



SUBMISSION ON “A SHARED FUTURE” CONSULTATION PAPER

by

CROSS-BORDER CONSORTIUM

of

**Area Development Management Limited
Combat Poverty Agency
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
Co-operation Ireland**

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Who is Making this Submission?

Since 1994, the partners of this **Cross-Border Consortium** – Area Development Management Limited (ADM), the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA), the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI, formerly the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust) have, separately, had responsibility for the implementation of a variety of measures of the European Union PEACE 1 and PEACE 2 Programmes in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland. Our organisations have also been working together in partnership to administer some of the cross-border measures of PEACE 1 and PEACE 2. In addition, each Cross-border Consortium partner organisation has, independently of the Peace Programmes, pursued its own mission; addressing variously the causes of economic disadvantage, social and civic exclusion and community divisions in the island of Ireland.

Area Development Management (ADM) is a company established in 1992 by the Irish Government in agreement with the European Commission. ADM's mission is to support integrated local economic and social development through managing Programmes targeted at countering disadvantage and exclusion, and promoting reconciliation and equality.

The aim of **Combat Poverty (CPA)** is to promote a just and inclusive society by working for the prevention and elimination of poverty and social exclusion. Combat Poverty is a statutory agency established under the Combat Poverty Agency Act 1986, which sets out the Agency's four general functions: policy advice, project support and innovation, research, and public education.

The **Community Foundation for Northern Ireland** works to support people, strengthen communities and build peace in the divided communities of Northern Ireland. Specifically its functions include: funding and supporting community-based action; raising funds from a wide range of donors who wish to support and be associated with this work; policy and publications drawing on collective experience, research, and evaluation, to influence policy development.

Co-operation Ireland (CI) is a voluntary organisation committed to the belief that a lasting peace can only be achieved when people respect, trust and understand one another. Its aim is to promote improved relations between the people of Northern Ireland and of the Republic of Ireland. Co-operation Ireland's activities target young people, community groups, those involved in business, tourism and agriculture, as well as politicians and the media.

ADM and the CPA, through an ADM/CPA office in Monaghan, were responsible for administering 13 measures under Peace 1. In partnership with the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust they administered a further cross-border measure. Under Peace 2 ADM/CPA are implementing 10 measures in Peace 2 under the supervision of a Joint Management Committee (JMC). In partnership with the CFNI and CI they administer a further two cross-border measures under the supervision of a Cross-Border Management Committee (CBMC).

The rich experience of the separate organisations has been further developed through practical co-operation and, just as importantly, the cross-fertilisation of ideas and sharing of the lessons learned from our own work, and from the work of the hundreds of projects which our organisations have supported — financially and developmentally — through Peace 1 and 2.

From our individual remits and our collaborative work we believe we are well-placed to make an informed contribution to the Consultation Paper on Improving Relations in Northern Ireland.

Welcome for the Consultation Paper and Process

The Cross-Border Consortium welcomes the production of the Consultation Paper and the associated Consultation Process. Ample time has been given to open up the debate and to make a considered response.

The Cross-Border Consortium has 6 key points to make in response to the Consultation Paper.

6 Key Points

1. Vision

- The Cross-Border Consortium welcomes the vision statement in the document ie. *Our vision of Northern Ireland is of a peaceful society in which everyone can freely and fully participate, achieve their full potential, and live free from poverty. We want a fair and effective system of government, underpinned by rights that are guaranteed for all, and responsibilities that all must share. We wish to support dialogue, and to foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity.*
- We would suggest that the vision statement should refer not only to Northern Ireland, but also to the “island of Ireland”.
- While the vision statement is laudable this vision is not elaborated through-out the document, where the focus is on community relations and specifically on the Protestant and Catholic communities. While important, this is a very narrow focus. The document should set out principles on rights, citizenship, equality, inclusion, culture, participation, difference and diversity and elaborate on these and the implications of working to achieve them through-out the document.
- Reference to relevant UN and EU Conventions would be helpful here.

2. Building Peace

- Building peace on the island of Ireland is about more than recognising the divisions between the two communities and promoting community relations. There needs to be an exploration of what the conflict was about and in this

context to develop a common narrative on the conflict. We need to move towards a shared understanding of the conflict, a shared understanding its causes and a shared understanding of the motivations of those who got involved in it.

- There is also a need to recognise that we are trying to build a peaceful society on the island of Ireland and this requires the efforts of everyone. The Lederach Framework is useful here.
- Lederach's work seeks to identify the elements of peace building in a post-conflict situation. His model suggests a peace building process within which reconciliation can be fostered.
- An important element in the Lederach Model is the importance of the 3 levels of conflict resolution and the interdependence of the levels ie. no one level can achieve reconciliation on its own.
- While much has been achieved at grassroots level, for example through the Peace Programmes, strong political leadership is required to drive forward peace making in Ireland. There is also an important role for the middle range leaders, such as the social partners and opinion formers, which needs to be recognised.



Lederach's Model of Transformation

3. The Republic of Ireland

- There is only very limited recognition in the document (passing reference in para. 3.9) of the wider perspective outside of the 6 counties of Northern Ireland.

- The conflict has impacted on the whole of the island of Ireland and in the six Border Counties in particular, as well as in Northern Ireland. To work towards building peace on the island of Ireland there is a need to recognise this and the important contribution that the people and institutions in the Republic of Ireland can make.
- This also places an onus on the institutions and society in the Republic of Ireland to make it a welcoming place for people from Northern Ireland to live, work and visit.
- There should be an acknowledgement of the contribution of the Peace Programmes to peace building.
- There should also be reference to the wider European dimension and how Northern Ireland and Ireland fits within this, and the contribution of Europe to building peace in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

4. A Shared and Pluralist Society

- The document notes that in moving forward we should aim for a shared and pluralist society. We agree with this.
- However, this requires that we move beyond the situation where everyone is classified as Protestant or Catholic or in limited circumstances as “other”. In moving forward we need to be more creative and less rigid in how we collect information to ensure equality across the range of relevant domains.
- There is also a need to recognise that the conflict has impacted across society and across the social strata. While the needs are undoubtedly greater in disadvantaged areas¹, in building long-term peace there is a need to engage with people across the socio-economic spectrum.
- Furthermore, there is a need to recognise the important role of NGOs in building peace – this is largely absent from the document.

5. Policy Context

- There is a need to more fully recognise the range of policy instruments and legislation in place, which is already working towards achieving a better society on the island of Ireland.
- Relevant policy and legislation which come to mind is the raft of equality legislation, the Targeting Social Need initiative and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy in the Republic of Ireland as well as the National Development Plan, the

¹ The Combat Poverty Agency and ADM/CPA have currently commissioned a study on the relationships between poverty and conflict.

Partnership Agreement *Sustaining Progress* and Building Sustainable Progress (BSP) in Northern Ireland.

- A possible way to move this agenda forward would be to require policy makers to assess the impact of their policies on peace building - this would require the development of a “peace proofing” concept, which could be integrated with other proofing approaches eg. gender, poverty, equality. In addition, criteria for “non-tangible community benefits” could be included in the “Green Book” on guidelines for economic appraisal of government investment.

6. Who Should Deliver?

- We welcome the focus on the three strands of local/community, regional and central government.
- We believe that the Northern Ireland Civic Forum has the potential to work well, as all strands of society come together within this Forum. However, this should be complemented by a North/South Consultative Body.
- It is important that an independent body, such as the Community Relations Council, would have responsibility for leading on this work. Given the importance of the work it needs to be adequately resourced to do so.
- However, there remains an onus on government departments, in particular, to be fully committed to peace building and reconciliation. In this context it may be useful for government departments in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to liaise on a more regular basis on issues of common interest, particularly in relation to peace building. The establishment of north/south units may be worthy of consideration in this regard.

REFERENCES

Combat Poverty Agency et al. (2002) *Building Peace and Reconciliation: Learning from the Peace and Reconciliation Programme*. Paper prepared by Combat Poverty, ADM, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland and Co-operation Ireland.

EU Cross-Border Management Committee (2003) *Building Peace and Reconciliation Post 2006*. Report prepared by PSc Management Consultants (Publication pending).