

RESOURCE NOTE 6

Guidelines on Cross Border Peace Building Work



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 Consortiumⁱ in response to requests from Partnerships on identifying the key characteristics of Partnership Development Programmes. This by no means exhaustive but is meant to supplement SEUPB Guidance Notes and Departmental documentation.

1) BACKGROUND

Cross border peace building work in a post conflict situation is challenging due to the complexities of working in partnership and within a different jurisdiction. There are numerous sensitivities, fears, perceptions and anxieties to overcome. Developing relationships, providing leadership, negotiation and consensus will involve a certain amount of risk taking. Most importantly, to achieve a lasting impact and added value the work will require time (this is a long term process), dedicated support and resources.

Cross border work is not easy and normally takes a staged approach as well as being influenced by environmental issues at specific moments in time. It sometimes starts with initial contact and getting to know each other, moving on to learning from each other and coordination of actions; to a more advanced stage of planning and implementation of actions together.

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2) WHY DO CROSS BORDER PEACE AND RECONCILIATION WORK?

2.1. Cross border work brings considerable added value to the overall process of peace building and reconciliation as it facilitates addressing a number of core issues in the conflict, in particular the significance and the role of the border. It also allows communities to tackle a range of problems that were a direct legacy of the conflict, including the breakdown in cross border relationships, isolation of border communities and overall social and economic decline.

2.2. In considering cross border peace and reconciliation work it is important to consider how best to support:

- **Communities along the Border which have been deeply affected by the Conflict.** Years of conflict in Northern Ireland have led to mutual distrust and suspicion not only between communities within Northern Ireland but between communities separated by the border. This has limited the development of cross border networking and linkages in areas where mutual benefit would occur naturally. Actions/activities might be:
 - cross border networking and meaningful engagement which will facilitate the building of new, positive and sustainable relationships and contribute to the peace process;
 - actions which will be mutually beneficial to the communities separated by the border, promote commonalities and dispel the myths;
 - actions which promote understanding and respect within these communities along the border.
- **Organisations/agencies to co-operate and collaborate** in tackling issues such as sectarianism and racism and promoting shared identity and cultural diversity.
- **Cross border strategies and projects that will:**
 - add value to the Peace and Reconciliation Plan for the region;
 - make a positive contribution to peace building and reconciliation;
 - promote mutual understanding and respect;
 - promote good relations and address the issues of sectarianism and racism.
- **Shared learning and enhance the knowledge base** in cross border peace and reconciliation work and initiatives which build the **capacity of groups participating in cross border work.**

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3) BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR CROSS BORDER PEACE BUILDING

The following 5 steps are recommended in developing effective cross-border projects.

3.1. Define the Motivation & Objectives

It is important to clearly define the motivation for undertaking cross border work. There should be some compatibility with the partner organisation, in structure, size or ethos. The motivation may be to:

- Gain a better understanding of different cultural values;
- Gain understanding and share learning in terms of policy issues on both sides of the border;
- Identify the potential to add value to current work;
- Identify opportunities to make best use of limited resources.

Questions at this step could include: Is there a common need? What is the mutual benefit for both parties? What is the opportunity for shared learning? How will we deal with logistics in terms of travel and the delivery of a joint project?

3.2. Finding an Appropriate Cross Border Partner(s)

In choosing a potential partner it is important to attempt to profile what characteristics the “ideal partner” might have. You may wish to consider the following factors:

- Are there clear benefits to both parties - is there potential to create “win-win” situations for all?
- Is there compatibility in terms of objectives for undertaking cross border work?
- Is there equal resources, motivation and commitment to the project/action/activities?
- Is there commitment to ongoing communication and the principles of partnership working?
- Is there potential for sharing of resources and skills?
- What are the logistical implications in terms of travel, joint activities and actions?
- Do potential partners have associated/shared culture and values?

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3.3. Designing Workable Management Structures

What type of structure will work for you? The type of joint structure must be relative and appropriate to the nature of the activities and actions. It is important to consider openness, transparency and participation and hence a written agreement and/or memorandum of understanding for roles and responsibilities, decision making, financial management etc. is recommended. Templates are available for this type of agreement.

3.4. Developing Relevant Cross Border Actions/Activities

What type of action or activity will you undertake? It is important to allow time for exchange and generation of ideas. Is there a shared vision and goal? What are the specific objectives, the scope of the actions/activities and potential cross border and peace and reconciliation impacts for the actions/activities? Ensure actions/activities, particularly in terms of building peace and reconciliation are prioritised, realistic and achievable. Ongoing communication is critical and “buy-in” can be achieved through ongoing consultation.

3.5. Implementing Effective and Efficient Cross Border Peace and Reconciliation Project(s)

There are a number of necessary components to ensure effective and efficient implementation:

- Regular face to face contact;
- Ongoing evaluation & monitoring;
- Mechanisms for communication – oral and written;
- Opportunities for teambuilding;
- Share successes;
- Provide support and space to resolve issues/conflicts;
- Take opportunities for participating in networking events and activities;
- Provide opportunities for shared learning;
- Provide opportunities to build new skills and competencies including, among others, Listening and Communication skills, Joint Project Planning & Management Training and Peace Building and Reconciliation Skills.

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4. RECOMMENDED PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITY

4.1. For the purposes of these guidelines, taking account of the Lead Partner Principle, the term Cross Border Lead Promoter will be used to denote the Partnership or Project who will take the lead on cross border actions etc within the Peace and Reconciliation Plan.

4.2. The Cross Border Lead Promoter is responsible for the implementation of the cross border actions. Regardless of the level of interaction i.e. Partnership or Project level, this will include:

- Laying down arrangements for its relations with partners (a signed agreement is recommended);
- Guaranteeing the sound financial management of the funds (including arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid);
- Ensuring appropriate expenditure on activities agreed (100%);
- Verification of expenditure by the partners;
- Eligibility of applications from the other partnership areas;
- Arrangements to check if organisations have applied to other partnerships and how to deal with this;
- Management arrangements for the cross border action/activity;
- Currency differences.

For further information please refer to the Consortium Cross Border Guidelines and the Pobal Cross Border Framework on www.pobal.ie and www.nicrc.org.uk



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.