

# PEACEPLUS

## Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government

# Weaving a Lattice of Peace

The impact of PEACE  
Funding on our Citizens  
and Communities



Northern Ireland  
Executive

[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Special EU Programmes Body  
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE  
Special EU Skemes Boidie



Black Mountain Shared Space Project  
PEACE IV

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# Welcome

**The story of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland stretches back more than thirty years. For most of that time, the PEACE Programmes have been key instruments to help lay the practical foundations for peace to flourish and for communities in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland to work together towards a brighter future for all.**

This booklet provides a snapshot of the vast range of activities directly resulting from PEACE funding over the past 30 years. Passing through the pages of this booklet, you will journey from the very first PEACE Programme through the various iterations since. You will see how the focus constantly changes depending on the prevailing needs. PEACE I focused on the economic rebuilding of a post-conflict and divided region and the social inclusion of those who had suffered the most. It progressed with a renewed focus on addressing the legacy of the past and actions that promoted reconciliation. As citizens in the region became accustomed to a nonviolent society, the emphasis changed to fostering positive relationships, changing attitudes, and building trust.

The latter PEACE Programmes highlighted the importance of supporting opportunities for our children and young people to realise their full potential, with a desire to help develop our future leaders.

The PEACE Programmes have been founded on the partnership principle. From the Government level down to the local community groups, every aspect of the Programme is carried out using a partnership approach.

You will also gain an insight into some of the changes achieved through PEACE funding across six overarching areas. This includes supporting economic growth and prosperity, addressing the legacy of the past, transforming local areas, promoting positive relations, changing attitudes, realising our young people's potential, and facilitating cross-community and cross-border collaboration.

Over two million citizens have been involved in these programmes. You will also read about the first-hand experience of a few of our citizens and how various interventions transformed their lives and those of their neighbours, including providing vital services within their communities and breaking down previous sectarian barriers.

We have also collected a record of all the projects funded by PEACE from the beginning, which you can find on our PEACE PLATFORM. [www.seupb.eu/past-programmes/peace-platform](http://www.seupb.eu/past-programmes/peace-platform)

Thank you to all who participated and shared their stories of PEACE. We look forward to continuing our shared journey together.



# Foreword

by Chief Executive,  
Gina McIntyre

## **This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the North-South Bodies, including the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).**

The SEUPB has the statutory remit for managing EU funding programmes between Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland. This booklet reflects on that milestone, capturing the journey that has led us to where we are today as a society. Across the pages, you will see the impact of PEACE funding on communities and lives throughout Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. You will read first-hand accounts of how the investment has created the foundation for greater collaboration, inclusion, opportunity, socio-economic growth, prosperity, and hope.

The SEUPB managed the PEACE and INTERREG Programmes, which over 25 years saw €3.39bn of support from our partners in the European Union, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive which has directly supported over two million citizens. This excludes those who did not directly participate but continue to benefit from the work of so many.

None of this would have been possible without the brave pioneers of peace who, throughout the past 25 years, have taken risks for peace, extended the hand of friendship, and carved friendships where there may previously have been mistrust and fear.

This booklet is a testament to their efforts and commitment to peace in this place and their continued drive to improve the lives of the communities and individuals who call it home.

Our current Programme, PEACEPLUS, builds on the legacy of its predecessor Programmes, protecting and preserving the hard-won and,

at times, fragile peace while offering the opportunity for a better future for the current generation and those who will follow.

It will deliver €1.14bn of investment in areas assessed as having the greatest need, delivering real change and impact to an estimated 625,000 citizens. Through a partnership approach at the grassroots level, it will empower communities, embed peacebuilding and create transformational change.

PEACEPLUS was made possible by the European Commission, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive, and I thank them for their unwavering support and commitment. I also want to thank all our partners and stakeholders, including past and present members the Programme Monitoring Committees, the SEUPB team, and all those who have worked over the past three decades delivering these vital funds.

We want to share the practical steps taken, the lessons we have learned, and the impact that the programmes have made with other countries that have suffered from conflict and those who are progressing to a peace accord. We do so in the hope that our experiences can contribute positively to the journey they are now embarking on.

Finally, it is an immense pleasure and privilege to lead an organisation delivering such important work within our society, and to get to meet the citizens who have benefitted. I hope that this booklet gives you an insight into just some of the incredible change and impact that has taken place, as we continue our collective journey for the betterment of all.

# An Introduction to PEACE

**Peacebuilding is a deeply complex, challenging, and multifaceted process that involves a wide range of strategies and approaches to reducing tensions and promoting harmony in communities. Some areas to be considered include conflict analysis, inclusive dialogue, education and awareness, collaboration and partnership, empowerment, addressing hurt, building trust and enabling economic development.**

The announcement of the PEACE Programme was the first tangible evidence of a peace dividend for a public weary of the violence, deaths, and constant fear caused by the conflict/Troubles. The first role of the PEACE Programme was to generate confidence in the nascent peace process and build momentum towards gradually healing the wounds of division.

Whilst the PEACE Programmes are unique in Europe, they benefited from the institutional precedents and European and international organisation landscape. While it learned from other EU-funded programmes in different countries in various sectors, PEACE-specific EU programmes did not exist from which to draw lessons and examples. Consequently, the programme would invent itself and the necessary tools as it went along.

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***“It’s all innovation, there is no recipe book - it’s all been learnings. How do you turn things around through investment? How do you experiment with arts, research, business, trade unions, etc?”***

Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement at Ulster University

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Photo supplied by the DARE to Lead Change (Dialogues About Race and Ethnicity) Project PEACE IV

## Addressing the immediate legacy of the conflict (PEACE 1 1995-1999)

PEACE I was created from a desire by the European Union (EU) to respond positively to the announcement of the ceasefires in 1994. They brought new structures and approaches involving civil society and the partnership approach at all levels. With high expectations and a narrow window of opportunity and goodwill, the PEACE Programme acted as a rapid response initiative that generated a high level of pioneering peacebuilding activities within every community in the region.<sup>1</sup>

The PEACE I Programme responded to social and economic difficulties in the Programme area, such as high unemployment and social deprivation. It addressed the immediate legacy of the conflict and took advantage of the opportunities arising from peace. It largely focused on areas and sections of the population most adversely affected by the violence and suffering the most acute deprivation.

The large number and diversity of projects and recipients of funding in PEACE I contributed to the quick and evident benefits of the cessation of paramilitary conflict. The funding was administered by a suite of statutory agencies on the ground, who were trusted among communities, and could deliver at a grassroots level with long established expertise and knowledge in their sector. This ensured swift actions which met the needs at a local level.



The Senator George Mitchell Peace Bridge, linking Fermanagh with Cavan, PEACE I

***“One of the most significant things that the Programme [PEACE I] did was enable us to distribute small grants. These grants, capped at £3,000, brought people who would normally be excluded into the funding system. It allowed more people to be involved in peacebuilding efforts and to feel a sense of ownership of the process.”***

Avila Kilmurray, (Former CEO of Community Foundation NI)

<sup>1</sup> Bush, K and Houston, K. [The Story of PEACE. Learning from EU PEACE Funding in NI and the Border Region.](#)

## Strategically addressing the legacy of the conflict and promoting reconciliation (PEACE II 2000-2004 Extended 2005-2006)

Following this first intervention, the European Union, and government partners agreed to a second Peace Programme, PEACE II. This was in recognition of the need for continuing support for the peace process in Northern Ireland and the fact that, despite the extraordinary difficulties being faced, the PEACE I Programme had continued to function, and use the funds.

PEACE II was different from PEACE I in two significant respects. First, the Programme was implemented in accordance with the new institutional arrangements agreed upon under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Second, it became part of the EU Structural Funds family of programmes which brought additional flexibility regarding what could be funded but conversely entailed a greater level of management and governance complexity. Furthermore, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) was created as one of the six North-South Implementation Bodies with specific responsibility as the Managing Authority of the PEACE II Programme.

These arrangements firmly placed the SEUPB and the PEACE Programmes at the heart of the EU presence in Ireland and Northern Ireland and as an integral part of the institutional architecture provided by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The Programmes were no longer short-term interventions. They were part and parcel of the wider peace process and of the development of good relations within Northern Ireland.

The PEACE II Programme built on the success and lessons of PEACE I and responded to social and economic difficulties. Economic difficulties included a downturn in the global economy, small regional businesses with little tendency to innovate, a shortage of highly skilled personnel in many sectors, high youth and long-term unemployment, difficulties in the agriculture sector, and slow growth in tourism. Social difficulties included rural poverty, some areas experiencing a deepening community divide and a continuing level of violence. Additional challenges included underdeveloped cross-border networks, lack of a smooth implementation of the peace progress, changes in political institutions and government policies, political uncertainty, and difficulties with the peace process alongside the re-introduction of direct rule in 2002.<sup>2</sup>

***“Economic development and peace building are closely intertwined. Economic development can help to build peace by reducing poverty, creating jobs, and providing opportunities for all segments of society. Peace building, on the other hand, can create an environment in which economic development can thrive.”***

Mohammed Saaida<sup>3</sup>



**Donegal Travellers Project Cultural Reconciliation Programme PEACE II**

<sup>2</sup> SEUPB, Operational Programme for PEACE II EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

<sup>3</sup> [www.researchgate.net/publication/372363742\\_Economic\\_Development\\_and\\_Peace\\_Building](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/372363742_Economic_Development_and_Peace_Building)



## Dealing with the past whilst looking to a shared future (PEACE III 2007-2013)

The PEACE III Programme took forward the lessons, best practices, experiences, skills and capacities gained from the previous PEACE Programmes. Like its predecessors, it responded to social difficulties, including significant numbers of sectarian and racially motivated crimes, high levels of division and segregation, lack of shared spaces and services, and significant numbers of victims and survivors of the conflict/Troubles and displaced persons continuing to experience acute problems.

It also sought to address economic challenges, including the impact of conflict on cross-border social and economic linkages leading to isolation and exclusion in some areas, low productivity and dependence on agriculture and traditional manufacturing industries, high levels of economic inactivity, high levels of long-term unemployment, and lower levels of earnings that contribute towards marginalisation and social exclusion, and a prosperity gap between the east and west of Northern Ireland with the border counties of Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

***“There have been some positive spin-offs, especially for victims and survivors. Before this funding, there was no statutory recognition or funding for victims. Without the funding and policy work that was made available, victims wouldn’t have been included in the Good Friday Agreement. The issue of victims was taken up by the statutory side, which was crucial.”***

Avila Kilmurray, Former CEO Community Foundation for NI



Prison to Peace Project PEACE III

<sup>4</sup> SEUPB [Operational Programme for PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.](#)

## Creating significant and lasting changes (PEACE IV 2014-2020)

Whilst significant progress had been made, the need remained for the PEACE IV Programme to promote social and economic stability in the region through actions that promote cohesion between communities. Socio-economic needs included those related to the impact of a segregated society, such as unacceptable levels of sectarian and race-motivated crimes, a largely divided society with 50% living in segregated communities within Northern Ireland and only 6% of children educated with children from a different community background. There was also a lack of shared space and a high number of victims and survivors with diverse needs experiencing long-term difficulties such as chronic pain, trauma and complex psychological problems. In addition, there were high levels of young people not in employment, education or training, and a large amount of the population with little or no qualifications, and community differentials in education and employment<sup>5</sup>

The corporate, community and institutional resilience of our region was again demonstrated with the decision by the UK electorate to leave the European Union. Northern Ireland benefited significantly from EU funding, and the UK's withdrawal raised concerns in the long term for a range of sectors in Northern Ireland, as well as for the peace process and cross-border cooperation beyond 2020.

The Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU including a commitment to ensure the continuation of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes until their conclusion in 2023.

It also provided a legal framework and affirmed the commitment of the EU and UK to developing a new PEACEPLUS Programme.

***“Through consultations for the new Peace IV programme and an evaluation of the previous Peace III Programme, a number of needs emerged. People wanted a space to share their culture and identity, communities wanted a safe, neutral space to undertake activities, and young people needed a space to socialise and access services.”***

Nicola Payne, Monaghan County Council,  
Head of Community Development



**The Courthouse Shared Space Creative Hub,  
Bushmills Co Antrim, PEACE IV**

<sup>5</sup> SEUPB [Operational Programme for PEACE IV EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2014-2020 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland](#).

## Supporting strategic cross-border co-operation to create a more prosperous and sustainable region (INTERREG)

INTERREG (also known as European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes) promotes cooperation between member states and third countries to create shared solutions to common challenges. Interreg projects are aspects of the EU's Cohesion Policy that are delivered on the ground. The overarching objective is to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union. There are over 70 cross-border INTERREG A Programmes across Europe, addressing the challenges of a border area, however the border on the island of Ireland is significant in terms of peacebuilding in fostering cross-border relations, and has complemented the work of the PEACE Programmes.

Since 1991, the INTERREG A Programmes have also funded thousands of projects to the value of €1.13bn across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland to address the economic and social disadvantage resulting from a border by promoting the creation of programme networks involving and benefiting local communities. They focused on enhancing the capacity at the local level for the development and implementation of local development strategies, improving the physical and spatial environment, protecting our shared environment and promoting actions which enhance the quality of life of the population. These projects were inclusive in nature and operation, improving people's health and wellbeing and making businesses better.<sup>6</sup>



Carlingford Lough Greenway INTERREG VA

6 [www.seupb.eu/past-programmes/interreg](http://www.seupb.eu/past-programmes/interreg)

## Supporting the journey to a more peaceful and prosperous society (PEACEPLUS Programme 2021-2027)

Encompassing both elements of PEACE and INTERREG, PEACEPLUS has built on the legacy of Programmes, experiences, lessons, and practices. It provides reassurances that the legacy of the PEACE Programmes will continue to influence the development of community relations, reconciliation, and cross-border cooperation in the region immediately following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. It, too, has been developed through extensive research and public consultation within the wider political, economic, social and environmental context.

The PEACE Programmes have had many multifaceted aims, objectives, and outcomes to deliver against the varied web of peacebuilding. Ultimately, the overarching mission has always been to create a more peaceful and prosperous society by taking advantage of the opportunities from the peace accord. Over the years, each investment has been designed to make real and meaningful change and help support the journey toward lasting and permanent peace. The PEACE Programmes are now seen as examples of practical peacebuilding activity to be shared throughout Europe and other regions.

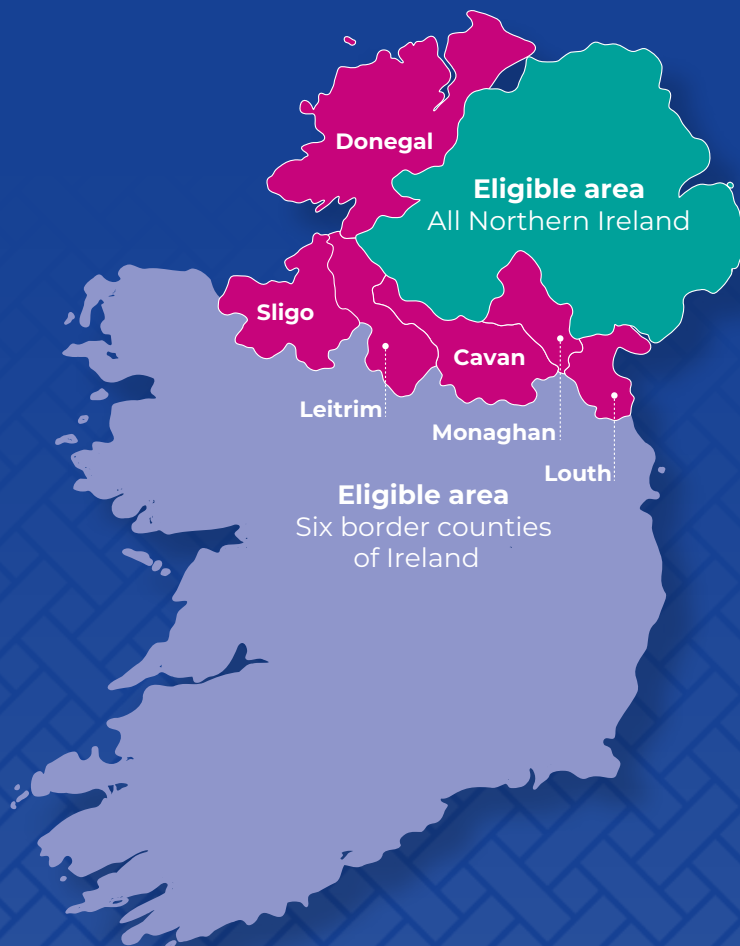
***“PEACEPLUS builds on the experiences of these past Programmes and is driven by grassroots organisations from both communities and both sides of the border. We will continue our joint effort to support peace in Northern Ireland and foster reconciliation between communities. PEACEPLUS will play a productive and effective role in this over the coming years.”***

Executive Vice-President, Marcos Šefčovič, European Commission



**PEACE I-IV**  
TOTAL AMOUNT  
INVESTED  
**€2.265bn**

**PEACEPLUS**  
FURTHER  
INVESTMENT  
**€1.14bn**



PEACE Programmes  
Delivering between

**1995 - 2029**

including PEACEPLUS

Over

**2.2million**

Total participants/citizens  
directly supported (2023)

**624,950**

Total citizens to be  
directly supported  
under PEACEPLUS

### Target groups

Long-term unemployed, women, children and young people, victims and survivors, people living in urban and rural deprived areas, displaced persons, excluded or marginalised people, ex-combatants, ex-prisoners and their families, public, private, and voluntary sector organisations.



**Professor Duncan Morrow**

Director of Community Engagement at Ulster University

**The PEACE Programme has been the continuity when the political process fell apart. There's been a level of continuity and development for 25 years when other people went away. Just look at victims and survivor groups that were supported predominantly through PEACE when others went away.**

It's all innovation, there is no recipe book - it's all been learnings. How do you turn things around through investment? How do you experiment with arts, research, business, trade unions, etc?

Not everything is resolved, but the normality of engagement and collaboration has completely transformed.

It's hard to overestimate how little integrated contact there was 30 years ago. The big legacy is the change in the social structure and social capital in Northern Ireland and the border counties.

It's much strengthened coming out of the PEACE Programme. You can notice changes. It doesn't matter if it's individuals, young or old, institutions big or small; everything at every level of society is shaped in a collaborative way now.

There's loads of examples of big capital projects with economic, social and cultural impact that have completely transformed how places see themselves. From festivals and hotels, it's been a catalyst for urban regeneration. It's been a way to make peace tangible and give it a sense of shared ownership - it's more than just what politicians do; it's a gateway to every citizen.

The PEACE Programme is like water. You don't notice it, but it gets into every crack. It's difficult to measure and easy to overlook. It's an element in every recipe, and without it, you wouldn't get the same result. A lot of it happens without people noticing, so it's difficult to measure, but it's a long-stayer—25 years!

The ultimate outcome is in changes in people's lives. Can people do more now than they could before? Yes. Is it all to do with PEACE programmes? No. Is it a huge contribution for change? Yes.



Girdwood Community Hub, Belfast, PEACE III

# Achieving Change through Investing in PEACE Programmes



Waterside Shared Village Project  
PEACE IV

# 1

ACHIEVING CHANGE:  
**Providing a platform for economic  
growth and prosperity**

*“Unless you achieve economic transformation,  
you can’t have a stable society.”*

Sir George Quigley, Irish President of the Irish G7 Alliance  
of Business Leaders and Trade Unionists.

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## PEACE I

**7-8,000**

employment projects

**42,450**

training participants

**1,579**

tourism facilities created

**413**

feasibility studies/grant  
seeding

**31,220**

qualifications recorded

**571**

tourism facilities upgraded



The PEACE I Programme boosted economic growth and employment by enhancing facilities and support services to enable people from disadvantaged groups and areas to access education, training, or employment. This included redirecting redundant skills, reinforcing efforts for the long-term unemployed and young people, and encouraging the participation of women in the workforce. It also stimulated private sector investment leading to sustainable employment and development especially in disadvantaged areas. Economic impacts of PEACE I included creating jobs, particularly within the voluntary and community sector and achieving training/accreditation.<sup>7</sup>



**Border Towns Retail Services Sector Initiative  
PEACE I**

The PEACE II Programme also focused heavily on economic renewal, including initiatives for developing trade, business investment, tourism, social economy, and entrepreneurship. Economic impacts included facilitating the development of services, infrastructure, training and engagement in areas affected by the conflict that would not have happened or not happened as quickly. It also took investment risks to develop sectors particularly affected by the conflict, such as Research and Development and ICT. PEACE II also enhanced skills to help participants obtain jobs or enter further education or training. Furthermore, it promoted and mainstreamed innovation through social economy and entrepreneurship projects that would not have been funded at that time under another government initiative.<sup>8</sup>



**Castleblayney Early School Leavers Initiative  
PEACE I**

#### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## PEACE II

**77,652**

individuals entering or progressing  
into education, training, or  
employment

**6,148**

jobs created

**10,248**

businesses  
assisted

<sup>7</sup> Pricewaterhousecoopers, (November 2003), *Ex-post Evaluation of Peace I and Mid Term Evaluation of Peace II Final Report*

<sup>8</sup> Pricewaterhousecoopers, (November 2003), *Ex-post Evaluation of Peace I and Mid Term Evaluation of Peace II Final Report*

PEACE III focused less on developing economic growth than PEACE I and PEACE II and more on reconciling communities and contributing to a shared society. Economic development was a positive spin-off, particularly for local communities affected by the conflict, from focusing on urban and rural regeneration and developing key institutional capacities. There was also a noticeable advance in cross-border and cross-community cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

The PEACE IV Programme also promoted economic stability in the region, notably through actions to promote cohesion between communities. For example, this included through shared space and children and young people projects. Disadvantaged and marginalised young people aged 14-24 obtained qualifications in personal development, good relations, citizenship, essential skills, health and safety, and first aid. The positive progression of young people was evident with intentions to move into paid work, further and higher education, participation in another youth project or volunteering following project completion.



The Third Space Project, PEACE IV



Engine Room Interactive Employment Project PEACE I



The Skainos Project, Belfast, PEACE III

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE III**

**117**

jobs created/  
safeguarded

<sup>9</sup> SEUPB, *Operational Programme for PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland*.

A new era of PEACE funding was launched in 2023 through the PEACEPLUS Programme, with a renewed focus on delivering economic regeneration and transformation. This will ensure complementarity as wider economic development strengthens the conditions for peace and good community relations.



**Belturbet Community Development Association Ltd  
PEACE I**



**AMPLIFY Project PEACE IV**

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE IV**

**585**

into paid work

**476**

to study AS or A Levels

**422**

into volunteering

**306**

into a further education college course

**161**

into accredited training

**454**

to study GCSEs

**462**

onto another youth project

**275**

into job training

**199**

into college/ university



The Courthouse Shared Space Creative Hub, Bushmills Co Antrim, PEACE IV

Investment in the economy, supporting SMEs, research, and innovation in specific areas of need are among the key focus areas. Support for skills programmes, lifelong learning, and diversification will also be available.

PEACEPLUS has also been developed to allow the social economy and entrepreneurship to play a key role in developing communities, leading to a more peaceful and prosperous society.

This could be through the smart towns and villages initiative, activities supported by local community action plans, small-scale projects building community capacity, skills, and wider economic development, or rural regeneration and development.

## EXAMPLES OF ANTICIPATED IMPACT UNDER PEACEPLUS

**1,512**

small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation

**5**

joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations

**9**

solutions taken up or up scaled by organisations

**8,000**

completions in joint training schemes

**7,500**

children and young people completions in joint training schemes

# 2

## ACHIEVING CHANGE: Addressing the legacy of the past

*'The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families'.<sup>10</sup>*

British and Irish Governments Agreement Reached  
in the Multi-Party Negotiations (April 1998)

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE I

**261,662**

hours of guidance/  
counselling sessions

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE II

**1,638**

reconciliation  
groups

<sup>10</sup> British and Irish governments, (April 1998), Belfast and Good Friday Agreement - Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations

From 1966 to 2006, 3,720 people were killed in Northern Ireland and Ireland, and 47,541 people were injured as a direct result of the conflict. Furthermore, an estimated 61% of the Northern Ireland adult population have experienced a traumatic event at some point in their lifetime.<sup>11</sup> 32% of the population in Northern Ireland also report adverse childhood experiences.<sup>12</sup> Armed conflicts affect the social foundations of mental wellbeing within the family and across the community. They affect access to essential services such as health and education, training and employment opportunities.

This legacy of the conflict and the ongoing presence of paramilitary influences in some areas presents new challenges for individuals regarding their wellbeing and ability to engage on a broader level, both within their communities and with others.



Relatives for Justice PEACE II

Twenty-five years later, our communities exhibit the symptoms of ongoing intergenerational trauma.

The PEACE I Programme helped to invest in activities focused on the varied needs of Victims and Survivors through the main self-help groups that evolved. These groups were not like other community and voluntary-based groups.

They evolved based on the shared experiences of individuals and their families and the trauma they suffered throughout the conflict. The groups were formed to support each other and reach out to those who had suffered. In the early days of the PEACE Programme, there were only a few victims' groups.



WAVE - Trauma Training Learning Pathway PEACE III

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS  
**PEACE III**

**6,999**

in receipt of trauma counselling

**44,037**

people attended 1,887 events assisting victims and survivors

**25,429**

people attended 2,184 conflict resolution workshops

**42,540**

participants in reconciliation projects

<sup>11</sup> CAIN, Ulster University, [Healing Through Remembering, Day of Reflection, Fact Sheet on the conflict in and about Northern Ireland](#)

<sup>12</sup> [www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2019/april/research-finds-that-childhood-adversity-and-trauma-in-northern-ireland-has-lasting-impact-on-mental-health#:~:text=The%20key%20findings%20of%20the,in%20comparison%20with%20other%20countries.](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2019/april/research-finds-that-childhood-adversity-and-trauma-in-northern-ireland-has-lasting-impact-on-mental-health#:~:text=The%20key%20findings%20of%20the,in%20comparison%20with%20other%20countries.)

Many newly formed groups, primarily single identity-based groups, lacked capacity and skills during the early stages of development. At the time, this was a highly volatile environment in which to work, with many individuals expressing distress, mistrust, suspicion, and anger that victims had not received true acknowledgement or recognition for the suffering they had to bear. Support work at this time was directed towards building relationships of trust and assistance to reduce the isolation felt by victims and survivors and working towards integration into everyday life. Without any formal government-led structures or truth recovery processes, community and voluntary groups promoted storytelling activities including recording of personal accounts of the conflict and dealing with the past.



Border Lives PEACE III

During the PEACE II Programme, the Community Relations Council supported groups working with victims and survivors to build programmes of work, helping to build capacity and to support those most in need. The PEACE II Legacy Project delivered several workshops, training courses and one-to-one sessions for individuals, which increased their self-esteem and confidence and enabled them to deal with anxiety and trauma experienced in the past. A direct impact of the project was the development and establishment of cross-community relationships, enhancing collaboration between diverse communities to contribute to peace and reconciliation. By the end of PEACE II work with victims and ex-combatants once seen controversial, was accepted as an essential element of peace building.<sup>13</sup>



Back to the Future Project PEACE III

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE IV**

**3,956**

received advocacy  
support

<sup>13</sup> Pricewaterhouse coopers, (November 2003), *Ex-post Evaluation of Peace I and Mid Term Evaluation of Peace II Final Report*

Throughout the PEACE III Programme, the SEUPB took a leading role and emphasised the importance of dealing with the past, supporting and adopting Brandon Hamber and Gráinne Kelly’s working definition of reconciliation<sup>14</sup>, which involved five strands, one of which was “acknowledging the hurt, losses, truths and suffering of the past”.<sup>15</sup> During PEACE III, a substantial injection of funding augmented and supported the government funding to groups working with victims (via the Community Relations Council), alongside a Victims and Survivors Strategy.

The CRC continued to promote good governance and undertook a review to assist groups in developing best practice standards in delivering their work. They also created an accredited and volunteer-led Befriending Training Scheme to support carers of victims and survivors, assisting in the alleviation of social isolation.

The work of the PEACE Programmes focused on bridging the gap in provision between victim-centred community-based service providers and statutory mainstream services. PEACE IV shifted the Victim and Survivor Service’s delivery model from a less personal, means-tested approach to an individual and victim-centred model with tailored support.

Interventions that provided a pathway towards healing under PEACE IV also included services that support and maintain resilience, such as counselling and emotional support, welfare advice, and opportunities for personal and professional development for victims, survivors, and their families.

In recognition of the needs of those who have suffered from past trauma and to build upon the work of the previous Programmes, PEACEPLUS will continue to develop the capacity for services through Investment Area 4.3 Victims and Survivors.

#### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## PEACEPLUS

**20,000**

participants will benefit from support and services for victims and survivors

**7,500**

participants will complete training programmes

**1**

joint strategy and action plan will address barriers to engagement in support and services for victims and survivors.

<sup>14</sup> Hamber, B. and Kelly, G., (September 2004), *A Working Definition of Reconciliation*. Occasional paper published by Democratic Dialogue, Belfast

<sup>15</sup> Deloitte, (September 2010, pg. 79), *Theme 1.2: Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past - Review of Implementation Report*



***“The fact is that in many working-class areas, it is groups like ours who originated as ex-prisoner groups that are doing the peacebuilding work because so-called ‘nice’ groups and agencies don’t want to be there and do not see the problems in these areas as being anything to do with them. Peacebuilding is not ‘nice’ work; it forces us all to look at ourselves, examine our beliefs and confront our prejudices.”***

Marion Jamison, Community Relations Officer, Reconciliation, Education and Community Training (REACT) PEACE II

The PEACE III Steer Mental Health Counselling and Support Project provided one-to-one professional counselling and facilitator-led, supported recovery programmes to adults physiologically affected by the conflict and who reside in the Derry City Council area or County Donegal. Reported impacts from this project included improved quality of life of people psychologically affected by the conflict, reduced mental health illnesses, raised self-esteem of people psychologically affected by the conflict, and improved relationships between Protestant and Catholic communities.

***“The counselling and support that I have received so far is helping me come to terms with a lot of baggage that I have been carrying for too many years.”***

***“I feel as if the real me is coming back again: that person who used to enjoy life.”***

The Steer Mental Health Counselling and Support Project PEACE III



**Paul Gallagher**

Teach na Failte -  
Open Doors Project -  
PEACE IV

**Throughout funding, Teach Na Failte delivered workshops, seminars, and residentials across the island, particularly to those who resisted existing state authority and legitimacy. These provided learning from the conflict, which has been rooted in divided religious, national, and group localities that have spurred paramilitary violence, social conflict, mistrust of state security forces, and a lack of consensus about Ireland’s future direction. Many discussions took place on a cross-community level regarding peacebuilding, uniting Ireland, border polls, the Commonwealth, remaining part of Britain, mediation services, restorative practices, joint capacity building, and community development programmes.**

The Dialogue Programme has enabled specialised support providing seminars and residentials to Republican Socialist ex-prisoners, ex-combatants and associated groups and individuals that have built self-confidence and self-esteem around the current political arrangements, policing and justice, decommissioning, armed struggle versus political struggle, as well as lessons learnt from other political conflicts and settlements. We also deliver youth intervention sessions with marginalised young people to discuss social justice issues. This work has seen the eradication of bonfires in several areas and the development of alternative forms of remembrance.



**Dr Avila Kilmurray**  
Social Change Initiative

**I've been involved in peacebuilding efforts since before the first**

**official Programme even began. As the Director of a community organisation, I conducted a survey of local groups right after the ceasefires. I saw a clear distinction between the various PEACE Programmes over the years. The first Programme was far more flexible. It allowed the creation of partnership boards and concentrated heavily on the process and inclusion, which was crucial given that we had just come out of 25 years of exclusion.**

One of the most significant things that program did was enable us to distribute small grants. These grants, capped at £3,000, brought people into the funding system who would normally be excluded. It allowed more people to be involved in peacebuilding efforts.

When it comes to measuring success, I think it's probably more difficult now. During the period from the ceasefires to the re-establishment of Stormont, there was a greater sense of optimism, so peacebuilding efforts got away with a lot more.

Collaboration can work well if it's thematic, geographical, or based on capacity and strengths, but that needs to be carefully managed. You can't just say, "Yes, we support collaboration," and push it in what is essentially a competitive process.

Collaboration is a good thing if it brings together strengths, but when it's just about securing funding, it loses its value. You have to ask, five years after the money ends, will this partnership still work together?

There have been some positive spin-offs, especially for victims and survivors. Before this funding, there was no statutory recognition or funding for victims. Without the funding and policy work that was made available, victims wouldn't have been included in the Good Friday Agreement. The issue of victims was taken up by the statutory side, which was crucial.

There are some lasting manifestations of this funding, like the Black Mountain Shared Space.

Other areas of work have developed over the years, like our work with young people. Women's issues were heavily invested in during the first two Programmes. This new PEACEPLUS Programme seems to have heightened awareness of minority ethnic communities, which is a good thing.



**The Next Chapter PEACE IV**

# 3

## ACHIEVING CHANGE: Transforming local areas

*“There are loads of examples of big capital projects with the economic, social and cultural impact that have completely transformed how places see themselves. From festivals and hotels, it’s been a catalyst for urban regeneration. It’s been a way to make peace tangible and give it a sense of shared ownership - it’s more than just what politicians do; it’s a gateway to every citizen.”*

Professor Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement at Ulster University

### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## PEACE I

**48**

roads improved

**157,611m<sup>2</sup>**

of new buildings

**1,579**

tourism facilities created

**240,941m<sup>2</sup>**

of sites improved

**136,765 m<sup>2</sup>**

of buildings upgraded

**571**

tourism facilities upgraded



Letterkenny Town Park PEACE I

Across the region, many areas of deprivation have endured environmental decay and weak community infrastructure due to three decades of civil strife. This is particularly evident in segregated areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, however, many other towns and villages also bear the scars of destruction. Consequently, morale in these communities can be very low, and residents may perceive themselves as stigmatised and excluded.

Locally based urban regeneration measures under all iterations of the PEACE Programmes sought to achieve an immediate tangible impact within the targeted communities and be sustainable over a prolonged period. The aim was to reverse the downward spiral of hopelessness and poor-quality environment and, in doing so, build upon and encourage the overall peace process.



Restoration of the SS Nomadic PEACE III

Funded projects tackled the social and environmental needs within Belfast and Derry/Londonderry communities to raise self-confidence and self-esteem, enhance the physical environment, and provide local amenities.

The types of action funded included environmental improvement campaigns, landscaping, supplying street furniture, providing amenities that support local communities, and infrastructural projects that provide employment opportunities, promote urban regeneration, and enhance tourism potential. Projects were successful at actively involving residents, especially those socially excluded, in the design and implementation of projects. They also contributed to the renewal of deprived areas and encouraged and attracted investment.

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE II**

**161,599**

individuals participating  
in cross-border  
activities

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE III**

**136,166**

users of 18 shared  
public environments

**27,383**

people benefited  
from shared services



Connecting Pomeroy Shared Space Project PEACE IV

Many of the border counties small towns, villages, and rural areas also suffered underdevelopment and neglect because of the security situation in the region. The economic development of these areas was seriously affected, and this has had knock-on effects on their social and physical fabric. Projects funded under the PEACE Programmes endeavoured to remedy these effects by restoring the physical fabric, building a sense of community spirit, and restoring pride.

Funded projects focused on heritage and cultural tourism, including water-based tourism, developing open spaces and derelict sites to enhance the local environment and provide children with recreational and leisure facilities such as play areas, physical landscaping of streets and squares regenerating them as commercial and residential locations,

redeveloping derelict buildings to provide new premises for commercial activities and places of cultural and tourism interest, and improving local transport between border towns and villages, including non-national roads not covered by other parts of the Programme or under different programmes.

These projects helped create conditions necessary to regenerate the urban and rural environment, underpinning peace and reconciliation.

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS  
**PEACE IV**

**7**  
new capital  
shared spaces

**17**  
local council  
shared spaces



Waterside Shared Village PEACE IV

The PEACE Programmes have invested in many iconic shared spaces, which have become visual beacons of a changing society. They have supported community-level shared spaces and services, resulting in attitudinal and behavioural changes within interface areas. This has helped to increase cross-community and cross-border integration across the Programme Area.

There is a significant opportunity to build upon this investment in PEACEPLUS, create new shared space facilities, and reimagine existing spaces to facilitate increased shared usage in urban and rural areas. This will help address levels of sectarianism and racism, create a more cohesive society, benefit and embed peace and reconciliation and result in significant social and economic regeneration and transformation. Innovative activity and service provision programmes within the shared spaces will encompass a wide range of thematic areas, including children and young people, health and wellbeing, social enterprise, tourism and heritage, education, arts and culture, and sport and recreation.



Shankill Shared Women's Centre PEACE IV

## EXAMPLES OF ANTICIPATED IMPACT UNDER PEACEPLUS

**Up to 10**

capital shared spaces  
jointly developed and  
implemented

**50,000**

participants from  
different communities  
engaged jointly within  
new shared spaces.

**17**

local authorities  
engaged in local  
community regeneration  
and transformation

**25,000**

participants accessing  
new rural facilities,  
enterprise and  
community services



**Sue Divin**

Programme Manager  
(PEACE), Derry City  
and Strabane District  
Council

**Since its opening in June 2011, to the current day, the iconic PEACE Bridge in Derry/Londonderry has been transformative in connecting people and place in the city.**

Since the Troubles, the River Foyle had been a natural interface barrier, dividing the predominantly Catholic/Nationalist/Republican 'Cityside' from the more diverse Waterside, where most of the Protestant /Unionist/Loyalist population live.

The PEACE Bridge crossed that barrier to connect the Guildhall Square and City Centre directly to the Ebrington Square (a former army barracks) and Saint Columb's Park.

From large scale festival events to park runs, shopping trips to family picnics and walks by the river, the bridge is used routinely by the local population and tourists alike.

Expanding the wider sense of shared civic space, with the refurbishments of Guildhall Square and the Ebrington site completed, it would be unthinkable now to have the city without this landmark connection.

The positive environmental impact has also been huge, making the city more accessible for walking and cycling, and linking greenways around the River Foyle and cross-border.

The PEACE Bridge is an outstanding example of how well-designed infrastructure can radically enhance reconciliation and leave a lasting legacy for generations.



**Bill McCotter**

Chairman, Belfast  
Star Basketball,  
Newforge Shared Space  
PEACE IV

**Basketball has always been a game that unites and draws people from all different backgrounds and contexts. Starting in the 1960s, we played in local sports centres, drawing crowds of over 1000 people! The decline of indoor leisure centres in Belfast reduced that, but we still maintained a presence playing at schools and centres across Belfast for the last few decades.**

That's all changed now. Newforge is home for us. From helping to co-design, the materials used in the court, to using it now for our home games, this shared space echoes the inclusive spirit of the 60s, bringing together diverse audiences to enjoy basketball.

The Belfast Star is more than a sports club; it's a beacon of peace, a testament to the power of sport in bringing people together, and a source of immense pride for everyone involved. And the crowds are back; in our first game we had 1200 spectators come to support!



**Betty Carlisle**  
Shankill Shared  
Women's Centre

**This new build is placed in a part of Belfast which is a known interface area and therefore creates limited opportunities for communities to learn from each other.**

We anticipate an increase in the number of women participating in programmes. Through our programmes, women will meet each other in a safe and secure space whereby they can learn together and it turn attitudes and behaviours will be changed.

We will welcome participants from different areas of the city who would not have attended Shankill Women's Centre in the past.

We will provide a neutral space for cross-community activities to allow meaningful and sustained contact between women, children and young people from all diverse community backgrounds.

Thanks to PEACE IV funding, there was investment in a volunteer programme, whereby a coordinator was funded, and 20 women received volunteer training and therefore can assist staff members in the new premises.

Four of the volunteers have now gone back into part-time work, although they'll still volunteer. That's a positive and unexpected side effect of the funding.

The building itself has been designed with women in mind.

There are soft spaces, an outside courtyard, muted colours, pale wood, wool carpet and soft seating. The general décor is designed to be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

A public realm scheme has brightened up the surroundings of the building in what was seen as a polarised, disadvantaged area.

Overall, the building is all about learning respect, making friends with people, enhancing skills and improving employability.

Funding is a constant challenge, and we will continue to face up to that challenge in our desire to improve women's lives.

This building shows what can be achieved with vision and support and a desire to make progress.



**Shankill Shared Women's Centre PEACE IV**



# 4

## ACHIEVING CHANGE:

### Promoting positive relations and changing attitudes

*‘Due to our shared past, the segregation and division in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, some sections of society have not yet developed the capacity to deal positively with diversity, difference, and the concept of ‘other’.’<sup>16</sup>*

#### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE I

**Over 50%**

of projects felt they had very significant impact in reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society.

**29%**

of projects felt they had a very significant impact in promoting reconciliation.

<sup>16</sup> SEUPB, Operational Programme for PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.



The Interface Programme PEACE I

Sectarianism, racism, intolerance, marginalisation and lack of community cohesion are long-term underlying problems in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. These problems have contributed to and have been exacerbated by the conflict. Lasting peace and successful reconciliation depend on the contribution of influential community groups and the full inclusion of previously marginalised or disadvantaged groups. It also depends on finding new ways to unite formerly divided communities to break down barriers and provide opportunities for individuals and groups from different communities to cooperate.



Football for All PEACE III

From the first PEACE Programme onwards, efforts were invested in developing the skills and capacity of communities, particularly the most deprived communities, to articulate their views and to participate effectively in local economic and social development activities. This also enables communities to participate in cross-community activity in the long term. Projects facilitated the full inclusion of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups, breaking down barriers of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and community background. For example, some programmes targeted women, recognising their role in community development as a source of new leadership in communities and, in shaping social and economic regeneration.

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**PEACE II**

**322**

projects building better communities.

**189,007**

people attended 8,393 events that addressed sectarianism and racism or dealt with conflict resolution.

**2,754**

participants from interface areas engaging in community activities.



Dreamscheme - Future Together PEACE III

Support for women's groups and activities contributed to developing cross-community partnerships and grassroots capacity. There are also many examples of PEACE-funded projects targeting Catholic and Protestant, Republican and Loyalist, Nationalist and Unionist communities and people from ethnic minority communities.

This work continued in subsequent PEACE Programmes. Efforts were strengthened to facilitate opportunities to build relationships, encourage dialogue, and promote change within individuals and within/between communities. Activities included increasing knowledge and understanding, changing mindsets, attitudes, and behaviour to address trust, prejudice, and intolerance, and accepting commonalities and differences.



The Peace Campus, Monaghan, PEACE IV

Findings from PEACE Programme evaluations provide evidence of improved knowledge and understanding of people's culture and identity. When individuals learn about different backgrounds, they are more likely to view diversity positively, fostering an environment of respect, empathy and appreciation.

Increased respect, as achieved through cross-community contact in PEACE Programmes, helps reduce anxiety associated with unfamiliarity, breaks down stereotypes, and builds trust, reducing sectarianism and racism. As anxiety reduces and trust grows, so does the hope for greater social mixing within programmes and day-to-day life.

#### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE III

**90%**

of participants improved contact with people from another community compared to 44% of the general population.

**Almost 100%**

of participants were willing to participate in cross-community and cross-border activities.

**83%**

of participants felt they understood 'a lot' or 'a little' about the other community's culture and traditions compared to 60% of the general population.

**76%**

of participants felt they understood 'a lot' or 'a little' about minority ethnic community cultures and traditions compared to 41% of the general population.

**79%**

of participants felt they could trust the other community compared to just 63% of the wider population.



Belfast City Council Local Authority Action Plan PEACE IV

Trust allows people to risk being vulnerable in the presence of other groups, which typically provides for deepening bonds between groups, enhancing people’s willingness to take steps toward cooperation and reconciliation.

The PEACE Programmes also helped to build the capacity of local leaders. For example, this included encouraging engagement between representatives of key local institutions and providing leaders with a toolkit and understanding of how conflict transformation and reconciliation have been achieved and can be widely applied. Support from community leaders and institutional authorities is also essential for members of different groups to engage with each other in ways that are collaborative rather than competitive.

PEACE Programme activities, where people from different groups can learn to see each other and work together as part of the same team to tackle community needs, are effective and can foster a sense of community belonging while providing new resources from which all groups can benefit. This bottom-up participation encourages people, including marginalised and disadvantaged groups, to become active and informed citizens. Enhanced community relations also bring tangible benefits such as community integration, regeneration and transformation.

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS  
**PEACE IV**

**33**

projects, including 21 regional-level projects, helped to increase tolerance, community cohesion, and positive attitudinal changes, including between Protestant and Catholic participants and built the capacity of local leaders.



Newforge Community Development Trust PEACE IV



The Peace Campus, Monaghan, PEACE IV

The PEACE Programmes also contributed towards developing a vision of a shared future by facilitating the building of relationships and opportunities for interaction and dialogue between individuals and organisations with significantly different opinions and political beliefs. This helps create the conditions in which differences are understood and accepted as a prelude to agreeing on how to live together in a shared space that is fair, equitable and inclusive of all.

The PEACEPLUS Programme will continue investing in this legacy of change by promoting increased social inclusion, improved cross-community and cross-border relations, and physical and social improvements. It will also continue to invest in empowering communities to work together and cement relationships through initiatives that sustain peace and leave a legacy of friendship and understanding.

## EXAMPLES OF ANTICIPATED IMPACT UNDER PEACEPLUS

**110,000**

people from different communities engaged jointly in the implementation of local action plans

**24,000**

people from different communities engaged in local level projects

**58,000**

people from different communities engaged jointly in regional level projects

**960**

organisations jointly engaged in local level projects

**16**

organisations with increased institutional capacity

**116**

organisations jointly engaged in regional level projects



**Liza Wilkinson**

Tides Training

**During Peace III,  
we partnered with the**

**Housing Executive, focusing on people living in social housing across Northern Ireland, where about 90% of residents were segregated, and we also worked with the staff.**

There was a culture among the staff of not talking about themselves due to the need to remain neutral. BRIC Building Relations in Community was about breaking down the ‘them and us’ mentality, in terms of those from different cultural backgrounds as well as those who live in social housing and NIHE staff, we also had to address issues that were beginning to rise as new communities began moving in.

At one point, Belfast was known as the race hate capital of the EU, which is a label that we do not want. With Peace IV, we partnered on five regional peace programs, Peace Bytes and Youthscape, which were focused on young adults and most from areas outside of Belfast, with a lot from rural areas.

Even though segregation isn’t as visible in rural areas, it’s definitely there, especially with the changing demographics as new communities moved in.

We were also part of three other PEACE IV projects. It’s a massive honour for TIDES to be involved in such a wide range of activities, across such a wide geographical spread, with such a variety of people, groups and organisations. While many focus on key people and areas, the reality is that Northern Ireland is such a small place, and everyone and every area matters.

One of the things I love most about our programmes is figuring out how to get someone to meet people outside their community. Stopping the violence was crucial, but then came the time to breathe and heal. Now, it’s about envisioning what we want this place to look like in the next 25 years. That’s something we can all be part of. It’s hard to predict which project or who will drive that change, but it involves people being themselves, integration, shared housing, new experiences, and spaces where people can listen and learn.



**BRIC – Building Relationships in Communities PEACE III**



## The Waterside Mums Caitriona Concanon And Nicola Creelman

Catriona and Nicola who are both from different backgrounds in Derry/Londonderry, signed up for 'Minding Mum', a peer-to-peer maternal mental health support group for new mothers. It is one of many activities taking place at the Waterside Shared Village. It is situated on a traditional interface between Irish Street and Top of the Hill in the city and is aimed at engendering trust and reconciliation between communities by providing a safe place for residents to engage in activities together.

Catriona from Top of the Hill sought out the Minding Mum. "It can be very lonely when you're with a baby in the house and everyone's working so I wanted some help and to meet other mums. I attended a lot of Minding Mum activities including workshops, social cafes and massage therapies. I ended up with a new group of friends, including some from Irish

Street, which was lovely." She added: "I also joined a mums' choir too in a community centre in a largely Unionist area that I'd never physically been to before. I would never have set foot in it otherwise and I realised what a beautiful wee centre it was."

Nicola said the facility-run project has changed her outlook on life. "The Shared Village is on the site of my old school, and I remember that being the divide between both communities. But now I don't see that anymore. When I'm driving from Top of the Hill into Irish Street and vice versa I see it's more connected. There's no real divide. When I was younger, I would never have even walked across it whereas now I have no issue doing it. The Shared Village is right there, nearly where the invisible line was and now that everyone comes from everywhere that line is quickly being eradicated."

# 5

ACHIEVING CHANGE:

## Realising our young people's potential

*“The impact of the ‘Troubles’ continue to significantly impact on the lives of our children and young people, all of whom were born after the Good Friday Agreement. The communities most deeply affected by the Northern Ireland conflict are also those in areas with the highest rates of mental ill health and child poverty, and the lowest levels of educational attainment’.”*

Koulla Yiasouma, NI Children's Commissioner, 2018

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE I

**48,787**

new accredited day  
care places

**7,205**

pre-school education  
places provide

EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE III

**43%**

of the beneficiaries were  
children and young people





YMCA M-Power PEACE IV



Many young people, particularly in the neighbourhoods most damaged by the conflict, emerge from the education system as poorly motivated, unqualified, and unskilled and drift into long-term unemployment. They subsequently transmit their negative experience of education, training and the job market to their children. Consequently, failure at school effectively begets social failure, resulting in a life of uncertainty, marginalisation, and dependence on social assistance structures.<sup>17</sup> The Bamford Review<sup>18</sup> also noted the effects of sectarianism and the associated violence on children and young people.

It highlighted that ongoing social and economic difficulties coupled with poor parental mental health had a profound impact on children.

All phases of the PEACE Programmes provided opportunities to break into this cycle of exclusion with interventions from early years through to young adults.

From the outset, the PEACE Programmes focused on strengthening preschool education, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas, to combat the problems of lower educational and skills achievement in later life and ultimately enhance employment prospects.

#### EXAMPLES OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### PEACE IV

**492**

pre-schools/  
schools  
participated  
in shared  
education

**Over  
200**

partnerships  
developed  
between  
schools

**2,417**

teachers  
equipped with the  
skills and capacity  
to deliver shared  
education

**121,868**

children  
participated in  
cross-community  
contact through  
shared class activity

**17**

projects facilitated 20,534  
young people aged 0-24 to  
complete programmes that  
developed their soft skills  
and respect for diversity

<sup>17</sup> PEACE I - Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 1995-1999

<sup>18</sup> Department of Health, (July 2006), The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) A Vision of a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service



**Youth Network for PEACE, PEACE IV**

Family support projects also better equipped parents with the skills and confidence to make a fuller and more positive contribution to their children’s development.

The PEACE Programmes also focused on achieving reconciliation among children and young people, with activities delivered inside and outside school settings to promote tolerance and acknowledge cultural diversity. This included within the youth and informal education services and efforts to strengthen community and family links with schools.

The educational structures within the region have resulted in a large proportion of children being educated solely with children of a similar background. Integrated Education was directly supported during PEACE I and PEACE II, including funding for the capital costs of eight schools/colleges and transformation support and research.

Shared education under PEACE IV created significant opportunities for children from pre, primary, post primary and special educational needs schools to have direct, sustained, curriculum-based contact between pupils and teachers.

Through collaboration between schools from different communities, shared education helped to promote good relations and enhance children’s skills and attitudes to contribute to a cohesive society. Key impacts included reconciliation outcomes with cross-community connections and friendships between children, increased opportunities for parents and children to meet outside of school, contributing to longer-term benefits, and the ability of children to acknowledge and promote similarities and differences in a shared classroom. This enhanced mutual understanding and led to positive attitudes and behaviours towards different communities. Shared activity with children in their early years also prevents stereotypes from developing in the first instance as, if formed, they are more challenging to change. Societal benefits that emerged also included equipping educational providers and children with the skills and attitudes to promote a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding, contributing to a cohesive society. In addition, educational benefits included access to a broader education/curriculum experience and facilitating the sharing of ideas and good practices between education providers.

EXAMPLES OF ANTICIPATED IMPACT UNDER  
**PEACEPLUS**

**142,628**

participations and 106,971 completions in Shared Learning Together Programmes

**2,080**

participations and 1,560 completions in joint shared education training schemes

**9,750**

participations and 7,500 completions in PEACE4YOUTH joint training schemes

**75,000**

participations and 56,000 completions in joint Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing training schemes

The PEACE IV Programme also funded projects to support disadvantaged/excluded/marginalised young people aged 14–24, many of whom had profound social and emotional needs and were at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, violence or dissident activity. The impact evaluation demonstrates the positive distance travelled across good relations, personal development, and citizenship outcome indicators. Regarding good relations, young people enhanced their capacity to form positive and effective relationships with those from different backgrounds. Young people also reported increased self-awareness and understanding, confidence, planning and problem-solving, positive relationships, working effectively with others, leadership, resilience and determination, and relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their health and wellbeing. There is also evidence of increased citizenship with engagement with valuable services and volunteering in communities, participation in community structures, initiatives, democratic processes, and improved family and community relations.

Furthermore, following project completion, some young people also obtained qualifications and intended to move into paid work, further and higher education, participate in another project or volunteer.

Investing in young people is essential for long-term peace and prosperity. The PEACEPLUS Programme will build on the previous Programmes and provide opportunities to improve their life chances, skills, education, confidence building, creative and sporting activities, and social entrepreneurship.

The Programme will also focus on enhancing community leadership and ensuring that a new generation of leaders is appropriately skilled in sustaining peace and good relations. Funding under the Shared Learning Together Education Programme will also contribute to attitudinal and behavioural change within schools, youth settings, and the wider community. The PEACEPLUS Youth Programme will contribute to lower levels of community division, sectarianism, and racism, make a positive contribution to reconciliation, and develop the capacity of the young person to make a positive contribution towards family, community and society.

Focused on inter generational trauma, the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme will lead to an improved understanding of youth mental health and well-being issues, share best practices, enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive relationships with others of a different background and improve emotional resilience.



Connecting Pomeroy PEACE IV



**Rory Sloan**  
One Young World  
Ambassador,  
Founder Resolute  
Minds

**My journey is a testament to the power of transformation. Never great at school, and after years of substance abuse and mental health issues, fitness, personal training and bodybuilding was my outlet.**

However, after months of training for my first bodybuilding competition, Covid hit and the whole world paused. I lost my job, developed an eating disorder, started drinking excessively and relying on cocaine. I got caught up in a dangerous world of criminal activity and drugs. This lifestyle led me to prison.

After my sentence, I was introduced to a group called Alternatives and a PEACE programme that offered counselling, education, and the tools to

reflect on my past. It wasn't just about staying out of trouble; it was about understanding myself and the roots of my actions.

For the first time, I faced my traumas and learned healthier ways to cope.

After my release, I committed to turning my life around. I used the skills and knowledge gained from the programme to set up my own business, Resolute Minds. Resolute Minds is dedicated to supporting young people struggling with mental health and trauma. I know firsthand how easy it is to fall into destructive patterns, and I want to provide the support that I desperately needed during my youth.

Today, I am still on my transformation journey. I am driven by a mission to help others find their path to healing and success. Now, through Resolute Minds, I'm paying it forward, helping young people overcome their challenges and build a brighter future.



**Faith Drummond**  
One Young World  
Ambassador,  
Podcast Host

**Through various moments in my life, I have experienced a deep sense of imposter syndrome. Growing up in the Greater Shankill in Belfast, I always felt out of place in rooms with great leaders.**

Through engagement with Greater Shankill Alternatives, SEUPB have significantly invested in me, funding my trip to One Young World in Belfast.

Being among global leaders and meeting other Peace Ambassadors reassured me and inspired me to start my podcast and social enterprise.

After being involved in a car accident at 14, I faced a traumatic legal system with no support. This experience fuelled my passion to create a social enterprise offering a 10-week resilience program for victims within the justice system, including cold water therapy and court visits. I also started a podcast to change the stigma around pole dance.

I travelled to Letterkenny to share my story and went to Japan to represent Ireland - something I didn't think would happen a few years ago as a young Protestant girl from Northern Ireland

These experiences helped me overcome my imposter syndrome, change my life, and challenge stigmas. SEUPB's support opened up networks and opportunities, proving that with the right backing, anyone can make a difference.



**Pauline Walmsley**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Early Years

**I've been involved in the Peace Programmes since Peace I and Peace II, focusing on capital buildings for the early childhood sector. During PEACE I, the cross-community playgroups were really the only significant cross-community activity happening in Northern Ireland. As we moved into Peace III and Peace IV, we saw something remarkable. People in areas controlled by paramilitaries started speaking out about their own childhoods and expressing what they didn't want for their own children. It's been incredible to witness that shift.**

There's a story from Peace III where we collaborated with Ulster University on a programme focused on Peace and reconciliation, where preschool children were seen as peacebuilding actors. This idea even expanded internationally. We connected with people in Colombia through an international network that focuses on peacebuilding with young children.

Our approach was based on anti-bias rather than just equality of opportunity. This had a profound impact on families. For example, some parents in Derry would never have crossed the border, but they did because their kids were part of the programme. That's the kind of impact this work has had on entire families.

A lot of the Peace funding went into training for early childhood education.



**Audrey Rainey**  
Director of Corporate  
Services, Early Years

When I look back, it's hard to believe how much the landscape has changed over the last 30 years. I truly believe that much of that change is due to the investment from the PEACE programme.

The focus has shifted from being capital-heavy to equipping the sector with the necessary skills. We worked with children with special needs and started looking at how to build a system at the local community level. That foundation enabled the sector and our organisation to benefit immensely from Peace. We're now delivering programmes on the government's behalf, largely because of the skills we built through this investment.

Thanks to PEACE, the communities and voluntary sector really grew. Every university in Ireland now offers early childhood degrees—something that wasn't around 30 years ago. Back then, people didn't see the link between outcomes and qualifications. The Peace program essentially pump-primed the sector at every level—child, parent, institutional, and system.

We've also done much work internationally in Albania, Poland, and Ukraine. They were eager to learn how we do things here. They were so hungry to understand how to work in partnership, something we had to work on actively back in 1998. Nowadays, it feels like second nature, but back then, it was something we had to figure out and then share with others.

# 6

ACHIEVING CHANGE:

## Facilitating cross-community and cross-border collaboration

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*“The specific added value of territorial cooperation programmes is mainly related to the creation of networks of cooperation set up to achieve a common objective.”*

INTERACT Programme Secretariat

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## EXAMPLE OF IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**23,990**

Total number of  
project partners across  
PEACE I to PEACE IV



**Multi-government representatives at the launch of the PEACEPLUS Programme, September 2023**

One of the fundamental principles of the PEACE Programmes is to encourage and support cooperation, collaboration, and partnership. At a strategic level, the PEACE Programmes represent partnerships developed and implemented in collaboration with key stakeholders from governments, including the EU, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government. This has meant a robust consultation process at the development stage of each Programme and a vital role for these stakeholders within the management and implementation of the Programmes.

These partners make joint decision-making on projects and investments on Steering Committees, which are sub-groups of the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC). Each PMC monitors the progress against agreed targets. This includes representatives from government departments, including the sponsor departments, the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and other relevant policy Government departments.

It also includes those from business and trade unions and social and environmental partners, including from the community and voluntary sector. These partnerships are vital to establishing trust and ensuring openness and transparency throughout the Programme's lifetime.

The networks and relationships among politicians, public officials, and NGOs within jurisdictions and across the border which exist now, would have been unthinkable just over thirty years ago.

The PEACE Programmes also required partnership working at the project level. Experience tells us that a strong partnership is essential for the project's success. Good projects have partnered with a collective mix of knowledge, expertise, and competence to collaboratively design and implement the project and achieve its outputs, results, and objectives. Evaluation findings, project partner reports and institutional knowledge obtained over the successive PEACE and INTERREG Programmes provide examples of partnerships that start from a baseline position of no/limited cross-border/cross-community contact, i.e., the 'Defining' stage to subsequent stages of 'Developing' and 'Expanding', and in some cases, 'Embedding' where in-depth and high-quality project delivery is achieved.



The added value and impact of cooperation demonstrated at the project level includes:

- Establishing partnerships across the Programme area and identifying community development needs and joint solutions for addressing those needs.
- Aligning partners to come together to define roles and set a shared agenda and common objectives.
- Sharing financial resources to mobilise funds.
- Growing the capacity of project partners as strategic leaders and catalysts.
- Strengthening the capability of projects, leading to better outcomes.
- Transferring information, knowledge and best practices.
- Smoothly implementing project activities.
- Achieving impacts that would not have been possible, or at a substantially lower level of activity or quality, had a single jurisdiction or community attempted to undertake related works in isolation.
- Providing the foundations for future work/ projects. This is evidenced by many partners continuing to work on projects that have spanned multiple iterations of PEACE Programmes, with one or two new partner additions based on the additional experience, skills and competence needed to deliver the new project effectively.

The PEACE Programmes also supports actors at local partnerships, local authorities, and citizen levels in working together to solve common problems. For example, Shared Spaces, Building Positive Relations, and Youth Projects have successfully engaged local communities with others they would not have had the opportunity to work together to address a local need.

The PEACE Programmes also provided local partnerships and local authorities with structures and incentives for local cooperation. This involves political representatives across the spectrum putting aside their differences on other matters for the sake of their communities. This often means elected representatives come together to plan and make decisions about the allocation of funds. It is a testament to those involved that this dialogue continued when, at the macro level, political discussions broke down.

The added value and impact of cooperation at the local level, including among project participants includes:

- Jointly identifying community development needs and working together to identify and deliver solutions.
- Providing opportunities for meaningful public participation and civic leadership.
- Access to new or improved services, activities, or facilities in the local area by community influence.
- Transformation of the local area.
- Shared connections with diverse people create the feeling of being part of a larger community.
- Developing the skills and capacity of future community leaders.
- Providing opportunities for contact with people from a different community background or across the border, including communities they previously hadn't engaged with.
- Increasing awareness of the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of others.
- Increasing respect and trust of people from different community backgrounds.



- Forming positive relationships with those from different religious, political, and ethnic/ racial backgrounds.
- Increasing the number and closeness of cross-border friendships.
- Providing opportunities for people to venture into areas they previously wouldn't have, breaking down pre-conceptions of space belonging to one community or another and destabilising traditional boundaries and divides.
- Experiencing the wider sense of community outside of own jurisdiction.
- Contributing to lowering levels of community division, sectarianism, and racism.
- Supporting local economic development.

Cross-border work opens community, business, and economic communication channels. Cooperation in work, education, youth, cultural activities, or business leads to social, cultural and economic regeneration. Cross-border work also brings added value to peacebuilding and reconciliation and provides an opportunity to holistically address various problems and challenges that are a direct legacy of the conflict<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, cross-border cooperation helps to develop a better understanding across communities.



Young Ambassadors for PEACE IV programme

Cross-border work under the INTERREG and PEACE Programmes became more normalised and less threatening to Loyalists and Unionists. Indeed, cross-border cooperation has sometimes provided a 'stepping stone' for individuals from Loyalist backgrounds to engage in cross-community initiatives with people closer to home. The availability of EU funding has, in the past, facilitated people and organisations to take risks in cross-border cooperation that they would not otherwise have taken.<sup>20</sup>

Cooperation and partnership are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all Investment Areas in the PEACEPLUS Programme.

PEACEPLUS will also focus on developing co-designed PEACE Action Plans, bringing together locally elected representatives, community representatives, and council staff and ensuring the plan addresses local needs. In addition, Theme Six, Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration, will focus on enabling joint strategy development and management, cooperation capacity building, and identifying solutions to reduce obstacles to cross-border cooperation.



<sup>19</sup> Taillon, R (2014) 'Cross-Border Cooperation and Peacebuilding in Ireland' The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland 1.

<sup>20</sup> Taillon, R (2014) 'Cross-Border Cooperation and Peacebuilding in Ireland' The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland 1.



**Paddy Harte**  
Chief Executive,  
International  
Fund for Ireland

**When I look back at 1986, there was virtually no cross-border collaboration of any kind and nothing like the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).**

Cross-border and cross-community development work was practically non-existent. The idea of community cooperating across borders was unheard of. We were starting from scratch, working with communities that were at a very low ebb and our work was really pioneering. The IFI has been involved in several projects where we collaborated closely with the SEUPB, while maintaining the IFI's independence and without the need for any formalised agreements.

We worked in a very complementary way—IFI focused on people-to-people relationships, while SEUPB handled major capital works.

The Black Mountain Shared Space project was a PEACE IV Programme capital build project that also received funding through the IFI Peace Barriers Programme. We helped the communities see beyond the walls, thus enabling Black Mountain Shared Space to make a significant application to SEUPB.

The first big impact we see is the confidence that the community gains when large sums of money are entrusted to them. It's like 'until people in yellow hats and diggers appear, no one believes the government really cares'. That gives the community such a huge boost in confidence— more than the actual building itself. The business community also gains confidence.



**Black Mountain Shared Space Project, Belfast, PEACE IV**



**Jane Crudden**  
PEACE Programme  
Manager, Cavan County  
Council

**What I've witnessed over the years has been nothing short of amazing. Starting at the local level and extending all the way to cross-border initiatives. We had groups from County Cavan come together with groups from the other side of the border. We're talking about putting together two of the most opposite groups—Catholics and Protestants—for World War I trips. It culminated with them visiting a WWI grave site in France and long after the programme ended, these groups are still in contact, attending each other's events.**

One of the biggest successes was the WWI trench we built. The amount of footfall it brought in was incredible, and it served as a resource to bring together groups from different communities. Capital projects like these are hugely popular. This time, the projects had to be decided by the communities themselves, and we would have needed ten times the funding we were allocated to meet the demand. But here's the thing: unless these buildings and projects are truly cross-community, there's no point in doing them. Some capital projects aren't as obvious, but they still create shared spaces. The revenue generated by the trench project alone was significant, bringing in money that wouldn't have been there otherwise.

We also took a risk by bringing GAA coaches into Protestant schools. Initially, we received some negative feedback. In the end, some schools contacted the coaches afterwards because they wanted to enter a competition.

I also remember when the Lambeg drum had never been played at the Féile, and now it has. One of the highlights was the Féile, which was opened by representatives from both the north and south. Before, they would never have seen any connection.

I've also seen our councillors go up north to learn from their counterparts. They came from completely different parties, and that kind of exchange would never have happened without Peace. They discovered commonalities—some of them were farmers, and they shared farming knowledge and experiences. Even today, there are still councillors from the south who stay in touch with their counterparts in the north.

We've done a lot of work over the past 15 years, but there's still so much more to do. The PEACE funding has been incredible in terms of bringing groups together. There were very few other funding bodies that focused on disadvantaged groups, and if you were targeting the right ones, PEACE was the only Programme that would fund them. The key to long-term success is getting the right people involved and building genuine relationships that last beyond PEACE funding. Unfortunately, that's not something you can easily record, but the anecdotal evidence tells the real story.

# Building a Lattice of Peace through the PEACEPLUS Programme

## **Peacebuilding takes time, and much work must be done to cement good relations in the region further.**

Whilst Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland are experiencing a period of relative post-conflict stability, PEACEPLUS is needed to address many longstanding social, economic, and environmental issues that have and continue to impact the Programme area.

It will also recognise the devastating impact of the challenging years we have all faced and the risks and challenges from the exit of Northern Ireland from the EU. Northern Ireland's continued transformation from deep-rooted division and violence to peace and stability also requires an ongoing concerted commitment to reconciliation, good governance, and community-building.

- Social challenges, including persisting health inequalities and increasing suicide rates, are also a significant concern. Divisions between communities are also still evident, with low levels of trust and high levels of residential and social segregation.
- Economic challenges include low productivity, a private sector dominated by a large indigenous SME base with few larger enterprises in this region, a high ratio of low-paid to high-paid jobs, high levels of long-term unemployment, high economic inactivity with a large proportion of people having no qualifications, a low number of business start-ups, low levels of export intensity, and a low level of overseas tourism.

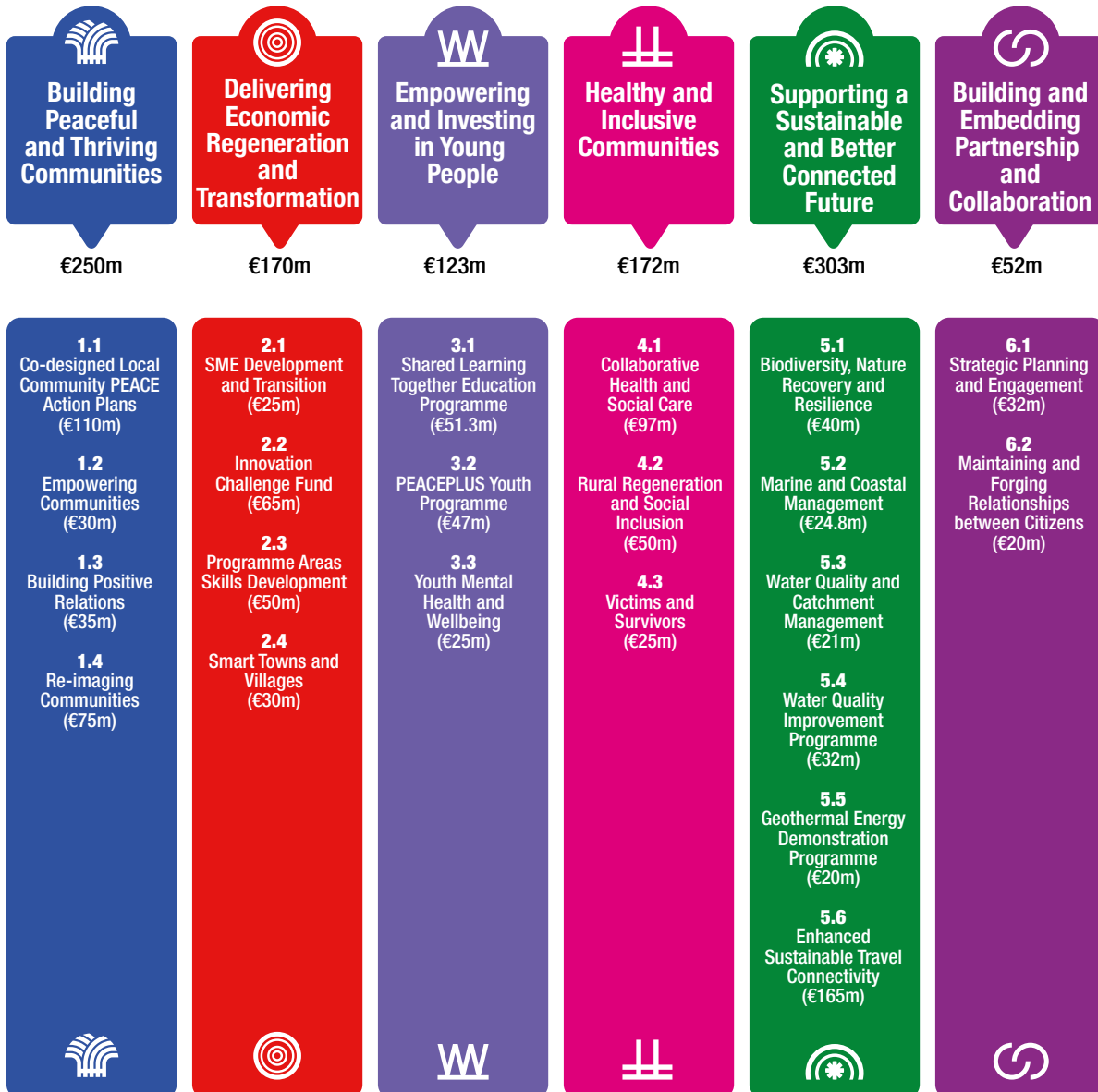
- Environmental challenges include emissions from agriculture and transport, an overreliance on cars, and limited public transport availability.

The Programme's strategy is to continue taking the opportunities and addressing the needs to support the overall peace process, including boosting economic growth, stimulating social and economic regeneration, and promoting social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life.

These include efforts to develop and deepen social cohesion between divided communities, increase tolerance and respect, reduce the levels of sectarianism and racism, promote increased opportunities for prosperity, and address the legacy of the past. It will also respond to the objectives of the European Green Deal by ensuring that sustainable development is at the core of the Programme interventions.

The SEUPB will deliver PEACEPLUS funding across six Themes and 22 Investment Areas, including building peaceful, thriving, and inclusive communities, investing in young people, supporting a sustainable and better-connected future, building partnership and collaboration, and delivering socio-economic regeneration and transformation.

## PEACEPLUS Programme Thematic Areas



A peacebuilding programme will not, on its own, transform conflict and deliver ‘peace’ in a nicely wrapped package on the day the funding disbursements end. At best, it will contribute to practical conflict transformation. It is only one component of a large, complex, and unpredictable peace process, and PEACE Programmes do not substitute for sustainable progress in formal political processes in post-agreement political arenas.

They do not substitute for private sector investment required to transform conflict-distorted economies. Given the scale, complexity, and intergenerational timeframe of the problems to be addressed, there will never be enough money available to match the need.<sup>21</sup> Peace cannot be bought.

21 Bush, K and Houston, K. [The Story of PEACE. Learning from EU PEACE Funding in NI and the Border Region.](#)

## PEACE as a playbook for peace building in a post conflict society

With almost 30 years of PEACE Programmes, there are opportunities to transfer knowledge and experience to conflict/post-conflict societies globally to help inform the development, designing, and implementation of future PEACE building Programmes. The achievements here in a relatively short time since the signing of the peace accord can be used as a framework by other nations still in the grip of conflict or struggling to transition to a peaceful society. Every conflict situation is culturally different, and the approach would have to be adjusted region to region. However the outcome remains the same, establish a peaceful, stable and prosperous society for the citizens.

Rebuilding countries after widespread destruction and human suffering is hugely complex and requires a multifaceted and long-term, collective approach by the authorities and international partners. In other countries in conflict, despite the ongoing tensions, stakeholders may seek to promote the peace process, governance reforms, and development initiatives. Even countries that have a peace process must continue to work towards reconciliation and integration after the cessation of violence and may face significant ethnic and political challenges. Countries worldwide are working to resolve significant problems. This includes Colombia, which, after decades of armed conflict, is on a peacebuilding path, tackling issues such as land restitution, drug trafficking and the reintegration of former combatants.

As outlined in this report, after the conflict/Troubles, Northern Ireland's challenges included sectarian division, economic disparities, legacy issues, youth engagement, cultural identity and social difficulties.

Northern Ireland, albeit on a much smaller geographical scale, can be a positive example regarding the infrastructural repair and development, economic recovery, social care, political and legal reforms, security and stability, and community relations required post-conflict.

The strides taken, achievements delivered, and lessons learnt here can serve as a playbook for peacebuilding on the international stage. Society in our region rests on a foundation enabled and supported by a lattice of peacebuilding tools and interventions.

While each peacebuilding context is unique, many elements required for success and future prosperity are consistent, including inclusivity, dialogue, education, economic development, security, capacity building, and – most importantly – patience.


It is vital to recognise peacebuilding as a long-term process that requires sustained effort, commitment, and resources, with intergenerational trauma and the socioeconomic scars resulting from violent conflict taking many, many decades to address and resolve.

We have come such a long way, but we are acutely aware that there is still much more to do. We will never take these Programmes of investment for granted.



PEACEPLUS Workshop



 Campas Síochána  
Peace Campus

The Peace Campus,  
Monaghan, PEACE IV

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