

RESOURCE NOTE 5

What makes a good peace building project?



INTRODUCTION

This Resource Note is one of a series of notes to support Partnerships in the implementation of their action plans, under Theme 1.1 (Building Positive Relations at the Local Level) of the Peace III Programme. It has been developed by the Consortium¹ in response to requests from Partnerships on identifying the key characteristics of good peace building project.

Numerous definitions exist for peace building. It is sometimes interchanged with reconciliation. For the purpose of this resource note, focus is placed on JP Lederach's pyramid and the interplay between types of leadership and approaches adopted.

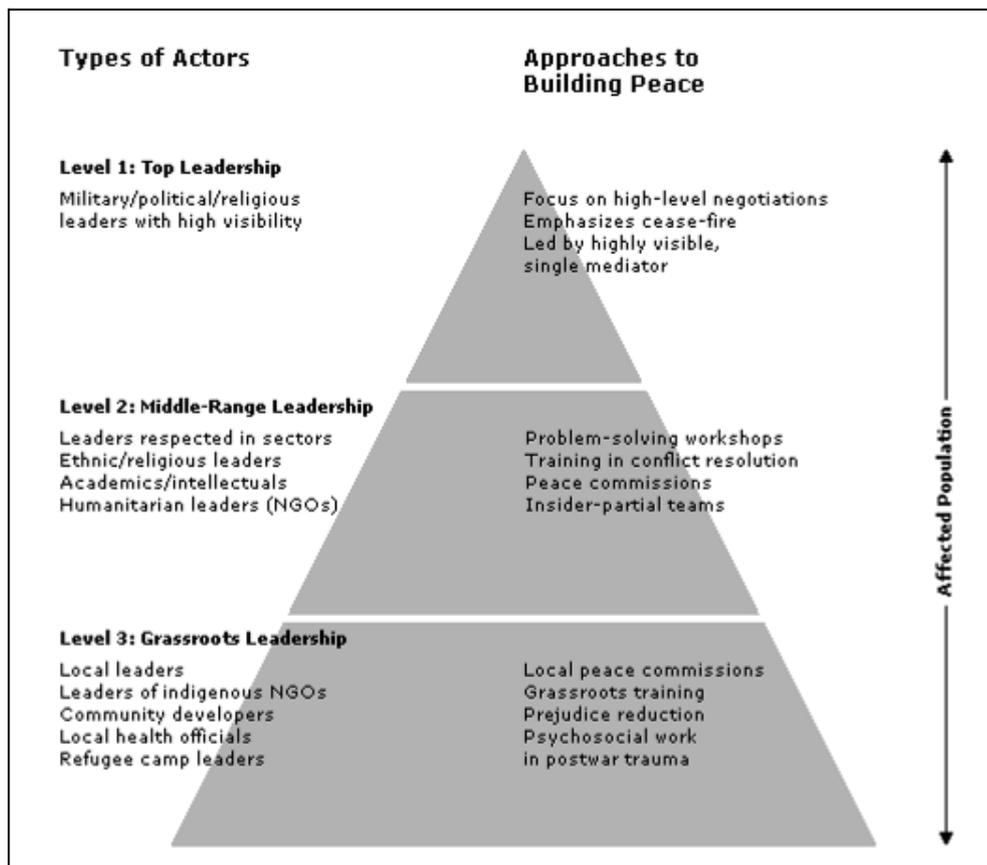
In addition to presenting some introductory theory on peace building, this resource note describes two specific examples of peace building in action. These are particular projects supported by the Peace III Programme through the Peace and Reconciliation Partnerships. These projects have been assessed using the guidance available on assessing peace building interventions, focusing on cultural diversity, equality, cohesion and the targeting of groups and areas ([SEUPB Guidance Note 1 - Project Selection](#)). They are also set in the context of an Aid for Peace process which has analysed and assessed their peace-building potential, the effects of these interventions and any changes that have occurred. Further information on this can be obtained from the Partnerships.

PEACE BUILDING

In *Agenda for Peace* the United Nations defines peace building as a process that 'consist of a range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation and societal transformation. Peace building is a long term process that occurs after violent conflict has slowed down or come to a halt.' (Boutros-Ghali, 1995)

RESOURCE NOTE 5

Much of the theory and practice around peace building has been developed around JP Lederach's pyramid.



Derived from John Paul Lederach, 1997. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*

Lederach's model illustrates the peace building process as involving interaction between all the layers. However it is often those at the grassroots who have experienced conflict most intensely. So it is leadership on the ground that is often best placed to facilitate community led peace building initiatives. Peace building is reliant on the activities of grass roots communities. Communities need support, resources and an enabling environment to deliver the change. This process relates to the key issues which Lederach refers to as the catalyst for realising sustainable reconciliation: relationships, encounters and creating the social space. Community peace building is the activity through which social change and reconciliation can be realised.

Traditional peace building projects tend to be linked to other development projects in order to achieve sustainable results. These kinds of projects promote cooperation between stakeholders, minimise the potential harm a project might have in high tension situations and ultimately enhance local capacity for peace.

RESOURCE NOTE 5

Elements of these types of projects include;

- Shared vision and a long term view
- Clarity of agreement and an agreed understanding of what peace building means
- Safety
- Flexibility and open mindedness
- Respect for difference
- A positive problem solving attitude
- Realism
- Trust
- A sense of humour and attention to enjoyment and comfort!

The concept of developing an integrated approach is essential to the process of building peace. Peace building involves many complimentary and interdependent practices. Many of the projects across the Peace III Partnerships demonstrate core practices that are common to successful peace building projects. Below are two examples.

EXAMPLE 1 - LEADERSHIP IN A SHARED SOCIETY PROGRAMME

The North East Peace 3 Partnerships unique Leadership Programme. This Programme increased community leaders' contribution to improving trust, tolerance and understanding of differences throughout the North East. The **Leadership in a Shared Society Programme** was targeted at councillors and community leaders. It aimed to develop key civic and leadership peace building skills in reconciliation, mediation, sectarianism and racism.



Partnership Manager, Patricia McCallion explained ‘ *The programme provided needs based, tailor made training backed up by mentoring, which focussed on weaknesses and strengths in the group that needed to be addressed and built upon.*’

RESOURCE NOTE 5

William Adamson, Chair of the Partnership, commented that the Programme *'gave participants the opportunity to put their leadership skills into practice by providing funding to run a group project.'* One group of participants went on to run an international food fair and family fun day where international communities showcased cuisine and cultural heritage. Another group organised a project for young people around football and anti-sectarianism, where the participants used leadership skills to deal with sectarian issues surrounding football.

Speaking about the councillors' participation in the programme Alderman Jack Rankin, Chair of the North East Peace 3 Joint Committee said, *' This programme is leaving a legacy in our Councils by enabling Councillors to increase their contribution to understanding difference in the North East. It provides a safe, open and honest opportunity for communication to take place between elected representatives about their role in peace building.'*



EXAMPLE 2 - SPIRAL (STORYTELLING TO PROMOTE INTERGENERATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND LEARNING)

SPIRAL was a collaborative initiative between The Netwell Centre, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), Co Louth, and Diversity Challenges (DC), based in Co. Armagh. SPIRAL's aim was to use storytelling to facilitate a greater understanding of the past and appreciation for the benefits of peace in the northeast cross-border region.

It was acknowledged from the outset that dealing with the past can be a very difficult process. The decades of conflict and violence in the north impacted on people in many ways e.g. those who were directly involved (political ex-prisoners, security forces, victims and survivors, displaced persons) and those who were indirectly involved (living in no-go area, crossing the border, friends or neighbours injured or killed). Despite the enormous number of conflict related incidents and experiences, the project noted that few people have had an opportunity to tell their stories and share their experiences.

RESOURCE NOTE 5

SPIRAL set out from the outset to work with older people who have lived through the conflict and assisted them to share their experiences and learning with young people and the wider community.

SPIRAL drew on life stories of older people who lived through the conflict, enabling young people to reflect on their experiences and the human repercussions of conflict. The stories from older people were carefully documented for historical purposes.

The SPIRAL Project has made an important contribution to the preservation of the social and community history of the northeast through video memoirs of those who have lived through the conflict, preserving important messages for future generations.

The SPIRAL Project was founded on two basic principles. The first is that young people who typically struggle with issues of identity and autonomy and older people who typically worry about declining social values and social connectedness can both benefit from forming closer relationships. The second is that many older people in the north-east border region want to share their stories and experiences with younger generations so that they can learn from the past, but in practice they have limited opportunities to do so. SPIRAL provided learning opportunities which demonstrated how older people in our community have rich life experiences that hold important lessons for young people today and can facilitate a greater understanding of the past and the benefits of peace. With cease-fires now more than a decade and a half, many young people have limited knowledge of the conflict. Yet the experiences of peace have been fragile and are by no means certain. Using real people was a key element to getting the message of peace and reconciliation across to young people particularly vulnerable young people.

Project Activity over the funding timeframe included video memoirs and audio recordings of conflict related stories and experiences, educational programmes and DVD's to schools and young people on a cross border/community basis, residential activity, social and cultural events on an intergenerational basis, conference presentations and article contributions to academic journals.

Dr Lucia Carragher, DkIT commented *“This was indeed a very successful peace project, not just in terms of the skills and knowledge imparted to participants but equally to the very diverse partners on the project and the positive ripple effect and impact this can have on the community at various levels. The project produced a DVD which includes video recordings depicting different experiences from people living in the northeast and includes a structured programme which invites young people to think more deeply about conflict by posing critical thinking questions and questions designed to help them relate the stories to your own life. The DVD is designed to support those*

RESOURCE NOTE 5

working with young people aged 16 and over in schools and youth groups in the community to promote peace, intergenerational and inter-communal cooperation”

Interviews from the project are available online on www.diversity-challenges.com/spiral. Or click [here](#) and [here](#).

For more information on the projects included in this resource note contact :

North East Peace III Partnership

Email: patricia.mccallion@coleraine.gov.uk

Web: www.northeastpeace.com

Louth Peace III Partnership

Email - Paddy.drumgoole@louthcoco.ie / grainne.cumiskey@louthcoco.ie

Tel: +353 (0) 42 9324154

Web: www.networkforpeace.org

¹The Consortium of CRC and Pobal have been commissioned by SEUPB to provide support and advice to the 14 Peace and Reconciliation Partnerships until 2013. Please refer to www.pobal.ie or www.nicrc.org.uk for more information