

Special EU Programmes Body

Project Case Study

Programme:
PEACE III

Theme:
**Developing Key Institutional
Capacities**

Funding:
€551,346.70

Lead Partner:
Queen's University Belfast

Website:
[http://www.qub.ac.uk/
research-centres/
PlanningforSpatialReconciliation](http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/PlanningforSpatialReconciliation)

Project contact:
[Samantha.livingstone@qub.
ac.uk](mailto:Samantha.livingstone@qub.ac.uk)

Geographical area:
Regional

Planning for Spatial Reconciliation

Spatial divisions along religious and political lines have intensified in Northern Ireland over the last 40 years. Recently, additional layers of social division have become even more pronounced, particularly in Belfast.

Preliminary surveys indicate that all the currently vacant and derelict land within a 20 minute walk from Belfast city centre is equal to approximately 265 football pitches. The redevelopment of this land is made more challenging due to segregation and deprivation in neighbouring communities. Our built environment has the capacity to affect the way we interact with spaces and one another. The planning of towns and cities has, therefore, a significant role to play in the peace and reconciliation process.

The Planning for Spatial Reconciliation project addresses some of the aspects of the current planning model which impact negatively on peace-building, allowing traditional, and, indeed new, spatial division to persist. The plan aims to contribute to the rethinking and re-modelling of the current planning system by investigating innovative approaches to spatial and community planning that can

assist the ongoing process of peace-building. These aspects include the failure to recognise and address spatial segregation and social division; a limited capacity to deal with the duplication of services and amenities within divided settlements; or a concentration on the technical aspects of 'land use planning' in detriment of a broader strategic planning.

Despite this situation, a planned new form of local governance provides the potential for a more integrated approach; implementation of new legislation is set to considerably change the forms of planning; and a partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the Department of the Environment allows for a unique combination of expertise.

Key Project Outputs

Key stages in the EU-funded Planning for Spatial Reconciliation project include establishing a knowledge base through research, enabling community participation in long-term planning and facilitating institutional change. The initiative will also include a number of exploratory pilot projects in NI to test how communities can employ the new planning processes to deal with issues of segregation, deprivation and disconnection.

