



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

Peace 
EUROPEAN UNION
Northern Ireland - Ireland
European Regional Development Fund


LCDDC
Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil
Dhún na nGall
Donegal Local Community Development
Committee

PEACEPLUS PLAN

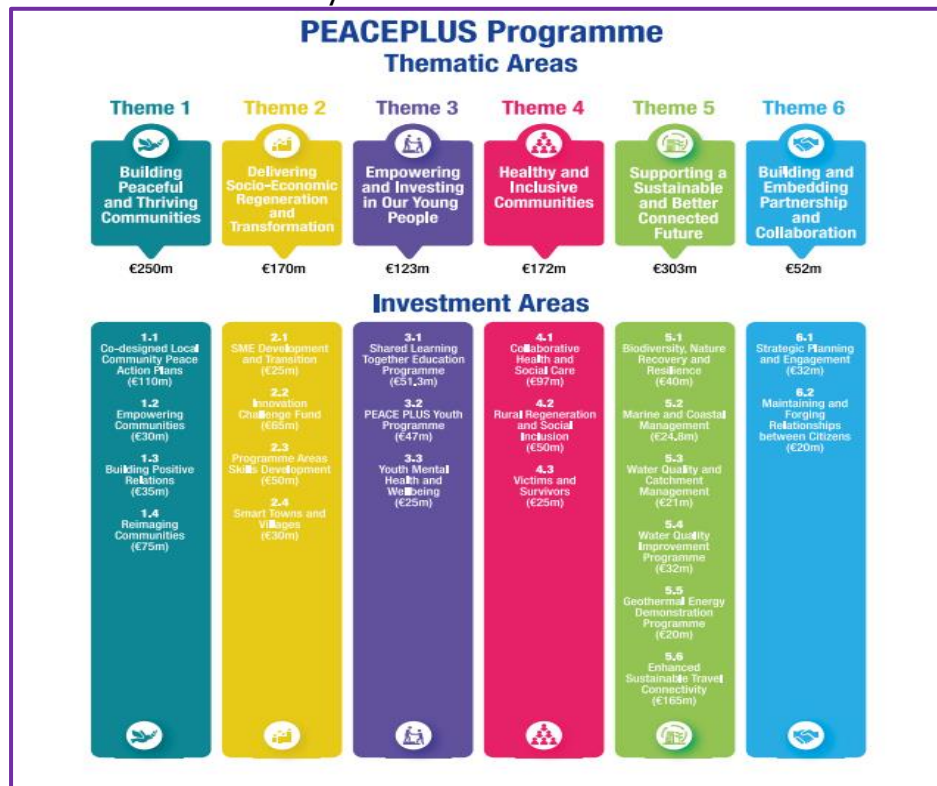
INDICATIVE REPORT

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BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The PEACEPLUS Programme builds on the investment of the EU in peace building in Ireland and Northern Ireland since 1995 and before. The Programme, once concluded in 2027, will represent 32 years of continuous funding in promoting peace and reconciliation by the EU.



The current iteration of the PEACE Programme represents a €1.1 billion investment in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, with an indicative budget under theme 1.1 of the overall programme of €7,635,395 million for Donegal, an increase of 37.6% on the PEACE IV allocation.

The county may benefit from further investment through other aspects of the PEACE Programme. These other aspects are outlined in the table provided and available on the SEUPB website, including a focus on investment areas such as SME development, youth and mental health, rural regeneration, biodiversity, marine and coastal management, and smarter towns and villages. All these opportunities and others throughout the programme should be of particular interest to Donegal given its background, strengths, and challenges. The peace programme includes six over-arching themes and 22 investment areas.

Overall, the peace programme wishes to utilise the opportunities provided by the peace process to date, as the region enters the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and beyond; and continues to address the changing needs of that process. This includes not just the development of relationships and promotion of reconciliation, but long-standing and widespread needs around social and economic regeneration, and issues that affect rural and urban areas as well as communities living close to the border.

Under Theme 1.1, Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans, with €110 million allocated across 17 local authority areas, Donegal County has been allocated an indicative sum of €7,635,395 million for Donegal, an increase of 37.6% on the PEACE IV allocation.

Performance Framework

The Investment Area 1.1 Performance Framework:

- Output Indicator: 17 PEACE PLUS Action Plans (One PEACEPLUS Action Plan for Donegal)
- Result Indicator: Target number of people from different communities engaged Jointly in the PEACEPLUS Action Plan's (this is based on the indicative Financial Allocation €7,635,395)

The Plan will be centred around three core themes

- o Local Community regeneration and transformation
- o Thriving and peaceful communities
- o Building respect for all cultural identities

The PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan provides the scope to incorporate projects which will span across a range of different sectors and activities including:

- o Youth Development Programmes
- o Health and Wellbeing
- o Community Regeneration Projects
- o Redevelopment and Reimaging of new and existing community facilities for shared usage
- o Initiatives to building Positive Relations
- o Social Innovation/ Enterprise Initiatives
- o Education and Skills Development Programmes
- o Programmes that increase social inclusion and promotes civil leadership

The formulation of the Co-Design Action Plan for Donegal will enable and empower local community partnerships, to select and deliver priority projects on a cross-community basis which will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and will make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation

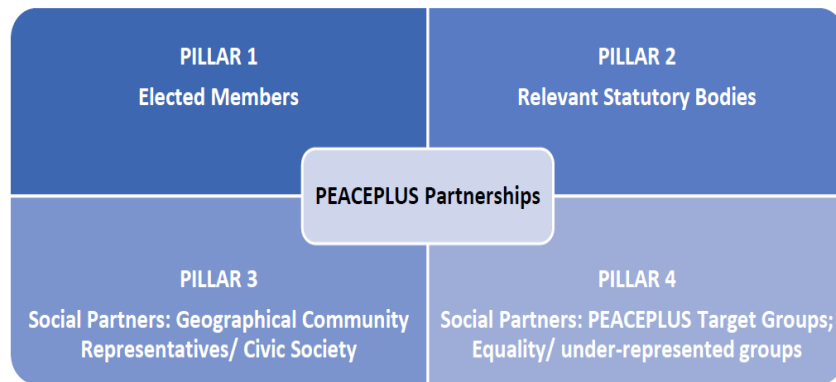
Peace Plus Partnership Framework

As part of the PEACEPLUS Programme there is a requirement to establish a PEACEPLUS Partnership in each Local Authority Area. Donegal County Council established a PEACEPLUS Partnership as a sub-structure of the Local Community Development Committee as was the position under Peace IV. The principal role of this Partnership is to oversee the design and implementation of a co-designed process in the County which will be used to inform the development of an overarching PEACEPLUS Action Plan.

The Local Community Development Committee agreed the establishment of the PEACEPLUS Partnership for Donegal of 28 members from across four membership pillars:

- (5) Elected Members from each Municipal District and the Chief Executive or his/her nominee (1)
- (5) Nominated public sector representatives
- (7) Social partners representing the different geographies of the county (e.g., Municipal Districts area or county wide)
- (10) Social partners representing PEACEPLUS and other social inclusion PPN Target Groups

Figure 1: PEACEPLUS Partnership – four recommended membership pillars for inclusion



Process

The Donegal Peace Partnership is tasked by SEUPB with overseeing the co-design and delivery of the peace plan for the

county. The Partnership will ensure that the plan they adopt will be consistent with and complement, existing country-wide and national plans and strategies.

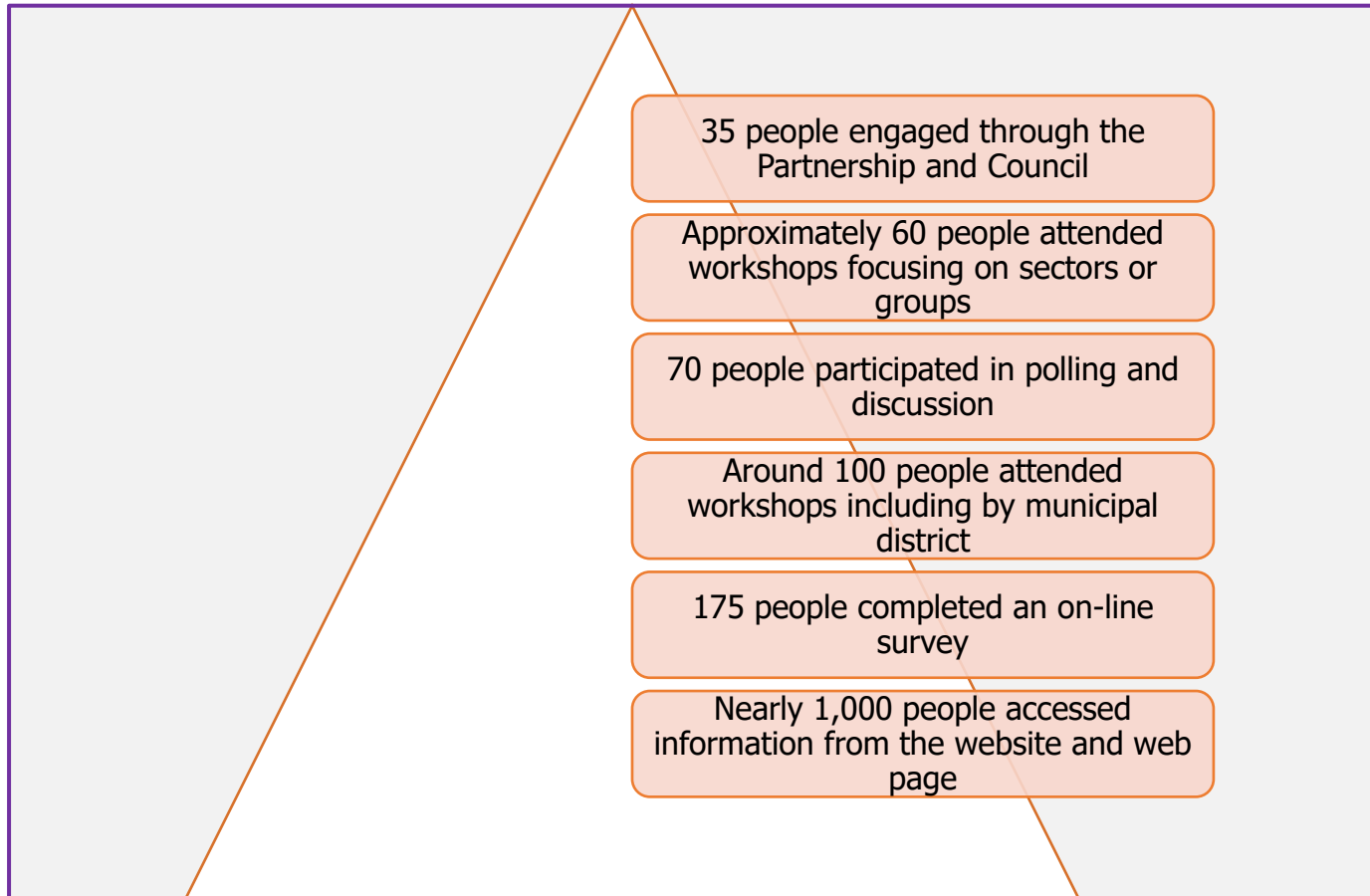
The Partnership is also reflective of the community with elected representatives and stakeholders from the most relevant public agencies. It also has representatives from those organisations that work with some of the minority groups and people that PEACEPLUS would particularly like to ensure are included in the delivery of the peace plan.

The first phase of consultation was carried out between March and April 2023. The process involved approximately 300 people and organisations including the activities below.

Consultation included:

- Launch of the consultation process.
- Sessions with Donegal County Councillors and the Donegal County Peace Partnership.
- Workshops in each municipal district.
- Workshops targeting minority and equality protected grounds people and organisations.
- One to one meetings where relevant.
- A session with Council staff.
- An on-line survey.
- Polling at workshops.
- Social media contributions.

During these outreach activities participation to date has included:



More than 300 people have been involved directly in consultation to date.

Feedback, conclusions, and recommendations on conceptual projects arising from the consultation are included below.

What Happens Next?

The Donegal County PEACEPLUS Partnership has agreed the broad outline of the conceptual activities in this document.

The next stages are:

0 A second series of workshops will be held to a) consult with the community that the conceptual activities are appropriate, and b) outline to communities the SEUPB peace plan template and ask communities to start to work up their own suggested delivery projects. By this stage it is anticipated the submission template from SEUPB will be available.

0 A third series of workshops, probably by area and theme, will put flesh to the conceptual ideas preferably through the worked-up ideas from communities and efforts will be made to reach a consensus on the template submissions for the peace plan.



- 0 The peace plan will be submitted to SEUPB within six months of their opening for peace plan submission – expected to be May-June 2023, with peace plans therefore having to be submitted by November-December 2023.
- 0 Potential for the Partnership to host pre-tendering awareness, information and support sessions for community organisations interested in tendering for delivery of PEACEPLUS projects.
- 0 If the peace plan is approved, the Partnership will tender for projects related to the peace plan submissions.
- 0 Successful and unsuccessful projects will be informed of the result of tenders and successful projects will commence. This is not expected to be before spring 2024.

Key Issues

Key issues include:

- o There are many different aspects of the peace programme that organisations may benefit from beyond the 1.1 theme for the local plan.
- o The indicative allocation for the county for theme 1.1 is €7,635,395 million including administrative costs.
- o The peace plan for the county is likely to have to be submitted by November-December 2023.
- o It is not anticipated that funding will be available until spring 2024.

CONTEXT

Donegal has a unique history that feeds in to a strong and unequalled culture and heritage. The county underwent a social, economic, and administrative jolt with partition in the 1920s and subsequent cross border and inter community violence, and challenges of the consequence of partition.

The county has a physically challenging location on the island anyway. While there are major benefits from its the location the county felt remote relative to the rest of the then Irish Free State. This led to ongoing challenges from the 1920s that were exacerbated further during the recent conflict given the county's unique demography and location.

During the recent Troubles the county was affected by direct violence which increased further the economic and social challenges it faced. On the other hand, the county was often considered a refuge from the violence in Northern Ireland by people from all backgrounds and continued to be a tourist and visitor destination.

While considered locally as a “forgotten county” it was dramatically affected by the conflict and by its geographic location. Yet, or maybe partly because of its location, the county has retained much of its unique cultural identity.

The PEACEPLUS Programme therefore is warmly welcomed in the county as a recognition of how the county has been detrimentally affected by the Troubles and how it continues to struggle with the long-term consequences. Legacy issues remain while the county's potential is still under-utilised partly because of the Troubles.

That potential and those ongoing challenges are reflected in this Peace Plan and in the conceptual ideas identified for the PEACEPLUS Programme going forward.

Context for the County

Donegal has a population of 166,321 people mainly concentrated in the north and east of the county and around the coast. By municipal district there is a significant difference in populations: Letterkenny-Milford MD has 28% of people (46,527), Inishowen MD 24% (40,265), Donegal 17% (27,795), Lifford-Stranorlar 16% (26,722), and Glenties 15% (25,012).

Around 16% of the population are 65 years old or more, around 25,000 people. There is a higher than average proportion of older people in the west of the county, often reaching 23% of people in parts of Glenties MD and Donegal MD.¹

¹ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023
p6

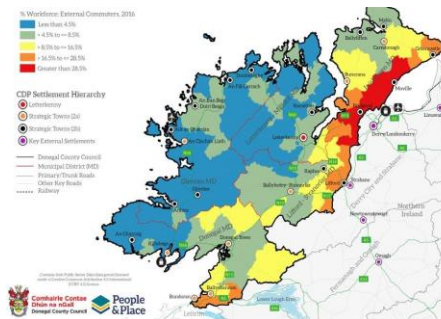
Letterkenny is the largest urban centre with a population of nearly 20,000 that has grown by 28% since 2011. The growth of population in the Letterkenny-Derry gateway is considered a platform for the growth of small rural economies. Donegal also has 13 inhabited islands with around 800 residents.²

Around 41% of the county is considered rural across all MDs but especially Glenties MD, Donegal MD, and Inishowen MD.

Much of the county borders Northern Ireland – 84% (Derry City and Strabane or Fermanagh Omagh Council areas) while the remainder borders Leitrim. The outworking of Brexit is therefore as significant to Donegal as any place on the island.

The proportion of people living in Donegal as external commuters (working outside the county) is reasonably high in the east of the county (more than 16% in areas around

Derry/Londonderry) while in the west of the county as a whole it is often less than 4.5%. Nearly 3,000 people travel to Derry City close to five times higher



than the next highest destination for external workers, Tyrone with 612 people.³

Overall, 69% of the county indicate that they are Irish language speakers; and the Donegal Gaeltacht has a population of nearly 25,000 people estimated to be nearly a quarter of all the Gaeltacht population in Ireland.⁴ Its location means that a rich social and cultural heritage has been retained.

However, the supplementary census statistics show that 11.3% of the Donegal population has a non-Irish nationality⁵ – and this is increasing in number. This was one of the reasons why Donegal County Council supported the development of a strategy for black and minority ethnic inclusion in 2021.⁶ This includes the 350 recognised Traveller families or 1,221 individual Travellers.⁷ The Traveller population is spread throughout the county.⁸

² Donegal Local Development Strategy, p25

³ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023 p41-43

⁴ Donegal Local Economic Community Plan, County profile 2016-2022, pp6-10

⁵ Donegal Local Development Strategy, p27

⁶ Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion, a strategy for County Donegal 2021-2026, p3

⁷ Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion, a strategy for County Donegal 2021-2026, p6

⁸ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023 p16

Donegal is the second highest destination for Ukrainian refugees by county in Ireland – 5,098 people or 7.19% of all Ukrainian refugees in Ireland. Donegal has around 3% of the total population of Ireland.⁹

There have already been several major developments in the last few years in the county. This has included Killybegs town centre regeneration and the regeneration of Burtonport Arranmore Harbour. Over 100 projects have been funded through the LEADER Programme and over 400 projects a year benefit from Council funding through the Members Development Fund, meaning over 600 projects are supported with €3.7million under the development fund. Leading festivals have been supported by Council and other agencies while tourist projects have been supported including Bunagee Marine Development, Wild Atlantic Way signature points, and Fanad Lighthouse. The Council has also supported €4.5million on improvements to social housing and €1.5million has been secured for a digital innovation hub.¹⁰

However, there is some stagnation identified in some urban locations including in town centres with just four of 26 main settlements having acceptable levels of vacancy/derelict properties.¹¹

It is recognised that given its size and weak urban structure with a low population density providing and accessing services

⁹ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023 p43

¹⁰ Donegal County Council Corporate plan, p5

can be difficult, and there is high dependence on a road-based transport system.¹²

According to the Haase Pratschke relative deprivation index,

Donegal is the second most deprived Council area in Ireland and the key drivers of that deprivation are low educational achievement and higher than average male unemployment. The highest rates of deprivation in the county are in the central and western parts of the county.¹³

Arrivals by Local Authority, as of February 2023

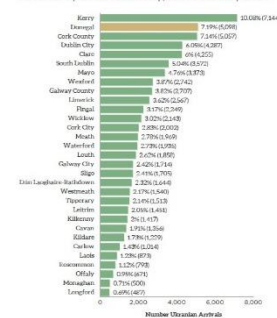


Figure 2.3 - Ukrainian Arrivals by Local Authority, 2022 (Source: CSO)

Arrivals by Donegal Local Electoral Area (LEA) as of February 2023

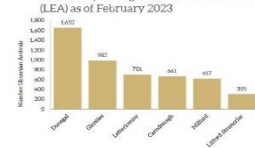


Figure 2.4 - Number of Ukrainian Arrivals by LEA, 2022 (Source: CSO)

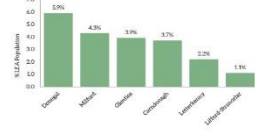


Figure 2.5 - % Ukrainian Arrivals by LEA, 2022 (Source: CSO)

¹¹ Donegal Local Development Strategy, p27

¹² Donegal Local Economic Community Plan, County profile 2016-2022, p11

¹³ Donegal Local Economic Community Plan, County profile 2016-2022, p31

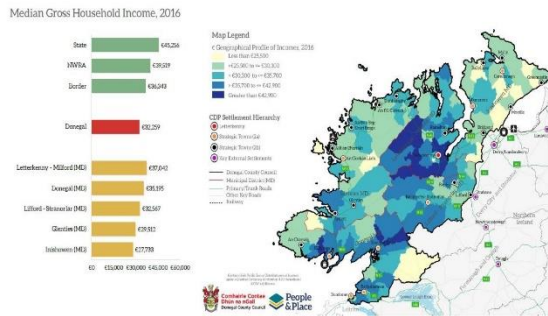


Figure 4.27 - Median Gross Household Income, 2016 (Source: CSO) Map 4.12 - Median Gross Household Income, 2016 (Source: CSO)

The geographic profile of income across the county shows a higher income in central and eastern parts of the county compared to western and northern parts as demonstrated in the map. The darker colours show an income of €42k compared to the lightest colours of less than €25k.¹⁴

Overall, 14.4% people in the county are designated as having a disability or 22,955 people spread throughout the county¹⁵ but with an emphasis on the west which also has a proportionately older population.

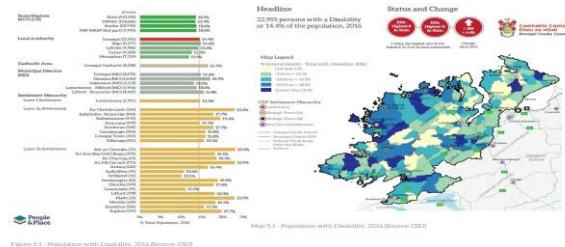


Figure 5.3 - Population with Disability, 2016 (Source: CSO)

There is a significant and numerous natural heritage and wildlife areas of high quality and good

reputation. These include Glenveagh National Park, one of just six found in Ireland as a whole. There are many other unique cultural and heritage sites and an impressive array of publicly and community owned sites promoting history including 13 public libraries, 17 national monuments, 474 protected structures, 47 special areas of conservation, 26 special protection areas, 14 natural history areas, ten nature reserves, six wildflower sanctuaries, and four wetland sites. There are several renowned festivals and annual events.

PEACE Related Groupings

The strategy for black and minority ethnic inclusion in the county focuses on full participation in all areas of society, recognition of cultural diversity and the elimination of racism. Themes and dimensions for the strategy include:

- Respect, ensuring relationships of care between people and communities.
- Representation, that people from minority ethnic communities have a say in decisions.
- Recognition for cultural diversity that are flexible to needs.
- Access to key resources, including employment, education, and health as well as cultural spaces.¹⁶

¹⁴ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023 p58

¹⁵ People and Place, Donegal County Council, Socio-Economic profile, 2023 p64

¹⁶ Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion, a strategy for County Donegal 2021-2026, p7

The Irish Traveller and Roma Inclusion strategy emphasises the need to protect cultural identity, education and employment, anti-discrimination and equality, and children and youth. Traveller and Roma communities preferred to emphasise inclusion as well as integration in how they are involved in activities.

As with the strategy for inclusion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds key issues include engagement, involvement, access to resources, personal development and visibility and valuing of diversity.

The county has 174 primary schools with nearly 20,000 pupils and 27 post-primary schools with around 13,000 students. A further 5,500 students attend third level institutions including over 2,000 at Letterkenny Institute of Technology.¹⁷

Educational achievement in the county varies across municipal districts and between the east and west of the county. Higher educational attainment levels are evident in the east.¹⁸

A range of actions have already been identified as being important for supporting rural youth. They include training to support youth entrepreneurship, life-skills training, promoting positive mental health and addressing isolation, provision of more recreational and social facilities, and rural transport initiatives.¹⁹

¹⁷ Donegal County Council Corporate plan, p12

¹⁸ Donegal Local Development Strategy, p28

The Council already recognises the potential and importance of its relationships across the border through the North West Development Group, the North West Strategic Growth Partnership, and other initiatives and projects. The cross-border work requires further critical mass in its work to increase credibility and impact.

Positive Peace

One of the challenges of the last 25 years has been to move Ireland and Northern Ireland from a negative peace (the absence of violence) to a positive peace (creating positive attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peace).

¹⁹ Donegal Local Development Strategy, p68

According to the Global Peace Index, the eight pillars of creating a positive peace include six that are directly relevant to the wider context of peace building. The six most impactful for the PEACE programme are:



The other two of the six pillars are low levels of corruption and a sound business environment.²⁰

Additionally, peace building and reconciliation are recognised as highly cost-effective activities while requiring ongoing investment. It is estimated that the cost of not undertaking

²⁰ Global Peace Index, 2019

peace building is x16 given subsequent likely social, economic and security costs.²¹

A positive peace, therefore, is also acknowledging the cost-effective nature of reconciliation work, leads to knock-on desirable socio-economic benefits including economic performance, social inclusion and more ambitious policy making.

PEACE Programme

The strategic context for the PEACE Programme is important and sometimes overlooked. It was the PEACE Programme that generated one of the best definitions yet of reconciliation that is at the heart of its delivery and has resonance for other related programmes including on good relations. These reconciliation criteria are:

1. Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society

Challenging political and civic leaders to agree a vision of a shared future requiring the involvement of the whole society, and which is interdependent, just, equitable, open, and diverse.

2. Acknowledging and dealing with the past

Acknowledging the hurt, losses, truths and suffering of the past including individuals and institutions.

²¹ Global Peace Index calculation, 2019

3. Building positive relationships

Relationship building or renewal following violent conflict addressing issues of trust, prejudice, intolerance in this process, resulting in accepting commonalities and differences, and embracing and engaging with those who are different.

4. Significant cultural and attitudinal change

Changes in how people relate to, and their attitudes towards, one another where each citizen becomes an active participant in society and feels a sense of belonging.

5. Substantial social, economic, and political change

The social, economic, and political structures which gave rise to the conflict and estrangement are identified, reconstructed, or addressed, and transformed.

The peace plan is an important part of the reconciliation process in the county, therefore, which is more than just about cross community relationships. The impact of economic and social deprivation, changing structures that estranged people, encouraging a sense of belonging of all including those people and communities feeling estranged (before, during or after the conflict), acknowledgement and a common vision, are all critical elements. These are also important because Ireland in

²² A Working Definition of Reconciliation, Hamber and Kelly, 2004, p4

2023 is different to the Ireland of 1995 when the peace programme started; and Donegal has unique challenges given its location and the impact of the Troubles. This iteration of the peace programme therefore should explore the benefits and challenges of a changing demography and bring a new lens on what peace and reconciliation may look like in the years ahead.

Perhaps just as significantly, the Hamber and Kelly definition also recognises the reconciliation paradox in the conflict between an acknowledgement of a painful and harmful past while searching for a longer term and interdependent future.²²

As the PEACE Programme focuses on challenging racism and sectarianism the definitions of each are important.

Racism

Racism is defined in many ways in different sources, but the fundamentals come back to:

- Feelings of inherent superiority based on race.
- Prejudice and disrespect.
- The continued play out of issues at a local level through things like graffiti and vocalisation of prejudice.
- Systemic or institutional racism developed sometimes over a prolonged period.

- Subsequent issues around decision-making processes, lack of involvement in decision-making and lack of recognition of contributions made.

As a result, the peace plan may be expected to include reference to:

- Systems and procedures by agencies and others that may include unconscious bias.
- Capacity building on every day or systemic racism and sectarianism.
- Identification of role models.
- Dialogues on the consequence of racism and how to challenge it.

Sectarianism

Sectarianism is defined in many ways in different sources, but the fundamentals come back to:

- Narrow-minded or parochial attitudes toward people of different faith beliefs.
- Being confined to the limits of a particular denomination or being biased toward people and beliefs of a particular denomination.
- Sectarianism in Ireland is often related to people from a Protestant or Catholic background but could equally relate to differences between people of other faith backgrounds.
- There are often links from the denomination to other cultural, historical, and political differences.

As a result, the peace plan may be expected to include reference to:

- Inter faith collaboration because while there can be a diluted relationship between religion and political, historical and cultural differences, nevertheless it can still play a part even if those differences are increasingly less clear in a county such as Donegal.
- Parochialism or limited engagement and loyalty locally is important to sectarianism, and so the benefit of looking beyond the local and exploring good practice elsewhere can be important.

Key Issues

Key issues in this section include:

- Geographic location has always been a factor affecting the county, its socio-economic and economic performance and relationship with the rest of the island.
- As much as 84% of the land boundary of the county borders Northern Ireland rather than the rest of the Republic of Ireland.
- Overall, 69% of the county consider themselves Irish speakers with 25,000 living in the Gaeltacht area or 25% of the overall Gaeltacht population in Ireland.



- 0 Educational under-achievement is an ongoing factor in the county. Initiatives focusing on young people in rural settings have already been identified.
- 0 Including people from a minority and minority ethnic background includes key needs such as engagement, involvement, access to resources, personal development, visibility, and valuing diversity.

- 0 A positive peace – more than the absence of violence, acknowledges knock-on issues such as social inclusion.
- 0 The peace programme itself acknowledges the importance of economic and social deprivation, changing structures that make people feel estranged, and acknowledgement.

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

During the consultation phase one workshops, more than 300 people were directly engaged and a further 1,000 through accessing information via the PEACE website. The summary below highlights the key factors and feedback in that consultation, that then feed into an outline of conceptual activities.

The county has a range of issues identified that reflect where Donegal is in 2023, 25 years on from the Good Friday Agreement. It is a different county with different needs relevant to the latest iteration of peacebuilding challenges, but it is also clear from the consultation that:

- There are ongoing legacy issues that will be reflected in conceptual outlines but that also should be an undercurrent in many of the projects eventually supported.
- Ex-combatants, ex-prisoners and ex-security personnel have a significant contribution still to make to projects even if they are not the direct beneficiaries in many cases.

Some of the key factors identified through the consultation are summarised here, but many also relate to the county's determination to respect the past but build a positive peace rather than just settle for a lack of violence. These include equality and inclusion, socio-economic issues, and trust in institutions.

There were also issues identified as residual consequences of the Covid period including for young people and more generally in relational terms.

Key issues, amongst others, include:

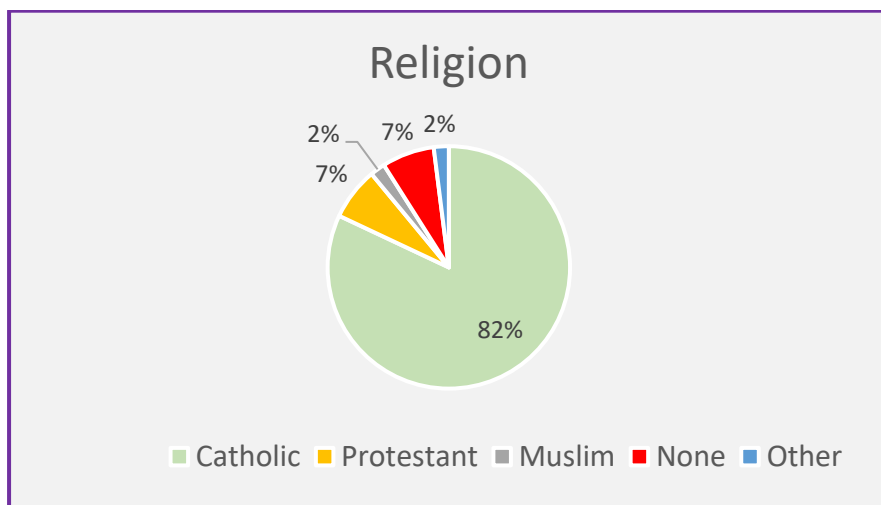
- Disengaged young people.
- The impact of geographic isolation linked to deprivation and poor transport infrastructure.
- Managing the changing demography including newcomer residents, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- Challenging racism and recognising degrees of sectarianism.
- Lack of shared and community-based play areas.
- Run-down community facilities.
- Recognising the heritage and culture of the county.

Survey

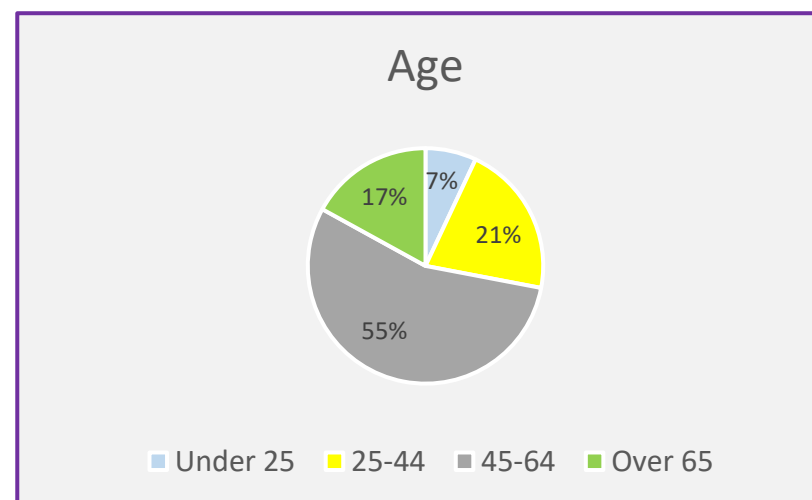
A survey was produced and completed by citizens of the county including many of those attending workshops, in addition to the polling.

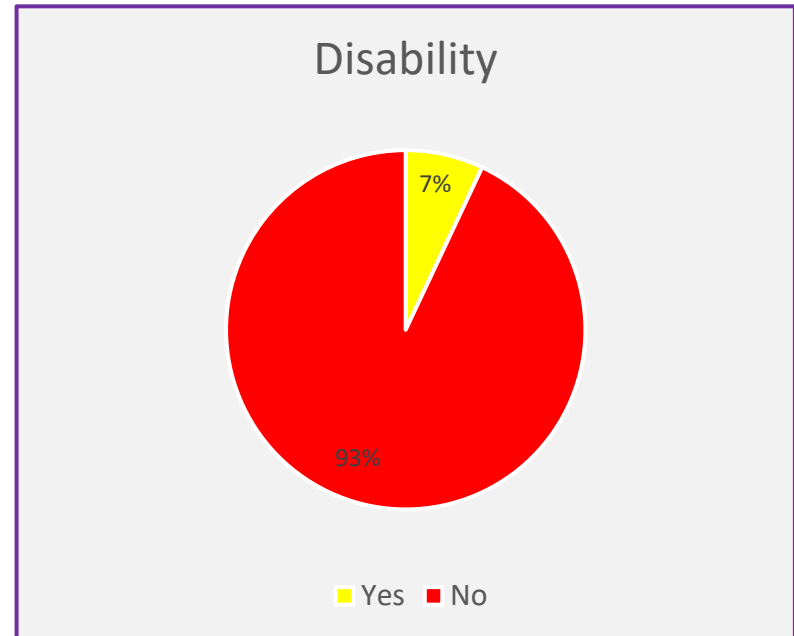
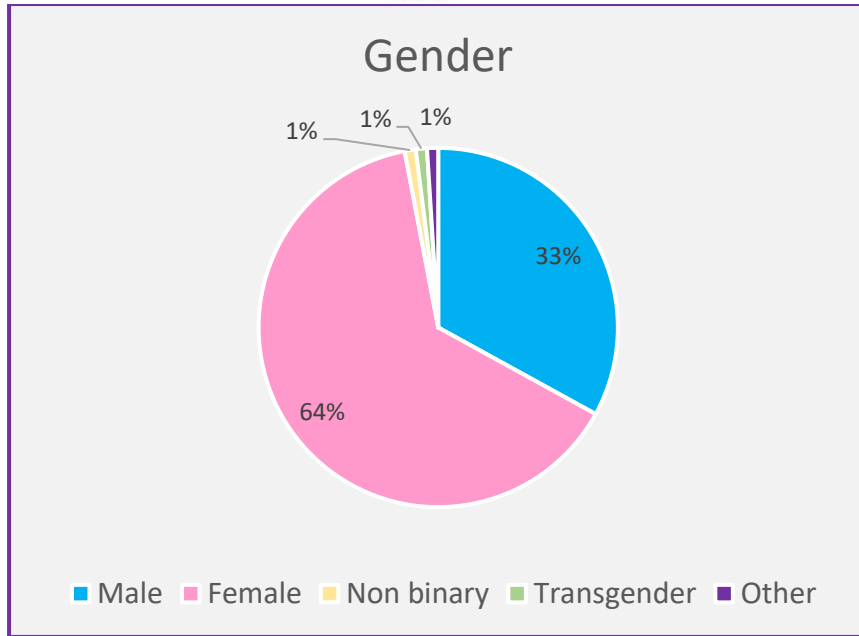
With 175 responses, given the population size of the County and the strong proportionate response by age, gender and community background, we estimate in the survey responses overall a confidence rate of 94% and a margin of error of +/- 5%.

As outlined below gender response included a majority of women which is also reflective of the management of many peace related community projects. The proportion lower than average proportion of people returning surveys with a disability may also relate to age profiles.



The religious profile is broadly reflective of the country. The number of young people completing the survey was fewer than the average population, but their opinions were captured during outreach for younger people. Most people managing PEACE projects are also in the 45–64-year-old age bracket.



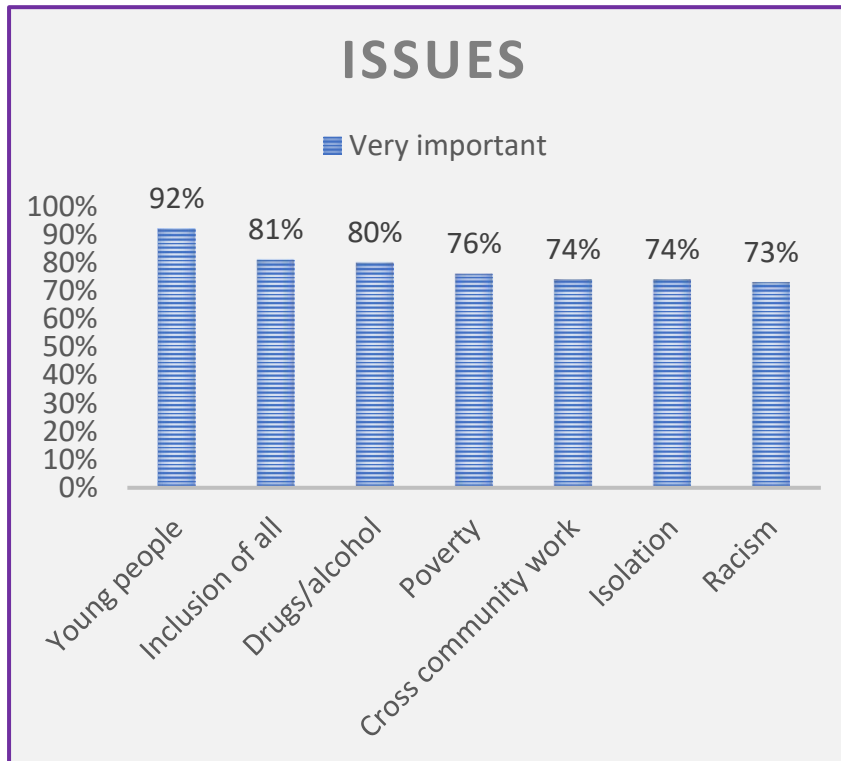


Results are provided for some of the key findings and using data slicing where relevant. Where data slicing takes place (not used in this short paper), results are relevant but may have a higher margin of error. The complete survey findings are available to the Partnership and Council for future use and reference if carrying out a similar exercise in the future.

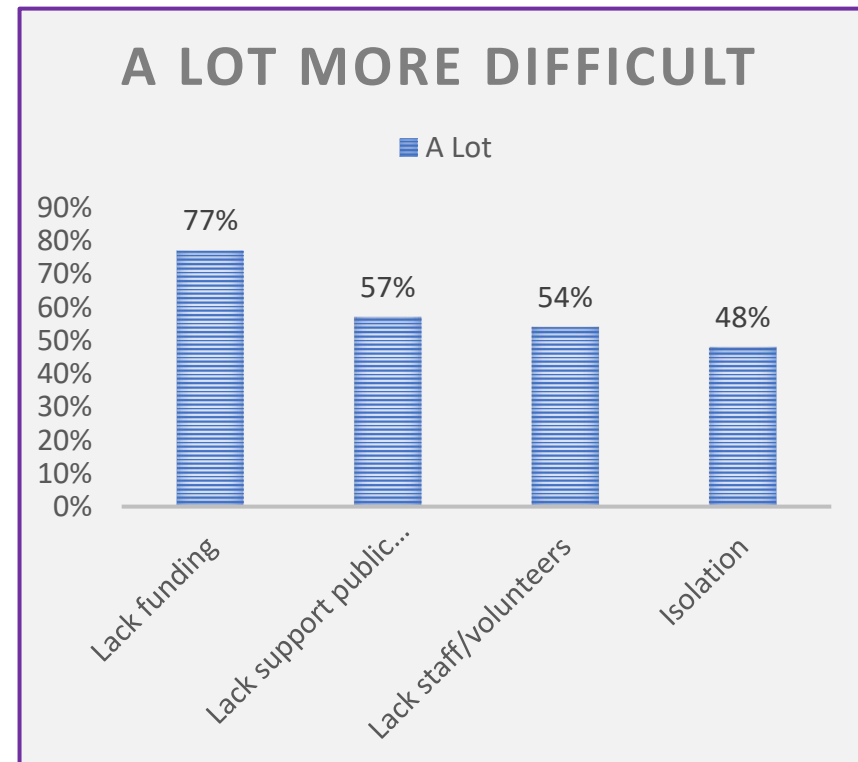
We have provided some of the key results only at this stage.

Delivery challenges

The survey asked people to identify some of the more important issues that needed addressed in their own areas. There was a significant focus on young people and a lack of inclusion for all people from within the community, as well as isolation and poverty. Alcohol or drugs related issues were considered very important by about eight people in ten. In addition, around three quarters of people thought that tackling racism and the need for cross community work were very important.



The most significant issues identified as making peacebuilding work in the county more difficult particularly included lack of funding. However, also mentioned in significant proportions were lack of support from public agencies (further exploration indicated this often related to funding and accessibility/engagement), and lack of people in the form of staff or volunteers.

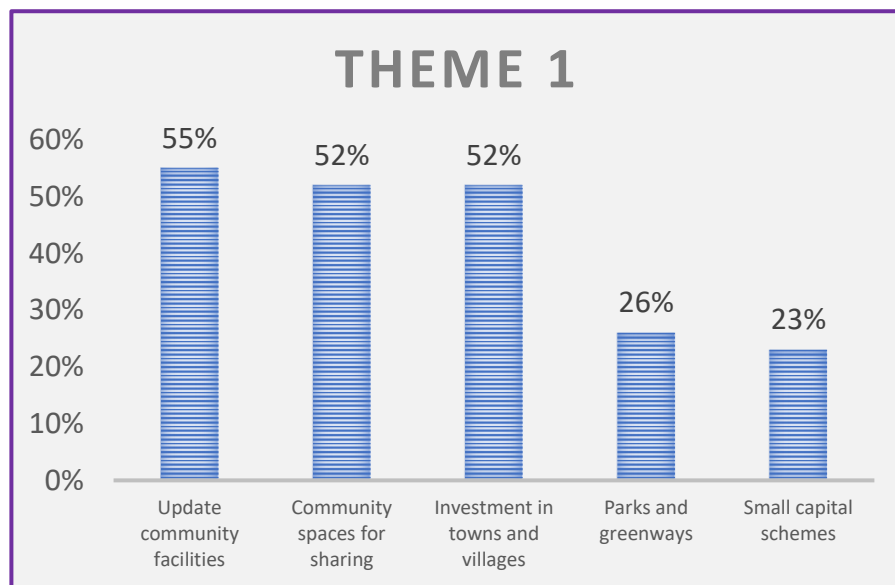


Themes

The survey asked people to prioritise possible actions associated with each of the PEACEPLUS themes. The themes are:

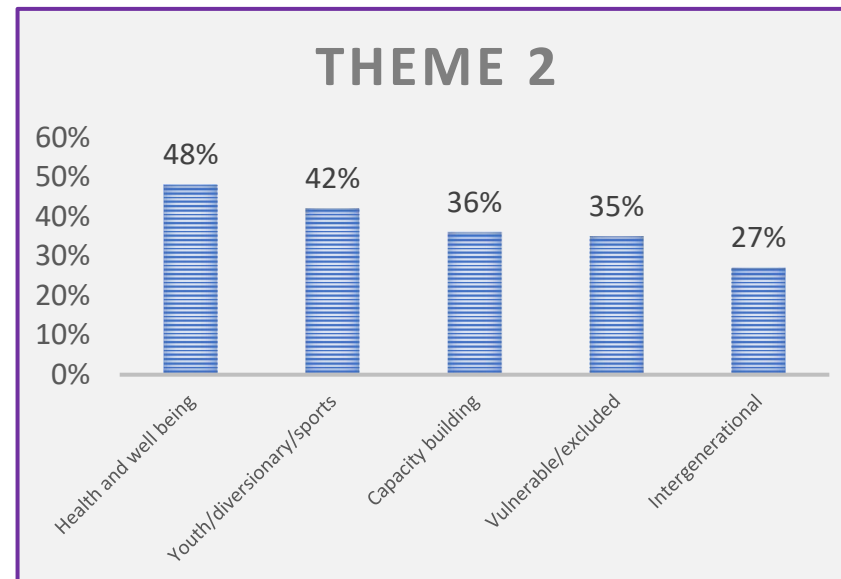
Theme One: Community Regeneration and Transformation
(Where there will be greater capital spend)

Priorities under Theme One included identification of the need to refresh existing community facilities and ensuring community spaces could be shared.



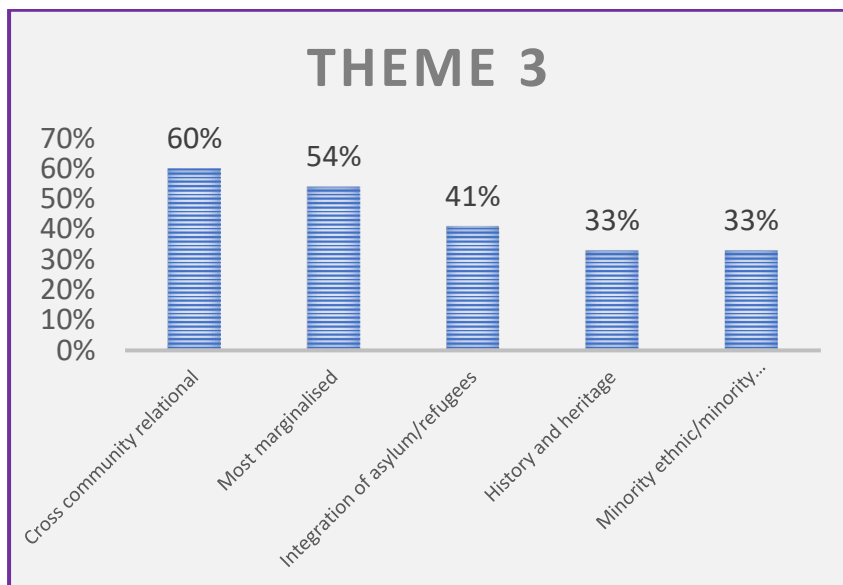
Theme Two: Peaceful and Thriving Communities

Priorities under Theme Two were identified as health and wellbeing projects, youth-related projects as well as capacity building and working with those that were most vulnerable.



Theme Three: Celebrating Culture and Diversity

Under Theme Three priorities were identified as including relational projects that worked across the community and the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as minority ethnic communities. Also highly popular was the need to work with the most marginalised and with history or heritage projects.



Additional ideas

Those completing the survey were asked to identify additional or other specific ideas, or to raise other issues not already covered in the survey.

Additional ideas raised included:

- A piece of artwork to acknowledge the Northerners who holidayed in Donegal during Troubles, maybe with a play area/performance area?
- Improve sports facilities and play parks in some areas – Lifford specifically mentioned
- Heritage conservation in the County’s oldest town e.g., the workhouse
- Promotional programme for the County’s museums
- Animate shared and community spaces including on diversity
- Bicycle rentals in some areas

Surveys: Qualitative Feedback

Survey participants were asked for qualitative feedback on the most important challenges for undertaking peacebuilding work, key issues in their areas, and their thoughts on the themes and possible activities. There was significant repetition in feedback such as those listed below, where the same or broadly similar comment was made at least five times.

Key issues locally

The key issues identified locally included:

- Work with communities.
- Inclusion.
- Cross border related issues.
- Racism.
- Poverty.
- Sectarianism.

A word cloud of the most mentioned words is highlighted, right, the larger words being mentioned most frequently.

Peacebuilding Priorities

Issues regarded as priorities for peacebuilding in local areas included:

- A sense of community.
- Housing.
- Youth and young people.



- Drugs.
- Social inclusion and facilities.

A word cloud of the most mentioned words is highlighted, right, the larger words being mentioned most frequently.

Barriers to peacebuilding work

The issues raised most often regarding barriers to undertaking peacebuilding work in the county included:

- Sectarianism.
- Lack of communication.
- Isolation.
- Education; and
- Lack of trust.

A word cloud of the most mentioned words is highlighted, right, the larger words being mentioned most frequently.

Key Issues

Key issues from the surveys include:

- There are a range of issues that are considered important for the PEACEPLUS plan including young people, racism, inclusion of minority groups, changing demography and its opportunities and challenges, and lack of shared spaces or run-down facilities.



- Social isolation and related health and wellbeing issues are also high on consultees agenda.
- Refreshing community facilities in order to facilitate a reanimation of shared space is important.
- Capacity building within the community is considered a high priority.

○ Utilising the history and heritage of the county has been identified as important.

○ Relationships across communities including intergenerational and involving asylum seekers and refugees were identified as priorities.

WORKSHOPS AND INTERVIEWS

Overall, over 100 people were engaged in consultation workshops and interviews including through:

- A workshop in each of the five municipal districts.
- Three on-line workshops.
- Targeted workshops including those from youth organisations, young people, intercultural backgrounds, minority faith backgrounds, people from a Protestant background, people with disabilities, women's organisation, and staff from Donegal County Council.

A total of 14 workshops have taken/due to place to date. More will take place in coming weeks and months.

Polling was also conducted at each of these workshops.

Key issues include:

- Peacebuilding needs have changed in the last 25 years since both ceasefires in 1994 and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. While during the iterations of Peace 1 the key needs may have included work with victims and survivors, and ex-combatants and ex-security personnel, the key issues in 2023 relate to changing demography, isolation, and inclusion more broadly. There was, however, agreement that ex-combatants and ex-security personnel had played a key role in

moving things forward to date, and still had a critical role going forward.

- Cross community and cross border working, and partnership were still relevant and important, with an added relevance given the relationship between the county and its northern neighbours.
- Issues such as isolation and lack of inclusion linked to social and economic needs, were referenced continually. As with building a positive peace, ensuring greater inclusion of those previously excluded, and helping people to understand and benefit from peace, were considered important elements of this iteration of peace funding. A sense of isolation, in a county where physical connectedness is a constant challenge with dependence on road travel, was thought to particularly affect those already more vulnerable i.e., children and young people and older people, people without driving licences or access to a vehicle.
- In many areas issues included lack of play parks and play facilities, as well as some absence of modern community facilities or community hubs for people to gather and develop relationships.
- A priority grouping/issue referenced in every workshop were disengaged young people and challenges of integration/inclusion/understanding minority ethnic groups including refugees and asylum seekers.



- Similarly tackling racism was considered a priority. Some of the feedback, at times explicit and at other times implicit, referenced the systemic nature of racism and the need for a deep-rooted exploration of it and the response to it across all sectors. This reflected a more generally need for change identified of moving from a largely mono-cultural society to an inter-cultural society. After 25 years of peacebuilding there may be sufficient confidence to explore some of the big issues related to racism and sectarianism.
- There may be additional need for practical support to minority ethnic or newcomer communities including translation and counselling.
- Some of the key issues linked strongly to issues around health and wellbeing including isolation and economic challenges.
- Many community organisations referenced the challenges of funding and the importance of receiving core costs for running projects not just project costs.
- Many within the community believed that skills and capacity within community organisations delivering importance services and support to local communities was an ongoing need that needed continually updated and provided.

- Community organisations referenced pre-tendering support of local community organisations were expected to tender for projects through the Peace Plan.
- The county was considered to have a strong, unique, and inclusive history and heritage that could be further used for job creation and capacity building.

During these workshops polling was carried out to facilitate the discussion. A total of 1,477 votes were cast on five main questions to stimulate discussion. The five questions were:

1. What are the key issues in your area?
2. What are inhibitors to undertaking peacebuilding work?
3. What should be priorities under Theme One?
4. What should be priorities under Theme Two?
5. What should be priorities under Theme Three?

The top five responses in each of the five questions were:

Q	Key issues in your area?	%
1	Disengaged young people	56%
2	Disengaged minority ethnic or other minority communities	53%
3	Poverty and disadvantage	53%
4	Isolation	46%
5	Racism	44%



Q	Inhibitors to peacebuilding?	%
1	Lack of staff and volunteers	67%
2	Lack of support from public agencies	50%
3	Location	49%
4	Lack of skills and experience	48%
5	Blockers and gatekeepers	23%

Q	Priorities Under Theme One	%
1	Developing more shared space	67%
2	Enhancing existing facilities	63%
3	Investing in towns and villages	39%
4	Parks and greenways	32%
5	Reimagining public space	30%

Q	Priorities Under Theme Two?	%
1	Health and wellbeing	57%
2	The excluded or vulnerable	55%
3	Capacity building	55%
4	Youth or/and diversionary or/and sports activities	47%
5	Intergenerational activities	35%

Q	Priorities Under Theme Three?	%
1	Integration of minority communities	59%
2	Engaging the marginalised	58%
3	Cross community relationship building	54%
4	Civic participation of minority communities including ethnic, refugee and asylum-seeking communities	50%
5	History and heritage	37%

These issues and priorities are reflected in the discussion. More importantly they are reflected in the identification of concept ideas in this document and in the concept ideas to come in the next phase.

CONCEPT IDEAS

There is considerable appetite for the roll-out of the PEACEPLUS Programme in the county.

It is striking that the cost of not undertaking good relations and reconciliation work may be x16 the added costs if it is not done, according to the Global Peace Index. The interventions identified as part of the PEACEPLUS programme, therefore, while requiring investment from the PEACE Programme may lead to less pressure on the public purse in the county in the longer term.

Challenging sectarianism and racism, engaging in cross community or cross border activities, will be encouraged throughout programmes though not requirements for all.

The emerging conceptual ideas for the PEACEPLUS programme allocated per them are summarised below.

Allocations

Given feedback and the quality and extent of narrative during the consultation, as well as need identified in the audit, a breakdown for the three themes may include the following, less administrative overheads dispersed proportionately.

Theme	Range	Agreed	Rationale
One: Community Regeneration & Transformation	30-40%	40% €3.04m	Identified need to regenerate shared community and play facilities Need for resources in the context of isolation Potential to re-animate space with inclusive activities
Two: Thriving and Peaceful Communities	30-40%	30% €2.28m	Identified need regarding youth, health and wellbeing, isolation, and inclusion for communities traditionally more excluded.

			<p>Demand and need across all municipal districts</p> <p>Core work of peacebuilding regarding relational, socio-economic and participation.</p>
Three Building Respect for All Cultural identities	Minimum 20%	30% €2.28m	<p>Identified need with minority communities especially newcomer, refugee, and asylum seekers.</p> <p>Recognising the cultural heritage of the county.</p> <p>Recognising demographic change.</p>

County wide projects

The PEACEPLUS Programme will operate throughout the county. The Partnership is keen that the allocation is fair and proportionate across the county while also meeting needs.

As a result, it is intended that:

- There will be an equitable allocation across municipal districts with a calculation yet to be made regarding population sizes, rurality, isolation, and socio-economic, criteria.
- A proportion of spend in each theme, yet to be determined, will be allocated on a county-wide basis to ensure inclusion of target groups that may be living and working across the county, but more thinly across municipal districts.

Pre-tendering Support

Recognising that the concept of tendering for projects rather than applying for a grant may be new to some community organisations, the Partnership will support some pre-tendering information and support workshops at the end of 2023 or/and start of 2024.

Theme One: Community Regeneration and Transformation

Budget is 30%-40% of total. The indicative suggestion, given demand, is a 40% allocation which would be approximately €3.04m less administration costs.

Overall participation numbers across all programmes are expected to be 7,636

Probably the theme where there will be a disproportionate allocation of capital spend. The theme will invest in regenerating communities with facilities and activities that encourage sharing and integration. The physical buildings, resources and appearance of a community may be changed for the better and will encourage the greater and more integrated animation of space.

Some of the initial conceptual ideas arising from phase one consultation are highlighted here.

10 Initial Conceptual Ideas

- Regeneration of existing community buildings that need refurbishment
- Reimagining parks and green areas
- Play Park construction or renewal
- Investment in community hubs including for minority ethnic, Irish language, Traveller, LGBTQ+ and disability
- Animate community spaces involving people from all backgrounds but that may also focus on youth and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Mix of size of awards for buildings and outdoor facilities as well as small capital resource for community organisations
- Artwork to celebrate the role of the county during the Troubles as a refuge for people from the North
- Update and regenerate sports and recreation facilities
- Heritage conservation activities
- Regenerate existing heritage, history, and cultural sites.

Theme Two: Thriving and Peaceful Communities

Budget is 30%-40% of total. The indicative suggestion, given demand, is a 30% allocation which would be €2.28m less administration costs.

Overall participation numbers across all programmes are expected to be 7,636

The theme may cover areas such as relationships and connections within and between communities and link the peacebuilding narrative with social and wellbeing initiatives.

The focus above is not exhaustive and potential tenderers should explore these issues themselves.

Cross community collaboration in identifying needs and providing project solutions is encouraged. This theme is anticipated to be highly community led.

10 Initial Conceptual Ideas

- Capacity building for community organisations
- Youth programme including disengaged young people and in their relationship with each other and newcomer communities
- Programmes to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people especially in the context of isolation
- Inter faith programmes including all churches and focused on isolation
- Leadership and civic participation programme including with communities and people not traditionally in leadership positions
- Arts and heritage programmes, including the promotion of existing history and heritage facilities
- Cross border engagement programme to support existing structures that undertake cross border work
- Intercultural and inter faith relational programme
- Intergenerational programme
- Tourist and visitor support exploring the county's past and present, which may connect to the diaspora on a wider stage.

Theme Three: Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

Budget is minimum 20% of total. The indicative suggestion, given demand, is a 30% allocation which would be €2.28m less administration costs.

Overall participation numbers across all programmes are expected to be 7,636

The theme may cover areas such as cultural diversity and involve people from many different backgrounds including minority ethnic and other minority groupings. Many other relational related issues may be addressed including disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, language, and others.

The focus above is not exhaustive and potential tenderers should explore these issues themselves.

Cross community collaboration in identifying needs and providing project solutions is encouraged. This theme is anticipated to be highly community led.

10 Initial Conceptual Ideas

- Increasing capacity for challenging racism – a belonging programme in the county including increasing the capacity of traditionally excluded groups
- Support for minority ethnic communities including counselling and translation, and other practical support services
- Youth inclusion, leadership and social integration programme supporting contact and mutual learning
- Anti-racism programmes which may include public education, increasing visibility of leaders and activists, or creation of intercultural exchanges in public venues
- Festivals and events that may also animate new or existing shared spaces
- Programme supporting cultural heritage
- Programme supporting preserving and increasing the use of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht regions
- Schools programme focusing on racism
- Exploring impact of systemic racism in public agencies, private and community organisations which may include intercultural competence initiative in public, private and community organisations
- Heritage programme linking the past and present given traditional cultural expression and changing demography.

GOING FORWARD

The consultation and development of needs, gaps and ideas will continue. However, in tandem with that, the county will expand on the concept ideas which will eventually become the effective “terms of reference” for the tendering process.

We cannot be definitive about timescale at this point because it is also dependent on SEUPB who are trying still to get agreement from the Irish and British government and the EU for important aspects of the process.

For example, we are waiting for a template for the submission of concepts and should not get ahead of that too much, though some aspects of the template should be common sense.

We anticipate the next phases being:

Step 1: May 2023

A second series of Workshops to a) get feedback on this document which will be layered up again after these workshops; and b) to ask those interested to work up a short concept paper for what they would like to see in the peace plan consistent with this document.

The outline of a concept paper is yet to be developed and ideally should follow an SEUPB template; but we will proceed regardless of whether the template is available. Some critical questions are likely to be important such as: what need is being

addressed, what should be done, what will be achieved for what target group?

We anticipate these second series of workshops around the end of May 2023.

Step 2: June-July 2023

A third series of workshops using the concept papers issued in the previous workshops and a further layered up plan after more feedback. They will explore whether groups/potential tendering organisations can agree wording of the SEUPB template for each potential initiative. We may try to synergise concept papers that come in. Remember this is the wording that may be used for a tender process in 2024.

This may be the most challenging part of the co-design process seeking to get a consensus on the template for each possible tender process.

The Partnership may also seek direct delivery by Council on some of the projects.

We anticipate these workshops to start toward the end of June 2023 and may run through into July. From the second series workshops, organisations need some time to draft and submit their concept papers. We may need some time to synergise these papers.

We are waiting further information from SEUPB on timeframe, template, and process.

Step 3: Agree the peace plan and submit it to SEUPB.

We anticipate this process from July-August 2023. The Partnership will need to consider internal processes and agreements required.

At this stage the anticipated closing date for receipt of peace plans is November 2023 – but it is hoped that the Donegal Peace Plan will be submitted sooner to allow for feedback and amendment.