

SUCCESSFUL LOCAL PEACEBUILDING IN MACEDONIA:  
SUSTAINED DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE

*Ann Kelleher and Kelly Ryan*

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Local peacebuilding projects should receive systematic and sustained analysis given their number and importance in creating conditions for peace in post-conflict societies. This analysis of the Nansen Integrated School in Jegunovce, Macedonia brings to light causal factors and specific practices that can produce successful local peacebuilding. Harold Saunders's concept of "sustained dialogue" enables an analysis of the factors contributing to the school's success, while five operational characteristics recommended by Dorothea Hilhorst and Mathijs van Leeuwen provide useful guidelines for examining the school and its sponsoring local peacebuilding organization.

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While much of the academic analysis of peace processes focuses on peacemaking—official negotiations and the implementation of resulting agreements—the significance of grassroots, intergroup civic engagement is worthy of systematic study and should not be taken for granted. Post-violent conflict peacebuilding has increasingly attracted academic analysis, including of local peacebuilding strategies. John Paul Lederach, one of the earliest and foremost proponents of local peacebuilding, highlights the importance of local people: "The international community must see people in the setting as resources, not recipients."<sup>1</sup> His citizen-based approach aims for "development of people and their communities in such a way that it facilitates and sustains an infrastructure for peace within their setting."<sup>2</sup> "The greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term," says Lederach, "is always rooted in the local people and their culture."<sup>3</sup> Other authors such