A Review of PEACE III and Considerations for PEACE IV
Executive summary

Contributing to political stability and increased community cohesion, balanced against bureaucratic and strategic headaches, and a series of recommendations for the new PEACE programme are just some of the main issues outlined in this report. Key stakeholders including voluntary and community groups, programme delivery bodies and the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) have their say on how the programme is working to date and what they would like to see in the upcoming PEACE IV programme.

The EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (PEACE I) was established by the European Union to:

> 'Make a positive response to the opportunities presented by developments in the Northern Ireland peace process during 1994, especially the announcements of cessation of violence by the main republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations'[1].

Known as the PEACE programme, it was designed in 1994 as a response by the EU to positive developments in the peace process and set out to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation. The initial programme was followed by further iterations of the programme to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

So how is it working so far? Between May and July 2012, NICVA in partnership with SIPTU[2], facilitated a number of round table events for the voluntary and community sector, aimed at reviewing successes and failures associated with the operation of the PEACE programme to date and opening a debate to examine the shaping of PEACE IV. Tony Macaulay[3] also played a key role in the discussion programme.

Discussions centred around **three key questions** asking:

1. *What do you think have been the successes of the previous PEACE programmes?*
2. *What have been the problems and challenges of the previous PEACE programmes?*
3. *What priorities should a new PEACE programme focus on?*

---

[1] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2011/OFMdFM/12611.pdf
[2] SIPTU, the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union SIPTU) represents over 200,000 workers across most sectors of the Irish economy.
[3] Tony Macaulay, http://www.macaulayassociates.co.uk/index.htm

Among the **successes** of the programme were:

- Increased political stability and secure political institutions
- Decreased levels of violence
- 'De-sectarianised' community relations in Northern Ireland through common goals
- A positive number of successful projects were completed, particularly with young people, tackling sectarianism and racism
- Certain areas, small groups and individuals have dramatically benefitted from PEACE funding
- Positive attitudinal changes
- The voluntary and community sector is now filling a gap by delivering a range of services from which the public sector has withdrawn
- Useful models of peace building and conflict transformation have been developed
- The voluntary and community sector's governance structures have improved in response to the overly bureaucratic nature of the programme and has become more professional
- PEACE programmes are becoming more strategic in outlook
- The role of IFBs was positive allowing non-political decisions to be made and money to reach local areas
- There is potential for all sectors to be involved (not just for councils making decisions and accessing funding).

The main **challenges** included:

- Increased, unnecessary, cumbersome and inflexible administrative procedures and bureaucratic delays negatively impacting on the programme's successful and timely deliverance.
- The impact of work being done at project level is being overlooked by SEUPB due to a lack of qualitative feedback.
- Core community needs are being missed under a risk averse system which does not encourage innovation.
- The programme failed to reach far enough into institutions of government and Non Departmental Public Bodies. The peace agenda has not been 'institutionalised'.
- A lack of strategic leadership and no agreed political strategy for reconciliation. Less a shared future and more an 'invited society'.
- The focus of the original five strands was workable but became too focused on community relations.

Discussions on **priorities for PEACE IV** centred on:

- Overhaul and rebrand the overly bureaucratic and administrative systems to de-stigmatise the programme and to become more user-friendly, efficient, accountable and focused on outcomes.

- Big Lottery Fund and Joseph Rowntree Foundation are exemplars in terms of funding structure and trust building and would be useful models for SEUPB.
- SEUPB needs to develop a system that picks up qualitative data on the impact of work done at project level.
- Need for a joined-up approach from government on economic and social policies with PEACE funding.
- Greater focus on long-term and small innovative projects and those benefitting groups most in need.
- Political input and leadership required alongside an agreed overarching political strategy for reconciliation (PEACE model).
- Long-term sustainable economic investment needed.
- Civil servants in the border counties need help breaking through the economic, social and political interface that is the border.
- Need for qualitative research on the hard to reach area of fully understanding the impact of good work done behind the scenes and what is hindering low impact areas.
- More support for smaller organisations to improve their capacity for funding and in the application process.
- Innovation and risk taking needs to be encouraged by the programme.
- Any new PEACE programme should focus on a number of priority areas including:
  - Rural sectarian interfaces
  - Meeting clearly identified community needs
  - Legacies and acknowledgements of conflict
  - Support for victims and survivors
  - Small grants programme including additional support on issues such as networking and sharing
  - Small innovative projects
  - Women
  - Youth (particularly young men)
  - Education (including shared education, civic education, education programmes for schools)
  - Class issues
  - Employment
  - Intergenerational work
  - Storytelling and expressions of history
  - Disability projects
  - Young men (with a learning disability)
  - Low impact geographical areas ('invisible barriers etc')
  - Volunteering
  - Threat of dissidents
  - Paramilitaries and ex-combatants
  - Leadership in loyalist areas
  - Inter and intra community tensions
  - Racism

An overview of the PEACE programme in Northern Ireland

Programme[4]	Funding (including match funds in millions)	Funding (from Europe in millions)	Timeframe
PEACE I	€667	€500	1995-1999
PEACE II	€835	€531	2000-2004
PEACE II extension	€160	€78	2005-2006
PEACE III	€333	€225	2007-2013

The EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (PEACE I), was established by the European Union to:

> '*Make a positive response to the opportunities presented by developments in the Northern Ireland peace process during 1994, especially the announcements of cessation of violence by the main republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations[5]*'

PEACE I[6]

The first PEACE programme was agreed by the European Heads of State and Government in December 1994 and formally established in July 1995. It was designed to address the immediate legacy of the conflict and took advantage of the opportunities arising from peace, the initiative of MEPs and the European Commission.

The programme was allocated a total amount of €500million (approximately £340million) by the EU for the period 1995 -1999, with approximately 80% spent in Northern Ireland and 20% in the border counties of Ireland. Designed to involve people at grass roots level and to focus on those areas and sections of the population most affected by the conflict, the programme was given a wide mandate which included social inclusion, economic development and employment, urban / rural regeneration, and cross border co-operation. PEACE I funded 15,000 projects[7] across Northern Ireland.

---

[4] Data from PEACE III Operational Programme document, http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/peace_iii_operational_programme.pdf
[5] Special EU Programmes Body (2007), *Peace III – EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland: Operation Programme*, Belfast: SEUPB http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE_III_Reports_Pubs/PEACE_III_Operational_Programme.sflb.ashx
[6] http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/about_us/office_in_northern_ireland/funding/peaceii.pdf
[7] Information supplied in interview by SEUPB June 2012

PEACE II

PEACE II (2000-2006)[8]	Number
Programme participants	868,420
Individuals participating in cross-border activities	161,599
Individuals participating in reconciliation projects	42,772
Number of groups involved in reconciliation projects	1,638
Individuals gaining qualifications	100,767
Individuals entering or progressing in employment, education and training	77,652

In March 1999 the European Council extended the programme for a further five years (2000-2004), allocating a further €531million with around 80% of the available funds allocated to projects in Northern Ireland (€425million). PEACE II, managed by SEUPB, was designed to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society through economic development and cross-border co-operation.

The specific aims of PEACE II were to assist Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland to:

- Address the legacy of the conflict
- Take advantage of opportunities arising from the peace process.

PEACE II had two general strands:

- Economic and social development
- Addressing the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland, as part of the region's peace process.

Priorities

PEACE II contained five economic and social priorities:

- Economic renewal (realising the economic opportunities generated by the peace process)
- Social integration, inclusion and reconciliation (with priority given to vulnerable groups in the areas worst affected by the conflict, interface areas and areas where community infrastructure is weak)
- Locally-based regeneration and development strategies
- Promoting an outward and forward-looking region (by encouraging a dialogue with other EU regions on economic, social and environmental issues)
- Cross-border co-operation (economic, social and cultural).

A number of different organisations distributed funding under PEACE II, including government departments, non-governmental organisations and Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs). In terms of expenditure, 15% of the programme was devoted to

---

[8] http://www.osce.org/cio/90147 quoting NISRA (NI Statistic and Research Agency, May 2010).

cross-border projects. By 2005 the EU PEACE II programme had provided almost €707million, including UK and Irish government contributions, for projects in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. Key to PEACE II was the greater focus on reconciliation[9]. More than 5,300 projects have been supported by PEACE II.

PEACE II extension

In June 2005, the European Commission announced an extension of PEACE II for a further two years until the end of 2006 with additional funding of €144million. This followed a request from the UK and Irish governments and approval of the extension by the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Overall PEACE II supported 7,500 projects[10].

Peace III[11]

The PEACE III programme 2007-13, was introduced as a distinctive programme part-funded by the European Union (€225million from the EU with further national contributions of €108million) through its Structural Funds programme. The main aims of the PEACE III Programme are to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation by assisting operations and projects which help to reconcile communities and contribute towards a shared society for everyone.

The programme is divided into two main priorities:

- Reconciling communities
- Contributing to a shared society

These priorities are delivered through a number of themes:

- To build positive relations at the local level
- To acknowledge the past
- To create shared public spaces
- To develop key institutional capacity for a shared society.

New approach

PEACE III carried forward a number of key aspects from the previous programmes and again places a strong emphasis on reconciliation. The new strategic approach introduced with PEACE III, which aimed to achieve maximum impact from the funding available through PEACE III, meant that voluntary and community groups could access programme funding from local councils formed into eight clusters. On completion of the programme PEACE III will have supported around 400, mostly large scale, strategic projects.

---

[9] Hamber B and Kelly G (2005), *A Place for Reconciliation? Conflict and Locality in Northern Ireland*, Democratic Dialogue http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/dd/report18/ddreport18.pdf
[10] Information supplied in interview by SEUPB June 2012
[11] Information taken from SEUPB website - http://www.seupb.eu/programmes2007-2013/peaceiiiprogramme/overview.aspx

PEACE IV

Discussions for PEACE IV have been ongoing for some time[12]. Indeed, there is some confidence that there will be a new programme and the UK Government has signified the desirability of a further PEACE programme.**[13]**

> 'In the case of Northern Ireland, the PEACE III Programme, which is funded from the Territorial Cooperation Objective, is helping to consolidate the region's institutions of devolved governance, and to address the legacy of decades of conflict and division. Given the unique nature of the programme, further assistance would be highly desirable - whether as a fourth stand-alone PEACE Programme or cross border programme with an additional social dimension.'[14]

Early indications of SEUPB's thinking for the new programme were outlined by Pat Colgan in his April 2012 OSCE presentation.[15] Under the heading 'Social Cohesion in a Shared Society' the following themes were suggested:

- Reconciliation within and between communities – the 'Peace Walls'
- Young people – a future built on social, economic and community cohesion
- Legacy of the past – Opportunities of the future: unlocking the potential
- Reaching out – engaging and involving hard to reach communities
- Building capacity for a shared future
- Sharing experiences with other regions.

---

[12] The EU Peace and Interreg Programmes in Northern Ireland, NI Assembly research and Information Service Briefing Paper, October 2011

[13] Eg Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report 14 September 2011, 'EU Structural Fund Issues', p.5
http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2011/FinancePersonnel/110914_EUstructuralfund.pdf Committee for Finance and Personnel Official Report 14 September 2011, 'Special EU Programmes Body', p.17
http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2011/FinancePersonnel/110914_SEUPB.pdf

[14] UK Government response to the European Commission's Consultation on the Conclusions of the Fifth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion: February 2011, p.5.

[15] http://www.osce.org/cio/90147

Case Study 1: Glebe House / Harmony Community Trust - bureaucracy

Experience of the PEACE programme to date:

Harmony Trust was involved in PEACE I through participation on the Down Peace Partnership Board and funding for Harmony Trust came through the Community Relations Council (CRC) and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). During PEACE II the Harmony Trust chairperson was the chair of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Working Group and Harmony Trust accessed funding though the local LSP and the Peace II YESSIP programme, with capital funding from CRC and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). In the period of PEACE III Harmony Trust has delivered a number of projects, and in phase two will be running community relations programmes for children, youth and adults funded by the North Down, Ards and Down PEACE III Partnership. The project will be developing the benefits and learning from the five projects run under phase one of the PEACE III programme.

PEACE III

The experience of working with the local cluster groups has been very positive and has enabled Harmony Trust to deliver services in a geographical area into which it had been planning to expand its services. PEACE III funding became available at a time when the Department of Education cut its community relations funding. The delivery of the Department's programme of projects by Harmony Trust has been very successful.

Despite its experience of the PEACE programme, Harmony Trust considers its experience with PEACE III to have been a 'culture shock' in terms of the administration and bureaucracy burden. It engaged with the programme via North Down Borough Council and experienced a very different culture there in comparison to Down District Council which was more flexible when it delivered PEACE II via the local LSP. PEACE III is much more embedded in the Council's culture as projects deal directly with Council staff. The demands from SEUPB have resulted in greater bureaucracy, and greater control to the point where 'common sense has gone out the window', making the achievement of peace and reconciliation more difficult.

Bureaucracy

Twelve months into the Harmony Trust programme SEUPB queried the original budget which had been agreed in the Letter of Offer, arguing that the costings for residential work were erroneous; an issue encountered by a number of organisations that provided residential work as part of project delivery. Residential costings were queried when accommodation was provided on site at Glebe House in complete contrast to occasions when accommodation was provided in hotels, in which case bills were never queried. An agreed costings schedule for residential work was not agreed with SEUPB until after the project was due to be completed, 'a nightmare with a lack of any flexibility'.

In this scenario it was clearly the procedures set in place by SEUPB rather than the Council that were the stumbling block. The final figure agreed for residential costs, based on 2010-2011 costs is now being applied to phase two of the programme, which again negatively impacts Harmony Trust's costs as it does not account for higher prices. The overall value of the service provided by Harmony Trust and its staff and volunteers[16] is simply not reflected in the funding provided; 'it is as though SEUPB has no concept of how the voluntary and community sector works'. Experience of the programme has helped Harmony Trust to develop the skills required to deal with the administration and bureaucracy.

Strategic environment

Harmony Trust considers that PEACE III was designed to ensure that the statutory sector and local councils played a leading role, but, as with PEACE II, the voluntary and community sector continues to be the lead partner at all levels and across the various structures of the programme. It would appear that the statutory sector has stepped back from the programme. Additionally, there is very limited funding available to pick up projects after the PEACE programme, eg for youth provision as the Department of Education no longer funds community relations, and funding is very limited in CRC and the Education and Library Boards. The current lack of political leadership and the incoherence around the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy has meant there is little driving force behind community relations or peace building.

PEACE IV

PEACE IV is needed to continue the long-term investment in peace and reconciliation. The programme needs to continue to focus on addressing segregated communities and developing healthy relationships between communities. The development of local partnerships, which has been somewhat overlooked, is a positive achievement, enabling the voluntary and community sector to engage with partners across a range of sectors. Greater flexibility within the system also needs to be introduced based on the strong relationships built up between the voluntary and community sector, funders and government departments.

---

[16] Volunteer expenses can't be claimed though the PEACE programme

NICVA PEACE IV events

In order to review the operation of the PEACE programme to date and to shape the development of any new programme, NICVA in partnership with SIPTU, facilitated a series of roundtable events for the voluntary and community sector from May to July 2012,. The events aimed to open up debate within the voluntary and community sector, to reflect on success and failure in the PEACE programmes I, II and III. Tony Macaulay also played a key role in the discussion programme.

Events took place in:

Venue	Location	Date
Ilex Centre	Derry	9 May
Fermanagh House	Enniskillen	16 May
Rural Community Network	Cookstown	24 May
Millennium Court Arts Centre	Portadown	12 June
CWC Offices	Letterkenny	21 June
NICVA	Belfast	3 July

Each of the PEACE IV events began with a presentation by Tony Macaulay which addressed *The Context and Challenges of Building Peace 2012*. Putting the review in context with the latest research available,[17] Tony outlined some of the major successes and challenges in the programme, the issue of low peace impact areas and the role of the voluntary and community sector.

Amongst the key points outlined in the presentation were:

Successes

- Increasing political stability and secure political institutions
- Reduction in levels of violence and threat of violence
- Increased contact, trust and relationships across the sectarian divide
- Approaches to addressing negative attitudes and behaviours within and between communities.

Challenges

- No agreed political strategy for reconciliation
- Threat of paramilitarism; dissident threat, loyalist violence
- Lack of leadership, confidence and development within some loyalist communities
- No solution has been found for dealing with the past
- Youth unemployment is potentially destabilising

---

[17] *Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report* (Paul Nolan, CRC, Feb 2012): indicators of Security, Political Progress, Cohesion and Sharing and Equality and *'Progressing Good Relations and Reconciliation in Post Agreement Northern Ireland'* (Grainne Kelly INCORE, Feb 2012): successes, issues and priorities for a shared and better future.

- Impact of the recession
- Lack of clarity over what works in building peace
- Funding
- Need for socio-economic development.

Low impact areas

- High levels of economic and social deprivation
- Significant levels of ongoing or residual paramilitary control and 'gatekeepers'
- Embedded and unchallenged sectarian attitudes and insufficient local community leadership committed to a shared future
- Large numbers of marginalised young people and a lack of youth activities
- Low levels of community pride and confidence and low participation in community development
- Fragmentation and low levels of trust and cohesion within the community
- Limited skills and knowledge in community development and peace building
- Little meaningful cross community contact or dialogue
- Weak intra community and inter community infrastructure.

Role of the Voluntary and community sector

- Commitment / knowledge / innovation
- Influencing policy / developing and sharing good practice / collaboration

Case Study 2: Tides Training and Consultancy
– challenges around supporting and mainstreaming good practice

Tides Training and Consultancy (Tides) is an 'ethically-based voluntary non-profit training organisation which is committed to helping build the community infrastructure necessary to sustain a lasting and equitable peace in situations which have experienced violent conflict'.[18]

Experience of the PEACE programme to date:

Tides' 'Training of Trainers' programme was funded by the PEACE programme under Measure 2.1. The programme addressed community relations, conflict management, advanced group work, skills and citizenship. It built cross-community programmes in areas that had directly experienced violence and ongoing tensions and aimed to implement effective local strategies working towards conflict reduction, meditative communication and community development initiatives.

The programme was evaluated and regarded as very successful and was recognised at European level as one of the most successful projects of its type in the PEACE programme. A proposal was submitted by Tides to extend the programme into the PEACE II extension programme and, although there were positive early indications that the training programme would continue to be funded, the funding application was turned down because it was not new or innovative. This raises a question around sustainability of the organisation. If successful projects cannot be re-funded under the PEACE programme, how are the most successful projects going to be mainstreamed when mainstream funding is either not available or is being reduced?

Without funding the programme came to an end, although elements of the programme continued to a much lesser extent in other programmes delivered by Tides, eg around labour mobility. Many of the programme's participants are now working in the field of reconciliation and good relations. Tides was successful in accessing funding in the PEACE II extension programme to deliver 'Stepping into Diversity' with the Multicultural Resource Centre which focused on race and diversity. For Tides the logical extension of this new project would have been to move participants into the 'Training of Trainers' programme, but this was no longer an option.

PEACE III

In PEACE III Tides is delivering a major project over four years called Bric, 'building relationships in communities,' which has received a total of £3,522,000 and is being delivered through a partnership involving the Rural Development Council (RDC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive(NIHE). Through this project the partners seek to empower NIHE staff to promote a greater degree of sharing within the currently highly segregated social housing market. This will be delivered via a model encouraging 'Changing Minds, Sharing Visions' and 'Crossing Borders' within NIHE. This innovative model of delivery will place a new and distinctive focus on

---

[18] http://www.tidestraining.org/

peace and reconciliation and institutional capacity building within a key regional public service organisation with the aim of facilitating the promotion of a shared society.

In the Bric application process, funding requested for independent evaluation over the lifetime of the project, was rejected. As a result there will be no full independent analysis of the project making it difficult to identify both key learning from the project and best practice. To supplement the data generated through Aid for Peace, Tides operates a process of reflective practice across the project every month to draw out further learning for the project. Again this reflective practice was an aspect that Tides hoped would be independently evaluated.

For Tides, the concern at present is that, despite the success of this initiative as with the 'Training of Trainers' programme, funding streams will not be available either through the PEACE programme or through alternative mainstream sources. If it is the case that the PEACE programme cannot re-fund projects there has to be a strong argument made that in order to mainstream good practice, other funding sources need to be made available to maintain successful projects post PEACE programme involvement. Knowing that funding is time bound naturally curtails the ambitions of a programme like Bric. It is clear that long term impacts in the Housing Executive can't be achieved via a short term project; the project can only be expected to access a small percentage of the overall staff body in NIHE and will not be able to access all NIHE housing estates in the short term. The Bric project is central to the NIHE's long-term community cohesion work.

Overview

At this stage of the PEACE programme and the peace process more broadly, it seems that there is very little leadership in terms of either mainstreaming and supporting good practice or ensuring that the strategic environment is fully developed. The lack of progress with the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration policy is a good example. If good relations projects have to compete for public monies against health or education the work will simply not get funded. The view in the voluntary and community sector is that the public institutions have failed to keep pace with the peace process and a key element of this is the fact that effective programmes have not been sufficiently long-term to become embedded in the institutions. Public and statutory agencies cannot be changed through short-term projects.

Feedback on NICVA's PEACE IV events

Positive feedback (on the PEACE programme to date)

Programme impact

- Political stability increased
- Levels of violence reduced
- Certain areas (eg North Belfast) have dramatically benefitted from PEACE funding
- Relationship building / trust has increased
- The PEACE programmes have 'de-sectarianised' community relations in Northern Ireland through common goals
- Successful changes in attitudes, not just along legislative lines
- A positive number of successful projects, particularly with young people, tacking sectarianism and racism
- Successful collaborative work being done at programme level has benefitted civic society, not just individuals / small groups
- Useful models of peace building and conflict transformation have been developed
- The voluntary and community sector's governance structures have improved in response to the bureaucratic nature of the programme
- The voluntary and community sector is now filling a gap by delivering a range of services from which the public sector has withdrawn
- PEACE programmes are becoming more strategic in outlook
- There is potential for all sectors to be involved
- The role of IFBs was positive allowing non-political decisions to be made and funding to reach local areas
- A number of areas, including Sligo and Belfast City Council, were cited as examples of successful PEACE programmes.

Negative feedback

Relating to SEUPB

Administrative and bureaucratic issues

- Unnecessary and cumbersome administrative procedures and bureaucratic delays are negatively impacting on successful and timely deliverance of the programme.
- The impact of work being done at project level is being overlooked by SEUPB; there is not enough qualitative feedback.
- SEUPB is too bureaucratic. The idea of 'taking risks for peace' has disappeared under many layers of bureaucracy.
- Over-bureaucratic style puts people off from applying (in terms of time and effort required).
- Programme bureaucracy has resulted in short term employment contracts for youth workers.
- Problems with the Euro exchange rate can mean disallowed payments.

- Earlier versions of the PEACE programme were much more flexible than PEACE III and were managed by people who understood community development. SEUPB does not have the necessary experience.
- SEUPB seems unaccountable.

Support

- SEUPB fails to continue support for successful projects
- SEUPB does not communicate directly with groups
- SEUPB is too remote from projects and as a result is remote from client groups eg victims
- SEUPB is not flexible enough in supporting and encouraging projects to succeed in the application process.

Relating to general issues

Funding

- Practitioners are not involved enough in assessing applications. Community panels could rectify this failing.
- Cluster groups are a 'closed shop'/ difficult to access funding.
- Only those groups 'already at the table' get access to funding.
- Small groups cannot access funding whereas larger organisations can better manage the time-consuming bureaucracy. Smaller groups tend to be 'squeezed out' as a result.
- Not enough funding reaching smaller groups focusing on women and youth in rural areas.
- The programme is too focused on larger organisations. Smaller groups are squeezed out through lack of capacity and the focus of the funder.
- Too much emphasis placed on partnerships of groups to access funding.
- Many of those present had no experience of PEACE funding; they were enthusiastic and interested about the possibilities. Those with experience were pessimistic and no longer see the PEACE programme as a worthwhile source of funding.
- Following strict funding lines and fitting requirements can mean a loss of focus on community needs and group ethos.

Administration AND bureaucracy

- The PEACE programmes have changed in terms of decreased flexibility and increased bureaucracy which has distanced voluntary and community organisations from the programme.
- Guidelines and monitoring requirements to groups are changed too often, ie 'goal post moving'; this is limiting the freedom and impact of groups.
- Terminology, jargon and complicated forms put people off.
- Slow payments have been bankrupting community groups.

- Audit culture is determining the potential of the programme and the groups within it.
- Auditing process does not pick up on irregularities which are picked up through 'whistleblowing'.

Learning

- Monitoring groups for peace have been totally ineffective, no recommendations produced.
- The focus of the original five strands was workable but became too focused on community relations.
- Collective failure to learn lessons from previous iterations of the programme in terms of what works, what doesn't work and making positive changes regarding
    - Bureaucracy
    - Consistency across elements of the programme / geographical areas
    - The challenge of getting funding into difficult to access groups / areas.
- Innovation is not encouraged, system is risk averse and this limits progress.
- Sustaining innovation is the key issue.
- Peace and reconciliation failed to reach far enough into institutions of Government and Non-Governmental Public Bodies. The agenda was not institutionalised.
- Some of the 'contact' work undertaken was difficult to measure for impact.

Leadership

- There is too much political influence on funding. Politicians sometimes overlook social issues in favour of business interests.
- The Assembly has shown no leadership, ie if they can't sort out an issue such as the 11Plus or Drumcree, what chance is there of addressing the legacy of the conflict? PEACE funding reflects the political landscape.
- If there is no agreed political strategy for reconciliation there is less chance of achieving a shared society.
- The Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist community is not at the same level in terms of effectiveness and take up as the Catholic / Nationalist / Republican community.

Suggestions for PEACE IV

Administration and bureaucracy

- Administrative systems need overhauled / slimlined
- Speed up the payments system to avoid cash flow issues
- SEUPB needs to realise that administrative delays have negative consequences, eg loss of jobs / projects
- SEUPB needs to be less bureaucratic (bring back the 'taking risks for peace' ethos)

- Establish why layers of bureaucracy are added to the SEUPB funding application procedure
- Easy to read forms using simpler terminology and less jargon
- Address problems with exchange rates, ie disallowed payments due to changes in exchange rate
- Learn the lessons of previous iterations of the programme and address the key areas regarding:
  - Bureaucratic systems
  - Lack of consistency across the different elements of the programme / across geographical areas
  - The challenge of getting funding into difficult to access groups / areas.

Monitoring and evaluation

- SEUPB needs to develop a system that picks up qualitative data on the impact of work done at project level
- Requirements in terms of monitoring / form filling should be agreed in advance
- No retrospective data demands.

Support

- Set guidelines and timescales for groups that are flexible, workable and sympathetic to the group, not the funder
- Professional support (free) to assist smaller groups as bigger organisations tend to dominate in terms of obtaining funding, due in the main to their greater capacity to work on proposals, their focus on protecting staff members and ability to develop strategically
- Practitioners should be more involved in assessing applications, eg through community panels
- It would be helpful if partnerships had staff who are not council staff or auditors, whose jobs it is to support groups and projects
- PEACE IV could replicate / develop the structures of PEACE III.

Funding

SEUPB

- SEUPB should adopt / adapt the Big Lottery Fund systems based on flexibility, support, speed of response, treating people as trusted partners. Big Lottery wants the project to succeed and is therefore more flexible and helpful in supporting project applicants to achieve aims.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an exemplar for funding structure / environment
- SEUPB must be more accountable
- SEUPB needs to communicate directly with groups
- Quicker payments are essential to avoid bankruptcy of community groups.

General funding

- Longer term project funding is needed
- Need to use the Concordat to hold government to account, eg on six to seven year programmes
- Funding should be renewed for 'successful' projects
- Community panels should be involved in assessing funding applications
- More support for smaller organisations in the application process
- Funding needs to be focused on outcomes
- Long-term sustainable economic investment needed
- The economic, social and political issues in border areas need to be addressed
- We need to have core funding for peace building work rather than continued reliance on PEACE programmes, with strategic leadership from the Assembly, which has been missing to date
- Challenge to voluntary and community sector is to ensure projects are sustainable (with an exit strategy)
- The programme should be 'needs led' rather than as it is at present, 'audit led'
- Need to move away from innovation mantra
- Lack of innovation is not the issue, it is sustaining innovation
- More attention needs to be given to smaller organisations
- Continuity of funding is required for those organisations currently in receipt of PEACE funding.

Learning

Monitoring and evaluation

- Set guidelines for groups that are flexible and workable
- Simplify forms
- No retrospective data demands
- Distance travelled models could be useful monitoring and evaluation tools to measure progress
- Measurement is a key issue; we need to figure out how to measure impact
- We need to learn more from the successful projects in the programme, eg through a forum to share good practice.

Funding

- Practitioners should be more involved in assessing applications through community panels

- More support for smaller organisations to improve their capacity for funding and in the application process
- More attention needs to be given to smaller organisations
- Innovation and risk taking needs to be encouraged by the programme
- Rebrand the programme to make it more accessible and workable. Speed up the process from initial application to end product to help reduce the stigma attached to the programme
- New focus on 'greatest need, greatest opportunity'
- More collaborative projects
- Learn the lessons of previous iterations of the programme and address the key areas
- The programme should be 'needs led' rather than 'audit led'.

Broader issues

- Need for research to understand the impact of good work done behind the scenes
- Need for research on low PEACE impact areas, ie What is the problem? What is the way forward? Is the sector having a problem as gatekeepers and hindering low impact areas?
- Need for research on low uptake and effectiveness in Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist areas
- Research needed into sectarianism and racism. Racism is on the rise. Does this mean work at project level is ineffective?
- Mainstream the learning to date of the PEACE programme
- A working 'Peace model' is needed
- Employ the Aid for Peace methodology
- Learn from work done in other international (post) conflict areas such as Bosnia
- Focus on community development model approach to peace building
- Is it time for the programme to consider a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- We need a joined up approach from government on economic and social policies
- 'Peace and Reconciliation' focus needs to be broadened and much work could be done in afterschool clubs and youth clubs.

Leadership

- Political input and leadership is required. Politicians have to take more responsibility and provide leadership in PEACE IV
- Politicians need to recognise the role of the voluntary and community sector in the peace process
- Need for agreed overarching political strategy for reconciliation
- The relationship between community development and peace building needs to be fully debated
- Republic of Ireland civil servants need to engage with the programme

- NICVA could provide more guidance and capacity building on how to approach PEACE IV.

Thematic areas to be addressed in PEACE IV

Greater focus on:

- Small innovative projects
- Women
- Youth (particularly young men)
- Education (including shared education, civic education, education programmes for schools)
- Class issues
- Employment
- Victims and survivors
- Dealing with the past
- Intergenerational work
- Storytelling and expressions of history
- Disability projects
- Young men (with a learning disability)
- Rural areas (including employment and issues relating to Belfast centrism)
- Low impact geographical areas ('invisible barriers etc')
- Volunteering
- Economic factors
- Drugs (prescription and illicit)
- Sectarianism (including middle class)
- Threat of dissidents
- Paramilitaries and ex-combatants
- Leadership in loyalist areas
- Inter and intra community tensions
- Local sustainable shared space
- Building broader confidence in police
- Flag flying issues
- Social exclusion
- Violence
- Racism
- Social heritage
- Creative industries
- Skills development in the voluntary and community sector
- Regeneration of areas / uniting people on a common goal
- Social enterprise

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

Case Study 3: Rural Community Network (RCN) – Good Practice Model

Experience of the PEACE programme to date

Rural Community Network (RCN) has been involved in the PEACE programme from 1996, having been involved in the original lobbying campaign in support of the introduction of a PEACE programme. In PEACE I and II, RCN delivered small and medium sized grants to rural communities through a service level agreement with the Rural Development Council. Currently in PEACE III, RCN manages the Rural Enabler Programme, a partnership between RCN (the lead partner), Irish Rural Link (IRL), the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCEGA), and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The project adopts an integrated and interdependent thematic approach involving one regional and up to 72 local programmes of intervention to address sectarianism, racism, community polarisation, mistrust and hatred.

The programme aims to:

- Build positive relations in rural communities across 12 counties
- Enable people to develop the confidence and skills necessary to build vibrant and peaceful communities
- Act as a resource for individuals and groups, supporting them to address their needs

Good Practice Model

RCN's approach in this programme is a development of that employed in its Rural Community Estates Programme funded through Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the International Fund for Ireland and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. In this programme it was apparent that in small rural estates the aim of setting up a community group or a residents' association was not always either feasible or sustainable. The Community Estates Programme model was transferred to the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

Effectively the model works on a number of levels; a support worker based in a number of estates, a support worker in each county and a support worker for rural institutions. The support worker is not allocated to any specific group but works as a resource for groups. Support workers also work in tandem on specific issues as required across programme areas, effectively county based but available regionally.

In terms of administering funding, all invoices are made out to and paid by RCN; invoices are checked against the agreed action plans and approved expenditure plans which have been developed by groups and their support worker. RCN is aware of the notion that this approach may be seen as potentially disempowering for constituted groups, in terms of the PEACE programme and its related bureaucratic demands. However, by taking on the administrative burden itself, RCN feels that it has enabled groups to focus on delivering their action plans. For RCN the approach has meant that it has taken on additional administrative resources.

Experience to date with this approach would indicate that it has been successful. Participant groups have successfully completed projects and have then returned to the programme to develop work further. The services of a support worker, in tandem with the lack of administrative burden, is the key aspect in the programme. This is the key learning for the PEACE programme generally; there may be a need for greater emphasis on support work, particularly in relation to smaller grants. This approach facilitates RCN to reach out to areas and groups that either have not previously engaged or had previously had a bad experience with funding programmes, for example with administration and bureaucracy.

Within the model the support workers in each county are linked in to local peace partnerships and local council activity which effectively links project activity to the wider context, facilitating project development beyond the life of the PEACE programme. This model allows for a strong engagement between projects and their support worker, building a level of trust which is not always apparent in the PEACE programme. The trust and confidence built using this approach allows for a project to develop more quickly, avoiding reluctance to spend due to lack of confidence, and increased ability to work to action plans. This approach accords with RCN's decision some years ago to no longer play the role of funder, but to focus on support. The learning, therefore, would suggest that this is a transferable model which could be implemented across PEACE IV programmes, most probably at a small grant level.

Typical grants are around £1,200 / €1,500 so the model developed is effective for a small grants programme. Whether it would be as effective for medium sized grants, or organisations with paid staff, is unknown. RCN believes that its approach would work for larger grant awards, though potentially new systems would need to be introduced alongside further checks and balances, with further administrative support provided by RCN. The model has been generally well embedded in the administrative relationship between RCN and SEUPB. Key to this smooth operation between RCN and SEUPB (Omagh) has again been the development and building of good relationships.

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out using the Aid for PEACE approach but also engages in a storytelling / collecting stories approach to obtain information on programme impact. RCN staff have been trained on collecting information through storytelling and dialogue. Additionally on the back of this experience RCN is producing a range of policy papers to highlight key learning from this programme. At project level RCN has encouraged a range of creative techniques to inform evaluative work.

PEACE IV

RCN believes it is vital that a small grants programme is available, even if the overall PEACE programme becomes more strategic and focused on larger organisations. Additionally it recognises that there is still a huge amount of work to be done within local areas and within the Protestant community in border areas, alongside further work in institutions. Political leadership is still very much needed for the programme, with a greater role for councils in peace building work at local level.

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

Conclusion

Key features (which have been demonstrated to be successful)

- The availability of the support worker who is not aligned to any one individual project but rather the county.
- The support of that worker to groups through the application process and in developing an Action Plan to access small grants for which they do not have to be administratively responsible (invoicing, bank accounts etc).
- Success is built on the support work rather than dependent on funding levels.

Organisational perspectives on the PEACE programme

Alongside engaging with groups and organisations in the voluntary and community sector on their experience of the PEACE programme to date, NICVA's researchers engaged with a range of key bodies experienced in the delivery of the PEACE programme, or aspects of the programme.

Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

Reflecting on the different iterations of the PEACE programme, SEUPB highlighted that PEACE I was a novel and innovative way of using structural funds which resulted in the European Commission taking great interest in how the programme developed. Structural funds had never been used in his way before. Secondly, as a programme, probably its greatest success was in building inclusiveness and participation across different forms of partnership structures. At the time, the programme was one of only a few platforms where all the political parties met. PEACE I was a very broad regional programme that tackled many of the immediate legacies of the conflict with innovative actions in enterprise, in economics, at structural level and most importantly at community level.

PEACE II

PEACE II built on the achievements of PEACE I and added the significant dimension of exploring reconciliation. PEACE II generated a great deal of learning around reconciliation, for example the work undertaken by Hamber and Kelly,[19] and SEUPB tried to apply the learning to the assessment process. Although some mistakes were made as part of that process, SEUPB learnt a great deal such as developing the distinctiveness criteria.

PEACE III

The programme has looked beyond local and national issues to include international lessons for peace building. There has also been a great deal of interest in Northern Ireland and how peace building has worked here. It is important to separate the peace process (the macro / state level) from the PEACE programme at ground level involving people and communities. At times when the peace process broke down, the PEACE programme continued.

There have been a number of developments of the programme in PEACE III which could not have been achieved in the earlier phases of the programme:

- Reconciliation and building positive relations has been built in to the heart of the programme – the programme is built on the reconciliation theme.
- SEUPB works with local authorities in PEACE III in a way which would not have been possible earlier in the process. It works across administrative boundaries with local authorities now organised in clusters with nominated lead partners.

---

[19] http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/dd/papers/dd04recondef.pdf

This approach has worked well despite other local authority initiatives failing, eg Review of Public Administration.

- A genuine attempt was also made in PEACE III to address issues relating to victims and survivors of the conflict in a strategic way. In the process SEUPB learnt a great deal about just how sensitive and complex the issue of victims and survivors is.
- The creation of shared spaces was also a success for PEACE III and this aspect of the programme has resulted in a number of significant and iconic projects which have, for example, transformed the city centre of Derry.

Challenges / issues arising in the PEACE programme to date

The challenges fall in to two broad categories:

1. The broad policy objectives of the programmes
2. The management and administration of the programmes

For many who have taken part in the programmes, the focus tends to be on the challenges around administration. This is an administratively intensive programme and does not translate easily to involving groups that do not necessarily have the management capacity to manage structural funds. Since 1996 the programme has migrated through a range of different structures including district partnerships, Local Strategy Partnerships and clusters to having a broad range of intermediate finding bodies and sectoral partners, to having a much more concentrated joint technical secretariat; changes driven by the nature of the evolving programme.

In terms of administrative burden and bureaucracy SEUPB identified two key areas for further development:

1. The time involved in the process of approving and assessing project applications. If you compare the PEACE programme and its sister programme INTERREG with other European territorial co-operation programmes, the average processing time in the other programmes is 22-26 weeks (from application to decision). SEUPB believes that this should be achievable through streamlining the process but it is outside the control of SEUPB.

2. The bureaucracy of accountability. The procedures come from two sources:

    1. EU regulations on how monies have to be accounted for
    2. The member states' own rules which are more onerous. For example procurement follows national rules, not EU rules; the same applies to verification.

SEUPB recently reviewed the application process for the INTERREG programme and introduced a shortened two stage process. The feedback from applicants was generally positive and made the decision process faster. It is a matter of striking a balance between keeping the application as simple and short as possible and ensuring SEUPB has sufficient information upon which to make informed decisions.

SEUPB has made representations to the member states to try and take away much of the administrative burden from projects, particularly smaller projects. One suggestion was to introduce the concept of a lead partner which would focus bureaucracy in the 'centre' with local authorities or bigger organisations. SEUPB shares the views of groups on the burden of administration and would support the introduction of a streamlined, more user friendly system. Further discussions were held in May 2012 with the member states about significant changes to the system. However, it is clear from the draft regulations for the new programming period that the regulatory environment will not be radically transformed.

A good example of innovation is the approach taken by Rural Community Network which manages the financial aspects of the programme so that the local projects on the ground do not need to manage any of the funding. This model is one which could be developed and applied more widely. Many of the issues arising from the programme derive from the management of finances so the potential to centralise the function in larger organisations seems like a positive development, replacing much of the financial management burden which has cascaded down to project level.

Despite the progress to date and the success of the programme in involving people from all backgrounds, there remains a sense of frustration about the speed of progress towards reconciliation after 15 years of investment. It is clear that the programme has become much more focused on reconciliation over the years and as this has become the case, the more traditional economic development work has dropped away.

PEACE IV

SEUPB has been gathering information from a range of sources on what might be included in PEACE IV. To date, suggestions include a focus on young people, employability, access and education, challenges around integration and housing and shared education. Creating shared spaces has been a very popular element of the programme and has transformed communities and there appears to be an appetite to continue that element of the programme. Additionally, the role of local authorities needs to be copper-fastened as they have a key role in planning and developing community relationships.

SEUPB recognises there has been some tension around balancing social inclusion objectives and reconciliation objectives and is aware of the need to ensure that promoting social inclusion does not happen at the expense of reconciliation. The new PEACE programme will be the first to be planned in a stable political environment and it would be surprising if the new programme was not injected with a degree of ambition which may not have been possible to articulate in previous programmes. In terms of measuring impact, PEACE III has introduced Aid for PEACE but there is still no perfect way of measuring impact for peace and reconciliation programmes. A great deal of research has been done on this issue and many people watch the PEACE programme to see how it measures impact.

Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI)

Since 1994 CFNI has worked in a funding and support role with a range of politically motivated ex-prisoner groups, acting as intermediary funding body under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (1995-1999), as well as under the EU PEACE II and the EU PEACE II extension programmes. The Prison to Peace Partnership consortium in the PEACE III programme emerged as a result of these long established working relationships built between the range of politically motivated ex-prisoner groups and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

The programme has three overarching themes:

1. Conflict transformation and peace building
2. Work around youth development and citizenship
3. A focus on social change and the nature of current challenges at community level

CFNI overview of the PEACE programme

- PEACE I was considered to be very flexible and user friendly and it worked very well. In PEACE I, CFNI managed 2,000 grants (CFNI's lead officer managed 400). CFNI was able to manage that process as projects did not require the same level of input as projects in PEACE III.
- There was much more flexibility in the first PEACE programme. Eighty per cent of the money was allocated up front to projects, there were limited demands on projects with regard to policies (now projects need a policy on almost every aspect of their activities), and rules could be interpreted in a number of ways to ensure sufficient flexibility in the system. Over time the interpretation of the guidelines has become much stricter.
- PEACE II and the extension were very different. In PEACE II the CFNI lead officer had 40 grants to manage which generated an equivalent workload to PEACE I.
- In PEACE III the lead officer manages 14 grants which generate an increased workload compared to earlier rounds of the PEACE programme.
- PEACE II and PEACE III are considered to be very different programmes. Projects that operated in the earlier PEACE programme found that in PEACE III more elements of their claims were being disallowed, almost to the point where organisations were afraid to spend funding. To some extent there was a 'culture of anxiety'.
- For CFNI the experience of PEACE II (and the extension) and PEACE III has been very similar, more rules being put in place, changes to what is eligible expenditure introduced on a regular basis.

Currently PEACE programme funding for many organisations at project level is only attractive when there are no other options available. Anyone who has been in the programme and has found an alternative funding source, has 'jumped ship' immediately.

A further key issue relates to the demands made by the programme's bureaucracy. People working in the programme are burdened not by the demands of the

programme per se but by the demands of bureaucracy, with too much time spent on this aspect rather than on key project work. The levels of bureaucratic demand are evident both at project level and at CFNI level as lead partner. The responsibilities of a lead partner are, however, very similar to the demands of a funding body, for example in relation to financial verification. Through every iteration of the PEACE programme, each programme becomes more burdensome and bureaucratic; each one becomes incrementally more difficult. Within each version of the programme demands are multiplied. For example, demands are made for information retrospectively yet no additional resources are made available to facilitate additional information requests.

The increasing demands of the programme meant that additional (short-term / consultancy rate) staff had to be recruited. Even when the programme was over (theoretically), at a time when CFNI no longer had staff working on the programme, the organisation received demands to review entire claims going back over three years. This aspect of the programme kept making demands of CFNI in the period after the 'end' of the programme. It is this level of bureaucracy that ensures when people talk about the PEACE programme the first reaction is not to talk about achievements but to lament the negative aspects of the programme, the negativities, which undermines the very important work the PEACE programmes have enabled to be undertaken.

Final points

- Individually and collectively, as well as organisationally, CFNI has become disillusioned with elements of the PEACE programme.
- Over the years, at project level, individuals have at least realised that CFNI is not responsible for introducing the huge range of regulations.
- It was always hoped that the programmes for ex-prisoners would be mainstreamed.
- It is important to bear in mind, despite the negative elements of the programme; the PEACE programme has been successful. The current work, for example with the ex-prisoner groups, has been first rate and of vital importance on a number of issues pertaining to the peace process such as decommissioning. This work needs to be continued and mainstreamed.

Community Relations Council / POBAL

Under Priority 1 of the PEACE III programme Pobal, in partnership with the Community Relations Council in Northern Ireland, delivers two key themes:

Theme 1.1: Building positive relationships at the local level

This theme is concerned with challenging attitudes to racism and sectarianism and in supporting conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level. The consortium of Pobal and the Community Relations Council provides technical support to 14 local authority led peace partnerships. The partnerships include the six County Council areas making up the border counties of Ireland, and eight clusters of the 26 district councils in Northern Ireland.

Theme 1.2: Acknowledging and dealing with the past

This theme aims to build upon the capacity of individuals to deal with the transition to peace and reconciliation and ensure that victims and survivors of the conflict are able to deal with the past on their own terms. The consortium of Pobal and the Community Relations Council are the implementing body appointed to manage a global grant of €50million euro under this theme.

Community Relations Council (CRC)

For CRC, PEACE I is regarded as a reasonably spontaneous reaction in support of the peace process which was designed to be fairly flexible. What has happened over the period through PEACE II and PEACE III is that the programme fund has moved incrementally into the mainstream of European funding. As a result the programme has had to adopt more regulations including a greater auditing requirement. During this period the EU became more concerned with ensuring financial accountability in all the member states, so for CRC PEACE III has not been any more bound by administration or bureaucracy than any other European programme or initiative.

PEACE III was designed to be a very strategic intervention. The difference between PEACE III and PEACE I and II is that Northern Ireland and the border counties are more advanced in the peace building process. The programme's operational plan situated PEACE III alongside other major strategic interventions that were designed to come in line with this phase of the PEACE programme such as RPA (did not happen), A Shared Future (replaced with CSI) and the Victims Strategy (came late). In essence the strategic context within which the PEACE programme was to be placed failed to materialise.

PEACE III was clearly designed to deal with larger projects. Measure 1.1 funding was disbursed through local authorities to local groups which effectively meant that the programme was based on geographically defined areas, focused on developing economic and social relationships in those areas. For Measure 1.2 the plan was that there would be larger applications strategically tied to the policy context and the work of local authorities. Because the policy / strategic context has not been developed

(see above) we have a situation in which a number of large projects have been developed, that are accountable in view of the significant investment of public funds, but have no particular strategic context to fit into. Therefore, whilst projects are being developed 'from the ground up' the burden of responsibility is not being adequately met by the 'top down' / strategic component. This is a structural issue that needs to be addressed.

With the economic impact of the recession and the related austerity measures, there has been, in this period, an even greater onus on rigorous accounting procedures for public resources and this has impacted at European, national and local level. The fact that Europe is considering a PEACE III extension or a PEACE IV programme (bearing in mind that PEACE III was to be the final element of the PEACE programme), suggests that the peace process, at least this stage of the process, has taken longer than expected. Europe could have adopted a position whereby it said PEACE III was the final instalment, that there are more pressing areas to deal with in Europe.

The ability of projects to cope with the administrative burden of the programme varies from project to project. Some groups manage well, more often as a result of previous experience of the PEACE programme, other large scale funding programmes or simply that they had the capacity to deal with the demands of the programme. Other groups have struggled, both in terms of the administrative burden and in terms of managing to spend the funding because they don't have in place sufficient or adequate mechanisms and structures to facilitate spending.

In relation to programme structures CRC is aware of the views of funded groups that they 'just want to get on with the work'. As a result CRC accepts that what is perhaps needed is consideration of 'types / models of development' wherein the sector might revisit older models of development. Options could include models in which groups at local level deliver services but do not need to be engaged in the 'back office' component. Another model suggested is based around hubs of support which provide support to groups in terms of HR, audit, monitoring and evaluation. In this model these skills are available to groups, but it is not necessary for individual groups to have this range of skills in-house, similar to the current model developed by Rural Community Network. In a recessionary period the hub idea makes sense; it may be the case that the organisations themselves need to decide on the appropriate model. The balance is therefore between partnership working balanced against the competing requirements of competitive funding environments. This debate needs to be undertaken or at least generated by SEUPB.

In terms of evaluation it was evident in PEACE III that the programme would undertake its evaluation work mainly at an overview / programme level, rather than at project level. It had been suggested by some that project level evaluations were undertaken by projects and then shelved, ie the learning was not embedded across the programme. The information generated at project level (the sum of the parts) was useful for reflective learning and this may well be lost with a programme overview. Aid for Peace as an approach is more a programme overview and suggests a view wherein the programme is seen as greater than simply the sum of its parts (individual projects). Measuring impact is always a central question for the

PEACE programme in terms of what and how to measure. There is a need to assess what does not happen as well as what was delivered (eg an absence of violence). It is envisaged that the final CSI strategic document will inform future developments in evaluation, monitoring and learning.

For CRC the programme has been difficult in the sense that, for funders, there was an attempt to simplify the structures of funding. In the first instance the arrangements to get the funding in place in the early phases had all the usual difficulties. Secondly, the resources going out required about three different levels of clearance, two levels from Europe and one from DFP. This produced a level of frustration for groups on the ground. As a sector CRC feels that, given the size of grants involved, projects probably need to accept a higher level of regulation if they want to participate with the programme. However, the competing requirements in terms of demonstrating project impact and financial accountability need to be balanced.

POBAL[20]

POBAL has been involved in the delivery of the PEACE programme from its inception, originally as ADM/CPA, Area Development Management Ltd (ADM) and the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA). Originally it delivered a full range of measures in the border counties in PEACE I; in PEACE II with CFNI and Co-operation Ireland, POBAL delivered the cross-border measures (measures 5.3 and 5.4) and delivered the full range of border counties measures. In PEACE III, POBAL is responsible for the administration of measure 1.2 with CRC and in tandem with CRC delivering support to Councils in measure 1.1.

In PEACE III there have been more difficulties for the groups in relation to the administrative procedures and the regulatory framework. The most significant difficulty has been to ensure groups adhere to the procurement regulations. The challenge in terms of peace building and reconciliation is that progress is halted when there are issues around expenditure, cash flow and management of staff. To facilitate projects, SEUPB has produced revised guidance notes for the programme covering the range of regulations and POBAL has organised support workshops to address the regulatory framework for projects. Additionally each project is assigned a Finance Officer and a Case Officer.

At verification stage the biggest issue for POBAL is that projects have spent their funding without necessarily adhering to the procurement regulations which effectively means that POBAL cannot issue the funding. The key issue is the lack of capacity at project level to deal with the regulations. In PEACE I and II the capacity of groups was developed and enhanced as the programme developed, however, the groups in PEACE III are, in the main, new to the programme and as a result capacity issues are to be expected. Projects now have access to significant funding lines to expand

---

[20] POBAL delivers two Measures – Measure 1.1 which supports the work of Councils and Measure 1.2 which focusses on delivering peace-building and reconciliation projects which have a specific focus on dealing with the past and building pathways for a better future. This interview covers Measure 1.2 This Measure focuses on victims and survivors.

their service delivery, without necessarily having the capacity to do so. In addition to PEACE programme regulations there are departmental requirements so the stress on projects can be substantial, particularly as the groups consist of people who are naturally vulnerable and suspicious in relation to the demands of the programme. The current regulatory requirements for groups have been significant and have resulted in penalties, termination of contracts, audit queries and cash flow problems.

For the groups involved there have been real difficulties. For groups working with ex-members of the security forces there is a limited number of 'safe' venues they can use; this causes issues when the tendering process is competitive and needs to demonstrate best value. The same sensitivities apply to booking transportation, monitoring requirements or form filling by participants.

Recent amendments to the administrative system have been positive, for example submitting claims online. However, an issue for groups now is the fact that POBAL is no longer able, as a result of limited resources, to undertake site visits to vouch expenditure. Site visits are resource and time intensive so are no longer a viable option for POBAL and consequently groups must bring the relevant documentation to POBAL. POBAL and SEUPB have provided as much support to the groups as they can, although this feeling may not be shared by the projects. It is clear that any group that has been through the earlier versions of the PEACE programme is better able to cope with the demands of the current programme and will have staff who are experienced in the demands of the programme. An ongoing issue therefore for the programme is the continuing need for capacity development and skills enhancement at project level.

To date these issues have not impacted on the measure's expenditure levels, N+2 has not been an issue. There are more issues around the targets set for POBAL by SEUPB. For projects, there have been issues around cash flow and that has had a subsequent impact on POBAL achieving its targets although flexibility has been introduced to the system to facilitate projects. These issues could be addressed to some extent through partnership working, matching up local groups, ensuring that the groups with greatest administrative capacity take the lead.

A key negative impact on the work to date has been the uncertainty at a strategic level for the victims sector. The strategic delay has contributed to the delays in the delivery of theme 1.2 in terms of focusing expenditure, raising expectations and in delays in being able to go live with 'calls'. POBAL has had to operate in a virtual policy vacuum and as a result there is a negative impact on its ability to fully meet the needs of victims and survivors. For example, the debate on the balance between delivering services for victims and survivors (eg counselling services) and the broader issues of peace building and reconciliation. Measure 1.2 is seen as 'plugging the gap' to some extent, so in round one POBAL funded service delivery which in itself raised many issues around standards and quality of services, and issues around peer and community support, balanced against professional service delivery (medical services, counselling etc).

Transferring this information into monitoring and evaluation data is another difficult issue as the data required tends to focus on outputs (number of participants) rather

than the quality of delivery and the impacts of the intervention. Systems are not able to collect information on the impact of services or how that impact has facilitated engagement with other communities. Previously, independent evaluators assessed the impact of projects but now evaluation work is undertaken by the projects themselves and again there is limited capacity at project level to undertake work on impacts; data collected is limited to outputs. It is vital to balance the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the programme against the rationale for POBAL's involvement which is to support and facilitate the projects.

A review by Deloitte, requested by SEUPB, also added a significant delay to the implementation of the programme. During this time, despite having monies to spend POBAL could not issue a call for applications. The review considered the work of the measure in relation to CRC's core activities and the role of the new Victims Service. Potential projects had to wait until the review concluded; POBAL could not design the programme until its conclusion. At this time there was the additional issue around project practice in relation to procurement so POBAL had to add additional layers into the administrative system to provide more checks and balances.

Current position

Following the review, POBAL's last call for applications focused on the review's recommendations, moving away from counselling and one-to-one support to a greater focus on peace and reconciliation outcomes. More broadly POBAL also aims to involve people in the programme who do not necessarily define themselves as victims, ex-combatants or security forces, people whose experience is still important for the learning process. Storytelling projects are also becoming more popular with groups. Additionally, a greater role for government departments and local councils in the broader peace building agenda is seen as important. POBAL would fully support the introduction of any PEACE IV programme and would hope again to play a central role in its delivery. Potential (existing or new) priority areas for any new PEACE programme include:

- Peace and reconciliation cross border work still needs to be a focus – cross border work has not been fully addressed for a range of reasons
- Focus on rural sectarian interfaces / shared spaces as well as peace walls
- Meeting identified needs in communities so long as need is clearly demonstrated
- Partnership working
- Legacies of the conflict
- Acknowledging the past in public memory – flagship projects
- Trans-generational impact of the conflict on young people
- Skills enhancement in terms of the delivery of peace and reconciliation and support for victims and survivors
- Work in the border counties (addressing the conflict in border areas)
- Small grants programme with additional support available to projects, eg for networking, shared learning
  - Localised, community-based peace building initiatives, eg people in the border counties would not necessarily classify themselves as victims.