



CRC e bulletin

Victims and Survivors Issue

Very few would have missed the controversy surrounding the launch of the Consultative Group on the Past's Report (more commonly known as the Eames-Bradley report) at the end of January. In this issue we gave a representative range of victims and survivors' groups a chance to respond, unfortunately only one responded by the deadline.

The views expressed in these articles by contributors are their own and may not necessarily be attributed to the Community Relations Council.

Eames-Bradley

Duncan Morrow is CEO of the Community Relations Council

The greatest obstruction to a shared and better future is our bitterly divided history. When we talk about 'the past' in Northern Ireland, we are actually talking about a history of violence, threat and discrimination which has left us with entirely different understandings of such basic questions as 'what caused conflict?', 'who was responsible for violence?', 'when is killing a crime and when is it a necessary evil in pursuit of a greater cause?' and 'who is a victim?'. It is not that we don't have any answers to these questions – we have too many, each one felt passionately.

And this passionate conviction is then brought to bear on issues as diverse as the St Patrick's Day Parade, the building of social housing, the devolution of policing and justice and the flag hanging over the City Hall. Every time these issues appear- and they have never gone away, you know – Northern Ireland polarises back into recrimination and resentment.

For that reason, formal political arrangements have tended to try to deal with this matter by hoping (or pretending) that it can just be put behind us. In practice, the official version that the book is closed merely inflames those who can see plainly that their deepest experience of injustice is being buried or forgotten. The fact that most people have an absolutely unshakable view of who the good guys are and who the bad guys are meets the formal public definition which asserts that 'this is a closed book' or 'we are all victims'. Silence may sometimes be golden –in the north of Ireland, it is festering.

March 2009

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Eames-Bradley continued

What the report has already demonstrated is that there are huge issues which the present political settlement has not resolved and shows no capacity to resolve. Instead, there is the appearance of policy gridlock and MLAs being thrown out of the chamber for digging up widely believed old allegations with particular political potency.

This report is too serious for CRC to make a knee-jerk response. We are currently undertaking a detailed analysis of the report and will comment on all the sections relevant to ourselves. Meantime we want to ensure that this topic is taken off the shelf and faced in a way that takes seriously our obligation to ensure a shared and better future for all. Above all, this is a time for story hearing, not just story telling.

Susan McKay comments on the Report

Susan McKay is a freelance writer and journalist.

The shafting of Robin Eames and Denis Bradley is just the latest debacle. The pair were not even informed in advance that their appearance before the NI select committee at Westminster would coincide with the announcement that the British government had already rejected one of their key proposals.

It can now be seen that a disastrous flaw in the Good Friday Agreement was its failure to include a mechanism to deal with the past, and in particular with the needs of those who were bereaved during the conflict. The clamour of hurt and angry voices demanding the truth has got louder and louder in the decade that has followed, and it isn't going to stop. This should have been foreseen. After all, it has happened before. It happens all over the world.

As it happens, I recently visited Liberia, in West Africa, one of the many countries which has set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the aftermath of a long conflict. Civil wars of extraordinary brutality in Liberia lasted for 14 years, and caused an estimated 300,000 deaths. A million people or more fled their homes. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was part of the peace settlement of 2003.

Under legislation introduced two years later, it was mandated to write the history of the conflict, including an investigation of its roots, to document human rights abuses from 1979 to 2003, to identify victims and perpetrators and to make proposals for reparations, prosecutions and amnesties. It was also tasked with drawing up recommendations on how to bring about reconciliation.

There were nine commissioners, selected through a transparent and democratic process. The TRC was given 2 years and 200 staff to complete its enormous body of work. It took 20,000 statements from people all over the country, and held public hearings and themed hearings. The final report is due out in June. Its first volume has just been published. It finds that the conflict has its origins in the founding of the state, that the causes of the conflict include poverty, greed, corruption, limited access to education, inequalities, identity conflict and issues of land tenure.

It finds that all factions to the conflict committed war crimes. It implicates other African countries, the US and Europe for opportunistic interventions

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which included backing various warlords and turning a blind eye to their excesses. It calls for reparations to individuals and communities to help restore human dignity and foster healing. It calls for an amnesty for those who took part as children, but for an end to the culture of impunity for adults who planned and carried out atrocities.

Critical to the ability of the Liberian TRC to carry out its work and fulfill its mandate is the fact that all parties who signed up to the peace agreement agreed that its recommendations would be binding on the government and on the president. So, while it has its enemies – some former warlords have accused it of witch-hunting and

have threatened to resist any efforts to indict them - it has been able to hold its nerve. By contrast, Eames and Bradley were thrown to the wolves.

The Liberian model might not be an exact fit for the North of Ireland. It seems clear that, as in the case of decommissioning, a body headed by international rather than local figures would have been required here. But just imagine the painful messes we would have avoided if such a body had been set up in 1998. Imagine the British government, the Irish government and the Northern political parties agreeing to engage in such a process without obstruction.

Truth recovery, wrote Michael Ignatieff, exposes the myth of blamelessness. A TRC would cast the same cold eye on politicians who fomented hatred as on the bombers and gunmen. It would scrutinise the activities of the security forces as well as the paramilitaries. It would offer all victims the opportunity to tell their stories in a context of equality.

It would confront denial and demolish hierarchies of victims. It would show that the IRA carried out sectarian atrocities against Protestants and blamed others for murders it was ashamed to claim. It would show that the security forces, quite probably at the behest of senior figures in the political establishment, colluded with loyalist paramilitaries in the murder of Catholics, that many such paramilitaries were, in fact, also members of the security forces. It would show that loyalist paramilitaries, fired up by the rhetoric of certain preachers and politicians, were motivated by sectarian hatred as much as by any notion of defending their country. It would show that there was horrific brutality all round.

Look what we've had instead. The Bloody Sunday Tribunal has not yet reported but has cost such a ludicrous amount of money that it has turned people off inquiries. The Cory inquiries have been delayed and compromised and the most explosive, into the murder of Pat Finucane, has so far been successfully avoided by the British government. Inquests have been blocked. The Police Ombudsman had to deal with fierce opposition from elements within the policing establishment and unionism. The Historical Enquiries Team has had to struggle for funds, and has been opportunistically opposed by some republicans. Loyalists have been allowed to hold onto their guns.

Meanwhile, victims groups have proliferated. Some are helpful and constructive, some are muddled and offering counselling and other services which are not of a high standard, and some are little political fiefdoms. There are victims struggling to find the truth about what happened to their loved ones who have been fortunate enough to get support from tenacious campaigners who have integrity and no vested interest. Others have fallen into the hands of bitter people who have exploited their pain.

We've had the disgraceful debacle over the appointment of a victims commissioner, culminating in the appointment, behind closed doors, of a matching set of four. Predictably, they have not found a collective voice.

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Edited by Patricia O'Neill and Ellana Tomasso

Susan McKay continued

And then Eames-Bradley. Another matching set – the former Protestant archbishop and the former Catholic priest. Set up by the British government, and therefore off to a bad start with many, and an odd mix of people. Their public hearings were poorly attended except by certain belligerent individuals who followed them around, shouting. They did, however, hear in private from a broad mix of relevant individuals and groups, and they did read their way diligently through a large body of reports and books.

The report was delayed so many times it began to seem it would never appear, and its launch was spectacularly badly judged. The proposal to begin the process of dealing with the past by distributing £12,000 to the head of each family bereaved in the conflict, and to leak this to the media before allowing journalists access to other key proposals, was madness.

The front page of the Irish News was typical of what followed. Under the headline, “Butchers, bombers, victims – they are all the same” the paper carried, side by side, photos of the Shankill Butcher, Lenny Murphy, the Shankill Bomber, Thomas Begley, and the 9 year old child, Patrick Rooney. Murphy leers, Begley looks dim, the child smiles the innocent smile of a child. Reparations have a place in a truth process, but it is not right at the start. Unionists have been claiming victory over the government’s rejection of the payment.

There is much that is of value in the Eames – Bradley report, in particular its proposals for a Legacy Commission. These proposals deserve the detailed consideration which they have been given by, notably, the Pat Finucane Centre. However, the report has already been seriously undermined by the government, and it will be harder now to persuade people to take it seriously. The cynical political exploitation of victims continues.

The past will not go away, and nor will its victims and their families. As victims commissioner Patricia McBride pointed out during a BBC discussion: “We can’t keep on asking people the same questions, getting the same answers, and then ignoring them.”

Eames-Bradley: An ahistorical tool of the Peace and reconciliation industry?

By Henry Patterson with kind permission of Parliamentary Brief also appeared on the Slugger O’Toole website.

Bradley’s problem, and indeed the problem of the report, is that the politicians’ response articulates profound communal division over victims and the past. Unionists, politicians and those who have voted for them, do not agree with Bradley when he proclaims: ‘we cannot wash our hands and say we were not part of the problem’. Most firmly believe in the innocent victim/perpetrator distinction.

The Eames Bradley group’s orientation to these issues was heavily influenced by the peace and reconciliation industry which has grown up in Northern Ireland under more than 30 years of direct rule and the peace process. The place of a local political class was usurped by NGOs, community groups, former paramilitaries and academics. A key characteristic of this group was an ideology that fused in different combinations local versions of liberal theology, recycled 1960s Marxism, human rights absolutism and the utopian legal theory of transitional justice.

It represents a framework for understanding Northern Ireland’s past which is structurally biased against Unionism and puts terrorist organisations on a level with the security forces. A group dealing with the past but with no historians on it and

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Henry Patterson continued

whose extensive bibliography contains not one book by an academic historian produces a poor man's post-modernism of 'story-telling' where the 'police story' or the 'army story' has the same truth value and moral content as the 'former combatants' story (transitional justice speak for terrorists' narratives).

The poor benighted Northern Ireland populace, the vast majority of whom never joined a paramilitary organisation, are being faced with five years of being forced to be 'reconciled'. For a majority that essentially means acknowledging that unless they listen to the usually self-justifying narratives of those responsible for most of the devastation of the Troubles, they are in danger of being responsible for future conflicts. This is the constant refrain of a community relations industry which has already had substantial amounts of state funding without any noticeable impact on continuing sectarian division in Northern Ireland. Under Eames-Bradley, the Treasury will be asked for £100m more to fill this black hole.

Eames-Bradley is the product of the fag-end of direct rule and the peace process. The social groups and ideas that produced it are characterised by their distance from and hostility to the unionist political class which now has an effective veto on key governmental decisions for the first time since 1972. Although the British government will pay attention to what Sinn Fein, the SDLP and Dublin have to say about the report, it will be difficult to ignore the hostility of Unionism. The Group may hope that once again a British government will ignore Unionist concerns but with Brown already in debt to the DUP over its support on 42 days detention and struggling not to be engulfed by the worst economic crisis since the 1930s this may prove unfounded.

From humble beginnings, SEFF thrives a decade on!

Director of South East Fermanagh Foundation Kenny Donaldson explains

South East Fermanagh Foundation (**SEFF**) is a group of victims/survivors from the community of South East Fermanagh, which was formed in 1999 as a result of identified needs amongst those who have been the innocent victims of paramilitary terrorism in this part of Northern Ireland, together with their families.

Over the years, the Foundation has steadily grown whereby it now offers a full welfare/benefits advice service, multiple alternative therapy treatment options, befriending support services, counselling, a full educational and training programme, respite support and a raft of other advocacy and representation-based work.

The organisation has been at the forefront of attempts to address the needs of victims/survivors who have been failed by successive Governments.

SEFF is committed to supporting individuals to make the personal transition from "victim" to "survivor" as part of a process of healing and confidence building.

SEFF is positive for the future and will strive to continue its' work on behalf of victims/survivors (particularly in the South East Fermanagh catchment area) We wish to assist the conditions whereby some of the most traumatised may have some sense of peace and will feel empowered to build their lives for their own betterment and that of their families.

CGP Report opens up old wounds

In the run up to and following the official publication of the Consultative Group on the Past's Report, our offices at South East Fermanagh Foundation were and continue to be inundated with distressed phone calls from our members. Many have expressed feelings of betrayal, anger and hurt at what they see as proposals, which inherently provides for a perpetrator centred process."



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SEFF's position was and continues to be that there cannot ever be equation drawn between those who set out to murder and maim or were part of terrorist organisations and those who suffered at their hands.

When reading the report we looked for what tangible actions are proposed, which would assist healing, truth recovery and justice for innocent victims. Having dissected the report paragraph by paragraph, we are of the view that the attention given to innocent victims' needs is negligible at best.

We will not acquiesce with recommendations, which either overtly or covertly suggest that the mess we had here was equally everyone's responsibility. People made choices for themselves; a minority legitimised dehumanising another to the extent of taking their life, they can never be considered as "victims." They were and are the perpetrators.

Profile - Maura Muldoon – Council Member

Maura graduated in 1981 with a BA in Social Administration and went on to achieve a Certificate in Social Work from the University of North Wales, a Masters in Business Administration with the Open University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management from Queen's University.

She worked as a probation officer for fourteen years before taking up the post of Sports Development Officer with the Sports Council for N.I. Since then Maura worked for a short time as Equality Manager with the Royal Hospital group. She is now employed by the PSNI as Diversity Manager.

Maura has been a Council Member since 2003.

Policy Update

Gemma Attwood CRC Policy Officer

Policy Responses

Council recently submitted responses on the following:

- ◇ DENI: Review of Irish Medium Education
- ◇ DSD: Draft EQIA - Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Barracks
- ◇ NIO: Community Safety Draft Strategy in Northern Ireland 'Together, Stronger, Safer'
- ◇ NI Assembly: Committee for Education - Written submission on the Education Bill

These [responses](#) can be found on the CRC website.

Assembly Update

Debates

2nd February 2009

Private members business - Consultative Group on the Past
 DUP Motion – That this Assembly recognises the importance of meeting the needs of victims; and condemns proposals from the Consultative Group on the Past which equate perpetrators of violence with innocent victims — *[Mr Simpson.]*

For the full text of the debate please go to this link: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2008/090202.pdf>



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3rd February 2009

Private members business - Civic Forum

DUP Motion - That this Assembly notes the ongoing review of the Civic Forum; notes that it has not met since 2002; notes the absence of any value from the Civic Forum to date; notes the lack of a widespread public concern about the absence of the Civic Forum; and calls on the First Minister and deputy First Minister not to establish a new Civic Forum, but instead to investigate modern ways to interact with the public, including online interactive means of helping to shape public policy. (*Mr Moutray*)

For the full text of the debate please go to this link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2008/090203.htm>

Questions & Answers

During February MLA's put forward a number of written and oral questions which were of particular interest to CRC. They covered a number of policy issues such as:

OFMDFM

1. Crumlin Road Gaol and how its regeneration will help combat social deprivation and poverty in North Belfast.
2. ASF TAP – what are the lessons learned.
3. The current status of the Civic Forum; what work it has completed to promote better community relations surrounding Loyal Order parades;
4. Victims:
 1. Expenditure plans for next financial year
 2. Draft programme of work
 3. Funding to individuals who are not part of any formal group

DCAL

1. Potential for the development of an Ulster Scots Project along the same lines as the Gaeltacht project in Belfast.
2. Sport and commemorating controversial figures

DFP

1. Procurement – social impacts; how will the Chancellor's pre-budget announcement impact on NI

Other issues included culture, identity, language, re-imaging, education & civic teaching

One question of particular interest related to labour mobility and social division.

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration will be given to the impact of social divisions on labour market mobility and investment decisions, in the review of economic development policy. (AQW 4149/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Economic Development Policy were outlined to Members as part of the Minister's statement on 1 December 2008. They have also been placed on a dedicated website (www.irep.org.uk) that has been established as part of the Review.

The Terms of Reference are wide ranging and include the need to make recommendations on the policy options to stimulate economic growth and productivity, and to build a larger and more wealth-creating private sector. This will include identification and consideration of any inhibitors to economic and productivity growth.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

The Committee is to carry out a short inquiry into the recommendations of the Consultative Group on the Past, following the publication of the Group's final report on 28 January 2009. The Committee held an oral evidence session with Lord Eames and Mr Bradley on Wednesday 25 February 2009.

For further information click below.

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/northern_ireland_affairs/niac_pn08_08_09_cfm

News

Welcome to YourAssembly.com!

This site allows you to get more involved with the Northern Ireland Assembly. By using the tabs along the top of the page you can find out more about our Roadshows and you can contact us with your questions for your MLAs. You can also find out more about The Speaker of the Assembly and his role.

This site and the Assembly Roadshows are all about helping you engage with your government. Through www.yourassembly.com, you can come back regularly and contribute your pictures, comments, videos and follow us on Twitter.

We want you to get involved with The Assembly as we take the Roadshows to a location near you. On this site you can find all the information you need about how to make comments, ask questions and arrange to participate in the Roadshows.

So, come back often and we will update the site as we travel throughout Northern Ireland with our own photos, videos and we'll keep you informed of when and where the next Roadshow will be.

[University of Ulster](#), Coleraine - 18 March 2009
[The Braid](#), Ballymena Town Hall - 19 March 2009
[Canal Court Hotel](#), Newry - 23 March 2009
[Killyhevin Hotel](#), Enniskillen - 24 March 2009
[Armagh City Hotel](#) - 25 March 2009
[Millennium Forum](#), Derry/Londonderry - 26 March 2009
[Strule Arts Centre](#), Omagh - 30 March 2009
[Island Arts Centre](#), Lisburn - 6 April 2009
[Grand Opera House](#), Belfast - 7 April 2009

Good Relations Indicators latest iteration can be found on the OFMDFM website under the following:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/equalityresearch/research-publications/gr-pubs.htm>

Consultative Group on the Past announcement of Oral Evidence Session in Westminster on Wednesday 25 February 2009. The transcripts of these sessions usually appear about two weeks after the event. You will be able to access these on http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/northern_ireland_affairs.cfm

Belfast City Council's Community services section is currently inviting groups within the community sector to apply for the following grants:

Summer Play Grant Scheme 2009
Community Development Project Grant March 2009 (For small and community project activities)

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Groups who can meet the relevant criteria may be eligible for funding. For application forms and information contact:

Community Services Section
Belfast City Council
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast,
BT2 8BP

Tel: 028 90320202 ext. 3346 3365
Email: stevensonj@belfastcity.gov.uk

Award Winner Boyd Excels for Irish FA

Irish FA Head of Community Relations, Michael Boyd, won an Excel Leadership Award at the Management and Leadership Conference at the Waterfront Hall in February, for leading the EU supported Football For All anti-sectarian campaign. The Excel Leadership Awards are endorsed by the Management and Leadership Network (MLN) and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce (NICCI).

Michael thanked the sponsors of Football For All and dedicated the award to the Northern Ireland Football Fans, "I would like to thank the EU, the Special EU Programmes Body, Border Action, the Amalgamation of Official Northern Ireland Supporters Clubs and the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council for supporting Football For All.

With continued support from the EU the Irish FA is re-launching the Football For All Project at the Odyssey in the Storm cinema on the 1st April with the official world premier of the new "Green and White Army, the Fans Story" film. If you would like to attend this free launch or would like more information on Football For All please contact Michael Boyd on 07894614328 or at mboyd@irishfa.com.

Belfast City Council's Good Relations Grant Aid programme is now open for applications. The closing date for this round of applications will be Friday the 20th March at 12.00 noon and the maximum grant available will be £10,000. Decisions on funding will be made at the meeting of the Good Relations Partnership on Friday the 17th April, so this round of funding can only support activities that will happen after this date.

The application form and guidance notes are now available to download. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations/goodrelationsfund.asp>

If you require any further information or wish to speak to one of the Good Relations team, please contact the Unit at 02890 270663

Leish Cox
Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project
Good Relations Unit
Belfast City Council
Adelaide Exchange
24-26 Adelaide St.
Belfast
BT2 8GD

Tel: 028 90 320 0202 ext. 6028

M. Phil. in Reconciliation Studies - Now Recruiting for September 2009.

Based at the Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin) in Belfast, the M. Phil. in Reconciliation Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with the most advanced scholarship about the roots of ethnic, religious, and political conflict and how such conflicts are transformed. This is a taught M. Phil. and can be taken full time over one year or part time over two years.

More details are available at: <http://www.tcd.ie/ise/study/mphil-degrees/reconciliation-studies/index.php>



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

Events

CRC is hosting a Resource Fair showcasing the resources and training services that are available from CRC funded groups at,

Farset International
466 Springfield Road,
Belfast

Friday 13 March
10 am -12 noon

This is a great opportunity to come and see the most up-to-date training and resources available in the sector.

Please contact Ellana Tomasso on 9022 7500 or etomasso@nicrc.org.uk to confirm your attendance.

CRC's Live Issues Conference

What do we need to do now to shape tomorrow?

Ramada Hotel, Belfast
31st March 2009

CRC's sixth Live Issues conference on the 31st March will focus on how we, as organisations in the community and voluntary sector, get practical. How do we use the advantages we have and how do we make the best use of the resources available? The conference will consist of a number of short seminars which will address themes such as connecting with communities and other organisations, advocacy and leadership. The day will culminate in a panel discussion drawing together issues raised in the different seminars and identifying and discussing practical steps which we can take now to shape future work.

A full programme and registration form will be available in due course.

"The Challenge of Change", Interface Working Group (IWG) consultation events in Belfast

In 2007 the Community Relations Council, (CRC) in collaboration with key interface agencies and government departments, initiated a process to begin to explore the future of existing interfaces and avoiding potential new interfaces in Belfast. This group has become the Interface Working Group (IWG) and has produced a report, "***Towards Sustainable Security - Interfaces Barriers and the Legacy of Segregation in Belfast***", which draws together all of the available material on interfaces in the Belfast area and makes suggestions for as to how this difficult, but vital issue, could be addressed.

The IWG recognises the crucial role of interface communities and the voluntary and community sector working with them. Therefore, Belfast City Council (BCC) and CRC are co funding a consultation process leading to a major conference, to give communities, on the ground, the opportunity to explore their role in any interface process.

"In responding to the legacy of physical segregation the perceptions of safety and security of the people living near to interfaces and interface barriers must be the priority." (p9)

There will be three facilitated consultation evening events across Belfast beginning at 6.30 pm and concluding with a buffet supper at 8.30 pm, which will allow all those interested to share their views on this process.

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 or Ellana at info@nicrc.org.uk.

Wednesday 4th March	Malone Lodge Hotel, Belfast
5th March	Lansdowne Hotel, Belfast
culminating in a conference on:	
Friday 27 March	Farset International, Belfast (9.30am – 1.00pm lunch)

For further information or to register for any of the above events please contact:
Grace O'Sullivan, Community Relations Council, 6 Murray Street, Belfast, BT1 6DN
Email: Temp3@nicrc.org.uk
Telephone: 02890 227500

Meet the Neighbours—culture, music, dance, food, limited tours. Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast, Saturday 21st March 9am—4pm.

One Day Introductory Course to Islam and the Muslim Culture

This course will be held in the Lanyon Building, Queen's University, University Road, Belfast, BT7 1NN. (Please do not contact the venue)

Dates: Monday 20th April or Monday 26th October 2009.
Cost: £135 (+VAT) per person which include Indian style lunch, information pack and visit to Mosque.

Please select your preferred course date when booking – further dates and venues can be found on www.educationislam.org For further information contact

Sue Magrath
Course Coordinator
Tel: 01924 466117

info@educationislam.org

The Polish Cultural Week is returning to Belfast for the third time as a part of the 'Polska!Year' with a range of events to share Polish culture, arts, heritage and language. The programme of the 'Polska! Year' developed by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs covers over 300 events in the most renowned and recognized concert halls, museums and galleries in cities including London, Edinburgh, Canterbury, Leeds, Liverpool, Oxford, Birmingham, Glasgow, Dundee, Norwich and of course Belfast.

There will be exhibitions, concerts, workshops and film screenings in venues including Linen Hall Library, Ormeau Baths Gallery, GT Gallery, PS2 Gallery, The Place, QFT and many more. Detailed programme of the Week will be announced during the media launch on the 27th March 2009, attended by the Polish Ambassador.

Should you be interested in organizing or supporting an event during the Polish Cultural Week please do not hesitate to contact me on 02893364400 or eva@connectni.co.uk.

School of Education & Stranmillis University College Lunchtime Research Seminar 6th March 2009

“What role for history teaching in the transition out of conflict?”

By Dr Alan McCully, School of Education, University of Ulster

The seminar will run between 1.00pm and 2.00pm in Room G6, School of Education, 69/71 University Street. A sandwich-lunch will be provided from 12.30pm in room G6a, and will be on a first come, first served basis.

Artsekta proudly presents “HOLI – Festival of Colours”

15th March 2009 St. Georges Market 2pm to 6pm

This unique and vibrant festival celebrates the coming of spring. Witness St George`s Market come alive with literal explosions colour and join in the festivities by throwing colorful powders (gulaal) in a party atmosphere among friends.

Taste a variety of foods from around world, watch Bollywood dancers and try your Bhangra dancing with our professional Indian DJ! The event will also feature local cultural performances and street entertainment

Admission is FREE

For more information visit <http://www.artsekta.org.uk>, phone Artsekta on 028 9023 1381 or email us info@artsekta.org.uk

St. Patrick`s Festival 2009 – Downpatrick and District

As one of the most ancient and historic towns on the island of Ireland, Downpatrick plays a key part in its intriguing history. Known widely as St. Patrick`s town and reputed burial site of the patron saint, St. Patrick`s Day cross-community celebrations hold an extra special significance for the county town.

Down District Council is proud to present a nine day programme of events from Monday 9 March to Tuesday 17 March culminating in a spectacular display of sound and colour as the St Patrick's Cross-Community Carnival Parade makes its way through the streets of Downpatrick.

Events throughout the festival will offer opportunities to learn more about the history of St Patrick, celebrate his life, explore the fabulous County Down countryside, and enjoy a range of concerts, exhibitions, talks, walks, special church services, sporting and family events. With almost 50 events to choose from, the St Patrick`s Festival has something for everyone!

For a free festival programme or further information and details about the festival, please contact:

The Festival Office, Downpatrick Tourist Information Centre, 53A Market Street, Downpatrick BT30 6LZ, Tel: 028 4461 2233, or view details online www.st-patricksdayfestival.com

The Women's World Day of Prayer (Interdenominational) takes place in St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's Church, Moyle Road, Ballycastle, on Friday 6th March 2009 at 7.30p.m. The Service has been prepared by the women of Papua New Guinea for 2009.

Our speaker at the Service will be Yvonne Naylor, M.Phil (Irish School of Corrymeela Community).

All are welcome to join us - Men, Women and Children.

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 or Ellana at info@nicrc.org.uk.

Coleraine Multi Cultural Showcase 'Celebrating a shared civic space for a diverse community'

Coleraine Borough Council and Ballymoney Community Resource Centre are organising a showcase of the array of multicultural arts and music that exists in the area in order to promote community relations and tackle racism. This will take the form of an event using music, dance, poetry and other forms of the arts to showcase the cultural diversity which exists in the community.

The open-day event is taking place on Saturday 7th March at Coleraine Town Hall, starting at 12 p.m. and finishing at 3 p.m.

The exciting line-up on the day includes Polish children from Coleraine's Polish Saturday School singing traditional Polish songs, lively and colourful Bollywood dancers from the Indian Community Centre in Belfast, an hour-long performance by the multicultural musical collective known as 'the Motion Project', a riveting insight into the Ulster Scots language by the well known Ulster Scots speaker Liam Logan, a traditional performance by the album-selling musician from Zimbabwe, Gabriel Sekuru Lavender and to finish it all off the senior champions from the Dominic Graham School of Dancing will provide an energetic and exhilarating performance of Irish dancing.

Performances will be interspersed with testimonies from some of the performers. If all that isn't enough, there will also be a free and delicious lunch provided by The Fab Kebab in Coleraine!

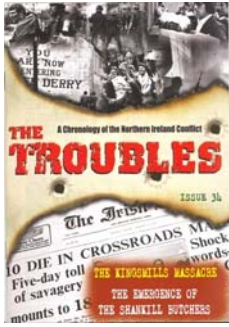
This event will be widely promoted and will target both BME and indigenous communities. It will link into Coleraine Borough Council's wider celebration of Coleraine's 150th anniversary of the Town Hall taking place this year and will be used as an opportunity to promote the Town Hall as a shared civic space reflective of the community it serves. All welcome.

For more information, please contact Karina McCollum Coleraine Borough Council on 028 47044 or Lee Millen, Ballymoney Community Resource Centre on 028 2766 5068.

"Creative Extremists" Fighting for the common good

Thursday 23 April 2009 – Stormont Hotel

As we move into a new era never has it been more important to understand and recognise the contribution that voluntary action has and will make to ensure a better society for all. At a time for change and opportunity this Conference will engage people with an interest in and passion for volunteering, people from central and local government, policy makers, council and Assembly politicians and community and voluntary sector leaders and academics. With a plethora of reviews and consultations in progress this conference seeks to Inform, Highlight and Inspire all those of influence. We issue the challenge – are we to be Creative Extremists and if so to what end?



Key Speakers

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP

MP for Sheffield, Brightside. Since 1997 has served as Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Author of Mutual Action, Common Purpose: Empowering the Third Sector.

Michael Edwards

Independent writer and activist affiliated with the New York based think tank Demos, Director of Governance and Civil Society Unit at the Ford Foundation, 1999-2008, Author of Civil Society, 2003, Just another Emperor? The Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapitalism 2008

Register for more information:

VSB: 028 90 200 850
Email info@vsb.org.uk

New Books/Research

The Troubles. A Chronology of the Northern Ireland Conflict published by Glenravel Local History Project

The periodical, to be produced monthly, is a chronology of the atrocities that were the Troubles. This month's issue reports on the incidents in January and February 1976. Future issues will continue the chronology. The publication draws on local newspaper reports at the time and is therefore not just another view of the Troubles, rather it hopes to provide a definitive reference source to events of the Troubles as they unfolded.

The publication is available price £2.99 from newsagents and bookshops or from Glenravel Local History Project glenravel@achtoncentre.com tel 90-202100

New research into Migrant-led churches

It is estimated that there are now over 360 migrant-led churches and chaplaincies on the island of Ireland, which the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) and EMBRACE Northern Ireland, have highlighted through a new Directory.

The directory, which is the first of its kind, was funded by the Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland; the AICCMR, as a sub-committee of the Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues, partnered with EMBRACE Northern Ireland to present a North/South perspective on this new phenomenon. The directory, which is for the interest of migrants, visitors to Ireland, media, community groups, Christian churches and service providers, was launched, in Belfast and Dublin, as a published booklet and as an interactive online resource (www.irishchurches.org).

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 or Ellana at info@nicrc.org.uk.

Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan said at the Dublin launch, “Churches have a tremendous network of social and activity groups and have always been at the center of our community life. They help define our values and contribute enormously to our sense of identity. Therefore I believe that churches and faith communities are in a unique position to be able to influence and support the integration process at all levels”.

The directory highlights the diversity migrants are contributing to Christianity in Ireland, particularly through the churches or chaplaincies which have been set-up or are being run by migrants.

Scott Boldt
Edgehill Reconciliation Programme
Edgehill Theological College
9 Lennoxvale
Belfast, BT9 5BY

Your Space or Mine? A co-influence approach to shared future urban environments in interface communities. research project, undertaken by Mike McQueen, Prof. Hisham Elkadi, Dr Jenny Millar and Dr Peter Geoghegan with input from environmental artist Peter McCaughey. The project has its origins in a request for assistance from an interface community group in prioritising community interest in proposals for a key river-front site, close to the Brandywell/Fountain interface in Derry/Londonderry. Previous projects exploring issues of diversity and stakeholder representation in design processes established a basis for YSOM?, which was funded by the European Union Peace 2.1 programme, through the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

For further information Contact
m.mqueen@ulster.ac.uk
Tel: 028 90 267252

Trademark Annual Report 2008

Trademark is an ethically based not for profit organisation which works towards social change in which the principles of social justice, equality and pluralism are actively pursued.

Trademark was established by a committed group of activists from the community and voluntary, public and trade union sectors and is an official partner of the ICTU delivering training, research and evaluation on a range of related themes, including equality and good relations, human rights and peace and reconciliation.

Confronting the Legacy of the Past—a report on the work of the Trademark project supported by the EU’s Peace and Reconciliation Programme under measure 2.4 Pathways to inclusion, integration and reconciliation of victims.

To obtain a copy of either of the above, phone Patricia O’Neill 9022 7500 or email: poneill@nicrc.org.uk.





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

WWW.NICRC.ORG.UK



Posters available from CRC phone 90227500 and ask for Patricia O'Neill or Ellana Tomasso or email info@nicrc.org.uk

Diversity in Action

The University of Ulster, Magee Campus has produced a 'Findings Summary' of the above project put together by Roisin O'Hagan and Grainne Kelly. To obtain copies phone 7137 5500 or email: r.ohagan@ulster.ac.uk

The 6th Connaught Rangers—Belfast Nationalists and the Great War

Published in 2008 by the 6th Connaught Rangers Research Project and produced by the Ulster Historical Foundation.

For further information phone: 9043 9095 or email: connaughtangers@messineassociation.org

Community Relations Award 2009

The Community Relations Council invites nominations of individuals for its 2009 Award for exceptional contribution to inter-community relations. The deadline is **3 April**.

This annual award, in the form of a bronze sculpture, was created in 2006 and was awarded for the first time in April 2006 during Community Relations Week.

For details and a nomination form [click here](#) or contact CRC.

Decisions on the winner of the 2009 Community Relations Award will be announced and awarded during Community Relations Week, 27 April- 2 May 2009.

Community Relations Week 2009 27 April- 2 May

Event entries for Community Relations Week 2009 are now being finalised. If you wish to include an event or activity please contact Ray Mullan at CRC 90-227500 or email rmullan@nicrc.org.uk

One Small Step Campaign

The One Small Step Campaign, which is now hosted by CRC, is running a weekly series of personal stories in the **Belfast Telegraph** which appear every Monday. The stories are by individuals who have taken steps to challenge sectarianism and segregation, in their own lives or in the community in which they live, and help bring about change towards reconciliation and a more shared society. The focus will be on how individuals have responded personally to the challenge.

CRC is co-ordinating the gathering of these stories. If you would like to add your personal story please contact Ray Mullan 90-227500 or send your article to rmullan@nicrc.org.uk. The articles should be **500- 600 words**, together with a photo if possible.