

UN International Day of Peace 2026

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

in a Digitally Transformed World

Peace Seminar

**Monday 21st September
10:00am- 2:00pm**

**Peace Campus,
Monaghan Town**

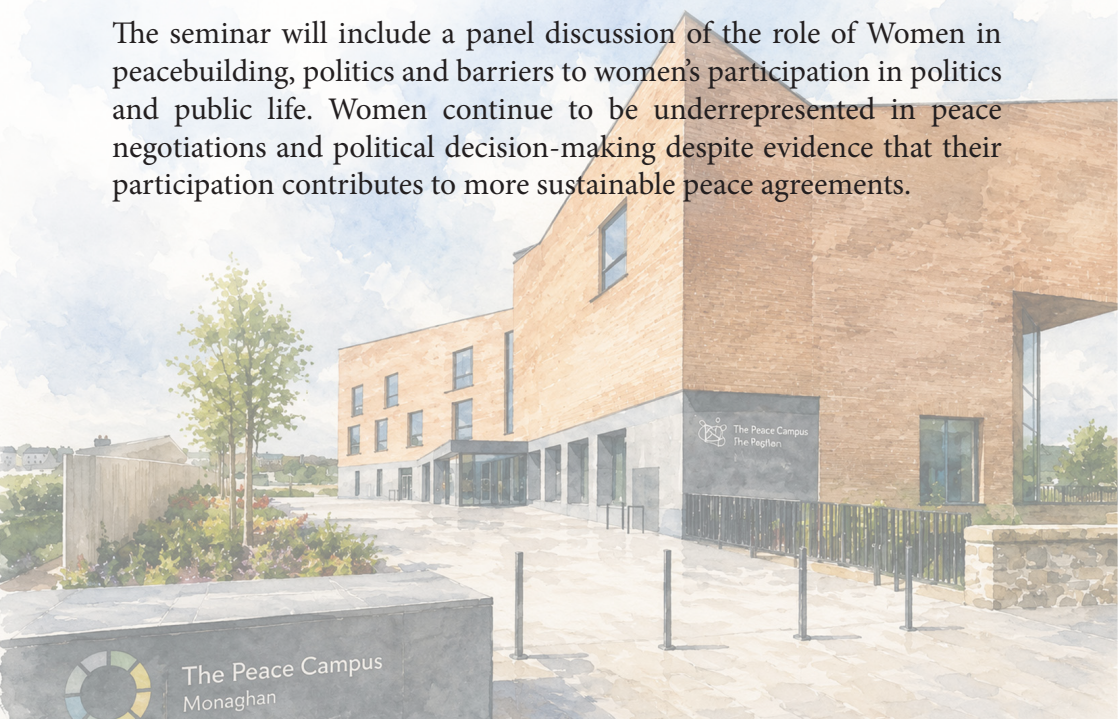
This Seminar has been organised by Monaghan County Council in partnership with the Embassy of Finland, John and Pat Hume Foundation and Glencree Foundation.

The seminar forms part of Monaghan County Council's EU Presidency Programme 2026 and is funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs' Communicating Europe Initiative.

This Peace Campus will host this special seminar to mark the **UN's International Day of Peace**, bringing together policymakers, diplomats, educators, cultural leaders, community organisations and young people to explore the role of peacebuilding in contemporary society.

As conflict, misinformation, technological disruption and political polarisation reshape societies worldwide, new approaches to peacebuilding are required. The seminar will reflect on the Northern Ireland process and learnings, examine the role of the European Union and its member states, including Finland's internationally recognised contributions to mediation, education and conflict resolution, in promoting sustainable peace.

The seminar will include a panel discussion of the role of Women in peacebuilding, politics and barriers to women's participation in politics and public life. Women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations and political decision-making despite evidence that their participation contributes to more sustainable peace agreements.



Objectives

1

Celebrate International Day of Peace.

2

Highlight Finland's contribution to peace, mediation and democratic governance.

3

Reflect on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

4

Examine the role of the European Union on the Peace Process and today's international peace.

5

Explore the impact of AI on peace and democracy.

6

Promote women's leadership in peacebuilding and political life.

7

Foster dialogue between policymakers, communities, educators and young people.

Panel 1

Peacebuilding in Practice: The Northern Ireland Experience, Finland's Role, and the European Dimension

Panel 2

From Screens to Systems: Women Shaping Peace and Politics in a Digital World

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



Audrey Carville

Audrey is an Award-Winning broadcaster and currently presents Morning Ireland on RTÉ Radio One. The bulk of Audrey's career was with the BBC. She presented international news programmes for the BBC World Service. She also anchored programmes for BBC Radio 4 and made documentaries for BBC radio 5Live. Before moving to London, Audrey presented television and radio programmes for BBC Northern Ireland.

Minister Niamh Smyth

Niamh Smyth TD is Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment with responsibility for Trade Promotion, AI and Digital Transformation, becoming the first minister in the State's history to hold a dedicated AI portfolio. Elected to Dáil Éireann in 2016 after serving in local government from 2009, she is the first woman elected as a TD in Cavan. Prior to her ministerial appointment in February 2025, she chaired the Oireachtas Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht.





Ambassador Leena Gardemeister

Ambassador Gardemeister has been in the Embassy of Finland since September 2023. Before this role, Leena was Deputy Director General of the Department for International Trade at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In the Diplomatic Service, she has served as Finland's Ambassador in Tunis from 2017 to 2019 and as Deputy Head of Mission in London from 2013 to 2017. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Gardemeister has served as Director of the Export Control Unit from 2010 to 2013, among other posts. Gardemeister joined the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1999. She holds the degree of Master of Social Sciences.

Dympna McGlade

Dympna is a retired community development and peacebuilding practitioner with over 45 years' experience. She remains active as an advisor to the John & Pat Hume Foundation, co-leads the Peace Summit Partnership, and is a member of Unite the Union's Retired Members Branch in Belfast.





Pat Hynes

Pat has led Glencree's Community and Political Dialogue Programme since 2015. A veteran of the Peace Process, he worked with government ministers during the 1990s and participated in Glencree's Political Dialogue workshops leading up to the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Internationally, he has worked on conflict resolution initiatives in the Middle East and the Papua New Guinea-Bougainville peace process, including serving as Special Adviser to former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. Pat also lectures at Maynooth University and works with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention and Resolution.

Liz McManus

Liz is a former Labour Party politician who served as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party (2002-2007) and Minister of State at the Department of the Environment (1994-1997). She has played significant roles in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives, including the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. An architect by profession, Liz is also an acclaimed novelist, short story writer and former columnist with The Sunday Tribune. Born in Montreal, Canada, she grew up in Ireland and has worked in Derry, Galway and Dublin.



Linzi is a mum of four children, living in North Down where she previously served as an elected representative in the Ards and ND Borough Council, as an Ulster Unionist Party Councillor. Having resigned her seat, she is now a regular political and social commentator and writes opinion pieces for the Irish News. Linzi now advocates for a New Ireland and participates on panels on this discussion. Linzi served for 18yrs in the PSNI before entering politics.

“Peace is not simply inherited. It is built through courage, participation and the willingness to listen.”



glencree
transforming violent conflict
into life-giving peace

