

# **The Trouble with Peace**

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*The European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern  
Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland*



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The *Hands Across the Divide* statue (1992) in Derry city, Northern Ireland.

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*“For peace comes dropping slow”*

(W.B. Yeats - 1888)

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## Acronyms

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic

COC: Challenge of Change

EC: European Commission

EU: European Union

GAA: Gaelic Athletic Association

IFB: Intermediary Funding Body

IR: International Relations

IRA: Irish Republican Army

LCEB: Louth County Enterprise Board

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NIA: Northern Ireland Assembly

PSC: Protracted Social Conflict

PSNI: Police Service Northern Ireland

PwC: PricewaterhouseCoopers

SEUPB: Special European Union Programmes Body

SIU: Social Inclusion Unit

## Introduction.

This is not a dramatic narrative about conflict, concerning a region plagued with daily occurrences of manifest violence. It is a much more subtle story, whereby protracted discourses of 'othering' manifest in eruptions of violence in certain times and situations, in a post-conflict setting. The context within which this study was written coincided with some of the worst violent riots seen in recent years in Northern Ireland, coinciding with the Marching Season, in the days leading up to and following the Twelfth of July celebrations.<sup>1</sup> We see that the threat of dissident republicanism has not been entirely erased, when we take into account the fact that during the research period of this project, a Catholic police constable was killed in Northern Ireland, in April 2011. An abandoned car bomb found on a roadside, only weeks after his death, was also blamed on dissident republicans. This forces us to question the extent to which we are living in a time of peace, and how we can really define this perception of peace and our 'post-conflict' status. We must therefore question to what extent peacebuilding measures are addressing the legacy of the conflict, and positively impacting upon social relations.

The European Union's (EU) Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the six Border Counties of Ireland (also known as 'Peace') is a peacebuilding initiative which has been operating in the six counties of Northern Ireland and the six Southern border counties of the Republic of Ireland, since 1995. It has consisted of three phases: Peace I, II and III, and is at present in its third phase, which is ongoing until 2013. Briefly put, the aim of the programme is to work towards a shared future, and to reconcile communities. This research project is an attempt to critically explore how peace

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<sup>1</sup> Protestant celebration in Northern Ireland, commemorating the 1688 victory of William of Orange (Protestant) over James II (Catholic). Perceived by many as a symbolic and provocative assertion of unionism.

and reconciliation is, and has been, approached in Northern Ireland and the border region of the Republic through this Peace programme. It will be undertaken partly through the use of the specific case of Louth, a southern border county, in order to garner more detailed examples, results and insights.

Although the context within which this research was undertaken was marked with several violent events, it is also important to be aware of those events reflective of a will to further the cause of peace. One example of this was the visit of the Queen in May 2011. This visit was unprecedented as it was the first time, since the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, that a reigning British monarch came on an official state visit. The debate that this visit engendered centred on the position of the majority: that this was an historical and hugely positive and symbolic visit for both islands. It also raised questions of to what extent the Irish identity has evolved, how far both nations have come since the Troubles, and what can be hoped for in the future in the relationship between Ireland and Britain. Despite the largely positive reception of the visit, Sinn Féin<sup>2</sup> voiced the opinion that the visit was premature, although no official protest was staged. In an attempt to disrupt the visit, some violent clashes took place on Dublin's streets and bomb scares took place, with both hoax and viable devices, throughout Ireland and in London. This visit and the reaction to it reveals the state of current British-Irish relations, and the legacy and continuation of the conflict, all impacting upon the road to peace for the island.

Part of the significance of this project lies in fact that it is a case of an externally funded peacebuilding programme, whereby both the main donor and beneficiaries are based within Western Europe. This is thus an unusual case of an external - local interaction in the context of peacebuilding, being that it all takes place in a 'developed' and European context. Many

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<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland's main Republican political party.



theoretical arguments criticising post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation revolve around the 'Northern/ Western' versus 'Southern/ Local' axis. An automatic inequality is perceived to exist from the outset of any interaction between these two actors, rendering the peacebuilding action essentially neo-imperialist in nature, and lacking in the necessary context-specific knowledge. The fault is assigned to the neo-liberal post-conflict industry, whereby it is asserted that local ownership of a rebuilding programme is necessary to any success. (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2003, Richmond 2010) With our own case, the same assumption of inequality is not necessarily automatically made, due to the geographical location of both donor and recipient. However, the relationship of donor and local recipient must be questioned, as the extent and nature of local ownership of the programme is of concern.

### Puzzle

The principal and overall objective of this project is to critically assess how peacebuilding is organised, implemented and received, through the Peace programme. The central argument of this thesis is that the Peace programme is flawed in its endeavour to build peace, and is impeded by three elements of the peacebuilding process: the industry of peacebuilding, the politics of peacebuilding, and the elusion of peacebuilding. In order to illustrate this argument, the progression from policy to practice will be explored. By investigating how the programme functions, from its beginnings in policy documentation to its end with participants' feedback, we can work towards identifying the key successes and inconsistencies of the programme. Ultimately, this critical analysis should lead us to broach the question of what direction peacebuilding in this region is going, and if this can be considered the way to peace.

The significance and relevance of the problem of this project lies in its timing. During the research phase of this project, Peace III was drawing to a close, with plans for an extension underway. As it is imagined that this second phase of Peace III will be the final part of the Peace programme as a whole, now is a crucial and opportune time to evaluate the evolution of the Peace programme thus far, in order to explore what has been done, and how peace and reconciliation can be approached in the future, most likely outside of the Peace programme funding framework.

In order to realise our objective, the project is led by the following central question: How does the EU Peace Programme frame and implement peace and reconciliation in the post-conflict setting of the Northern Irish 'Troubles', and how is this construction then received and appropriated in the southern border county of Louth? As has been stated, the way in which I intend to answer this question is by tracing the story of the programme from policy to practice. The framework employed in order to do so comes from John Paul Lederach's theory of an 'integrated framework for peacebuilding'. (1997) Within this framework, he constructs a 'leadership triangle', asserting that there are three main groups of leaders involved in the peacebuilding process, coinciding with three levels of society: the top, middle and grassroots. The structural framework of our narrative reflects this triangle, with each of the three chapters focusing principally upon one level of society. In this way, we can chart the process that leads from policy to practice in a systematic and structured way, along with including the different levels of society involved in the process of peacebuilding.

In order to undertake this critical assessment of the Peace programme and put forth my argument, the three aforementioned themes which emerge throughout the peacebuilding process will be employed as analytic tools in each chapter. Along with demonstrating the ways in which these themes emerge at each stage of the Peace programme's duration, this will facilitate a systematic and strategic review of each stage of this peacebuilding story,

from policy to practice. This will allow for a thematic and coherent analysis of the Peace programme to take place in each chapter. All three themes serve to impact upon the Peace programme's fundamental purpose, and are linked insofar as they reflect self-interest and an inability to either look objectively upon or fully engage with the conflict's main issues. The first of these themes is the 'Industry of Peacebuilding', concerning the ways in which the programme operates as a business, becoming a bureaucratized and professionalized initiative. The second theme is the 'Politics of Peacebuilding', concerning the relations involved as regards power and authority within the programme. The third and final theme pertaining to the programme is the 'Elusion of Peacebuilding'. This denotes the reluctant or evasive nature of the programme, whereby the avoidance of tackling issues pertaining directly to the conflict and its legacy takes place. Therefore, in this instance, what I could *not* find in the programme is of as much importance to what I could unearth. We will see that the first two instalments of the programme, Peace I and Peace II, focus primarily on economic and industrial reconstruction, whilst Peace III in Louth appears to tackle the issue of racism to a greater extent than sectarianism. The significance of this lies in the fact that certain attitudes are potentially perpetuated through this avoidance. We must question the logic behind this elusion and aim to understand it, whilst analysing how it is legitimized within the rhetoric of the programme.

### Methodology

In order to collect the evidence needed to inform the above research puzzle, a multi-faceted research approach has to be taken. This is due to the fact that we are dealing with issues such as peacebuilding policy, organisation and implementation, along with issues of a more subjective nature such as attitudes, concepts of peace and conflict, and perceptions of 'the other'. The methodology is qualitative in nature, and includes data collection methods such as literature research, policy document review, and interview. Firstly, in order to gain

insight as to how peacebuilding and reconciliation are conceptualized and considered in academic theory, an extensive literature review was undertaken. This allowed me to familiarise myself with the principal arguments surrounding post-conflict reconstruction and informed me as to how this project could be theorised and related to other instances of peacebuilding. In addition, it was important to gain an appreciation for the academic thought surrounding the Northern Irish conflict itself and its aftermath, in order to avoid the pitfalls of studying a subject area that is inherently familiar to me. This allowed me to widen my perspective on the conflict and gain practical knowledge as to what has occurred in its aftermath.

In order to learn how the Peace programme originated and was constructed and organised, the Operational Programme documents for Peace I, II, and III were studied in detail. These documents also outline the policy framework and implementation strategy for each stage of the Peace programme, thus permitting an understanding of the evolution of the programme, along with the ambitions and strategies of each stage of the programme. In an attempt to focus in on the specific case of Peace III in Louth, I attended several project events and meetings during which I attempted to build a contact base and familiarise myself with the local Peace 'scene'. In turn, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals involved in the management and organisation of the Peace programme in Louth. These interviews, mainly undertaken with local authorities and members of relevant institutions, allowed me to gain knowledge as to how Peace III functions in Louth.

These interviews also allowed me to become familiar with the various Peace III funded projects operating on the ground in Louth. These three projects were chosen on the basis of similarity of aims and objectives, and accessibility. Having chosen the three case projects, their respective strategic action plans were studied in order to identify their place in Peace III, and identify their strategic objectives and overall vision. In turn, individual semi-

structured interviews were undertaken with each project co-ordinator, in order to gain an appreciation for how the project actually unfolded. Finally, semi-structured interviews, both in individual and focus group form, were undertaken with participants of the projects, in order to gain an understanding as to how each project was received and evaluated by its participants, and therefore its target audience. The information from these interviews was then analysed in order to identify the key successes and failures of each Peace III funded project.

It is important at this point to clarify that Louth is my place of residence, and that my interest in a peacebuilding programme that operates there of course lies partly in its relevance to my own life. As a local resident, I am part of the wider demographic that the Peace programme targets. This is underpinned with the fact that I am a former participant of two projects funded by the programme. My proximity to the area and topic in question brings to the fore issues of objectivity and bias, and questions as to how to define my role as a researcher. The attempt to be completely objective and distance myself entirely from the subject at hand is, quite frankly, impossible. A more realistic approach is to use the prior knowledge I have around this topic area to benefit the project, by taking advantage of my familiarity with the setting of Louth.

It is also important to note that the choice of County Louth as a case study is not only due to its own significance and relevance to me. Studying how peace and reconciliation is approached just south of the border relates to how the conflict and its aftermath has impacted upon this area of the Republic of Ireland. However, in terms of the limitations of this project, Louth's particular situation cannot be considered as representative for all twelve counties involved in the programme, let alone the six counties of the southern border region. In addition, it should be made clear that our three chosen case projects funded within Peace

III in Louth do not reflect the nature of all the funded projects in Louth. This research therefore represents a segment of the programme's workings.

Having outlined the objectives of the project, the structural and analytical framework, and the methodology employed to achieve all of this, we can turn to our chapter outline. In chapter one, the policy of peacebuilding will be tackled, with Lederach's top level leadership being of main focus. This includes those leaders who are visible to the public at large, such as political, religious and military leaders. (1997: 39) In this case, the top leadership therefore corresponds with governing authorities, and international actors such as the European Union (EU). The aim is to explore the policy framework and the underlying assumptions of Peace I, II and III. This will not only set the context of Peace III itself, which is the part of the programme we focus on throughout chapter two and three, but highlight the evolution of the programme as a whole.

Chapter two's focus is on how peacebuilding is organised and implemented in Louth, and thus mainly deals with the middle level leadership. This concerns those leaders who are not as visible as the top leadership, yet are respected in sectors such as academia, religion and smaller organisations and institutions. The intention is to familiarise ourselves with the Louth peace plan, whilst setting the scene for our next chapter. In chapter three, we look at the grassroots level of leadership, exploring how Peace III funded projects operate on the ground and how they are received and (re) appropriated by those they aim to target. Within the conflict resolution field, the argument is made that the idea that post conflict peacebuilding must empower communities, in order to build peace from below, so that cultures of violence can be eroded. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, 2005: 215) We this chapter, we can assess the nature of grassroots participation and bottom-up peacebuilding. Finally, each chapter will conclude with an analysis of how the three themes of peacebuilding have emerged and impacted upon the peacebuilding process.

## Chapter 1: Policy of Peacebuilding.

### Peace I

#### General Context

Peace I, the first phase of the EU Peace and Reconciliation Fund in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland, was agreed upon in December of 1994, and established in July 1995, running until 1999. It came at a key moment in the Troubles, as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and loyalist paramilitaries had shortly beforehand announced a ceasefire, in August 1994. The programme can therefore be considered a strategic move on the part of the EU, in order to 'strike while the iron was hot'. Following the ceasefire, framework documents were written in early 1995, demonstrating an effort on the part of both the British and Irish governments to come to a peaceful agreement. Later that year Peace I was set in motion. However, the ceasefire came to an end in February 1996, with complaints from Sinn Féin that Ireland's rights were not being attended to, and that they were being excluded from talks. This disruption to peace was marked with the Canary Wharf bombing in London. (Hennessy, 2001)

Violence continued to be perpetrated on both sides, along with demonstrations for peace by the general public. The IRA renewed their ceasefire in July of 1997, following calls from British and Irish governments, and with the promise that they would be included in talks. Throughout the next year intense talks were coordinated, with the view to reaching an agreement. This finally came in the form of the Belfast Agreement, which was reached on Good Friday, the tenth of April, 1998. Some would argue that the agreement marked the beginning of the peace process in Northern Ireland, whilst others claim it began with the 1994 ceasefire. In any case, its significance as a marker of peace was somewhat blighted by the Omagh bombing, taking place only four months later. This is considered to be one of the

worst, and most tragic, events of the Troubles. Despite this tragedy, the 'Good Friday Agreement' came into force in December 1999, as Peace I came to an end.

### The Programme

#### 1. Construction:

Having been informed of the context within which Peace I was both constructed and actually unfolded, we can now turn to the process by which the programme originated and was designed. A report (1997) from the European Commission (EC) to other European institutions gives details of the origins and ambitions of the programme, and communicates the intention to provide additional funding for the programme to continue until 1999. €500 million was allocated to the programme from 1995 to 1997 with the following conditions: eighty per cent would be assigned to the six counties of Northern Ireland, twenty per cent would be assigned to the six southern border counties of the Republic of Ireland, and fifteen per cent of all activities would be of a cross-border nature. (1997: 4) The programme was prepared by the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom, and then approved by the EC. (1997: 4) In this EC report, the rationale behind EU involvement is clarified with the statement that "the European Union has a clear interest and vital role to play in maintaining the momentum for peace and reconciliation, not only for the benefit of the region most affected, but also for the wider benefit of the European Union as a whole." (1997: 4) The beneficial role of the EU is stressed once again with the assertion that the EU acts as a neutral actor in this situation and serves as a good example, due to its own experience and journey in becoming an inclusive and integrative body. (1997: 9)

The most extensive document for Peace I, entitled the *Special support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland 1995-1999* (1994), lays out the background of the programme, its aims and objectives, and details of its implementation. It



is therefore the principal primary source used to analyse the details of the programme. The construction of the programme's policy framework and priorities began with consultation exercises undertaken by the EC. (1994: 13) This was followed with a process of consultation in Northern Ireland, culminating in a conference taking place in March 1995. What should be taken note of in regards to this conference is the divergence amongst those in attendance as to what the general approach of the programme should be. On one side, the view was that the regeneration of the economy should be the first matter at hand, as its improvement would pave the way to peace. On the other side, the view was that social inclusion was the most pressing need, and should be directly targeted. (1994: 16) This disagreement demonstrates the contention revolving around the efficacy of an economic or socio-psychological approach to peacebuilding.

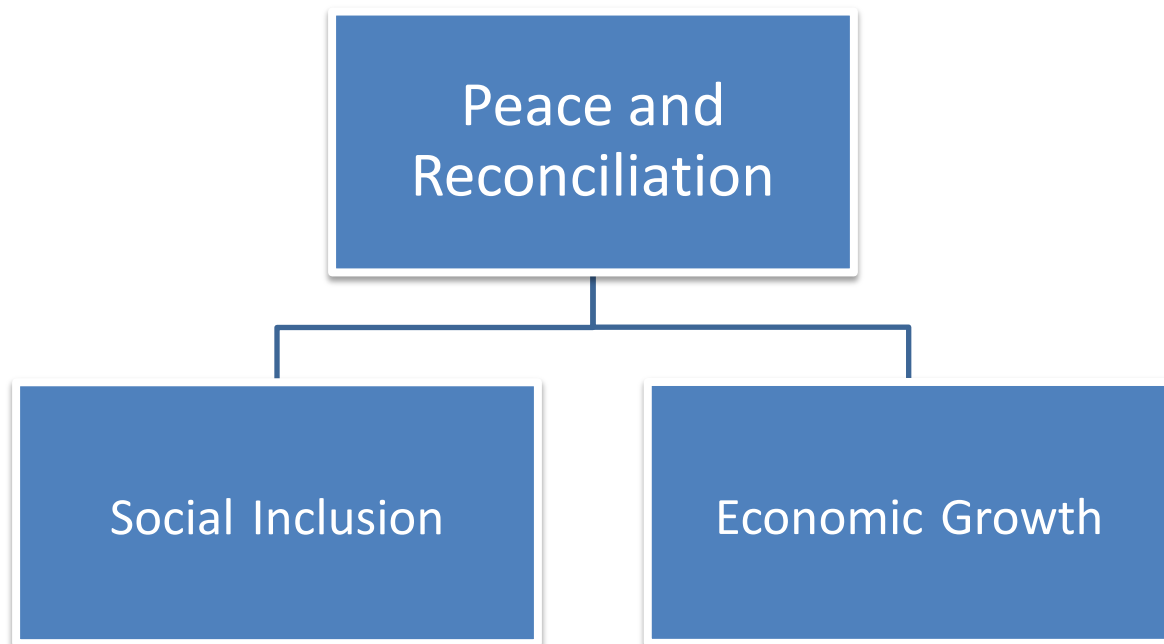
Consultation is emphasised as an important feature of the programme in the EC report (1997), as these preliminary consultation exercises were further bolstered with the establishment of a consultative forum "composed of representatives of a very wide range of interests in the eligible areas." (1997: 6) The elements of local involvement in the programme are emphasised once again when it is described as a programme that facilitates a bottom-up approach, with grass-roots involvement. It gives responsibility to those 'on the ground' who have previously been left out, and thus fosters local co-operation and civil society involvement. (1997: 9) These statements quite clearly reflect the desire to communicate the extent of local ownership and representation throughout the Peace I programme.

## 2. Policy framework:

The strategic aim of the programme is "to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society, and to promote reconciliation by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban and rural regeneration, developing cross-border cooperation

and extending social inclusion.” (1994: 32) Two strategic objectives are articulated. The first is to “promote the social inclusion of those at the margins of economic and social life”, whilst the second is “to exploit the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process, in order to boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration.” (1994: 32) Finally, the five priorities stemming from this are as follows: to boost economic growth and employment, to improve the social and physical environment, cross-border development, the encouragement of social inclusion, and the enhancement of facilities to promote investment. (1994: 13) When looking at the figures for the programme, we can see that thirty percent of the EU funding was dedicated to promoting social inclusion, whereas fifteen percent was assigned to cross-border development. (1994: 33)

**Figure 1: Peace I framework.**



### 3. Implementation:

The implementation of these policy choices is described in the European Commission report (1997) as being undertaken through decentralised delivery mechanisms. These mechanisms operate through three channels: government departments, who handle forty three per cent of the funding, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Intermediary Funding Bodies (IFB), who handle forty per cent of the aid, and area-based bodies such as district partnerships (Northern Ireland) or county council led task forces (Republic of Ireland), who take care of seventeen per cent. (1997: 6) It is interesting to note that the sole channel specifically representing local interests has the least funding at their disposal. A Monitoring Committee oversees the programme in general, and is assigned the task of working with the aforementioned consultative forum in conducting the mid-term evaluation and review of Peace I. (1997: 10)

## **Peace II**

### General Context

The second phase of the Peace and Reconciliation Fund, Peace II, came into being in 2000, ending in 2006. The Belfast Agreement came into force just before the programme's beginnings in December of 1999. In terms of how the agreement impacted on society, one could argue that the mindset of the people had the opportunity to evolve. For the first time, an official and strategic attempt to build peace, agreed by all parties, was in place. New institutions were established, such as the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) and the Northern Ireland Executive, in keeping with the process of devolution. It marked a turning point, demonstrating to what extent politicians were interested in making peace, in a very visible manner to the population at large. This was solidified through referendum, whereby 71.1% of the Northern Irish population and 94.4% of the Irish population voted in its favour. (Albert, 2008: 51)

Although it is not within the parameters of this section to profoundly analyse the agreement's tenets and impact, it is essential to underline certain aspects of it, in particular the provisions which could affect how future peacebuilding would function. Firstly, the early release of paramilitary prisoners was provided for. This led to the emergence of a new minority group in (Northern) Irish society, potentially at risk of being discriminated against and excluded from mainstream society. Secondly, a North - South Ministerial Council and associated implementation bodies were set up, in order to ensure cross-border cooperation on issues affecting both jurisdictions. (Albert, 2008)

In the years that followed the implementation of the agreement's provisions, whilst Peace II was in operation, stability was continuously threatened. Problems principally revolved around the issue of decommissioning, as paramilitary groups refused to entirely decommission their weapons, despite the deadline of May 2000 to do so. Finally, at the point whereby the peace process was perhaps at its most fragile stage, disarmament began in August 2001, continuing until 2005. (Melaugh, 2006) A further sign of the IRA's commitment to the peace process came in the form of an official announcement in July 2005 of the end of their violent campaign. Meanwhile, as time wore on, the changing opinion of the public towards the Belfast Agreement is made clear, when we take into account that only 56% of the Northern Irish population held support for it in 2002. In keeping with the stalemate and worsening relations in parliament, a review of the agreement was opened in 2004, with parts of it subsequently changed in 2006. (Albert, 2008: 52)

### The Programme

#### 1. Construction:

Peace II's principal policy document, known as the *EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland 2000-2004 Operational Programme* (2001),

outlines the strategic objectives and implementation methods of the second phase of the EU Peace and Reconciliation fund. The construction of the programme was largely informed by an evaluation of Peace I. Problems which arose throughout Peace I are discussed, demonstrating an effort to actively assess and learn from past experience, in order to design the subsequent instalment of the programme. Constructing Peace II upon the basis of a Peace I evaluation could suggest a realisation on the part of policy makers that improvements had to be made.

One of the main issues emerging from this evaluation is the complex nature of the programme's implementation structures. There was reportedly a high level of confusion on the behalf of funding bodies, as they were unclear as to their own specific role and responsibility. This was in part due to the amount of implementation mechanisms and lack of co-ordination and communication with other structural funds programmes. This confusion was also due to the little public information available on what kind of projects could be funded, and by whom. (2001: 16) In addition, it seems that a simple absence of experience and planning was an issue throughout Peace I. This led to a lack of foresight in terms of the time it would take to set up the administration needed, and a lack of understanding as to the complexity of the funding process. Finally, it proved difficult to engage with socially excluded groups, due to lack of planning for the required capacity building training for many of these groups. (2001: 16)

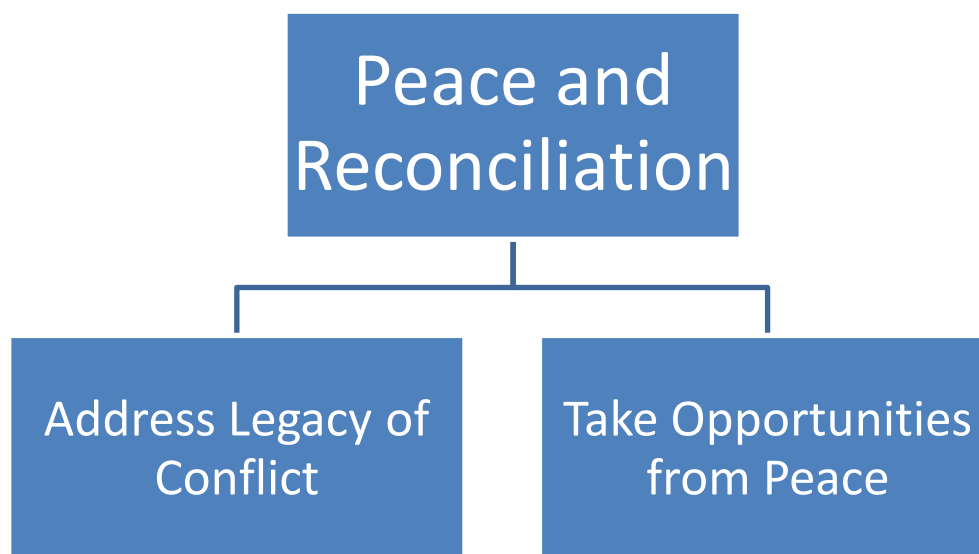
## 2. Policy framework:

Peace II's strategic aim, much like its predecessor, is "to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation." (2001: 30) The two principal objectives to the programme are to "address the legacy of the conflict", and to "take opportunities arising from peace". (2011: 31) As we can see, the former objective differs from

Peace I, insofar that the matter at hand is longer the conflict, but what it has left behind. Peace II approaches its target area as one that is in a post-conflict context. Two approaches are defined, in order to fulfil these aims and objectives. The first is to support bottom-up cross-border structures for the programme, whilst the second is to support co-operation between projects, so that there is a higher level of contact between communities. (2001: 31)

Similar to Peace I, five priorities are identified for the programme, which do not differ significantly from the priorities of Peace I. By looking at the breakdown of funding by priority, we can see that 'economic renewal' is the highest priority, with 32.1 per cent of funding, whilst a 'forward and outward looking region' is of lowest priority, in receipt of 5.2 per cent. (2001: 44)

**Figure 2: Peace II framework.**



### 3. Implementation:

The implementation of these strategic aims and objectives is undertaken, like in Peace I, through three channels: government departments, NGOs and IFBs, and area-based bodies. In terms of how much funding each channel manages, 39.2 per cent is assigned to

government departments, thirty four per cent to NGOs and IFBs, and 19.8 per cent to area-based bodies. (2001: 44) This shows little change from Peace I in terms of the relative responsibility of each channel involved in implementation. However, how the area-based bodies function changes as it will now be managed by the regional structures of Regional Partnership Board in Northern Ireland and the Border Region Authority in the Republic. (2001: 49) The former contains members from Northern Irish government, whilst the latter contains an EU co-ordinating committee, which in part represents the EC. (2001: 50) During Peace I it was these authorities' role to select and monitor those projects which would be funded. This changes in Peace II, with former Peace I district partnerships (Northern Ireland) becoming 'local strategy partnerships'. The newly assigned role to these local strategy partnerships is to select and fund projects, in keeping and consistent with the Peace II operational programme. (2001: 46)

These local strategy partnerships answer to the monitoring committee and the newly established managing authority: the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB). The formation of the SEUPB is another aspect of the Peace II implementation strategy that is distinct from Peace I. Seven per cent of all funding is allocated to it, in order to provide technical assistance and work on cross-border co-operation. (2001: 44) The SEUPB manages cross-border EU structural funds programmes and serves to certify expenditure claims to the EC, control the cash flow of the programme, oversee the implementation of the operational programmes, and guide the work of the monitoring committee. (SEUPB) It thus does not decide who receives funding, but manages and acts as the go-between, also providing a link between local actors and the EU funding.

### **Peace III**

#### General Context

The current phase of the Peace programme, Peace III, came into being in 2007 and will continue, with an extension, until 2013. Most reference to the 'peace process' and the Troubles itself seems to end by this point. This is most likely due to the fact that a government was formed by the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin in 2007. It thus appeared that the island was heralding in a new peaceful age. Taking this into account, we must be aware of the fact that this third phase of the Peace programme unfolded in what is considered a post-conflict, post-peace process setting. The economic state of the island and its impact on the mindset of the people must also be taken into account. Many argue that the economic downturn and significant rise in unemployment has led to a rise in young people susceptible to recruitment into violent organisations, resulting in a rise of violence in recent years. This has included the killing of two British soldiers in 2009, a car bomb in Newry city in 2010, and the murder of a Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) officer in 2011. Dissident Republicans are being blamed for all three events.

### The Programme

#### 1. Construction:

The Peace III *Operational Programme* (SEUPB) is our main source outlining the vision and plan for the programme. It outlines a policy framework decided upon by the Northern Ireland executive, the Irish government and the European Commission. (NIA, 2010) The construction of this phase of the Peace programme has been informed by an evaluation of the last phase. This evaluation gave details of several issues that came to light throughout Peace II. Firstly, it is argued that too much was expected from the programme, and that too high a sense of optimism surrounded its implementation, based upon the assumption that it would support ongoing political and social developments. The expectations for this phase of the programme are lowered when it is stated that the programme "is only one element or



strand amongst various initiatives” (SEUPB: 28) In keeping with this, the assertion is made that stronger strategic links must be made between the programme and other peacebuilding initiatives, in order that the Peace III has a more well defined and clarified place within the wider peacebuilding process. (SEUPB: 28)

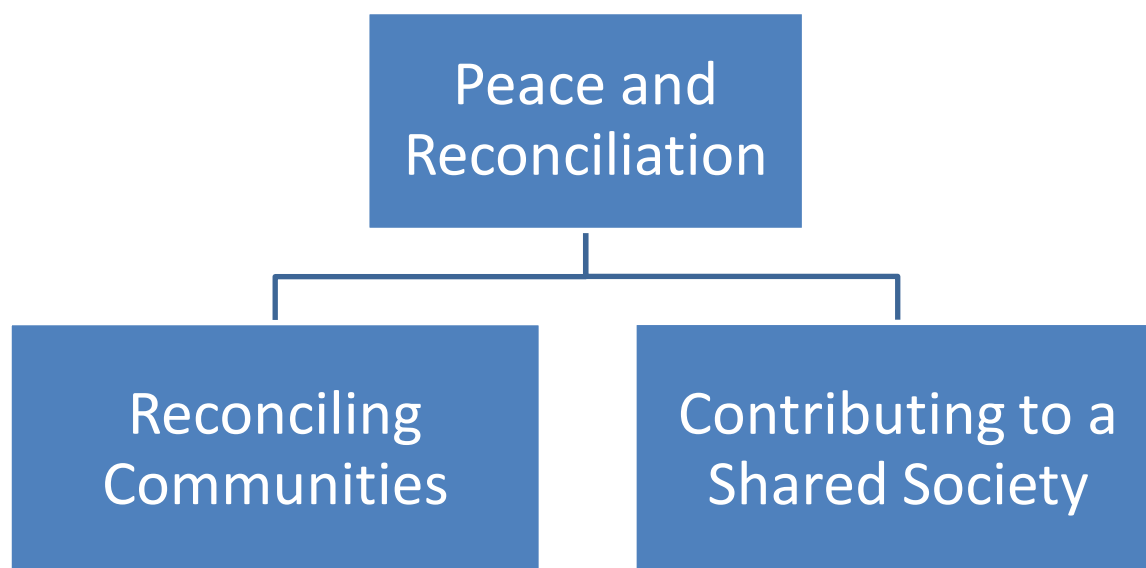
The complexity of the implementation process of Peace I was highlighted in its evaluation, resulting in changes to be made for the ways in which Peace II would be delivered. However, the Peace II evaluation shows that a confusing bureaucracy persisted, with fifty six implementing bodies and ten horizontal principles guiding the programme. In an aim to target this, the number of measures, implementing bodies and horizontal principles was reduced in the Peace II extension period. (SEUPB: 29) In addition to this, a working definition for reconciliation was introduced in extension phase of Peace II, in order to clarify what reconciliation actually means and how to foster it. This was designed by Hamber and Kelly, and involves five strands: developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society, acknowledging and dealing with the past, building positive relationships, cultural and attitudinal change, and social, economic, and political change. (SEUPB: 29) We will see that these strands helped to guide the strategic policy framework for Peace III. The introduction of this definition reflects the underlying ambition to orientate Peace III more towards relationships. It is claimed in the Peace III operational programme literature that this led to the funding of projects which had a “greater emphasis on peace building.” (SEUPB: 29) We could therefore question what exactly was being built up until this point.

## 2. Policy Framework:

The overall aim of Peace III is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation. (SEUPB: 52) The first priority (priority 1) is ‘reconciling communities’. Within this, building positive relationships (theme 1.1) and acknowledging

and dealing with the past (theme 1.2) are the more specific objectives. (SEUPB: 52) The second priority (priority 2) is 'contributing to a shared society', whereby creating shared public spaces (theme 2.1) and developing institutional capacities for a shared society (theme 2.2) are the key areas. (SEUPB: 59) From these aims and objectives, five cross-cutting themes are thus identified: cross-border co-operation, equality of opportunity, sustainable development, impact on poverty and partnership. For the first time in the Peace programmes' operational programme literature, racism is defined as an issue in need of attention within the Peace III programme. To this end, on almost every occasion that the ambition to target sectarianism is mentioned, racism sits alongside it. Peace III's target groups thus include those who are affected by racism and it is defined explicitly as an issue that will be targeted within priority 1: theme 1.1 and priority 2: theme 2.1 and 2.2. (SEUPB: 52-60)

**Figure 3: Peace III framework.**



### 3. Implementation:

This policy framework is supported by a newly reformulated implementation structure that emerged for Peace III. The SEUPB continues to act as managing authority for the programme, in keeping with its role throughout Peace II. In addition to this, two further directorates are put in place within the SEUPB. The first of these, the Joint Technical Secretariat Directorate, takes care of the financial control of projects and the support of projects through tasks such as assessment and contract issuing. (SEUPB: 78) The second directorate, the Corporate Services Directorate, includes a programme finance unit and a certifying authority unit. The function of this directorate, simply put, is to manage expenditure. (SEUPB: 77) This already complex and intricate set-up is further complicated when we consider that each of these directorates function independently, despite being within the SEUPB. In order for this to work, financial services are provided from one to the other through yet another body; the Programme Finance Unit. (SEUPB: 78) Finally, it is stated that the SEUPB works in close contact with government departments, who are ultimately accountable for expenditure. (SEUPB: 75)

A monitoring committee continues to function in Peace III, with membership from groups such as the SEUPB, government departments, trade unions, those from the community and voluntary sector, with the EU Commission acting in an advisory capacity. (SEUPB: 80) Its main role is to review the progress of the programme and the results of the implementation, allowing them to propose to the SEUPB any revisions of the operational programme that are deemed suitable to make. (SEUPB: 81) The monitoring committee in turn delegates responsibility for the selection of suitable operations for funding to another body, the steering committee, which works on a cross-border basis. (SEUPB: 81)

In addition to these changes in implementation structures, the way in which monitoring and evaluation is carried out also changes in Peace III. The difficulties of evaluating and monitoring peacebuilding are put forth in the operational programme documentation, seen

in part due to the often intangible nature of peacebuilding outcomes. It is thus made clear that the existing framework for Peace II is in need of improvement in order to tackle this difficulty. (SEUPB: 30) To order to do this, the Peace II monitoring committee employed independent consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) with the task of developing a new monitoring and evaluative framework for the programme. (SEUPB: 83) From the documentation on PwC's research (2007), we can see that the new methodological approach put in place for Peace III is the Aid for Peace approach. This approach focuses on assessing the needs of the region, and then designs the intervention's objectives and activities accordingly. It is deemed the most comprehensive by PwC in their analysis, and has been promoted by the EC, due to its input-output/result chain approach to evaluation. (2007: 44) Described as 'third-generation' Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, this approach has four stages: Peacebuilding needs analysis, peacebuilding relevance assessment, conflict risk assessment, and peace and conflict effects assessment. (2007: 44)

The attempt within Peace III is to thus operationalise the Aid for Peace approach and integrate it into the programme's planning, monitoring and evaluation stages. (2009: 4) In the information documentation provided for projects by the SEUPB as regards this evaluative methodology, it is stated that each project leader will be educated in this method by a facilitator. (SEUPB: 2) However, in an interview with a former project appraisal officer for the Peace programme, it emerged that, in the view of the interviewee, the resources and training were not put in place in order to facilitate the implementation of the approach.<sup>3</sup> How evaluations took place within our case study projects will be discussed in our third chapter.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Project Appraisal Officer, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

## Analysis

### Industry of Peacebuilding

Several issues have emerged throughout this outline of each phase of the Peace programme, which suggest the bureaucratised and professionalised nature of the initiative. In the Peace II operational programme documentation the implementation system put in place for the programme is described as an “innovative combination of implementing structures” which “embedded an inclusive, cross-border, and ‘bottom-up’ decision-making which has been one of the most distinctive features of the Peace I programme.” (SEUPB: 42) However, having discussed the way in which the programme has been implemented it has become clear that an extremely complex bureaucracy is in place managing and overseeing the programme. The problems that this caused were identified during the construction of Peace II and II, leading to an overhaul of a new implementation structure for each phase of the programme, with the aim to simplify how it operates. However, it is quite clear that Peace III continues to be executed in a very complex way. In terms of why this might be, we must question if the highly bureaucratic nature of the programme is a way to integrate the programme into as many institutions and bodies as possible, making a broad spectrum of people feel like they have a role and stake in peacebuilding. In terms of the effects of this, it is difficult to ascertain who exactly has the most power and responsibility in the programme, being that every decision is filtered through different institutions. In addition, the intricate system put in place does not entice smaller and less experienced groups to apply for funding.

This issue of the bureaucratisation of peacebuilding is one that has been discussed by authors such as Goetschel and Hagmann (2009) who argue that peacebuilding has become a bureaucratised process, enlisting a wide array of actors and projects. This leads to the

establishment of a peacebuilding agenda, built upon one resounding consensus which remains unchallenged. They thus refer to government-sponsored civilian peacebuilding and its project management rationale as 'peace by bureaucratic means'. (2009: 56) They also argue that peacebuilding has become professionalised, as experts in development and in the region in question are recruited to consult upon peacebuilding initiatives. (2009: 59) This is reflected in our own case, whereby the independent external consultancy firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, were employed in order to develop an evaluation and monitoring framework for Peace III. Although it can be argued that these are the people best suited to most efficiently and expertly undertake the task, it speaks to the industry of peacebuilding that Goetschel and Hagmann critique, whereby bureaucratic endeavours lead to top-down form of peacebuilding. One implication of this is that the definition of peace does not involve the say of those actors who are intended as the target of the peacebuilding exercise. (2009: 57)

### Politics of Peacebuilding

Understanding the politics involved in this peacebuilding story is important in order to ascertain the nature of the roles of both external and internal actors. The exact role and level of control that the EU and its associated bodies play in the programme can be difficult to ascertain, due to the high level of bureaucracy and the intricate system of accountability involved. However, it does emerge that there are three main authorities involved in the design of the peacebuilding initiative and the construction of the programme's policies: the EU, the governments of Ireland, and the United Kingdom. Aside from this, it could be considered that they play a donor role, and serve as an external body providing funding for internal actors to choose how to spend it. However, in a NIA report (2010) addressing SEUPB's ongoing role in relation to Peace III, it is stated that any changes to policy can only be initiated by the Irish government and the Northern Ireland Executive, with the agreement

of the EC. (NIA, 2010) Therefore, it could be argued that the EC have the final say in terms of the policy of the programme. In addition to this, we can decipher the EU's specific role from the literature surrounding Peace I, such as the EC report. (1997) In this, we see that the EU's role is seen as one of a superior actor which has overcome conflict and adversity. It is thus made known that the EU has something to teach the governments and people of the island of Ireland in their quest to achieve peace.

The top-down manner of the programme's construction is perhaps countered an emphasis upon local and internal consultation in Peace I's construction and operation, in the EC report (1997) and the operational programme. This demonstrates the will to communicate the level of local ownership and participation involved in the making of the programme. With Peace II, the evolution of how the locally-based delivery mechanism operates reflects the ambition to give more power and assign more autonomy to local authorities in constructing and implementing their own peace plan. This could be seen as a positive development, as it allows for a more context-specific plan to be made for each county. However, when we attempt to delve into and assess the complex hierarchy of Peace II, we see that these newly reformulated local systems answer to regional structures, which contain government representatives and an EU co-ordinating committee, representing the EC. This reminds us that what we may perceive as a high level of local autonomy on the surface is perhaps an illusion, concealed in a complex chain of authority which ultimately leads to the EU.

### Elusion of Peacebuilding

Our discussion of the details of each instalment of the programme demonstrates how certain policy choices in the programme do not address the central cleavage of the conflict: the dysfunctional relationship between the two biggest communities of Northern Irish society. According to the Peace I operational programme (1994), its two main objectives are to aid

those who are socially excluded, and rebuild the economy. The importance of the latter is highlighted with the assertion that the end of the violence and everyday disruptions presents an opportune moment for the economy, which could not have existed before this point. (1994: 25) Both these aims, although arguably important to a well-functioning society, do not specifically address the master cleavage of the conflict. There is very little explicit mention of the importance of building relationships and cross-community contact in this documentation. In keeping with this, Harvey, Kelly et al's study on the Irish border puts forth the criticism that Peace I became a reinvestment programme, focusing too much upon the economic and industrial infrastructure of the region. It is argued that although this was much needed in the region, it should not be in the remit of a programme aiming to build peace. (2005: 129)

The approach of Peace I therefore seems to be built upon the assumption that peace is built when certain tangible grievances and needs are addressed. This is in keeping with the human needs approach in conflict theory, whereby conflict is seen to emerge if people are deprived of their needs, based upon their communal identity. (Demmers) The significance of need deprivation is at the core of Azar's theory of protracted social conflict (PSC), whereby he describes PSC as the "prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation." (Azar 1991: 93 in Demmers) It could therefore be argued that Azar's vision of peacebuilding would revolve around addressing these needs, and focusing on issues such as economic development, as Peace I sets out to do.

It could also be argued that Peace I was an exercise in state-building, as opposed to or along with peacebuilding. The former is defined by Call and Cousens (2007) as "actions undertaken by international or national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen the institutions of the state which may or may not contribute to peacebuilding." (2007: 3) This



definition is predicated upon the idea that peacebuilding and state-building are inter-linked, and that one may help the other. The authors thus argue that both should be applied so that they have a complementary relationship. (2007: 7) In terms of how exactly a focus on economic growth relates to this definition of state-building, there are two main links. First of all, using resources to promote economic opportunities and stimulate growth builds trust in state institutions. In addition, working on building up a positive image of the region for foreign investors reflects well on the state itself.

Peace II's strategic objectives, concerned with dealing with the legacy of the conflict and taking opportunities arising from peace, could be said to be more in line with addressing the conflict than Peace I was. The two approaches outlined in order to fulfil these objectives are cross-border structures and co-operation between projects, which facilitate and prioritise the importance of building of relationships and cross-community co-operation. Despite this, the priority concerning economic renewal receives the most funding, reflecting the ever-present concern with revitalising regional industry and commerce. In the latter stages of Peace II, we have seen that a working definition for reconciliation emerged. The fact that it took up until this stage to clarify reconciliation demonstrates that it was not a central preoccupation throughout Peace I and II.

The introduction of the specific issue of racism into the Peace III policy framework is one of the most notable departures from Peace I and II. Up until Peace III, sectarianism was considered as the sole problem impacting upon relationships, in a society that was seen largely as bipolar in nature. With the changing nature of the island's population, and the estimate that by 2030 ethnic diversity could be up to 18 per cent in Ireland, racism has become a crucial element of the national agenda, and thus a part of the Peace III operational strategy. (SEUPB: 17) The preoccupation with racism is thus in keeping with figures demonstrating that racially-motivated violence is on the increase, which has been reflected

in recent policy developments on the island, with a Racial Equality Strategy emerging in Northern Ireland, and a National Action Plan Against Racism emerging in the Republic of Ireland. (SEUPB: 17)

In the operational programme documentation for Peace III, racism is put forth as a problem intrinsically connected to and shaped by sectarianism and the conflict, pointing to and reflecting a “culture of intolerance and violence” which revolves around territoriality and suspicion towards the other. (SEUPB: 36) The legitimisation of the new focus on racism in Peace III is thus achieved by connecting it to the legacy of the conflict on Northern Irish society. It is seen as a problem which is bolstered by the specific nature of the conflict and those fractured social relationships which bolster it. Several studies have attempted to address this racism / sectarianism interface. One such study took the shape of a conference held in Dublin in 1998, whereby the issues pertaining to a multi-ethnic Ireland were in question. During this conference, McVeigh, in his attempt to address the impact of the sectarian division on multi-ethnicity in Ireland, put forth two examples reflecting the two strands of argument which address this question. The first of these examples is the view propagated in the Belfast Agreement, whereby ethnicity is seen to concern only ethnic minorities, meaning that sectarianism and racism are viewed as separate issues. The other, put forth for example by Robert Moore in 1972, is that the Northern Irish conflict is a race-based one, indicating that this instance of sectarianism is a form of racism. McVeigh’s own argument aligns more with the latter example, as he claims that Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland are divided in terms of ethnicity, which means that sectarianism and multi-ethnicity cannot be distinguished from one another. (McVeigh, 1998: 16) He claims that we must stop understanding the division between sectarianism and racism solely in terms of religion, as this leaves out the many secular dimensions to the sectarian conflict, rooted in nationalist ideology and ethnic identity. (1998: 19)

In a second study (2007) exploring the sectarianism / racism interface, the argument that sectarianism is a form of racism is undertaken through an analysis of the origins of sectarianism in Northern Ireland. This investigation asserts that Northern Ireland was established as a sectarian state by the colonial power, bolstered with a sectarian power structure and a racial ideology. The coloniser used religion as its racial delineator, due the fact that it was the most dominant signifier of difference between the two main communities. (McVeigh and Rolston, 2007: 3) This colonial element to the story is important when we attempt to understand why the term racism is so rarely used to describe the relationship between Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants. McVeigh and Rolston make the claim that racism was not seen as applicable in this specific context, as, unusually for its time, both the colonisers and the colonised were of the same colour. (2007: 4) This reminds us of the crucial role that perceptions of race and ethnicity play, in the analysis of this interface. It also points to the unusual nature of this case, when compared with other instances of British imperialism. The coloniser could not assert its superiority along the lines of colour or language, as in other colonial situations, so it turned to the other significant marker of difference: religion.

Having discussed the academic debate upon the relationship between sectarianism and racism, we can better analyse how it is perceived within Peace III, through the operational programme. First of all, both issues are seen as ones that can be tackled simultaneously, in the same manner, and with the same approach. This is demonstrated in the policy framework and programme priorities. The two are connected once again when racism is related to the aftermath of sectarian conflict. This would suggest that they are seen as a form of one another, supporting the academic arguments which equate the two that have been outlined above. However, this does not seem to be the case, as the interface between the two is discussed solely in terms of how the post-conflict context has facilitated the growth of

racism. Therefore, racism is considered to affect certain groups of people, such as ethnic minorities, whilst sectarianism affects other groups, such as Catholics and Protestants. It is important to stress at this point that this emic perspective will be employed in our future analyses, as regards tackling sectarianism and racism, although it is not the view of the author.

It could thus be argued that the Peace III perception of racism is based upon the predication that it affects only those who are 'foreign' or are of a different colour than the majority. This argument is strengthened when we consider that the Irish travelling community<sup>4</sup> is not even mentioned in the Peace III literature, despite the fact that it is defined as a minority ethnic group in Northern Ireland. The crux of the matter therefore is this: Peace III does not fully subscribe to either argument concerning racism and sectarianism. Although they are framed as mutually exclusive forms of prejudice, they are approached as if they are forms of each other. Ultimately, this means that the approach of the programme is based upon the assumption that teaching people to not discriminate specifically against their Nigerian neighbour will open their minds to the prejudice they hold for their Catholic or Protestant one. In the context of Northern Ireland whereby a lengthy protracted conflict is in part based upon the rivalry between both religious groups, we must question the viability and validity of this approach.

### **Conclusion**

Having outlined the construction, policy framework, and implementation strategies of the Peace programme, we see that it is a peacebuilding initiative which has evolved over its lifespan, which spans almost two decades. The priorities of the programme, and the way in

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<sup>4</sup> An indigenous and traditionally nomadic minority group, with their own language, culture and traditions, separate from the 'settled' Irish community. Considered an ethnic minority group in Northern Ireland, but a social group in the Republic of Ireland.

which these priorities are implemented and evaluated, reflect this evolution. As it is a programme that is future-oriented, unfolding in what we have termed a 'post-conflict, post-peace process' period, its approach is therefore one that is geared towards long-term generational change. It is unfolding in a context whereby the results of its two previous instalments should be emerging and impacting. However, Northern Ireland is still very much a segregated region, both in terms of physical realities and ideological leanings. This demonstrates the ever-present problems of discriminatory attitudes, and an unwillingness to work in an inclusive manner. We have demonstrated how the industry, politics, and elusion of peacebuilding emerge at the policy stage of peacebuilding, obstructing its path to building peace. The discussion that this chapter has engendered has informed us of the general vision of Peace III, thus allowing us to move on to our next chapter, where we can observe how it is translated or implanted in a local setting.

## Chapter 2: Organisation of Peacebuilding.

### Profile of Louth

In order to investigate how peacebuilding operates in the localised setting of county Louth, it is firstly necessary to construct a general profile and image of the area we are dealing with. County Louth, the smallest county in Ireland, is one of the Republic of Ireland's thirty two counties, with its northern boundaries corresponding with the line of the border (drawn in 1921) that separates the Republic and Northern Ireland. Its position between the cities of Belfast and Dublin make it an attractive area in which to settle. It has two main urban centres: Dundalk, the administrative capital in the north of the county, and Drogheda in the south. The 2006 census shows the population of the county to be 111,267, of which approximately eighty nine per cent of people are Catholic. In 2002, the unemployment rate was found to be at 13.2 per cent, just above the national average of 8.8 per cent. (SIU, 2004: 9)

It is important to examine more profoundly the demographic make-up of Louth, in order to get to grips with the nature of this specific Peace III target population. The Social Inclusion Unit's (SIU) *Social Profile of Co. Louth* (2004), although built upon the findings of the less recent 2002 census, is a useful source when painting this societal picture of Louth. As the SIU works within the Louth local authorities offices, we can gain understanding as to what local authorities deem most problematic when it comes to social inclusion. The profile's purpose is to investigate issues specific to society in Louth, which could lead to social exclusion and marginalisation. The profile is structured in such a way that individual groups, seen as vulnerable to discrimination and marginalisation, are profiled. One such group is asylum seekers and refugees. It is stated that there were 858 asylum seekers in Louth as of April 2004, the majority of whom were from Nigeria. (2004: 32) In keeping with this, Sarah Mallon's research (2010) on institutional racism and sectarianism highlights the

fact that approximately fifteen per cent of Louth's population is foreign born. In addition, it is shown that Louth has highest proportion of black or black Irish ethnicity in Ireland: 2.2 per cent compared to national average of 1.1 per cent. (2010: 10)

The Irish travelling community is a group to which the SIU also assign attention to, in their social profile of Louth. As was mentioned in our first chapter, this group is recognised under British law, and therefore within Northern Ireland, as an ethnic group, whilst in the Republic of Ireland it is, in the eyes of the law, a 'social group.' This allows not only for discrepancies between how the group is treated in both jurisdictions, but means that discrimination towards them is rarely understood or colloquially labelled as racism. According to the SIU profile, 4.3 per cent of Traveller families throughout Ireland reside in County Louth. (2004: 60) It emphasises that what is of utmost importance when constructing social inclusion policy is to recognise the cultural differences of Travellers as a group.

From this brief overview of the nature of Louth's population, we can deduce that this is a diverse and multi-cultural county, particularly when compared with national averages. Although informative and relatively thorough, the SIU profile offers no statistics as to what extent racism and sectarianism are reported to be problems in County Louth. This reflects the lack of a criminal reporting system in place. The term 'racism' is not used when dealing with discrimination against Travellers in this report, reflecting the national reluctance to connect the two. As the term 'sectarianism' is not appropriate, we must question within which of the two principal forms of discrimination highlighted in Peace III this minority group falls. In addition, although the report is structured in such a way that groups in any way perceived to be outside 'mainstream' society are identified, no religious minorities are mentioned. As this profile comes from a unit with the local authorities, it perhaps also goes

some way to explaining why the term 'religious sectarianism' is one that lacks clear definition and incites confusion.

### Impact of the conflict

The area within which the EU Peace and Reconciliation Fund operates is the six counties of Northern Ireland and six southern border counties of the Republic of Ireland, including Louth. The choice to include the southern border area demonstrates the extent to which the conflict is seen to have impacted upon the area outside Northern Ireland's legal boundaries. One perspective could be that the conflict simply 'spilled over' into the Republic, whilst others would argue that the border area was an active area in its own right, with its own particular role in the conflict. Understanding the role of the border in Louth is important, as it marks the point of contact with the region of conflict. Newman and Passi (1998) argue that boundaries like borders both separate and act as lines of contact between communities. (1998: 194) The Irish border therefore marks the point where the population of the southern border area connected with the conflict. Their relationship with the conflict was delineated and acted out on this border. The border became an area of insecurity and fear. It is therefore important to examine the ways in which the Troubles impacted upon the border area, and more specifically upon Louth, both during the conflict and in its aftermath. This will allow us to understand the Peace programme in context.

The border area of the island of Ireland was not perceived to be an area onto itself until the European Community's study in 1983 recognised the economic problems plaguing the area, due to lack of access to markets and economic innovation. (Harvey, Kelly et al., 2005: 18) These issues were found still to be the case in a 2000 study, with a high level of rurality cited as a key issue. (2005: 19) However, it has been stated that Louth is the least deprived of the six southern border counties, perhaps due to the fact that it is relatively urban for its small



size, and that it is situated between the two capital cities of the island. (2005: 21) The need to focus attention upon the border area was recognised by authorities, north and south, and strategies were implemented on both sides in order to better the area. However, work which took place was approached separately, as opposed to taking a cross-border approach. (2005: 28) It could be argued that a 'back to back' separatist approach such as this does little to facilitate cross-border relationships and attitudinal change within the area.

During the Troubles the border area was a highly militarised zone, with frequent road closures. It became a place of fear and was avoided by many, who assumed it was an area rampant with Republicanism. Cross-border activity and movement lowered significantly, resulting in a lack of development in the area and a breakdown of relationships and cross-border interaction. (Harvey, Kelly et al., 2005: 63) The border area in general had a poor reputation, with the northern area of Louth considered an area in particular within which Republican sympathisers resided. This is reflected in the name 'El Paso' soon assigned to the Louth town of Dundalk. During the Troubles, violence was not only perpetrated north of the border. Bombings took place in Dublin in 1972 and 1973, followed by a car bomb which exploded in Dublin's city centre and the border county of Monaghan in May of 1974, killing thirty three and injuring approximately 300 people. Amongst the further bombings that took place throughout the conflict, south of the border, was in Dundalk on the nineteenth of December, 1975. Two were killed in this attack on a pub, for which Loyalists extremists were blamed. (Oireachtas, 2006: 4) The violence that took place and the negative portrayal of the area demonstrates not only the extent to which the border area was involved in the conflict, but makes clear the need for assistance in order to re-build the social and economic landscape.

In the aftermath of the conflict, it was in Louth that the highest number of those displaced from Northern Ireland throughout the conflict settled. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation

Partnership: 20) The Rahaleen (2005) study on displacement defines it as a form of forced migration due to conflict, across or near to borders. (2005: 4) There are 22,000 people born in Northern Ireland living in the South, of which 11,000 are considered to be displaced. (2005: 5) Reasons for this north to south migration include fear of arrest and imprisonment, violence and internment, which was introduced in 1971 by the British government. Those who were displaced are identified as being mostly of Catholic or Nationalist background. (2005: 4) In keeping with this, the SIU (2004) profile on Louth identifies displaced people and ex-prisoners as one of the groups at risk of marginalisation. This latter group emerged with the 1998 Belfast Agreement, whereby prisoners were released as part of the process of building peace. *Fáilte Abhaile*, [welcome home] the main group representing Louth's Republican ex-prisoners, estimates that there are 150 ex-prisoners living in the Dundalk area, along with 250 displaced people. (2004: 68)

Ex-prisoners are at risk of exclusion and discrimination in employment and life in general, as they have criminal records and are lacking in qualifications, leading to a high unemployment rate of forty per cent. (2004: 68) This form of discrimination, also against displaced people, can be described as sectarianism. This term is considered to have more than one meaning, reflected in the fact that two strands are identified in Louth's peace plan documentation: political and religious. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 20) In general, one could define the former as discrimination based upon political views, and the latter as prejudice based upon religious faith. In Louth, the former is seen to affect the lives of displaced persons and ex-prisoners. In addition, it is understood as being the fear of expressing political views, of the return of the conflict, and of violence along the border. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 20) This demonstrates the broad understanding that the term holds. In regards to religious sectarianism in Louth, it is a form

of discrimination that is seen to impact upon the Protestant minority of Louth. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 20)

From our discussion, it is clear that the area suffered both socially and economically as a result of the conflict. Louth has been impacted in its own way, most notably in terms of the image of the area and the introduction of new communities. It therefore seems that there is a specific border experience of the conflict and its aftermath. In order to consider Louth's place in the Peace programme as a whole, it is necessary to analyse what shape the Peace III programme has taken in Louth.

### **Peace III in Louth**

#### Authorities

As one of six southern border counties, Louth has been part of the Peace programme since its beginnings. For this instalment of the programme, €2.8 million was provided for Louth in order to design and implement their peace programme from 2008 until 2010 (2009: 4). In order to understand the way in which the peace plan for Peace III has developed and been organised in the local setting of Louth, we should firstly identify the bodies involved in the operation and implementation of the programme. The Louth County Council is the general local authoritative body for the area. Based in Dundalk, its role as regards Peace III is to generally manage and administer the programme. The SEUPB oversees the programme in general, and the Peace III Secretariat, within the Louth Local Authorities, supports those attempting to access the programme, and provides administrative support to the Louth Peace and Reconciliation Partnership (peace partnership), and. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 10)

The peace partnership can be described as an executive committee which brings together members of the local government, state agencies, local development organisations, and

representatives from the community and voluntary sector. Its purpose is to oversee the construction and implementation of Louth's peace plan, in a way that allows for local participation in the process. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 12)

Problems arose during the partnership's construction, in terms of to what extent its members reflected the county's diverse population. As only one of the Peace III defined target groups<sup>5</sup> was elected to partnership, the Louth County Council intervened, leading to the election of two representatives of Louth's minority communities. (2008: 12)

Attempts were then made in order to strengthen the linkages between the authorities assigned with designing the peace plan, and those whom the programme was targeting. Therefore, whilst the construction of the partnership was ongoing, a series of consultation exercises were organised, whereby members of the public (normally direct stake-holders in peace and members of the aforementioned target groups) could comment upon how the peace programme should function in Louth. (2008: 13)

This included public meetings, focus group discussions and round table discussions. (2008: 14)

### Louth Peace III Plan

The *County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Peace III Strategy and Plan 2008-2010* is the principal document describing Louth's peace plan. The design and development of the plan was supported by external consultants, Ann McGeeney & Associates, due to a "limited timeframe" and the fact that these consultants had expertise and experience in peacebuilding in this area. These consultants were in turn "guided" by the executive committee of the peace partnership. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 11)

The peace plan for Louth was constructed in five stages: planning, consultation,

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<sup>5</sup> The Peace III target groups include the following: victims of the conflict, displaced persons, ex-prisoners and their families, marginalised groups as a result of discrimination, and former members of the security forces. (SEUPB: 50)

responsiveness, negotiation and agreement, and submission. As has been mentioned, the first three stages were undertaken under the leadership of the peace partnership. Input from local organisations and citizens took place in the consultation stage. Those consulted are described as community organisations and other stakeholders. The main priorities of the programme were outlined to the consultees, as the peace partnership was aware of “competing peacebuilding priorities”. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 18) Therefore, it seems that the main priorities were firmly decided upon pre-consultation. The geographical spread of where consultation took place was taken into account, as was the type of language used. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 18) However, as occurred with the construction of the peace partnership, it became clear that minority ethnic and faith communities were not participating in the consultation process. To counter this, one event took place addressing groups and individuals solely from these communities. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 19) The next stage of the process marked the first official meeting of the peace partnership, on the fourteenth of April 2008, with a view to discussing what had been learned thus far, and designing and developing the final plan and policy framework of Peace III in Louth. (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 15)

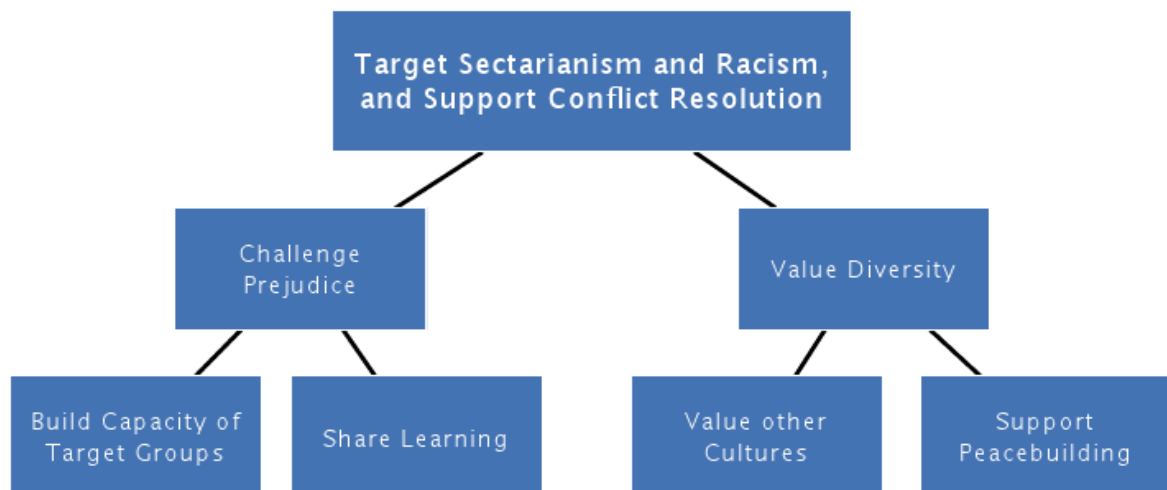
The Louth peace plan policy framework stems from priority 1 of Peace III: ‘reconciling communities’. Within this priority, the main focus is upon theme 1.1: ‘building positive relations at the local level.’ The Louth peace plan objective is “to challenge attitudes towards sectarianism and racism and to support conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level.” (County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 4) This is in keeping with the particular setting of Louth that we have been familiarised with, being that it has an increasingly multi-ethnic population, and has been impacted by a conflict seen partly as a result of a sectarian mindset. The overall vision for Louth has been defined as “a peaceful,

inclusive and confident community, where fears and hurts have been reconciled and diverse cultures are appreciated.”(County Louth Peace & Reconciliation Partnership: 49) This vision reflects the clear focus on relationships that Louth’s Peace III plan entails.

There are two main aims shaping the Louth peace plan. The first of these aims is ‘challenging prejudice for building peace’, within which there are two objectives. The first of these objectives is building the capacity of target groups, whilst the second is sharing learning in communities, with the ultimate ambition to address sectarianism and racism. In turn, four activities have been assigned within the remit of this aim. Activity I is combating sectarianism and racism. Activity II is challenging prejudicial attitudes through sport and arts activities. Activity III is aimed at youth. Activity IV is addressing institutional sectarianism and racism. (2009: 1-2) The second aim, ‘appreciating and valuing diversity’, is facilitated with two objectives. The first is supporting local communities in valuing other cultures, and the second is supporting peacebuilding leadership across Louth. (2009: 50) Activity V, within this aim, is promoting positive relations between new and local communities. Activity VI is promoting intergenerational understanding and peacebuilding. Activity VII is developing shared heritage and mythology. Finally, activity VIII is networking for peace. (2009: 3) Both of these aims are underpinned by the general ambition of ‘mainstreaming and sustainability’ throughout the programme.

We can deduce the relative importance of the plan’s priorities by studying the budgetary assignments to each activity. Through this, we can see that activity I, that is ‘addressing capacity deficits for minority groups in combating sectarianism and racism’, is assigned the highest amount, with €599, 625. The activity in receipt of the least amount of funding is activity IV, ‘Addressing institutional sectarianism and racism’, with €88, 800. In fact, the funding needed for the implementation of the plan, termed ‘technical assistance’, more than triples this amount, with €281, 075. (2009: 76)

Figure 4: Louth Peace III framework.



It is evident that the process by which local counties develop their peace plans is selective in nature, whereby Peace III is tailored to suit the local setting. The choices made in constructing Louth's peace plan lend insight as to what is deemed relevant, and irrelevant, in this specific case. By choosing to focus upon priority 1 of Peace III, 'reconciling communities', as opposed to priority 2, 'contributing to a shared society', we are reminded of the differences between Northern Irish and Louth population make-up and society, insofar as segregation is not a preoccupation in Louth.

### The Concept of Peacebuilding

Having outlined the Louth Peace III plan, we can begin to appreciate how peacebuilding in Louth is understood in this instance. Peacebuilding is a term coined by Galtung, denoting the progression to a positive peace after war. (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 186) The terms 'negative' and 'positive' peace are at the heart of his (1964) theoretical framework of

structural violence, whereby violence is built into the social structures within which we live. The former term denotes the absence of violence and war, whereas the latter is defined as the “integration of human society.” (1964: 2) He argues that as long as this structural violence continues, a positive peace will not be attained. Call and Cousens take this on in their definition of peacebuilding as “those actions undertaken by international and national actors to institutionalise peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict (“negative peace”) and a modicum of participatory politics (“positive peace”) that can be sustained in the absence of an international peace operation.” (2007: 2)

It is clear that peacebuilding is thus a complex endeavour, insofar as its function is sometimes expanded to provide for all of a post-conflict society’s needs. This includes addressing the root causes of conflict, in order to achieve a positive peace, as opposed to simply trying to prevent a relapse into the conflict. (Call, Cousens, 2007: 2) With this differentiation between striving for a negative or positive peace, it could be argued that problems arise as to what to aim for and how to prioritise within a peacebuilding initiative. To perhaps counter this intricacy, Cousens (2001) puts forth the argument that peacebuilding must aim to focus on the violent conflict, whilst utilising the societal tools on hand, in order to facilitate the road to a positive peace. She claims that it is thus an endeavour to strike a balance between a ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace. (2001: 13)

In terms of how these arguments relate to our own case, Cousen’s argument on striking this balance is not reflected in the preoccupations of our peacebuilding case, as the future-oriented aims and objectives of the plan frame peacebuilding in such a way that the conflict itself and its direct legacy are not of central importance. Choosing to focus upon theme 1.1, ‘building positive relations’, as opposed to theme 1.2, ‘acknowledging and dealing with the past’ demonstrates a willingness to orientate Louth’s peace plan towards the future, as opposed to reflecting solely on the conflict. Galtung’s conceptualisation of what peace is



forces us to recognise the violence present in what seemingly is banal and 'normal'. This is wholly relevant to our case, as it is not one of extreme and observable violence. It reminds us that part of securing peace is tackling those tensions and prejudices that are beneath the surface.

### **Analysis**

#### Industry of Peacebuilding

The design and development of the peace plan for Louth, which outlines the policy framework and its implementation, was undertaken by independent external consultants. This choice is explained with the argument that the timeframe with which to construct the plan was pressing, and that the chosen consultants had expertise and experience in this area. In keeping with this, the cost of what is termed 'technical assistance' more than triples the cost of one of the programme's eight peacebuilding activities. When we consider the complex bureaucracy involved in the running of the programme, we must question to what extent reducing implementation costs are truly of concern. In addition, the underpinning aim of mainstreaming and sustainability within the peace plan ensures that peacebuilding is incorporated into mainstream local development work in the future. However, this leads to the inclusion of peacebuilding into the work of local government authorities. This aim therefore could be described as a method of institutionalisation, in keeping with Goetschel and Hagmann's (2009) critique of peacebuilding, discussed in our previous chapter.

When questioned as to the main problems which have arisen in relation to the organisation of Peace III in Louth, a complex bureaucracy and the mismanagement of funds were identified as the most problematic, by the Peace III secretariat. This makes it more difficult for small groups to apply for funding, and be successful in doing so.<sup>6</sup> This forces us to call

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Secretariat, Louth County Council, 15/03/2011.

into question the rationale and impact of the complex bureaucratic system at work in Peace III. An interview with a former project appraisal officer for Peace I sheds light on this, by charting the general changes that have taken place throughout the lifespan of this programme. According to the interviewee, the general approach in Peace I seemed to be about getting the funds out to small community groups, even if the specific group did not exactly meet with conditions and requirements of the programme.<sup>7</sup> With Peace II and III, accountability became more of an issue and policy changes were made. It became more bureaucracy-driven, making it difficult for small groups to apply and receive funding. This was in part a way to make bigger groups become involved in the programme, allowing for a wider network to take shape.<sup>8</sup>

#### Politics of Peacebuilding

Issues involving power and authority within the design and implementation of Peace III in Louth shed light on the politics within the initiative. The fact that an intervention had to be led by the local authorities, in order to ensure the peace partnership was more representative of the population, demonstrates the extent of the gap that exists between those chosen to shape the peace plan, and the target groups and recipients of said plan. Like those documents which laid out the general framework of the Peace programme in our first chapter, our principal document detailing Louth's peace plan emphasises the extent to which the local community plays a part in the design of the policy framework for the programme. This was done in Louth through consultation exercises. However, setting out the main priorities of the programme to the consultees, in order to avoid dealing with competing peacebuilding priorities, suggests that the aim was to confirm a policy

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Project Appraisal Officer, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Project Appraisal Officer, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

framework mostly decided upon pre-consultation. With this approach, the intention is not to stimulate debate about Peace III, but to uphold those policy choices which had already been identified, whilst giving the impression that said strategies are being appropriated on a local level. It is also interesting to note that throughout this consultation process, it emerged that minority ethnic and faith communities were not becoming involved. What is even more interesting is the way this was dealt with, whereby a discussion was dedicated to consulting exclusively with these specific groups. As opposed to attempting to combat the problems behind the absence of these groups, exclusion and division was therefore bolstered. The opportunity to integrate and build relationships between local actors of different backgrounds was thwarted in this way, putting a stop to what could have been an interesting and productive debate, due to the diverse background of its participants.

This calls into question the exact nature of the local ownership of this programme. As noted in our introduction, this peacebuilding case is different from most others. Most critical literature on the subject of international peacebuilding is primarily built upon the idea of the 'Western' donor and 'non-Western' recipient, with the argument that local ownership needs to take place in order to work against implanting a 'Western' ideal of peace in a 'non-Western' area. This local ownership is seen as important as it allows for peacebuilding structures to be sustained even after the external actor and funding is no longer in place. As our case does not fit exactly into this mould, it could be tempting to assume that the same problems do not take place. But this assumption would be an acceptance of the idea that the only instance of power asymmetry is contained within this 'Western-Eastern' axis. In the case of Peace III in Louth, we must then question who makes the decisions about the programme. The peace plan is shaped by external consultants. It is then guided by a peace partnership, made up principally of local executives, government figures, and development organisations. Taking this into account, the ownership of this programme could be

described as simultaneously localised and outsourced. This forces us to question how local ownership can be defined.

Richmond, (2010) in his study on the post-liberal peace, concurs with the prevailing argument used by many critics of international peacebuilding which asserts that local contexts are quite often overlooked. However, he clarifies this argument by distinguishing between what he terms 'the local' and the 'local-local'. The former reflects those local actors undertaking liberal peacebuilding and state-building at an elite level. The latter denotes the communities and individuals that make up society beyond the former "liberally projected artifice." (2010: 667) The way in which to ensure that peacebuilding is an entirely context-specific endeavour is by finding the "dynamics of the everyday", within this 'local-local' setting. These dynamics are the key to understanding those deeply ingrained issues which need to be tackled by the peacebuilding process. (2010: 668) According to Richmond, all of this helps us to work towards achieving an "*everyday state* (of peace)" (2010: 684) that goes beyond the surface.

This reminds us to beware of the assumption that local is always better. Although the choices made by local actors may be more context-specific, there is such a thing as local politics and power asymmetries, which exist in both the 'East' and the 'West'. It brings to the fore the automated legitimacy attached to the term 'local ownership'. It could be argued that it has become a romanticised notion and discursive tool, with little clear understanding as to who these 'local' actors are. However, with this new way of interpreting what local is, we can see that it is the 'local-local' which does not participate in the Louth peace plan, as opposed to the 'local'. What thus could be taking place is described by Richmond as "local elite co-option". (2010: 673)

### Elusion of Peacebuilding

When we reflect upon Louth's peace plan we can see that it is framed in such a way that it continuously aims to target two issues impacting upon social relations simultaneously: racism and sectarianism. We can therefore reason that they are understood as two problems which can be tackled in the same way, with the same approach. This is in line with the perspective of the Peace III programme discussed in our first chapter, which identifies that both problems are inherently inter-related and bolster one another. This is reflected in the eight activities designed to fulfil the strategic aims and objectives of the Louth plan. From the description of these eight activities, we deduce that only two seek to directly and exclusively target those elements relating directly to the conflict, such as its legacy and the issue of sectarianism: activity VI and VII. (2009)

It could be argued that the inclusion of racism as such a central preoccupation alongside sectarianism in the Louth peace plan is as a result of the complexity and lack of clarity surrounding the definition of sectarianism in Louth. As has been pointed out, sectarianism is described as encompassing a political and religious prejudice, in the peace plan's documentation. Its meaning is therefore more convoluted than that of racism, and affects numerous target groups born out of or related to the conflict. Although it is broadly defined as "the spirit or tendencies of sectarians, especially adherence or excessive devotion to a particular sect, especially in religion" (Farlex, 2011), it is a term that has automatic and embedded connotations with the Northern Irish conflict, within the island of Ireland. Could it be for this reason that there is a reluctance to tackle this issue exclusively, in the context of Louth? It could be argued that its meaning differs in accordance with the context within which it exists, meaning that an understanding of sectarianism in Northern Ireland could very well vary from how it is understood in the Republic of Ireland. The view of an interviewee within Louth's local authorities reflects this, whereby she asserts that

sectarianism is less of a problem in the south than in the north.<sup>9</sup> This outlook is quite valid when we consider that in parts of Northern Ireland physical barriers are still in place, in order to separate the living spaces of Catholics and Protestants. However, if sectarianism is understood in a clear manner only in a Northern Irish context, is it thus perceived as a 'Northern' problem, irrelevant to the southern Irish context? If so, addressing the complex impact of the conflict on this southern border society is made all the more difficult.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter, detailing how Peace III is organised and implemented in the local setting of Louth, demonstrates how the general Peace III policy framework is utilised at a local level. It also shows to what extent issues relating to the industry, politics, and elusion of peacebuilding emerge at the local level. It acts as a bridge in the policy to practice chain that we are tracing in this project, allowing us to proceed to our third and final chapter, with an understanding of the context within which they were chosen for funding, and an awareness of what under what policy and organisational framework they operate.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Secretariat, Louth County Council, 15/03/2011.

## **Chapter 3: Practice of Peacebuilding.**

### **Project 1: Institutional Sectarianism and Racism**

Our first case study project, which took place between September 2009 and March 2011, is funded under activity IV of Louth's Peace III plan: 'addressing institutional sectarianism and racism'. €88,800 was assigned to complete and execute this activity. (County Louth Peace and Reconciliation Partnership: 66) The project was undertaken by the Louth County Enterprise Board (LCEB), which is a local body that is represented within the peace partnership. The LCEB aims to stimulate the development of entrepreneurship and small businesses in Louth, and thus became the chosen institution for a project exploring discrimination in the workplace. The project's research report is our main source for this project, and describes that the project came about partly as a result of the findings of another Peace III project, Challenge of Change (COC), which identified to what extent racism in local institutions was a problem. (LCEB, 2010: 5)

#### The project

There are two aims to this project. The first is to address capacity deficits for minority groups in combating sectarianism and racism, whilst the second aim is to increase awareness and understanding of the issues of sectarianism and racism in the workplace for employees and employers. (2010: 6) The project itself, headed by Sarah Mallon in the LCEB, was preceded by a phase of research, which would facilitate the ensuing design of the action plan for the project, and set the context for its implementation. Essentially, the purpose of the research was to identify the most pressing issues concerning institutional racism and sectarianism in Louth and the cross-border area, thus aiding the practical implementation of the project and facilitating the design of an action plan.

Within the research phase, getting to grips with the local demography of Louth was of importance, and the statistics found demonstrated to what extent Louth is a diverse and multi-cultural society. It was then necessary to gather information on the relevant institutions, research publications and legislation, within the national and European context. Sources such as the Equality Tribunal's 2008 report and the Employment Equality Act of 2008 were used in order to paint a picture of to what extent racism is a reported problem in Ireland, and gain knowledge as to what attempts are being made to tackle this. An attempt was also made within the research to define what exactly institutional sectarianism and racism is. However, this was done by referring to definitions that have already emerged, such as the idea that there are two types of sectarianism (religious and political), which has previously been discussed in chapter two. In addition, it was recognised that *institutional* racism and sectarianism can be more difficult to identify and understand, as opposed to discrimination that takes place on a personal level. (2010: 12)

The research itself involved two main target groups: employers and minority group employees. It was undertaken through survey questionnaires, focus group and individual interviews. (2010: 13) The research aimed at minority groups attempted to garner a better understanding of the extent to which minority groups experience racism or sectarianism in the workplace. From this, practical recommendations could be made in order to best combat the discrimination. (2010: 24) The primary research involving minority community groups and their supporting agencies was outsourced to research consultants Ann Mc Geeney and Peter Fuller. (2010: 13) Reasons for this outsourcing were identified by Mallon, in interview, as being due to the fact that this particular aspect of the research project 'wasn't the strength of the enterprise board'.<sup>10</sup> It was felt that the LCEB would not have the contacts to get access to the communities involved. Issues of gaining the trust of interviewees and questions as to

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.



the type of language that should be used were also identified as reasons for the hiring of external consultants.<sup>11</sup>

Those who took part in the focus-group consultation section of the research included refugees, ex-political prisoners, religious minorities, and individuals originally from Eastern Europe and Africa. It appears that the Travelling Community did not take part. However, in the support organisation consultations which also took place, this community was represented. What firstly emerged from the research relating to sectarianism was the fact that most participants felt that racism was more of a problem than sectarianism. In addition, it was communicated that it is very difficult to report or prove sectarian discrimination. (2010: 26) From the research centred upon racism, it emerged that racism is considered to have become more of a problem as the number of migrant workers increases in Ireland. In addition, racism reportedly occurs within institutions at every stage of the employment process. (2010: 27)

As a result of this research, several conclusions were drawn which directly impacted upon the design of the project. The findings from the research aimed at employers showed that eighty five per cent of the Louth responders did not have a diversity policy in place. Secondly, two forms of racism were identified: real and perceived. The latter is seen as reflecting a lack of understanding of Irish business culture. Thirdly, the need for equality and diversity training in institutions was made clear. In addition, a good practice model was seen as needed for employers. (2010: 40)

The project's action plan thus laid out a strategy which was made up of thirteen workshops, aimed at both employers and minority groups. One of the ambitions of the project became about raising awareness of the necessity of having diversity policies, and encouraging the

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

positive nature of having a diverse work force. (2010: 23) Workshops aimed at minority groups involved the dissemination of information for ethnic entrepreneurs interested in starting their own businesses. Finally, workshops were designed to encourage the development of 'Diversity Champions' in businesses, who are assigned with the task of disseminating best practice policies within their own workplace. (2010: 46) In terms of evaluating the project, it is done so internally, with feedback questionnaires disseminated in each workshop, and reports to the peace partnership. An external evaluation then takes place to inform the Peace III extension. (2010: 49) No mention is made of the 'Aids for Peace' approach set out in the Peace III policy framework, despite the fact that it is the intended framework for all Peace III projects in order to ensure coherent and efficient evaluation.

#### Co-ordinator

Having outlined the origins of the project, its aims and the manner with which it unfolded, it is necessary to gain a more profound appreciation for the delivery of the project. In order to do this, a semi-structured interview was carried out with Sarah Mallon, the co-ordinator of the project. In this interview, the aim was to learn about the challenges faced by the co-ordinator and to uncover information, not readily available in the research report. In question were the problems and issues that arose throughout the project's lifespan, the potential impact that the project had, and the general view the co-ordinator had on the project, and Peace III as a whole.

In terms of the problems and challenges that the co-ordinator faced, it emerged that the context within which the project unfolded was deemed problematic in itself, due to recession and the ensuing fear of group minority employees to take issue with anything, for fear of losing their jobs. This meant that access to employees was more difficult than it perhaps would have been during a thriving economic climate. In addition, the dissident

republican threat was coming to the fore during this time, impacting upon the feeling of the project. There were further problems as regards the timeframe of the project. A certain amount of the project entailed relying on personal contacts, and the process of building up such a contact base from scratch is a time-consuming one.<sup>12</sup> As the research uncovered the issue of perceived racism, it was felt necessary to educate minority groups about Irish business culture, in order 'to break down barriers and miscommunication.'<sup>13</sup> Despite the seeming need for this kind of workshop, the turnout for the two workshops held was extremely low. When speculating as to why this was, Mallon made the suggestion that perhaps 'we [LCEB] weren't the right people to be tackling it?'<sup>14</sup> When asked what Peace III target groups took part in the project, it came to light that no Travellers were involved. In addition to this, no displaced people were involved, which related to the problematic issue of how to define, and in turn combat, sectarianism. It was an issue that was seemingly 'hard to address.'<sup>15</sup>

In terms of the impact of the project, and to what extent it fulfilled what it set out to do, the co-ordinator was largely positive. One benefit is the fact that the project's aspirations and findings would now be mainstreamed into the LCEB. This reflects the emphasis placed on the importance of mainstreaming and sustainability in the Louth peace plan. In addition, the project has helped to make minority group entrepreneurs more aware of what is on offer for them, in terms of training and financial aid for developing a business. However, when asked what the project may have exposed, in terms of issues that need more attention, Mallon made it clear that a lot of work still needs to be done with ethnic entrepreneurs, as many do not know what is available to them, and may be intimidated to enter into an unfamiliar

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

office. In terms of what Louth's Peace III programme lacks in general, Mallon felt that what could be improved is the relationship between different Peace projects.<sup>16</sup>

### Participants

Having discussed how the project unfolded, from the perspective of the project co-ordinator, we can now complete our analysis of this project by turning to how participants responded to it. This will allow us to reflect upon what those who are being targeted in the Peace programme actually think of it. The aims of the interviews with participants were to understand their reasons for taking part in such a project, what they did and did not like about the project, how it has impacted upon their lives, and if there is a need for such a project, in their opinion. In this instance, the interviews were of a semi-structured individual form.

Institutional racism was considered by one participant as more of a problem than personal racism, which was why said participant decided to take part in the project.<sup>17</sup> This strengthens the case for the need for a project such as this, as it shows that it is an area that needs to be address. What was seen as most positive aspect of the project was its capacity to build the confidence of minority groups, who were perhaps up until then unsure as to their own capabilities and role in the business world of Louth. In addition, it was good way to raise awareness of what the LCEB specifically had to offer for people interested in starting or developing their own business.<sup>18</sup>

When questioned about what could have been improved in the project, the general set-up of the workshops was criticised. Firstly, the language level was deemed too complex for many

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Participant A, Dundalk, 25/05/2011.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Participant A, Dundalk, 25/05/2011.

for who English is a second language. A 'softer delivery' would have been appreciated.<sup>19</sup> In keeping with this, the structure of the workshops did not encourage participants to feel comfortable in speaking up, asking questions, and generally participating. This could be improved by structuring the workshops in a round-table discussion format.<sup>20</sup> Finally, when asked if there was a need for a project such as this, the general consensus was yes. It served to build confidence in participants, and emphasised to what extent skill-building is as important as job-searching, which is considered a positive message.<sup>21</sup>

### **Project 2: Darver Activity Centre.**

The Darver Activity Centre project, which ran between October 2009 and March 2011, is funded under Activity V of Louth's peace plan: 'promoting positive relations between new and local communities'. The project was based at the Darver activity centre, which is owned by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)<sup>22</sup>, and is an initiative of the Louth Gaelic Athletic Association Board, aiming to provide the county with a training centre. This activity was assigned €257,000 whilst this specific project was assigned €185,000 by the peace partnership.

#### The Project

Our main source detailing the strategic aims and policies for this project is the *Strategic Plan and Action Plan*. (Mentor) An external consultancy firm, Mentor Economic Developments Limited, were assigned with the task of developing this action plan. (1) The plan begins by setting the context of the project, with a brief profile of Louth and outline of plans and initiatives by local and national organisations, who aim to target those issues that lead to

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Participant B, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Participant B, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Participant B, Dundalk, 27/05/2011.

<sup>22</sup> The GAA is the national organisation established in 1884, that promotes and organises Gaelic games (such as Gaelic football, hurling and camogie), Irish music, Irish dance, and the Irish language.

social exclusion. (4) Conclusions made from this are that sport has a role to play in integration and addressing racism and sectarianism. (8) The report explains the Louth County GAA Board's role in this by attesting to the work the organisation has done to promote integration of new citizens through sport, build cross-border and cross-community contact, foster peace, and engage those who can be at risk of societal marginalisation through engagement with sport. (9) This is provided as explanation for the Board's successful request to undertake Activity V of the peace plan.

The project aims are to develop relationships between new and local communities, to build the capacity of target groups to engage in anti-sectarianism and anti-racism work, and to increase levels of trust, tolerance and community cohesion in local communities and on a cross-border basis. The objectives are to establish a resource centre and a language laboratory, run a home economics programme, host sports days and offer coaching skills to new citizens, and to undertake cross-border and cross-community workshops and deliver a cross-border conference. (9) Three themes are identified in order to fulfil these objectives. The first is engaging with new citizens and disadvantaged Irish communities. The second is providing opportunities in sport and other areas for these two aforementioned groups. The third theme is synergy, meaning the centre will work in tandem with other organisations. (16-19) Evaluating the project was undertaken by the co-ordinator, through keeping records of attendance, evaluation sheets and comment cards from participants, in order to compile a monthly progress report. (32) Once again, no mention is made of the official evaluation framework structure set out by Peace III, born out of the commissioning of an independent consultancy firm.

#### Co-ordinator

As with all our case projects, a semi-structured interview was undertaken with the project co-ordinator, Gareth Conlon. The aims were to learn about how the project actually

unfolded, identify the challenges faced and uncover information, not readily available in the action plan. Questions that arose aimed to expose problems and issues, the potential impact that the project had, and the general view the co-ordinator had on the project, and Peace III as a whole.

As a way in which to begin to raise awareness of the project, Conlon began by visiting local African churches and attempting to build contacts within them. He would then invite interested parties to visit the activity centre and introduce them to what the GAA does. In turn, they would be made aware of their own local clubs, with information on training times. As time went on, Conlon began to despair of this method, as the number of those following through was not high. He felt like the approach was '... not peacebuilding.... not integration.... a waste of time.'<sup>23</sup> The project's initial strategy was thus clearly centred on sport, and the GAA. As a way in which to approach the project in a different way, and to encourage more people to get involved, students in schools were then targeted. In five schools, courses on personal development, international development, and conflict took place. With younger students, racism and diversity were focused upon to a greater extent.<sup>24</sup> This was a divergence from what was outlined in the action plan.

Activities that were planned from the outset, such as English and Home Economics classes, had mixed success. The former took place over a ten-week period which was, according to Conlon, too short a timeframe to see any significant improvement in attendees' language level.<sup>25</sup> The home economics classes were successful at first, but numbers dwindled quite quickly. When questioned as to why he thought this was, Conlon could only reason that 'you can offer all the opportunities but you need people to take you up on them.'<sup>26</sup> However,

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

the latter classes offered something that the former could not: the opportunity to mix new and local communities. In an attempt to do this on a bigger scale, a multi-cultural day festival took place in September, based on the following slogan: 'Recognise our differences, but celebrate our similarities.' According to Conlon, on the day of the event, he was made aware of the fact that the building could not be used for the festival, for insurance reasons. Alongside this organisational problem, no Irish people were in attendance.<sup>27</sup> This made fulfilling the ambition of building relationships between new and local communities impossible.

When questioned as to what Conlon felt that the Peace programme lacked, he claimed that it 'works too much on money, and not enough on relationships.'<sup>28</sup> Conlon discussed the way in which the project was funded and was of the opinion that too large an amount of capital was assigned to it, and that the capital could have been used more wisely if divided amongst more groups. In relation to the break-down of the project's funds, from a total of €185,000 allocated to the project, €50,000 went towards equipping the building that would be used for the project in Darver.<sup>29</sup> It was known in the planning stage of the project that the building within which the project would operate would not be ready before the summer of 2010. (Mentor: 22) However, in reality this building was not completed until November 2010, lacking a co-ordinator office and facilities such as the internet.<sup>30</sup>

He also despaired of the lack of a general steering committee representing all projects, or any relationship between ongoing projects. It is made clear in the strategic action plan that establishing a steering group was of importance, and was one of the actions necessary for the implementation of the project. (Mentor, 32) He also felt that one year was too short a

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.



timeframe to make any real progress.<sup>31</sup> Both these issues Conlon had with the programme are identified in the consultation findings detailed in the strategic action plan of the project, whereby many felt that the project was too ambitious for the time scale appointed to it. The view of those consulted was that in order to counteract this, partnership with other agencies would be helpful. (Mentor, 11)

### Participants

Individual and focus group semi-structured interviews were undertaken in order to gain appreciation for how participants responded to the project. As with our former participant interviews, the objective was to understand their reasons for taking part, question what they deemed as positives and negatives of the project, question how it has impacted upon them, and ask if they feel there is a need for such a project. Out of those participants of the project that I gained access to, most took part through attendance at the multi-cultural festival. One such participant saw it as a great opportunity to network with other local minority group organisations. However, this participant also brought to light the fact that many people, from a different cultural background have no interest in the GAA.<sup>32</sup> This reflects the problems that can emerge when a Peace project is linked too closely with one specific organisation or activity.

In the focus group interview held with a local minority group organisation, those who had participated in this same multi-cultural festival day were positive about their experience, as it allowed them to bring people's attention to their country's culture. However, they also highlighted and despaired of the fact that there were no local Irish people in attendance, which meant that the audience for the group's presentation was somewhat limited. In addition, the location of the festival in Darver was defined as a problem, being that it was

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Participant A, Dundalk, 23/05/2011.

difficult to access due to its rural location.<sup>33</sup> This is an important point to make when we take into account the fact that only five kilometres away lies a second centre, within which Peace III funded projects take place. This demonstrates a lack of strategic thinking and research when it came to assigning this activity to this centre. The issue of the centre's location was also identified as a potential problem in the strategic plan and action plan documentation, during consultation testing the project's feasibility took place. (Mentor: 11)

### **Project 3: Challenge of Change.**

The Challenge of Change (COC) project (in its Peace III phase) ran between October 2010 and March 2011. It differs slightly from our other case study projects, in that it is funded under the Peace III Southern Partnership, which is the cross-border delivery mechanism for theme 1.1 of Peace III ('building positive relations at the local level'). This partnership covers a specific cross-border area, as opposed to solely working within Louth, which means that its official delivery agent is based outside of its target areas, in the Newry / Mourne Council, in Northern Ireland. (Peace III southern partnership, 2008) This also means that the COC project does not only operate in Louth. However, for the purpose of our discussion, only the activities undertaken within Louth will be taken into account.

#### The project

The main aim of the project is "to facilitate greater involvement from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in civic, community and political life and to increase community cohesion." (Peace III southern partnership, 2010) Three objectives underpin this: to develop, promote and facilitate integration of BME and indigenous communities; to improve understanding and support between indigenous communities and BME communities; to

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Participants B, Dundalk, 24/05/2011.

change perceptions and stereotypes in relation to minority ethnic communities. (Peace III southern partnership, 2010) Therefore, in terms of general Peace III aims, this project aims to prevent racism and target prejudicial attitudes. Scoping research was undertaken by an external consultancy firm, 'Juniper Consulting', in order to shape the design of the COC action plan. In the action plan documentation (2008), we can see that there are five themes that stem from the objectives: training, networking groups, integration, addressing racism, and advice and support. (2008) The plan includes activities such as capacity building and cultural awareness training, cross-border events to discuss issues impacting upon BME communities, sports and arts-based projects, and an anti-racism campaign. (2008) In terms of how the project is evaluated, and the break-down of funds, this information is unavailable within the action plan documentation.

#### Co-ordinator

A semi-structured interview was carried out with the co-ordinator of the Louth counterpart of the project, Katerina Skrebska, in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the project, uncover problems that arose, and gain an understanding of the co-ordinator's view of the impact of the project and Peace III as a programme. When questioned as to how the project unfolded, in relation to its aims and objectives, Skrebska made it clear that it did not progress precisely according to plan. This was due to the changing nature of local minority community groups that COC planned on working with.<sup>34</sup> By the time COC got underway, and when it came to initiating contact with groups, it transpired that certain groups no longer existed, or had re-formulated into new groups with distinct targets and aims. In addition, due to a worsening economy, many from the Eastern European community had left the country. Although this could be considered out of COC's control, it may also indicate

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Katerina Skrebska, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 12/05/2011.

that too much time passed between the planning stage of the projects, and the implementation stage. Similarly, it could reflect a poor relationship and lack of contact with community groups, or issues with the organisation within the project.

When asked as to any particular difficulties that arose throughout the programme, the short timeframe of the project was an issue. This was mostly due to the fact that building a contact base takes time.<sup>35</sup> This is a problem that is inherently tied up with the short-term nature of Peace projects. COC was also a Peace II funded programme, with co-ordinators in both Louth and Newry/Mourne. As opposed to building upon the work, experience and contact base that COC achieved through these Peace II years, the project is expected to go back to zero, with a new set of staff.

In terms of the impact that the project may have had, Skrebska emphasised the progress made by the three main local groups that she worked with: Culture Connect, Simul Polonia, and the Dundalk Intercultural Club. According to Skrebska, groups such as these rely on COC, as resources for them are extremely low. In addition, the Culture Connect group was helped set up by COC, and is the first integration project running in Drogheda town.<sup>36</sup> Finally, when questioned as to what target groups COC worked with, it came to light that Travellers were not involved. Skrebska noted that it was difficult to establish contacts, but that their lack of involvement will be focused upon this in Peace III phase II.<sup>37</sup>

### Participants

Individual and focus-group interviews were undertaken with members of all three local groups that COC worked with in Louth. Participants were questioned as to their involvement in the project, their general opinions on it, and its impact on them. It became

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Katerina Skrebska, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 12/05/2011.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Katerina Skrebska, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 12/05/2011.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Katerina Skrebska, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 12/05/2011.

clear, having completed all three interviews, that COC's principal role was to provide resources and funds to the groups, in order to facilitate their work. Each group had to learn over time what could or could not be funded for them. For Simul Polonia, COC could pay for the promotion costs of the group's activities.<sup>38</sup> For the Dundalk intercultural club, they learned that COC could fund activities only concerning adults, as opposed to young people.<sup>39</sup> We can assume that this is due to the fact that COC's target groups do not include youth. As the club's main activity is an after-school homework club for children, this is somewhat restrictive. For Culture Connect, COC could meet certain expenses such as the hiring of the venue for certain events and the music. Although it was made clear that costs for food could not be covered, for one event, where local community representatives were present, COC did cover said costs.<sup>40</sup>

When it came what the groups found lacking in COC, this method of asking for resources and waiting for a response by the co-ordinator was an issue. It could be considered a time-consuming process, due to the lack of advance guidance as to what COC could specifically do for each group. The intercultural club found themselves at times 'confused and frustrated' due to their own lack of awareness of what could or could not be funded. They felt that the problem lay with the bureaucratic element of the project, whereby the Louth co-ordinator refers to a superior based outside of Louth. They raised the issue of potential communication barriers that could arise from this system, whereby a negative response to a funding request could be the result of a misunderstanding. The opportunity to have some personal contact with the external superior would have been appreciated.<sup>41</sup> This complex

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Group A, Oriel Cultural Centre, 24/05/2011.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Group B, Dundalk, 23/05/2011.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Group C, Drogheda, 26/05/2011.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Group B, Dundalk, 23/05/2011.

bureaucracy structure was emphasised by another group. As only one individual seemed to decide if they would get funding, they felt that it was too powerful a role for one person.<sup>42</sup>

For two groups, there was a sense that what COC funded did not necessarily correspond with the most pressing needs of the group. For one group, funding was provided for room rental so that group committee meetings could take place. With eight members in a committee, this was not seen as a necessity and the room was not regularly used. What was identified as most important by the group was to gaining practical expert advice and training, in relation to how to run a committee and design a constitution and action plan. This training was finally organised by another group, the Louth Minority Ethnic Consortium.<sup>43</sup> The other group felt that more impact and progress could be made if local minority groups were brought together, with resources combined, as opposed to working independently with small amounts of capital.<sup>44</sup> With these views of certain participants, one could argue that COC's funding resources were not always strategically given. Although a certain responsibility should lie with the group to evaluate their needs and ask for resources accordingly, the restrictions on what could or could not be funded certainly applied limits.

## **Analysis**

### Industry of Peacebuilding

The employment of external consultancy firms took place with all three of our case study projects, in order to design action plans or undertake research. According to the Darver project budget, €10,000 was assigned to preparing the action plan, which was undertaken by independent consultants. (Mentor: 34) The rationale behind the commissioning of

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Group C, Drogheda, 26/05/2011.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Group B, Dundalk, 23/05/2011.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Group A, Oriel Cultural Centre, 24/05/2011.

consultants for the institutional sectarianism and racism project was based upon the argument that the implementing institution for the project did not have the capacity (for instance as to what kind of language to use) or contact-base to access minority community groups. We must question to what extent the consultants hired would have this contact-base, or 'skills' needed to engage and communicate with minority groups. This passing on of responsibility is an example of what can happen when peacebuilding is institutionalised and professionalised. The former normalises and reinforces the features of the peacebuilding initiative, meaning that debate is restricted. The latter sends the message that the peacebuilders are on a different level from those whom they are targeting. This could be likened to the reserve of international peacebuilders who hide behind barricades and walls, loathe to actually engage with those they are employed to work with. (Richmond, 2007: 268)

This could also be said for COC and the groups that it funded. In their attempts to build the capacity of BME community groups, the COC approach in Louth was primarily to assign funding to groups. This focus on money was articulated by the Darver project co-ordinator as being one of the aspects of Peace III's inner workings that he did not appreciate. The root causes behind this preoccupation with money lie perhaps in the general system underlying the Peace III funding. In the NIA report on the workings of the SEUPB (2010), the language used by the SEUPB representative presenting the situation of Peace III is of an urgent nature, centred upon the argument that they are endeavouring to get the money allocated to the programme spent before the end of the programme, in order to avoid losing it. He finishes off the presentation with the assurance that "There is no threat to any money in either programme." (NIA, 2010) The report reflects the anxiety and concern at work in the case of externally funded initiatives, whereby the rules controlling the capital are dictated by another.

Politics of Peacebuilding

The main aim of the Darver project, according to Conlon, was to integrate people through sport. (Conlon, 2011) Although it could be argued that sport is a powerful medium through which relationships can be made, it should be noted that within the Louth's peace plan Activity II is dedicated to challenging attitudes through sport and art. Therefore, it is unclear as to why plans were made to use sport to such a high degree in a project which is assigned to promote positive relations (Activity V). Consultation exercises which took place in the planning stage of the project identified the issue of the GAA's image as an exclusive organisation. (Mentor: 11). Furthermore, one of four outcomes of the project, identified in the strategic action plan, is "securing the image and reputation of the GAA as an inclusive, progressive organisation." (Mentor: 15) We must therefore question if we are here witnessing the politics of peacebuilding, and if the project's motivation lies in bolstering the image of the GAA.

Within the Darver project, we must question the place of a national organisation such as the GAA, with its own agenda, participating in the Peace programme. The GAA was established during a wave of cultural nationalism in the late nineteenth century, which emerged in order to combat the Anglicisation of the country and its people. The organisation is still considered an institution synonymous with Irish identity and culture. However, in recent years, efforts are being made to modernise the GAA and make its image less of an exclusive one. A rule prohibiting British security forces from joining the organisation was revoked in 2001. A second rule prohibiting the playing of non-Gaelic games on GAA grounds was modified in 2005, allowing the English and Irish rugby teams to play one another in 2007, in



the GAA's national stadium of Croke Park.<sup>45</sup> This 2007 match therefore was therefore not only an historic occasion, but showed the GAA to be a progressive organisation, dedicated to moving into a more inclusive future.

The Queen's visit to Ireland in 2011, during which she paid a visit to Croke Park, gave another opportunity to the GAA to modernise and distance the organisation from republicanism. Putting these questions of image and historical political persuasion to one side, we must also consider that it is in the GAA's interest to widen its appeal and gain new members. As the resources put into the buildings upon which the Darver project is based is in the GAA's possession outside of the Peace III programme's lifespan, we must further question this. (Conlon, 2011) We therefore could conclude that the involvement of the GAA could be seen as verging on a move with political undertones, in terms of enhancing the image of the organisation.

For one of COC's funded groups in Louth, an inconsistency in funding policy for events pointed to a double standard corresponding with the type of people present at the event. It reflects that line between what Richmond (2010) described as the 'local' and the 'local-local', discussed in our second chapter. This inconsistency in funding policy towards this group sends the message that exceptions can be made when local authorities are involved, as opposed to 'normal' people. The fact that the group set up by COC in Drogheda was the first of its kind in the town brings to light the potential variation and unequal distribution of peacebuilding initiatives throughout Louth. As Dundalk is the administrative capital of Louth, and thus houses the county council offices and the third-level institute, it often seems to be the beneficiary of more resources. It also benefits from peacebuilding initiatives by being closer to the border than Drogheda. This could be a case of one area of the county

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<sup>45</sup> Croke Park is the site where troops and police opened fire in 1920, killing fourteen Irish civilians, during the Irish war of independence.

monopolising funding, despite the needs of other areas, due to its power as the governing authority.

### Elusion of Peacebuilding

With the institutional sectarianism and racism project, the difficulty identified by the project co-ordinator as regards defining and tackling sectarianism is extremely telling. In terms of why it could not be effectively tackled, several observations can be made. It was stated by the co-ordinator that displaced people did not take part in the programme. Taking into account this lack of engagement, how could an understanding of how sectarianism manifests itself in Louth be fostered? In addition, the dissident republican threat, which has re-emerged in recent years, was identified as an issue, in terms of the general mood of the project. This threat could make people fearful of speaking openly about their experiences, along with perhaps making the co-ordinator uncomfortable in addressing an issue that is ever-present.

On the other hand, the lack of engagement with the issue of sectarianism could have come from the participants themselves, as it was noted that most participants in the research phase of the project felt that racism was more of a problem than sectarianism. No instances of religious sectarianism were reported throughout the research, and in turn there was very little engagement with those who could potentially have experienced it, such as the Protestant or Muslim minority. In an attempt to surpass this difficulty, the principal and general message driving the project was to appreciate diversity and open one's mind. It was stated by the co-ordinator that the hope was that the underlying message would naturally impact upon both racism and sectarianism.<sup>46</sup> As has been put forth in our first chapter, this approach is questionable when we consider that sectarianism is framed, within the Peace

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Sarah Mallon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 18/05/2011.

programme, as involving exclusively those involved in the conflict, whereby deeply ingrained prejudices and emotional notions of identity, have been bolstered and crystallised with displays of violence. With this clearly defined perception of what sectarian discrimination is, it is difficult to conceive that addressing racism, which is a problem framed as involving ethnic minorities and those uninvolved in the conflict, automatically addresses sectarianism.

Throughout the Darver project, tackling sectarianism was also an issue. In the strategic plan and action plan, sectarianism is explicitly mentioned in the project's aims, whereby encouragement will be given to build the capacity of the Peace III target groups to engage in anti-sectarian work. (Mentor: 9) However, no ex-prisoners or displaced people were involved in the project, despite the project's central task being the building of relationships between new and local communities. Although these groups have admittedly been living in Louth for quite some time, they are still considered a group that is at risk of social exclusion from mainstream society, and are thus identified as Peace III target groups. Without their inclusion, we must question how sectarianism could have been tackled in the project. In addition, despite the fact that one of the strategic aims of the project was to increase tolerance on a cross-border basis, there seems to have been very little cross-border activities within this project. According to the project co-ordinator, at one point a group from Northern Ireland stopped off in Darver on their way and took some pictures.<sup>47</sup>

Further problems emerged throughout the project when it came to including local communities in activities. This problem was identified by participants and the project co-ordinator alike. Without both new and local communities taking part, positive relationships cannot be fostered, and the project cannot fulfil its brief. One of the strategic objectives of the

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Gareth Conlon, Project Co-ordinator, Dundalk, 16/05/2011.

project is “to host sports days and offer coaching skills to new citizens thereby intensifying their level of involvement in Gaelic Games.” (Mentor: 10) This objective was criticised in the action plan by stakeholders, with the suggestion that it should be altered in order to include the local Irish community. (Mentor: 13) This is a crucial element of the project which did not seem to be altered, as centres such as African churches were the key target areas to encourage involvement in the programme.

In terms of how COC relates directly to the conflict, there was a cross-border element to the project as two of the groups interviewed attended a residential conference event in Northern Ireland, finding it to be informative and useful. Its innovative structure allowed them to network and build contacts with other community groups, also working with COC.<sup>48</sup> They reported that attendees there were given information about the history of the conflict in Northern Ireland. This project differs from our other cases, as it did not set out to tackle sectarianism. It could be argued that this approach is valid, as it worked in accordance with its aims of targeting the BME communities. However, as with both our other case projects, the Travelling Community were not included in the project.

When we attempt to ascertain why this minority group is excluded in all three instances, we are faced with the question of where it fits into society. What differentiates it from other ethnic groups on the island, who were included in the projects, is the fact that it is an indigenous group, of much the same appearance as the ‘settled’ Irish. Due to the official status of Travellers in the Republic of Ireland as a social group, it could be argued that discrimination towards them is an accepted and condoned form of racism. Their exclusion in these projects bolsters the arguments put forth in our first chapter, whereby the Peace III

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Group A, Oriel Cultural Centre, 24/05/2011.

framing of racism is predicated upon the perception that it concerns only those 'foreign' elements in society, who differ in appearance to the majority and originate elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has exposed a segment of Peace III in Louth, through the discussion of three case study projects, funded under Louth's Peace III plan. In terms of what these projects say about Peace III in Louth, common inadequacies involved the exclusion of the Travelling Community, and the avoidance of combating sectarianism. In addition, there were several common problems, identified by co-ordinators of the projects, such as too little time for planning and implementation, and a lack of synergy and communication between projects. As regards participation in the projects, the most notable impact on participants included confidence building, heightened awareness of local services, networking between local ethnic minority community groups, and funding opportunities for groups to execute their own activities. The chapter demonstrated that the three aforementioned elements of peacebuilding, that is industrialisation, politicisation and elusion, also emerge at the practice and grass-roots level of peacebuilding. In turn, this demonstrates how issues pertaining to the local organisation of peacebuilding filter into the practice of peacebuilding, such as a lack of clarity surrounding the concept of sectarianism, and the outsourced and executive nature of local ownership. Ultimately, this chapter has shown how peacebuilding, under Peace III, practically takes place, and thus completes our journey from policy to practice.

## Conclusion

The principal and overall objective of this project has been to critically assess how peacebuilding is organised, implemented and received, through the Peace programme operating in Northern Ireland and the southern border area of the Republic of Ireland. The central argument of this thesis is that the Peace programme is flawed in its endeavour to build peace, due to its impediment by three elements of the peacebuilding process: industrialisation, politicisation, and elusion. Having studied Peace III in both a regional and local setting, we can put forth several statements as regards its vision. Firstly, it demonstrates a desire to break away from the traditional understanding of the problems plaguing Northern Ireland and the border region. No longer are we attempting to deal with a negative bipolar dynamic, but a much more complex and heterogeneous society. Secondly, it takes a broad and holistic approach, demonstrating that the general purpose of the programme is to improve society as a whole, as opposed to targeting only those specific problematic issues that directly led to the conflict, or arose from it. Thirdly, it demonstrates the potential difficulty of Peace III's role as a peacebuilding programme in a 'post-conflict post-peace process' context, in its attempt to retain equilibrium between the past and the future.

In order to illustrate the central argument of this study, the progression from policy to practice has been traced and analysed, structured with the help of Lederach's leadership pyramid. This pyramid, which is an effort to construct an analytic framework of the peacebuilding process, conceptualises and frames peacebuilding as a process which concerns leaders, exclusively. The 'grassroots leadership' level is described as including actors such as local leaders and community developers. He suggests that these specific leaders are bound to the local population, through the assertion that they "understand intimately the fear and suffering with which much of the population must live" and

“witness firsthand the deep-rooted hatred and animosity on a daily basis.” (1997: 43) Lederach’s pyramid, although a neat structure within which to work, is flawed in its portrayal of the grassroots level, as it works from the assumption that the social space of the ‘local’ is a unified and integrated entity. As we have seen from our case projects, the execution of a peacebuilding initiative, with the leadership of actors such as local community developers, does not automatically denote a meaningful and engaging relationship with the local population.

### How can we define peace?

Is peace characterised by a lack of violence? Is it the development and support of healthy interpersonal social relations? Is it found in a political system that represents and is supported by its entire population? Is it how John Lennon imagines it, as a world without countries, religion, or possessions? Alternatively, can it be defined as a state of existence whereby people feel and believe that they are living in a state of peace? These questions demonstrate to what extent peace is a contested and subjective concept, intrinsically tied up with perceptions of normality and individual life experience. Galtung’s conceptualisation of a state of peace, detailed in our second chapter, forces us to question what we understand peace to be. His differentiation between what is known as a negative and positive peace forces our perception of what a state of peace is to broaden, as we look beyond apparent violence, to latent conflicts. Essentially, this forces us to question the extent to which we are living in a peaceful society and how we can define a post-conflict state. In a post-conflict context such as our case, manifest violence is generally atypical and exceptional, especially in our case county of Louth. Therefore, what is the incentive to target underlying and largely invisible attitudes? Avoidance of tackling these attitudes could in part signify an attempt to depoliticise and sensitise the road to peace, rendering it a non-confrontational process.

Richmond argues that peace is a contested concept and reality, leading to its assertion often taking the form of knowledgeable actors constructing peace for those who are not considered knowledgeable. (2007: 251) This is reflected in our case, whereby priorities for the programme, laid out by the Irish and Northern Irish authorities and the EU, are appropriated by local authoritative actors and communicated to the local community as policies which will remain more or less unchanged. Therefore, in the case of Peace III in Louth, those who describe and define peace are consultants, local executives and representatives of development organisations. Defining and shaping a vision of peace is further problematic when we consider that this period is considered as both post-conflict and post-peace process. This notion that we are already living in a state of peace makes all the more difficult the decisions as to what peacebuilding measures need to be taken.

#### How can we build peace?

Challenging the idea that the meaning of peace is a singular and universal concept opens up options for peacebuilders, by forcing the question of how peacebuilding policies could be shaped around one ideal or vision of peace. Within every peacebuilding endeavour it is thus necessary to reflect upon the type of peace that is envisioned, in order to question how one can implement it. The principal objective of the Peace programme on a whole is peace and reconciliation. In the pursuit of peace, both Peace I and II prioritised economic growth. Peace III arguably moved more towards addressing reconciliation by targeting the problematic and fractured relationships between communities. With this re-alignment came the introduction of the issue of racism, alongside sectarianism, within the programme's remit.

Racism on the island of Ireland, whether it be towards those of a different nationality, those of a different religion, or those from a different ethnic minority community, is an issue that desperately needs to be addressed and targeted. However, a programme which frames



racism and sectarianism as different issues involving different sections of society, depending on their colour, religious persuasion, and birthplace, is perhaps not the most appropriate one to do so. It must be emphasised that the inclusion of racism within Peace III is not problematic or unjustified in itself. How it has been framed from the outset and then implemented in Louth is what is problematic, in view of the fact that two of the projects found it next to impossible to deal with sectarianism. These projects therefore did not help to clarify the meaning or extent of sectarianism in Louth, or actively work on relationships concerning those who are affected by it. The potential result of this is that sectarianism, and thus some of the issues which drove the conflict and help shape its legacy, remain neglected. More attention must therefore be assigned to the terms we use to describe and frame social relations. The Catholic-Protestant, Nationalist-Unionist dynamic is directly connected to the rest of the population, affecting those who do not identify with either religious group or national ideology. A peacebuilding programme which frames sectarianism and racism as issues which affect different groups of a population thus restricts integration, and further entrenches division.

In a state of protracted violent conflict, in part motivated and sustained by ingrained notions and assertions of polarised identities, the actors involved internally rationalise their own prejudices against those considered as 'the other'. This becomes an important social process with the utilisation of tools with which to define and delineate one's own identity and place in society. Ultimately, there is comfort and familiarity in one's identity assertions. The post-conflict peacebuilding process is thus caught up in a vicious circle, whereby there is an unwillingness to abandon embedded prejudices and hatreds. It is caught up in a balancing act between the past, where violence and discrimination lies, and the future, in which we see economic recession and an increasingly multi-ethnic Ireland.

It is within this struggle to maintain balance that we find the crucial paradox of peacebuilding: to build peace one must engage meaningfully with the painful, deeply-rooted and sensitive issues of the past, whilst simultaneously maintaining a sense of hope and objectivity, in order to address these issues, and ultimately leave them behind. The image on the cover of this document, the *Hands Across the Divide* statue in Derry city, Northern Ireland, depicts two figures on a bridge with their hands outstretched across the water; not quite touching. It is an indication of an effort towards unity and peace, whilst also displaying that this has not yet, or cannot, quite be achieved. Do people truly want to alter their view of the world, put aside hesitation and join hands? It is within this question that we find what is, essentially, the 'Trouble with Peace'.

## **Explanation of Terms**

The Troubles: the Northern Irish conflict.

Six counties of Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland, the North of Ireland, the north.

Twenty six counties of the Republic of Ireland: the Republic of Ireland, the Republic, the south.

The six border counties in the Republic of Ireland (included in the Peace programme's remit): the southern border counties, the southern border area.

The border area: counties alongside the border, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Island of Ireland: Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a whole.

The Peace programme: Peace I, II, and III as a whole.

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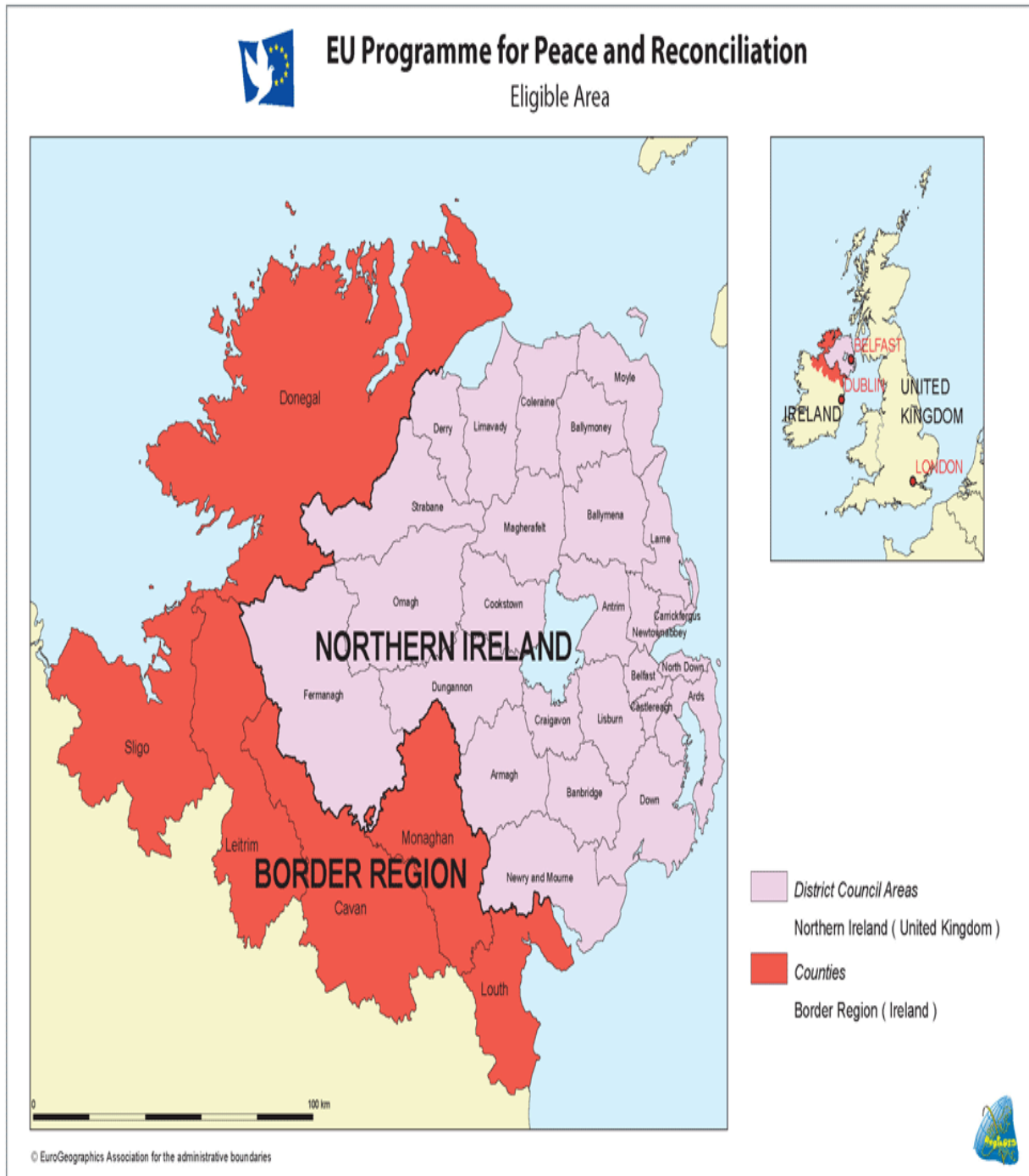
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Figure 5: Map of eligible area for Peace programme.



Source: <[http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/SEUPB\\_Image\\_Gallery/Map-eligible-area\\_PIII.sflb.ashx](http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/SEUPB_Image_Gallery/Map-eligible-area_PIII.sflb.ashx)>