

Drumman National School visit War-Torn Children Exhibition in Linen Hall Library, Belfast – 14th March 2017

The 5th and 6th class pupils of Scoil Colmcille, Drumman, Ramelton, Co. Donegal recently visited the War-Torn Children Exhibition in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast, accompanied by their class teacher, Maura Kelly, their school principal, Gerard Shiels and the co-chair of the READ DL literacy project, Paddy Hannigan.

The group won the trip to the exhibition by engaging with the **READ DL** (Donegal) project which was held for the six weeks prior to World Book Day on 2nd March. READ DL, based on the worldwide 'One Book, One Community' project, creates an awareness of reading and promotes literacy within schools/education centres and communities in Donegal.

This year's book was 'The Breadwinner' by Deborah Elliis, a Canadian author and activist who highlights the plight of children and families in war torn countries. In 'The Breadwinner', she depicts the plight of one family in Afghanistan and in particular a daughter, Parvana, who must disguise herself as a boy to go and work for the family after her father is captured by the Taliban.

The theme of the book and the theme of the exhibition wove well together so a visit to the Linen Hall was another way for the pupils to explore how war impacts on children and their families. Organised by Roberta Bacic, Curator of the exhibition and Breege Doherty, Assistant Curator, the group were, first of all, introduced to the Library by a member of staff. They then divided into two groups and took part in the following activities;

- **A tour of the exhibition by Roberta Bacic and Stefania Gualberti**, Irish Network for Nonviolent Action Training and Education (INNATE)



Roberta explaining the textiles to the pupils and their teacher. (Photo: Paddy Hannigan)



Roberta and students focusing intently on a photo image. (Photo: Paddy Hannigan)

- **Rob Fairmichael from INNATE explained the poster section of the exhibition** and also gave students a chance to view a selection of the letters sent by students in Galway and Dublin to nonviolent peace activist Margareta D'Arcy during her imprisonment in 2014 for her anti-war campaigning at Shannon Airport. Rob also introduced the group to making effective posters for various campaigns



Rob Fairmichael, INNATE, taking the pupils on a tour of the poster section of the exhibition. (Photo: Paddy Hannigan)

- An added bonus was **the meeting with Ann Patterson from Peace People** who spoke to the pupils about how they can contribute to peace building.

After lunch, the whole group were taken on a **tour of the Belfast Murals by Bill Rolston, Emeritus Professor, Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University**. This tour brought the pupils face to face with what they had only seen previously on the TV and opened their eyes to how some communities live with conflict in their lives.



Bill explaining the murals on the Peace Line to the pupils and staff. (Photo: Paddy Hannigan)

The committee of READ DL wish to thank all who made the trip and tour possible for the pupils.

Paddy Hannigan
21st March 2017