

IMPLEMENTING NATURE FOR PEACE: MULTILATERAL COLLABORATIONS AND PROJECT-BASED INITIATIVES IN THE CARPATHIAN NATIONAL NATURE PARK – A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: Armed conflicts have devastating effects on the environment, contribute disproportionately to carbon emissions, and negatively affect community resilience to climate change. Conflict causes degradation to ecosystems and ecosystem services, the restoration of which can be a lengthy process. Early impact assessments and rapid response actions in the aftermath of conflict are essential for establishing baseline datasets and facilitating successful recovery. However, the one-way flow of external resources is not always sufficient to achieve the targeted results. Partnership building and the involvement of the local population are essential for the restoration of natural ecosystems, and the mutual exchange of support between different protected areas. The Nature for Peace concept brings together rapid response and long-term methods to help raise awareness and empower people to protect and restore their remaining natural capital.

The Nature for Peace concept aims to help empower people affected by armed conflicts by accompanying them in their rehabilitation process. This concept is carried out in protected areas, drawing on the healing mental health effects of natural environments. During this communities are empowered to protect and care for their natural environment. Sharing this knowledge is essential to enable the restoration of affected natural environments and support to affected communities.

Keywords: Nature, Armed Conflicts, Mental Health, Nature for Peace

1 INTRODUCTION

Ongoing wars, along with all conflicts, adversely affect people, both physically and emotionally. Emotional suffering related to the experience of conflict may occur not only due to direct exposure to life-threatening situations and violence but also through living in damaged environments, broken infrastructure and due to negative environmental impacts (IUCN 2021).

Nature for Peace is a concept of interaction between nature and people affected by conflicts, the implementation of which facilitates emotional recovery and health improvement along with a new perception of natural value based on knowledge sharing. The Nature for Peace Vision is to lead the way in developing the role of protected areas for those affected by conflict, and its mission is to see protected areas become a focal point for recuperation of those affected by conflict, and for sharing of knowledge and resources for post-conflict reconstruction of the natural environment (Chrystie et al. 2022).

The N4P concept unites 3 key concepts:

Peace for nature. This well-known concept focuses on changing attitudes between people and nature.

Post-conflict recuperation through nature.

Culture for peace. Another well-known concept, this focuses on empowering individuals to take responsibility for the environment, through education (Wiegele et al. 2023).

The general objective of the Nature for Peace Concept is establishment of a knowledge hub as a platform for communication and new aspects of cooperation, cultural exchange, forming of new trust and values of conflict victims as well as the sharing of best practice examples to ensure sustainable protected area use and increasing ecological awareness. This will be achieved through the following desired outcomes:

Outcome 1: Establishment of the interdisciplinary cluster for exchange of knowledge capital.

Outcome 2: Awareness campaign of protected area potentials in the post-conflict context.

Outcome 3: Establishment of a program for rehabilitation of victims.

The health and well-being benefits experienced by visitors to protected areas are well documented (Mental Health Foundation 2021), (Jenny Laverdure 2021), (University of Minnesota 2022). Therefore, protected areas can play a crucial role in health improvement and emotional recovery for post-conflict victims (INTEGRIS Health 2022).

The Nature for Peace platform will unite people from diverse cultural backgrounds within a project that facilitates personal responsibility for sustainable use of natural resources, keeping a clean environment, playing a role as a key agent in raising awareness in their communities and finally making peace with nature (Korchemylyuk et al. 2022).

2 MULTILATERAL THEMATIC APPROACH

“Bi- or multilateral thematic cooperation(s). Cooperation in a specific area of management (e.g. research, capacity building, etc.) is agreed for a specific or indefinite period. Usually this is done on the basis of an appropriate agreement.” (Jungmeier et.al 2023)

To facilitate multilateral thematic partnership building for Nature for Peace, a cluster will be developed for professional outreach to relevant industry experts including environmentalists, humanitarian actors, mine action organizations, educational authorities, and medical personnel.

The Nature for Peace Cluster is a group of partners from different educational, research, nature protection and other relevant professional backgrounds, who work together to develop the role of protected areas for post-conflict recovery and peace building.

The approach develops an international team with diverse knowledge and experience, who contribute to promotion and implementation of Nature for Peace concept all over the world through sharing of best practices for making peace with nature and taking responsibility for ensuring a safe environment.

A cluster is understood for the purposes of Nature for Peace as a: "Geographical concentration of interlinked companies and institutions in related branches of industry that complement each other by joint relations of exchange and activities along one (several) value creation chains." (Michael Porter, 1990) "The co-location of partners, service providers, educational and research institutions related through linkages of different types". (Europe Innova 2007)

A cluster approach is commonly adopted in relation to the themes of internally displaced populations and rapid-onset or chronic crises where local populations are affected. As such the roles of partners are informal and require few resources other than a digital platform. Cluster partnerships are open to all those with links to the theme of humanitarian response, and who have expertise, resources or information relevant to the theme or sector. Potential partners include but are not limited to: Protected Area management personnel; international organizations (e.g., the International Committee of the Red Cross); relevant governmental organizations; NGOs (local and international); donors; business representatives; industry experts; education sector representatives; volunteers; healthcare professionals and academics.

2.1 ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE MULTILATERAL THEMATIC APPROACH

The multilateral thematic approach with a cluster as its foundation has the advantage of engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders who will each bring their own experience and expertise to develop the concept. However, this same advantage can cause problems in coordination and clarity of leadership:

Advantages	Limitations
The project concept is communicated to a diverse, cross-sectoral range of potential stakeholders and future funding bodies	This approach encourages multiple participants to 'observe', which may lead to difficulties in building concrete, deliverable relationships
The partnership is diverse and 'infinite' as opposed to finite, increasing the likelihood of it persisting long-term	Coordination may be more complex due to diverse range of participants from organisations with differing agendas
Availability of a wide range of expert resources within the cluster	It can depend on a limited number of active participants, if direct engagement is challenging to maintain
Engaging different perspectives under a common aim encourages innovation and creativity	The broad scope and wide range of participants risks an over-complicated negotiation process in order to settle on concrete objectives
Engaging local partners alongside international stakeholders increases potential for local support from the international sector	A multilateral partnership approach can struggle to maintain coherent leadership due to a wide range of different perspectives.
A further advantage of this approach is that there is no risk for the participants	Different languages

3 PROJECT-BASED COOPERATION

“Project-based cooperation. Projects, by definition temporary organisations with a binding and usually demanding work programme, are a common form of cooperation. The partners commit to work on specific topics and usually receive access to a certain amount of project funding in return.” (Jungmeier et.al 2023).

The second key partnership approach will be based in project-based cooperation. This will be achieved through a Nature for Peace pilot project in the Carpathian National Nature Park (CNNP). This project will be directly delivered by cooperation between national park personnel, project staff, and participants (beneficiaries of the project).

The CNNP has great natural, ecological, cultural and historical potential for recuperation of those affected by conflict, and for sharing of knowledge on the themes of biodiversity, nature conservation, ecosystem services, climate change and other global topics.

The CNNP has a beautiful mountain landscape, picturesque places, clear waters, and healing air. Around Yaremche, Tatariv and Vorokhta rise masses of spire forests (spruce, white fir, pine, juniper). The volatilization of coniferous trees, combined with the scents of herbaceous plants, enrich the environment with volatiles. According to scientists, spire trees, especially spruce, create a sense of lightness, and landscape therapy is an important method of treatment. Mountain air is clean, rich in oxygen and ozone, has a special healing photophone that regulates the body's immune system, and aids in the recovery of

damaged or weakened human organs. The availability of physiotherapeutic, manipulative, massage, and inhalation treatments all contributed to the creation in this area of rest homes, boarding houses, sanatoriums and other health facilities (Carpathian National Nature Park 2009).

Beitrag im Rahmen des 17. Forschungsforums der österreichischen Fachhochschulen von 17.-18. April 2024 an der IMC Krems.

3.1 PROGRAM

The focus of the Nature for Peace concept is the rehabilitation of people affected by conflict. The concept states that nature can contribute greatly to the recovery and rehabilitation of people. A workshop program was created for this purpose.

After the difficult time of the war, the goal is to give the affected people time to open up to new topics and to recover from past traumas. The natural environment will make an important contribution to this. Intact nature can help to leave the destruction behind for a moment, and to start the rehabilitation and recovery process. The workshop program activities have been carefully chosen and the density of the program ensures that enough time will be given to recover during the weekend.

The workshop program was designed to combine the concepts of nature, recreation, and knowledge transfer. Thus, forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku), nature yoga, and national park excursions were chosen to combine these interdisciplinary topics. Beneficiaries will be introduced to the topics of nature and nature conservation in a hands-on way, with special attention paid to the protected animal and plant species of the CNNP. The project-based cooperation approach will see the direct involvement of partners including rangers and other staff from the national park, alongside education for sustainable development experts and healthcare professionals. The roles of these partners will be dictated through the management plan but will require funding input and well-developed, formal objectives.

3.2 ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT BASED COOPERATIVE APPROACH

Advantages	Limitations
Possible funding streams increase due to combining networking opportunities from different partners	The content of the project depends on the project application and funding guidelines, which may differ from the perspectives of all partners
Engaging partners from different backgrounds increase cross-sectoral confidence in the concept	Coordination may be more complex due to the participation of partners from organizations with differing agendas
Availability of a wider range of human and infrastructure resources	A cooperative approach may cause frictions in the allocation of resources between different partners
Engaging different perspectives under a common aim encourages innovation and creativity	The project-based partnership approach runs for a finite period, after which a new project (and new funding) may be required to avoid the concept from dissolving.
Engaging local partners increases potential effectiveness in the local the area	If one partner is depended on too heavily, this can be a risk to the entire project
The project-based cooperative approach brings together people with distinct skill sets to work towards a common goal.	Project objectives may evolve over time due to partners' differing requirements, but be restricted to the original project proposal through funding mechanisms

<p>A further advantage of this approach is that any risks involved in the project will be shared between the different participants.</p>	
<p>Engaging the different partners throughout the project will increase the likelihood of network expansion, thereby supporting and widening the scope of the nature for peace concept.</p>	

4 CONCLUSION

The Protected Area (CNNP) and the Nature for Peace Approach will benefit in multiple ways from the two partnership approaches evaluated above.

The management goals of the CNNP include the objective to positively contribute to the United Nations Strategic Development Goals (SDGs). The two partnerships evaluated above will further the N4P concept's contribution to meeting the following SDGs: – Good health and well-being (to promote the role of protected areas for health improvement and recreation activity), SDG4 – Quality education (to provide basic ecological knowledge for people), SDG10 – Reduced inequalities (to increase focus on the treatment of people living out of protected areas), SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities (to promote ecosystem services), SDG16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions (to promote responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels), SDG17 – Partnership for goals (to work with multiple stakeholders, to improve national and international partnership).

A further key benefit is that through the networks developed, the protected area and protected area management will have the opportunity to communicate and exchange information and to share and collaboratively expand their experiences in the field of Nature for Peace. The cultural exchange dynamic will allow for communication and experience sharing with other protected areas that may also have suffered from the impacts of conflict. A diverse range of potential avenues for funding opportunities and resource exchange will be made available, and the feasibility of Nature for Peace itself will be demonstrated and widely communicated. This will also provide awareness raising as to the natural capital of the protected area, and of any requirements there may be for reconstruction within the protected area due to the conflict.

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