
- Design and deliver training courses, learning platforms and educational or shared practice exchanges between various sectors working on sectarianism, paramilitarism, radicalisation or youth violence throughout the UK and Ireland.
- Carry out, commission and access appropriate research to ensure Corrymeela's work in this area is evidence-informed and widely shared.
- Develop and increase local and international partnerships with civil society organisations, relevant statutory bodies and service deliver agencies, policy, research and academia to effectively deliver Corrymeela's programme on sectarianism.
- Increase programme funding to support Corrymeela's work on sectarianism.
- Conduct an annual programme review to consolidate learning and monitor the progress of work.

1.2. Marginalisation. To work alongside **Marginalised Groups** to identify and overcome structural barriers to participation. Bearing Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) in mind, we specifically support groups marginalised because of religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

Over the period 2018-2021, we will:

- Deliver a comprehensive programme on marginalisation, focusing on asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants (ASRVM) group and other groups marginalised because of religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- Build the knowledge, technical skills and expertise in the marginalisation programme area.
- Design and deliver training courses, learning platforms and educational or shared practice exchanges between various sectors working with marginalised groups.
- Carry out, commission and access appropriate research to ensure Corrymeela's work in this area



is evidence-informed and widely shared.

- Develop and increase local and international partnerships with civil society organisations, relevant statutory bodies and service deliver agencies, policy, research and academia to effectively deliver Corrymeela's programme on marginalisation.
- Increase programme funding to support Corrymeela's work on marginalisation.
- Conduct an annual programme review to consolidate learning and monitor the progress of work.

1.3: Legacies of Conflict. Recognising the impact of commemoration and partition on Irish-British relations, as well as further afield, we will develop the capacity of **Educators and other Societal Leaders** to ethically explore and learn from the past in order to inform policy, deepen healing and strengthen democratic practice in the present.

Over the period 2018-2021, we will:

- Deliver a comprehensive programme on legacies of conflict, promoting a shared understanding of reconciliation through the education system and in communities.
- Build the knowledge, technical skills and expertise in the legacies of conflict programme area.
- Deliver training, resource development and follow-up work with the education system including leaders, teachers, pupils and wider community.
- Develop community heritage and historical skills projects and events focused on controversial historical periods.
- Lead and organise advocacy and policy events and disseminate publications focused on legacy issues that connect communities with structures of power and seek to influence public policy.
- Engage in collaborative projects with local and international bodies working on legacy issues exchanging best practice.
- Increase programme funding to support Corrymeela's work on legacies of conflict.
- Conduct an annual programme review to consolidate learning and monitor the progress of work.

1.4: Public Theology. To elevate the contribution of **Faith Groups'** understanding and practice of reconciliation. We will deliver Public Theology projects that promote religious literacy and address belonging, power and societal impact.

Over the period 2018-2021, we will:

- Deliver a comprehensive programme on public theology with faith, interfaith and non-faith groups and communities.
- Build the knowledge, technical skills and expertise in the public theology programme area.
- Design and deliver training courses, learning platforms and educational or shared practice exchanges between various sectors engaged in public theology.
- Carry out, commission and access appropriate research to ensure Corrymeela's work in this area is evidence-informed and widely shared.
- Develop and increase local and international partnerships with relevant groups to effectively deliver Corrymeela's programme on public theology.
- Increase programme funding to support Corrymeela's work on public theology.
- Conduct an annual programme review to consolidate learning and monitor the progress of work.

1.5 Corrymeela has a vast network of co-workers and partners, including those who use the centre for their projects of goodwill. We will further group and societal reconciliation by reviewing,

developing and strengthening these strategic connections.

Over the period 2018-21 we will develop and introduce a volunteer alumni network.

1.6 Recruit new groups to participate in Corrymeela's programmes, particularly those disproportionately affected by marginalisation, conflict or sectarianism.

1.7 Further improve Corrymeela's measurement of programme engagement and impact.

## **Strategic Aim 2: Communications about Peace and Reconciliation.**

**“Corrymeela *is* story” (Rev Ray Davey 1915-2012). In the midst of some stresses on our peace process, we will promote public narratives that deepen belonging, participation and democracy.**

### **Prioritising:**

2.1 Amplify narratives of reconciliation, hope and civic courage across media platforms to encourage the deepening of the peace process.

Over the period 2018-21:

- we will increase the number of speeches, interviews, published articles, website hits and social media activity.
- Have eight news items per month on our website (and associated social media platforms) that amplify stories of reconciliation through our programmes: promoting our work, the work of our partners, our funders, and opportunities, particularly those for people who are not resourced to participate in such programmes.

2.2 Gather, package and market key messages of Corrymeela’s programmes for the purpose of sharing practice and informing learning and policy, both at home and abroad.

2.3 Enhance communication with Corrymeela’s funding partners for the purposes of shared learning, and engagement with new audiences.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Develop, implement and review a communications strategy.
- Develop, implement and review an outreach strategy (which will include how Corrymeela serves the local community and engages with external stakeholders across Ireland and across the world).

## **Strategic Aim 3: People of Peace and Reconciliation**

**Enhancing the capacity of all who are part of Corrymeela to meet the challenge of living and working well together.**

### **Prioritising:**

3.1 To hold ourselves to best practice as a charitable organisation, respecting, effectively supporting, and managing our staff and volunteers.

Over the period 2018-21 we will:

- Review staffing requirements and structure and implement the changes agreed.
- Review staff handbook policies and procedures ensuring good communication and consultation with staff.
- Plan and implement a staff appraisal scheme.
- Ensure a training, development and support action plan is developed from training needs highlighted in appraisals.
- Review staff health and well-being and implement a plan to make improvements and assess success.
- Develop, implement and review a social media policy.

3.2 Corrymeela's work would be impossible without 80,000 hours of volunteer work per annum. We will strengthen, grow, and support our volunteer programme to keep volunteering at the heart of Corrymeela.

Over the period 2018-21 we will:

- Review and improve recruitment to ensure that Corrymeela attracts at least half of its volunteers from Ireland (North and South).
- Review and improve training, support and management.
- Ensure that Corrymeela Community Members are informed about and involved in the Volunteer Programme.
- Introduce an alumni scheme.
- Collect and analyse information on the contribution of volunteers to the work of Corrymeela (volunteer hours by task) to ensure that the real cost of all activities is known and that this informs the development of budgets.

3.3 To support all — from latest recruit to founding member — who are part of Corrymeela in their

understanding, capacity and practice of reconciliation. We see this as a priority that is both internal and external.

Over the period 2018-21 we will:

- Arrange a thank you/ celebration event during Volunteer Week each June.
- Develop and introduce a volunteer alumni network and a staff alumni network.

## **Strategic Aim 4. A Place of Peace and Reconciliation.**

**To enhance the quality, inclusiveness and accessibility of Corrymeela's sites and infrastructure to support the 2018 - 2021 strategic plan.**

### **Prioritising:**

4.1 Corrymeela is a place of encounter and reconciliation welcoming participants into community. We will ensure our communication, booking, welcome, hosting and follow-up with participants reflects our ethos.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Make further improvements to our enquiry and bookings process, learning from feedback on our services and best practice in other similar organisations.
- Ensure that volunteers, community members and staff are trained to implement relevant policies and procedures.
- Improve the way in which we collect feedback from people who visit Corrymeela and apply learning as appropriate.

4.2 Improving access, inclusion and welcome throughout all Corrymeela's sites and activities, particularly for those who are marginalised or excluded.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Ensure that facilities are further developed and accessible to all, in line with legislation and best practice.
- Ensure that our pricing policy is sensitive to the different needs of people who use our services.

4.3 The delivery of a developmental vision for Corrymeela's sites, in line with our programmatic focus, supported by appropriate funding.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Engage with statutory agencies, local government and funders to ensure that Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre has suitable, compliant infrastructure.
- Work with Northern Ireland Water on a wastewater treatment project for the Ballycastle Centre.

4.4 Ensure that audio-visual and information technology equipment and systems meet Corrymeela's needs, follow compliance standards, and that appropriate support is available.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Develop, implement and review an information management strategy.
- Undertake a review of audio-visual and information technology needs, secure funding and implement improvements to ensure that Corrymeela can provide modern and professional support to its visitors and guests.
- Ensure that appropriate audio-visual and information technology training is available for volunteers, community members and staff.

## **Strategic Aim 5. Governance for Peace and Reconciliation.**

**To secure Corrymeela's vision and mission by strengthening our governance.**

### **Prioritising:**

5.1 Implement the recommendations of the 2018 governance review: furthering transparent and accountable governance systems for decision making, delegation, compliance, reporting and monitoring.

Over the period 2018-21 we will develop and carry through an implementation plan for the governance review.

5.2 Regularly review the board's governance performance, appraise the performance of each trustee and develop, implement, and review a governance action plan.

Over the period 2018-21 we will:

- Ensure that new Council Members and Office Holders receive induction within one month of election.
- Undertake a skills audit of Council Members.
- Arrange best practice training workshops for Council Members.

5.3 Ensure that Corrymeela has appropriate strategic and operational plans which are effectively implemented, with progress regularly monitored by Council.

Over the period 2018-21 we will:

- Review progress in relation to implementation of the Strategic Plan on a quarterly basis.
- Capture and apply learning in the development of the next Strategic Plan (2021-24).

5.4 Further develop effective management and HR structures that serve the mission of Corrymeela.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Review existing human resources policies, prepare and implement new policies, as required (ensuring good communication and consultation with staff).
- Undertake a remuneration review (ensuring good communication and consultation with staff).



## **Strategic Aim 6. Financial Sustainability for Peace and Reconciliation.**

**To secure Corrymeela's vision and mission by securing our financial sustainability**

### **Prioritising:**

6.1 Sustain financial balance and stability in Corrymeela's budget.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Develop and implement a budget plan to be included in Corrymeela's operational plan (working towards a balanced budget by 31 March 2020).
- Prepare, implement and review a fundraising strategy which will include annual targets to be included in the budget plan.
- Prepare, implement and review an efficiency and cost control plan.
- Undertake quarterly reviews of income and expenditure against budget and report the outcome of these reviews to Council.
- Further improve financial planning and control by reviewing Corrymeela's Financial Controls Policy.
- Ensure that all programmes and events are costed, breakeven points are identified and action is taken to control expenditure.
- Identify and report on key performance indicators, reporting to Council on a quarterly basis.

6.2 Implement a marketing strategy to help us to reach more people and generate more income.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Prepare, implement and review a new marketing strategy (which will include situational analysis, market segmentation, alternate marketing strategies, selected marketing strategy and evaluation).
- Implement and review a new pricing policy to ensure full cost recovery (which will be part of the selected marketing strategy – see previous point).

6.3 To increase our financial capacity to support groups who have been disproportionately affected by marginalisation, conflict or sectarianism to participate in our mission.

Over the period 2018-21 we will introduce a 'Corrymeela Congregations' initiative to raise awareness, further develop links with the local community and raise additional funding for particular groups within the programme themes.

6.4 Increase income from donations, campaigns, grants and new funding partnerships.

Over the period 2018-21, we will:

- Ensure that community members, volunteers and staff are aware of their potential to contribute to fundraising for Corrymeela (and that they have the training and materials required).
- Prepare, implement and review a fundraising strategy.
- Ensure that income generation and fundraising activities are based on research and an accurate assessment of potential giving.
- Ensure that the appropriate level of staffing support and promotional materials are available.