2024 Think Tank

Output

"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

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Rapporteur,

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2024 EC2U Think Tank – Output

Partner University: *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iași (UAIC)

Date of local EC2U Think Tank: 14 June 2024

Participants:

Name	Function	Affiliation
Nicoleta Laura POPA	Professor, PhD / Vice-rector	UAIC
Carmen MOLDOVAN	Associate professor, PhD/ Director of the Public Law Department/ (WP7 representative/ moderator)	Faculty of Law, UAIC
Ana Iolanda VODĂ	Lecturer, PhD habil. (RI4C2 representative)	Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, UAIC
Mihaela TOFAN	Professor, PhD	Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, UAIC
Andreea MIRONESCU	CS II principal researcher	Interdisciplinary Research Institute (ICI), UAIC
Adina STOLERU	Head of the Diaspora Office	Iași City Hall
Mihaela POPIȘA	Advisor to the Urban Strategy Implementation Office within the Integrated Development Strategy Implementation Directorate	Iași City Hall
Agatha FILIMON	Head of the Sectoral Specialization Office	North-East Regional Development Agency
Carmina Florentina URSACHE		Romanian Red Cross, Iasi branch
Ciprian - Mihai PĂIUȘ	Executive Director	Iasi Community Foundation
Ioana PRUTEANU	PR manager	*Europe Direct Iași* - Information Center
Petronela SPIRIDON-URSU	Local coordinator (organizer)	EC2U, UAIC

Audience: ~~Yes~~ / No

Number of attending audience members: 12

1. Results from surveys sent prior the local Think Tank (if relevant)

Please add results (extract of results) from the survey sent to participants prior the session. It is possible to send results separately to the Global Coordination Team if needed.

Stakeholder group: [**researchers and academics**]

- **What is social innovation and how can it be leveraged for peace building?**

According to researchers and academics, social innovation could be defined as follows:

✓ A dynamic and collaborative process through which new solutions to social problems are generated and debated, aiming to bring about positive change and improve the quality of life in the community. By involving all relevant actors, including citizens, and by harnessing the diversity of perspectives, approaches, and knowledge, social innovation becomes a powerful tool for peace-building in communities. Encouraging participation and empowerment of citizens in social processes and promoting a more equitable and resilient society creates a flexible and creative framework for addressing social problems and developing innovative solutions.

✓ A complex notion, combining elements from multiple domains relevant to the evolution of social relations.

In the humanities, social innovation is linked to educational and, more broadly, cultural processes, thus prioritising the role of tangible (educational and cultural institutions) and intangible (societal representations conveyed in literature, film, and art) cultural infrastructure in building good community relations and resolving social conflicts.

Peace-building is a general objective to be pursued and achieved at both international and national levels and social innovation can be used by:

a) Development of a mobile app (or online platform) for conflict mediation in communities divided by ethnic or religious conflict; this online app/platform would allow citizens to communicate and negotiate solutions in a safe and neutral environment.

b) Organise intercultural education workshops in schools, where students from different ethnic or religious groups can learn to understand and appreciate cultural diversity and develop communication and conflict resolution skills (e.g. through trainings, workshops: e.g https://novapolis.ro/atelier-culinar-de-bucatarie-internationala-o-experienta-educativa-si-un-moment-savuros-de-bucurie/).

c) Implementation of a community volunteering programme, where residents can work together to improve public spaces and organise cultural and social events that promote interaction and mutual understanding (e.g. volunteering projects, cultural and sports activities - role of community cohesion and acceptance of diversity).

d) Use of a technology-based early warning system to detect incidents of violence in a conflict-affected area and quickly alert local authorities and organisations to intervene and prevent violence from escalating. E.g. Noise monitoring systems; Smart surveillance cameras equipped with facial recognition and aggressive behavior recognition technology; Mobile apps where citizens can report incidents of violence/aggression in real-time).

- **What were/are the main social vulnerabilities and needs in peace building?**

Building and strengthening social peace is based on knowing and recognising the multiple identities that make up a person's individuality and facilitating group connections, limiting ethnic, class, or gender discrimination, and promoting inclusive social discourses by providing space for marginalised groups to express themselves. This long-term process requires concerted efforts from policymakers, civil society, academia, and culture. The lack or insufficiency/inefficiency of such combined efforts, more specifically the lack of an environment and an infrastructure through which they can manifest themselves, can be the main vulnerability at the local/national to which the following can be added:

a) Lack of access to quality education and essential resources can hinder the promotion of peace in conflict-affected communities. An example would be rural communities that face a lack of access to quality education due to poor school infrastructure and a lack of teaching resources. Many children in these communities do not have schools nearby and have to travel long distances to get to school, and many schools lack adequate facilities such as classrooms, books, and teaching materials. When people do not have access to adequate education and other resources, they often lack the knowledge and skills to manage conflict effectively and find peaceful solutions. Thus, investing in education and facilitating access to essential resources becomes essential to support peacebuilding and to develop communities' capacities to manage and resolve conflict in a constructive and sustainable way.

b) Marginalisation and discrimination create fertile ground for conflict and violence, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as ethnic, religious or sexual minorities (e.g. including LGBTQ+ communities). To build sustainable peace, it is crucial to address these

social injustices and promote an environment where all members of society feel included and respected.

c) Gender inequalities can be a major factor fuelling social tensions and can intensify the risk of violence in communities (e.g. in Afghanistan, persistent gender inequalities and restrictions on women's rights under the Taliban regime have contributed to a climate of oppression and violence against women).

d) Ethnic and religious tensions are often major sources of conflict in communities, fuelled by differences of identity and faith (e.g. tension in the Balkans in the 1990s; religious tensions in the Middle East; Hindus and Shias in Iraq and Syria, or Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian territories).

e) Selective compliance with the fundamental principles established in the United Nations Charter.

The ideal of peace seems to be present in most states, in the most diverse fields, but its implementation is threatened from multiple directions: the aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, the continuous and accelerated development of fake news phenomena, disinformation and manipulation of public opinion, the evolution of woke currents and cancel culture (both are manifestations of intolerance) and the presence of populism.

- **How have the forms of co-creation and challenges changed during the last years?**

In recent years, there has been an appetite for reflection and a critical approach to societal issues in the film and literature of contemporary directors/writers. This trend is contemporary with a wider transnational movement and underlines the interest and desire of the millennial generation of creators to use their art as a medium for social activism. However, this exploration through the art of the social is, so far, predominantly directed towards social situations typical for certain groups (middle class, traditional families), and much less towards the situations of marginal groups/classes/identities. Voices from these backgrounds also have little or no space for expression in culture (e.g. Roma writers).

At the same time, forms of co-creation and their associated challenges have evolved significantly due to several technological, social, and economic factors (e.g. technological change, citizen empowerment, technological advancement) that have facilitated global co-creation through digital platforms and online collaboration tools and begun to include a wider range of partners such as NGOs, governments, the private sector, and citizens, thus bringing diverse perspectives and resources into these processes.

However, coordination between stakeholders with varying objectives and priorities can be difficult and requires effective mediation and facilitation to achieve harmonious and beneficial outcomes for all parties involved.

The main challenge is that the digital barrier can exclude communities without access to the internet or technology, creating inequalities in the process.

- **How can science be harnessed to advance peace building efforts?**

Science in general (considering all its branches or domains) is the one that brings sensitive subjects to the fore and proposes solutions. Their dissemination is necessary, on the one hand, to raise awareness of problems, imperfections, and dysfunctions, and on the other hand, to solve the negative aspects. Thus, science can be harnessed to advance peacebuilding efforts through multiple means.

- ✓ The analysis and understanding of conflict can be improved through interdisciplinary research combining sociology, psychology, and political science, facilitating the development of prevention strategies.
- ✓ Modelling and simulations can also help to understand conflict dynamics and test intervention scenarios.
- ✓ Technology plays a crucial role in this process by developing digital platforms for mediation and using artificial intelligence to analyze online discourse and identify sources of conflict.

In addition, educational programs and awareness campaigns are essential to promote tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution, while psychological interventions and access to health contribute to healing trauma and rebuilding social relationships.

Humanities research in universities has also increasingly turned in recent years to the analysis of social representations in literature and other arts, thus increasing its relevance and involvement in identifying and ameliorating societal problems. Romanian researchers in literary studies are currently leading/conducting several projects on the literature of labor migration, the construction of collective memory at the community level, representations of the rural world, etc. Closer collaboration with other local institutions and greater attention by academic decision-makers to the valorisation of scholarship at the local level (and not only/predominantly in specialist journals) could increase the impact of the humanities in the process of identifying/solving societal problems.

Stakeholder group: [associations and NGOs]

- **What do you consider to be your most successful activity/ format/ tools + platforms/ product in social innovation and/or peace building?**

✓ Education and Awareness Programmes: Information campaigns and educational programs in schools on health, human rights violence and prevention, and entrepreneurship. (e.g. Regional Study Centre courses, RubikEdu)

✓ Volunteering Activities: Networks of volunteers involved in humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and projects.

✓ Social Integration Programmes: Support for refugees and migrants, community centers offering various services for social cohesion.

✓ Health Promotion Centre: Free support and assistance in accessing health services.

✓ Digital Platforms and Technological Innovations: Digital database, automatic counting of volunteer hours.

✓ Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborations with other NGOs, institutions and schools.

✓ Crisis Intervention: Emergency humanitarian aid

✓ Implementation of projects with beneficiaries in Ukraine.

✓ Research and innovation strategy for smart regional specialization.

✓ Activities that promote European values, fulfilling their mission to create bridges between European citizens and the institutions that represent them at the European level.

- **With whom did you collaborate in identifying the best solutions?**

Collaboration in the quadruple helix (academic, business, public administration, and NGOs) at the national, regional, and local level, even European level (Representation of the European Commission in Romania, with the Liaison Office of the European Parliament in Romania.).

- **Did you involve the affected people in the process of finding the best solutions?**

Affected people are involved in the process of assessing needs and identifying the best solutions. This involvement is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of programmes and initiative

- **What barriers did you encounter when trying to find solutions?**

- ✓ Prejudice, ignorance, and fear (overcome through mutual knowledge, openness, and communication).
- ✓ Lack of or limited resources, reluctance to change (either of beneficiary communities or staff in terms of technology), difficulties in mobilising and actively involving people, the complexity of issues, institutional coordination, or external factors.
- ✓ Language and cultural differences, dilemmas about addressing immediate needs (shelter, food, clothing, etc.) or long-term needs (language courses, skills training, educational support, etc.)

- **How does the your institution support and encourage peace building?**

- ✓ Facilitating dialogue in the community around issues of peace, solidarity, and volunteering;
- ✓ Collecting resources and allocating them to the affected people;
- ✓ Empowering NGOs that contribute in this direction;
- ✓ promoting European and human values;
- ✓ Through psychosocial support, community programs, psychological first aid, first aid courses/demonstrations, etc.;
- ✓ Indirectly, through the implementation of economic and social development programs and projects.

Stakeholder group: [municipality]

- **What do you consider to be your most successful activity/ format/ tools + platforms/ product in social innovation and/or peace building?**

- ✓ Permanent collaboration with social, political and economic organisations as well as with citizens in order to strengthen conflict management at all levels and to maintain peace and sustainable development.
- ✓ Promoting inter-community dialogue through actions such as: organising public forums and community meetings to facilitate dialogue between different groups in the community and initiating mediation and conflict resolution programmes to help resolve local disputes.
- ✓ Activities carried out with Romanian communities in the Diaspora.
- ✓ Involvement of PMI in internship programmes.
- ✓ PMI's role in managing the refugee crisis.
- ✓ Collaboration with IT companies and universities as well as NGOs in identifying solutions to local problems.

- **With whom did you collaborate in identifying the best solutions?**

  - ✓ Citizens, local public administration, international organisations, social, political, economic organisations, NGOs (e.g. Civica, FabLab), Romanian communities abroad, universities.

- **Did you involve the affected people in the process of finding the best solutions?**

  Yes.

- **What barriers did you encounter when trying to find solutions?**
  - ✓ Insufficient volunteer culture at local level
  - ✓ People's reluctance to change
- **What role does voluntary engagement (associations and others) play for the municipality? How to maximise individual contribution/impact?**

In the organization of events, volunteers are often called upon to contribute to the success of the events (e.g. the Pope's visit, the RePatriot Summit, the annual commemoration of the Iasi Pogrom, etc).

Voluntary involvement and the work of associations play a key role in supporting and developing local communities by:

Community and social support:

- ✓ Volunteers and associations provide direct support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disadvantaged children, people with disabilities and refugees.
- ✓ These organisations can respond quickly to local needs, providing help in emergencies and ongoing support for chronic problems.

Social capital development:

- ✓ Volunteering helps to create and strengthen social relationships, strengthening community cohesion.
- ✓ Participation in voluntary activities improves communication, collaboration and leadership skills among citizens.

Improving public services:

- ✓ Volunteers can complement and expand the capacities of public services, providing additional resources for education, health and other areas.
- ✓ Collaboration with the municipality can lead to the implementation of innovative and effective programmes.

Promoting civic participation:

- ✓ Involvement in voluntary activities encourages citizens to be more active and involved in local decision-making.
- ✓ Associations play an important role in mobilising and organising the community to address local issues.

Maximising individual contribution and impact :

- ✓ Creating an enabling environment for volunteering:
- ✓ Municipality can establish formal partnerships with associations and volunteer organisations, providing logistical support, space, and resources.
- ✓ Develop a centralised platform to connect volunteers with available volunteering opportunities.

Providing training and resources:

- ✓ Organise training sessions for volunteers to develop their skills and prepare them for various roles.
- ✓ Offer material and financial resources to support volunteer projects.

Recognising and rewarding volunteers:

- ✓ Implement volunteer recognition and reward programs such as awards, certificates and appreciation events.
- ✓ Promote volunteer and association success stories to encourage participation and highlight positive impact.

Facilitate collaboration and communication:

- ✓ Encouraging collaboration between different associations and volunteer groups to maximise available resources and expertise.
- ✓ Create effective communication channels between the municipality and volunteer organisations to ensure coordination and alignment of objectives.

Promote a culture of volunteering:

- ✓ Run awareness campaigns to promote the benefits of volunteering and encourage citizens to get involved.
- ✓ Incorporate volunteering into the education system through school curricula to encourage students to participate in voluntary activities.

By implementing these strategies, municipalities can maximise the contribution and impact of volunteers and associations, creating stronger, more cohesive and resilient communities.

- **How does the municipality support and encourage peace building?**

The municipality plays a significant role in building peace through various strategies and initiatives such as:

- ✓ Implementing educational programs in schools that promote tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of diversity.

- ✓ Public information campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of peace and social cohesion.
- ✓ Developing public spaces where people can meet and interact safely, contributing to a sense of community.
- ✓ Implementing programs to assist vulnerable groups such as refugees, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.
- ✓ Work with NGOs and other organisations to provide support and resources to these groups.
- ✓ Partnering with churches, youth organisations, cultural associations, and others to develop programs and initiatives that promote peace.
- ✓ Support civic initiatives and volunteering that contribute to social cohesion.
- ✓ Develop and implement policies that promote equity, social justice, and sustainable economic development.
- ✓ Encouraging citizen participation in decision-making, ensuring transparency and accountability of local governance.
- ✓ Organising cultural and sporting events that bring people together and promote team spirit and collaboration.
- ✓ Support artistic initiatives that address peace and human rights issues.
- ✓ Local and international cooperation in the spirit of tolerance and good understanding and in accordance with international rules in force.

2. Results from questions asked during the local EC2U Think Tanks (per stakeholder group)

Stakeholder group: [researchers and academics]

Question	Answer
Understanding stakeholders' perceived role	
How and why do you feel directly affected by peace building?	Peace represents the state of normality and is like health. We realize what peace is when it is no longer there because we are only affected by its lack. The COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine accompanied by the continued and accelerated development of fake news phenomena, created the context of activating the feeling of panic, fear, and insecurity accompanied by the awareness of the fact that we are not prepared to face unforeseen situations of crisis and conflict and we do not know how to react and act in such situations.
What role do you (should you) have to play in peace building?	When something hinders communication, there is no more peace. The academic and scientific community brings to the fore sensitive topics related to peace, inclusion, gender inequalities, and ethnic and/or religions tensions and proposes solutions. Their dissemination is necessary, on the one hand, to raise awareness of problems, imperfections, and dysfunctions, and on the other hand, to resolve negative aspects through constructive criticism. Everyone should play their role in society.

Sharing concrete actions, best practices, barriers encountered	
What best practices can you share? What motivated these actions?	Social innovations related to educational and, more broadly, cultural processes give priority to the role of tangible (educational and cultural institutions) and intangible (societal representations transmitted in literature, film, and art) cultural infrastructure in building good relations between academic and community environments, resolving social conflicts and consolidating peace. These innovations are proposed and implemented through durable and sustainable projects in the fields of education and research focused on: ✓ interdisciplinary research combining sociology, psychology, and political science, facilitating the development of prevention strategies; ✓ developing digital platforms for mediation and using artificial intelligence to analyze online discourse and identify sources of conflict. To them are added other projects such as Erasmus+ projects (for students and all academic and scientific staff), Student Tourism Fairs, Professors from abroad bringing practitioners to the countryside, etc.
What barriers did you encounter?	✓ Reluctance to change; ✓ Awareness of prejudices; ✓ Cultural/ethnic differences; ✓ Misunderstanding of cultural heritage; ✓ Lack of financial resources for actions that would lead to the consolidation of peace; ✓ Fake news phenomena; ✓ Social challenges.

What challenges remain?	Developing a common language that fosters communication and listening on a broad common ground. Identifying levers to boost education growth in rural communities that face a lack of access to quality education due to poor school infrastructure and lack of teaching resources. Shifting the paradigm of understanding and analysing literature, the way of teaching literature, and analysis as part of the social circuit.
Ensuring inclusive and sustainable peace-building via social innovation	
How does your municipality play a role in peace building? What can be improved?	Please refer to the municipality stakeholder group below.
What role does education and lifelong learning play in peace building?	Education and lifelong learning must consider the preparation and provision of useful working spaces and tools for : ✓ Stimulation of the self-construction of memory by referring to the past; ✓ Escalation of conflicts/crises; ✓ Formation and training of experts and opinion leaders; ✓ Stimulation of tolerance and inclusion; ✓ Makeathons and workshops on specific themes.
How can science be harnessed to advance peace building efforts?	Science can be harnessed to advance peacebuilding efforts through multiple means: ✓ The analysis and understanding of conflict through interdisciplinary research;. ✓ Modelling and simulations can also help to understand conflict dynamics and test intervention scenarios;

	✓ Technology plays a crucial role in this process by developing digital platforms to monitor sources of conflict.
What role does voluntary engagement (associations and others) play? How to maximise individual contribution/impact?	Please refer to the NGOs stakeholder group below.

Stakeholder group: [**associations and NGOs**]

Question	Answer
Understanding stakeholders' perceived role	
How and why do you feel directly affected by peace building?	From a social point of view, peace is not a natural state. Peacebuilding requires multi-level engagement (community, local, national, and global) and must exclude hate speech.
What role do you (should you) have to play in peace building?	The civil society / NGOs support citizens, especially children and young people, to discover the fundamental values, rights, and freedoms that contribute to the promotion of peace through social integration programs, digital platforms, education, and awareness programs.
Sharing concrete actions, best practices, barriers encountered	
What best practices can you share? What motivated these actions?	✓ Volunteering activities that promote European values, fulfilling their mission to create bridges between European citizens and the institutions that represent them at the European level; ✓ Education and awareness programs (e.g. Regional Study Centre courses, RubikEdu); ✓ Interregional collaborations for contributions to well-being; ✓ Promoting the idea of first aid;

	✓ Collaborations with other NGOs, educational, and museum institutions (e.g. promoting the EU in schools for children and young people, involving them in role-playing games (ambassadors of the EU countries) to teach them how to react to media messages of disinformation and the stimulation of hatred; fair of the EU member states dedicated to primary school children - annually on May 9; Pogrom Commemoration Day in Iași, etc.). ✓ Social and digital innovations encompassing electronic tools, software, platforms, systems, and devices that facilitate data generation, storage, and transfer (crucial for advancing peacebuilding efforts globally). ✓ Free support and assistance in accessing health services; support for refugees and migrants, community centers offering various services for social cohesion (e.g. projects with beneficiaries from Ukraine). ✓ Educational hub for refugees (kindergartens/schools, language courses, business orientation, etc.). ✓ Workshops focused on recognizing and combating prejudices, on knowledge, and tolerance.
What barriers did you encounter?	Lack of or limited resources, reluctance to change (either of beneficiary communities or staff in terms of technology), difficulties in mobilizing and actively involving people, the complexity of issues, ignorance, language and cultural differences, lack of politics, institutional coordination, or external factors.

What challenges remain?	Fostering a mindset that welcomes transformation and growth. Identifying, creating, and promoting programs and tools that stimulate and encourage individuals to embrace change and adapt to new contexts.
Ensuring inclusive and sustainable peace-building via social innovation	
How does your municipality play a role in peace building? What can be improved?	Please refer to the municipality stakeholder group below.
What role does education and lifelong learning play in peace building?	NGOs play an important role in education and lifelong learning through ongoing social education campaigns, workshops, and discussions on cultural taboos, conflict escalation and the individual role of the aggressor versus the aggrieved, armed conflicts and crises, disinformation, peace education and peacebuilding, and more.
How can science be harnessed to advance peace building efforts?	Please refer to the researchers and academics stakeholder group above.
What role does voluntary engagement (associations and others) play? How to maximise individual contribution/impact?	NGOs support people to discover the fundamental values, rights, and freedoms that contribute to promoting peace. Voluntary engagements facilitate community dialogue around issues of peace and solidarity.

Stakeholder group: [**municipality**]

Question	Answer
Understanding stakeholders' perceived role	
How and why do you feel directly affected by peace building?	Did not feature directly in the discussion.

What role do you (should you) have to play in peace building?	The municipality contributes significantly to peacebuilding through diverse strategies and initiatives, including: ✓ Public information campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of peace and social cohesion; ✓ Implementing programs to assist vulnerable groups such as refugees, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities; ✓ Work with NGOs and other organizations to provide support and resources to these groups; ✓ Support civic initiatives and volunteering that contribute to social cohesion. ✓ Encouraging citizen participation in decision-making, ensuring transparency and accountability of local governance.
Sharing concrete actions, best practices, barriers encountered	
What best practices can you share? What motivated these actions?	✓ Promoting inter-community dialogue by organizing public forums and community meetings to facilitate communication between different groups within the community. In addition, the initiation of mediation and conflict resolution programs helps resolve local disputes. ✓ Initiatives conducted with Romanian communities living abroad. ✓ Continuous cooperation with social, political, economic, and educational organizations, as well as citizens, to promote peace and sustainable development. ✓ The management of Ukrainian refugees after the outbreak of the war.
What barriers did you encounter?	Insufficient volunteer culture at the local level.

What challenges remain?	Shifting the Power, and empowering local actors is a topic that is gaining more and more attention, but for now it is difficult to implement. In emergencies, calamities, wars, humanitarian situations, etc., international organizations intervene in local communities to help, but in this process, if they do not involve local actors, they risk destabilizing things more, being culturally disconnected, not having a basis for collaboration with the affected people or the organizations that work with them, the procedure of many work processes with them, the bureaucratic pressure on local partners, etc.
Ensuring inclusive and sustainable peace-building via social innovation	
How does your municipality play a role in peace building? What can be improved?	Preparation of a general contingency plan for risk situations (armed conflict, pandemic, etc.) at the local level, including the preparation of citizens to know how to proceed in case of armed conflict and other crisis situations that affect the safety of citizens.
What role does education and lifelong learning play in peace building?	Implementing educational programs in schools that promote tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of diversity.
How can science be harnessed to advance peace building efforts?	Please refer to the researchers and academics stakeholder group above.
What role does voluntary engagement (associations and others) play? How to maximise individual contribution/impact?	Voluntary involvement and the work of associations play a key role in supporting and developing local communities. In the organization of events, volunteers are often called upon to contribute to the success of the events (e.g. the Pope's visit, the RePatriot Summit, the annual commemoration of the Iasi Pogrom, etc).

	The municipalities can maximise the contribution and impact of volunteers and associations, creating stronger, more cohesive, and resilient communities by implementing specific and adapted strategies.

Other relevant remarks shared during the local EC2U Think Tanks

Other topics/aspects considered important for social innovation and peacebuilding:

- ✓ Mutual knowledge, interaction, sharing common values, overcoming the fear of "the other";
- ✓ Post-conflict reconciliation and healing;
- ✓ Community resilience;
- ✓ Involvement of young people and promotion of participatory democracy;
- ✓ Disaster preparedness and local capacity building;
- ✓ Community Participation;
- ✓ Facilitating access to technology and the use of digital platforms;
- ✓ Integration of vulnerable groups;

Brainstorming implementable actions at the level of EC2U

- ✓ Intense promotion of human fundamental values, rights, and freedoms with an emphasis on tolerance, equal opportunities, inclusion, active participation, and awareness;
- ✓ Training of experts and specialists in peacebuilding;
- ✓ Events and debates on topics such as peace, justice, tolerance, resilience, prejudice, and crisis resolution addressed to the general public;
- ✓ Development of social and digital innovations (digital tools, software, platforms, systems, and devices) for advancing peacebuilding efforts globally.

3. Conclusive summary to the main question / areas of focus

Please provide a concise response to the questions below, according to the discussions held during the local session.

The objective is to understand how social innovation can contribute to peace building notably via adopting bottom-up approaches to inclusive and long-lasting peace building.

- *How can we ensure peace building initiatives are **inclusive** and address the needs of all stakeholders?*

✓ *By maintaining permanent collaboration with educational, social, political, and economic organizations as well as citizens to strengthen conflict management at all levels and maintain peace and sustainable development.*

✓ *By carrying out information campaigns, intense promotion of the peace-building initiatives, and subsequent collection of feedback.*

✓ By identifying and continuously training social facilitators.

✓ Constant dialog and collaboration between central and local authorities, NGOs, consolidated university networks, and Romanian communities outside the borders.

✓ Incorporate volunteering into the education system through school curricula to encourage students to participate in voluntary activities.

- *How can we, via **cooperation**, ensure a **long-lasting and sustainable** peace?*

✓ By promoting local and international cooperation in the spirit of tolerance and good understanding and following international rules in force.

- *How can one contribute, as an organization / an individual to the **common strategy/capacity** for peace building?*

✓ Developing and implementing policies that promote equity, social justice, and sustainable economic development.

✓ As in most countries in the ex-communist space, many generational and social cleavages are due to different life experiences in communism/transition/neoliberal society. These conflicting experiences create conflicting representations of the past and visions of the present/future, therefore the critical analysis of social memory according to generation,

status, and ethnicity can offer solutions in the process of recognition and inter-individual differences and can help negotiate some expectations/ common goals for the future.