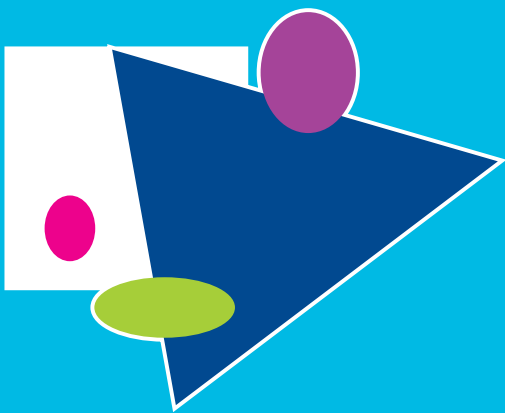




R ShaRd FutR




Life is not just black and white...
Value difference



Celebrating the contribution of voluntary youth agencies to the building of a more peaceful and inclusive society.

Building good relations and accepting difference.



Foreword

In April 2006 over 300 young people and their youth workers made their way to W5 to celebrate the contribution of young people to the building of a more peaceful and inclusive society.

The event, known as the R ShaRd FutR celebration evening, was hosted by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) as part of Community Relations Week. It was organised in partnership with the regional voluntary youth organisations accessing our Community Relations Youth Service Support Scheme (more commonly known as CRYSSS) and showcased many of the creative approaches developed by them as they strive to promote acceptance and understanding of others and to build good relations among our youth population.

This publication aims to show-case this work further, providing ideas and inspiration to both those already involved in this area of work and those who have yet to become involved. It also contains articles which contribute to debate and thinking on the challenges which remain if we are to adequately prepare our young people to live and share in a peaceful and increasingly diverse society.

On behalf of YCNI, I hope you enjoy learning more about the enthusiasm and commitment of all those who are involved in community relations and related work across the regional voluntary youth service and beyond. Their skills and experience have much to offer the A Shared Future policy and strategy and its vision for a society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence.

Since the Youth Council was established in 1990 one of its key functions has been to encourage and develop good community relations. We have issued grants of over 1.5 million to 55 youth organisations primarily for this purpose in this period. Over the last 16 years our society has become increasingly diverse and we all need to learn how to share the future. Nothing will diminish our commitment to this work of peace building, inclusion and active citizenship.



Máire Young, Chairperson YCNI



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From the Core to the Coal Face

Sinead McGrath, The Catholic Guides of Ireland (CGI)

The Catholic Guides of Ireland have been involved with community relations programmes for many years. We have worked alongside and with our sister organisation Girl Guiding UK and the Scout Association on a number of activities and programmes that have aimed to improve relationships and understanding. We also took part in the pilot stages of the policy development process developed by the JEDI¹ initiative.

This latter piece of work aimed to embed the principles of EDI at the core of our association. In recent years the out-workings of this process has resulted in a number of new training initiatives that have incorporated the EDI² principles into our basic training for leaders and developed related programmes and activities for our younger members to take part in. We have also developed two new policies, one to promote Social Inclusion and a Volunteer Policy, which have been received with great enthusiasm. We have raised awareness of the EDI principles at all levels of our Association and this is evident through the joint programme run between Catholic Guides of Ireland, Christ the King Drumanness and UK Guides Spa Brownies.

Christ the King Leaders had taken part in good relations training provided by Catholic Guides of Ireland and funded through the CRYSSS Scheme. Through this training the leaders gained the confidence to proceed with a project that they had identified along with Spa Brownies. Joint meetings were held in each others meeting halls. These led to the planning and delivery of a number of joint community projects. In addition both groups have had a joint enrolment and holiday and they are looking forward to carrying out further activities with one another.

Both groups were excited about taking part in the R ShaRd FutR event and had taken time out of their holiday to prepare a presentation to incorporate all that they have achieved over the past year, including the songs and poems outlined opposite. Their presentation was designed to include the full participation of

each Brigin and Brownie. They enjoyed being in the spotlight but most of all they enjoyed being able to take part in the creative activities.

They also enjoyed the interactive drama although at some stages leaders were worried that it was a little too advanced for them but the girls got involved and took part with very little encouragement needed. Through the R ShaRd FutR event the girls were able to express how much they have enjoyed working and taking part in events together. The Leaders also enjoyed the event as it gave them fresh ideas and contacts for further activities.

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The Catholic Guides of Ireland aims to provide a diverse programme of activities that will encourage girls and young women to develop to their full potential.

Our CHOICES programme has been tailored to suit the needs of the different age groups that our youth work focuses on, and includes:

- Look what I can Do (5 to 7 years)
- Lets Do It (7 to 10 years)
- Count Me In (10 to 14 years), and
- Get With It (14 to 19 years)

These programmes incorporate themes such as health, communication, out of doors, international, creativity, environment and special programmes along with work towards interest badges. They are designed to enable our young people to choose the areas within the programme that they are most interested in and add what they feel will provide them with challenges most suited to their needs.

¹ The JEDI acronym stands for Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence. JEDI is a partnership between lead youth agencies in Northern Ireland. Its overarching vision is to “to increase the ability and confidence of youth organisations and young people to be at ease with difference, acknowledge one another as equals and promote improved relations between all”. For further information visit www.jedini.com

² EDI stands for Equity, Diversity and Interdependence and derives from a piece of research published by the University of Ulster which argues that these principles underpin the development of effective community relations.



Catholic Guides of Ireland, Christ the King Drumaness & UK Guides Spa Brownies



By working together we also discovered we shared the following song:

On my honour

On my honour I will try, there's a duty to be done
and I'll say ay
There's a reason to be here and a reason above
My honour is to try and my duty to be loved

People don't need to know my name
If I've done wrong
then I'm to blame
If I've hurt someone
then I've hurt me

Chorus - on my honour

Now as I go on my guiding way
In all I do my work and play
Grant o lord the courage to me
To be the best that I can be

Chorus - on my honour

WHO

We are the brownies and we are from Spa
We are the brigins and we're from Drumaness
We've been meeting up-see what will happen
Its our future that we are mapping

WHEN

We've been working all together
For two years, whatever the weather
Been to each others meeting places
We've got to know so many new faces

WHERE

We've had some fun, done all sorts of things
Bounced at coco's and didn't we sing
The brigins came to brownies for thinking day
Then all together our promise we did say

WHAT

What was the best bit Ardnabannon all together
Now we have really got to know each other!
We are growing and learning all the time
United in guiding-well we think that's fine

WHY

To make new friends and do things together
To get to know and respect each other
We're not all the same, this is true
But we're not all that different and that's true too!

Friends

We are Brigins and Brownies and we are
all great friends
We have fun and play together hope it never ends
Although we are different in some kinds of ways
We try to work things out and have happier days

We met together for the first time 2 years ago
It was strange not knowing what others might say
But as we spent more time and travelled to and fro
The easier it became to make lots of friends

By Rebecca and Claire



Embracing Diversity

Rainer Pagel, Phab NI Inclusion Matters

Phab NI Inclusion Matters' mission is to include young people with and without a disability in education, sports, arts, and leisure activities:

Our philosophy, which is...

“Working Together for Inclusion”

... is in all instances very closely tied to the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI).

Whilst all of our work is underpinned by the principles of EDI, we do regard our Children Embracing Diversity programme funded by CRYSSS, as our EDI flagship. In 2006 we took this summer scheme to Omagh. We are keen to work on this project in partnership with other organisations, and the Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group was our first and obvious partner in this years' venture. We work with our partner organisation(s) to recruit local workers and volunteers to run the programme which usually takes place in August. Training for volunteers and workers occurs from June onwards.

This Children Embracing Diversity programme aims to illustrate the JEDI philosophy in total, and each year has a key focus on one of the three principles. This year the magic word was interdependence – we explored the concept



through a wide range of inclusive play activities, creativity and art, drama and dance, music and poetry, and, of course, it came to a spectacular crescendo on the last day in a colourful extravaganza, when the children staged exhibitions, showed their artefacts, and performed some of the dances and activities that captured their imagination during the two weeks.

We were proud to be involved with the recent **R ShaRd FutR** event in W5, where we were given the opportunity to showcase some of the inclusive games outlined in our “Go For It!” publication, and demonstrate Parball, Northern Ireland's newest inclusive sport. We also asked the young people attending the event to explain what they understood by Equity, Diversity and Interdependence and jot down their definitions on three flipcharts.

“Go For It!” is a compendium of inclusive games, which Phab NI Inclusion Matters published in 2005. It lists and describes some 30 tried and tested games that can be played in groups consisting of young people with and without disabilities, and makes the point very clearly that youth clubs and groups do not have to programme different games events for young people with disabilities, and those without.

Parball is a brand new fast and exciting inclusive indoor sport played in wheelchairs. It is the first sport of its kind created to be inclusive of people with and without disabilities. Parball is played with a team of nine people, three people with a disability, three people without a disability, and three subs. Phab (NI) Inclusion Matters is always offering youth groups the opportunity to try out some of the skills involved in Parball, to have a go at playing the game, and perhaps hold a tournament in the group's local area. A typical Parball taster session lasts 3 hours and covers Wheelchair Skills, Ball Skills, Teamwork, and Game Play. Tournaments can be held with a minimum of six teams.



The “Rosetta Stone” tried to encourage young people to jot down their interpretations of Equity, Diversity, and Interdependence. Whilst this did not produce large amounts of new insights, (and certainly the usual amount of flippant comments also), the majority of the comments showed a clear core of understanding of the principles. As this exercise is a very quiet activity, that can take place at the margins of many types of events. Phab NI Inclusion Matters will use it again in other contexts, where young people with and without disabilities come together.

As an information event to show that EDI is more than just jargon and dry theory, **R ShaRd FutR** worked very well. What could have been a simple “fun day” kind of event – 300 young people let loose in an extremely stimulating environment – turned out to be the event that combined having fun with non-formal learning about EDI; that enabled organisations like ours to exhibit their work, **and** witness innovative approaches to EDI-inspired youth work by other organisations; that

enabled decision makers not only to read about it, but to experience the value of EDI first hand.

We know that planning and running an event such as this is no mean feat, and probably prompted the organisers at least once solemnly to swear never to try this again. If this is true, then we at Phab NI Inclusion Matters are all the more pleased that the event took place, that we were able to take part, and that we were able to show some of the young people with whom we work, what lies behind the JEDI - acronym. Our only criticism: too little time to take everything in; let’s have a full day next time!

Many thanks to the EDI Team at YCNI!

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To Play, That Is The Thing

Joanne Stainsby, JEDI



The **R ShaRd FutR** celebration evening was an indication of what can be achieved when organisations work in partnership to create safe environs for young people to explore, question and discover. It was also a wonderful demonstration of the skills, commitment and creative approaches the youth agencies involved have to offer the A Shared Future agenda¹.

The principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI) are core to the A Shared Future agenda. Its vision is for the emergence of a society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence (A Shared Future, 2005, p.7). Those youth organisations involved with R ShaRd FutR strive to embed the (EDI) principles into all aspects of their organisation's culture, both internally and externally. Promoting fairness, celebrating diversity and valuing our connectedness is paramount to building relationships, and gearing towards a society where everyone can have a sense of pride and belonging.

On the evening of this showcase event JEDI, with the assistance of The Voluntary Service Bureau's project, Young Citizens in Action (YCIA) took the opportunity to pilot resources that have been developed to enable young people to explore diversity and build a sense of mutual respect for those different to themselves.

Young Citizens in Action (YCIA) piloted an activity developed by JEDI specifically for the 7-10 year old age group. 'A cultural package' is based on the classic game of 'pass the parcel'. It uses an activity-based approach to introduce the central themes of culture, respect for diversity and demonstrates in a very simple yet effective way the differences and similarities that connect a group of young people.

During the activity a parcel was passed around and each time it stopped a layer had to be removed and players were invited to take part in EDI-based tasks such as:

- Say hello to someone 'Eskimo' style
- Give the parcel to someone who has tried Indian food
- Give the parcel to someone who does not live in Belfast

JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity & Interdependence)
A creative partnership promoting a vision of community through sectoral, organisational and personal transformation

In true EDI style the usual one prize at the end had been replaced by little cards which the 'winner' circulated to all participants to thank them all for being involved in the activity. These were later exchanged for bright and colourful books.

On behalf of JEDI, I facilitated another activity session. This one had been designed with the 14+ age group in mind, but is also suitable for use with younger and adult groups. It invited participants to reflect on the themes of family, community and identity and used art to explore and then discuss memories of favourite games, safe places and important people from their childhood.

The session enabled young people from diverse backgrounds and who did not know each other prior to attending the event to share aspects of their identity in a safe and positive way. As stories were told, similarities were spotted, differences were acknowledged and gradually the interconnectedness of each others' different experiences were more deeply understood. Informal and play opportunities such as these are fundamental to our duty to adequately prepare our young people to contribute to a more peaceful and diverse society.

JEDI's Vision

'To increase the ability and confidence of youth organisations and young people to be at ease with difference, acknowledge one another as equals and promote improved relations between all.'

JEDI's Aim

'To develop and implement sustainable models for embedding, monitoring and quality assuring the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence throughout the youth sector.'

¹ A Shared Future was published in March 2005. It sets out the Governments policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland



Emma Ward, Young Citizens in Action

Young Citizens in Action (YCIA) is an exciting youth led volunteering and citizenship programme that operates as part of the Voluntary Service Bureau. YCIA helps young people aged between 16-30 years old become more actively involved in society through volunteering and raising awareness of relevant youth issues.

Volunteering is a great way of developing skills, gaining experience, meeting new people and having fun while helping others.

Citizenship is about being involved in the community you live in and taking an active role in what your country does for its own citizens and for other people. Citizenship is about knowing your rights and knowing the process to complain or change things if you feel you or others are being treated unfairly. Some questions to get you thinking include:

- Do you know the current policies of your government? Do you support them?
- Do you know about Fair Trade products? Do you think they are a good idea? Do you understand your government's policies in world trade?
- Do you know how policies can help you identify the need for leisure facilities in your area?
- What do you think about the war in Iraq? Should it have taken place?


Community Relations Work is an integral part of what we do within YCIA and therefore we felt it was very appropriate to get involved in the R ShaRd FutR initiative. The concept for the event started off somewhat smaller-more a gathering of young people,

sharing experiences of volunteering and so forth, and then having pizza and playing bowls. However what transcended came from the enthusiasm and creativeness of those organisations involved, and it quickly became apparent that this would be a colourful extravaganza, celebrating all the positive and diverse aspects of youth culture in Northern Ireland.

The atmosphere on the evening was electric, with individuals representing many varied organisations having the privilege to rub shoulders with some of Northern Ireland's most creative, talented and vocal children and young people. W5 was buzzing, and Nuala McKeever was the perfect hostess, sharing heartfelt encounters of "when she was still young" using her very own brand of good old Northern wit.

The evening set a precedent for Community Relations Week, firmly acknowledging the effectiveness of interagency approaches, the commitment of voluntary youth organisations to the A ShaRd FutR agenda and the value in engaging with young people on this theme. It is therefore hoped that Youth focused celebrations will continue to be an integral aspect of future initiatives.

"During the R ShaRd FutR event Young Citizens in Action ran a DVD for guests to enjoy. It had been produced in conjunction with young people from the Indian Community Centre and explored their views on St Patrick."



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The Challenge of Building A Shared Future

Duncan Morrow, Community Relations Council

April 24-30 was Community Relations Week and an opportunity for both community and voluntary groups and public bodies to illustrate some of the progress that is being made in building better relationships as the foundation for a shared future. With over 150 events in the programme across Northern Ireland and all district council areas it was recognition of and encouragement for work in progress.

The week's theme was Building A Shared Future, a reference to the government policy on community relations launched last year. There are alternatives to a shared future and we have lived them for decades. But we should be in no doubt what they involve: killing, expulsion from homes and properties, massive economic destruction and random violence, particularly against the most vulnerable. Any belief that an alternative to sharing here is consequence free is not only naïve but dangerous.

If anyone tells you that A Shared Future is social engineering, laugh and offer a few observations. We have been protected from the consequences of our local antagonism by the intervention of massive social engineering. Communities that were ready to drive, burn or shoot each other out have been 'stabilized' by 'peace' walls and CCTV. We have also ensured a minimum degree of public services through duplication, at huge cost to the public purse. But this social engineering in the foothills of polarisation has never really resolved anything.

None of this is to say that things have not got better in the last decade. But the issue is not just stopping the violence; it is actually changing the fundamental relationships which produce violence. The work after the violence has stopped is all about sharing.

The first requirement is leadership. It is imperative that we end the ambivalence that is hanging around, that A Shared Future is just rhetoric, cucumber sandwiches

for the twenty first century. This means some real decisions by political leaders to embrace the notion that sharing is not a short term tactic but a practical and moral necessity. That will mean a willingness to take on vested interests which define progress only in terms of relative benefits for one part of the community. One of the fears around the restoration of devolution is that local politicians are not yet willing to take on these challenges, as the flak they will take will be from their own voters and interests. But, until we are able to meet these challenges, A Shared Future will be hobbled by being seen as a top-down policy.

On the other hand, it is imperative that the British and Irish governments, and all of the international supporters who have invested so much in peace building here emphasise that the long-term sustainability of peace depends on just such a commitment, whether devolution is established in the short run or not.

In addition, A Shared Future requires resources to back up the policy commitments and a clear implementation plan. As a start in this the government Minister Lord Rooker, during Community Relations Week presented the first shared future triennial action plans by government departments. At the same conference the Community Relations Council presented 90 research recommendations for action by government to deliver on A Shared Future on issues from housing and interfaces to education and flags and emblems. The Community Relations Council is not responsible for implementing A Shared Future but it will be monitoring progress and acting as an active partner to those wishing to take steps towards sharing over separation. Success will be measured by the degree to which hard questions are now addressed and properly resolved through dialogue.



Some of the key recommendations presented include:

- A cross-sectoral rationalisation of the schools estate. The Strategic Education Review (Bain Review) must ensure increased partnership and collaboration between sectors and schools of different types as well as developing new types of shared and jointly managed schools.
- Resources should be made available to develop local environments in a way that improves community relations and reduces a sense of territory.
- The flying of official flags at district councils and the funding of all festivals should be in line with the idea of civic shared public space.
- The comprehensive mapping of housing estates across Northern Ireland to fit them into three categories:

Those estates already integrated: good channels of communications with tenants/residents should be developed to ensure that they do not become segregated. Close monitoring required.

Those estates where a strategic approach to integration could be implemented. (For example where there is a positive response to integration: an estate strategy team should be set up to work towards encouraging further integration).

Those where integration would prove extremely difficult: these should be monitored closely and close links established through community groups. 'Softening' approaches should be introduced through building new smaller developments at interface areas/ peace walls. Open spaces should be utilized as much as possible and environmentally friendly schemes should be encouraged. Community representatives should be encouraged to work alongside those from the opposite community.

- Non contentious areas for new developments of mixed housing developments should be identified.
- An aggressive and inventive media campaign aimed at young people, made with the help of young people, should be developed and delivered.
- With regard to interfaces, there should be a commitment to building no more physical barriers.



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Games NOT Names

Lorraine Murphy & Margaret Deevy, PlayBoard

PlayBoard was established in 1985 to address the play deprivation of children in Greater Belfast as a direct consequence of the civil unrest. Over the past twenty years the agency has grown and developed. It has become Northern Ireland's lead play agency and is currently recognised as a key sectoral partner, with specialist skills and knowledge.

The agency supports the growth and promotion of play opportunities, play work training and school age childcare services across Northern Ireland. PlayBoard's work is directed in support of the Children (NI) Order 1995, the relevant legislation relating to children and young people and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC) in particular articles 12, 23 and 31¹.

PlayBoard plays a unique and pivotal role in building relationships at both a community and strategic level, by providing expertise about play, the play sector and school-age childcare sector within a local and international context. PlayBoard remains grounded in its commitment to meet the play needs of all children, whilst consolidating and further developing school age childcare services, to meet the needs of children, parents and local communities.

The agency exists to promote, create and develop quality play opportunities, through three strategic key functions:

- Tackling Play Deprivation in the Community
- Supporting Quality Out of School Play Care provision
- Workforce Development of the Play Work sector

This approach is reflected in our Mission Statement 'Working for the Child's Right to Play'. PlayBoard works within the value base of Play Work which is underpinned by the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI). The principles of EDI seek to find ways for people of different backgrounds and goals to live and work with one another with mutual respect. PlayBoard aims to embed these principles in all work, both internally and externally.

Last year PlayBoard launched its anti bias, anti sectarian training package 'Games not Names'. This programme was designed to encourage practitioners to reflect upon and examine the values that underpin and inform their play provision. Delivered using a play focus, practitioners are offered a safe environment to develop anti-discriminatory practice and to become aware of relevant legislation.

The aim is to provide play workers with the space and time to explore the impact of unfair discrimination and bias on play and play work.

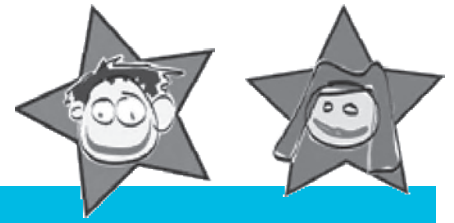
General course objectives:

- To examine language, myths and stereotypes within the context of anti-discriminatory and anti-bias practice
- To provide an overview of relevant key legislation that underpins quality play work and childcare practice
- To explore the different modes of communication and how these inform and influence children's environments



¹ For further details on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child see: www.ohchr.org





- To highlight the importance of play to children's holistic development and introduce participants to the language of play work
- To engage in practical activities, including programme planning that embrace and reflect anti-discriminatory and anti-bias practice.
- To introduce a framework of an Equity, Diversity and Interdependence framework for policy development
- To evaluate the impact of the programme on registered provision.

This training programme is one very tangible example of the contribution PlayBoard is making to the building of a more shared and diverse society.

On a more fundamental basis, the principles of EDI provide the framework for many ongoing discussions within PlayBoard and its training programmes. They require that, rather than not asking questions or offering an opinion because 'it is not the done thing', or rather than following the unwritten rule of avoiding certain topics, we ask the questions and consider the possibilities. We recognise and celebrate difference. It is this ethos we seek to promote.

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PlayBoard had an opportunity to deliver some of the games and activities during the R ShaRd FutR event.

Activity One: Games Session

During the evening a number of games sessions were facilitated. These sessions enabled all those who attended to join in with other children and young people in experiencing some of the games on offer. Games in the workshop were wide co-operative games and they were to enable the groups to work together and enjoy what they were doing. The games had no winner and they were non competitive. I used some games where the participant had to focus on senses other than sight to play and they appeared to enjoy what they were doing. There was a wide age range of young people on the night both with and without disabilities and they all participated and enjoyed the games. Play is an excellent tool for uniting young people.

Activity Two: R ShaRd FutR Sculpture

Throughout the evening it was estimated that children, young people and adults from 10 different organisations worked together to build a free standing structure that represented them as they are today and where they see themselves in the future. Those who took part were invited to use the wide range of materials and loose parts that were available to add their personal touch to the structure.

Each organisation added a different dimension to the structure and the end result was a multi layered and multi coloured free standing structure that enabled all those who took part to identify themselves as individuals and organisations. It also demonstrated how the combination of the different styles and ideas joined together to make a bigger and better structure.

Although a formal evaluation was not conducted on the evening the anecdotal evidence suggests that both sessions were a great success.



Moving Beyond the Current Paradigm

Paddy White, Youth Link: NI

Introduction

Youth Link provides training opportunities for young people and youth workers in all areas of Northern Ireland working with Church, para-Church and community based organisations.

A Shared Future states that “Government recognises the contributions made, for example, by employers, churches and other faith-based organisations.....these organisations continue to have a role to play in helping build relationships across Northern Ireland” [OFMDFM, 2005, p.55]. For an organisation such as Youth Link, fulfilling this role has implications at strategic and operational level.

Vision and Strategy

Youth Link has recently drawn up its Strategic Plan for the period 2006-2009. To remain relevant within the evolving nature of Northern Irish society it was important that this strategy took account of the broader political realities, as well as legislative and policy developments. This included the vision of a shared and inclusive society, where young people can play their part to promote a shared Northern Ireland.

The revised vision for our work is “Churches working together to develop excellence in youth work and ministry, enabling young people and youth practitioners to be agents of transformation in a divided society”. The revised mission statement includes aims to ‘encourage and equip young people to participate in Church and society and in the building of a shared future’ and ‘integrate equity, diversity and interdependence into all aspects of policy and practice in youth work and ministry’.

New language reflected above does not compromise the essence and integrity of Youth Link’s vision and work which has evolved over the past 14 years. What it does, however, is give added significance to the nature of the organisation [and its work] and its alignment to core government priorities, particularly those reflected in A Shared Future, without making any concession on the ethos and independence of the organisation.

Funding

Although A Shared Future states that “the current proposals should not lead to significant public expenditure implications” [ibid, p.55], the vision of A Shared Future is to be inextricably linked to the deployment of current mainstream funding in order that it more effectively promotes good relations. Indeed it could be suggested that if the economic imperative of tackling the costs of division is realised then it should, in the long run, lead to a more effective and efficient delivery of public services.

The government’s publication of its Priorities and Budget 2006 - 2008 [<http://www.pfgni.gov.uk>], makes an explicit link to A Shared Future [para.31] and identifies one of its four strategic priorities as “a society based on partnership, equality, inclusion and mutual respect”, which will be used as a key factor in determining choices regarding the allocation of resources.

As a voluntary organisation in receipt of government funding the above developments have implications for future project proposals.

Positive Steps [DSD 2005] sets out the Government approach to funding the voluntary and community sector. It recognises that the Government provides substantial support for the voluntary and community sector through a range of funding programmes but many of these are short-term in nature and do not always realise the full potential of the financial investment. A move to a longer-term strategic investment in communities has begun which will increasingly promote an outcome focused approach - “government will actively promote a longer-term [7-10yr] outcome focused approach to programmes that significantly involve the voluntary and community sector” [ibid, p.6].

To this end, Youth Link is not just strategically planning its programme development, but is also currently considering how it may be better equipped to respond to the medium and long term opportunities to promote a more inclusive society.



Measuring Impact

Improving relationships between and within communities in Northern Ireland is a long-term goal for Government. Political or other developments within society have the potential to have immediate impact on a good relations programme in either a positive or negative way. While short-term change is significant, measurement is important over the long-term. It is proposed that OFMDFM establishes a group with representatives from “relevant government departments, other organisations and external stakeholders to develop meaningful, measurable and relevant indicators” [OFMDFM 2005, p.58].

Youth Link will need to validate its work by continuing to monitor progress at project and programme level, since this insight from local level can inform the evolution of future policy. In addition, Youth Link’s role as a strategic partner in the JEDI Initiative, YouthNet and Inter-Church fora, means it is well placed to make useful contributions to the proposed measurement group to help identify relevant and valid indicators of positive change.

Risk

Yet an inherent risk exists - that of inactivity and A Shared Future not being embedded at any of the levels identified in the policy. Within Youth Service, there exists openness and a body of expertise to promote and develop community relations work beyond its current paradigm. However without the modelling and support of those in government, the policy could be in danger of never moving beyond rhetoric. The challenge presented here is to move this policy beyond the focus on local community, to promote and encourage a whole society approach, one which promotes and encourages work to address segregation at many levels and in many forms, including the political institutions of Northern Ireland. The voluntary and community sector supports such a vision yet must also ready itself to grasp this fundamental notion of change.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Northern Ireland Programme for Government [PfG] remains the primary policy framework for Government in Northern Ireland.

A Shared Future sets out the Government’s vision of a shared and inclusive society and it is clear from the consultation process that there is overwhelming support for such a vision. However good community relations policy needs effective implementation and it is in its outworking across all sectors and levels of governance in society that practical foundations of trust can be developed.

The voluntary sector in Northern Ireland is well placed to continue to build and professionalise its contribution to both social capital and social inclusion. The language of sectoral partnership, through Compact, has established a proactive and significant ‘horizontal’ positioning of Government towards the voluntary sector and it is now incumbent on the sector to not only maintain high standards of governance and conduct, but also to be strategically well placed with regard to policy development in what Kendall calls a “mixed economy of persuasion” [Kendall, 2003, p 193].

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Being Creative with Contentious

John Peacock, Youth Link: NI

During the **R ShaRd FutR** event Youth Link worked in partnership with Cathog to facilitate an arts based workshop.

This was a natural partnership. Both organisations deliver conflict transformation and community relations programmes supported by YCNI CRYSSS funding which use a range of arts and crafts activities to explore contentious issues with young people.

During the workshop young people engaged with different art forms such as mosaics, painting, cube making and jewellery making to express their journey towards conflict transformation.

A DVD showing some of the conflict in the Province over the last 30 years was used as a backdrop to emphasise the young people's role in building a shared future out of the conflict of the past.

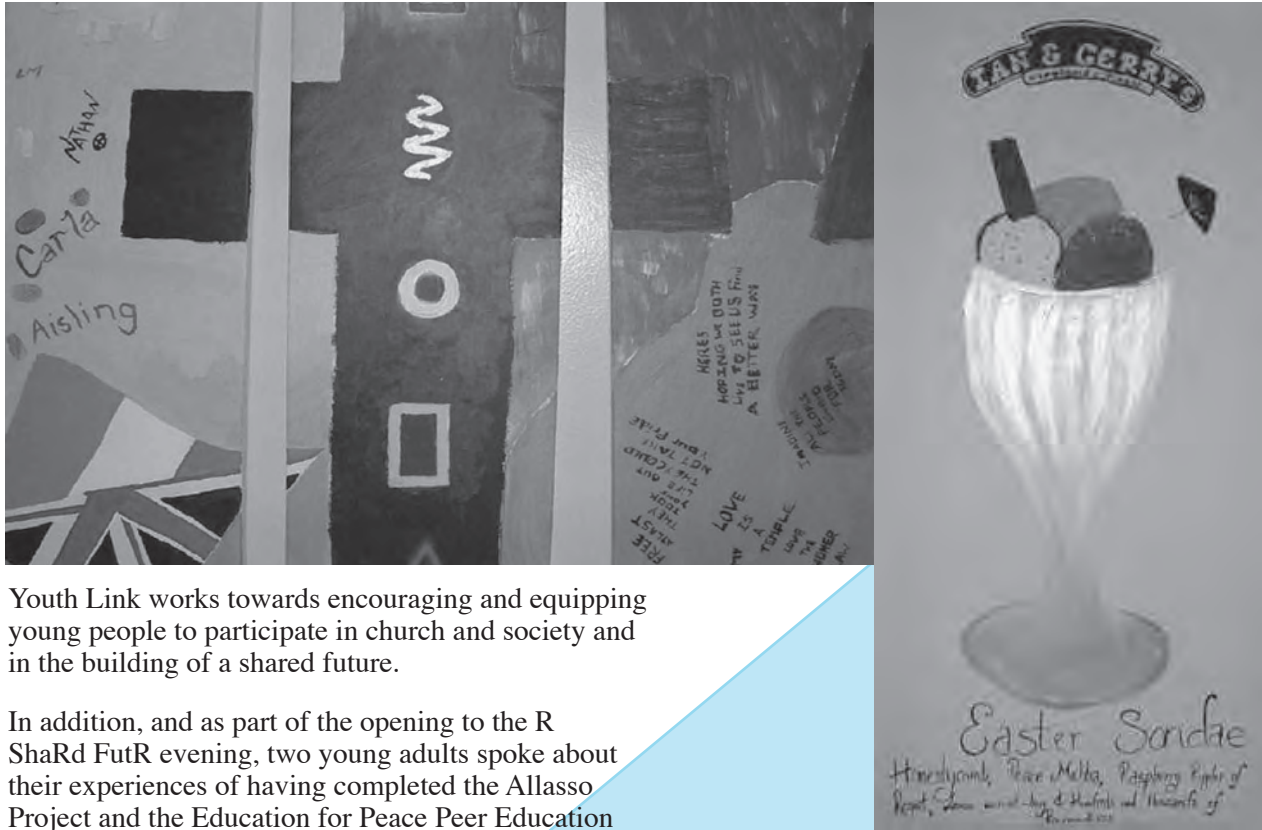
With skilled facilitation these techniques provide powerful tools to sharing. This sharing around difficult issues builds relationships and healing in the lives of individuals and Communities within a diverse society.

Central to Youth Link is a commitment to building relationships that enable healing in the lives of individuals and communities within a diverse society.

“The R ShaRd FutR evening was a celebration of what young people can achieve, with a little help and support”

Nial Bole, aged 18
Youth Link representative and participant at the R ShaRd FutR event





Youth Link works towards encouraging and equipping young people to participate in church and society and in the building of a shared future.


In addition, and as part of the opening to the R ShaRd FutR evening, two young adults spoke about their experiences of having completed the Allasso Project and the Education for Peace Peer Education Programme delivered by Youth Link.

The two young adults shared how they had come to have the opportunity to study the conflict in Northern Ireland, and to hear from people involved in the conflict from different perspectives. Through this experience, they began to understand the value of resolving conflict personally, nationally and internationally. The young adults shared what they had learned about living with diversity, democracy and what it means to be an active citizen both locally and globally. Their input highlighted the value of work of this nature as we seek to build a more shared society.

The R ShaRd FutR event was a very worthwhile highlight during Community Relations Week. Youth Link and Cathog wish to thank YCNI for the opportunity to profile the work we are doing with young people and young adults at this event.

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Cathog is the umbrella headquarter body for the Roman Catholic Youth Service in Northern Ireland.

Its Diocesan Youth Officers complement the work of the wider Youth Service within relevant Education and Library Boards. Their primary focus is in the area of faith development and peace and reconciliation work with young people.



Theatre Isn't Just Entertainment

Sheelagh O'Kane, The Rainbow Factory: YouthAction NI

Artistic development underpinned by youth work principles continues to be at the core of YouthAction's creative work with young people. The Rainbow Factory, as one aspect of the Arts Unit within YouthAction, undertakes several major productions each year, in addition to the eighteen weekly dance classes, the annual Christmas show and the summer dance extravaganza. Satellite projects run in Banbridge and the North West and creative arts programmes are delivered with the Indian Community Centre and Harberton Special Needs School alongside a new urban summer musical currently being developed.

The Rainbow Factory aims to be inclusive with a fee structure established to enable access from all sections of the community, regardless of social, religious or economic background.

For the R ShaRd FutR event, as Director, I discussed with the group various aspects of cultural diversity in N. Ireland and its direct relevance to them. After much discussion, as the topic was so wide the group felt they wanted to explore more in depth the topics of racism and sectarianism which they felt was still very relevant in N. Ireland especially in response to the recent murder in Ballymena of a young school boy. After intensive workshops around these issues Forum theatre was used as a tool to allow the group to explore their findings with an audience, in order to engage the audience into discussion as to whether certain aspects of the performance were relevant to them. It was not intended to be a light piece of theatre purely for "entertainment" but a vehicle for the cast to allow the audience to agree/disagree with what they saw.

About Youth Action

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a regional voluntary youth organisation with bases in Armagh, Ballygawley, Belfast and the North West. It works to enable young people achieve their full potential by providing services, information, training and support. It also seeks to extend the understanding of youth work through the development of innovative models of practice.

The organisation works to support and assist young people as they strive to find and/or create their identity and develop their role in the community. It provides services complementary to statutory and other independent agencies throughout Northern Ireland. Particular emphasis is placed on groups from disadvantaged communities who are working towards their own development. Key priority youth work areas include gender equality, arts development, vocational training, rural development, area based strategies and work with young men.

Youth Action Northern Ireland works with young people to support them as active and equal citizens whose voices are heard, respected and valued. It firmly believes that the inclusion of young people is best facilitated by effective partnerships. YouthAction continues to work locally and strategically with others to maximise resources and enhance opportunities for young people. Through locally based initiatives the organisation, in partnership with community based groups, continues to strive to bring about change from within communities where young people are involved as equal and active contributors.

Models of practice developed through priority youth work areas alongside vocational training underpinned by youth work principles ensures young people have the opportunity to grow and develop as well as achieve a range of qualifications. The range of training delivered includes the NIOCN Introduction to Community Relations EDI and other programmes.



Using this tool allows for some contentious subjects to be opened up for discussion and, whilst seemingly offensive and directly political, tries to throw the responsibility of change back to the audience. This helps the audience, primarily young people, realise they have the power to affect positive change within themselves and their communities.

Overall the whole event was inspiring to be a part of as it allowed the young people and the workers to come together with a common goal, exploring aspects of community relations and EDI in an interactive and participatory way.

The piece below was written by Ann-Marie Patton, one of our members who participated in the event.

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‘As one of the members of The Rainbow Factory that took part in the piece of Forum theatre which was presented in the Odyssey’s W5 in conjunction with YouthAction N.I, I feel that it was a great eye-opener to the public’s view and response to specific situations regarding racism and sectarianism.

Our theatre piece was based on situations in which people were discriminated against and oppressed because of their differences e.g a young black woman ignored in a bus queue by two white women, an elderly lady and a teenager. As this was Forum theatre, a discussion was then opened to the audience in which they were encouraged to give their thoughts and ideas on the scenario: why was this happening? Was it fair?

They then offered advice to help aid the situation on how the characters should react and respond, which the actors then preformed through improvisation.

Another scenario used was a teenage boy being verbally abused by two teenage girls on a bus because of the school uniform he was wearing, and the religious background of the school. Again the discussion focused on why this was happening and what should happen was opened to the house.

The specific scenarios we chose to display were researched through the application of personal experiences. The inspiration of our ‘bus’ theme came from the story of ‘Rosa Parks’ in which racism is the key element.

Also in our theatre piece each actor had their own specific group, for example: music fanatics and environment enthusiasts etc, and encouraged audience members to recruit to their group. This demonstrated the fact that we all have our own likes and dislikes, traits and mannerisms. At the beginning of the piece, through dance, it showed the segregation between the members of each of the different groups. We received a strong, positive response from audience members of all ages, religions and races.



I found this opportunity to perform a drama piece with a message, in front of a large group of people, very useful in all aspects of performance, such as confidence building, focus and improvisation. It was a great learning experience and a delight to take part in.’

Ann-Marie Patton



Countering Racisms: Reflections from working with young people.

Rick Bowler, Sunderland University

The YCNI (Youth Council Northern Ireland) asked me to outline my thoughts on where youth and community educators should focus energy when combating racism and sectarianism. This paper is based on my racisms and youth work, January 2005 conference talk for JEDI (Joined in Equity Diversity and Interdependence).

*'Sometimes it is hard for us to wear our own traditional dress publicly. We are scared of being given racist abuse. One day I was wearing my own traditional dress to go to the temple. On the way I was humiliated and called names by people just for being different. We had to wait in a queue for a taxi to go home, and while we were waiting, a few people in a car started calling us racist names, and they drove past three times. People in front of the queue were disturbed by their attitude and let us take the taxi before them. This was shocking and difficult and we felt so insecure.'*¹ (Kousalyaa's Story)

NICEM (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities) recently raised the sinister prospect that a racist murder similar to Stephen Lawrence is a real possibility. Northern Ireland has some extremely worrying statistics on racism and racist harassment.

- '66% of minority ethnic school children in Northern Ireland have experienced racist harassment'²
- '...the stereotypical perpetrator of racist harassment in Northern Ireland is a young white male over the age of 16 acting in consort with other young white males.'³

Racism and sectarianism⁴ operate at multiple levels and the problems of racism, like sectarianism, have deeply ingrained roots. The legacy today is often invisible from those that do not feel, or accept, its

sinister, exclusionary power. This witting or unwitting phenomenon of a deeply embedded, albeit hidden, supremacist discourse needs to be exposed, examined and challenged. Kousalyaa's brief narrative tells us that racism happens when people are undertaking 'ordinary' daily activities.

It tells us the street racists are confident that others will be afraid, or too shocked, to fully counter the abuse. It also tells us that 'ordinary' people do not want to collude with 'hatred', ignorance, intimidation and abuse. These are the same lessons for the North of England as they are for you.

Where do these supremacist and sinister realities emerge from? In part they are the legacy of 'scientific racism' and the creation of a discourse of the 'savage', the 'child-like primitive', the non-European other. As Curtis points out, in Victorian England '... caricatures of Irishmen clearly parallel those of 'African Savages'...'⁵ Liam de Paor links these historical racist constructions in his excellent book 'Divided Ulster'⁶.

In the North of England the racialised processes of 'othering', homogenising and denying were uncovered and illuminated in a 2 year National Youth Agency funded Innovation project - PROUD (People Respecting Others Understand Difference)⁷. This project worked with 'Black and White' young men and women who all lived in the same geographical space as neighbours.⁸ All of these young men and women lived in the district of Sunderland known as Hendon. They went to the same schools but never socialised together. The youth centres in the area were 'white', albeit a 'whiteness' that was invisible from public discourse.⁹ This dominant culture was 'normalised' and hidden from public investigation. The sinister element of this normalising of a racist culture culminated in the near death of a 16 year old English born Bengali origin young man who was attacked by 20 white young people.

1 Kousalyaa's story cited in Save The Children, 2005, Think of Me, Think of You: an anti-discrimination training resource for young people by young people, Save The Children Northern Ireland Publications.

2 Connolly, P., 2002, Fair Play: Talking with Children about Prejudice and Discrimination. Belfast: Save the Children and Barnado's cited in Jarman, N., 2003, Victims and Perpetrators, Racism and Young People in Northern Ireland, Child Care in Practice, Vol. 9, No. 2, pg. 133, Taylor and Francis.

3 Jarman, N., 2003, Victims and Perpetrators, Racism and Young People in Northern Ireland, Child Care in Practice, Vol. 9, No. 2, pg. 137, Taylor and Francis.

4 <http://www.Itscotland.org.uk/antisectarian/index.htm>

5 Curtis, L.P.Jr., 1971, Apes and angels: The Irishman in Victorian caricature, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, cited in Jahoda, G., 1999, Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture, pg 227, Routledge.

6 Liam de Paor, 1973, Divided Ulster, pg xiii, second edition, Pelican Books

7 Bowler, R., Hill, I., Reid, P., 2002, The PROUD Report. Copies of this report can be obtained through the YCNI.



PROUD uncovered deeply held but poorly located racist attitudes amongst white young men and women best described as growing up in a predominantly 'white' 'underclass environment.'

PROUD unmasked a group of white young people who were lost. They appeared to believe that they owned the place but had no idea of its value or its / stories, nor of its privileges, potency and demise. They lacked a sense of perspective and had been given few tools to widen their vision. The young people grew up in the same space but lived in different worlds gendered, racialised, sexualised and marginalized. As Parekh has stated:

*'Acts of racism, racial violence, racial prejudice and abuse do not exist in a vacuum. They are not isolated incidents or individual acts, removed from the cultural fabric of our lives. Notions of cultural value, belonging and worth are defined and fixed by the decisions we make about what is or is not our culture, and how we are represented (or not) by cultural institutions.'*¹⁰

A common view held by street racists, mono-cultural policy makers, euro-centric thinkers and common sense analysts is that 'black people are all the same'. In anti-racist discourse the common view has been that 'white people are all the same'. These are misconceptions that appear to live in the ether of the environments our young people are growing up in. These learning environments are racist and sectarian, and they need major systemic, political, educational, cultural and structural change. The sectarianism in Northern Ireland demonstrates that the privileging power of 'whiteness', although invisible, clearly has multiple roots and traditions.¹¹

In the dominant discourse on 'race' 'whiteness' is so 'normal' that it is not even on the agenda for examination. In my experience 'white' people, when asked about the privileging power of 'whiteness', say 'they have never really thought about it'. The 'visible' 'minorities' have little choice when 66% of children are unpleasantly reminded of it through racist harassment. If racism is to be adequately challenged and the racist

learning environments removed then the 'whiteness' that holds the power of constructing an 'homogenised other' has to be exposed, examined and interrogated. These misconceptions about supremacy and inferiority fed the racist imaginations of the white young men and women involved with PROUD.

*'Research shows that the factors most crucial to shaping young people's achievement are **high aspirations, clear goals, self-esteem, attentiveness; and feeling in control of their own destiny.**'*¹²

In focusing on these core factors PROUD highlighted the following realities about educating against racism and racist imaginations.

- Talking about racism is difficult. Acknowledging the difficulties is essential in building dialogue. Avoiding the discussion is a collusive act.
- Racism and other forms of supremacist / fundamentalist discourse generate deeply held but often unallocated emotional resistance. People can feel negative emotions - anger, anxiety, discomfort, fear and impotence - and not be clear where these feelings originate. These unlocated and negative emotional responses need to be dealt with if progress is to be made. Emotional literacy is an essential element of an anti racist education.
- People often do not acknowledge their own privileges and privileged positions within society. This stops people from seeing power as a factor in the relationships we all have. Racism is thus hidden or individualised / personalised. Its legacy and the privileges arising from it are made invisible and deemed natural and normal. Political literacy is an essential element of an anti-racist education.

8 The author recognises that 'Black' and 'White' are problematic terms. Black is used as a political term and encompasses all people of African, Asian and African Caribbean origins including those of mixed heritage. It is also used to denote all people who have been categorised, or choose to categorise themselves as 'visible minority ethnic'. White denotes all people who would not be included, or who choose to exclude themselves from the categoric labels 'Black', 'Minority Ethnic', 'Visible Minority Ethnic'

9 Bonnett, A., 2000, *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives*, Prentice Hall. Also: Roediger, R, D., 1999, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Verso Publications

10 Bhikhu Parekh, 2000, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*, pg 159, Profile Books

11 Lipsitz, G., 1998, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, Temple University Press.

12 Ravi Gurumurthy, 2004. Chair-Person - National Council for Voluntary Youth Services cited in Guardian News Paper December 15th 2004



- Our environments for learning about power and injustice are filtered, coded and limited. We are discouraged from asking critical questions. We are discouraged from posing alternative solutions or blocked from seeking evidence to explain the complexities.
- Cultures of silence and silencing invade our spaces so we end up with dominant views expressed as:
 - ‘We don’t speak about that!’
 - ‘Don’t speak about it like that!’
 - ‘We don’t go there!’

In conclusion it is my contention that anti-racism needs strategic leadership across all institutions and areas of society. It is not acceptable for educators to do nothing in the absence of transformational political leadership. It is the educators’ role to work with children, young people and their support networks to challenge the absence of a non-racist strategic lead. Structural change is essential to create a belonging based on social justice, mutual respect, equality and diversity. ‘Whiteness’ and its privileging power needs to be examined. Its ‘invisibility’ must be illuminated, challenged and open to public critique.

Professional educators must establish learning environments that allow for inclusive definitions of belonging. The young white people in PROUD unfolded a sense of their own belonging as needing to be based on a negative sense of the ‘other’. Their surroundings, their political leaders, and their educators had failed the young white people. They were ignorant of who they were and where they had come from. Their sense of identity was negative. ‘Whiteness’, enacted as a supremacist discourse, appeared to be their only badge of privilege. Professional educators need to generate dialogue with young people and their communities.

This dialogue must build critical understandings of a positive sense of self, grounded in cultural competence and emotional and political literacy. This is what Gundara has called Intercultural Education.¹³ Professional educators must develop ways of examining the privileging power hidden within racist and sectarian cultures. We must examine how sectarianism feeds into racism and vice versa. The young white people involved with PROUD felt positive only by blaming black people for their

problems. We were the first black people they had ever really worked with. Their problems were caused and perpetuated within a racist society. Their communities, social workers, police, teachers, probation officers, community workers, politicians, public servants were almost entirely white. How did they think that black people were the cause of their plight?

Professional educators need to locate, expose and eliminate the racisms that permeate all our intra and inter-personal relationships. We need to locate how the power of sectarianism and racism have damaged the relationships we have today. Professional educators have to cross borders and build alliances in order to challenge dominant ‘fixed’ ideas of who and what we are and how we live together. We need to raise aspirations and educate for change. Negative and sinister racist and sectarian beliefs and actions need to be challenged at multiple levels in society. We need to speak ‘out’ about racism and sectarianism. We need to develop a critical dialogue about it in order to identify and counter the reasons we have for not speaking it. The work of PROUD and the voice of Kousalyaa demand that we enter this dialogue if we are to offer all children a better world than the one we grew up in. We must do this if we want to counter racist and sectarian cultures and stop another racist and sectarian murder.

I leave you with some questions that may help us on that journey.

- **How do racist and sectarian learning environments perpetuate themselves?**
- **How can we challenge the investments of those that benefit from its perpetuation?**
- **How has ‘whiteness’ impacted on sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland?**

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¹³ Gundara, J, 2000, *Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion*, Paul Chapman Publishing.





Big Games n' Things: A new twist on old favourite

Joan Reid, The Scout Association

The Scout Association is currently involved in a Community Relations (Citizenship) Programme that works with young people aged 11-18. The project uses the medium of sport to explore prevalent themes with young people. This is an innovative approach to EDI in that it engages young people in a programme of physical activities whilst dealing with sensitive issues around accepting difference and celebrating diversity. The programme not only works with Scout groups but involves youth and community groups, extending opportunities to all young people. CRYSSS is one of a number of funders supporting this work.

The Programme content has focused on active citizens, culture, religion, and identity. Issues have been dealt with in a challenging way, with specific learning outcomes arising from each of the topics explored, using sport as an effective training tool. In parallel with this, the project has developed other creative methods of delivering citizenship, such as 'big games' which were used at the R ShaRd FutR event.

The R ShaRd FutR event at W5 was an opportunity to further explore equity, diversity and interdependence values, skills and attitudes with young people. In parallel with this, it was of course a chance to showcase Scout projects and indeed Scouting in general.

The methods applied on the evening are being used in the citizenship project's ongoing work. Two young leaders who have been involved in the EDI Citizenship Project were involved in the delivery of the workshop. This was fundamental to attracting young people (and not so young people) to take part in the activities. Through using eye catching and yet familiar 'big games' of snakes and ladders and mega 4 in a line, it was a useful method to capture the attention of the 11-18 year-old age group. Young people were attracted to and excited about playing the games, yet as they



found out, they proved somewhat more challenging than at first sight.

The 'games' had the following objectives:

Diversity Snakes n ladders: To explore young people's understanding of diversity and challenge perceptions of different groups within Northern Ireland.

Cultural Symbols mega 4 in a line: To explore different faiths and beliefs and their cultural traditions.

Challenge Snakes n ladders: To challenge young people's attitudes to stereotyping of different cultures and traditions in Northern Ireland.

The activities were well received and clearly met their objectives. Young people from different communities actively participated, including exchange visitors from other European countries. Young people appeared to be challenged by the questions and statements presented, and were able to work through the issues in a secure and safe environment.

Feedback from Scout groups attending the event was positive and young people clearly enjoyed the experiences.

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The purpose of Scouting is to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

This aim is implemented through a Progressive Training Programme encompassing an exciting array of educational, social, sporting and outdoor pursuits. The training is resourced at NI regional level by Council Headquarter staff, volunteer Committees and Headquarter volunteers, and at a local level by volunteer leaders working at County, District and local Scout group level.



All Aboard EDI

Ashley Hunter, Ocean Youth Trust Ireland

Ocean Youth Trust Ireland (OYTI) is based in Belfast. It is a locally operated charity that owns and operates a 21m ketch called Lord Rank and a 17m ketch called Four Sisters. We offer mid-week and weekend voyages to groups and individuals as well as more adventurous voyages around Europe. No previous sailing experience is necessary and all equipment is supplied.

OYTI currently offers an Introduction to Community Relations/EDI Work training course designed for people who are interested in working with young people in this area. This is run in partnership with YouthAction NI. On completion of the course participants gain an NIOCN (level 2) qualification: a nationally recognised qualification that is also endorsed by the Youth Work Training Board.



Included in the course is the opportunity to experience youth work within the alternative setting of sailing. The course includes two residential sailing aspects. During the second residential course participants have the opportunity to take onboard and complete community relations/EDI work with young people from their group or organisation.

OYTI offers an Introduction to CR/EDI Training Course aimed at young people aged between 18 and 25 years of age.

Funded by the Youth Council NI

In 2005 12 young leaders gained the Introduction to Community Relations/EDI qualification and in doing this they had the opportunity to put their skills into practice by taking young people from their setting out on our training vessel. This was a fantastic opportunity to put

the theory into practice but it was also rewarding for their young people to be able to combine learning about the equity, diversity and interdependence theme with taking part in a voyage.

OYTI was pleased to be a part of the R Shard FutR event at W5 and were happy to be able to bring some of our past participants along. We had planned to have the Lord Rank, our largest vessel, present to launch the evening's celebrations, but unfortunately this was not possible as it was in use by another group. We did however have the Four Sisters present which was very warmly received. We operated tours of the vessel allowing groups of young people to come onboard and get a flavour of what our work involves.

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Roving Reporters

Lisa Rea, Public Achievement

Public Achievement recognises the creative capacity of individuals of all ages to actively participate in the civic life of their communities and in the building of a more just, peaceful, democratic and pluralist society. This is done by a volunteer ‘coach’ supporting small groups of young people in addressing issues that are important and around which they design, carry out and evaluate their own projects. In the process, they learn skills of active citizenship and democracy.



We work in schools and communities across Northern Ireland, in Museums in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and on youth exchanges and collaborative research with like-minded organisations around the world, particularly in conflict regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East and Southern Africa.

Through coach training we provide our volunteers with the appropriate skills and expertise to work with young people around community relations issues whether on a contact or non-contact basis. Through the projects the young people work on in schools, communities, museums and WIMPS, they have the chance to meet people from backgrounds different from their own in a safe environment.

An example of this work is a recent project called ‘Young People and Built Heritage’ where young people from Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Jewish backgrounds had an opportunity to explore their built environment, the meanings it holds for them and to meet each other and work on a project together. Now that this project is completed the young people involved are keen to keep in contact with the other groups and work together again.

At the R ShaRd FutR event, a group of young people who are part of Public Achievement’s museum project acted as reporters, interviewing participants and the organisers of the event about Community Relations and what it means to them, as well as taking part in the activities and games on the evening to get a real feel for the event. Some of the favourite activities of the night were learning about photoshop from the BYTES project, learning about opportunities with Ocean Youth Trust and playing Par Ball.

It gave the group a good chance to think about community relations in a broader sense to what they were used to and also a good chance to brush up on their interview skills and camera skills that they are hoping to put to good use in future projects. The group are going to be editing their video and producing a DVD as a souvenir of the event. It will hopefully be finished soon as they have a LOT of footage to get through.

As a leader in charge I was really impressed by the event. It was great for showcasing successful community relations projects but also for getting the young people who came along with me excited about new ways of working. They are now looking forward to taking part in a voyage with Ocean Youth Trust and are hoping to put what they learned about ‘photoshop’ into use in another project. Well done to all the organisers and participants!

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Young people do want to make a difference!

Kathryn Fee, Future Voices

The Spirit of Enniskillen (SOE) was inspired in 1989 by the late Senator Gordon Wilson and his wish to encourage and support young people from all backgrounds and traditions to make their own personal contribution towards dialogue and a shared future. The Spirit of Enniskillen aims to develop the leadership potential of young people in communicating across boundaries of mistrust, build relationships and deal with differing opinions in a way that encourages new understanding, creativity and move towards a constructive change.

The Future Voices initiative was set up by Young People, for Young People, to address the contentious and contemporary issues facing young people in Northern Ireland. The aim of Future Voices is to develop leadership skills in young adults; supporting their active participation in a diverse and pluralist society by increasing their capacity to understand, access and impact on political systems as well as contributing towards a culture of understanding and respect between all communities in Northern Ireland.

The group encourages the exploration of important issues and change through a balance of participant training and social events. Informal education and political awareness of individuals and groups of young adults working on the themes of equity, diversity and interdependence is facilitated through:

- Establishing and facilitating a programme of meetings, residentials, short training courses and projects furthering cross-community and inter cultural dialogue;
- Providing opportunities, through the above programmes, to develop new skills, increased confidence and the production of information appropriate to active citizenship in Northern Ireland;
- Liaising with other agencies, in Northern Ireland and internationally;
- Developing a database of interested young adults as well as a communication system to supporting this network;

- Assisting in the development of the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust and similar community relations projects, promoting understanding of the purpose of this work;
- Promoting ownership of the project by young adults and preparing them to accept the consequences of their 'Future Voices'.

Future Voices was eager to be part of the R ShaRd FutR showcase, and were involved from the early planning stages. Working in partnership with YCNI and many leading regional voluntary organisations, we wanted to plan a celebration that encompassed the hard work and commitment of many of our young people in Northern Ireland. I think that the evening certainly met these expectations, and the young people representing Future Voices locally, and our delegates from Cyprus thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



Lisa Collins, our Chairperson, was invited to speak during the opening of the celebration, and her words were resounding throughout the evening, "Young people do want to make a difference" and this couldn't have been more evident, as the spectacle, entertainment and delights of the night were led by young people directly. Our input was facilitated by the very dedicated Karen Gilloway and Johnny McDowell, and centered around discussing differences and shared experiences. The session opened some interesting and important debates with participants and highlighted the importance of providing safe spaces for young people to explore these issues.

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Changing Lives

Norma Rea, The Youth Council for Northern Ireland

‘How can you be so enthusiastic about this area of work?’ It was a question asked of me following an input on good community relations and EDI youth work at a local conference. The question took me a little by surprise. The enquirer went on to ask, ‘Where is the evidence that this work works?’

Measuring the impact of good community relations and EDI based youth work continues to be a complex task and it would be naive to suggest that it, and it alone, will solve the problems of a divided and highly contested society such as Northern Ireland. However, as Kofi Annan noted at an international meeting in 2001, *‘None of us is born intolerant of those who differ from us. Intolerance is taught and can be untaught... But in this area, as in others, prevention is better than cure. We must work to prevent intolerance from taking hold in the next generation. We must build on the open-mindedness of young people, and ensure that their minds remain open’*¹.

His statement reflects two interrelated perspectives: that society should value work aimed at building tolerance and open-mindedness; and that building tolerance and open-mindedness should be a core aim of our work with young people. Both of these perspectives raise challenges for a divided society.

My role as Development Officer (Equality Principles) with YCNI includes responsibility for the administration of the Community Relations Youth Service Support Scheme (CRYSSS) and supporting regional voluntary youth organisations accessing this funding to develop and deliver good relations and EDI based youth programmes. It has involved contributing to opportunities such as the Living Together initiative outlined overleaf and delivering training for youth workers on community relations and EDI based topics². I also co-ordinate YCNI’s role as secretariat to the JEDI initiative³. The government’s A Shared Future Policy and Strategy highlights that this work has an important role to play in the building of a more peaceful and tolerant society in Northern Ireland⁴.

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) operates within the statutory framework of the Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

The Council’s statutory functions include encouraging cross-community activity by the youth service.

Promoting and developing the contribution of youth work to citizenship, peace building, understanding of diversity and inclusion is a core aim of YCNI’s current strategic plan.

However, my commitment to this area of work is rooted in a much more personal frame of reference. Born in the 1970’s, I grew up in quiet, rural Northern Ireland. The troubles were both far removed and yet also at the heart of my community. While the bombings were distant news items; my school, my youth organisation, the local family holiday destination, even the regional youth events I participated in were predominately single community affairs. Fear and suspicion of ‘the other’ was a routine part of life. Cross community youth work training in my late teens provided me with the first opportunity to explore and discuss these realities. Listening to, challenging and being challenged by the prejudices and stereotypes I and those around me held was a powerful experience. Reflecting on the impact of this work, I don’t believe it is exaggerated or clichéd to suggest that it was life changing.

While sustained acts of violence may have become less visible in recent years, Northern Ireland remains a highly divided society. Young people continue to grow-up in communities which are predominately one religion or the other. Marie Smyth’s research into the impact of this division for young people from areas most affected by the troubles highlights that experiences such as being a victim of a punishment attack may be highly publicised and thus highly visible.

¹ Speech by United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan at a Institute for International Education meeting in New York, 27 November 2001.

² For further details see: www.ycni.org

³ JEDI is a youth service partnership aimed at embedding the principles of Equity (fairness), Diversity (acceptance of difference) and Interdependence (recognising and exploring ways in which our individual paths are intertwined) into youth work policy and practice. For further information see: www.jedini.com

⁴ see: OFMDFM (2005) A Shared Future Policy and Strategy, para 2.4.12.



However, it is the less visible (or ignored) experiences such as a lack of contact with or knowledge of ‘other’ community, sectarian verbal abuse, avoidance of certain areas, experiences of segregation and fears for safety of self and family that are more common⁵.

Research published as recently as 2005 highlights an ongoing sense of inevitability that young people growing up in interface areas will become involved in interface violence, and that community background continues to play a significant role in determining the places young people feel they can travel to and the resources they can access⁶.

‘Children and young people attend schools where a substantive number, or all, of the pupils are nominally of a Protestant community background or a Catholic community background.’ (Russell, 2006)⁸

Good community relations and EDI youth work aims to establish safe spaces for young people to air and discuss the difficult issues around the themes of identity and division as well as learn about and meet the ‘other’. In a context where 100’s of 1000’s of migrant workers have made their way to the UK and Ireland in recent years, this work has been developing to meet the new challenges presented by this reality⁷.

This publication contains many examples of the creative approaches developed by voluntary youth organisations and supported by YCNI to deliver good community relations and EDI youth work. These examples of practice and the related stories from young people on the impact this work has on their lives compliment policy statements, research findings and my own personal experience to inform my belief that if Northern Ireland is to find a peaceful and inclusive route beyond the troubles good community relations and EDI work has an important role to play.

We acknowledge that further work is required to understand how best to monitor and measure the impact of good community relations and EDI based

5 Smyth, et al. (2004) *The Impact of Political Conflict on Children in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: ICR.

6 Hansson, U. (2005) *Troubled Youth? Young People, Violence and Disorder in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ICR.

7 For example, JEDI’s work to embed the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence into community relations training for full and part-

youth work and as I noted at the outset, work with young people on its own cannot build a more peaceful, tolerant and inclusive society. There are important responsibilities for our political leaders, for housing, for formal education and community development.

‘The NI Housing Executive classifies integrated estates as having populations of more than 10% Protestant or 10% Catholic, and currently less than 10% of social housing in Northern Ireland is integrated.’ (Gray & McAnulty, 2006)⁸

However, as government moves to deliver on the A Shared Future agenda, the contribution of youth work must be recognised and valued. The skills and experience developed within the youth service have much to contribute, but will require ongoing training and support to provide youth workers with the confidence, expertise and resources to address the challenges growing up in a divided and increasingly diverse society.

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time youth workers has encouraged youth workers to address the wider issues of racism and discrimination alongside sectarianism.

8 Russell, 2005 and Gray & McAnulty, 2005 in CRC (2006) *Sharing Over Separation*, Belfast: CRC.



Living Together: Sharing Local Youth Work Skills with International Colleagues

From 2004 to March 2006 the Youth Council for Northern Ireland worked in partnership with the British Council through the Connecting Futures initiative to develop and deliver an international conflict transformation programme. Entitled 'Living Together', this ambitious project sought to share the learning and skills developed by youth workers here in Northern Ireland with colleagues in the Caucasus's region of the former USSR through the delivery of an international conflict transformation forum for young people aged 18-25.

The forum was held in Georgia in August 2005. It involved over forty young people from Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and from across Northern Ireland and representing a wide range of religions including those from Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim faiths.

All of the young people had grown up in communities experiencing ethnic conflict and all were active in their local community and/or in non-governmental organisations. The forum was a great success and it was evident from the outset that the tools and techniques developed by youth workers here in Northern Ireland have much to contribute to conflict transformation work with young people in an international context.

Building on the success of the first forum a second phase was developed to prepare the young participants to take up a lead role in conflict transformation programmes within their local community.

The second regional youth forum was held at the Corrymeela centre in Ballycastle in September 2005. As well as providing participants with the opportunity to further their understanding of the cultural and national identities represented in the project, the content of the forum was designed to equip young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to co-facilitate an introductory community relations training session. On return to their local communities the young people were then supported by the experienced practitioners and trainers involved in the project to lead an introductory community relations project with peers within their local community organisations.

Within Northern Ireland these projects took place in Larne, Newry and North Belfast between December 2005 and March 2006. End of project evaluation reports highlighted that the young people had been successful in translating conflict transformation techniques into their local community and sharing their learning with their peers in a creative and challenging way. Support from experienced practitioners ensured the establishment of safe and positive learning environments for everyone involved. Young people leading the sessions recorded a wide range of learning and development from the experience.

Supporting young people to be leaders of change takes courage, skilled local support (role models) and the sustained investment of resources and time. However as Lederach (2002) has pointed out, it is only when peace building tools are applied by and in local communities and groups that they will have most impact.



'Bringing individuals together who have known nothing but segregation and who came to the sessions with deeply ingrained stereotypes and prejudices, was always going to be challenging. I was heartened by the fact that participants kept coming back, and although there were difficult moments, I think that this in itself is a positive sign that they wanted to make the effort to get to know each other and learn something about each other's traditions.'



Many Hands Make “light” Work

John Kee, StreetReach

StreetReach began in the summer of 2003. Summer Madness approached Church Army with the idea of running a huge urban mission off the back of the Summer Madness festival, and so the idea was born.

Each year over 5000 young people and leaders attend the Summer Madness Festival and the focus of StreetReach is to offer these young people an opportunity both to serve and engage with others from differing faith perspectives and life experiences. The programme promotes active citizenship through practical social action and dialogue with others.

We work with Protestant and Catholic young people and provide opportunities for constructive dialogue in the midst of practical social action, undertaken in joint teams on the streets of Belfast from July 5th July 10th.

The genuine learning, exchange of views and growth in understanding between participants has proven to be quite significant over the years.

CRYSSS supported the scheme during 2006. It now operates in twelve areas across Belfast and we partner churches and community groups in these areas to provide additional energy and momentum to tackle street clean-ups, mural replacement, open air Barbeques, Kids Clubs, pensioner trips and visitation.

At a tense and confrontational time these projects bring real engagement between community leaders, clergy and local residents; strengthening local partnership, increasing cross community contact and softening attitudes and actions around some of the conflicted areas.



As an organisation we were involved in R ShaRd FutR from the outset. We viewed it as a wonderful opportunity for young people involved in our work to share their experiences with others in their peer group as well as to learn about additional interesting and inspiring projects undertaken by young people and youth organisations in the province.

Working in partnership with key voluntary organisations and led by the Youth Council NI, we jointly created a showcase evening that was underpinned by the core values of equity, diversity and interdependence, and pay tribute to the positive and creative aspects of youth culture in Northern Ireland. Working, participating, and sharing in all the delights that the evening had to offer, we were immensely proud of the young people representing Streetreach as well as all those young people representing the array of other organisations present.



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BYTES, CAMERA, ACTION

Gordon McBride, The BYTES Project

The Bytes Project provides opportunities for young people in an informal setting to accelerate their own personal development through the creative and enjoyable use of technology. There are a total of eleven Bytes Centres across both Belfast and Derry.

The Bytes Project will encourage and support those young people who, by their social environment or personal experience, face obstacles to personal development. Bytes will assist young people to achieve their full potential, through progression to further education, purposeful training or the world of work.



Throughout our centres we run a diverse number of projects ranging from those centred on health, to Information Technology (IT), sport and many more. Our most recent include Conflict Management and Cross-Community/Cross-Border Projects.

BYTES recently launched a Resource Pack, entitled BYTES, Camera, Action, funded by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland's CRYSS Scheme.

The pack is a result of a project which brought young people from highly divided communities together to share and to learn about each other's



local communities and discuss their place within them. This training tool comprises of a facilitator's manual and a DVD. The Resource Pack has been expertly designed to support youth agencies in their quest to explore relevant issues affecting young people today.

A large number of young people representing different BYTES Centres participated in our contribution to the R ShaRd FutR evening.

During the evening BYTES ran a Badge Making Station providing children and young people attending the event with the opportunity to experiment with a range of IT facilities to produce badges and posters to reflect their identity. The bonus included many having a finished product at the end of each session. Of course there was the odd hiccup along the way (which always adds to part of the fun), but the staff of W5 were very gracious and accommodated us as far as possible.

R ShaRd FutR provided young people representing BYTES with the chance to demonstrate their own knowledge and skills and share this with others. This boosted the morale and confidence of many of our young people and they thoroughly enjoyed interacting with children, young people and adults from the range of different backgrounds in attendance.

Feedback from young people and BYTES staff was generally positive towards the R ShaRd FutR evening and the range of workshops on offer ensured that there was something to capture the imagination of most.

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Learning from Beyond Local Boundaries

Angie Kotler, Schools Linking Project

The main aim of the Schools Linking Project is to establish positive and sustainable relationships between pupils of different backgrounds, who live and attend schools in different parts of the district, and who otherwise might not ever meet. It is hoped that creating such relationships will have a preventative effect on the forming of prejudicial attitudes to people of different ethnic and/or religious backgrounds.

Bradford has a diverse population. However, only 25% of school pupils attend schools where there is a significant ethnic mix. A concurrent and related concern in education is the underachievement and disaffection of certain sectors of the population.

Linking schools enables children to meet and mix in 'normal' circumstances. Spending a school day together incorporates a range of formal and informal activity, allowing for a broad range of communication skills to be encouraged and developed. This is an important aspect of the work and impacts on engagement in learning and achievement as well as social cohesion.

The riots during the summer of 2001 and the events of September 11 threw the city's divisions into sharp focus. There was an imperative to act, while even before these events, the Ouseley report had made strong recommendations for education in the city to try to address the simmering tensions exacerbated by division and virtual 'apartheid' in the schools. The past year, since 7/7, has been a time of uneasy peace, with much of the Asian Muslim population feeling anxious and victimised.

There are five key factors in the organisation and development of the Schools Linking Project:

- Central co-ordination
- Partnership working between teachers and creative sector workers
- Training and support for teachers and schools
- Financial support
- Internal and External evaluation

Central co-ordination is important, particularly in a district as large and diverse as Bradford. It allows for key messages to be disseminated and shared, for a pool of supportive creative workers to be linked to schools and for training and support materials to be developed. Crucially, it also provides a steer and a listening ear when schools need support.

We discovered that the most powerful tool for leaning and teaching issues across the curriculum in a culturally diverse and challenging way was to use creativity, so that, for example; drama facilitates work on immigration, art can provide a way of expressing relationships and understanding experiences, dance and other physical activity develop new skills and teamwork. We discovered also that this does not come naturally in all classrooms and that good partnership working requires thought, planning and training.

Training days have been developed to support teachers who are leading the project in their schools. They have opportunities to work on issues of identity and prejudice as well as time to plan link days with their partner.

In 2006 there are 60 linked primary schools across the district, with an additional cluster in one area and a growing number of secondary schools. An external evaluation was carried out in 2005 and the report can be found on www.bradfordschools.net/slp

The following case study provides a snapshot of the Schools Linking Project.

G Primary and E Primary were the pioneers of the Schools Linking Project in 2001-2 and it is from the model developed organically with them, with drama and art and the use of Cartwright Hall, one of the city's cultural venues at the heart of it, that the project has grown.

Girlington is an inner-city primary, with approximately 98% pupils of Pakistani heritage and many starting school with English as an additional language. The school is a resourced school for hearing impaired



pupils and has an impressive achievement record. Eldwick is a suburban school, with the majority of its pupils being of white British backgrounds. It has consistently high achievement; one of its major strengths is its use of drama across the curriculum. These two schools came together to explore what they had to offer each other, both in terms of learning and teaching communication skills and in terms of building positive and sustainable relationships between their communities, at a time when this seemed both difficult and crucial.

All the adults involved were apprehensive and yet hopeful about this work, but no-one was prepared for how eagerly the children grasped the opportunity and how clearly they expressed their views. Without ever telling them why we were bringing them together to work, after a few meetings they knew and told us that everyone should be doing this, so that 'we wouldn't have riots any more in our city'. These ten-year olds showed us that we had to have the courage of our convictions and through their work were able to express this more clearly than any adult could.

We do not claim that this project has all the answers to the many challenges that we face in terms of community cohesion in Bradford. However, we can say that we have a model that seems to work in terms of starting a process and we are now trying to involve parents more and to further develop citizenship training for schools. We trust youth work practitioners and teachers across Northern Ireland will gain from learning about our work and that our approaches will be of help to their ongoing commitment to the good relations agenda within an equally divided and increasingly diverse context.

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OVER TO YOU...

1. Did you find the **R ShaRd FutR** Publication? *(tick any that apply)*

Not relevant to your work

Boring

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Informs your work

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Other (please state)

2. Did this publication make you more aware of the work of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the CRYSS Scheme? *(tick one only)*

Yes

No

Don't Know

3. Did this **R ShaRd FutR** Publication make you more aware of the contribution Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations play in the building of a more shared future? *(tick one only)*

Yes

No

Don't Know

4. Did this publication give you any ideas towards developing good community relations/EDI related projects within your organisation?

.....

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