

# OUR ARPILLERA JOURNEY

Museum Services journey with Conflict Textiles began in 2011 with an exhibition in Hargraves Hill Community Centre. A project exploring the Troubles\* in our area - 'Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles' - developed from this exhibition.

Delivered as part of the PEACE!!! Cultural Fusions programme (2011 - 2013), the Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles exhibition opened in Coleraine Town Hall in September 2012. Curated by Roberta Bacic of Conflict Textiles and Museum Services, the exhibition incorporated nearly forty quilts and arpilleras from seven countries which explored different aspects of conflict. These textile artworks inspired much dialogue on the Troubles across the North East area.

## "I had a chance to share my experiences of The Troubles"

Feedback from workshop participant

Groups and individuals from across the North East area then participated in a series of textile workshops creating new artworks documenting their responses to the Troubles. These, along with some of the arpilleras and quilts displayed in Coleraine were presented in *Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles II* at Mid-Antrim Museum, the Braid, Ballymena in 2013.

The arpilleras created through this project, were accessioned into Coleraine Museum's Collection. They explored many themes and the contrasting emotions that many felt and experienced growing up and living through the Troubles. Peace, justice and love was represented alongside bombings, car bombings and life during the Troubles.

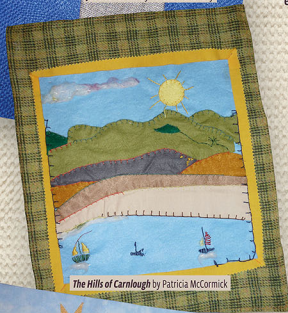
## "The power of women to help change society."

Feedback from workshop participant

The arpilleras allowed the participants to creatively share their experiences of the Troubles here, locally, in our area. The process of sitting, stitching in a group, also encouraged women to open up and talk about the Troubles and how it affected them on a personal level.

Since 2013, these arpilleras have been included in travelling exhibitions, curated by Conflict Textiles, in museums, including the Ulster Museum in Belfast and various universities such as University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. Through these exhibitions they share their message with a wider audience and leave a legacy for future generations to explore.

Our journey with arpilleras and Conflict Textiles has continued to grow and evolve through various different exhibitions and outreach programmes over the last 14 years. It has been hosted across our various museum venues and now we are adding to its story and enriching the Journey of the Arpilleras.



\*The Troubles is a broad term used for over thirty years of conflict and violence in Northern Ireland resulting in over 3,000 deaths. Following previous periods of conflict, the Troubles started in the late 1960s and officially ended with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.