



# CRC e bulletin

## Time for the Walls to Come Down?

Is it time for the peace walls to come down?

Is it time to begin a conversation about how and when this could happen?

For the past forty years, interface barriers have been erected in Belfast, L’Derry, Portadown, Lurgan and other parts of Northern Ireland as a response to inter community violence. These barriers include walls, fences, security gates, derelict ‘buffer zones’ and barriers that have been planned into infrastructure and regeneration development.

The erection of interface barriers has been sustained through the ceasefires, the ten years since the signing of the Agreement and the establishment of a devolved government in 2007. However in recent years, community based interventions have resulted in a decrease in the number of violent interface incidents.

In January 2008, the US-Ireland Alliance engaged Millward Brown Ulster to ask residents from a sample of interface areas in Belfast for their views on the ‘peace walls’. The survey found *‘strong agreement that the walls serve to help residents feel safer by keeping the communities separated.’*

However, when asked if they would be in favour or opposed to the walls coming down, 81% of the residents polled were in favour.

- 21% said now
- 60% said yes, when it’s safe enough, but not at present
- 17% said they didn’t care if the walls never come down
- 61% agreed that local politicians should be doing more to create conditions for the walls to come down

In the discussion paper ‘A Process for Removing Interface Barriers’ (July 2008), Tony Macaulay suggests a five-phase process that would create the conditions to make it safe enough for the walls to come down.

The discussion paper is an independent proposal intended to stimulate discussion within and between local interface communities and government and other stakeholders. The paper highlights the conditions required for an effective process such as reaching a ‘tipping point’, when key stakeholders see the benefits of removing interface barriers as outweighing the benefits of maintaining them. It also identifies the essential characteristics of the process such as multi agency working and the safety, wellbeing and quality of life of interface residents being at the very centre of the process.

The overall aim of the proposed process is to create the circumstances in which interface barriers can be safely removed.

The proposed process has five main phases to be carried forward within the context of community, social, educational and economic development in interface areas.

Continued overleaf

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## Time for the walls to come down continued

The five phases are:

Phase 1: Mapping

Phase 2: Consultation

Phase 3: Local Interface Development Plans

Phase 4: Implementation and support

Phase 5: Normalisation

The initiation of the overall process would be the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Assembly. A Regional Working Group would be required to lead, facilitate and coordinate the overall process. Local Interface Development Groups with representatives of all the key stakeholders would lead, facilitate and coordinate the consultation, development and implementation of Local Interface Development Plans.

If you would like a copy of the discussion paper contact Tony Macaulay at [tony@macaulayassociates.co.uk](mailto:tony@macaulayassociates.co.uk)

## Summer Intervention Programme Support

Over the past number of years the Council's Community Relations/Cultural Diversity Grants Scheme has provided support to various community initiatives aiming to reduce community tensions and the potential for civil unrest during the summer period.

The work of supporting mobile phone networks continues as this has proved successful in enabling community activists to deal with such issues as rumour control, plan synchronized interventions, relay information to the community, contact statutory agencies and political representatives as well as offering moral support to those working in often difficult and challenging circumstances.

Through its ongoing meetings with community organizations, the Council has recognized the need to support work that provides diversionary activities for those (often young adults) who are most likely to get caught up in conflict between interface communities. The purpose of this work is twofold, firstly it seeks to provide resources to take groups out of their areas for cultural awareness based activities at times when the potential for interface conflict is high. Secondly the work seeks to provide positive alternatives that encourage participants to reflect on their own community experiences and how they could make positive contributions to community life through participation in community events.

The CR/CD Grants Scheme gives priority to projects which best address the following issues, work that;

- Enables participants to reflect upon their own identity and that of other communities
- Clearly seeks to promote good community relations and which involve participants from differing communities
- Specifically seeks to provide diversionary activities during times of heightened community tension
- Provides a space for participants to make a positive contribution to the life of their community through taking part in larger community events
- Develops the skills base of participants to enable them to recognize and respect difference.

**Paul Jordan**, Acting Director of Funding and Development

## Where we are with PEACE III

### Priority 1: Reconciling Communities

The European Programme has been working with District/Borough/City Councils since before Christmas 2007 on Priority 1; Reconciling Communities. This funding is to help Councils develop their 'Peace Plans' on a cluster basis, work is now heading towards implementation. This may mean Councils recruiting for new staff and opening new funding schemes—keep an eye on your local press.

For information about your Council's 'Peace Plan' contact your local Council Office.

CRC and Border Action have been appointed by the Special EU Programmes Body as a joint delivery mechanism of Priority 1.2 of the Peace III Programme.

Theme 1.2: Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past, this will be implemented through the following 3 strands:

#### Strand 1: Addressing the Past in Public Memory (By Public Tender—to be advertised)

#### Strand 2: Support for Participation (Opened 20th June—rolling scheme end date to be announced)

“To provide advice, counselling and support services for victims, their relatives and those who care for them.

To build the capacity of individuals to deal with the transition to peace and reconciliation and ensure victims and survivors are able to deal with the past.”

#### Strand 3: Securing the Future (Closed 13th June 08—to reopen in October 08)

Innovative actions that will help prevent an outbreak of violence into the future, by taking action to repair relationships and by engaging the wider community in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

If anyone has queries or needs further information regarding the above funding contact the European Department at CRC—phone 028 9022 7500 or Border Action—phone 047 71340 or 00353 47 71340 (calling from NI). Or visit [www.nicrc.org.uk](http://www.nicrc.org.uk) or [www.borderaction.ie](http://www.borderaction.ie)

## News

**Belfast City Council** has been awarded £6.3 million under measure 1.1 of the EU Peace III Programme (a programme to support peace and reconciliation, which runs 2008-2010). They have set up a Good Relations Partnership and will be responsible for allocating this funding to a range of groups and organizations in Belfast.

If you are involved in, or planning any projects relating to securing shared city space, transforming contested space, developing shared cultural space and building shared organizational space,

you may be eligible to apply for this funding.

For more information visit the website at:

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/peaceplan](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/peaceplan)

**NICEM's** report on conferences held on 2nd July 2007 and 8th and 9th May 2008 has been published. The report entitled *A Shared Future of Race Relations* brings together expertise and experience on European and local integration policies and practice.

“Both events attracted a

wide audience consisting of representatives from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, local majority community groups, trade unions, statutory agencies, local and regional government and many other organizations with a role in peace building.”

NICEM hopes this resource “...will further promote the expertise and experience both at the local level and Europe-wide.”

To download the report click on the link below.

[NICEM Conference Report](#)

If you would like to comment or submit an article for this bulletin or advertise a community relations event or publication, please contact Patricia at [poneill@nicrc.org.uk](mailto:poneill@nicrc.org.uk) or Ellana at [etomasso@nicrc.org.uk](mailto:etomasso@nicrc.org.uk).

The views expressed in this magazine by contributors are their own and may not necessarily be attributed to the CRC.

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**Promoting a peaceful and fair society based on reconciliation and mutual trust.**

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Posters available from CRC phone 90227500 and ask for Patricia O'Neill or Ellana or email [info@nicrc.org.uk](mailto:info@nicrc.org.uk)

## Forthcoming Events

**The International Day for Peace** is celebrated annually on 21st September. It provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date.

Established by a United Nations resolution in 1981, the International Day of Peace was first celebrated in September 1982. It is held to mark our individual and collective progress toward building cultures of peace, and serve as a reminder of our permanent commitment to peace above all interests and differences of any kind.

To find out more visit [www.InternationalDayofPeace.org](http://www.InternationalDayofPeace.org)

**Understanding Modern-Gov** are holding two Seminars In September. On the 24th the subject is *Understanding the Northern Ireland Assembly* and on the 25th, *Understanding the Northern Ireland Executive*. For information about the 24th click [here](#), for info on 25th click [here](#).

If you register for both days there is a reduction of £50. For details of discounted rates for group bookings please call 0207 484 5637 or alternatively you can email [mikeoleary@moderngov.info](mailto:mikeoleary@moderngov.info)

**Queens University** are delivering a course on the Biographical

Narrative Interpretive Method – 5 day Intensive research interview training.

Designed for PhD students and professional researchers, the course provides thorough training in doing BNIM biographic narrative interviews, together with 'hands-on experience' of following BNIM interpretation procedures. The course runs from the 18th–24th September.

To find out more about this course contact Anne Kearney in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queens, email: [a.kearney@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.kearney@qub.ac.uk) or phone 028 9097 5992

**CIPFA** have published their Autumn 2008 Training Courses Programme, The courses range from *Fraud Awareness* to *Perfect Proof-reading*. To obtain a brochure contact Anna Egner, phone 028 9026 6777 or visit their website [www.cipfa.org.uk/ni](http://www.cipfa.org.uk/ni)

**CIPFA's Annual Conference** *Stepping up to the Mark: taking responsibility* is on 1st and 2nd October. CRC's Duncan Morrow will address the challenges and opportunities posed by the shared future agenda on day one of the conference. For more information phone 028 9026 6774 or email [emily.kennedy@cipfa.org](mailto:emily.kennedy@cipfa.org)

**Meet the Neighbours Day in New Mossley** An all day event on 16th August. It is an event organized by the Housing Executive

to promote cultural awareness and understanding in the Newtownabbey Borough. It will be a day of fun and entertainment with demonstrations of dance, music and food as well as providing a wealth of information on local and wider services—over 30 organizations will be represented on the day.

For information email [john.read@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:john.read@nihe.gov.uk)

## New Publications

A new updated A-Z Frieze for young children is available from CRC—contact [info@nicrc.org.uk](mailto:info@nicrc.org.uk)

**North South Rural Voice** have published two reports and a fax sheet. The report FOCUS! Cross Border issues details the results of a recent North South Rural Voice cross border project, which aimed to bring rural citizens and policymakers together to address some of the issues affecting the quality of Life in rural border areas.

The second report *We Could Learn from Sheep* is a summary report of NSRV Dare to Share Conference held in Lusty Beg Island in April 2008.

They have also produced a useful Fact Sheet, *Holding a Meeting* which details facilitating community groups to engage in successful Cross Border and Cross Community work.

To obtain the reports or Fact Sheet contact [info@nicrc.org.uk](mailto:info@nicrc.org.uk) or [info@nsrv.info](mailto:info@nsrv.info)