

# SLIGO PEACE & RECONCILIATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

## *Aids for Peace - Baseline report March 2009*

### **1 Peace building needs analysis**

Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Committee through a process of extensive public consultation developed a Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan for Sligo (2008 – 2010).

The 'peace' plan took account of the experiences and expertise of agencies and interest groups and the learning from previous 'peace' work within the county. The peace plan also took account of other relevant research in particular the 'Reconciliation Profile Sligo County' conducted in 2006.

Below is a brief summary of the Sligo Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan focusing on the impact of the conflict on the county, a review of the evidence of need, the statement of need and feedback from consultation process contained within the Sligo 'peace' plan. These form the basis on which the 'peace building needs' for County Sligo were identified.

The 'Area SWOT' analysis contained within the Sligo Peace Plan identified a number of 'weaknesses' and 'threats' (low confidence/expertise base, difficulty in engaging with minority groups, silence) which have also been taken account of in identification of the peace building needs for Sligo County.

The Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan describes Sligo as somewhat unique in that it is the only one of six southern border counties not having a land border with NI. Despite this the county had a strong historical connection to NI (Little Belfast); this has been *'all but lost in the conflict'*. The impact of the border and the conflict on County Sligo is described as having *'a profound psychological effect leading to severed relationships, feelings of isolation and loss of social connection'* creating *'a sense of silence around issues related to the conflict'* which is manifest in a *'sense of apathy with regard to the impact the conflict might have had and to our societal responsibility for address these issues'*

The 'Review of the Evidence of Need' notes that the issue most frequently raised during consultations was racism. It notes that while there is little *'hard evidence'* available *'anecdotal evidence suggests that racism is a growing problem in communities, schools and the workplace'*. Statistical evidence points to the *'increasing religious and ethnic diversity'* within the county and in general minority communities both indigenous (travellers, displaced communities, protestant communities and political minorities) and new communities (refugees, asylum

seekers and economic migrants) often feel quite *'vulnerable'*. The *'Statement of Need'* notes that *'the increasing cultural diversity in the county presents a growing challenge to counter sectarianism and racism within and between communities in Sligo'*

Several of the consultation responses contained in Section 2 of the Sligo Peace Plan outlined the need for *'education responses'* to address issues related to sectarianism and racism and a particular need to engage young people in the process.

The review of the Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan identified the following *'peace building needs'* for Co Sligo:-

- Address the silence/apathy around the issues of sectarianism and disengagement with the NI conflict and its impact on the county
- Groups/Agencies fear of engagement in meaningful peace-building and identified need for support
- Cultural diversity awareness raising & acknowledgement of contribution of minority groups to local society
- Educational responses to deal with anti-social, racist and sectarian behaviour

## **2 Peace building relevance assessment**

A set of five strategic priorities (see below) have been identified to provide a coherent framework for addressing peace building needs as identified in the Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan and outlined above:-

1. Challenging sectarianism and promoting and further developing cross-border peace building
2. Countering racism and promoting positive attitudes to cultural diversity
3. Promoting conflict resolution and mediation
4. Supporting active participation by Peace III programme target groups in civic life
5. Developing the capacity and leadership skills of the Sligo Peace and Reconciliation Partnership Committee

Within these strategic priorities a range of cross-cutting, indicative actions have been prioritised to begin to address the identified peace building needs:-

- Good relations training/mentoring/support for key project workers
- Showcase/networking events
- Research
- Rural/Urban peace projects
- Women's peace project
- Travellers/New communities peace projects

- Culture/Arts/Heritage
  - Sport
  - Diversity Training
  - Inter-Faith Programme
  - Political/Historical Perspectives
  - Youth Education
  - Developing the capacity & leadership skills of the Peace III Partnership
- *Groups/Agencies fear of engagement in meaningful peace-building and identified need for support*

Good relations training/mentoring/support for key project workers and activity designed to develop the capacity & leadership skills of the Peace III Partnership will support agencies and projects delivering on peace objectives by providing support, training, networking opportunities and skills development through a range of tailor made training initiatives, guest speakers, discussion workshops and study visits to other projects.

- *Address the silence/apathy around the issues of sectarianism and disengagement with the NI conflict and its impact on the county*

A range of challenging programmes - Inter-Faith Programme, Political/Historical Perspectives, Rural/Urban peace projects, Women's peace project, Culture/Arts/Heritage, Sport, Research and Conflict Resolution & Mediation Training – will provide an opportunity for people to come together through a range of common interests and shared concerns to begin to build more positive relations at both a local level and across the border. These programmes will provide a space where people can begin to openly acknowledge their own experiences of the conflict and its impact on their communities.

- *Cultural diversity awareness raising & acknowledgement of contribution of minority groups to local society*

Research, Showcase/networking events, Travellers/New Communities peace projects, Diversity Training and Culture/Arts/Heritage and Sports programmes will raise awareness of cultural diversity by providing opportunities for basic awareness raising through a series of one off events alongside more focused programmes of training and challenging dialogue.

- *Educational responses to deal with anti-social, racist and sectarian behaviour*

Targeted Youth Education Projects delivered through formal networks (eg schools) and information networks (eg, youth groups) will build young peoples understanding of conflict and reconciliation. Programmes will be designed to make contact with 'hard to reach' young people and work to increase their participation in civic society.

The identified actions will be implemented through a series of partnerships/consortia bringing together agencies/organisations with an expertise in the subject matter and a knowledge and understanding of the NI conflict and its impact.

### **3 Conflict Risk Assessment**

The following potential risks in delivery of the Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan 292008-2010) have been identified:-

- Displaced people, former political prisoners & former combatants are a relatively small percentage of population, this coupled with rural dispersal may lead to potential difficulty in engaging with this target group
- Low capacity among minority ethnic groups may create difficulties in engaging with this target group
- Threat of violence from 'dissident' groups may impact on the level of cross-border engagement
- Apathy/Silence around sectarianism and disengagement from the NI situation – difficulty/risk in breaking that silence
- Loss/reduction of staff in key agencies/organisations as a result of economic downturn may impact on resources needed to deliver the project on the ground

The Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Committee will actively seek to minimise the impact of these potential risks through a process of engagement and awareness raising.

- Advocates from minority communities will be actively sought to represent their community interests on the Peace III partnership committee.
- The Peace III partnership committee will actively engage in a process of on-going development to increase their own understanding of the relevant issues and build on their own capacity and leadership skills
- The Peace III partnership will engage with a range of providers through public procurement, partner delivery and small grants schemes to deliver on a range of activities designed to 'break the silence' that has characterised the counties response to the NI conflict
- A programme of good relations training, developmental support and networking opportunities will be put in place for key project workers
- Profiling of the project, through showcase/networking events, newsletters, taster sessions and general publicity (local radio/newspapers etc) will raise awareness of the work
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of the project by development staff and external evaluator/s will ensure that potential 'risks' are identified and addressed early in the process.

- The Peace III Partnership will actively engage with supports provided by SEUPB and the Peace III Consortium. They will also engage with networking opportunities within the Southern Border Counties and the Peace III Clusters/partnerships

The Sligo Peace & Reconciliation Partnership Committee will remain aware of these potential 'risks' to the delivery of the project and sensitive to other issues outside the control of the partnership which may arise during the lifetime of the project. The Partnership is committed to the delivery of a programme of meaningful peace building (see effects assessment) within Co Sligo.

#### 4 Peace & Conflict effects assessment

NEED	Groups/agencies fear of engagement in meaningful peace-building and identified need for support		
ACTION(S)	IMPACTS	OUTPUTS/RESULTS	
<p>Support &amp; discussion workshops for staff and management engaged in delivering project</p> <p>Capacity building for Peace III Partnership Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants/organisations identifying changes in attitude towards cross-community/cross-border work</li> <li>- Participants identifying changes in personal behaviour/actions/attitudes</li> <li>- Participants meeting/working with people/organisations they wouldn't normally have an opportunity to meet/work with</li> <li>- Participants/organisations identifying increased skills and confidence in delivering peace work</li> <li>- Creation of opportunity for networking and learning from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 project actions delivered by a partnership or network</li> <li>• 30 participants</li> <li>• 16 groups/agencies participating</li> <li>• 12 events -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 residential</li> <li>- 4 cross-community and/or cross-border events/activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minimum 30% of all project participants engaging cross-border events/activities</li> <li>• Completed Research into issues related to sectarianism &amp; racism</li> <li>• Attitudinal survey</li> <li>• Monitoring/Evaluation report/s Completed</li> </ul>	

NEED	Address the silence/apathy around the issues of sectarianism and disengagement with the NI conflict and its impact on the county	
ACTION	IMPACTS	OUTPUTS/RESULTS
Political/historical perspectives project Inter-faith project Rural & urban based peace project Women and conflict Training in conflict resolution/transformation & mediation skills Culture/Heritage/Arts project Sports Project/s Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants identifying changes in attitude towards cross-community/cross-border work</li> <li>- Participants identifying changes in personal behaviour/actions/attitudes</li> <li>- Participants meeting/working with people they wouldn't normally have an opportunity to meet/work with</li> <li>- Participants identifying increased understanding and awareness of shared history and its impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 participants in Political/historical programme</li> <li>• Inter-active programme exploring the history of Sligo as a Garrison Town completed, research recorded and learning shared</li> <li>• 40 participants engaging in inter-faith project</li> <li>• 500 participants engaged in rural or urban activities</li> <li>• 60 participants in the women &amp; conflict programme</li> <li>• 40 participants engaging in conflict resolution and/or mediation training</li> <li>• 120 people participating in culture/heritage/arts project</li> <li>• Minimum 5% of participants who are from the protestant community</li> <li>• Minimum 2% of participants who are from the Displaced/ex-prisoner/combatant community</li> <li>• Completed Research into issues related to sectarianism &amp; racism</li> <li>• Attitudinal survey</li> <li>• Monitoring/Evaluation report/s completed</li> </ul>

NEED	Cultural diversity awareness raising & acknowledgement of contribution of minority groups to local society	
ACTION	MPACTS	OUTPUTS/RESULTS
Showcase/networking events Diversity training – community/voluntary groups and workplace New Communities Peace Action Travellers Peace Action Culture/Heritage/Arts project Sports Project/s Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants identifying changes in attitude towards cross-community/cross-border work</li> <li>- Participants identifying changes in personal behaviour/actions/attitudes</li> <li>- Participants meeting/working with people they wouldn't normally have an opportunity to meet/work with</li> <li>- Participants demonstrating an increased awareness/understanding of minority perspectives and diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 showcase/networking events</li> <li>• 3000 attendees at showcase/networking events</li> <li>• 2 showcase/networking events receiving media coverage</li> <li>• 500 participants engaged in awareness raising activities</li> <li>• 80 participants engaged in cultural diversity training programmes</li> <li>• Minimum 5% of participants who are from the Travelling community</li> <li>• Minimum 9% of participants who are of non-Irish nationality</li> <li>• Completed Research into issues related to sectarianism and racism</li> <li>• Attitudinal survey</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Evaluation report/s completed</li> </ul>

NEED	Educational response to deal with anti-social, racist and sectarian behaviour		
ACTION	IMPACTS	OUTPUTS/RESULTS	
<p>Youth/education anti-racism/anti-sectarian programme</p> <p>Youth interventions/initiatives designed to build relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants identifying changes in personal behaviour/actions/attitudes</li> <li>- Participants demonstrating an increased awareness/understanding of minority perspectives and diversity</li> <li>- Participants meeting/working with people they wouldn't normally have an opportunity to meet/work with</li> <li>- Participants demonstrating an increased awareness/understanding of minority perspectives and diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 formal youth education programme designed and delivered engaging with a minimum of 60 Participants</li> <li>• 10 youth initiatives delivered engaging with a minimum of 150 participants</li> <li>• 200 children engaged in inter-school project/s</li> <li>• 2 initiatives involving diversity training for youth leaders</li> <li>• Minimum 25% of all project participants who are young people aged 25 and under</li> <li>• Completed Research into issues related to sectarianism and racism</li> <li>• Attitudinal survey</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Evaluation report/s completed</li> </ul>	