

Special EU Programmes Body

Project Case Study

Programme:
PEACE III

The Rural Enabler

Theme:
**Building Positive Relations—
Regional**

Funding:
€3,123,864.60

Lead Partner:
Rural Community Network

Website:
www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org

Project contact:
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Geographical area:
**Regional: NI and Border
Region of Ireland**

This is an initiative designed to reduce racism and sectarianism in rural communities which has received over £2.7 million worth of EU support.

The programme takes a unique 12-county approach to supporting rural communities at a local level and is supported by the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD), the department of Community, Equality & Rural Affairs (DCE&RA) and Irish Rural Link (IRL).

Designed to encourage peace-building and social cohesion the project focuses on seven distinct themes including:

young people; flags and emblems; housing; interfaces; racism and community relations; community development and rural institutions.

The aim is to change attitudes, overcome misconceptions and challenge the inherent prejudices that exist within rural communities. The programme also helps rural communities to take the first steps needed to overcome tensions and to build positive relationships for the future.

Each of the counties participating in the project is allocated an 'enabler' who supports groups and individuals to overcome sectarian and racist attitudes. Facilitation development grants are also available to enable these groups to use specific activities or bring in the specialist expertise they need to make a difference in their area.

Key Project Outputs

- Set up around 70 programmes;
- 170 Facilitatory Development Grants Processed;
- 150 Facilitatory Development Activities implemented;
- Up to 7 thematic action research reports;
- A practice to policy manual to influence and inform future interventions in this work;
- 1 programme evaluation tracking progress against each of the 7 themes; and
- End of programme conference with presentation of evaluation and practice-to-policy study.



Judith Getty, a youth community worker, working with the Rural Enabler Programme in Bushmills.