

COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES TO PEACE BUILDING

The Peace Network recently hosted a seminar and workshop on 'Community based Approaches to Peace Building', on 23 November in San Sebastian.

Designed to discuss some of the most effective community focussed approaches to effective peace building, the event illustrated how EU PEACE funding has supported local communities in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

Attracting a number of non-governmental organisations, universities, local authorities and government officials the event underlined the importance of supporting and developing local community voices as part of peace building.

Opening the seminar Markel Olano, Director General of the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa said:

“Developing the capacity for different communities to express their views in a legitimate and productive manner is one of the most important building blocks in the creation of a peaceful and stable society. This combined with the development of effective working relationships between different communities is essential for a region to grow and prosper.”

At the event Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council discussed the practical implications of reconciliation on the ground and how the peace programme has moved from social inclusion to an enhanced focus on reconciliation activities and initiatives.

Angela Holohan from the Donegal Community Workers Co-operative also discussed how the concept of partnership working was an integral part of the successful delivery of the three EU funded PEACE Programmes, from 1995 to the current programming period 2007-2013.

Speaking at the seminar Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body said:

“Capacity building and the development of innovative partnership working lies at the heart of the PEACE Programmes. Over the years the programmes have supported a number of projects which have had a real and tangible impact on strengthening peace and reconciliation within Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

“The PEACE Network is an excellent vehicle through which we can share our experiences with European neighbours.”

The SEUPB acts as the secretariat for the Peace Network, which was set up to effectively communicate the experience of managing, implementing and evaluating EU PEACE funding in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

Community based approaches to peace building is just one of 13 different pre-determined themes that the Network is working through as it facilitates the learning, exchange and transfer of knowledge amongst its growing number of participants.

For more information about the Peace Network please visit www.seupb.eu

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