

## Foreword

The Special EU Programmes Body and the Distinctiveness Working Group welcome this research which clearly demonstrates the impact the PEACE II Programme is having on the ground in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This Distinctiveness Working Group was set up to look at how the distinctiveness criteria were being implemented in the programme, and to try to bring together some of the learning from all the different approaches to peace building work. The group usually meets in community venues, and uses the opportunity to hear from people who are working 'on the ground'. By doing this, there is a chance to hear not only about the achievements, but also about some of the problems and dilemmas faced by those who are trying to build stronger and more peaceful communities. There is much to be learned by going out more in reception than transmission mode.

Much of the monitoring of the peace programme records the administration, or the facts and figures, but behind all this, there are many stories of how it is all being done, and there is now within this community a great deal of knowledge, skills and experience - within the projects and programmes, and within the many organizations and partnerships that are assessing, developing and supporting all the initiatives.

The thinking behind this piece of research was around how some of this story could be captured from three very different areas and contexts - East Belfast, Strabane and Cavan. The researchers spent many hours in interviews and meetings and the report records some of the concerns and frustrations, but also many examples of new opportunities - where things were made possible that weren't possible before. There are some common themes - the importance of building skills and capacity, the positive impact of small amounts of money, the supportive influence of umbrella bodies and networks. There are, too, common concerns - particularly around sustaining the work in the longer term.

The report also poses challenges to the PEACE II Programme as it asks the question of how we can ensure that reconciliation work is given a greater focus in the future. Changing the habits and patterns of division is not an easy task, nor is it a short-term one. The research highlights the limitations of a peace programme in trying to tackle deeply rooted problems in a short time-scale - but it is clear that people feel that it is a crucial start to a process that is long term, difficult to measure, and hard to do. The report also contains evidence that this programme has been successful in reaching out to all sections of the community. However, we have to be careful not to be complacent and there is evidence that the lack of capacity in some communities is constraining the extent to which can fully engage in peace building and reconciliation. It is important moving forward that all sections of the community feel that they have a full and equal opportunity to positively engage in peace and reconciliation work.

**Pat Colgan, Chief Executive,**

## **SEUPB**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research was carried out by NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) and was overseen by the Research Studies Steering Group whose members are drawn from the Distinctiveness Working Group of the Peace II Programme Monitoring Committee. The Steering Group was chaired by Libby Keys (Rural Community Network). The other members of the group were:

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We would not, of course, have had the data on which the project is based without the many individuals throughout Strabane, East Belfast and Cavan who gave of their time so freely to participate in this research. Through their participation in the project, they have had a say in how PEACE II has impacted upon their area.

The Special European Union Programmes Body expresses its gratitude to all individuals and organisations that took part or assisted in any way with this important piece of research.

## Executive Summary

This research provides an insight into the impact that PEACE II funding has had in Strabane, East Belfast and Cavan. This analysis is intended to supplement additional quantitative data that is available on PEACE II funding in Northern Ireland and the border counties. The research, commissioned by the Distinctiveness Working Group, was conducted by NICVA Research Unit (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) between June and September 2004. A total of 84 interviews were carried out with PEACE II recipient organisations and other key actors from the media, political parties and other civil society organisations across each of the three study areas. This research is not intended to be an evaluation of monitoring forms or an audit of PEACE II funding projects but more of an attempt to garner opinion on the wider impact PEACE II funding has had in each of the areas. In relation to the level of funding received by each area, a total of £6.2 million went to 86 projects in the Strabane District Council area. East Belfast received £14 million under PEACE II across 74 different projects. Finally, a total of 58 projects in County Cavan received PEACE II funding amounting to 7.7 million.

This report has attempted to place the findings of the interviews in the wider socio-economic and political environments in each of the three areas. This analysis has taken account of a wide range of factors and has been an important element of the analysis in relation to how the funded projects have integrated into the wider environment. In essence this research attempts to measure the impact PEACE II is having on the ground, whilst also trying to examine the progress or otherwise of funded projects and to provide an assessment of learning from both a positive and negative perspective. Despite the very obvious differences in each of the areas - the socio-economic profile, the impact of the conflict, history of community development, etc – there are some very clear common messages to emerge in relation to the impact of PEACE II.

The interviews produced a wide range of comments relating to PEACE II and how it has influenced peace building, economic renewal and capacity building. Across all three areas there is almost unanimous agreement with the assessment that PEACE II has acted as a catalyst which has facilitated the development of services, infrastructure, training and engagement that would otherwise not have happened or at the very least not happened as quickly.

This particular point highlights two very different ways in which PEACE II funding has provided the impetus for change in each of the areas. First, the funding has provided the capital through which services and infrastructure have been developed and in some ways this has been a consolidation of the activities funded under PEACE I. This is a very important aspect of the impact PEACE II has had as this type of investment is seen as essential in terms of the social and economic reconstruction of a society emerging out of conflict. Peace building in this wider sense is only possible if traditional thinking and ultimately the legacy of the conflict can be explored in a safe environment. However, this holistic view of peace building is predicated on a stable political environment and as will be seen in a number of instances throughout this report, external factors have influenced and shaped how PEACE II programmes have rolled out on the ground. The second element, which is much more related to the existence of the distinctiveness criteria, is the creation of an environment where applicants have had to think about other communities and the needs that exist there.

This has made a lot of recipient organisations of PEACE II recognise the impact of the conflict and how that may be addressed in as inclusive a manner as possible. Many respondents who were in receipt of PEACE II funding claimed that they would not have otherwise considered quite as fully the needs of the other community and would not have necessarily pursued just as explicit a programme of peace building or cross-community work. Again, this report will attempt to show how relationships and new ways of working have developed under PEACE II funding. That is not to say that PEACE II funding has provided a solution to all inter and intra community tensions that exist and it is worth noting that a very distinct thread of realism ran through the respondents' comments concerning the challenge ahead. It was not uncommon to hear respondents discuss tokenism, facilitation of engagement but not reconciliation, the difficulties of getting the message further than committees and a focus on meeting the distinctiveness criteria at the expense of meeting real need.

There was also a sense amongst some of the respondents, particularly those in East Belfast, that activities to address the legacy of the conflict have been influenced by local conditions which have negatively impacted upon some PEACE II funded projects. A number of respondents (both recipients and non-recipients of PEACE II funding) felt that some elements of the PEACE II programme were inflexible to realities on the ground, for instance the interface violence and intra-community feuds

in East Belfast and what may have been appropriate in a rural setting was more difficult to translate into an urban one. There was also a feeling that the distinctiveness criteria had, in some cases, meant that some projects were not funded because of the adherence to ensuring a reconciliation element in all funded projects. This was particularly the case in relation to single identity work in areas. In relation to any economic renewal associated with PEACE II, it was difficult for respondents to attribute any direct impact to PEACE II because of the multifarious initiatives and policies that exist in each of the areas in terms of regeneration and renewal.

Through PEACE II projects individuals have developed their skills and confidence but it is difficult to state the exact number of jobs have been created directly or indirectly as a result of the funding. Of course improvements in the built and natural environment through PEACE II are self-evident but economic renewal is much more than improved footpaths and a refurbished community hall. There was a recognition by many respondents during this research that things had improved on the surface but to make a judgement on the longer-term impact these improvements are going to have on the economic renewal and regeneration of an area was too difficult. The issue of sustainability was a common theme throughout the interviews. The thrust of the discussions related to sustaining and maintaining the momentum that has been created through PEACE II in terms of building confidence and facilitating engagement within communities. In each of the areas there were a number of suggestions as to how future funding may be developed based on the experiences of organisations funded under PEACE II. A number of common areas arose during the interviews. For instance, how need is determined and the articulation of this need between the funder and organisations operating on the ground emerged as a common theme. This is not to say that current projects which are funded under PEACE II do not meet a genuine need on the ground but there is a feeling, particularly among non-recipients of PEACE II funding, that any future funding should attempt to take greater cognisance of local issues and priorities.

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A very clear message to emerge from the research into how to take things forward related to the introduction of a degree of proportionality in the funding application process to ensure that smaller organisations can avail of funding. There is a general sense that PEACE II has had a positive impact across each of the three areas but if there is to be future funding, respondents of all types were concerned about how to sustain the work and level of engagement that has occurred already. This is not a one dimensional view of sustainability which only focuses on the financial side of things but one that is concerned about sustaining the involvement of individuals in order to take these initiatives forward. On more than one occasion the issue of finding people to become involved at an organisational level was seen to be becoming more and more difficult. This of course cannot be solely linked to the PEACE II funding programme but it is indicative of a wider societal problem which could potentially affect longer-term developments. As a consequence of the opinion that PEACE II has acted as a catalyst, trying to attribute tangible outcomes is difficult, particularly in terms of economic renewal or long-term attitudinal changes with respect to creating a stable and peaceful society which promotes reconciliation. There is a sense amongst the respondents to this research that it is a first step in developing the capacity and skills to attempt to address these issues from a more stable and sustainable position. The issue of additionality, in terms of other policies and funding programmes that exist in each of the areas, has made it all the more difficult to identify the impacts directly attributable to PEACE II. Allied to the impact that the wider economic, social and political environment has had in each of these

areas, an accurate and robust assessment of the impact of PEACE II is very difficult. It is widely recognised amongst individuals in PEACE II funded projects and other actors in the community that PEACE II has been a further step in a longer, more involved process that will require further investment and commitment. Indeed for many, PEACE II funding has been the manifestation, financially at least, of the peace process on the ground.

# 1: Introduction

This research provides an insight into the impact that PEACE II funding has had in Northern Ireland and the border counties. This analysis is supplemented by a series of case studies to provide additional information in the context of existing quantitative data. The research will take full account of the spectrum of PEACE II funding in a selection of geographic areas. The research will serve as a snapshot to assist the statistical and analytical data currently available in order to tell the story of the PEACE II Programme by highlighting any impacts produced by the funding. The three areas selected for this research were Strabane District Council area, East Belfast and County Cavan.

## 1.1 Background to PEACE II

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) is a unique EU funding programme covering Northern Ireland and the six border counties - Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo. The programme aims to help Northern Ireland become a more peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region. Over the period 2000-2004, PEACE II will have provided 700 million (some £450 million) in assistance through a range of social and economic projects. The Programme Managing Authority is the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB), a cross-border body established under the Good Friday Agreement. Programme funding is administered by the following categories of implementing body:

- Government departments.
- Non-government bodies or Intermediary Funding Bodies (IFBs).
- Local Strategy Partnerships (Northern Ireland) and County Council led Task Forces (border region).

It is to these implementing bodies that project sponsors must apply for funding.

The PEACE II Programme promotes economic and social development with a special focus on those groups, sectors/activities and areas which have been most affected by the conflict. Two specific objectives, or distinctiveness criteria, can be identified in relation to the overall aim of the PEACE II Programme:

### **Objective 1: Addressing the Legacy of the Conflict**

The Programme will address specific problems generated by the conflict in order to assist the return to a normal peaceful and stable society.

### **Objective 2: Taking Opportunities Arising from Peace**

To encourage actions which have a stake in peace and which actively help promote

a stable and normal society where opportunities for development can be grasped.

The Programme Priorities under PEACE II are:

- Economic Renewal.
- Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation.
- Locally Based Regeneration and Development Strategies.
- Outward and Forward Looking Region.
- Cross Border Co-Operation.

### **1.2 Key objectives of PEACE II**

PEACE II is not a conventional regional development initiative. Its overall strategic aim is to “reinforce progress towards a more stable and peaceful society and to promote reconciliation.” Successful projects must:

- Promote economic and social development with a special focus on those groups, sectors and areas which have been most affected by the conflict.
- Develop reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between and within traditions and communities in the eligible region.

The specific objectives of the programme are to enable the return to a normal society by addressing the legacy of the conflict or by taking opportunities arising from peace.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The main objectives of the study are:

- To identify any synergy between projects within a geographic location, their interaction, positive or otherwise, with actors in the community and factors within the community that facilitate or impede the development of PEACE II key objectives.
- To describe, through qualitative and quantitative analysis, the combined impact of all the PEACE II funded projects within the given geographic area.
- To identify practices and activities which have been particularly successful and to identify where there has been less progress than anticipated, with a view to learning from both success and difficulty.

To this end, rather than reiterating the data from monitoring reports and previous evaluations, this research attempts to tell the story of PEACE II on the ground and to get at the information that is not always collected on monitoring forms. As a consequence of this, the research is not intended to be an audit of all PEACE II funded organisations but rather it reflects as widely as possible the range of organisations funded under each Measure. As a result any detailed analysis or commentary of individual projects is confined to the case study sections, while in the main body of the report, there is a summation of the general opinions and attitudes towards PEACE II amongst PEACE II organisations and other key community actors.

## **2: Methodology**

In order to fully assess the impact of PEACE II funding in each of the study areas, a three stage methodology was developed.

### **2.1 Area selection**

In the first instance an exercise was undertaken to select the three study areas - one urban, one rural and one from the border region. A number of variables were taken into consideration during the selection process. The variables included information relating to the relative deprivation in the area, socio-demographic statistics, the effects of the Troubles and the level of European funding that was accessed by

organisations in each of the areas. A list of potential areas was presented to the Research Studies Steering Group and a decision was reached on each study area. The three areas selected by the Research Steering Group were:

- Rural **Strabane District Council area**
- Urban **East Belfast**
- Border region **County Cavan**

## 2.2 Interviews

Within each of the selected study areas a number of key individuals from PEACE II recipient organisations were interviewed to assess the impact and awareness of PEACE II funded projects in the area. These individuals were selected from a list of funded organisations sourced from the CSF Central Database<sup>1</sup>. As highlighted in the objectives for this research it was necessary to examine how funded projects integrated into the community and therefore it was deemed necessary to speak to other key informants such as local politicians, the media, churches, public sector representatives, community leaders and other civil society representatives. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and followed a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 1). The interviews were conducted between June and September 2004. A total of 84 interviews were conducted across all of the three study areas (30 in both Strabane and East Belfast and 24 in Cavan). A list of all the organisations interviewed during this research can be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>1</sup> The Central Database is a live and dynamic system which depends on various funding bodies to provide and update information on European funding. The data from the CSF Central Database is correct as of 3 June 2004. PEACE II Geographical Survey **Special EU Programmes Body 13**

## 2.3 Case Studies

The final stage in the methodology focused on developing short case studies on projects that had been funded under PEACE II. These case studies provide further insight into the impact the funding has had on the organisation and the role it plays in the local community. Particular attention was paid to the effect of the distinctiveness criteria upon peace building and ultimately addressing the legacy of the conflict. **Special EU Programmes Body PEACE II Geographical Survey 14** This report is divided into three distinct sections which aim to examine the impact and integration of PEACE II funding in each of the three study areas. Each section examines the overall funding each area received under the PEACE II funding programme by Priority area. To set these findings in context, a number of background statistics are provided, setting a fuller picture of the environment into which the funding was distributed.

The substantive proportion of each area section focuses on the impact the funding has had and how that relates to the wider socio-economic and political environment that defines each area. The analysis articulating the impact the funding has had is, by its very nature, a relatively broad brush assessment. However the inclusion of a number of short case studies at the end of each chapter shows how particular projects funded through PEACE II have impacted directly upon a specific community. Within the area specific chapters, the analysis has been structured in such a way as to reflect the impact it has had under the two objectives which form the distinctiveness criteria:

- Addressing the Legacy of the Conflict
- Taking Opportunities Arising from Peace

After each of the three area specific sections there will an overview provided on how PEACE II has impacted on the area and what contribution PEACE II funding has made to that area in relation to the distinctiveness criteria as listed above. The report

will conclude with a discussion of the other pertinent issues in relation to PEACE II that were raised during this research. Quotations have not been directly attributed to any individual or organisation. Where direct quotations have been used they will be followed by a (R) or (NR) which signifies whether respondents were speaking on behalf of an organisation which received funding (R) or did not receive funding (NR).

### **3.1 Terminology**

The formal title for the second peace programme is the 'European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland, 2000-2004'. For the sake of convenience and brevity, the programme will be referred to as 'PEACE II' and the preceding peace programme will be referred to as 'PEACE I'. When Strabane and Cavan are referred to in this report it relates to the District Council area and the County as opposed to the respective towns in each area. When discussing East Belfast we are referring to the Parliamentary Constituency. For projects funded in Northern Ireland sterling is referred to when discussing the level of funding. For projects funded in the Republic of Ireland all funding amounts are referred to in euro. No direct comparison is made between the two currencies.

## **3: Structure of the Report**

# 4: Strabane District Council Area

The following section will articulate how funding under the PEACE II programme has impacted upon organisations and their beneficiaries in Strabane District Council area. The experiences and attitudes of recipients and non-recipients of PEACE II will be assessed in relation to the social, economic and cultural profile of the area which is the most deprived district council area in Northern Ireland.

## 4.1 PEACE II funding in Strabane District Council area

Generally there is a very positive attitude towards PEACE II funding throughout the Strabane District Council area. The area has benefited from an injection of funding totalling over £6.1 million (£6,141,652) which has contributed to a mixture of capital and service based projects within the area. A total of 86 projects have been funded and 55 organisations have received funding.

Before looking at how PEACE II funding is viewed in Strabane District Council area it is necessary to examine what the major features of this funding are in terms of the types of activities funded under the programme.

The single largest block of funding to be distributed in Strabane District Council area was under Measure 1.1A Business Competitiveness and Development - Economic Revitalisation. A total of five projects received £1.65 million (27% of the total funding in Strabane District Council area) to develop workspace units and offices in Castlederg, Ballyfatten and Strabane town. Under the Economic Renewal Priority, 11 projects were funded under Measure 1.2B Sustainable Tourism Development based on shared natural and cultural resources (NI) Natural Resource Rural Tourism. A total of £124,750 went towards the development of tourist accommodation and its associated infrastructure (signage and walkways).

The remainder of the funding under the Economic Renewal Priority was distributed to projects providing support for victims to develop essential skills, women returning to the workplace, provision of childcare facilities and the development of skills, etc, for farmers. A total of £2,180,261 was distributed under the Economic Renewal Priority which equates to 35% of the total funding distributed in Strabane District Council area.

A significant proportion of the funding went towards facilitating cross-border engagement. Under Measure 5.3 Developing Cross-Border Reconciliation and Understanding £1,009,118 was distributed to six projects. These projects included an attempt to address tensions within the Protestant community through research, audit, debate and dialogue; bringing children together from both sides of the border to explore their different traditions and cultures through art; and the facilitation of an engagement with the Republican Socialist community to begin a process of reconciliation.

Another Measure under which a sizeable number of projects were funded was Measure 3.1 Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy. A total of 11 projects were funded under this Measure which received just under £640,000 (this represents 10% of the total funding distributed in Strabane District Council area). The projects included the renovation of vacant buildings to set up community businesses, establishment of an equipment pool to support the development of locally based sports programmes and environmental enhancement initiatives to regenerate the River Mourne. Other projects included the upgrading of a community transport service and the refurbishment of various community buildings and workspace units.

Combining the figures for the Economic Renewal Priority and the two social economy Measures (2.3 and 3.1) a total of £3,155,572 was distributed in the Strabane District Council Area under PEACE II. This equates to 51% of the total funding accessed by organisations in Strabane District Council area.

Three projects under Measure 2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure received £335,847. Two of the projects looked at developing and enhancing services they already provide whilst the third attempted to bring communities that are estranged through differing political and religious opinions together through a fun and sports day.

Other funding focused on the provision of childcare primarily through the funding of staff to maintain childcare services (Measure 2.5 Investing in Childcare which totalled £188,520). Overall a total of 18 projects were funded in order to provide childcare facilities, equipment or cover staff and revenue costs. This funding, under a number of different Measures, totalled £282,699.

A number of training initiatives have been funded under a variety of different Measures but some of the most notable have focused on developing a work readiness plan aimed at women returners from both communities and a pre vocational course to build self-confidence for victims. A closer examination of the data presented in the CSF database shows that a total of £1.1 million (18% of the total PEACE II funding in Strabane District Council area) went towards the provision of training, enhancement of skills and development of capacity amongst women, ex-prisoners, former members of the security forces and victims.

From the above analysis of PEACE II funding in Strabane District Council area it is clear that the funding has covered a wide range of activities and initiatives from large scale economic renewal to cross-border arts programmes.

<sup>2</sup> The selection District Council area is situated in the north-west of County Tyrone with neighbouring council areas including Derry City Council to the north, Omagh District Council to the south and east and County Donegal to the west. The latest Census figures show a current population of 38,248 people living in the area with 23,017 (60.2%) people of working age (Source: Census 2001, NISRA).

**Table 1: Funded projects in Strabane District Council area<sup>2</sup>**

Priority	Projects	Total Award
<b>1. Economic Renewal</b>		
1.1A Business Competitiveness and Development - Economic Revitalisation	5	£1,653,728
1.2B Sustainable Tourism Development based on shared natural and cultural resources (NI) - Natural Resource Rural Tourism	11	£124,750
1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities	2	£141,700
1.5 Positive Action for Women	4	£241,128
1.6 Training for Farmers (NI)	2	£18,965
<b>2. Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation</b>		
2.1 Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace	1	£8,883
2.3 Skilling and Building the Social Economy (NI)	2	£335,720
2.4A Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - Pathways to Inclusion	2	£253,269
2.4B Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - Integration and Reconciliation of Victims	2	£237,962
2.5 Investing in Childcare	8	£188,520
2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure	3	£335,847
2.8 Accompanying Infrastructure and Equipment Support	12	£106,192
2.9B Renovation and Development of Villages and Protection and Conservation of the Rural Heritage	2	£60,000
2.11 Area-based Regeneration-Belfast, Londonderry and Regional Towns (NI)	2	£240,608
<b>3. Locally Based Regeneration and Development Strategies</b>		
3.1 Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy (NI)	11	£639,581
3.2 Locally-based Human Resource, Training and Development Strategy (NI)	5	£183,331
<b>4. Outward and Forward Looking Region</b>		
4.2B Outward and Forward Looking Tourism - Enhancing the Region as a Tourism Destination	3	£23,950
<b>5. Cross-Border Co-operation</b>		
5.1 Increasing Cross-Border Development Opportunities	2	£5,850
5.3 Developing Cross-Border Reconciliation and Understanding	6	£1,003,268
<b>6. Technical Assistance</b>		
6.2A Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme and Co-ordination with Other Programmes	1	£338,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>£6,141,652</b>

## 4.2 Background to Strabane District Council area

The Strabane District Council area is situated in the north-west of County Tyrone with neighbouring council areas including Derry City Council to the north, Omagh District Council to the south and east and County Donegal to the west. The latest Census figures show a current population of 38,248 people living in the area with 23,017 (60.2%) people of working age (Source: Census 2001, NISRA).

There are 35 primary schools, six secondary schools and two grammar schools in the area providing education to approximately 8,000 pupils (Strabane Economic Profile and Trade Directory, 2003/04). The area also caters for further education through the Strabane Campus of the North-West College of Further and Higher Education. There are four main towns in the Strabane District Council area - Strabane, Castlederg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart. Strabane is by far the largest town with a population of 11,670 which is 32% of the total population of the District Council area. Castlederg, Sion Mills and Newtownstewart have total populations of 2,579, 1,676 and 1,520 respectively (Source: Census 2001, NISRA). The main tourist attractions in the area include the Sperrin Mountains, the rivers and lakes for anglers, shooting and hill walking.

## 4.3 Community background

According to the 2001 Census, 66% of the population in the Strabane District Council areas described their community background as Catholic. Individuals who described their community background as Protestant make up 33% of the population, whilst the remaining 1% describe themselves as having another religion or none at all. (Source: Census 2001, NISRA).

Local people are slowly getting over the trauma of 'the Troubles' which resulted in the deaths of 56 people in the Strabane District Council area. Both Protestants and Catholics suffered greatly mainly because of the activities of paramilitaries and the heavy security presence. Thirty-one Protestants, twenty Catholics and five individuals from outside Northern Ireland lost their lives, scarring the lives of many within this relatively small district council area (Source: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton>). It is clear from talking to people throughout the area that the process of coming to terms with what happened in the past has been slow but progress is being made. Although there is still suspicion and minor conflict in mixed areas such as Castlederg, there are some very positive networking and cross-community initiatives helping to break down traditional barriers to progress.

Conflict related violence combined with unfavourable currency differentials during the 1980s added to the economic problems of the area.

*"Strabane is on the way back and you would not recognise the town from what it was ten years ago. In a further ten years the town will have again made a substantial improvement."* (NR)

Although not necessarily attributable to the Troubles or recent inter-community tensions, there are a number of anti-social behaviour issues in the Strabane District Council area including under age drinking and drug abuse and perceived minimal intervention from statutory bodies. There are high levels of mental health problems and intergenerational unemployment creating a long-term negative impact within the area.

#### **4.4 The local economy**

The manufacturing sector has been a main source of employment within the area with 30% of the workforce working within that sector (Strabane Economic Profile and Trade Directory, 2003/04). The area has improved dramatically in terms of employment over the last two decades. Strabane was once known as the 'unemployment blackspot of Northern Ireland' with for example 23.6% unemployment in 1991 compared to 12.9% for Northern Ireland as a whole. By July 2003 the situation significantly improved with unemployment rates of 5.2% in Strabane District Council area compared to an overall Northern Ireland figure of 3.5% (Strabane Economic Profile and Trade Directory, 2003/04).

Looking at the economy in a little more detail, the Adria textiles factory in Strabane employs over 1,000 people and faces a bleak future, with recent redundancies adding to speculation concerning the future of the factory. Employment in the Castlederg area includes a number of construction businesses and light engineering in the rural areas. The farming community has also suffered through the recent foot and mouth crisis and the decline in the pig industry. There is a need to build up an infrastructure enabling the next generation of farmers to stay within the industry rather than moving to find other sources of employment as the agricultural sector is an important feature of the economy in the Strabane District Council area.

#### **4.5 The impact of PEACE II**

The following sections will examine the impact of PEACE II funding in the Strabane area as well as exploring any lessons to be drawn from the experiences of respondents who participated in this research.

##### **4.5.1 Addressing the legacy of the conflict**

As outlined in the above the conflict has left its mark in the Strabane District Council area and a combination of external factors has meant that the area has suffered particularly badly as a result.

## Peace building

Views on the impact on community relations resulting through PEACE II vary depending on the organisation and its location within the Strabane District Council area. Amongst respondents there is an appreciation of the fact that the greater focus on economic renewal and development in PEACE II has created a situation where groups, through necessity, are coming together.

*“It will take time to see if the PEACE II funding has had the desired effect in terms of peace and reconciliation. What it has done is open opportunities but it takes time to change attitudes. The opportunities created include a mechanism and opportunity for organisations to meet and exchange views.” (R)*

It may be too early to tell if PEACE II has brought about any meaningful change in how the two communities in Strabane District Council area interact. Nevertheless it is clear from the comments gathered during this research that PEACE II has provided the opportunity and the conditions for groups to work across the divide but to judge the impact now would be difficult.

Although there are mixed opinions on community relations in the Strabane District Council area there is also general agreement that there has been progress.

*“In terms of peace and reconciliation there is a remarkable improvement compared to even five years ago.” (NR)*

A number of respondents who did not receive PEACE II funding felt that some things had changed but there is still plenty of scope for further progress.

*“Peace and reconciliation have not directly been impacted upon through PEACE II. There is still tension in the town at particular times of the year but it’s improving slowly.” (NR)*

*“Although most groups are eager to embrace in peace and reconciliation, one Protestant group feels that reconciliation has been very much forced on them... it is understandable that reconciliation is a process taking longer for some groups than others.” (NR)*

Sectarianism is still visible through graffiti and flags in Strabane and in Castlederg where there are also tensions between young people after school, in the evenings and at weekends. In the Castlederg area the two communities tend to come together in a business sense rather than a community sense. To a certain extent the local umbrella groups get people together to work for everyone’s benefit. Groups will communicate through these organisations but would be less willing to work on a one to one basis. There is a fear that people will not support groups if they are seen to be working one to one with groups across the political divide.

Nevertheless there are examples where PEACE II has generated greater engagement and a changing of mindsets between the two communities. For instance one event funded under PEACE II involved organisations from both sides of the community coming together to celebrate their local identity, culture and heritage.

*“Initially Killen Community Hall was used for Protestant events and Killeter Community Centre was used for Catholic events but now there are 50/50 events at both halls. The Scottish and Irish music brings people together in areas where 20 years ago bombs were going off.” (R)*

A second example of the success of PEACE II in terms of bringing people together is an educational project bringing together young people from different communities, both cross-border and cross-community. A respondent believes that the impact of this funding on the children benefits both the individuals who participate and their families and friends when they return to their own communities.

*“When the young people are brought together there is peace by osmosis as they realise that they have a lot in common.” (R)*

Against this progress there is still a sense that more needs to be done and perhaps there needs to be a re-evaluation of where Strabane is in relation to peace and reconciliation.

*“We need to revisit the issue of peace and there is a need to look creatively at where money has went so far and instead of stepping back, build capacity, address disillusionment and provide genuine support.” (NR)*

## Developing the economy

Projects funded under PEACE II, in the view of the respondents, have had a very positive impact on the employability of individuals in most need of support and retraining within the community. There are major concerns for the textiles industry in the Strabane District Council area and the projects funded through PEACE II offer options through training, specialist skills, work experience, alternative employment and industrial facilities.

The provision of services including affordable childcare and rural transport initiatives has enabled parents and those in rural locations to get back into the labour market. Projects are also providing the skills and experience needed by individuals who would otherwise find it difficult to enter the labour market. Capital funding for the provision of workspace in Castlederg and Strabane will help to provide the capacity for current and future business start ups in the area.

There is however a general consensus that the real economic and employment benefits of PEACE II are difficult to measure. Through PEACE II projects, individuals have developed their skills and confidence but it would be difficult to state exactly the number of jobs have been created so far.

*“The creation of jobs and provision of many useful services have improved the quality of life in areas where there is a clear lack of service provision.” (R)*

The effects are nevertheless beginning to be felt in terms of addressing the migration of graduates from the area.

*“There is a realisation that graduates are beginning to stay and come back to the area whereas ten years ago very few graduates would find employment in the area after completing their studies.” (NR)*

Some interviewees feel that the Strabane District Council area has been somewhat forgotten about because of its proximity to Derry and Omagh. PEACE II funding for the area has helped to address this perception of neglect through the creation of opportunities to develop new services and improve existing ones.

*“PEACE II is giving the opportunity to do work which otherwise would not have been done.” (R)*

There is a conflict of opinions about the value of business units that have been funded through PEACE II particularly in the Castlederg area. On one side there is a perception that the units are the way forward and that there should be more to help offset the job losses within manufacturing

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in the area. On the other hand, there is a view that more units have not necessarily been the answer and that securing successful businesses within the units that already exist would possibly be a better strategy. It is still too early to say which is the better but there is clearly some discussion about the way economic development should be brought forward in the area.

The relatively high unemployment rates, lack of inward investment and relative deprivation in the Strabane District Council area are often seen as impediments to sustained economic growth. However, a number of respondents stated that through PEACE II the necessary facilities and training were being put into place which provide the opportunities that will allow individuals to get back into the workforce.

*“PEACE II funding for community childcare and affordable crèche facilities is a major bonus in helping to relieve the poverty trap.” (R)*

*“We see the training and equipment in place but it will be a couple of years before we see the benefits in terms of employment.” (NR)*

This statement and indeed this section highlight the fact that PEACE II has developed capacity and provided opportunities that is hoped will have a long lasting effect on the economic landscape of the area. As was shown in the opening analysis on Strabane District Council area, a considerable amount of funding has gone into the area in relation to economic investment, training and development of capacity amongst different groups and areas.

#### 4.5.2 Opportunities arising from peace

The following sections will attempt to uncover the impact that PEACE II funding has had in relation to providing organisations and the beneficiaries of those organisations with the opportunity to develop and promote a stable and normal society.

##### Developing capacity

There is a general belief amongst some of the community actors' interviews for this research that the Protestant community is becoming more organised at a community level and that groups are more capable of gaining funding for their projects than they would have been in the recent past. There are a number of examples of initiatives (as described in the opening part of this section) that highlight the confidence in predominantly Protestant organisations and their ability to work on a successful cross-community programme.

One respondent described PEACE II in terms of its role in developing capacity as:

*"Priming the groups for the next stage in their development."* (NR)

There is a sense that the Protestant community was initially very slow to take up PEACE II funding and some of the reasons suggested for this were a lack of capacity, a perception of where the funding was coming from and the fact that many such communities are in rural areas.

*"The Protestant community is not as community orientated and EU funding suits community-based projects and there is a lack of capacity to tap into this within the Protestant community."* (NR)

*"Protestants initially saw PEACE money as being cross-border nationalist money. They were late starters in learning how to go about getting funding. It is good to see them looking for the money and getting it now."* (NR)

These are politicised points and it is often difficult to disentangle conflicting and often confusing arguments surrounding this issue. The question is, does it relate to weak community infrastructure that cannot attract resources or is it a reluctance to apply for funding which is linked to a politically contentious peace process? There is a sense however that the situation is changing, albeit slowly, as a result of PEACE II but further progress can still be made.

*"If there is a further round of PEACE funding I feel that Protestant groups will have a greater capacity to access funding. This success will generate new groups and a greater community capacity will be developed."* (NR)

Capital projects funded through PEACE II have also had a very positive impact on Strabane District Council area. The development of business units has the obvious benefits of attracting new businesses but other smaller capital projects have also had real impacts. But as we have already seen in the preceding section, this is a contentious point in some areas and there is still debate surrounding their viability. One example of this is a rural development organisation moving into new premises. They are using PEACE II funding to enable the installation of disabled access thus enabling the physically disabled and elderly to access and benefit from their services. The organisation will now be able to ensure that everyone within the community can take advantage of their services. There is a general sense that such capital projects have enabled organisations to deliver within the community in a more professional and inclusive way.

There is recognition that the urban areas in Strabane District Council area have taken advantage of the funding, however villages in the more rural locations have yet to fully engage in the funding programme. This has been attributed by a number of respondents to a general sense of apathy combined with a general lack of capacity.

*“People are down in the mouth and apathetic towards community development.”* (NR)

The form filling difficulties and an attitude that they can look after themselves appear to be common within rural areas. There is some evidence of groups looking to work in partnerships in rural areas but according to one respondent, who was not a recipient of PEACE II funding, some would prefer to look after their own corner rather than engage in the peace and reconciliation aspect of community development.

Ultimately the level of funding that has gone into Strabane District Council area as either capital expenditure or through the provision of childcare facilities, training and tourist activities has increased the capacity of the area in order to begin to create a normal and stable society.

### **Providing opportunity**

The day to day services including playgroups, health services and rural transport initiatives have greatly improved the quality of life for many within rural communities. Individuals can now take advantage of services which previously they would have had to travel to Strabane or Castlederg to access.

The services provided through PEACE II projects are seen as being very professional and there is a high level of trust and confidence in the work that is undertaken. The effects of projects funded through PEACE II have had very real impacts for young people in the area as is demonstrated below by two recipients of PEACE II funding in the area.

*“A measurable impact of PEACE II is the fact that young people are coming in off the streets. Just two years ago there were 50 cases of drug and alcohol abuse amongst 11-14 year olds, dealt with by the drugs and alcohol unit. This year there has been none at all.”* (R)

*“Another outcome is young people becoming peer educators for other young people coming in. This improves their self-esteem and they are also encouraged to go on courses to give them direction in life.”* (R)

There are a number of impressive environmental and tourism projects being undertaken within the Strabane District Council area. The environment in Strabane town has been helped through enhanced shop fronts and the statues helping to promote pride in the area. Other changes include the planned lighting of the bridge, tree planting and the laying of Kilkenny stone in Strabane town centre. These improvements are having an impact in that people who previously travelled to Omagh or Derry to shop are coming back to Strabane.

*“Since the improvements have been made to the town centre there has [sic] been an increased number of people coming into the town to shop and as tourists.”* (NR)

PEACE II has helped to educate people about their environment and those who have participated have a greater appreciation for the environment. The environment has been used as a core topic in bringing young people together from cross-community and cross-border backgrounds.

## 4.6 Conclusion

What has PEACE II achieved in the Strabane District Council area and what do the recipients of PEACE II and key actors in the wider community believe this achievement to be? The second part of that question is perhaps easier to answer than the first.

Across the full spectrum of individuals and organisations interviewed for this section of the research, it is clear that PEACE II has impacted in a range of ways. The most tangible impact has been the fact that PEACE II has provided a mechanism through which other things have happened. It is a common theme throughout this research that has shown that PEACE II has acted as a catalyst. This perhaps goes some way in also answering the first part of the question. Through PEACE II funding, investment in the development of workspace units, or funding cross-border arts initiatives or providing training to increase self-confidence, PEACE II has achieved positive results. Respondents recognised that the direct outputs that are captured in monitoring forms are not the only measures of success, it is the wider impacts such as increased employability, a better and more confident tourist product and a basis from which different cultures and traditions can be understood that are the real indicators of success.

What became evident during this research and in particular when respondents talked about the impact that PEACE II had had in relation to peace and reconciliation work, was that there appears to be in essence a shared commercial and economic life but considerable social segregation. This was borne out by many of the responses to this research in so far as community groups work together to a limited degree but there are still tensions and resistance to cross-community activities. With this comes the usual politics of who got what and it is no different in Strabane District Council area but it would take considerably more analysis to substantiate any of these claims. Nevertheless PEACE II has provided the opportunity and the conditions for organisations to work together and certainly this is more the case, at a cross-border level at least, than in any of the other study areas.

This clearly demonstrates the limits a programme like PEACE II can achieve in the context of continued social and political problems and the fragility of the political institutions in Northern Ireland. The PEACE programme was never expected to solve community relations problems or to deliver overall peace. That is very clear from the responses to this research but it has provided a basis from which some of these wider issues may be addressed.

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The mixture of socio-economic and cultural factors that shape Strabane District Council area is reflected in the spread of funding. In a similar vein to East Belfast a significant proportion of PEACE II funding was distributed under the Economic Renewal Priority and the two social economy measures (2.3 and 3.1). The main difference in Strabane District Council area is that the capital expenditure on workspaces, etc, was very closely linked to the local economy. Whereas in East Belfast the major funding under the Economic Renewal Priority was more closely associated with the wider Northern Ireland economy and linkages with the local economy in East Belfast are perhaps more difficult to ascertain. In a similar vein to Cavan there has been significant funding in developing the area as a niche tourist destination and improving the environmental and built infrastructure in the area.

As has been shown throughout this section, the projects funded under PEACE II have enabled the recipients to produce an impact far beyond the monetary value of funding made available through the programme.

Throughout the interviews there was a consensus that the funding had given individuals the opportunity to improve their employability, enhance their self-esteem and to discover career paths.

# Case Studies

## WEST TYRONE VOICE

*“ Without PEACE II I wouldn't be here. The main reason for going for PEACE II was because it was there to enhance the service”.*

This organisation was initially set up in a local parish hall in Newtownstewart in 1999 but quickly found its feet and moved to its current premises at Grange Court, Newtownstewart, in December 2000. West Tyrone Voice provides a unique support service to the victims of terrorism and their wider families throughout the west of Northern Ireland. There is a current membership of 600 with a family circle of 2,300 people from Strabane, Londonderry, Omagh, Magherafelt and Fermanagh. The membership of the organisation is made up mainly from the Protestant community although a number of people from the Catholic community are also involved.

The range of services provided includes befriending, counselling, welfare advice, training services, confidence building activities, advice services and informal chats. The impact of PEACE II on the organisation has been a development of their capacity to provide services and greater professionalism through the funded posts.

A total of £302,164 was received enabling the recruitment of professional staff and the provision of pre-vocational training to build self-confidence and also to enable participants to acquire the necessary qualifications and skills to become more employable (the target group is victims of the Troubles). West Tyrone Voice received its funding from PEACE II under Measure 2.4B Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims Integration and Reconciliation of Victims and 3.2 Locally-based Human Resource, Training and Development Strategies (NI).

There is a realisation within the organisation that although the funding has opened new opportunities for the membership, it is difficult to estimate the tangible benefits gained. The training undoubtedly builds self-confidence and allows them to talk openly about their experiences in relation to the Troubles.

The take-up of training courses including CLAIT, ECDL, car and HGV training surpassed expectations with 96 participants compared to the 24 that they had planned for. The exit strategy is a concern as there are currently no sources of income outside of funding and membership fees.

## BORDER ARTS

The Border Arts project based in Castleberg has received funding within both PEACE I and PEACE II. The project began as the result of a survey of arts completed in 1998 and links arts to business services. Before the project was set up groups on both sides of the border tended to work in isolation with cross-border communication in the Castleberg area being particularly poor.

To promote the project the Ulster Orchestra was brought in and local schools became involved as the core link to the community. Initially Killen Community Hall was used for the Protestant events and Killeter Community Centre for the Catholic events but this has changed to a situation where there are totally cross-community events held at both venues. Border Arts sees the promotion of Irish dance, Irish music and Ulster Scots as being key in 'breaking the mould'. The project offers a range of activities including crafts, exhibitions, developing ceramic displays for the town, face painting workshops, painting and poetry.

Border Arts has organised an annual cross-community carnival for the last four years. Initially there was some concern about tensions due to the mixture of bands; however the event has gone well and there is a great level of confidence in it now. The project has developed contacts through participation in the 2002 St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin. Using the contacts and the fact that the first carnival cost £24,000 for float and costume hire, Border Arts was inspired into setting up a carnival group with costume makers.

The project received almost £240,000 through PEACE II to support and develop the business idea of creating floats and providing storage for the floats. The community business currently hires out six floats for carnivals throughout Ireland. The PEACE II funding has also been used to fund training on carnival skills and travelling has developed new contacts throughout Ireland. The project is 'a good image builder' for Castleberg with its main strength being the promotion of peace and reconciliation in the area.

Under PEACE II, Border Arts received three different slices of funding. The first was under Measure 3.1 Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy (NI) (£12,300) which was used to renovate vacant farm buildings so that they can be used to set up a community business involving the building of carnival floats, etc. Second, Border Arts received £3,600 under Measure 5.1 Increasing Cross-border Development Opportunities to assist in the setting up of a community business comprising of carnival floats, costumes and props, etc.

Finally, the organisation received £236,401 to employ a full-time project manager and part-time administrator to facilitate the delivery of 'Border Reach' in the East Donegal and West Tyrone areas. This particular element of the funding received by Border Arts was under Measure 5.3 Developing Cross-border Reconciliation and Understanding.

# Case Studies

## **PUSHKIN PRIZES TRUST (YOUTH CROSS-BORDER AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)**

The Pushkin Prizes Trust received PEACE II funding under Measure 5.3 Development of Cross-border Reconciliation and Understanding (£224,375). The intention of this funding is, through the medium of the arts, to bring adults and children together from both sides of the border and from different communities in a neutral environment where they can gain an insight into their different communities and backgrounds.

The original creative writing project was set up by the Duchess of Abercorn in 1987. It requires approximately £250,000 per annum to be maintained and PEACE II funding has been central to its life.

The Pushkin poetry and prose schools competition is run during the Easter and summer school terms. The Trust uses the natural environment and creative arts to break down barriers that might otherwise exist. The Trust also organises 26 'Baronscourt Days' each year with each day involving 80 young people aged between nine and thirteen. The groups are made up of even numbers of Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. Other events include adult writing programmes and the annual summer camp of the imagination.

If PEACE II funding had not been available the project could simply not survive. The life of the project is currently utterly dependent on PEACE II funding, however they are currently negotiating an exit strategy. They have visions of the Department of Education taking on at least part of the awards programme to ensure that the good work is continued.

## NEW HORIZONS PARTNERSHIP

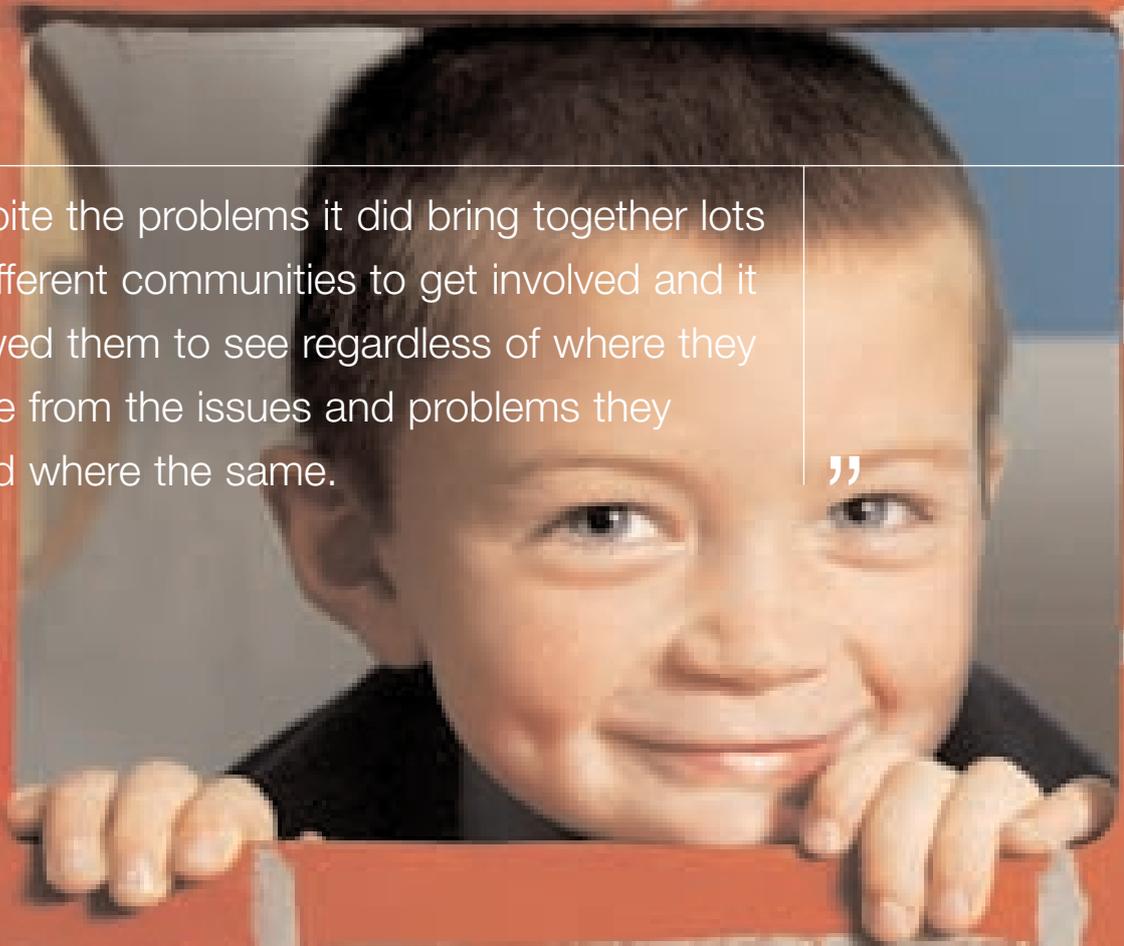
Under PEACE II the New Horizons Partnership received two awards. One was under Measure 2.3 Skilling and Building the Social Economy (NI) and totalled £283,804. This funding was used to develop the 'Working Towards Employment Project'.

The aim of this project is the development of a process to enable disadvantaged individuals to move along an identified route of training, to supported employment, and eventually to open employment, through a process of tailored support and work preparation. The second award was under Measure 3.1 Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy (NI) (£29,500) to develop the 'Bridge to Employment Project'.

The New Horizons Partnership has the core aim of improving the quality of life for people with learning difficulties. The partnership involving Foyle Health and Social Services Trust, North Western Health Board in Donegal, Disability Action and Ashbrooke Estate aims to diversify and promote independence, training, supported employment and enterprise through a range of programmes. The main focus of support is individuals of working age who need support and confidence to become independent both within employment and within their private lives. New Horizons run a café called the Gate Lodge to enable participants to gain catering skills and work experience as a stepping stone towards greater independence. Other sources of income include horticulture, New Deal employment opportunities and from retail and wholesale trade.

Approximately four years ago the partnership put together a strategy for funding the activities of the organisation. They realise the importance of sustainability and to minimise their exposure to risk they have secured a range of funding sources with half coming through European sources and half from other sources such as service level agreements. The group is aiming to reach a target of 60-70% funding through service level agreements and they only enter into new projects if they have a clear exit strategy. The impact of PEACE II is that it has provided a kick-start to the projects that New Horizons has developed. The project manager estimated that through PEACE II the organisation has made 300-400 people more employable and less dependent within the Strabane area. New Horizons have recently developed a computer programme entitled 'Independent Travel Training Programme'. This innovative product is now being marketed throughout the UK showing that although the project is based in Strabane the impacts are much wider.

“ Despite the problems it did bring together lots of different communities to get involved and it allowed them to see regardless of where they came from the issues and problems they faced were the same. ”



# 5: East Belfast

It is difficult, to accurately identify the exact impact that £14 million of funding has had in an area that has over recent years had its traditional employment base severely reduced, coupled with an increase in the influence wielded by loyalist paramilitary groups. However, this section aims to present an overall view of the impact that PEACE II funding has had in East Belfast.

## 5.1 PEACE II funding in East Belfast

East Belfast received approximately £14 million (£14,017,643) of PEACE II funding. A total of 74 projects have been funded by PEACE II in East Belfast. The focus of these projects reflects the priorities of PEACE II, with the majority of the funding, in financial terms, having an economic renewal focus.

Before embarking upon examining the comments made by recipients and non-recipients of PEACE II funding in East Belfast, a more detailed analysis of where the funding has been distributed is required. This will then be followed by a discussion surrounding the wider socio-economic and cultural issues that exist in this area and which have directly and indirectly affected the implementation of PEACE II funded projects.

This research set out to examine how projects within a specific geographic area interact and ultimately what factors within that community have facilitated or impeded the development of PEACE II objectives. Nowhere has this been more pronounced than in East Belfast where events on the ground have shaped dramatically the impact that PEACE II funding has had. That is not to say that the paramilitary feuds, the interface violence in the Short Strand and Lower Newtownards Road area and the rise of paramilitary control in communities has lessened the impact of PEACE II. It has meant however that the implementation of projects and ultimately their long-term success has been somewhat curtailed.

Later in this section there is a long and detailed discussion about the relative weakness of community infrastructure in Protestant working class areas in East Belfast and many of the respondents cited this as a reason why more organisations did not avail of PEACE II funding. This point becomes highly politicised with representatives from both ends of the political spectrum stating that Protestant community groups lacked the knowledge and skills to effectively draw down PEACE II funding. Indeed some Unionist politicians felt that groups in Nationalist areas were given more support during PEACE I which then allowed them to build the capacity and knowledge to engage more fully in the PEACE II funding programme. This is a highly contentious point which this research, other than examining where the funding has actually gone, will not attempt to substantiate.

Nevertheless when the figures for the distribution of PEACE II are examined, some interesting features emerge. As is shown in Table 2, just over £14 million went into East Belfast from PEACE II funding programmes. However on looking at these figures in a little more depth it is clear that investment has been concentrated in a limited number of areas, which has in turn contributed to a series of views and perceptions about the programme and its efficacy in East Belfast.

For example, projects in the Short Strand area of East Belfast, which is predominately Catholic, received just over £718,812 (Short Strand Community Forum and the Short Strand Partnership being the main recipients) under a number of PEACE II Measures. This funding, which equates to 5% of the total funding received by East Belfast, went into a very defined geographic area. As is described throughout this section, the violence at the interface during 2002 had a detrimental impact on cross-community activity which is such a key part of PEACE II. On the other hand the emphasis of this £718,812 on tourism, economic development and training has meant that the Short Strand now has a place at the table in terms of engaging with government and statutory agencies as they have a proven record in delivering successful projects.

That leaves £13,298,830 under projects funded in PEACE II that will have gone to Protestant areas and groups. On the surface this appears to be a very sizeable sum given the concerns expressed later in this section relating to the lack of community infrastructure and capacity in East Belfast. Again there appears to be something of a contradiction between what the respondents to this research state and what the actual reality is in terms of the funding that has gone into the area.

A closer examination of the funding and where it has gone is required. Under Measure 1.8 Technical Support for the Knowledge Base, £8,024,810 went into funding the Northern Ireland Science Park, the Genomics Centre for Excellence and Thales Air Defence. Added to this, a further £1,250,000 went into the East Belfast Enterprise Park under Measure 1.1A Business Competitiveness and Development. All these projects are in the Harbour Estate area of East Belfast and there is no doubt that they have generated increased employment, research and development, and inward investment, but to suggest that 66% (£9,274,810) of the total funding that went to East Belfast directly impacted upon individuals living in the most deprived areas East Belfast would given the remit of this research be difficult to make.

This leaves £4,024,020 of PEACE II funding which went directly into the Protestant working class areas of East Belfast. However a sizeable amount of this went to organisations which although based in East Belfast, have a Northern Ireland wide remit as well as to a number of schools and the Belfast Education and Library Board. This funding totalled £943,197 (7% of total funding) and again the value and contribution of these projects to individuals and groups in East Belfast cannot be underestimated. In many cases the funding has helped supplement and develop activities that would otherwise have not been funded.

Not including the funding received by groups operating in the Short Strand area (£718,812) and the money used to revitalise the economy of East Belfast (£9,274,810), £3,080,823 (22%) of the £14 million received under PEACE II, therefore, went to community organisations operating specifically in inner East Belfast.

The above analysis is in no way intended to undermine or devalue the contribution that these projects have made in either addressing the legacy of the conflict or providing opportunities that have arisen from peace. The intention is purely to provide a more rounded view of where the funding has gone and to provide a context against which the comments made by respondents during this research can be measured.

**Table 2: Funded Projects in East Belfast<sup>3</sup>**

Priority	Projects	Total Award
<b>1. Economic Renewal</b>		
1.1A Business Competitiveness and Development - Economic Revitalisation	1	£1,250,000
1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities	4	£489,827
1.5 Positive Action for Women	6	£768,902
1.8A Technology Support for the Knowledge-based Economy (NI) - Innovative Technology and Networking	3	£8,024,810
<b>2. Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation</b>		
2.1 Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace	1	£75,456
2.11 Area-based Regeneration - Belfast, Londonderry and Regional Towns (NI)	6	£172,930
2.2 Developing Children and Young People	7	£604,508
2.3 Skilling and Building the Social Economy (NI)	3	£239,736
2.4A Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - Pathways to Inclusion	5	£626,153
2.5 Investing in Childcare	4	£128,396
2.6 Promoting Active Citizenship	4	£274,808
2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure	1	£9,500
2.8 Accompanying Infrastructure and Equipment Support	15	£189,558
<b>3. Locally Based Regeneration and Development Strategies</b>		
3.1 Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy (NI)	7	£566,882
3.2 Locally-based Human Resource, Training and Development Strategy (NI)	4	£321,156
<b>4. Outward and Forward Looking Region</b>		
4.2B Outward and Forward Looking Tourism - Enhancing the Region as a Tourism Destination	1	£30,000
<b>5. Cross-Border Co-operation</b>		
5.3 Developing Cross-Border Reconciliation and Understanding	1	£140,385
5.5 Education, Cross-border School and Youth Co-operation	1	£104,636
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>£14,017,643</b>

<sup>3</sup> The selection of projects for East Belfast is based upon the project address only as given in the CSF Central Database.

## 5.2 Background to East Belfast

East Belfast incorporates the area which runs from the River Lagan going east as far as Dundonald and Ballybeen, and from Belfast Lough to the Braniel estate. The main arterial routes in this area include the Newtownards Road, Woodstock Road, Albertbridge Road and the lower Ravenhill Road. The population of this part of the city is 79,261 (Census, 2001). People living in East Belfast predominately define their religion as Protestant, with the exception of the Short Strand and some small areas around Ballyhackamore and Willowfield where the dominant religion is Catholic. In the 2001 Census a total of 10% of people in East Belfast defined their community background as Catholic, compared to 85% of the population who defined their community background as Protestant (Census 2001, NISRA).

## 5.3 Community background

During the thirty years of the Troubles East Belfast was the least affected part of the city, sometimes referred to by locals as 'the quiet East'. In this time 117 residents in East Belfast were killed, compared to 139 in the south of the city, 378 in the west of the city and 491 in the north of the city. Ironically since the ceasefires and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, East Belfast has been more affected by community tensions. In particular in the summer of 2002 there was violence at the interface of the Protestant Cluan Place and the Catholic Short Strand. During this time public disorder between the two communities led to a virtual breakdown in any contact between them. Despite their obvious differences, both communities experience similar multi-dimensional problems in their everyday lives.

Research based on a number of case studies illustrated the extent of the problem in peaceline zones: people in these areas tend to have much lower earning rates; the unemployment rate tends to be nearly three times higher than the Northern Ireland average; there are high benefit dependency rates and generally low educational standards (Smyth and Hamilton, 2003).

The combination of the decline of heavy industry, high dependency rates, low educational standards and deprivation have partially resulted in the growth of paramilitary activity and anti-social behaviour in this area. There are different factions of loyalist paramilitaries in East Belfast, and in recent years there have been increasing intra-paramilitary feuds. Many young people growing up in this area are finding themselves with little life chances.

*"If you ask a lot of kids in this area what they want to be, they say in the UDA or UVF or LVF. This is because of the money that surrounds paramilitaries. Paramilitaries in this area are being given credibility without being elected... There are little options for kids besides paramilitaries. If you don't become the hunter you become the hunted."* (R)

*"I was recently speaking to a young lad, who said his ambition was to leave school and eventually become an early released prisoner, that is the reality of what we are dealing with in this area."* (R)

Disaffected young people in this area suffer from feelings of being left behind and because of this, a number of them turn to anti-social behaviour. In this vicious circle there also exists an extensive drugs trade.

*"The dope and coke [cocaine] industry has set up a black economy in this area - there are 1,000s of children and adults involved, and addicted to this industry."* (R)

These wider socio-economic and cultural issues will have impacted upon each of the projects funded under PEACE II, and therefore should be borne in mind with any analysis of the impact of this funding. There is something of an ironic symmetry to this situation.

*"What impact does a project have on a conflict situation, but also what impact does conflict have on a project?"* (R)

## 5.4 The local economy

Much of East Belfast developed in the early part of the twentieth century to meet the needs of the shipbuilders, Harland & Wolfe. The growth of the shipbuilding industry in this area acted as a catalyst to encourage various other types of heavy industry to set up. The employment opportunities available encouraged masses of people to come into the area. Rows of terraced housing were built to accommodate these people, and for many years the east was considered to be the industrial power house of the city. In the last part of the twentieth century heavy industry in the western world was in decline, and East Belfast has been a casualty of this decline. The two massive cranes of Harland & Wolfe still stand as a daily reminder of the east of the past.

Much of the housing developed in the industrial revolution is now in decline, and recently 600 terraced houses around the shipyard were knocked down to make way for redevelopment. Deprivation is a major issue in the east of the city, with two out of the ten most deprived wards in Northern Ireland being in this area (Ballymacarrett and The Mount) and another three wards (Tullycarnet, Woodstock and Island) within the 10% most deprived places in Northern Ireland (East Belfast Statement of Need, 2003). However in East Belfast some of these deprived areas are situated alongside some of the most affluent areas in Belfast.

## 5.5 The impact of PEACE II

The following sections will examine the impact of PEACE II funding in East Belfast, as well as exploring any lessons which can be drawn from the experiences of respondents who participated in this research.

### 5.5.1 Addressing the legacy of the conflict

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, since the ceasefires and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, East Belfast has been affected by increased interface violence and intra-community tensions (between opposing loyalist paramilitary groups). Given this backdrop, how has PEACE II impacted in terms of addressing the legacy of a conflict that is still very real for people living in the area?

## Peace building

A commonly held perception of PEACE II and its impact in East Belfast is that the funding has facilitated contact between the two communities but has produced little in the way of reconciliation. This is perhaps understandable as much of the peace and reconciliation work has been seriously hampered by the interface violence of 2002, and the intra-community feuds. Against this backdrop there is a reluctance to be seen to be involved in peace and reconciliation work that seeks to address the legacy of conflict, because of a fear of possible repercussions in one's own community.

*"When PEACE II kicked in during 2001/02, East Belfast suffered the worst violence it had seen. That whole episode really affected organisational and personal relationships and as a consequence cross-community work. People have been more guarded about this type of work." (NR)*

Although this comment was made by an individual whose organisation was not in receipt of PEACE II the respondent works for a strategic development organisation and has a good overview of the entire situation in East Belfast. The same point was reiterated by an individual whose organisation was in receipt of PEACE II and which was very much on the front line during the interface violence that characterised 2002 in East Belfast.

*"In 2002, the community violence at the interfaces had a massive impact on community development in this area. Prior to this, 90% of projects in East Belfast would have had a cross-community element with other groups in East Belfast, but after 2002 that went down to nil... but it is slowly rebuilding." (R)*

Unfortunately this view seems to be something of a baseline from which all engagement between and within communities has been subsequently measured.

Despite this rather pessimistic view there have been, in the opinion of many of the recipients of PEACE II interviewed during this research, small but significant changes in relation to peace and reconciliation in the wider area. These changes have come from the creation of an environment where organisations applying for PEACE II funding have had to consider the needs of other communities when making an application. This is a theme common across all three areas where the needs of the other communities have had to be taken into consideration during the application process. What we did not get however during the interviews for this research was a sense of how far this understanding of the needs of the other community actually permutated the day to day work of the projects. Perhaps this is understandable given the very fragile conditions that exist between both Catholic and Protestant communities and within Protestant communities themselves. It is genuinely difficult to assess how effective the development of reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between the two traditions and within communities has been.

Despite this rather unfortunate backdrop against which PEACE II has tried to operate there is a strong emphasis by recipient organisations of PEACE II that it has created an environment where organisations have had to consider the development of reconciliation and mutual understanding.

*"Despite the problems it did bring together lots of different communities to get involved and it allowed them to see regardless of where they came from the issues and problems they faced were the same." (R)*

*"PEACE has allowed people to build linkages between streets and local community groups... groups which get the money help build sustainable relationships... helps start thinking about greater involvement with the community at large." (R)*

The above quotations are just a snapshot of how many recipient organisations felt about the impact PEACE II has had in starting the process of developing new relationships and finding new ways of taking into account the needs of the other community. A number of projects in East Belfast were funded under Measures 5.3 and 5.5 which helped encourage cross border engagement and provided young people in the area, through cultural learning partnerships between community and youth groups and schools in East Belfast and the six border counties, to develop an understanding of different traditions and cultures.

*“Most of our work is cross-community and cross-border - we have a partner in Donegal. The project I’m involved with is working with young people aged 14-18. We encourage young people to come together to try to understand-and to do things they normally wouldn’t do. For example I get children from this area to go to GAA matches and St Patrick’s Day parades.” (R)*

Although the development of reconciliation and mutual understanding is elemental in terms of the overall objective of PEACE II there were some concerns expressed, primarily by non-recipients of PEACE II funding, that this objective was sometimes obscured.

*“If there was a stronger emphasis on the reconciliation theme you would see some excellent programmes - there is a thirst in East Belfast for finding ways of working together - but it will only happen if groups are pushed into a corner to do this.” (NR)*

As is shown above, this view, which was not an isolated one, is that there was insufficient focus on reconciliation in PEACE II projects. It is therefore worthwhile attempting to examine why this opinion exists in East Belfast and why a ‘strong social economy focus’ and the absence of the term ‘peace and reconciliation’ in the distinctiveness criteria have resulted in the perception that peace and reconciliation has become less of a priority.

*“In relation to reconciliation PEACE II has had much less of an impact than PEACE I. PEACE II has less of an emphasis on reconciliation and it was very secondary in terms of what organisations wanted to do in terms of their applications to PEACE II.” (NR)*

To date under PEACE II in East Belfast, only one programme was funded under Measure 2.1 ‘Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace’<sup>4</sup>, whereas just over 70% of funding received by organisations based in East Belfast had an economic renewal or social economy focus. Specific projects funded under Measures 2.3 Skilling and Building the Social Economy and 3.1 Local Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy received £806,617. This is of course a very rudimentary analysis of the funding and it is understood that addressing the legacy of the conflict takes many forms but it is not too difficult to see where misinterpretations about the focus of the funding programmes may arise. It does at the very least however provide a context for statements made by recipients of PEACE II funding in relation to the difficulties of undertaking cross-community work in East Belfast.

*“To try and get funding now without a cross-community function is difficult.” (R)*

Of course it would be incorrect to assume that peace and reconciliation work is confined to cross-community or cross-border activities and this is particularly true in East Belfast where some Protestant communities themselves do not engage on a meaningful level. At one level there is a need to address the level of influence paramilitaries on the ground in East Belfast are having. This is not necessarily within the remit of PEACE II but this influence does impede many of the key community activists from taking the initiative to pursue peace and reconciliation work. This particular issue was well summed up by one respondent working in Protestant inner East Belfast.

*“We are coming out of a political situation that requires confidence building. In order to move away from the past people need to be able to see changes - otherwise paramilitaries will gain legitimacy.” (R)*

At another level is the fact that the Protestant community itself is not a cohesive entity and there remains a challenge in attempting to reconcile differences within that community before any meaningful cross-community work can occur.

*“People from the Newtownards Road don't necessarily speak to people from the Beersbridge Road... why should people from the Short Strand feel compelled to speak to everyone?” (R)*

PEACE II funding has been and can be used to reconcile differences within the Protestant community, so long as it is addressing the strategic objectives of the programme and not reinforcing interests which are opposed to those objectives. There are very definite signs of some early progress being made.

*“The PEACE II money has helped us in the [named estate] ...there has been little things done in this area to improve relations within the Protestant community. In the past few months the paramilitary slogans have gone and this year the bonfire was moved.” (R)*

The reality on the ground as described throughout this section bears testament to this fact that for an area such as East Belfast it will be difficult to make the transition beyond sectarianism without confronting the wider socio-economic issues surrounding it. This wider impact of PEACE II will be discussed in later sections. This sentiment is best summed up by an individual whose organisation had received PEACE II funding.

*“The problems in our area cannot be solved by a weekend solution - we need real commitment and a time frame of 2-3 years is not long enough to make any real impact. For example we have a cross-community group of women in the East with Short Strand and it took them two years to be relaxed enough to talk and have a laugh together.” (R)*

This is not to say that amongst PEACE II funded projects that the inclusion of distinctiveness criteria, etc, has not created the conditions for organisations and communities to work together or at the very least take into consideration the needs of the other communities. It is just that the complexities on the ground in East Belfast have meant that the process is a very slow one and is highly susceptible to the impact of external factors.

<sup>4</sup> The project received £75,456 to provide a fresh new web-based resource for all those who work in community relations, conflict transformation and community development in Northern Ireland.

## Developing the economy

It would be fair to say that East Belfast, in terms of economic development and inward investment, has not suffered to the same extent as Cavan or Strabane as a direct consequence of the conflict. To be sure, East Belfast has suffered considerably from the decline in its heavy industry base but this is more attributable to changes in global markets than a direct impact of the conflict. Nevertheless, within East Belfast there is a general feeling that despite the focus of PEACE II on economic renewal and development, the economic impact has been difficult to assess. Of course the significant investment made under Measure 1.8 Technical Support for the Knowledge Base and Measure 1.1A Business Competitiveness and Development have undoubtedly had an economic impact. However it is difficult to attribute any impact in East Belfast and in particular in those communities which have suffered most since the decline of heavy industry.

As mentioned in the previous section it is important to create a stable and normal society before the issues of sectarianism and joint working can be fully addressed. During the interviews there was a general consensus amongst all the respondents that the community sector in East Belfast was not ready for the strong economic focus of PEACE II. This predates PEACE II funding and can be traced back to a relatively small uptake within the community of PEACE I funding through which infrastructure could have been developed.

*“There is a real void left from the closure of the heavy industry. PEACE II was a measure that helped, but the decline of the heavy industry in this area is devastating, especially because of the lack of education and skills. ..[And] they have not been able to take advantage of funding, mainly because of the ‘individualism’ that exists; community spirit is starting but very slowly.” (R)*

As mentioned above the decline of the heavy industry has been a massive blow to this area and as yet in the opinion of this individual whose organisation was not in receipt of PEACE II there has been no real major investment to fill the void.

*“There has not been as much economic impact as there could have been. There have been little jobs created. The economy in this area is disappearing, so we really need to get investment. This is the only way that pride will be increased in this area and along will come further investment.” (NR)*

Outside of changes in the global economy and as was articulated by a number of respondents to this research, it is perhaps too early to clearly state the tangible impact of PEACE II funding, in terms of kick-starting economic development. Nevertheless there are signs that with PEACE II funding, particularly under Measures which have provided training and development opportunities for individuals, is preparing the ground for future economic development. Through addressing the needs of the more marginalised groups in East Belfast the funding is providing opportunities that will allow individuals to participate in the labour market. Just a couple of examples of this are given below by organisations which received PEACE II funding.

*“We have an ex-prisoners group supported by PEACE II funding [which has been] very successful. It is encouraging people to take up training apprenticeships and there is a group of ten going through them now.” (R)*

*“In the first year we registered 143 people on training courses, in our own building and also in our outreach centres in the surrounding estates. These courses provide basic skills (no qualifications obtained from them). They have been very successful in that few people leave the courses. Many have gone on to further courses where they have obtained qualifications. These courses have also assisted people to get back into the work environment, particularly middle-aged and older people who would have worked in the heavy industries - this project assists re-skilling.” (R)*

Nevertheless the fact remains that in terms of an economic impact it is difficult to assess at this stage how the funding has enhanced or added to the economic development of East Belfast. In fact one recipient of PEACE II encapsulated the role the funding has played in the economic renewal of East Belfast.

*“If there was no PEACE funding all the external economic impacts which have blighted East Belfast would have happened regardless. Without PEACE the community won’t have moved on and although the political will was there the money to translate this desire would not have been found to the same extent.” (R)*

This issue of creating a tangible and visible link between the funding and the actual impact on communities was perhaps best articulated by one respondent who suggested that this is only a small step in a wider process which is by no means straightforward.

*“There have been some ripples in the pond with PEACE II, but at this stage of the game we should be aiming to make a bigger difference.” (R)*

## **5.5.2 Opportunities arising from peace**

The following sections will attempt to uncover the impact that PEACE II funding has had in relation to providing organisations and the beneficiaries of those organisations with the opportunity to develop and promote a stable and normal society.

### **Developing capacity**

As is well documented, co-ordinated community activity has a relatively short history in East Belfast, particularly in Protestant working class areas, and many voluntary and community groups are still in the process of establishing themselves.

For a number of respondents this lack of infrastructure and community cohesion has meant that East Belfast has been unable to take full advantage of the opportunities presented under PEACE II. Despite the low uptake of PEACE I there was a recognition that it did have an effect on how thinking changed and it did lay the groundwork for future developments.

*“PEACE I started the evolution of strategic development in East Belfast in terms of collaboration and organisations thinking in the round about things.” (R)*

On the other hand many respondents, primarily those who were not in receipt of PEACE II funding, felt that East Belfast was not ready for PEACE II and substantial assistance was needed to help organisations to avail fully of the funding.

*“Many of the community groups in East Belfast only became interested in community development in the late stages of PEACE I. In many respects they were not prepared for the ‘social economy’ focus of PEACE II. For this reason a number of community groups did not qualify for the PEACE II funding.” (NR)*

*"I can understand the change in focus to social economy, but in this area there is still a real need for capacity building." (NR)*

As has already been shown in this section the gap between the perception of non-funded PEACE II organisations and the reality of the focus of the funding that went into East Belfast is not so great. However, there is provision under 2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure to address this particular issue. However, only one project in East Belfast was funded under this Measure. This organisation received £9,500 to develop relationships between parents and young people while encouraging them to spend time together. Despite this a significant number of organisations which did receive PEACE II funding felt that the support allowed them to develop greater capacities within their organisations to help their beneficiaries.

It is in this area that many respondents felt that capacity building within organisations was a strong and positive feature of PEACE II. Indeed the general perception was that PEACE II funded projects are enabling organisations to develop and ultimately have a bigger stake in their communities.

*"The PEACE II funding has given people the opportunity to come out and get involved in the community - there is not much in this area so this offers real opportunity." (R)*

*"PEACE II acted as a catalyst for further development in the area... although for this area it will take a long time." (R)*

However, this increase in capacity also relates to community infrastructure in East Belfast in so far as that PEACE II money has enabled a number of groups to increase the capacity of the organisation and how it interacts with the wider community.

*"Without the PEACE II funding we could not have run our project to the capacity we have. The money gave us a bigger capacity." (R)*

*"Through the money [PEACE II] we developed a forum. This helps bring together organisations in this area. This is something very positive." (R)*

This has been a common theme, not only in East Belfast but across all three areas, whereby PEACE II funding has acted as a catalyst for developing greater capacity within organisations.

## Providing opportunity

In a direct correlation with the increase of capacity there is a general understanding that PEACE II has impacted in terms of community spirit and engendered a greater sense of confidence amongst participants in training courses and activities. Below is just a selection of comments from respondents whose organisations have received PEACE II funding and where they believe the funding has impacted most.

*“One of the things we tried to do is build confidence. We put in for a small grants programme, this benefited a number of small groups particularly in [named estate]. At the beginning these groups were nervous but now their confidence has grown.”* (R)

*“The PEACE II money allowed me to engage with working class kids, irrespective of religion and chances, because in the past statutory organisations have often neglected these individuals.”* (R)

*“We applied for PEACE II funding and successfully received it for a pre-school programme for children with autism. This is an area of real need in Northern Ireland. By obtaining this money we were able to reach more families [and] it gave us a bigger capacity.”* (R)

*“[Peace II funding] already is helping women in other areas of their life, both personal and work. In this programme there is an opportunity to visit other centres outside Belfast. Many of these women rarely venture beyond their own area.”* (R)

The sentiments expressed above are indicative of the view held by many in East Belfast that the funding has provided an opportunity outside the scope of mainstream funding programmes. Again the notion of PEACE II acting as a catalyst and providing an impetus to address issues and problems that may have otherwise not been a priority is a common theme.

*“In terms of tangible impacts the strong economic focus on the provision of more training is certainly one. The training on offer is much better as it is accredited... you don't see the long list of non-accredited training that you used to see all the time. The main impact is the contribution to having a better skilled workforce.”* (NR)

However this view is tempered with a note of caution about the potential this funding has now unlocked in some organisations in terms of tackling social exclusion and raising confidence.

*“Expectations have been raised in the community and now it is essential we find ways to sustain this confidence... most people who came into this field came in to help people and their community.”* (R)

One respondent demonstrated the need for co-ordination and greater communication amongst organisations which are attempting to address unemployment, low educational achievement and skills.

*“Perhaps there is some duplication as training organisations are all looking for the same person... these people [unemployed, under-skilled, etc] are not an exhaustible supply of people. There needs to be more negotiation between groups about what they want to achieve but this co-ordination needs to happen and this is the only way in which the community sector will survive through sharing resources and ideas... in a lot of ways PEACE II has made it worse because organisations can fence off their own stuff.”* (NR)

This closing statement, by an individual who has a very keen strategic overview of East Belfast, shows that the idea of co-ordination or synergy between organisations (particularly across different sectors) is still a challenge.

## 5.6 Conclusion

In trying to sum up or provide an overview of the impact PEACE II has had in East Belfast, the best place to start is to ask the question, what would it be like if PEACE II funding had not existed? Without a doubt the violence at the interfaces would have continued, the role and influence of the paramilitaries would be the same if not greater and the decline of the traditional employment base in East Belfast would have continued unabated. So what has PEACE II really achieved in East Belfast and has the investment of £14 million been money well spent?

It is a difficult question to answer and is perhaps beyond the scope and remit of this research but it does throw up some interesting points for discussion.

There is no escaping the fact that interface violence and paramilitary feuds have blighted East Belfast over recent years and have impeded the development of key PEACE II objectives. This is most notable in the ability of organisations to work together and interact. Without doubt the process of ensuring that projects fulfil the distinctiveness criteria has created a positive change in how the other communities and their needs and traditions are viewed. But as stated throughout this section of the report, PEACE II funded projects have been unable to claim to have had a substantive impact on reinforcing progress towards the creation of a more stable and peaceful society. This is not a criticism of PEACE II or the projects funded under the programme but it is a stark reminder of the impact that events on the ground can have on funding programmes. In the objectives for this research the question was posed concerning synergy between projects and their interaction and what factors have facilitated or impeded development. The answer is quite clear; PEACE II facilitated a process where an environment and structure existed that meant organisations had to address how their particular project or development may promote reconciliation. However the manifestation of these activities on the ground was reduced because that synergy on a cross-community and intra-community basis was not feasible and meant a lot of development and trust built up over the years essentially faded away.

This interaction was at a horizontal level between organisations working on the ground but it was clear during this research that PEACE II funding had meant organisations (in particularly those involved in economic development and training) have established much stronger links with government and the private sector. This appears to be as much a consequence of a historical development of capacity and expertise in dealing in the social economy and economic renewal as the direct financial input through PEACE II. The financial input under PEACE II has provided further impetus and direction to a number of projects and has meant that developments have happened faster than would have otherwise been the case.

In conclusion the interviews in East Belfast revealed that PEACE II has in the main made a positive impact. This is a predominantly Protestant area that traditionally has had little community activity. However in recent times with the decline of heavy industry there has been an increased desire to become involved in community activity. PEACE II has acted as a catalyst for community capacity building in this area by building and enhancing the recipient organisations' ability to engage more fully with their beneficiaries. Across East Belfast, in the funded projects, the dedication of project workers is enabling small but positive steps to be made. These positive steps are not always measurable on monitoring forms, particularly the raised expectations and hopes of individuals in this community.

In interface areas there are many inter-related socio-economic problems, and East Belfast is no exception. The low educational standards, limited employment opportunities and high dependency rates create a vicious cycle of poverty where paramilitary influence can grow. In this environment low community morale is often widespread. Within East Belfast these factors, coupled with weak community infrastructure, have been a huge challenge to PEACE II funded projects. These macro issues require a co-ordinated approach from all sections of government, the private sector and the voluntary and community sector.

# Case Studies

## THE BEAT INITIATIVE

### PEACE II provided £21,150 under Measure 2.11 Area-based Regeneration - Belfast, Londonderry and Regional Towns for The Beat Initiative in East Belfast.

This programme set out to get local people involved in organising a carnival in their own area, in the form of a lantern parade. The aim of this carnival was to increase pride in their local area and to portray a positive image of the area “as opposed to the many negative images that come from the area in the media”. As part of the distinctiveness criteria, The Beat Initiative set out to also include groups from the Catholic Short Strand in East Belfast.

The preparations for this carnival ran from the summer of 2003 to December 2003. These included:

#### ■ A Leadership Training Programme

- local people took part in this programme which aimed to develop leadership skills, to be used in the co-ordination of the lantern parade. The development of leadership skills within the local community of East Belfast has had a positive impact on this community because “for so long there has been no real community focus, we need much more, and projects such as this one assist in building community ethos.”

#### ■ Outreach Programme

- in East Belfast there has not been a long history of community activity, and those who do get involved often do not like to go beyond their “immediate streets”. Recognising this issue, this programme used PEACE II funding to devise an outreach programme. The success of this outreach programme can be measured in the fact that over forty local groups participated throughout East Belfast, including a group from the Short Strand.

The Lantern Parade was advertised throughout the city and on the night of the parade (5 December 2003) over 650 people took part on the route from the Belmont area, along the Holywood Road and the Newtownards Road. Unfortunately on the night the Short Strand group did not feel they could take part, because of “problems on the ground”. Therefore while The Beat Initiative tried to address the legacy of conflict in East Belfast, outside events<sup>5</sup> resulted in the minority Catholic community not taking part in this parade. Because of the politics associated with the parade a group from Dundalk also decided to pull out. This highlights very vividly the politics of community development but despite this being an obvious blow to the parade the decision was taken to proceed. Nevertheless workshops to make the lanterns were held across all sections of the communities in East Belfast.

The impact of this parade went beyond an evening of wonderful light; a number of individuals who were involved in this programme have subsequently moved on to further and higher arts and cultural programmes.

*“A young lad who came from a disadvantaged community got involved in The Beat Initiative. He used the skills gained here to move on to Performing Arts in BIFHE. He is now a self-employed, full-time arts performer, and as part of his work he is just back from Korea.”*

The Lantern Parade could become an annual event with private sector and Arts Council sponsorship. Despite the problems the parade did bring lots of different communities together to get involved and it allowed them to see that regardless of where they came from, the issues and problems they faced were the same.

<sup>5</sup> This occurred after a series of misunderstandings surrounding violence and the threat of potential violence at the interface between the Short Strand and Lower Newtownards Road.

## MERSEY STREET RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (MARA)

The Mersey Street Residents Association stands in the immediate area surrounding Harland & Wolfe and has had “difficulties with the closure of the shipyard”.

in terms of the impact on local employment and the local economy. The two massive yellow cranes stand in view of this residents association as a reminder of the industrial past. This is an area characterised by decline, and recently 600 social houses were pulled down to enable the area to be redeveloped. To date, 33 new social houses have been built and 175 private houses, although by the end of the development in this area it is anticipated that the numbers of private and social housing will be broadly comparable.

All the houses next to the MARA have been demolished. However within this building there is much activity that has been made possible by PEACE II funding. This residents association applied for PEACE II funding for ICT courses and was successfully awarded £90,016 under Measures 2.4A Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - Pathways to Inclusion and 2.8 Accompanying Infrastructure and Equipment Support.

This project provides IT training at various levels for local people:

*“The PEACE II funding has given people an opportunity to come out and get involved in the community - there is not much in this area so this offers real opportunities.”*

The majority of this PEACE II funding was secured under Measure 2.4a Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims. This funding is important in this area as:

*“We had all the trouble in 2002 and people in here would be drawn into that... Traditionally people around here have focused only on their own areas, so IT allows us to find out about the world. PEACE II has opened the doors of the world to us.”*

Despite the distinctiveness criteria of PEACE II, the project co-ordinator believes that the project has been involved in limited co-ordinated activity with the minority community to address the legacy of conflict in East Belfast.

The skills the project co-ordinators have developed using PEACE II funding have enabled certain elements of this IT project to become sustainable, but there is a note of caution.

*“It won't allow us to grow or build on what we are doing. I feel that overall it has been rushed. There is not enough time to allow for real investment in the programme.”*

# Case Studies

## THE OASIS CENTRE

The Oasis Centre is located in the heart of East Belfast, on the Castlereagh Road. As an organisation it was funded under PEACE I to convert an old public house.

The project co-ordinators were then successful under PEACE II in securing £441,675 under a number of Measures to fund the following programmes and so build their capacity:

### ■ First Steps Programme

- for people to get back into life long learning or employment. For a lot of people the thought of formal education would be a complete turn off. Learning is on a one to one basis looking at a holistic level (Measure 1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities).

### ■ Kids' Club

- provision of quality childcare for 24 4-11 year olds within a structured environment. Activities offered will include computers, arts & crafts, cookery, drama, games, puzzles, music, circle time, structured play etc (Measure 1.5 Positive Action for Women).

### ■ Women into Technology

- this project takes local unemployed women and trains them in ICT to a level where they are able to perform a variety of computer related office duties (Measure 1.5 Positive Action for Women).

### ■ IT Express

- this project will train 20 unemployed people who have little or no computer skills up to MCP level. This would involve classroom tuition followed by work placement. This qualification is recognised and required within the IT industry (Measure 1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities).

The Oasis Centre also offers a number of diverse programmes that meet the wide range of academic ability in this area and the PEACE II funded projects form an integral part of the projects offered in the centre. In this centre there is a café open to the community and crèche facilities, to encourage people to become involved in their local community. This centre has the potential to become a place where the Castlereagh Road community can come together, mirroring the role the Short Strand Partnership plays in the centre of the Catholic Short Strand. This will take time as "there has been a lot of individualism in the city - but in the last five years a bit of community spirit has started to develop". The Oasis Centre recognises the importance of sustainability. In the Centre a wood-working programme is offered, and there is a potential to sell local wood-work. However under the current PEACE II regulations "if we sell anything we have to take it off our grant - how can we become sustainable?"

The project co-ordinator of the Oasis Centre is of the opinion that there have been a number of difficulties in striving to address the legacy of conflict in this area:

*"We are looking for a quick fix, but there is no quick fix. When the feud broke out in 2002 it broke down trust. Now we are only ready to begin to build trust again, but much of this work is determined by forces on the ground."*

## SHORT STRAND PARTNERSHIP

The Short Strand Partnership is a community centre that has in many ways become the heart of this area” we have a very close knit community everything happens through this centre.”

The PEACE II money totalled £590,262 and it has significantly increased the capacity of this project enabling them to continue a number of existing programmes and to begin new programmes. The programmes available include:

- A Youth Victim Support Programme
- Short Strand After School Club
- Ex-prisoners Programme
- Community Economic Regeneration Programme
- Tourism Project
- IT Training Project

The community centre employs forty members of staff and makes a significant positive impact on the lives of people in the area. The sophistication of this centre has been built up over many years of community work, and those involved worked with an ethos of “with PEACE II we know it is important to be creative”. The social economy aspects of PEACE II have been fully captured by the Short Strand Partnership. They want to create employment and bring inward investment into the Short Strand. They currently are involved with running a car park at the Sirocco Works in Belfast.

Through the PEACE II funding, Short Strand also established a partnership with Leitrim Enterprise in County Leitrim. By working with this group they became aware of an outdoor pursuit centre available, and in August 2004 they successfully secured the site. The partnership was also given land at Pottinger’s Quay by Laganside, and is currently in negotiations to enable them to manage twelve apartments that are to be built on this site. If this is successful, the project co-ordinators believe they “could be completely sustainable”. The expertise and dedication within this partnership have enabled the PEACE II funding to make a significant positive impact in this area.

*“We have been doing this [peace and reconciliation] for a long time. During 2002, in one week I thought we had lost everything we had built up over twenty years. But thankfully the links did not completely perish and we are beginning to rebuild these links.”*

“ There was a general denial that the Troubles had any impact as it was seen as insignificant compared to what people suffered over the border.

”

# 6: County Cavan

To begin to estimate the impact that PEACE II has had in Cavan in comparison to the other areas selected for this study is a difficult task. Despite the proximity to Northern Ireland the differences in how PEACE funding has impacted on the people of the area are stark. Allied to different administrative structures and procedures, any direct comparison can only be made in the most general terms. There are of course similarities but on closer examination these similarities only go so far and the real differences, as will be shown throughout this section, lie in how the funding has impacted upon activity on the ground.

## 6.1 PEACE II funding in County Cavan

County Cavan received approximately €8 million (€7,797,902) of PEACE II funding. A total of 58 projects have been funded by PEACE II in Cavan as of 3 June 2004. The focus of these projects reflects the rural nature of County Cavan. Table 3 outlines the type of projects funded.

Before looking at what the interviews elicited in terms of individual opinions and attitudes towards the impact that PEACE II has had in County Cavan, it is first necessary to briefly examine where the funding has gone. This will be followed by an examination of the social, economic and cultural factors that have shaped the environment in County Cavan into which PEACE II funding was distributed.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the bulk of projects funded under PEACE II were under Measure 3.4 Improving Our Rural Communities (Border Region). A total of 19 projects were funded to the value of €962,642 (12% of total funding in Cavan). Projects funded under this Measure included the refurbishment of an old rectory for tourist accommodation, the construction of a footpath from Swanlibar Day Centre to Alteen Road, the provision of an arts education programme for young people, free internet access and self-learning facilities in a library and the provision of playgrounds and outdoor playing courts.

The single largest slice of funding in Cavan was made under Measure 5.2 Improving Cross-border Public Sector Co-operation. A total of €1.6 million was received by Cavan County Council to produce a documentary on the Breifne Mountain Region. This project obviously attempts to establish this region of north-west Ireland as a quality, educational and activity destination based upon the sustainable development of its total natural and cultural resources.

As will be shown in later sections, County Cavan has struggled in an economic sense due to its proximity to Northern Ireland and to this end there has been considerable investment under the Economic Renewal Priority. A total of €2,211,181 went to projects in Cavan under a variety of Measures contained within this Priority. Projects funded under this Priority have primarily used the funding to employ project workers, with the exception of the €600,000 under Measure 1.1E that was used for construction costs associated with the Enterprise Centre in Blacklion. The types of posts funded under this Priority ranged from craft and tourist development workers, a transport service co-ordinator to general managers and administration posts.

During the interviews a number of individuals had talked about the lack of community infrastructure that had traditionally been associated with Cavan. There was, on more than one occasion, a description of how PEACE I was about bricks and mortar, while PEACE II concentrated on peace building with the next step in the evolution focusing on social cohesion. It is also generally accepted that the final stage can only be achieved once the first two elements are in place. Under Measure 2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure (just over €1 million which equates to 13% of total funding) the emphasis has been on the continued funding of a number of key posts within organisations. Like the Economic Renewal Priority a number of development officers, administrators and managers have been employed using PEACE II funding. Some examples under Measure 2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure include the employment of a development worker to develop a strategic plan to redress social and economic decline in an area, a researcher to assist in genealogical research in Cavan and a leisure centre manager. The only capital expenditure was on the refit of a community hall and a number of meeting rooms in a community centre. This was part of a wider co-ordinated programme to increased capacity within community centres across Cavan (the project received €330,400 for this development).

In relation to cross-community or cross border work a number of projects received funding to specifically address these issues. It is of course understood that all PEACE II funded projects must demonstrate how they fulfil the distinctiveness criteria. Under Measure 2.1 Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace just over €46,000 was provided to facilitate the publication of a series of heritage trails, school programmes and seminars. Whilst under Measure 5.5 Education, Cross-border School and Youth Co-operation, €108,000 was used to develop foundations which will promote mutual respect and understanding among children and adults of different traditions, north and south of the border.

The above analysis gives a snapshot of the type and nature of some of the projects funded under PEACE II in Cavan. It is difficult to characterise the nature of the entire funding in Cavan and to do justice to the projects which have been funded. Nevertheless there is clearly a strong emphasis on the development of tourist-based projects and the employment of key workers in organisations to sustain and develop activity in Cavan. Nevertheless this section aims to provide a more rounded view of where the funding has gone as well as providing a context against which the comments made by respondents during this research can be measured. But as will be shown later, PEACE II has also provided greater opportunities in terms of delivering services and providing community facilities which in turn have addressed some of the issues surrounding weak community infrastructure.

**Table 3: Funded Projects in County Cavan<sup>6</sup>**

Priority	Projects	Total Award
<b>1. Economic Renewal</b>		
1.1E Business Competitiveness and Development in the Border Region	4	€687,590
1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities	7	€1,189,308
1.5 Positive Action for Women	2	€254,283
1.8A Technology Support for the Knowledge-based Economy (NI) - Innovative Technology and Networking	1	€80,000
<b>2. Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation</b>		
2.1 Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace	1	€46,296
2.2 Developing Children and Young People	1	€172,700
2.4C Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - of Target Group in the Border Region	3	€555,643
2.7 Developing Weak Community Infrastructure	7	€1,082,939
2.8 Accompanying Infrastructure and Equipment Support	1	€145,100
<b>3. Locally Based Regeneration and Development Strategies</b>		
3.3 Building Better Communities (Border Region)	8	€407,235
3.4 Improving our Rural Communities (Border Region)	19	€962,642
<b>5. Cross-Border Co-operation</b>		
5.2 Improving Cross-Border Public Sector Co-operation	1	€1,656,167
5.4 Promoting Joint Approaches to Social, Education, Training and Human Resources Development	1	€350,000
5.5 Education, Cross-border School and Youth Co-operation	1	€108,000
<b>6. Technical Assistance</b>		
6.2A Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme and Co-ordination with Other Programmes	1	€100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>€7,797,902</b>

<sup>6</sup> The selection of projects for County Cavan is based upon the project addresses only as given in the CSF Central Database.

## 6.2 Background to County Cavan

County Cavan is mostly rural and agricultural with only 16.8% of the population living in the three towns which have a population of 1,500 or over. County Cavan is characterised by drumlin countryside dotted with many lakes and small hills. The north-west area of the county is sparsely populated and mountainous. The county has several areas of highly scenic landscape and over recent years has made significant gains in terms of tourism. The towns and villages of the county are distinctive centres which cater for various employment, service and social needs.

Based on 2002 Census figures there has been a small but nevertheless significant increase in the overall population of the county and the figures are now back to 1961 levels (56,546 and 56,594 respectively). Almost 40% of the population are within the 18-44 age cohort and a similar percentage aged less than fourteen years.

## 6.3 Community background

In relation to the religious make-up of the county, the 2002 Census reported that 87% of the population designated themselves as Catholic, 8% as Protestant and 5% stating having another or no religion.

Therefore despite the relative decline and subsequent stabilisation of the population the percentage of Protestants has remained relatively unchanged. Nevertheless, during the inter-censal years (1991 and 2002) the population of Cavan has showed the greatest percentage increase across any of the three Ulster counties in the Irish jurisdiction (+6.8%).

One of the single most important factors to have influenced demographic change, economic development and tourism in County Cavan is the impact of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The marginality of the border counties which is often associated with the general economic and demographic changes in this area was accentuated by long periods of uncertainty, insecurity and limited outside investment induced by border closures and intermittent conflict-related violence.

For many, the road closures were the most tangible impact of the Troubles as they stifled both the economic and social fabric of the county.

*"...many roads had been closed, access to natural and familiar centres had been made difficult if not impossible and there had been major under-investment and lack of commercial development as a result of the Troubles and the investment in security forces. Local Protestant communities had disengaged and kept their heads down and did not become involved in community activities."* (R)

*"The impact of the Troubles on the county has been the closing of 22 roads."* (R)

*"The only road to cross the border was at Belcoo and the only transport was provided by Bus Eireann. The only other crossing was at Ballyshannon which had a very sparse rural transport scheme."* (R)

Because of the road closures along the border a large number of people found it very difficult to travel to the natural hinterland of the county in Fermanagh and a lot of friends and family lost contact during this period.

*"Because of road closures it meant people were caught off from their natural hinterland. Thankfully it has all normalised now."* (R)

## 6.4 The local economy

As mentioned above County Cavan is very much a rural area and it has in the past been fairly reliant on agriculture to provide the main source of employment. In some areas of Cavan, however, the over-reliance on a declining agricultural sector and many of the other factors discussed above have had a particularly significant impact in terms of the demography and economic development of the area. A number of these rural areas have experienced severe economic and social decline and over past decades a number of prominent factory closures have had a devastating effect on the county.

All of this has been compounded by the fact that County Cavan experiences many of the problems associated with a peripheral region which has not benefited from state and private sector intervention for a long period. Among the more pertinent factors are that no major industry located in County Cavan during the Troubles and the county has a very weak industrial employment capacity. There is also a poor urban structure combined with a dispersed rural population and significant rural poverty. Dependency levels are high at both ends of the spectrum under 15 and over 65 which has major implications for the delivery of social services.

Finally, the extent of the level of relative disadvantage in County Cavan has been recognised by the Irish Government in two initiatives launched in 2001 and 2002. Over 70% of the County has been included in the CLAR Programme (a programme which targets these areas that have suffered the worst population decline between 1926 and 2002). Cavan Town has been included in the Provincial Strand Section of the RAPID Programme where 20 of the most disadvantaged provincial towns were targeted. Factors such as unemployment and income levels, family and social structures, educational disadvantage and a high level of rented Local Authority Housing were used to identify the priority areas.

There remains many social and economic difficulties in County Cavan directly attributable to its proximity to an area of conflict for a prolonged period that are being addressed by initiatives such as PEACE I and II.

This lack of economic opportunity, the proximity to the border, poor infrastructure and lack of public transport (particularly a rail link) have for many created an acute sense of isolation, a depletion of the local community and a general lack of confidence. As in many border areas, separate social structures and national schools led to limited contact opportunities between the two communities.

It is against this socio-economic backdrop that the impact of PEACE II in the Cavan area will be assessed.

## 6.5 The impact of PEACE II

The following sections will examine the impact of PEACE II funding in County Cavan by assessing the attitudes of recipients and non-recipients of PEACE II funding in the area.

### 6.5.1 Addressing the legacy of the conflict

As mentioned already in this section there were very few acts of terrorism in Cavan over the 30 years of the conflict but that has not meant the County has gone unscathed. Proximity to the border has had a negative effect on economic development, tourism and the general social fabric of many of the communities along the border. This section attempts to articulate how peace building has been encouraged under PEACE II and how the local economy has been stimulated.

## Peace building

A commonly stated impact of PEACE funding, as articulated by the respondents in Cavan, has been the general recognition that the Troubles have had a significant impact on Cavan.

*“There was a general denial that the Troubles had any impact as it was seen as insignificant compared to what people suffered over the border.” (NR)*

*“In Cavan the Troubles didn’t really feature but there is definitely two communities... it’s an us and them situation. There are good working relationships but the real problems weren’t really discussed. There are subtle differences but it is not antagonistic.” (NR)*

Of course the levels of violence as experienced in Northern Ireland were not replicated in Cavan.

There was little acknowledgement of the lack of engagement between the two communities, the continuation of separate education systems and different development tracks for young people.

PEACE funding and in particular the introduction of the distinctiveness criteria have meant that engagement with the religious minority community (Protestant community) has increased.

*“The distinctiveness criteria are working even though it has been a burden for some people, it is working. It is not tokenism.” (R)*

One respondent from a community group felt that PEACE II had created the situation whereby their organisation had to engage more directly with the Protestant community.

*“Trying to find partners for cross-community work has put a lot of pressure on the minority community in Cavan. These joint activities are putting the pressure on a small number of people who tend to be the same ones usually involved.”* (R)

*“[PEACE II] forced us to scour the area and beat the bushes for Protestants to engage with.”* (R)

This final statement is of course perhaps overstating the situation but the general impression from all the respondents is that a separate development existed between the two communities and that, although the relationship on the surface was an amiable one, meaningful engagement was rare. The real challenge and one that was very apparent during the interviews is ensuring that all PEACE II funded projects are challenged in terms of their inclusivity and how they address and consider the needs of the whole community. Although the above statements are somewhat negative in how they may be interpreted, it nevertheless articulates quite clearly the difficulties of undertaking community relations work where there is almost homogeneity in terms of the religious make-up of the population.

Without exception all the respondents felt that PEACE II funding had instigated this engagement and had impacted on how organisations interact with the religious minority community. It has also impacted in terms of strategic and organisational development when assessing need and developing initiatives. The following statements demonstrate how recipients of PEACE II have viewed what in the main has been a very positive experience and one that both sides have benefited from.

*“PEACE funding has impacted on us as we wouldn’t have thought about the needs and the realities of the Protestant communities and PEACE has allowed these links to develop.”* (R)

*“If there had been no PEACE funding a lot of things wouldn’t have happened. People are now being made to feel more comfortable. We seek to avoid holding activities on Sundays. With the absence of PEACE II those discussions wouldn’t have happened.”* (R)

*“It has all been small little stages. In terms of initiatives to generate interaction things like that wouldn’t have happened prior to PEACE II. There wouldn’t have been awareness of engagement and certainly bringing people together in a hall wouldn’t have happened.”* (R)

*“Under PEACE II it has meant working in areas that aren’t always comfortable. There is now a need to understand others and that changed the focus of the work of the organisation and this wouldn’t have happened without PEACE II.”* (R)

The process has been a slow one but there is now a general feeling that the fact that PEACE II funding instigated a degree of engagement that was not previously there has been regarded as a success.

*“Peace building is real but it is quite slow. When you build things slowly it has a longer lasting effect.”* (R)

A common theme to emerge from the interviews regarding peace building and the effects of PEACE II on this area has been a genuine recognition of the true realities of this engagement with the minority community. This was most explicitly stated by one respondent who felt that although Protestants were now involved in communities, etc, the question of how far that has permeated into the rest of society was a concern.

*“There has been a lot of interaction amongst the groups involved in this project and their committees but I am not sure if this level of interaction and engagement has gone further into the community. The groups find themselves in a transition stage where they are trying to get the wider community to use the buildings and accept them as neutral venues.” (R)*

*“People would have talked in the past but whether mindsets have changed is a different matter. It depends where you are starting from in terms of measuring the real impact. People weren’t that polarised to begin with anyway but they are still not comfortable discussing issues that make them feel uncomfortable. People don’t want to feel uncomfortable particularly if they are attending something on a voluntary basis.” (NR)*

Despite these very positive appraisals of the impetus that PEACE II has created in terms of engagement between the two communities, there were some concerns relating to the validity of the peace building elements in some projects.

*“In meeting the criteria for peace building a lot of projects were dressed up as peace building which tended to obscure the real issues like getting people’s views and values on peace and how things have affected them. Instead it is just a tick box exercise and often the bare minimum is done to ensure the project meets the criteria.” (R)*

Clearly there are a number of conflicting perspectives on the impact PEACE II funding has had in terms of peace building. It is important however to consider these comments within the wider definition of peace building in terms of creating a multi-faceted social and economic foundation from which engagement between the two communities can be fostered. It is nevertheless very clear that it has created a situation (through the distinctiveness criteria) that has led to an increased awareness of the needs of the minority community and has at varying levels promoted direct engagement.

Inevitably in the border counties this has included the Protestant minority community but it also means women, young people, displaced persons and political ex-prisoners. One example of this is an organisation funded under Measure 2.4C Pathways to Inclusion, Integration and Reconciliation of Victims - of Target Groups in the Border Region. The organisation received a total of just over 399,000 under this Measure to employ a co-ordinator and to explore the counselling needs of ex-prisoners and their families, displaced persons and their families and the Protestant community in the border counties of the Republic.

However, the real challenge for this research lies in attempting to attribute this change directly to the PEACE II funding or to general societal changes that have come about because of the wider changes in the socio-political environment. Ultimately the research can’t fully answer that question because of time constraints and the remit of the project. What is clear, however, despite the different perspectives the respondents have on the distinctiveness criteria and how far engagement between the two communities has filtered into wider society, is that PEACE II has brought about a change.

The very existence of PEACE II funding has meant groups have been able to undertake activities and projects that would otherwise not have happened and, because of the distinctiveness criteria, some level of engagement between the two communities has been made possible. This consequence of PEACE II funding is perhaps best summed up by the thoughts of one respondent whose organisation received PEACE II funding.

*“[through PEACE II funding] the opportunity now exists for groups to engage. Protestants are now working as volunteers and that would not otherwise have happened. This starts people asking questions in their own communities about becoming more involved.” (R)*

## Developing the economy

It is difficult to assess the true impact PEACE II funding has had in terms of economic renewal in Cavan. For many the improvements felt throughout the county have come about as much as a consequence of the peace process as PEACE II funding. However there is a recognition of PEACE II's impact in terms of addressing some of the infrastructural and economic problems within the county. This is particularly apparent when respondents discussed how PEACE II had influenced the level and type of training available.

*"The Troubles and the border had effectively stopped all commercial development in the county so there was very poor investment. This has been improved as a result of the PEACE funding programmes as there are now the beginnings of local economic development."* (R)

"There was an outward migration because of employment as no-one wanted to invest here because of the conflict." (NR)

It was very difficult for respondents to separate the impact of the Troubles from the economic decline in Cavan. However there is a general sense that as a result of the 'Celtic Tiger' and other macro level economic factors, Cavan is doing better and the input of PEACE II has had some impact. With the exception of funding to raise enterprise awareness and promote enterprise development in the Swanlinbar region (€38,650) and the development of the Blacklion Enterprise Centre (€600,000), there has been little in the way of any large scale economic renewal or developments as has been seen in for example, East Belfast. Taking this into consideration and the overall analysis of funding that has been distributed in Cavan the focus has been less on capital based projects but on funding jobs and developing programmes that take advantage of the tourism potential in the county.

*"PEACE II has put Cavan/Monaghan on the side of the map in terms of tourism and there has been an impact on heritage and social infrastructure."* (R)

In relation to an economic impact, it is perhaps too early to say if PEACE II has had an impact. However, from the limited references to the economic impacts there is a recognition that PEACE II has developed capacity and provided opportunities that will impact on the local economy for a number of years to come.

*"PEACE [funding] is good as it has raised the level of trained and skilled individuals (and) it has brought the border counties on a par or ahead of the rest of the country."* (R)

Perhaps one of the most tangible examples of where a number of funding programmes, initiatives and a change in the wider cultural and social landscape that have come together is in Belturbet. The individual whose organisation redeveloped the old station in Belturbet felt that a series of factors had come together to economically reinvigorate one of the areas most affected by the Troubles in the County. In this instance, PEACE II funding was provided under Measure 1.1E Business Competitiveness and Development in the Border Region (€19,046) to develop a marketing strategy for the station and tourist accommodation.

*"The biggest single impact in Belturbet was the opening of the George Mitchell Peace Bridge - PEACE funding and the peace process has improved the entire economy in Belturbet."* (R)

## 6.5.2 Opportunities arising from peace

The following sections will attempt to uncover the impact that PEACE II funding has had in relation to providing organisations and the beneficiaries of those organisations with the opportunity to develop and promote a stable and normal society.

### Developing capacity

On the issue of infrastructure deficit a number of respondents commented on the impact PEACE II funding has had in developing and consolidating existing community facilities and how funding has improved the community infrastructure in Cavan.

Opinion is mixed and there is a general perception that a lot of PEACE II funding in Cavan went towards capital expenditure. In reality, however, a total of four projects (based on available data from the CSF database) were funded as capital projects. In all, this funding totalled 625,500 which represents 8% of the total funding distributed in Cavan.

*“One of the biggest impacts has been the capital expenditure on community centres. In the main everything seems OK with these in terms of everyone using them.” (R)*

*“Most centres existed before PEACE II and were used by groups but there was a stigma attached to the old centre and groups argued that because the services that were going to be provided in the new centre were cross-community they needed additional funding to adapt the centre.” (R)*

It is this point relating to the renovation and provision of services in halls and centres that in the past may have had associations with a particular church or institution and therefore been closed to one side of the community, that is the real story behind the impact of PEACE funding in this area. As one respondent commented, the distinctiveness criteria, implicit in the application process for PEACE II funding, when tied to renovation, development or the general use of centres for training, etc, have begun to slowly change these perceptions.

*“The groups find themselves in a transition stage where they are trying to get to the wider community to use the buildings and accept them as neutral venues.” (R)*

She then went on to add:

*“There is however a reluctance in terms of joint working and there is limited support of the community but these are wider societal problems and not necessarily associated with the PEACE element. However it might lessen in community halls which one side of the community wouldn't have used before by indirectly getting them in the halls through training, etc.” (R)*

It is this shift from such centres which were seen as belonging to one community or the other that appears to be an evident advance under PEACE II. It would appear this is closely linked to the peace building work that is going on in Cavan but progress is slow.

*“In the past the Protestant community didn't approach groups like us. We have linked up the local Orange Lodge to help to try to secure public funding to redevelop a hall. Although, the lodge decided to raise the resources privately, the liaising developed links between organisations and acted as a catalyst for the project. Through this and the fact that I am funded under PEACE II these links with Protestants in the area wouldn't have been able to happen.” (R)*

One feature of PEACE II in Cavan has been the number of posts that have been funded. Where the data is available, a total of 16 projects specifically stated that the objective of the funding was the employment of a particular worker. A basic analysis of the data shows that funding for new or existing posts in the Cavan area totalled €2.2 million (this is again based on available data on the CSF database). Clearly this level of investment and the associated activities that these particular posts will undertake has had a significant impact on the capacity of organisations to deliver services and develop programmes in Cavan.

One example where the development of capacity will have a much wider reaching impact than the employment of one individual is the provision of €419,208 under Measure 1.8 New Skills and Opportunities to employ a Tourism Development Officer. PEACE II provided the funding to implement a programme of tourism training, study visits, mentoring and cross-border tourism networking opportunities. This funding has enabled capacity to be developed amongst local people which will ultimately strengthen and enhance the economic base in terms of developing a good tourism product in County Cavan.

*“The project provided training and information to allow people to become more involved in tourism. As a legacy of the conflict, tourism was badly affected in the border areas. It is low level training such as making breakfast, marketing B and Bs, etc, but it has helped cross-border links to be developed.” (R)*

## Providing opportunity

A significant proportion of the PEACE II funding distributed in the Cavan area has focused on the provision of services such as arts education, vocational training and counselling. Clearly the funding will have an outcome in so far as that 'x' number of people have attended the course or availed of the service. However, it is the broader impact and what effect that has within the community and for longer term development that is of most interest.

At the widest level there is a general consensus that PEACE II funding has had a very uplifting effect on the local communities and community spirit. Respondents felt that it had kick-started a lot of things that would have never happened otherwise.

In one example a development organisation received funding under PEACE II to cover salary costs for a development worker which in turn led to an increase in childcare provision in that organisation which subsequently allowed the organisation to draw down further funding from another source. This is a very good example of the wider impact that PEACE II is having in terms of drawing down additional funding.

*"The provision of childcare facilities was greatly helped by the PEACE II funding which by its sheer existence allowed an uplift in a capital grant from another funder. We wouldn't have been able to do that without having PEACE II funding." (R)*

In another example PEACE II funding provided the funding for training courses for drivers involved in a rural transport scheme. Like the case above the PEACE II funding did not go directly into the actual service provision but it provided the necessary conditions through which services could be expanded and developed.

*"Without PEACE funding we wouldn't have been able to do as much as quickly. There would have been two less services without it." (R)*

As mentioned above PEACE II funding has provided the opportunity for a number of organisations to undertake activities that would have otherwise not been possible. An example of this was a project which provided counselling for victims and the families of victims for those killed in the bombings along the border.

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*"It helps build confidence and these individuals back into life and reaffirm that they can make more of a contribution to the family as well as the community. If there had been no PEACE II funding we would not have been able to do this." (R)*

Some respondents drew parallels between the increase in community spirit, particularly in some of the smaller towns in Cavan, and the increased provision of community playgrounds. This provision of funding for the development of play and leisure areas is a feature of PEACE II funding that is worth further investigation. A total of seven projects with the express intention of developing or maintaining community play and leisure areas were identified from the CSF database. These seven projects received funding in excess of €358,000 (5% of total PEACE II funding) to develop these facilities. In the main the projects were developed to provide a safe environment for children to play in whilst also facilitating an opportunity for parents to come together and interact.

A final feature of PEACE II funding in Cavan which is worth a mention is the level of funding that has gone to environmental and town renewal projects. In particular the redevelopment of footpaths and road junctions seems to have been a common area that has been funded. Projects which have had this environmental focus were funded under Measure 3.3 Building Better Communities and 3.4 Improving our Rural Communities (a total of six projects) received just under €300,000 which equates to 4% of the total funding in Cavan. Clearly the opportunity to address the legacy of the conflict in terms of the under investment in the infrastructure of County Cavan has been embraced by organisations and agencies in Cavan and has been a very visible impact of PEACE funding in a number of towns and villages

## 6.6 Conclusion

What difference has PEACE II made in County Cavan? Have peace building and the development of a normal and stable society been fostered through the distribution of €7.7 million of PEACE monies? What impact has this funding had in an area that although relatively unaffected by the conflict-related violence, nevertheless has a very real and tangible legacy of the conflict?

Throughout this research what was particularly evident was the impact that the distinctiveness criteria had in terms of engagement with the religious minority community. Although as researchers we were unable to fully assess the level of engagement that took place, there appears to have been a real change in attitudes towards the needs and issues of the minority community. In many ways this sets Cavan apart from the other two areas where a 'polite apartness' has characterised relations between the two communities. In Strabane and East Belfast on the other hand this type of engagement was starting from a much more divisive base. There are examples given through direct quotations of respondents through this section that highlight how PEACE II has implemented this change and has started a process of engagement.

Another feature that sets Cavan apart is the greater focus on covering salary costs as opposed to providing training opportunities or funding large scale economic development projects. That is not to say one area of funding is more worthy than the other but it does highlight how the funding has been applied in different ways across the three areas. It is perhaps because of this we have seen in Cavan a much wider impact of the funding articulated by respondents as a funded project worker can be involved in a multitude of activities with a wide range of actors. One particular example of this is the North Cavan Community Development Initiative which is collection of six different PEACE funded projects. Equally in Cavan we have heard more of how groups engage with one another. This could be attributed to a less politically motivated environment in which organisations are less insular and less fearful of repercussions if they are seen to be working together. This is of course a fairly circumspect view but this working together did seem more explicit in Cavan than in any of the other study areas.

Heritage, the environment and tourism also featured as key areas that were funded under PEACE II in Cavan. In this regard the funding has more in common with Strabane than East Belfast where, as mentioned before, the focus was very much on economic renewal and development. However, it was at times difficult to assess how the development of play or leisure areas or the redevelopment of footpaths really contributes to peace building. There is an argument to be made that they address the legacy of the conflict through developing facilities and infrastructure which have been neglected. Nevertheless when an individual, whose organisation received nearly €90,000 to develop a play area under Measure 3.4 Improving our Rural Communities (Border Region), was pressed on the applicability to the distinctiveness criteria the researcher was simply told that the town lacked such facilities. It later transpired that the engagement with the religious minority community was through parents of different backgrounds coming together when their children were playing in the playground. This is not to deny the importance of such developments and it makes sense that this is one step in the creation of a normal and stable society but it is an important feature of the funding that has been distributed into County Cavan that sets it apart from the other areas.

As with the other two areas included in this study, respondents in Cavan felt that PEACE II had provided a kick-start for other projects and allowed organisations to draw down funds from other sources as a consequence of having secured PEACE II funding. This was particularly prevalent in Bailieborough and Blacklion where projects have benefited from the sheer existence of PEACE II funding that clearly sent a message to other funders of the credibility and value of the project and its associated activities.

Indeed nowhere was the synergy between funders and projects more prevalent than in Blacklion and Belturbet where the legacy of the conflict was very evident in terms of the effect on the economy and social fabric in both towns. In both these towns major investment along with substantial PEACE II funding has turned things around and created the conditions where tourism and economic development can, and are flourishing.

# Case Studies

## RURAL LIFT LTD

Established in 1995, Rural Lift is a rural transport provider around the Blacklion area of County Cavan. In the early days the organisation received funding to undertake a research project to determine what transport was available in the area and what the barriers were for people accessing transport.

The only road to cross the border was at Belcoo and the only transport was provided by Bus Eireann. The only other crossing was at Ballyshannon which combined with a very sparse rural transport scheme made travelling around the county and its hinterland very difficult. Rural Lift tried to engage with local providers and in this respect they are unique as a rural transport initiative.

PEACE II funding allowed Rural Lift to develop and enhance its services through a training programme for drivers. This initiative allowed the drivers to receive training recognised in the UK. The funding also allowed the employment of a Transport Service Co-ordinator working on the six rural transport routes and expansion of five new routes. In addition, continuation of work with Bus Eireann and NWHB to integrate transport in the region was able to continue due to the €56,287 received under Measure 1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities. Rural Lift is continuing to lobby for recognition of this training in the Republic of Ireland, the simple economic fact being, recognition equals lower insurance rates.

The training they provided was split between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (32 people in total were trained). One of the benefits of this training was the fact that drivers came into contact with people from different backgrounds.

In relation to peace building the transport services provided by Rural Lift allowed people to get across the border to see people and places they hadn't seen in years.

Without PEACE II funding Rural Lift would not have been able to do as much as quickly and almost certainly there would have been two less rural transport services.

Rural Lift is a good example of a project that is cross-border in nature (Rural Lift has a sister organisation, Rural Lift South Fermanagh, which has five buses and comes under the Department for Regional Development's Rural Transport Plan). It shows how PEACE II funding has allowed the organisation to develop alongside other funding initiatives (Rural Transport Initiative administered by ADM, Dublin) as well as integrating into both the local community and on a cross-border basis.

*"Without PEACE funding we wouldn't have been able to do as much as quickly... there would have been two services less".*

## MAC NEAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Blacklion is situated in the extreme north-west of County Cavan at the bridging point of the Belcoo River between Loughs Mac Nean Upper and Lower. Together with its near neighbour the village of Belcoo on the northern side of the river, Blacklion was the principal border crossing between Fermanagh and Cavan when the road closures along the border were in force.

Ten years ago the impact of Army and Garda checkpoints at Blacklion as well as the impact of conflict related violence was significant in terms of the economy and community life in Blacklion. There was a checkpoint directly in front of what is now the resource centre and therefore the refurbishment of the old national school and market house were very symbolic. Blacklion was the only crossing point at the border because of all the road closures.

There is generally a feel good factor in the town and things are getting better. The resource centre in the old National School which is now Mac Nean Resource Centre has been very successful. PEACE II funding went towards the whole capital costs for refurbishment of the resource centre. The group received €110,000 under Measure 3.4 Improving our Rural Communities (Border Region). PEACE II funding helped refurbish it and covered the capital costs for refurbishment. The Resource Centre now provides training, after schools groups and IT courses. Prior to this development there were no meeting rooms or childcare facilities in Blacklion.

Peace building and engagement between the two communities was never really an issue in Blacklion as people from different backgrounds generally fell into the roles of the committee. The Resource Centre is in an old Church of Ireland school but this never stopped anyone using it.

*“The confidence that came from all these developments gave the area a real lift. The PEACE II funding allowed other funding to be drawn in to complete the refurbishment and development of the resource centre... a rising tide lifts all boats.”*

The PEACE II funding allowed other funding to be drawn in to complete the refurbishment and development of the resource centre.

The Resource Centre has been a success as there was already a good foundation in terms of peace building in Blacklion that meant the area was ready for PEACE funding. Although this base existed in terms of the local community, the legacy of the conflict was very evident and developments such as the Resource Centre, the Market House development and PEACE II funded Blacklion Enterprise Centre have revitalised the area.

# Case Studies

## BAILIEBOROUGH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PEACE II funding has allowed Bailieborough Development Association (BDA) to establish a base in the centre of Bailieborough whereas in the past they were three miles out of town.

PEACE II allowed an external evaluation to be carried out and now the organisation has a position in the community which would not have happened otherwise. The organisation received €215,633 under Measure 1.4 Promoting Entrepreneurship.

The PEACE II funding BDA receives is to fund the implementation of the development and peace building strategy. The funding also contributes to the employment costs of a general manager and an administrator, running costs for an office space and programme development. This funding which allowed the organisation to establish a base in the town of Bailieborough has provided a catalyst from which a lot of other work has emanated. For instance, the provision of childcare facilities was greatly helped by PEACE II funding which by its sheer existence allowed an uplift in a capital grant from Area Development Management. The organisation would not have achieved any of this without the initial PEACE II funding which put the foundations in place.

Approximately one in five of the population in Bailieborough is Protestant. This is perhaps one of the most denominationally diverse communities in Cavan. In the past the Protestant community didn't approach community groups but through PEACE II the organisation has established links with Protestants that would not previously have been possible. Another impact of the PEACE II funding has been BDA's ability to work with other

organisations to help develop peace building programmes. BDA in conjunction with Cavan Family Resource centre held a seminar with 24 Protestant people on a Saturday. This was the first time the local Protestant population got together to talk about needs and it is the intention that a model will of good practice will be developed that will take account of the needs of minority communities in the area.

In other collaborative pieces of work that have only been possible because PEACE II covered the development worker salaries was an initiative with the Holywell trust (a cross-border initiative to develop a youth and music studio). The milestone is to develop a viable use for the Bridewell Centre (which is based in the centre of Bailieborough). BDA is working with the Holywell Trust to develop a partnership and make the Bridewell Centre (which started out life as a jail) into a music studio. There is a desire to develop something that has long-term sustainability rather than developing another visitors' centre.

It is for this reason that PEACE II has had a massive impact on a town the size of Bailieborough in a very short space of time. There has been no tension between the two communities but there has been separate development. However there is now a growing acceptance by the Protestant population that BDA is an organisation for all the community.

*"None of this would have happened without PEACE... BDA's organisational profile has risen and where it was once seen as irrelevant, it is now right back in the town".*

If there had been no PEACE II funding a lot of little things would not have happened. People are now starting to feel comfortable and there is a greater recognition of the needs and issues affecting both communities in Bailieborough. The absence of Peace II funding would have meant those discussions and debates would not have been possible.

## THE CAVAN PARTNERSHIP

Cavan Area Partnership is one of 38 similar partnerships across designated disadvantaged areas in the Republic of Ireland. County Cavan is one of these designated areas in terms of rural and urban disadvantage.

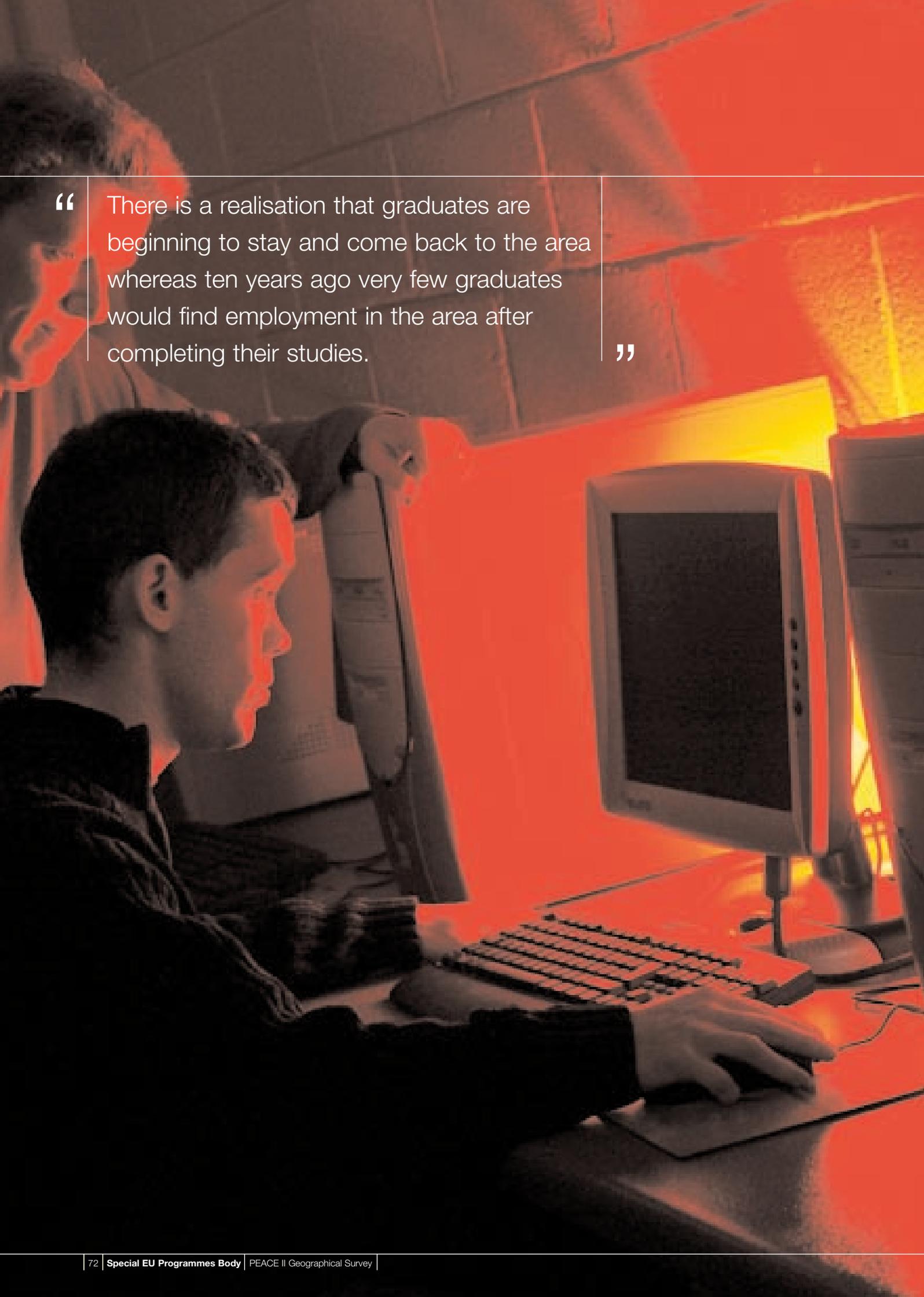
The programme run by The Cavan Partnership is focused primarily on social inclusion and it is funded from public exchequer funds. The focus is on unemployment, community development and community-based youth development.

The Cavan Partnership sought PEACE II (€100,000 under Measure 1.3 New Skills and New Opportunities) funding to enhance this work and it has allowed the Partnership to broaden its horizon to include the wider community.

The PEACE II funded project focuses on providing training for other groups in terms of peace building and community development. Some communities may be financially well off and would fall outside the remit of the Partnership but in terms of community development and infrastructure they may not. The focus of the project will be to assist communities that lack sufficient capacity to meaningfully organise and therefore provide the initial impetus and structures for these communities to become more involved in the peace building process.

Although still in its early stages the funding acquired under PEACE II demonstrates how it can act as a supplement to existing government programmes to tackle issues that fall outside mainstream funding initiatives.

In relation to peace building and engagement with the minority community the Partnership is very aware of the need to strike a balance between integration and allowing people to be different.



“ There is a realisation that graduates are beginning to stay and come back to the area whereas ten years ago very few graduates would find employment in the area after completing their studies.

”

## 7: Further Considerations

Outside of the discussions surrounding the impact of PEACE II a number of issues were raised concerning sustainability, bureaucracy and potential developments for any future funding programmes. Although this was beyond the immediate remit of the research it is desirable to include a summary of some of the more dominant issues that were raised during the interviews. On the issue of sustainability there were a number of issues raised across all three areas about how the recipients of PEACE II funding may sustain and develop their projects in the future. It perhaps comes as no surprise that the main concern was the fear of losing paid posts which have been funded through PEACE II (as has been demonstrated throughout this research a significant numbers of posts have been directly funded under PEACE II). The respondents believe that the loss of staff has potentially a serious impact, especially within smaller organisations, where staff knowledge and contacts are essential to the survival of the project.

From a great deal of comments made on this issue there is some anxiety around the sustainability of PEACE II funded projects in the absence of any future funding under the PEACE programme. It would be unfair to suggest there is a prevailing school of thought that suggests projects should be continually funded even after their natural life expectancy has been reached. The concern relates more to the less tangible aspects of the impact of PEACE II funding and maintaining the momentum that has been created in terms of building confidence and facilitating engagement within communities. However the concerns surrounding sustainability are not only focused on the financial side of things.

A number of respondents made reference to the decline in voluntarism but more specifically the demands that are placed on individuals working on a voluntary basis (especially those involved in the governance of organisations). There is a fear that a further round of PEACE funding will weaken the community infrastructure with small groups being unable to secure funding. One of the less positive impacts respondents have associated with PEACE II funding has been the decline in voluntarism. In some instances a number of respondents felt that the large sums of funding which have been available to groups have in some way spoilt them. It is very difficult to directly attribute both of these particular outcomes to PEACE II it is perhaps symptomatic of wider issues in society. Nevertheless respondents recognized this point but they felt that there had been a marked difference in relation to both these issues and at the very least they felt that PEACE II funding had in part contributed to this situation.

There was an issue of funding small, inexperienced groups which may have difficulties rolling out the programmes. These groups could benefit if future funding offered the possibility of small grants. These groups could also be encouraged to network with larger, more experienced groups in their area and this perhaps underlines the degree to which insularity is common across some of the areas. Indeed respondents felt that a separate fast track programme for smaller amounts of funding would be beneficial. A programme distributing smaller amounts of funding within a simplified framework would assist smaller groups which were previously put off by the bureaucracy. There was

almost unanimous agreement that the administration associated with PEACE II should be streamlined as it was detracting from work on the ground. In many cases the monitoring system has created a perception of mistrust between many funders and funded projects. Although this may be a well rehearsed point, it is nevertheless an important point. It was also felt that a degree of proportionality should be built into any future funding application process to ensure that smaller organisations can avail of funding and that the level of monitoring and audit is in line with the size of the grant. Some respondents feel that there is too much emphasis placed on the cross-community aspect within the overall framework of the funding. Although there is recognition of the need to focus on cross-community criteria in order to create a normal and stable society, there is a feeling that not all areas are in the same position to engage in this type of work and single identity issues need to be given more attention. Because of the demographic make-up of some of the areas included in this study, a number of respondents expressed a sense of frustration that single identity groups were finding it difficult to secure funding. In the eyes of the respondents this had a negative effect on developing capacity and therefore stopped groups becoming involved in peace building and the provision of services.

As discussed previously there is a perception that the distinctiveness criteria have put some pressure on the minority community in each of the areas in relation to their level of engagement. When looking at the way forward there was a feeling that the distinctiveness criteria have worked well but there should be a little more flexibility in their application. Under the methodology used by this research project an informed discussion of the impact of PEACE II funding across each of the areas set against wider social, economic and cultural factors has been achieved. In this regard the research most certainly showed how external factors can impede or facilitate the implementation of PEACE II objectives. A total of 84 interviews were completed with a wide range of individuals saying that by being given the opportunity to tell their story of PEACE II outside the confines of monitoring forms was a welcome development.

A total of EU36,585,140 (£25,620,812) under the PEACE II programme has been distributed across Strabane District Council area, East Belfast and County Cavan. This funding has enabled 218 projects to deliver a variety of services, training courses and employment opportunities. The funding has also assisted in the development of local economies and the development of capacity and infrastructure within communities and organisations. In other words PEACE II through its various Priorities and Measures has made things possible that were not necessarily the priority of mainstream funding programmes. It has been evident throughout this report that PEACE II has acted as a mechanism through which a process of change and engagement has been facilitated. There are of course varying degrees to which this process has been a success and the external socio-political environment is a key determining factor in impeding or facilitating this process. It is therefore perhaps unwise to focus solely on the monetary value of the funding. Equally, it is also perhaps imprudent to view the PEACE II programme in isolation as the external social, cultural and political environment really shape the extent to which any funding programme, such as PEACE II, can bring about change on the ground. Indeed for a number of respondents the PEACE II programme was part of a wider process in which the funding is just another tangible manifestation of the wider peace process. Of course PEACE II in itself cannot solve the problems of our divided society and it goes without saying that there is still considerable work to be done.

PEACE II funding across each of the three areas has been different in terms of the

nature and focus of the projects that have been funded. This is of course reflective of the different needs and priorities in each of the areas. Nevertheless at the macro level there are some very obvious commonalities that exist across each of the areas. For instance, Strabane District Council area shares some features with Cavan in so far as it is essentially a rural area that is trying to promote itself as a niche tourist provider, it is right on the border and it has suffered from a lack of inward investment. On the other hand Strabane exhibits some of the characteristics associated with East Belfast, in that there are some very deprived areas in Strabane District Council area, it has a very real and self-evident legacy of the conflict and of course there are the usual tensions between the two communities. One distinct characteristic of Strabane is the fact there is not the same degree of homogeneity in terms of the religious background of the population as in the other two areas.

## 8: Conclusion

This has influenced how projects have interacted and worked together. It was clear that in Cavan, where there is understandably less mistrust and misunderstanding between the two communities, there appears to be more engagement between funded projects. During the interviews in East Belfast and to a lesser extent in Strabane, there was little indication that projects worked together to any greater degree than if they had not received PEACE II funding. The increased capacity either in terms of staff or through the delivery of front line services has meant that a significant number of organisations are more heavily involved with government, statutory agencies and funders. The fact still remains that circumstances on the ground have meant that inter-community (or as is the case in East Belfast, intra-community) engagement has often been difficult and this has often been regardless of the PEACE II funding an area has received. Another area in which it was difficult to draw any firm conclusions from was in relation to examples of good and bad practice. Perhaps understandably respondents were rather reticent to discuss what they felt was not working so well in relation to their projects. Of course external factors were cited as reasons why projects had not progressed as quickly as originally thought but these were often seen by the respondents as outside the control of the organisation and were not linked directly to how projects had been instigated. To that end all the respondents in one way or another felt their projects were being administered and delivered successfully. This issue was compounded by the fact that those respondents who were not recipients of PEACE II funding only had a very general overview of the impact of the funding and in the main did not have a detailed understanding of what was good or bad practice within specific projects. To conclude, what are the main messages to emerge from this research in relation to the impact of PEACE II in Strabane District Council area, East Belfast and County Cavan?

First, PEACE II has instigated, implemented and supported initiatives, projects and activities that would have perhaps not been funded or would have taken longer to establish. PEACE II has provided an impetus to address the under investment in the social, physical and economic infrastructure of each of the areas that has been as a direct consequence of the conflict. Second, through the introduction of the distinctiveness criteria, an environment has been created where applicants have had to think about other communities and the needs that exist there. This has made a lot of recipient organisations of PEACE II recognise the impact of the conflict and how that may be addressed in as inclusive a manner as possible. Many respondents who were in receipt of PEACE II funding claimed that they would not have otherwise

considered quite as fully the needs of the other community and would not have necessarily pursued just as explicit a programme of peace building or cross-community work. That is not to say there was unanimous agreement with regard to the distinctiveness criteria.

A number of respondents (both recipients and non-recipients of PEACE II funding) felt that some elements of the PEACE II programme were inflexible to realities on the ground, for instance the interface violence and intra-community feuds in East Belfast and what may have been appropriate in a rural setting was more difficult to translate into an urban one. There was also a feeling that the distinctiveness criteria had, in some cases, meant that some projects were not funded because of the adherence to ensuring a reconciliation element in all funded projects. This was particularly the case in relation to single identity work in areas where there is almost homogeneity within the population. Like all research, and particularly this type of research, more questions than answers are often posed. This report is no different and at its core the question still remains, is this type of funding programme the best way to tackle the most basic issues of what divides us? No one initiative or funding programme could ever reasonably claim to tackle such a fundamental issue. At the very least this research has shown us that PEACE II has contributed to putting in place an environment where individuals and organisations have to consider the needs of others. Whether or not this has fully translated into addressing divisions and engendering greater inclusivity within our society is debatable. Nevertheless given the enormity of the task in hand it would be churlish not to recognize the significance of PEACE II in attempting to create the conditions through which a normal and stable society may be achieved. The PEACE II funding programme is a chapter in a much larger and complex story that has yet to reach its conclusion.

## 9: References

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*PEACE II Operation Programme, SEUPB, 2001*  
*Smyth, M and Hamilton, J 'The Human Costs of the Troubles' in Hargie, O & and Dickson, D Researching the Troubles: Social Science Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Conflict, Mainstream Publishing (Edinburgh), 2003*  
*Strabane Economic Profile and Trade Directory 2003/04, Strabane District Council, 2004*  
*Structurally Unsound: The Northern Ireland bids for further EU monies, Democratic Dialogue, March 2000*

## 10: Interview Schedule

*What is the general awareness of the PEACE II programme and funding in the specific area? What is the overall perception in terms of the impact that PEACE II has had in the area?*

- Outputs, ie jobs.
- Wider community impacts - what difference has the funding made to people's day to day lives?
- Economic impact - has economic renewal/confidence increased in the area because of Peace II?
- Environmental impact - has the physical and social environment of the area improved as a direct result of Peace II funding?
- Peace and reconciliation impact - have things improved between the two communities - is there greater dialogue/trust/networking - have other factors contributed to this perceived improvement?
- Is it too difficult to assign any impact of PEACE II because of other activities and sources of funding?
- Is there a lack of distinctiveness when trying to measure the impact of PEACE II?
- *If there is a perception of a negative impact, what factors in the community have impeded the successful implementation of Peace II objectives?*
- *Have PEACE II programmes integrated within the area and how well do they interact/meet the needs in the area?*
- *What have been the main advantages/disadvantages with regards to PEACE II?*
- *What lessons have been and should be learnt from PEACE II?*
- *If the funding of PEACE II projects in the area were to be removed, would it have an impact?*

## Appendix 2: List of Respondents

### **Strabane District Council area**

- 3rd Tyrone Scouting Ireland
- Abercorn Estate
- Border Arts
- Churchtown Community Project
- Dennett Interchange
- Democratic Unionist Party
- Fountain Street Community Development Association
- Koram Centre
- Melmount Forum
- Melmount Roman Catholic Church
- Mournderg Partnership
- New Horizons Partnership
- Pushkin Prizes Trust
- Social Democratic and Labour Party
- Sinn Fein
- Sion Mills Strawberry Fair
- Strabane District Council
- Strabane Lifford Anglers Development Association
- Strabane Local Strategy Partnership
- Teach na Failte

- The Villages Together
- Tyrone Constitution
- Ulster Unionist Party
- West Tyrone Voice

#### **East Belfast**

- Ashfield Boys' High School
- Ballymac Friendship Trust
- Ballymacarrett Arts and Cultural Society
- Barnardos
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Local Strategy Partnership
- Belfast Regeneration Office, South and East Team
- CAREW 2
- Castlereagh Local Strategy Partnership
- Democratic Unionist Party
- East Belfast Community Development Association
- East Belfast Independent Centre
- East Belfast Observer
- East Belfast Partnership
- Gae Lairn
- Greenway Women
- Inner East Forum
- Mediation NI
- Mersey Street Residents Association
- Oak Partnership
- Oasis Family Centre
- Round Tower Project
- Short Strand Community Forum
- Sinn Fein
- Sustainable NI Programme
- The Beat Initiative
- Ulster Unionist Party

#### **County Cavan**

- Area Development Management/Combat Poverty Agency
- Bailieborough Development Association
- Belturbet Community Development Association
- Bunnoe Community Development Association Ltd
- Cavan Community Development Board
- Cavan Family Resource Centre
- Cavan Monaghan Rural Development Co-op Ltd
- Community Connections
- Cootehill Resource House
- County Cavan Community and Voluntary Forum
- Fianna Fail
- Fine Gael
- Killeshranda Community Council
- Killinagh Community Council
- Kingscourt Community Development Council
- Mac Nean Women's Group
- National Training and Development Institute
- North Cavan Community Development Initiative
- Rural Lift Ltd
- Sinn Fein

- The Cavan Partnership
- West Cavan Community Council
- Youth Reach Centre Kingscourt

The number of organisations listed does not match the total number of interviews conducted during this research. Where interviews have taken place with more than one representative from a political party or statutory agency the organisation has been listed only once.

## Notes