

'TOWARDS A SHARED SOCIETY'

A Report on
The Community Relations Council
Policy Development Conference
Friday 28 May 2004

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Foreword

The *A Shared Future* consultation was the first opportunity in almost twenty years for people in Northern Ireland to directly respond to the Government's policy and practice in relation to community relations. The document acknowledged that a lot of valuable community and race relations work has and is, being achieved. However, it also recognises that, in light of the changed political and wider environment, there was a need to reconsider current policies, programmes and delivery mechanisms.

The Community Relations Council (CRC) was actively engaged in the *A Shared Future* consultation process and helped provide opportunities for individuals and organisations to have their say in the shaping of a vision, policies and structures for the development and delivery of a more shared and pluralist NI society.

The *Towards a Shared Society* conference was extremely successful and represented yet another step forward as it provided delegates and speakers with the opportunity to further explore some of the issues identified in the consultation. The conference workshops were valuable in drawing on the knowledge of practitioners and policy makers and it is hoped that this conference report and its recommendations will feed into the Government's eagerly anticipated draft *Good Relations Strategy* which will shape the direction of good relations policy in NI.

Eamonn McCartan
Chairman, Community Relations Council

Executive Summary

This report considers the main issues addressed during the Community Relations Council (CRC) conference 'Towards a Shared Society'. The conference was held on the 28th of May 2004 at the Hilton Hotel, Belfast, with the aim of revisiting some of the topics raised during the Government consultation on community relations 'A Shared Future'. In particular, the conference identified six main areas of concern – interfaces, housing, young people, flags and emblems, race relations and promoting good relations in local government. Participants were introduced to the topics in the morning of conference by a presentation and panel discussion on each subject in six workshops. The afternoon was then given over to open discussion, allowing everyone attending the opportunity to voice their concerns, examine potential ways forward, and identify policy implications.

The Conference opened with an address by Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive of the CRC. In this report he returns to the main theme of that address and challenges us to think about the kind of future the people of Northern Ireland might want. More specifically, the address focuses on the need to identify a 'shared future' as a key element in public policy making. This, it is suggested, requires a new approach to community relations: one that moves beyond conflict management toward the promotion of dialogue within the social fabric of Northern Ireland. Targeted public policy, we are told, is a principal mechanism for moving from sectarian and racist antagonism to mutual recognition and the appreciation of diversity. This objective cannot be realized over night, promoting good community relations is not a quick fix, but a generational project.

The first section of this report introduces and recaps the six issues discussed at the CRC conference. Each issue is set in context, a number of recent developments are detailed, and some innovative ideas and actions that arose during the consultation process are briefly discussed. The second section of the report gives space for the chairs of each of the six working groups to outline what they consider the key issues of concern that arose within their group to be, the third and final section ties together the recommendations made on the day and in doing so distils some of the main difficulties to be overcome and actions needed to create real change in the six areas of study.

Address by Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive, Community Relations Council

There can be no greater issue in Northern Irish politics than the question of what kind of future we wish to create for ourselves. Indeed, if the peace process has been the overarching theme with which we have all been engaged for the last decade, then ‘A Shared Future’ encapsulates (some would say ‘at last’) the peace outcome which the whole enterprise has been aimed at.

The goal of peace in a divided society is a peace where the principle of antagonism – politics shaped on the basis that everything is a zero-sum competition between exclusive rival visions – is transcended by a recognition that progress and development are only meaningful in real terms if they include those very same others we have antagonised and been antagonised by. It is a recognition that the principle of human sacrifice for political goals gives way to a principle of political sacrifice for human goals. A culture of tolerance and variety is a culture where we do not have to fight for our difference but where our differences are recognised, lived out and free to change and grow.

The Shared Future review should therefore be a key element of policy making in Northern Ireland to date it has not been so. Improving community relations, or, even better, seeking good relations, remains a moral obligation to which lip service is paid, but which is usually postponed until after the last and (supposedly) decisive battle and/or left to others. Even programmes like the massive EU Peace Programme have had to struggle to insist on peace distinctiveness against the well-developed tendency in Northern Ireland to accept the cheque without making the change. Furthermore, that failure is then turned on community relations as evidence that the ‘massive’ (!!)

peace industry is failing. As a representative of the most publicly identifiable body which acts to distribute focussed support money for reconciliation in Northern Ireland, I would like to place on record that the massive industry of public assertion is far away from the small sums we distribute in fact.

What we now know, ten years into the peace process, is that transforming a society from antagonism to peace will not happen through political fiat. The truth is that

antagonism runs through the veins and sinews of our society, and is reproduced at local level, in our institutions and in our perception of what is 'normal'. Much of the discussion about group rights and individual rights that has taken place in human rights circles is a discussion about how quickly or how thoroughly we will move from antagonism and how best to manage the transition. Antagonism means that our communities have grown up as 'not the others' as much as communities focussed on single positive goals. At every turn, the presumption of enmity and antagonism justifies our lack of trust. The presumption that 'they' will exclude or eliminate us and everything they don't like about us justifies our need to do the same to them.

Transition in this context means moving from one state to another, from antagonism to recognition. Otherwise, our so-called peace process will be little more than a gap in the level of our hostilities, as antagonism reinforces itself and regroups for the next enemy encounter. But transition from antagonism to peace means working towards an end to antagonism while antagonism still exists - and good reasons for the fear and anxiety of others also still exist. In the midst of transition is widespread and deep uncertainty about whether or who to trust, as the common sense of the past (prepare to defend yourself) gives way to a new necessity for the future (recognise your enemy as your friend). In a context where sharing is nobody's aspiration but everybody's predicament, Northern Ireland is a deeply ambivalent place, between the need to move on with others and the need to stay vigilant against them - 'just in case'.

The measure of progress in a peace process cannot therefore be attached to any single change - political, social or historic. Overall the question is whether we are moving from a culture of antagonism into one where a different presumption is normalised in each sphere. This is not a top-down or a bottom-up process (as the jargon has it) it is an either-or process - either antagonism or not antagonism. There is no order of causality, no first or second, but a role for everyone to contribute to acts of trust rather than acts of suspicious enmity. And in the middle of transition the priority is keeping alive the necessity of facing the crucial decisions across every element of public life, even while the doubts still remain.

No amount of money spent to achieve peace and reconciliation will achieve its goal if it does not embed and develop a culture which leaves antagonism behind. The

paradox is that every time we confront our antagonism we are brought back into its orbit, so dealing with it threatens to derail the project every time. The very process of addressing issues, risks bringing back conflict, but there is no choice but to set the goal and embrace the risks and setbacks intrinsic to this enterprise. What cannot be allowed to happen is any deviation from the goal of a society beyond antagonism. The difference will not be made by the size of the cheque but by what we choose to spend it on. Otherwise, as a colleague recently remarked to me, we will continue to spend millions of pounds of money without producing the right amount of outcomes.

As we come to the end of the Shared Future process, it is crucial to re-emphasise our priorities. The vision of a shared future and the measure of progress that flow from it must be embedded at the heart of government policy. There is no doubt that this is a long-term project. Nonetheless, if the vision of the first Programme for Government—of ‘a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust’—is ever to be more than empty words, this version of community relations must be an essential element of any meaningful public policy mix. ‘Shared’ does not mean homogenous. In fact by recognising the need to share, we recognise that different people are working together. What is critical is that the rules of engagement are those appropriate to democratic equals working for their collective benefit and not those of mortal enemies working for insular community self-interest.

Without the vision at the core of government, all talk of ‘joining up’ is likely to remain rhetorical. Departments will continue to duck and dive and prevaricate. It is essential to orientate policy towards this goal, even if the specific policies which result will have to be adjusted to prevailing conditions. Policing, planning and service provision are as important as housing, education and community development. Cultural policy, investment and targeting social need in a meaningful way all demand that serious attention is paid to the imperative to support the emergence of a shared future. Anything less than this vision pays lip service to a peace process and avoids the consequences in practice.

All of this work needs to be informed by a new definition of improving community relations in Northern Ireland. This means moving on from a definition of improving

relations that measures success through instant harmony to one that tackles real and outstanding obstacles to ending antagonism. Until now, the lazy tendency to caricature community relations work as the search for a naïve harmony and wellbeing means that any work is usually dismissed in the next breath as irrelevant and lacking in application to those in greatest need.

Community relations is about ending antagonism: making this place work ‘with others’, not ‘without others’. Alongside constitutional politics, agreed security arrangements and human rights and equality legislation, community relations policy and strategy is the final critical element of any inclusive peace-building strategy in Northern Ireland, applying to all organisations and structures which foster defensiveness, avoidance or mistrust.

In spite of its apparent status as ‘a waste of time’, ongoing inter-community violence and tensions continue to demand a public response. Too often, community relations work has been invoked to bind up the wounds of antagonism but not to challenge its structure or purpose. After violence erupts, elected democratic politicians find themselves obliged to respond as a matter of urgency, although they are often, indeed usually, elected to articulate the hopes and fears of one side of this conflict relationship alone. This raises a deep dilemma: not to promote community relations appears to collude in non-democratic violence, but to promote it in such circumstances prioritises inter-community harmony over the fears and hopes of the community the politician is elected to represent.

The most likely contexts in which this dilemma will be exposed include violence at inter-community interfaces, over community self-celebration (such as parades) or against the police. When violence erupts, politicians find themselves obliged to retreat from any pretence that they represent all of the people to a situation where they ‘take sides’. The result is usually a policy mix to manage the consequences while maintaining the system.

Such management of conflict usually involves:

The erection of physical barriers to prevent uncontrolled contact (‘peace walls’)

Attempts to create a rough balance of political forces and a structure for channelling funds (capacity building or community development)

Cultural confidence building and political reinforcement, often focussing on neighbours as opponents and enemies rather than on interdependence and mutual antagonism (single identity work) and buying time by improving those aspects of the quality of life that are amenable to quick wins, such as special investment programmes or short –term improvements in community infrastructure.

This last element can easily be accused of rewarding bad behaviour and opens up a potential vista of open-ended blackmail. Responsible politicians and their civil servants are therefore usually concerned to limit or close down expectations at the very same moment as expectations are raised, leaving a residue of cynicism in many interface communities.

The mere management of conflict in areas where violence is feared or prevalent will predictably require that those in positions of public authority, whether political or administrative, turn a blind eye to local paramilitary formations. Elected politicians claiming their legitimacy as democrats, and their administrative servants, are obliged to pretend that they are ‘against paramilitaries’ with one breath while being ‘realistic’ with another, interacting with paramilitary leaders on a daily basis.

In practice, community relations work becomes reduced to targeted political management in interface areas, again measured by the presence or absence of riots. Success is measured by the absence of visible violence, or, at least, its containment in marginal areas. While this may be rather brutal and bleak, obliging people at the interface to live with peace walls, hostility, unpromising economic prospects and paramilitary control, it is at least better than the system-threatening prospect of cross community political breakdown. In the face of three and a half decades of violence, and decades or centuries of tension and sporadic violence before them, it is a compliment to the continuing democratic aspirations of communities and politicians in Northern Ireland that community relations work has emerged at all.

The greatest problem with ‘management-as-solution’ for community relations is that it holds out no prospect of coming to an end. Predictably:

- Events will move at different paces on the two sides of a peaceline. As a result, any surface stability is likely to be temporary if relationships remain fundamentally hostile.
- The necessity of patrolling numerous interfaces imposes huge additional costs on the exchequer, requiring the duplication of services and a high security presence.
- Access to core services by residents is likely to be restricted by fear.
- Maintaining employment which requires a journey to work through ‘hostile’ areas will be difficult.
- The defensive imperative will continue to promote aggressive behaviour by young men as ‘patriotic’.
- Leadership will be equated with defensive military capacity not with trust building or innovation.
- Investment will be extremely difficult to attract.

‘Discrimination by postcode’, whereby simply coming from an area is ground for suspicion, becomes part of a deepening cycle of local deprivation. Interface communities will either be areas of persistent mass unemployment or characterised by out-migration. These in their turn are the roots of the next round of instability. The only thinkable solution becomes the eradication of one side of the interface (always the others) by the numerical victory of our own side, and the gradual creation of larger *apartheid* blocks of population from which ‘the others’ are excluded.

In the interim, public tranquillity is mistaken for peace, reinforcing an illusion among citizens living at a distance from immediate danger that they have no responsibility for change or encouraging the presumption that the wider problem of a lack of fundamental trust has ceased to exist. Northern Ireland remains mired in its own political paradox: those with the greatest interest in change (i.e. those living on or near an inter-community interface) are those with the least possibilities of political influence, while those with greater power of political and social action have no interest in engagement. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland exports much of its brightest and best young talent.

The only convincing version of community relations work sets its goals far beyond managerialism. In this view, community relations work is the search for the foundations of trust between all people in Northern Ireland who have been divided on the basis of perceived political, cultural, religious or ethnic background. In a profound sense, community relations work is the assertion that core democratic values—equity (justice and equality), diversity (variety and freedom) and interdependence (relatedness and social cohesion)—must prevail above and along with all and any claims to ‘national sovereignty’. Community relations strategy is designed to promote and prefer efforts at embedding trust and dialogue in a context where both have been at a premium and the growth of critical bridging and linking social capital which are the *sine qua non* of a sustainable society and economy¹. It is intrinsically practical, seeking to build trust in concrete situations, characterised by confidence, ease of interaction and freedom of expression and movement. It is measured not by surface harmony, but by an increasing area of public life and interaction which can fruitfully and practically address real differences and conflicts within the prospect of a shared future rather than antagonism.

Defined in this way, community relations work looks beyond the polar duality of Catholic-Protestant or nationalist-unionist to include the quality of relationships across new and emerging divisions. The embedding of a capacity for dialogue in the social institutions of Northern Ireland is likely to become ever more important in a globalising economy. Furthermore, dialogue including members of new ethnic minorities extends from the core of Northern Ireland rather than treating small minorities as ‘additional’, and it does so while acknowledging the ongoing reality of ‘traditional’ divisions.

For a serious project to begin, government has to will the means and the mechanism. This is not primarily a question of budget size, but of the identification of priorities. It is also a question of balancing wide participation with the need to sustain the vision. Thus, the principle that politicians lead (which is crucial) must sit alongside, and cannot override, the principle that politicians are mutually accountable to the vision of

¹ See Robert Putnam’s work on social capital for a more detailed analysis.

a shared future. In the context of transition, this means that the ongoing demands of representing antagonism cannot suspend the capacity to continue with policy aimed at ensuring good relations into the longer run. Thus, at least in the interim, it is essential that an independent regional body like CRC, drawing on leadership beyond party allegiance, continues to exist, albeit with new powers and responsibilities and some party political membership.

The same issue applies to District Councils. Local flexibility and participation are certainly key values in embedding a shared future as is the integration of community relations into wider community strategy. But there is no point in promoting the role of Councils if they have neither the vision nor the capacity to act. The regional body should be given a role in transferring these responsibilities and skills over time, based on already existing practice and regional networks which alone have the knowledge and commitment to embed new practice.

Ending antagonism is the generational project in Northern Ireland, whatever its ultimate constitutional destiny. A Shared Future is one in which the principle of insular community self-interest has given way to the democratic imperative of participation as full citizens in a common endeavour. It is critical that we seize the opportunity of A Shared Future now and give it the priority it deserves.

Section One: Key issues in ‘A Shared Future’

1. Introduction

The aim of the government consultation ‘A Shared Future’ was to stimulate the widest possible debate on the fundamental aims and objectives of future community relations policy in Northern Ireland. It also sought to obtain views on the principles that should underpin this policy and on possible measures that may help achieve;

- (i) a shared society in which people are encouraged to make choices in their lives that are not bound by historical divisions and are free to do so, and
- (ii) a pluralist society, with respect and tolerance for cultural diversity, where people are free to assert their identity

Those consulted during the ‘shared future’ process placed a great deal of emphasis on the exercise as the first step on a transitional process. This section introduces the six areas of concern that were most prominent within the consultation; interfaces, housing, young people, flags and emblems, race and ‘promoting good relations’. More particularly, it contextualises each of the six issues in terms of the current and ongoing debate and details the background conditions against which the remainder of the report is set.

2. The Changing Face of Interface Areas

Residential segregation has been a prominent feature of urban life in Northern Ireland since the nineteenth century (Boal 1992). Persistent violence has meant that communities have become more firmly and extensively segregated. An interface is a term typically used to describe the boundary between a predominantly Protestant / unionist / loyalist area and a predominantly Catholic / nationalist/ republican area. Boundaries such as these are recognised as features of some urban and rural areas of Northern Ireland (Murtagh 1999).

Three specific types of interfaces have been identified; an ‘enclave’ area - an island community, totally surrounded by the ‘other’ community, a ‘split’ - an interface clearly divided by a barrier or some other identifiable mark and a ‘buffer zone’ - where a mixed community separates two distinctly segregated communities (Jarman 2000). Over twenty peace lines and numerous other less obvious barriers (such as roads and parks) exist in Northern Ireland, both urban and rural. Territoriality is a key factor in the conflict in general and this is acutely reflected in interface situations. Interface areas are often characterised by high levels of social and economic disadvantage, long term unemployment, low educational achievement, poor health and restricted access to shops and jobs (Murtagh 1994). People living in interface communities can order much of their daily routine, travel patterns and social arrangements by reference to both the visible and the invisible boundaries which form their conceptual and internalised social geography (Shirlow 1999).

Programmes of diversionary activities for young people have had some success in reducing negative activity around interfaces at key times, and innovative community networks (such as the mobile phone network) have allowed for better communication

between communities (Shirlow 1999). Interface specific projects and organisations (such as the Belfast Interface project) have allowed for more strategic work to develop to deal with difficult issues. They have also raised awareness within relevant agencies/ public authorities and government (Jarman 2000).

3. Moving from Segregation to Integration – Focus on Housing

£96.7million has been spent on the scheme for the purchase of evacuated dwellings (SPED) since April 2000. 10% of all families who present themselves as homeless to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) each year do so because of intimidation. 90% of NIHE estates are segregated, and murals, flags and graffiti are readily acknowledged by the NIHE to be a significant chill factor (NIHE Report, 1999). From February 2000 to February 2003, the NIHE responded to thirty incidents of homelessness directly attributed to racist attacks.

The NIHE is presently developing models for two mixed housing pilots. In the medium term four hundred families are on its waiting list for mixed housing. Most of these families request such housing because of mixed marriages / partnerships. The NIHE acknowledge that segregation gets in the way of meeting need and prevents the best use of existing housing stock and land. Recently NIHE established a new 'Community Cohesion Unit' to take policy forward in this area. The first sheltered housing scheme for elderly Chinese people was recently established in Belfast.

4. Youth and Peace Process

For many young people in Northern Ireland the 'Troubles' and their legacy have provided the context against which they have grown up (Smyth 1998). Indeed, throughout the period of conflict young people have been at the highest risk of being killed, with almost 26% of victims aged 21 or less and the 19-20 age group having the highest death rate for any age group in Northern Ireland (Fay 2002). Recent research suggests that young men especially regard violence as a normal and acceptable aspect of life (Youth Action 2002). Research also suggests that community relations work undertaken by the youth sector often has difficulty moving beyond an initial preparatory stage and into 'contact' work.

While there is some funding available for 'diversionary' activities for young people, in specific places, at specific times, this is widely regarded as inadequate (Henry 2002). Development of citizenship modules within the education curriculum need to be backed up with adequate training for teachers and youth workers (Wylie 2003). While there is some provision for integrated education (5% of schools are 'integrated'), this is patchy without real choice for all parents (O'Connor 2002; NICIE 2003). Nevertheless the development of strategic community relations programmes specifically for young people and youth organisations (such as the JEDI partnership) are a positive development (www.jedini.com).

5. The Ups and Down of Flags and Emblems

Flags and emblems are used in Northern Ireland as territorial markers that often reflect sources of conflict and changing dynamics of inter-communal tensions. There is little agreement between statutory agencies as to their roles and responsibilities in

relation to the removal of flags or other emblems. The display of flags, particularly paramilitary flags, was one of the most commonly cited concerns within the 'Shared Future' consultation (Darby 2004). While the problem of contentious flags has long been acknowledged, attempts to confront it have rarely met with success. Recognition of the difficulty and complexity surrounding this issue was given in the Belfast Agreement, which notes, the 'sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes' (Belfast Agreement, 1998).

Recent prosecutions under the Terrorism Act 2000 (NI) Section (13.1) following the proliferation of Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) flags in Holywood, Co. Down (June 2004) are significant. The removal of paramilitary murals in East Belfast and their replacement by murals celebrating local civic culture is encouraging. Sectarian murals have been removed in the Lower Shankill and there has been a general clean up of painted kerbs, flags and sectarian / paramilitary graffiti. There is also work ongoing developing a partnership approach between the local communities (e.g. Coleraine) and the statutory sector to help communities manage and influence the impact of the display of flags and emblems in their local area.

6. An All Inclusive Society? Focus on Race Relations

Incidents of racial abuse and harassment against members of the minority ethnic / minority faith communities in Northern Ireland have been increasing (www.psni.police.uk/statistics/). Northern Ireland is becoming more culturally diverse with each minority community having particular needs and facing a different set of problems. It is recognised that the Traveller community in particular, emerge as a group who are significantly disadvantaged (Connolly 2002). Issues that are relevant for many ethnic minorities include;

- (i) difficulties accessing services faced by those who speak little or no English
- (ii) general lack of knowledge / awareness of existing services offered
- (iii) need for more staff training in relation to issues of 'race' and minority faith
- (iv) significant levels of racism and racial harassment experienced by minority ethnic / minority faith communities in Northern Ireland.

Recent innovations in provision for minority ethnic / minority faith communities include the setting aside specific 'women only' swimming times for Muslim women. This has enabled Muslim women to use a public facility which was previously inaccessible to them due to aspects of their cultural tradition (www.belfastislamiccentre.org.uk/womenact/). There has also been a recent rise in public awareness of racist attacks and intimidation. In terms of the development of policy, the Government is due to launch its Race Equality Strategy (OFMDFM 2004) which will include a Race Equality Forum comprising of representatives from government departments, the statutory sector and community / voluntary organisations(OFMDFM 2003).

7. Promoting Good Relations in Local Government

Community Relations Officers (CRO'S) and Good Relations Officers (GRO'S) are the main delivery mechanism of Community Relations / Good Relations at local government level. This programme is administered by the Community Relations Unit

(CRU) of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act requires public authorities in carrying out their functions, to have 'regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group' (Northern Ireland Act 1998). For this reason, equality schemes produced by Councils have already had to consider the issue of good relations.

One example of this is the adoption of 'promoting good relations' as a corporate objective by Belfast City Council and the development of a good relations strategy (Belfast-City-Council. 2003). The work of a number of organisations (CRC, Equality Commission, Future Ways, Counteract et al) has furthered a number of approaches to the engagement of the statutory sector in 'promoting good relations' (Community Relations Council; FutureWays 2001; FutureWays 2003).

8. Conclusion

This section has identified and summarised some of the issues that arose in the Government's 'A Shared Future' consultation. The future of Interfaces, Housing, Young people, Flags and Emblems, Race Relations and Good Relations in Local Government are key factors in the development of better community relations in Northern Ireland. As such, these six topics were the chosen focus for the Conference hosted by the Community Relation Council on which this report is based. The next section reports on discussions made on each of these topics on the day of the conference and details some of the conclusions reached by participants.

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Section Two: ‘Moving Towards a Shared Society’: Conference Contributions

Report (i): ‘The Changing Face of Interface Areas’

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Panel Members

Neil Jarman, Institute for Conflict Research – Chair
Roisin McGlone, Inter-Action Belfast
Roberta Rodgers, Northern Ireland Office
Chris O’Halloran, Belfast Interface Project

1: Background – The Broader Phenomenon of Interfaces

Despite a relatively quiet summer of 2003, tensions still exist at interface areas and violent incidents occurred in North and East Belfast. Some incidents of violence and disorder occurred in areas not previously regarded as interfaces. Recent research has identified a need to recognise that interface areas are a broader issue than often perceived. Interfaces are largely seen as an exclusively Belfast phenomenon (with the exception of perhaps Londonderry / Derry, Lurgan and Portadown) located at the intersection of working class residential areas. Interfaces are in fact a broader, and changing, phenomenon, seen by their emergence within rural as well as city areas and reflective of changing demographics. The theme of the workshop was focused on examining the changing nature of interface areas and the problems occurring for groups working at those interfaces. The workshop also addressed the issues at the governmental level including funding for community groups, the role of the private and public service providers and the issues facing groups particularly affected at interfaces.

2. The Changing Nature of Interfaces

City Issues

Belfast has witnessed gentrification and Catholic and Protestant demographic change, with movement from working class areas into middle class areas resulting in an increase in the number and type of interfaces. Interfaces are occurring not just along the ‘well-defined’ lines, such as Duncairn Gardens, but are appearing in much more diverse areas. With community movement to new housing there is an ‘assertion of territory’ and potential new interfaces are being created – an example given being the newly built shopping development of Dunnes Stores on the Crumlin Road.

The use of CCTV and other measures to reduce violence and disorder at some interfaces has resulted in the disorder being displaced to neighbouring locations not covered by cameras. Parks, for example the Waterworks, are also becoming contested

areas. A further concern that was expressed is that interface areas frequently become ‘dumping grounds’ for vulnerable families.

Rural Issues

Interfaces are increasingly a feature of rural as well as city areas, although the issues within rural interfaces may differ from those in the city. There are not necessarily physical peacelines and boundaries but often ‘invisible’ dividing lines. The level of fear may be greater in rural areas on account of increased isolation. It was suggested at the workshop that knowledge that has been acquired by those working at city interface areas needs sharing with rural areas. It was suggested that there needs to be a planned policy structure to confront the issue in rural areas as the experience so far has been that some local authorities may be reluctant to tackle the issue (fear of ‘opening a can of worms’). Good practice in conflict management also needs disseminating to the rural areas. It was generally agreed that there is not enough sharing of good practice.

3. Issues at the Governmental Level

It was asserted that good, dynamic work has and is being done at the grassroots level of interfaces but that this is often not recognised at government level. At the grassroots level the local community workers are engaged in dialogue on difficult and complex themes including contentious issues of policing and parades. Previously divided communities are talking to each other. It was felt that this good work is often undermined or negated at government level as a result of constraints on funding.

It was highlighted that it could be difficult to get support from statutory bodies and that statutory bodies are too narrowly focused in their concerns and expectations. An example given referred to the issue of sustainability of community groups, it was felt that groups were often required to prove their sustainability before any funding was secured. Further a focus on proving financial sustainability may neglect the positive regeneration work being done in local areas. As such there is a need not only for financial lobbying but also to emphasise to policy makers the non-monetary worth of community groups. A need was identified for increased contact and dialogue between statutory and community groups to encourage this process.

From the government perspective it was stressed that there is not a desire to put up any new interface barriers, although a new barrier is going up presently at Glenbryn, this is being constructed at the request of residents. The installation of cameras at some interfaces is also being done with the consultation of both communities and not just on the authority of the NIO / PSNI.

IMC Report

The Independent Monitoring Commission Report received criticism during the workshop for the lack of recognition it devoted to the work done by community groups, in particular those groups that include ex-paramilitaries. It was suggested that the report demonstrates an ignorance of the complexity of the issues at interfaces in criticising such groups for being “apologists” for paramilitaries when such contacts may be necessary to secure progress in the reduction of violence.

Funding

Community groups experiencing severe frustrations over funding. Examples were given in which money is offered with only 3 months of the financial year left, but has to be spent in that time even though the money is needed during the tension-ridden summer months. Others cited examples where funding was granted then removed after 6 months; and funding being linked to an unrealistic time frame. There is a clear need for recognition that projects, that have arisen out of the background of years of conflict, cannot always be achieved and completed within 2 years.

It was noted, however, that the lack of funding, the time restrictions and so on were not new problems and groups cannot rely on this uncertain funding for existence. Given this reality, it was suggested that attention ought to be focused on how to overcome the problems and that projects / groups needed to find imaginative ways to generate more money. One group had successfully attracted funds from US business. It was pointed out though that this approach will not be possible for all groups, in particular those located in rural areas and as such lobbying for core funding still needs to be a central concern. There was a consensus that it was necessary for groups to adopt both approaches, imaginative new plans as well as lobbying for core funding. There is a particular need for core funding, both to retain workers and ensure the longevity of projects workers need a guarantee of a salary. There is a need to lobby for funding especially for administrative support, which cannot be covered by project costs. Community groups create and identify their own good practices and the dissemination of ideas will help in lobbying for funds and increase the justification of receiving those funds.

Peace and Reconciliation

Concern was expressed at the level of bureaucracy involved in securing Peace II money and that there was a lack of recognition by Peace II funders of the range of positive work done at the grassroots level. An example was given from the Ligoniel / Ballysillan area, which has two joint co-workers drawn from each side of the community but who work closely together. A number of cross-community projects are happening in the area particularly around education, including a programme of literacy and numeracy classes aimed at 17/18 year olds. It was reported that there is good interaction within the classes and individual development but that Peace II does not recognise this as a 'common issue' on which to form bonds and relationships between the two communities. Disappointment was expressed at the lack of recognition for the important work that has been achieved. It was also noted that such an approach assumes that bridge-building needs to revolve around conflict / constitutional issues. Such an approach ignores the fact that the overt CR issues may be more problematic for people to engage in than, for example, literacy and that working together on common problems may be one way of being able to address CR issues. One consequence of the narrow Peace II approach is that projects may be discontinued because funding is removed or denied.

Joined up Policy Approach

It was felt that Belfast City Council, NIHE and other statutory agencies could and should play a greater role in creating a 'joined-up' policy approach in contrast to the present piecemeal approach.

4. The role of the public and private sector at interfaces

Role of Private Sector

The private sector's role at interfaces is often in creating 'buffer spaces'. Newly built shopping centres may begin as neutral territory but this is not to say that these areas will remain uncontested territory. CounterAct was cited as one agency which has intervened in conflict issues in the workplace. It was suggested that there might be a role for a similar agency to develop new workplaces, shopping centres etc. that can remain neutral grounds.

Role of Public Service Providers

The role of service providers working within interface areas was raised, through the problems faced by Belfast hospitals. Research into service-usage has revealed that interface issues are carried into the hospitals, with certain communities using only certain hospitals. Consequently when service provisions are relocated to different hospitals people using the services do not necessarily follow. Many female patients from the Village area had opted to go to the Ulster hospital rather than to cross the interface and go to the Royal Victoria when services were relocated from the City hospital. Schemes are in place to attempt to confront this problem.

This phenomenon also has implications for employment issues and is reflected at a staffing level. Tours have been organised for local residents around various departments to increase understanding of potential career opportunities and it is hoped that the ability to see the variety of services that are available will attract staff from 'across the divide'.

It was suggested that this might be indicative of wider problems in that women traditionally find it easier to cross an interface than men and as such the problems of service-usage/provision may be even greater for men. There is also the concern that service provision may be dragged into sectarian issues with the suggestion that hospitals may only serve one section of the community.

The planning of service-provision therefore may be presently flawed. The use of the Noble index in measuring need for and determining the location of service provision needs to be expanded to include real levels of accessibility for the community, and how far people have to travel to the hospital. Interface issues reveal that the central concern is *where* the hospital is located (which area, which areas need to go through in order to reach the hospital etc.). Currently these issues are not considered in service provision. There perhaps ought to be better relations between community groups and service providers who are both addressing the same problems but at present face administrative and invisible boundaries.

There is a related issue of using public transport for school children with some parents opting for longer routes that they consider being the safest, rather than the most direct.

Often the availability of free bus passes does not reflect the desire to take longer routes and such passes are not always available. This is again, perhaps indicative of a gap in communication between service providers and service users.

5. Issues for Groups Affected by Interface Areas

Young People

There is a perception that interface issues affect the whole community alike, but this is not necessarily so. Often young males are both the perpetrators of violence as well as the victims of ‘territorial spaces’ and the consensus was that interface areas affect young people disproportionately. Young people are frequently accused of ‘being the problem’ and the experience of Belfast Interface Project is that young people have been socialised into violence at interface areas and continue to be so. Incidents of stone throwing continue to occur.

It was noted that much good work continues to be done by community groups with young people to encourage understanding and engagement. Activities that were cited included cross-community football matches and a Groundwork project on reclaiming space in Short Strand involving both communities painting a mural on the Madrid Street gates. A number of delegates commented on the behavioural changes amongst the young people when they participated in mixed community events. Frequently the young people attending were the same young people who threw stones during periods of violence. At these mixed events the language of the young people remained sectarian in their language but their behaviour was not – the two communities mixed and socialised well. It was further noted that the “young people problem” was not restricted to interface areas but was prevalent across Northern Ireland. It was noted that there is no overall strategy for youth issues and suggested government initiatives lack strategic planning.

Victims

The issue of the role of victims within interface issues was raised from both the perspective of victim’s organisations and interface project workers. There was concern amongst some victims that those who end up working in the community sector and representing communities are often those who were previously involved in conflict and who have no legitimacy or mandate. The role of ex-paramilitaries within interface areas perhaps needs examining, fear was expressed that paramilitaries control the work of community groups and the level of violence at interface areas. There was a perception that those who attempt to solve problems at interface areas are actually contributing to the problem. There needs to be serious examination of how ex-paramilitaries, can be used most constructively. The work of ex-paramilitaries can be offensive to victims and this issue is central to the legitimacy of interface workers.

On the other hand it was stressed by interface workers that a lot of positive work was being done by ex-combatants at interfaces and it was stressed that ex-prisoners are often a vehicle through which to stop trouble. The example of a group in Ardoynne engaging in much progressive dialogue was given. There is also a conceptual problem of what is a victim – there may be an argument that everyone in Northern Ireland is a

victim to an extent. It was argued that ex-prisoners/paramilitaries were welcome within interface work if they make a positive contribution.

6. Conflict Manifestation

Manifestations on conflict at interface areas has changed over time and community groups have also had to change. A range of responses and initiatives has been adopted including mobile phone networks, relationship building programmes and others. It was suggested that Northern Ireland is still at the stage of conflict management, rather than any developed stage of conflict transformation or ultimately a consensus society.

It was noted that much good work has been and is being done at interfaces, especially compared to a few years ago. Groups including community groups, ex-combatants and politicians have taken risks that have paid off. However it was stressed that there needs to be recognition that the work is still at the conflict management stage and needs to develop and be given time to develop. It was suggested that not enough was being done by the statutory agencies that have adopted diverse approaches and have “largely washed their hands” of interface issues.

It was felt that political parties often ‘misuse’ interface areas for their own ends, walking away when violence erupts. (Example given was the role of the DUP in the Holy Cross dispute). It was further suggested that the stability of the interface areas is key to the wider stability and peace across Northern Ireland.

7. Current Issue - Networking – Sharing of Knowledge

A recurring theme throughout a number of issues was the lack of interaction and co-operation within both horizontal relationship (cross-community) and vertical relationships, namely between community groups and statutory agencies. There were accounts of numerous successful projects, achieving success in attracting funding and in developing cross-community relationships. Knowledge of these successes, and how to achieve them, needs to be spread within the field.

It was apparent that for some community groups there is a problem of not knowing who is the contact point for the other community. There was a consensus that contact is vital to move away from ‘firefighting’ issues and to achieve progress. The discussion on service provision also revealed another tier of relationships that are not interacting well.

It has been recognised that there is a need to form a wider network of groups, to arrange basic training, to discuss crucial issues and so on. Lots of this work is already being done, but efforts are limited without response from and interaction with the other community.

7. Recommendations for Government Action

A Need for Networking

There is a need for increased networking both horizontally within and between communities, and vertically between community groups and statutory bodies. A need

was identified for increased dialogue between statutory and community groups. One suggestion is for some form of 'interagency forum' as a chance to consider all the issues amongst community, statutory, and voluntary groups. Local networks need to link into governmental level.

Dissemination of Good Practice to Rural Areas.

There is a need for greater sharing of good practice policies. Successful practices need sharing and disseminating, particularly to rural areas in which interfaces have not previously been an issue. There needs to be a planned policy structure to confront the issue in rural areas as the experience so far has been that some local authorities may be reluctant to tackle the issue of interfaces.

Need for a 'Joined-Up' Policy Approach

Statutory agencies such as Belfast City Council and NIHE could do more to create a 'joined-up' policy approach.

Funding and the Sustainability of the Sector.

Community groups need core funding, especially for administrative needs and for the retention of staff. There is a need for increased statutory recognition of the positive work done by community groups at the grassroots level and less emphasis on the issue of financial sustainability.

Retention of Mixed Communities.

There also needs to be safeguards put in place for mixed communities to ensure they remain mixed. There is a need in these areas to maintain shared resources rather than allowing one community to lay claim and dominate such spaces.

Report (ii): ‘Moving From Segregation to Integration – Focus on Housing’

Pete Shirlow
University of Ulster

Panel Members
Paul MCKerna
Geraldine Kane

1. Introduction

This report summarises some of the key issues that link the relationship between housing, segregation and the development of a more stable society within Northern Ireland. The information provided is based upon secondary analysis and viewpoints on these issues that were brought forth during discussions on housing (at the Community Relations Council Policy Development Conference held at the Hilton Hotel on Friday 28 May 2004).

2. Background

According to Darby and Knox the Shared Future document received criticism that housing was not proposed as a means of reducing segregation and the facilitation of sharing. They noted that housing agencies responded to this criticism through strongly noting that ‘the imperative of promoting good relations is to create real choice and not to socially engineer communities’. In effect Shared Future adopted the general line that the vision of increasing segregation within the social and private housing markets would be ‘incremental’.

In general terms policymakers are aware that high levels of segregation can promote injustice, inequality and sectarian prejudice. However, they also understand that the ability to deliver a more mixed housing stock, both in terms of religion and race, is diluted by threats both real and implied as well as choice. Choice can be based upon non-sectarian factors such as family and other social linkages.

The findings from the Omnibus survey cited in the Darby and Knox paper on a Shared Future also noted that 46.3% believed that the Government should ‘try to achieve more shared living i.e. more mixed religion communities, safe shared facilities etc’. A slightly higher share of respondents within the same survey 50% argued that ‘Government should leave things as they are and support shared living where it is wanted’. Such survey evidence highlights the lack of significant majority support for a more direct intervention and challenge to religious and ethnic segregation.

3. Housing Issues in Northern Ireland

There are several key issues that are of importance in an analysis of housing in Northern Ireland. It is evident that the provision of social housing and housing need

more generally was a factor in the nature and direction of conflict. There is no doubting that the allotment and planning strategies that were implicit in housing was a central factor in the upheaval and political discord evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The restructuring of housing provision at that time and the creation of both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Housing Council permitted an expansion and upgrading of the social housing stock.

In 1997 the Housing Policy Review handed development responsibilities to housing associations and in turn promoted the Executive's role as a strategic enabling authority. There is no doubting that this partnership was effective in construction and repairs and in the reduction of housing unfitness. However there are several key issues that remain open to interpretation and dialogue and which were the focus of the Policy Development Conference. These were:

(i) Public Participation

There is a continual criticism that there is a lack of consultation in major development plans and the imbalance of knowledge and technical competencies between planners and the communities for which they are planned.

(ii) Segregation

The NIHE estimates that there has been a growth in segregation in recent years within the social housing estates that they manage. This growth in segregation was combined with a growth in intimidation between 1998 and 2001.

Events such as Drumcree, the Shankill Feud and Holy Cross are still effective in terms of leading to violence and intimidation against spatially vulnerable populations.

There is a general sense that communities and planners are aware of how violence and sectarianism controls the stability/instability of social housing areas yet there are few strategic solutions that have been identified, although it should be stressed that the NIHE have identified some new community relations strategies.

A major problem is also based upon the activity of political representatives and the desire of some politicians to maintain boundaries between communities in order to maintain electoral advantage.

Paramilitarianism and the marking of territory remains as an enduring feature of many social housing areas.

There is also a problem, most common in Belfast and Derry, where there has been an evident decline over several decades of the Unionist/Protestant population. A process of decline which has been paralleled by an increased demand for housing within Catholic/Nationalist/Republican communities. There is an emerging debate that concerns the maintenance of boundaries between communities given these dissimilar demographics. This debate also refers to population shifts that are occurring due to religious shifts within the private housing market.

In relation to the latter point it was noted that Protestant demographics have been characterised by lower fertility rates, smaller than average family sizes and an ageing population structure compared with their Catholic counterparts. However, the 2001 census showed that there has been some degree of closure in demographic patterns between Catholics and Protestants. Material from the NIHE, which was dedicated to an analysis of mixed religion estates, also indicated that within such places that both Catholic increase and Protestant decrease bottomed out during the mid to late 1990s. The 2001 census also shows that there is some stability within areas within which there has been long-term Protestant decline, most notably within the Derry Urban Area where the Protestant community has grown in numerical terms since 1991. It should also be noted that there has been a small decline in some minority Catholic populations in parts of the Moyle, Larne and Ards District Council areas.

Yet and despite a more shared demographic profile it is obvious that there are still issues that surround the nature and meaning of segregation. The most explicit issue surrounds the accommodation of Catholic and Protestant populations within interface areas. In many interfaces there has been an evident decline within the Protestant population and in some cases there are relatively high rates of housing vacancy. In parallel to this is the high demand for housing in Catholic areas and the call for vacant housing in Protestant areas to be made available for Catholics. This creates a distinct policy problem in that many Protestant communities would see the housing of Catholics within their community as a loss of territory or as a threat. For many Catholic communities the failure to accommodate their need, say for example by using vacant properties and land within Protestant areas, as an example of a policy agenda that serves unionist political agendas.

In relation to many social housing estates there is also a process within which out-migration, due to both violence and wider social processes, creates a process of residualisation whereby the remainder community is likely to be populated by older, benefit-dependent and less socially or spatially mobile people. This problem, as noted, is usually equated with Protestant communities. The experience of communities that encounter significant levels of out-migration can be the loss of organisational capacities and a decline in the level of social capital and the skills needed to promote more balanced development pathways.

It is well-known that the majority (around 85%-90%) of those who present themselves as homeless or at risk to the NIHE are not victims of sectarian intimidation. However, intimidation remains an important issue especially with regard to the impact upon social stability. Data on intimidation are collected at Housing Management level, of which there are 37 in Northern Ireland. One of the striking features of the data is the significant rise in the number of reported cases since 1998-99. In the three years recorded, there was a 20-fold increase in the number of reported cases

There are both inter and intra community influences at work here but clearly, the Loyalist feud accounts for a high proportion of the overall increase. Although the specific reasons for the intimidation are not identified, the data shows that nearly one-third (32%, 551) of all intimidation cases in the selected period were in either the Shankill or North Belfast Housing Management Districts.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the distribution of the data at a regional level. It shows that, in 1998-99, there were 56 cases in 15 Districts across Northern Ireland. The mean rate was only 1.51 per District and the Standard Deviation, which measures the spread of data away from the mean, was also quite low at 3.36. However, by 2000-01 all but one Housing Management District reported a case of intimidation, the mean had risen to 29.95 and the Standard Deviation had increased to 43.85 indicating both a real numeric increase and a spatial spread of incidents (Table 2). Overall, the percentage increase between 1999-99 and 2000-01 was nearly 102%.

Table 1 Intimidation cases as a result of civil disturbance in Northern Ireland

Indicator	98-99	99-00	00-01	Total
Total	56	549	1108	1713
Mean	1.51	14.84	29.95	46.30
SD	3.36	12.89	43.85	52.38
No of Districts	15	35	36	36

Table 2 Profile of intimidation cases by Housing Management District

HM District	98-99	99-00	00-01	Total	%
Belfast 1 West	3	21	34	58	3
Belfast 2 East	3	26	40	69	4
Belfast 3 West	3	32	36	71	4
Belfast 7 South	9	60	90	159	9
Belfast 4 North	1	40	104	145	8
Belfast 5 Shankill	1	11	238	250	15
Belfast 6 North	18	28	110	156	9
Bangor	0	19	20	39	2
Ards	0	2	12	14	1
Castlereagh	2	3	23	28	2
Lisburn	0	23	32	55	3
Poleglass	4	15	7	26	2
Downpatrick	0	5	12	17	1
Banbridge	0	6	11	17	1
Newry 1	0	22	15	37	2
Armagh	1	13	9	23	1
Lurgan	0	8	11	19	1
Portadown	0	14	16	30	2
Dungannon	0	4	9	13	1
Fermanagh	0	6	6	12	1
Ballymena	0	23	47	70	4
Antrim	1	33	27	61	4
Newtownabbey 1	0	10	24	34	2
Newtownabbey 2	1	17	33	51	3
Carrickfergus	3	9	25	37	2
Larne	0	18	15	33	2
Ballycastle	0	8	4	12	1

Ballymoney	1	24	9	34	2
Coleraine	0	11	20	31	2
Derry 1 Cityside	0	0	5	5	0
Derry 2 Waterside	5	22	36	63	4
Derry 3 North	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	1	8	9	1
Magherafelt	0	1	5	6	0
Strabane	0	3	4	7	0
Omagh	0	6	1	7	0
Cookstown	0	5	10	15	1
Total	56	549	1108	1713	100

In 2003 the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme which is managed by the Housing Executive spent £44.6m. This scheme allows for the purchase of an Owner/Occupied property where that owner has been intimidated or threatened. The present scheme was introduced under Article 29 of the 1988 Housing Order.

There has been a criticism of the NIHE that it has done too little in terms of promoting and encouraging shared spaces. However, given the realities of violence and threat it is possible to conclude that the ability to provide for shared housing spaces, especially within the main urban centres has been tempered by the reality of fear and threat. As noted by the NIHE:

“In an uncertain political climate and with violence an unpredictable variable in some local communities, the expectations from any new policy must be realistic and viewed over the longer term.”

More recently the NIHE has provided a commitment to promoting integrated housing where it is ‘practicable, desirable and safe’. Citing the estimated 400 families on its waiting list with a mixed background the Housing Executive says it will work with the Department for Social Development, Housing Associations and others to bring proposals forward for two pilot projects of integrated housing in the medium term.

NIHE points out that those who need housing in the social and affordable sectors must have greater choice. In recognising that less than 10% of social housing is integrated, the NIHE has noted that segregation undermines the meeting need and prevents the best use of housing and land.

Although the location of the shared housing projects has yet to be decided, the NIHE recognises that such projects cannot be imposed. The key strands of the Housing Executive’s community relations policy include:

- Continuing to respond to the needs of people in danger as a result of community conflict;
- Supporting people who choose to live in single identity or integrated neighbourhoods;
- Working in close partnership with other groups and organisations to deliver results on the ground;

A new Community Cohesion Unit will be created within the Housing Executive to take its policy forward.

4. Housing Discussion

In relation to the themes identified above the discussions that took place at the Policy Development Conference focused upon a series of key themes.

(i) There was a general concern with the level of spatial segregation and the new forms of interfacing that are taking place between predominantly Catholic private housing areas and predominantly Protestant social housing communities. This latter concern was also related to discussions over how some mixed housing areas are also tending, in certain places, to become more segregated. The point being that there was a need to protect mixed housing areas and to ensure that social mobility among one section of the population does not encourage the out-migration of established communities.

(ii) There was also a desire to encourage more research which provides information on the socio-economic characteristics of the Catholic and Protestant populations and how this impacts upon the reproduction and stability of communities. A central aspect in such work is to learn more about demographic change and what such changes may mean.

(iii) A central concern was articulated around the theme of uneven stability between highly segregated communities and in particular the deficit in terms of institutional and social capital within Protestant communities. It was felt that this unevenness was in itself a key factor in terms of developing the skills needed to promote negotiation and conflict transformation between interfaced communities.

(iv) The complexity of encouraging a sense of belonging, permanence and attachment to locales while at the same time encouraging shared space was also debated. All delegates welcomed the building of strong and resourceful communities but felt that factors such as the legacy of conflict, paramilitarianism, intimidation and policing precluded the type of shared responsibility required to aid the creation of increased mixing and the sharing of space. Most of the delegates welcomed the NIHE's recent ideas on encouraging mixing as well as concurring with the reality that the development of shared living spaces would be tied to a decline in sectarian atavism. Yet there was also a strong suggestion that brownfield sites should be developed as social housing projects that encouraged mixing. Sites linked to the Belfast Docks and Ebrington Barracks in Derry were two sites acknowledged as places within which such housing could be provided.

(v) There were also a series of ideas around the need to create more neutral sites in order to lessen the impact of territorialisation upon segregated communities in Northern Ireland. The realities of avoidance due to a lack of neutral sites within which to work, shop and engage in leisure activities was seen as a major catalyst in the perpetuation of territorial discord. It was felt that if there was a more apparent recognition, by policy makers, of fears and the presence of chill factors more generally then this would help frame a more logical debate that concerns segregation more generally.

5. Key Policy Issues and Recommendations

(i) Government and related agencies need to clearly identify policies that aim to protect and encourage shared living. Developing shared living should not be left to the NIHE.

(ii) Brownfield sites should be made available for the development of shared and social housing. In particular, shared social housing projects should be prioritised before all other private and social development.

(iii) Choice and security should remain central priorities in terms of creating shared living, but there is also a need to challenge stereotypes and prejudices which discourage those who wish to share space.

Report (iii): ‘Youth and the Peace Process’

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Panel Members

Micahel Wardlow
Leigh Whitley
Stephen Hughes
Marlene Kingham

1. Introduction

The following paper opens with a brief background to the involvement of the youth service in community relations’ work. This is followed by the view on the present policy context held by those agencies represented within the Joined in Equity Diversity & Interdependence (JEDI) partnership. This view has been informed by consultations with young people and so the youth vision on working towards a shared society is also highlighted.

The youth vision and the JEDI view on the present policy perspective provided the starting point to discussions in the youth workshop during the conference. An overview of the discussion leading from this material is provided. It is important to highlight that whilst the background information focuses primarily on the youth work services, for almost thirty years an equally important function has been played by the schools sector on behalf of youth, primarily through its Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) funding strand. Reference to this work was made during the course of workshop discussions and has been highlighted within.

2. Background

Responsibility for community relations was first placed within the Department of Education in 1975. A 1982 circular viewed this commitment as a ‘responsibility for helping children to learn and understand and respect each other, and their different customs and traditions, and of preparing them to live together in harmony in adult life’ (DENI, 1982, *in* Harbison, 2001).

In the late 1980’s the Department of Education established the Cross Community Contact Scheme within the youth sector. Described as ‘the mainstay of funding for community relations youth work for many years’ (RDP, 2001, p30) this scheme has helped to firmly establish a responsibility by the sector to contribute to peace-building through the development and delivery of youth programmes aimed at bringing together young people from both communities. Today the scheme is administered jointly by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the five Education and Library Boards, under what is known as CRYSSS/CRYSS (Community Relations Youth Service (Support) Scheme).

Over the years this work has presented a range of challenges in terms of, for example, promoting equal participation, achieving engagement in contact work and measuring

impact (RDP, 2001). A range of research studies have indicated that less community relations youth work practice is undertaken by the Protestant community and that where this work is undertaken, both communities struggle to move beyond preparatory work to a point where the young people come into contact with 'the other side' (see for example, YCNI, 1998; ETI, 1992; ETI, 2001; Captia, 2001 & JEDI, 2003). Furthermore, although much of this research supports the view that community relations youth work practice does help young people to develop a more positive perception towards their peers from the other main tradition, measuring the impact of this work in terms of creating a less divided society is more complex.

The limitation of community relations' youth practice presented by young people returning to, and growing-up within increasingly divided communities, is readily acknowledged. During the 1990's a range of research studies also reported on increasingly segregated lifestyles in Northern Ireland (Smyth, 1996; Shirlow & McGovern, 1997; Boal, 1995; Compton, 1995). These helped to spur recognition of the need to develop more comprehensive strategies of support, and wider community involvement in this work. Networks such as The Community Relations Youth Work Network evolved at this time. Discussions increasingly recognised the need to develop programmes guided by local issues and to create wider community support for the work. These later developed into recommendations on the need to work in partnership, not just with other youth groups, but the community as a whole, and that funders had a roll to play in promoting this notion (CRYN, 1996).

It was at this time that Eyben et al (1997) put forward the view that community relations' work could be improved through the application of three principles – equity, diversity and independence (EDI)

- 'equity' suggests that differences can be negotiated according to agreed principles of fairness
- 'diversity' recognises the reality of difference
- 'interdependence' proposes that people on either side of the sectarian division are dependent on one another and inextricably linked

Eyben et al (1997) highlight that this approach moves away from the 'cross community contact' approach by placing emphasis on acceptance, negotiation and relationship building as an on-going process rather than that which has a beginning (preparatory work) and end (contact work).

As these developments collided with the political developments of the peace process towards the end of the 1990's, commentary on the limitations of community relations youth work practice in isolation of work to tackle institutional, organisational or practice level division within the sector, began to emerge. These ideas informed the work of the present youth sector partnership, JEDI.

JEDI was set up to:

- embed the principles of EDI into the ethos policies and programmes of the organisations of the sector
- develop a coherent strategy for community relations youth work and education for citizenship within the Northern Ireland youth sector

They include:

- invitations to, ‘change relationships for young people... change organisational culture...(and) model an independent future’ (Wilson, 2002. p.3)
- ‘mainstream a more coherent community relations objective into the youth service with responsibilities for management committees, staff, volunteers, senior members, junior members, parents and the wider community’; (Hinds, 2002, p.9)
- ‘develop meaningful relations with other young people for the whole range of religious, political, social and ethnic backgrounds’ (McMaster, 2000)

Recent work has resulted in the publication of a number of resources for the sector. The recently published ‘Framework for Critical Reflection’ acknowledges a responsibility of practitioners to reflect on the values and beliefs that underpin their actions within the practice setting and to consider the impact these have upon the young people they work with (JEDI 2002a). It also promotes a new model for community relations’ youth work practice that provides for learning within local communities, wider contact, reflection and relationship building on an ongoing basis. The function and role played by the policies and operations of organisations has been acknowledged. Nine agencies from within the sector have piloted a policy development process aimed at understanding how to begin to address overt institutionalised segregation that may exist as part of the overall fabric of society in Northern Ireland. The learning gained from this process has been incorporated into a ‘Step-by-Step Guide’ (JEDI 2002b) and a rollout process is presently underway involving a further five organisations.

Forthcoming plans include the:

- development of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism
- embedding of new training programmes
- harnessing of the new resources within the existing infrastructure

These are underpinned by the ongoing recognition of the importance of delivering community relations youth programmes that promote peace building and reconciliation between the two main traditions and relationship building across all social groups.

3. The Youth Service View on the Present Policy Context

Work towards the building of a more shared society is ongoing at a range of levels within the youth service. Whilst identity, confidence building, engagement on contentious issues and contact based initiatives for young people are supported at local level, institutional transformation initiatives are promoted at organisational level.

Commitment rather than compliance underpins much of these efforts. There is also recognition of the deep-seated problems extending beyond conflict in Northern Ireland, including poverty, unemployment and depression, all of which impact upon the lives of young people.

Within this context the promise of a policy framework based on ‘a clear vision, values, principles and objectives’ has yet to be realised. Clarity on the proposed central policy aims and acknowledgement of the complexity at which good community relations operates is of increasing importance.

The youth service has much to contribute to the future shape of community relation’s policy, from the experience and knowledge it has accumulated, to its contribution to the development of young people who will be the decision makers in the not too distant future. However, long-term and cross-Government efforts will be required to maximise this contribution.

Whilst the youth service vision is of a more shared and pluralist society, the view that two options were presented in the consultation document as alternative futures by the Government, when in fact they should be overlapping realities, is supported. This view is underpinned by the concern to ensure that any future policy development does not inadvertently promote avoidance of the overt and complex divisions that exist in very different forms in every layer of our society. Whilst local action, targeted at local needs and conditions is essential, the issue of targeting raises several concerns that should be taken into consideration.

The JEDI experience has highlighted that the creation of a peaceful, inclusive and fair society can no longer focus solely on specialist programmes at local community level. Rather, there are functions and responsibilities at institutional (policy and operational) level to be considered also. For this reason it is *recommended* that the targeting of specific action be underpinned by learning from good practice, research and information sharing. In particular, there is a need to identify areas where good relations have been established and maintained and to develop good practice models based on the learning gained from these examples.

The delivery of policies that tackle sectarianism and racism in a pragmatic way and put in place programmes that encourage communication, tolerance, trust and respect for different cultures, faiths and traditions at many different layers in our society is supported. It is *recommended* that this intervention explicitly include institutional and organisational prejudice. The view that funding should not reward ‘the bad behaviour syndrome’ is welcomed.

At regional level the need for a dedicated body such as CRC to co-ordinate the energies and experiences of a broad range of interests and sectors towards the common goal of a shared future is supported.

The recommendation that the Department of Education should lead a co-ordinated action involving education-based interests is supported but there is concern at the limited categorisation of those interests. The youth work sector, in particular through the JEDI Initiative, is perhaps best placed through recent practice and experience to offer a lead to the other elements in the education sector. It has piloted some inventive work and built a professional field of expertise that could now be called upon to benefit this latest government initiative to promote better relations. There is particular support for, and interest in, the need to monitor and evaluate the policy responses that emerge from this review process.

4. The Youth Vision

The above view has been informed by research into the views and opinions of young people on working towards a shared society.

The majority of young people involved in recent consultation work by JEDI concurred with the vision of a more shared and pluralist society.

The advantage of this vision was highlighted by research into the opinions of 16 years olds in Northern Ireland undertaken by ARK at the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research, Queens University Belfast. Most young people responding to this survey felt that more integration would lead to a better understanding between people.

Young people acknowledge that this vision will be difficult to achieve and requires work to change people's attitudes as well as work to build relationships across different divisions.

Young people feel a number of actions are required to build a shared future in areas such as:-

- Challenging racism and sectarianism
- Bring paramilitary activity to an end
- Policing that is more involved with local communities
- Local Political leadership
- Work to build local relationships
- Opportunities for different cultural and religious groups to mix

Young People also identified a range of barriers to the creation of a Shared Future, including:

- Fear of speaking out
- The troubles and the legacy of conflict
- Limited opportunities to meet with those from different religious or cultural backgrounds
- Stereotypes

5. Responses by Panel Members

Michael Wardlow, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) opened the workshop with some reflections on his experience in the formal education sector, highlighting what he felt was an intense lack of identity for young people and questioning why we put young people into single identity groups.

Following input on the youth service perspective, some issues of concern were raised by Leigh Whitley, such as the role of youth workers when faced with the issues of an increasingly divided society in Northern Ireland including rising racism and ongoing sectarianism.

Leigh reflected on the training he had received to develop this work and asked was it adequate? He felt there was also a need for training opportunities for young people who do not wish to follow a degree route or go to university.

The view that funding should not reward 'the bad behaviour syndrome' was endorsed highlighting that this reactive approach often resulted in very good work going to the wall just as it was making headway. This point also highlighted the need for funding to be more long-term.

Reflecting on his experience, one youth worker highlighted that before you can tackle the deeper issues of sectarianism and racism there is a need to help young people understand themselves in a broader sense. Young people want inclusion, the opportunity to have their opinions heard and listened to and one example of how this approach worked was 'Civic Link'. One participant noted, 'the project aims to give young people a sense of pride not only in themselves but also in their community. They need to have this before they can take pride in other communities'.

From this perspective it was emphasised that there was a need:-

- for further youth based approaches in working towards a shared society
- get young people involved and for their opinions of young people to be listened to

Marlene Kinghan, Head of Communications and Participation NICCY (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People) outlined her role within the NICCY. She highlighted her concern to involve children and young people in all decisions that affect them, ranging from how they travel to school to what they will eat at lunch, to the issues raised for discussion within the shared future agenda. As she highlighted, the role of the commissioner is to safeguard and permit the rights of children and young people. This includes listening to their concerns and challenging government to make changes where necessary.

6. Feedback and Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, the following key points were made:-

The position stated by the youth sector was widely endorsed.

The need to value and adequately resource the work carried out by the youth service was raised, particularly in light of going reductions in funding.

It was further emphasised that community relations' youth work cannot be entirely successful at grass roots level if there is no clear support at senior level both within government and within regional and local agencies.

It was also noted that an increase in the need to more adequately support those who are involved in tackling the worst excesses of sectarianism and racism should be put in place.

It was felt that more openness is required between policy makers, funders and organisations if the difficult issues faced by building a shared future is to be successfully progressed.

There was frustration that community relations' work appears to be overly concerned with interface issues and ignores the attitudes and views held by middle class children and young people. These groups who will often not meet 'those from the other side' until they go to University – and even then a culture of polite avoidance and mistrust enables a range of stereotypes to go unchallenged throughout their adult life.

On the subject of challenging paramilitary activity, it was highlighted that young people are just doing what others in their community have done. If paramilitary activity is the role model, how do we provide young people with different role models?

There was some criticism of the professional training offered to youth workers in preparation to deal with sectarian and racial issues. The importance of providing teachers and youth workers with the opportunity to challenge their own values before they go into the schoolroom or the youth club was stressed.

There was a feeling that teachers are less well equipped to deal with contentious and diverse identity issues than youth workers. One school teacher added that whilst some teachers were undertaking community relations training for example, the challenge remained as to how to create an environment where pupils can speak freely about these and related issues. Given the expertise available, she felt there was scope to further train and equip teachers in how to deal with community relations' issues within the classroom. However, leading on from this she then asked, 'How do teachers who are teaching Maths and English deal with a pupil who brings flags and emblems issues into a class that lasts for 1 ½ hours?'

Some youth groups highlighted that whilst they could develop community relations work discretely, to formalise the work within the organisation was more challenging. This involves organisational transformation approaches that are difficult and lengthy to achieve. The comment led to a call for support for work aimed at tackling institutional issues.

There was debate over the appropriate length of training required before professionals are qualified.

The need to begin appropriate community relations' work at Primary level was also debated, although no clear consensus emerged as to whether this work was more or less important than targeting the 11+ age range.

It was felt the present restructuring of the curriculum offered an opportunity to develop community relations within the formal education sector, at both teacher training and practice levels.

There was general support for all young people to have the opportunity to take part in community relations based issues. It was felt advisable not to leave the parent out of this equation. This led to the question, 'Who trains the parents in community

relations?' Again this point highlighted the need for whole organisational approaches to community relations.

Whilst a regional co-coordinating function for a body such as the CRC was endorsed the role that this body should play in the education sector was less clear and would require exploration at a senior level. The view that Education had an ongoing responsibility to contribute towards the shared society agenda was widely supported.

The discussion closed with general agreement on the need for a common ground for training teachers and youth workers.

7. Recommendations

There is an increasing need for clarity on the proposed policy framework based on 'a clear vision, values, principles and objectives'. This policy should acknowledge the complexity at which good community relations operates and aim to establish clear commitment at a range of levels within society.

The delivery of policies which tackle sectarianism and racism in a pragmatic way whilst at the same time putting in place programmes which encourage communication, tolerance, trust and respect for different cultures, faiths and traditions at many different layers in our society is supported. It is recommended that this intervention explicitly include institutional and organisational prejudice.

Funding should not reward 'the bad behaviour syndrome' and should be more long term in its commitment.

Positive role models should be facilitated to develop in areas where paramilitary gangs recruit members.

Whilst the elimination of sectarianism and racism will alleviate fear, there is a need to clearly value the role played by programmes that encourage tolerance, trust building and respect for different cultures as an essential process to the achievement of this goal.

Within the future framework there is an ongoing and important role to be played by the youth services and the formal education sector.

Future framework should aim to identify areas where good relations have been established and maintained leading to the development of good practice models based on the learning gained from these examples.

With the present curriculum review, there is an opportunity to further develop the community relations' dimension of formal education.

The professional training of youth workers and teachers should be reviewed with specific concern to providing them with the opportunity of challenging their own values before they go into the schoolroom or the youth club thence, establishing common ground for both these groups of leaders.

At regional level there is a need for an independent co-ordinating body who will have a specific remit to monitor and challenge the implementation of policies emerging from this consultation.

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Report (iv): ‘The Ups and Downs of Flags and Emblems’

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Institute of Irish Studies
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Belfast

Panel Members

Robin Wilson – Chair
Gordon Gillespie
Stephen Farry

1. Introduction

There is a long history of controversy surrounding the display of flags and emblems in Northern Ireland – for example, the Flags and Emblems Act (1954) or the riots which followed the RUC’s removal of a Tricolour from Divis Street in Belfast in 1964 as well as many other more recent incidents.

Why are flags and emblems important?

The use of symbols is not peripheral to political debates but a fundamental part of people’s emotional attachment to political groups and communities.

Symbols are a form of communication.

The message intended is not always the same as the message received.

A range of messages might be received.

There is a complex hierarchy of suggestion involved in symbolic politics.

2. A Change of Context

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was intended to provide a new political dispensation. A recognition of the importance of symbols and emblems is included in the GFA which notes:

‘All participants acknowledge the sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes, and the need in particular in creating the new institutions to ensure that such symbols and emblems are used in a manner which promotes mutual respect rather than division.’

More broadly, however, different interpretations by unionists and nationalists as to what the concept of ‘parity of esteem’ means and how this relates to the official use of political symbolism has been a source of contention. To unionists the Union flag is the flag of the state of which Northern Ireland is a part and should therefore be widely used. Republicans argue that the terms of the GFA guarantee equality between unionists and nationalists and that both the Union flag and the Tricolour should be flown. Nationalists generally take the view that no flags should be flown over public buildings.

3. Areas of Consensus

Since the GFA there have been attempts to deal with differences over flags and emblems on public buildings. Notably a relatively uncontested emblem (of a flax plant) was produced for the new Northern Ireland Assembly.

Another official symbol which had the potential to cause substantial political disagreement was the badge for the new Police Service of Northern Ireland. The PSNI badge was agreed in December 2001 by the policing board a month after the NIO had released a series of their own suggestions (all widely regarded as poorly designed). Significantly the new badge was accepted by both the SDLP and UUP – giving it cross-community support.

The new badge has the cross of St Patrick at the centre of a six pointed star. The point of contention concerned the inclusion of six additional symbols; a harp, crown, shamrock, laurel leaf, torch and scales of justice. Unionists were insistent that some symbolic reference to the RUC had to be included in the new badge and this led to the inclusion of the crown and the harp (both of which originated with the older Royal Irish Constabulary). The SDLP may have been able to support the inclusion of these symbols because they were somewhat obscured by the other items contained on the new badge.

4. ‘Official’ Flags Disputes

The debate over the flying of flags over government buildings came into particular prominence with the devolution of power to local politicians in late 1999. Sinn Fein ministers refused to fly the Union flag over buildings for which they had responsibility. They argued that both the Union flag and the Tricolour should be flown, or neither. As a result the then Secretary of State, Peter Mandelson, introduced legislation naming a number of days on which the flag would be flown. The Flags (NI) Order 2000 was challenged by Conor Murphy in the Belfast High Court on the grounds that it breached equality legislation but the court ruled that flying the Union flag on a limited number of days was a reasonable compromise and a reflection of Northern Ireland’s status within the UK.

Although local councils are not bound by this legislation a number have moved, or appear to be moving, towards following the same policy including Ards Borough Council late last year.

Might the Flags Regulation be extended to other statutory bodies including District Councils? This in itself would not produce an easy solution. If unionist majority councils were required to fly the Union flag only on designated days would the same apply also to nationalist majority councils which at present do not fly any national flag?

An indication of where the implementation of such a policy might lead occurred in March of this year when the Sinn Fein Mayor of Limavady Council ordered the removal of the Union flag from the front of the Council Offices on St Patrick’s Day (one of the designated flag days) to the fury of unionists. Councillor Brolly stated that, ‘On a day when people celebrate their Irish heritage, I did not think this flag should be flying as it may have made some people feel uncomfortable.’ (*The Chronicle* Limavady, 31 March 2004). This of course also raises the related question of how one

celebrates one's Irish heritage – but that is a question for another occasion. In any event the application of the Flags regulations to other statutory bodies beyond government departments may well exacerbate tensions on the issue – at least in the short term.

Even where policy has been changed the issue of flags can continue to be a source of contention. On 12 May, for example, a DUP councillor wrote to the *News Letter* calling for unionist councillors on Ards borough council to support the flying of the Union flag over council property every day of the year irrespective of whether the councillors could face financial penalties as a consequence of this.

On the broader question one proposal might be to produce a new range of flags and emblems and perhaps even a new flag for Northern Ireland – indeed this is an idea supported by my colleague Dominic Bryan. However, this is an area we have agreed to disagree – Dominic takes the view that a new flag, given the support of enough high placed individuals could eventually win cross-community support and become widely accepted. My view, however, is that a new flag is likely either to be colonised by nationalists or unionists alone or, more likely, be completely ignored.

5. Unofficial Flags Disputes

The flying of flags in an unofficial capacity has also helped provide the spark which helped ignite two high-profile events in the last four years. The first, the loyalist feud of 2000 and the second the trouble surrounding Holy Cross Primary School in North Belfast in 2001. Besides this there have been many other, less high profile, disputes involving the display of flags in many areas across Northern Ireland.

However, Holy Cross and the loyalist feud highlighted factors which are common to most, if not all, disputes involving the display of flags – these are the issues of identity and territoriality with flags acting as a manifestation of these issues. But while flags can serve as a unifying symbol for a particular group in these circumstances they can also be seen as threatening to those outside and thus act to increase tension in an already tense situation.

if we agree that the overuse of symbols can have a negative impact on the community what alternatives can be offered. Might the number of flags and emblems in, for example, an interface area be reduced through a process of negotiation? However, well this might help to ease tensions in the short term might the acceptance of those symbols which remain also be interpreted as legitimising their display of those that remain irrespective of the effect this might have on community relations in the longer term?

Might the police take action against the illegal display of paramilitary flags? A case was successfully taken in relation to the display of LVF flags with four men being jailed in March, but could similar action also be taken against some of the larger paramilitary groups with stronger grass-roots support?

One area where administrative changes might be helpful would be in a clearer demarcation of responsibility for the removal of flags between the various agencies involved, whether the police, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or District

Councils. In this regard it might be useful to provide a more obvious point of contact between the agencies involved in this arena.

It might also be worth considering increasing the number of individuals involved in mediating disputes involving symbols as well as increasing funding for organisations engaged in transforming the environment in which people live.

In any event disputes surrounding flags and emblems haven't gone away – nor, unfortunately, are they likely to in the foreseeable future.

Recommendations for Action

The workshop arrived at three main recommendations for action;

- a. There should be a code of regulation to cover the display of flags and emblems that should reflect the complexity of the issue.
- b. One Government department should have responsibility for the supervision of this code and the PSNI would have clear responsibility for its implementation.
- c. The overall aim should be a movement towards more common symbolism such as that agreed upon in the new PSNI badge and the Assembly Flax Flower.

The problem with this report is that there is no report on the discussion on the day of the conference

Report (v): ‘An All Inclusive Society? Focus on Race Relations’

Panel Members

Anna Lo – Chinese Welfare Association David white

Patrick Corrigan

Nisha Tandon

Edwin Graham

1. Introduction

Anna Lo opened the workshop by outlining some of the common problems facing members of the black and ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland. From the outset it was highlighted that there was a considerable degree of diversity within black and ethnic minority communities but that there were also common issues which these communities encountered.

Some of these common issues included:

Experiences of racism and discrimination,
Difficulties in accessing mainstream services,
Services which are inaccessible and inappropriate to the needs of black and ethnic minority communities,
Language barrier and lack of language support,
Black and ethnic minority communities being used as scapegoats for existing problems,
Feelings of social isolation and marginalisation.

A short presentation was then delivered by each of the speakers.

Edwin Graham – Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum

Edwin outlined his belief that if people were to give more attention to matters of Inter-Faith Relations, then the issues between Protestants and Catholics would be seen in a totally different context that may render many common sectarian disputes if not meaningless, then at least less contentious. He illustrated that inter-faith issues are at the interface between racism and sectarianism. A focus on race can sometimes address issues of religious difference.

Thirty years of conflict has led to a society that is focused on the issues of difference within one religious tradition – Christianity. Issues of difference between faith communities have been neglected and masked. The post-ceasefire political debates have continued this legacy up to the present day.

He highlighted the failure of schools to prepare citizens for a diverse society. Unlike the rest of the UK the current Religious syllabus provides no teaching about belief systems other than Christianity or about faith communities other than the main Christian faith communities. Proposals for a new religious syllabus include a single

module in post-primary schools, but no teaching in Primary schools. Furthermore because the religious syllabus is determined by the four main churches, the department of education says that it has no influence on the content of the religious syllabus.

Edwin outlined that there had been some significant advances:

- Equality legislation introduced after the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement has created the potential for significant improvements. “Religious belief” is one of the nine equality categories and it is now widely accepted that this means more than simply Protestants and Catholics but also includes those who belong to other faith communities.
- Recent legislation has made provision for Non-Christian faith communities to perform legally recognized marriages. Until this year that was not possible, however the forms used by the General register office are still peppered with Christian-centered language such as Church, Congregation, Minister, etc.
- A number of public authorities have published materials with information about a range of faith communities, and many public authorities have brought in a trainer from the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum to assist them.

There have been some major set-backs and missed opportunities as well:

- There were two very major public rows in district councils, one in relation to the presentation of the Koran by the Muslim Community and one in relation to plans for a mosque.
- There continues to be widespread discrimination in schools. In one extreme case a girl who chose to wear a veil because she was a Muslim was locked in the school Chapel for two successive days. In other cases Children have been frozen out of discussion in religion classes by the teacher because they tried to express their views. In some of these cases the children were withdrawn from the religious class and told to sit at the back of a different class and do their work.
- Following the Twin Towers attack in New York, many Muslims in Northern Ireland were attacked. The Mosque in Belfast was attacked. Many people who have a Middle Eastern complexion still experience abuse.
- It has been a frustration of the Inter-faith Forum that monitoring forms for funding that it receives from Peace II ask for details of the number of Protestants and Catholics with no acknowledgement of the existence of other faith communities. Despite section 75 many public authorities still continue to promote the 2-dimensional, Protestant / Catholic view of Northern Ireland.

Edwin concluded by stating that our society needs to realize that religious diversity is present. When it does so and develops a culture that can accommodate and support such diversity it will find that there are many benefits that accrue to the majority faith communities and to the entire society.

David White – Independent Trainer

David highlighted some of the many issues relating to policing and questioned whether the PSNI were providing adequate resources and commitment to tackling the growing problem of racially motivated attacks.

With regard to migrant workers David questioned why economic migrants are being continuously criticized for stealing jobs, yet many in the indigenous community are unwilling to take these jobs.

He also highlighted the difficulties asylum seekers and migrant workers encountered in Northern Ireland and insisted that society ought to recognize the essential contribution that economic migrants have made to this economy.

David raised the issue that people here tend always to talk about Catholics and Protestants and Ethnic Minorities as if there were three communities or categories living here. However he argued that Ethnic minorities are a very diverse groups and should not be lumped together as one homogenous community.

Patrick Corrigan - Amnesty International

Patrick began his presentation by reminding participants that Racism is a human rights issue as well as a community relation's issue.

He outlined some of the practice that Amnesty International had implemented in the Republic of Ireland. This involved a campaign to challenge government parties to take leadership in addressing racism. The campaign had a significant measure of success and it was the hope of Amnesty International that a similar campaign could be implemented in Northern Ireland.

It was reported that Amnesty international had also carried out a survey documenting the experiences of black and ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland, with regard to racism.

The outcome of this survey revealed that 86% of respondents had experienced Racism.

Most had experienced racism on the streets.

It was also uncovered that many had experienced racism from public officials including representatives within the PSNI, education system, health practitioners and public servants.

The survey illustrated that one in three of those surveyed had experienced racism at the hands of the PSNI. It was also reported that there was a very low confidence in the PSNI, which had been exacerbated by the low level of prosecutions for racial crime.

Patrick added that it was imperative that the issue of racism be addressed and that society also addresses the persistent practice of using asylum seekers and ethnic minorities as scapegoats.

It was argued that there was a strong need for a focused government strategy to tackle racism. This strategy would require clear leadership coupled with a public awareness campaign and the proper enforcement of existing legislation.

Nisha Tandon - Indian Community Centre

Nisha outlined that the Indian Community Centre was now in its twelfth year of operation. She added that over the past year they had witnessed a significant increase in racially motivated incidents against members of the Indian Community.

Nisha added that the Indian Community centre was now providing services for people from India who were arriving in Northern Ireland with little support mechanisms.

She went on to highlight some of the outstanding issues that faced members of the Indian community living and working in NI.

- Problems with housing
- Education – lack of English language support for children whose first language is not English
- Problems with accessing the Health and other public services.
- Lack of recognition of foreign qualification
- Ongoing experiences of Racism and discrimination

2. Workshop Discussion

Out of the many different issues raised in the workshop, some common themes emerged;

(i) 'Good practices' that are currently happening in Northern Ireland.

The establishment of the first sheltered housing scheme for Chinese elderly people in Belfast

A new initiative funded by the International fund for Ireland, mapping the needs of the Muslim community.

'Embrace's' anti-racism educational program. Part of this campaign is to monitor and challenge the sloppy use of language frequently used in discussions regarding immigration and asylum seekers.

'Embrace' is also involved in working within churches and enabling refugees to tell their stories.

The development of the Race Forum in OFMDFM

The establishment of the Anti-Racism Network.

(ii) Educational Strategy & the need for Anti-oppressive and Anti-racism training

Many participants stressed the need for an educational strategy to raise awareness of all types of cultural diversity and of anti-oppressive practices. Participants argued

that this strategy should not simply be applied to schools. It was argued that training in anti-oppressive, anti-aggressive and anti-racism practice was needed across a whole range of disciplines.

In terms of schools it was suggested that teachers needed to be equipped with the necessary skills and resources to address the problem of racism. Participants also felt that it was imperative that schools implement anti-bullying and anti-racist policies and that they are proactive in challenging prejudice, racism, stereotyping and discrimination.

It was also stated that more needed to be done in schools to teach about different minority ethnic communities and different faiths and that it was necessary to encourage children to respect and celebrate cultural diversity.

Recognition needs to be given to the fact that Northern Ireland is not simply composed of two monolithic communities.

At the outset of the workshop it was highlighted that Northern Ireland continues to be defined in a very narrow way which is not inclusive of those from a minority ethnic community. Participants argued that it must be recognized that any moves towards a shared future needs to be inclusive of all communities.

It was also stated that we needed to challenge the traditional concept of community relations and to recognize that ethnic minority communities have a vital role and stake in any shared future.

Some concern was expressed that very often Catholic and Protestant community groups were prepared to do work around issues of Cultural diversity, however this cultural diversity did not involve inviting along the members of the other dominant religious group from themselves.

(iii) The role of the Churches

It was felt that the churches needed to be more proactive in condemning and challenging racism. There was some concern that the church had maintained a deafening silence with regards to racism.

Some participants highlighted that there was good practice going on within some churches. Initiatives included inviting Refugees to the church and enabling them to tell their stories. Some churches had produced Newsletters with information on the different black and ethnic minority communities and other churches had hosted evening entertainment and outings for members of the black and minority ethnic communities.

However it was felt that at a leadership level, the hierarchy within the various churches should be more proactive in challenging racism and in condemning all types of racism without reservation.

(iv) Resourcing of the black and ethnic minority communities.

It was recognized that if we are to have any success in addressing racism in Northern Ireland it was imperative that black and ethnic minority communities are properly resourced.

(v) Role of the Media

During the workshop some participants expressed concern at the power the media could yield and the potential affects negligent reporting had in stigmatizing minority ethnic communities and in creating and reinforcing negative and false images.

It was also believed that the media should begin to reflect ethnic minorities in a true light as opposed to merely reporting on festivals and incidents of racism.

(vi) Co-coordinated campaign to address racism

It was stated that a concerted multi-agency effort was needed to address racism and all forms of oppressive activity.

It was believed that this campaign would require strong leadership from a wide range of groups, including,

Government
Public servants
Education system
Church
Media
Community / voluntary sector

3. Conclusion

During the workshop recognition was given to the fact that there was a lot of good practice already happening within Northern Ireland, but what was missing was a strong and concerted effort to challenge and condemn racism and to prosecute those guilty of racist crime.

References

Report (vi): Promoting Good Relations in Local Government

Tommy Stewart
Vision Management Services

1. Background

Local government has been viewed as the foreground of local Community Relations action by successive governments since the mid 1970's. Over this period of almost thirty years policy direction has suggested that the most effective way to address local Community Relations issues is at District Council level.

This has manifested itself in a range of measures beginning with an approach in the 70's which in effect encouraged Councils to achieve Community Relations as a bi-product of their community development work through to the more structured approaches of recent years. Whether or not these interventions have been successful can only be judged effectively by those whom the policies were designed to benefit, local residents.

Since the introduction of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 local authorities have again been the foreground for local Good Relations endeavours, with Councils being enabled by financial support from the Community Relations Unit. Focus has now been directed towards internal relations sometimes at the expense of the focus on wider Community Relations issues. Evidence would however suggest that many of the key "players" at local authority level remain cautious about taking centre stage on this issue.

This leads to the identification of a number of key questions:

- Has Community Relations at local government level been best value or has it merely created an "industry" that no one really can see benefit in?
- If then Good Relations, the apparent successor of Community Relations, is to move centre stage in local authorities are adequate policies in place to enable practitioners to gain sustainable and positive outcomes?
- How can members and staff be engaged in real and meaningful Good Relations initiatives?

2. The Present Context

Given the thrust of the "Shared Future" consultation if "working towards a shared society" is the aim of government then what are the implications for local authorities? Following the recent extended consultation on "A Shared Future" the Knox/Darby report has indicated that most believe that "Councils should be the main bureaucratic vehicle for supporting Good Relations". In noting requests for permanent funding of Community Relations/Good Relations at local government level, the Knox/Darby reports outlines a number of other potential conditions of such funding. These include; the adoption and implementation of Community Relations into community

support plans; clearer guidance and enforcement of how Community Relations funding can be used; and greater uniformity across Councils in terms of the extent and quality of integration between Community Relations and other Council functions.

Key policy implications for local government level identified by Knox/Darby were:

- The continued need for anti-sectarianism training programmes for politicians, public officials, community organisations and members of the public;
- The need for a review/evaluation of the work undertaken by the Equality Commission through Section 75;
- Pilot Councils be given additional Good Relations functions with resources and evaluated;
- That a clear strategy be developed on the role of public bodies in creating a neutral environment.

The weight of opinion expressed was that stronger legislation needs to be introduced to require local Councils to take a more proactive approach to Community Relations within their areas, targeting local concerns and groups for particular support and encouraging decision making.

Given this direction what then are the practical implications for Good Relations in local authorities?

The Evolving Role of Community Relations “Officers.”

In 1989 the District Councils Community Relations Programme began what has been a journey of evolution that has seen all 26 district Councils participate in the programme on a voluntary basis. Community Relations Officers have been appointed and Councils have had a degree of autonomy in terms of the role such officer’s play within Council and the wider community. Given this divergence and the manner by which Councils have interpreted policy and legislation pertaining to Community Relations we now have a confusing “muddle” with the function of Community Relations being exercised by officers with a range of titles and with remits that vary enormously. More guidance and commonality is need in regard to the role and function of Community Relations Officers.

As we move forward we reflect on one respondent to “A Shared Future” who said “Community Relations must be placed at the heart of the policy and actions of local district Councils. It cannot be seen as a burdensome function that must be fulfilled to satisfy the requirements of OFMDFM.”

Developing Models of Good Practice

Since 1989 and in particular since 1998 many models of “good practice” have been noted within Community Relations and Good Relations in Northern Ireland. The merits of these and their weaknesses need to be collated to enable Councils to move forward confidently applying tried and tested approaches that can be adapted within their local context.

Measuring Impact

How do we measure the success of Good Relations in the local government context? Is it merely that we make an acceptable annual report to the Equality Commission? Measurement of Community/Good Relations impacts is something that has been at the heart of many non conclusive meetings over the past thirty years. However there is need for the design of specific realistic and achievable performance measures to enable cost effective delivery of Good Relations in local government.

Mainstreaming Good Relations within Equality

Given that the development of Good Relations at local government is likely to be driven forward by two forces, the Section 75 duty and the outcomes of “A Shared Future” we must ensure that Good Relations is not seen as a “side show” within the equality duty of Councils but seen as a vehicle enabling attitudinal change across all equality issues? *To remove the all too common isolation of Community/Good Relations Officers Good Relations must be placed centre stage within the heart of Councils structures and policy making.* Only then can the desired evolutionary change begin to be achieved. Given the Northern Ireland context this may only occur with increased legislative powers that will ensure Good Relations does not continue to appear as the “poorer cousin” of local government policy.

Future Direction

Many practitioners at local government level have been left feeling that they have been given no future direction, living in a context of political and financial uncertainty. As we strive towards “A Shared Society” we need to enable a more coordinated, focused and effective approach across the district Councils that will give officers effective recognition to be empowered to bring about lasting change.

3. Main Issues Raised During Conference Workshop

Conference workshop speakers included Caroline Wilson (Belfast City Council), Derek Wilson (Futureways) and Danny Lambe (Equality Commission)

Caroline Wilson raised a series of issues relevant to the development of Good Relations in Belfast City Council including:

Realisation that making progress on Good Relations issues in local government tends to be slower given the political context in which officers and members work;

Need for Councils to have a Good Relations Strategy that is backed unanimously by Council and for Good Relations to be embedded in Councils Corporate Plan;

Importance stressed of having a cross departmental Good Relations working group and the benefits of having a Good Relations Forum with representation from other sectors that live and work within the Council area;

Good Relations must have both an internal and external focus; the two cannot be divorced from each other;

Acknowledgment that for Good Relations to progress difficult conversations will have to occur but priority at all times must be the safety of members, staff and residents;

Councils need to grasp the moral responsibilities of moving their areas forward through capacity building.

Derek Wilson raised issues arising from over thirty five years of work in the field of Good Relations:

Processes must not be rushed. From his initial meetings in Belfast City Council in 1995 it took the Council until 2003 to publish a Good Relations strategy and appoint Good Relations officers. However this time is needed to ensure opportunities are maximized, not lost;

Current policy context increases opportunities to raise agenda of community and Good Relations like never before;

Good Relations to date has been a waste of time but there is no time to waste;

District Councils must be seen as a place to learn how this might be done and then progress model across public life;

Core to a successful process will be strong leadership from the Council and it's Chief Executive;

Councils must now move from a culture of blame to responsibility. Continual perception of being a victim must be laid aside and each take responsibility for the "shape of the future" they are going to share;

Minority voices must be heard within Councils and space afforded were real Good Relations work can occur.

Danny Lambe from the Equality Commission is engaged in over viewing the work of all designated agencies in compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 including the Good Relations duty. He raised the following points:

Key issue for Councils has been to ensure that Good Relations is mainstreamed, otherwise compliance is less than effective;

Best progress has been made where corporate Good Relations strategies have been implemented and where specific staff have been assigned to take forward Good Relations;

Where Community Relations Officers have moved to Central/Chief Executive Departments progress has been more evident;

Officers must not be isolated. Good Relations Officers need to work in conjunction with other key staff such as Policy Managers, Equality Officers and Community Safety Officers;

Must be more sharing of good practice amongst Councils to ensure that plans created are effective in addressing the real issues;

Equality Commissions will publish its Good Relations Strategy and will be more focused on ensuring Good Relations compliance. This will be enabled by the Equality Commission developing a Good Relations Forum and by the Commission issuing baseline guidance on compliance.

4. Workshop Discussion

These inputs developed a varied range of questions from workshop participants with a number of core questions arising:

(i) Is there opportunity to grab the opportunities presented by the Review of Public Administration?

Generally participants and panelists were of the view that there was opportunity but that there was a danger that the slowness of the review and the consequent administrative rearrangements would limit the ability to move forward for some time

after reorganisation. However in the future the potential for increased power sharing arrangements in new Councils could lead to opportunities to facilitate Good Relations.

(ii) How do you convince politicians to take part in promoting Good Relations?

Two principal drivers were discussed: the need to be seen to be accountable to legislation and the “bad image” Councils can have if Good Relations is not addressed in a serious manner. It was felt that officers were often working well but members needed to be more effective in authorising and verifying work of staff. Time needs to be taken to find appropriate ways of engaging members rather than trying to move forward without their full cooperation.

One model of good practice may be to have members agree to sign a declaration of Good Relations practice as was the case in Newry and Mourne with strong feeling that those Councils who are seen as being able to deliver should be given additional funding and those who can’t should not.

(iii) Do we not rely too much on structures and reorganisation to tackle the problem? Surely we must get to the nub of the problem and tackle it?

There was general agreement on the sentiment of this thought but with the reservation that structures are needed to enable problems to be addressed in a coordinated and focused manner. Concern from some that current report from the Shared Future consultation is regressive not progressive and that there must be strong emphasis placed on civic leadership and dialogue as the vehicle to deliver Good Relations in District Councils.

5. Recommendations for Government Action

Promotion of Corporative and Civic Leadership

Government must provide strong leadership through the provision of an underpinning framework for Good Relations and a clear definition of the requirements being placed upon and expected from District Councils.

Councils must also provide strong corporate leadership to their staff and civic leadership to their communities to enable progressive Good Relations.

Recognition of Challenge

Government must reinforce the positive value of Good Relations work and ensure procedures and policies are in place which move public bodies beyond “notional” compliance whilst giving acknowledgement to the paradox faced by politicians engaging in Good Relations.

Resourcing Impact

Government must enable the release, regionally and locally, of resources that will adequately enable Good Relations capacity building among elected members, Council staff and the wider community. Effective performance measures must be established

to ensure resources allocated achieve maximum impact on good relations in Northern Ireland.

Section Three: Conference Recommendations

As the Policy Development Conference on Friday 28 May 2004 concluded, participants in each of the workshops were invited to select three key issues that they considered to be central to the challenges they faced and to the improvement of community relations in their specific area of interest. The following section asserts each of these prioritized issues and the reasoning behind their prominence.

1. The Changing Face of Interface Areas

One of the most important aspects identified by this Workshop was the real need to document and disseminate good practice and experience of work that has occurred or is presently underway. Many of those present commented on the lack of such information and its enormous value to groups and practitioners.

In addition to this, there was an acknowledgement that better networking at multiple levels was required urgently. This needed to have a more strategic focus, resulting in the establishment of an effective multi-agency forum on interfaces.

All this needed to feed into policy development at both a government and funding level. Work within interfaces needs to be sustainable and long term realistic funding is necessary to make this possible.

2. Moving from Segregation to Integration; Focus on Housing

Participants in this Workshop were keen to stress the need for social / community and political partnership to design a real choice into housing availability. By enhancing policy development and raising the priority of integration such a choice can be realized.

The Group also saw the need for multi-agency co-ordination in the development and maintenance of integrated communities. Accountability over the distribution of public funds was seen as vital as was the need to actively prioritise mixed communities.

Crucial to developing a shared housing resource was the provision of real political leadership at all levels, that understood the issues around housing and community separation and was willing to take the (sometimes difficult) decisions that create change. Without such leadership participants felt that the status quo would remain.

3. Youth and the Peace Process

The concept of partnership was most important for this workshop. The participants were keen to emphasize that there needed to be real partnership working between the formal (schools) and informal (youth services) sectors *as well* as between these groups and parents and the young people themselves. Only by engaging in positive work through the 'whole journey' of the young person could real change be achieved.

The Group also felt that it was necessary to revisit the general understanding of what community relations is. For many participants it was more than simply building

relationships between Protestants and Catholics – it covered the whole range of identities, discrimination and acceptance and this needed to be recognized and catered for.

The need for adequate and comprehensive community relations training was also raised as a key concern. The Group felt strongly that youth workers and teachers should be made aware of community relations through one common training system, within which individuals could specialize as appropriate. At the moment training was often non-existent or inadequate.

4. The Ups and Downs of Flags and Emblems

The workshop stressed the need for a code of regulation to cover the display of flags and emblems. However they recognized that this code would need to reflect the complexity of this contentious issue as well as regulating the circumstances when flags could be and should be flown. However, it was felt that a line needed to be drawn on the display of paramilitary flags and emblems. It was felt that these should not be tolerated and needed to be removed.

In the light of such a code, its operation needed to be the clear responsibility of one government department who would supervise the code. It would also be the clear responsibility of the police to enforce the code.

The Group wanted to move towards a situation where common symbolism could be accepted. At the moment there is little common agreement on Northern Ireland emblems and symbols, however a number of symbols have been agreed upon, such as the Flax flower as a symbol of the Assembly and the new PSNI badge which was agreed on at the inaugural meeting of the NI Policing Board.

5. All Inclusive Society? Focus on Race Relations

In looking at issues affecting ethnic minority communities this Group saw the widespread provision of training as key to raising awareness of discrimination and racism. Participants felt that many sectors (the media, education, health, social services, public servants) would benefit from targeted awareness raising of issues affecting minority ethnic / minority faith groups. Such training should be proactive and focused on promoting anti-oppressive / anti-aggressive behaviour. Its aim should be to show people in a true light, without resorting to stereotypes.

Ethnic minority / minority faith groups also need to be adequately resourced to allow them to work effectively. Resourcing is an issue which affects the entire voluntary sector and should be a focus for any future review of policy.

Groups and communities need to act and build on existing good practice to develop work. Good practice needs to be recorded and disseminated in a meaningful and accessible way.

The Group also felt that work should not simply look at issues of race or religion but should extend to all types of difference in society. This would enable a holistic

approach to diversity work and underline that ultimately people are individuals in their own right, with different requirements needs and beliefs.

6. Promoting Good Relations in Local Government

This workshop agreed that the most important requirement for the development of good relations was real leadership, corporate, civic and political. Without this there would be no real progress in the area and no strategic development.

They also felt that it was vitally important that people and organizations in Northern Ireland recognized the real challenge that good relations presents. That good relations was about going further than simply compliance with equality legislation, and often people were legitimately fearful of going down such a road in case they 'opened a can of worms'. However, it was important to emphasize the huge positive value of such work and the need for it to be carefully managed.

The need to performance manage such work was also regarded as key. Capacity building, adequate assessment of training and evaluation would enable work to be ongoing and developmental. Proper resourcing for effectiveness was also vital.

7. Conclusion

This conference has given local participants the opportunity to look again at the issues that emerged from 'A Shared Future'. While the six issues explored in the workshops by are important, they are not exclusive. Other concerns over funding, the development of policy, training, the role of the media and the need for political leadership arise again and again, in relation to specific areas and outside them. This conference has shown how much good practice does exist and how practical straightforward action could make real change, if the political and civic will was there to implement it. Even issues which on the surface look intractable, can often be improved with careful thought and action taking account of everyone's concerns. It is hoped that this conference report has gathered together some of the practical realities surrounding these issues and will be of use to both practitioners on the ground and those developing future community relations policy.

List of speakers, panel members and participants who registered

<p>1. Interface Issues</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Neil Jarman, ICR – overview and chair</p> <p>Roisin McGlone, Inter-Action Belfast</p> <p>Roberta Rodgers NIO</p> <p>Chris O’Halloran, BIP</p>	<p>2. Housing</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Pete Shirlow, UU – overview and chair</p> <p>Imelda McGrath, NIHE</p> <p>Brendan Mackin, Unemployed Centre</p>
<p>3. Youth</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Michael Wardlow - CRC</p> <p>Leigh Whitley, Youth Worker Newtownabbey</p> <p>Stephen Hughes, Youth Worker Ardoyne</p> <p>Norma Rea – Youth Council NI</p> <p>Marlene Kingham - NICCY</p>	<p>4. Flags and Emblems</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Robin Wilson, Democratic Dialogue overview and chair</p> <p>Hazel Francey, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Gordon Gillespie, Inst Irish Studies</p> <p>Stephen Farry – Alliance Party</p>
<p>5. Minority Ethnic</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Anna Lo – overview and chair</p> <p>David White, Trainer</p> <p>Patrick Corrigan Amnesty Int/RAG</p> <p>Nisha Tandon, Indian Community Centre</p> <p>Edwin Graham, Interfaith Forum</p>	<p>6. Promoting Good Relations in Local Government</p> <p><u>Panel</u></p> <p>Tommy Stewart, Ind. Consultant – Overview and chair</p> <p>Derrick Wilson, FutureWays</p> <p>Danny Lambe, Equality Com</p> <p>Caroline Wilson, BCC</p>

Name	Group
Maria Miskelly	ANIC
Michael Potter	Training for Women Network
Catherine Clydesdale	ANIC
Monica Hui Fang	Mandarin Speakers Assoc
David Price	The Bytes Project
Maureen Green	The Bytes Project
Hongyan Yang	Mandarin Speakers Assoc
Anne Scully	Mixed Links Initiative
Karen McFarlane	BCDA
Margaret McNulty	Think Again Reconciliation
Billy Leonard	N.I Centre for European Co-operation
John Lamont	Creating Common Ground
Brendan Gibbon	Greenhill YMCA
Amanda Biega	Community Foundation NI
Maureen Doyle	Cookstown District Council
George McClelland	Boys Brigade Northern Ireland
Una Calvert	Ligoniel Improvement Association
Gary Robinson	Ballysillan Community Forum/ L.I.A
Sarah Lockhart	The Junction/Towards Understanding & Healing
Philip Clarke	Dungannon & South Tyrone BC
Iris Mathews	Ballymore Open Centre
Geraldine Shevlin	Equality Commission NI
Pamela Mathews	Banbridge District Council
Rosemary Orr	Partnership in Community Transformation
Frank Foley	INCORE
Stephen Anderson	NIHE
Jason Donaghy	Fermanagh Trust
Monica O'Prey	Communities in Transition Programme
Diana Stewart	Local Gov Staff Commission
Pauline Donnan	OFMDFM
Alan McClelland	OFMDFM
Joseph Marley	Ardoyne Focus Group
Vincent Gribbon	OFMDFM
Grainne Kelly	Democratic Dialogue
Alderman William Decourcy	N'Abbey Borough Council
Kat Healy	Community Foundation NI
G McLroy	L'America Community Assoc
M Kelly	L'America Community Assoc
Jacqueline Gallagher	Springhill Pk C.D.A
Ann Gallagher	Springhill Pk C.D.A
Kay Tinney	Springhill Pk C.D.A
Kerry Speak	Springhill Pk C.D.A
Valery Guniey	MCRC
Susan McEwen	Corrymeela
Tara McHugh	Corrymeela
Peter Farquharson	Habitat for Humanity
Ellen Heaney	NICHA
Lucinda McMurrin	N.I Federation of Housing Associations
Mary Keenan	Cookstown LSP

Name	Group
Sinead McGrath	CGI
Sabine McAlister	Saver/Naver
Eamon Oakes	CityBridges
David Mitchell	Lisburn City Council
Donall Henderson	Connswater Housing
Jacqueline Locke	Connswater Housing
Netta Menice	Connswater Housing
Mags Tierney	Youth Initiatives
Dermot Curran	Belfast Community Housing Assoc
Helen Lewis	INCORE
Roisin O'Hagan	INCORE
Malachy Mulgrew	Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum
Kate Clarke	CRC Interface Project
Leish Cox	Chinese Welfare Association
Linda Britton	Community Healing Unit
Martin Murphy	NOVA, Banardo's (N.I)
Patrica Blackman	Southern Education and Library Board
Fionnuala Carson Williams	Linen Hall Library
Dr Claire Armstrong	Royal Group of Hospitals
Craig Cook	R.E.A.C.T
Tully Kewley	R.E.A.C.T
Derrick Mathews	Community Relations Unit
Noreen McClelland	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Billy Gamble	Community Relations Unit
Kat Healy	CFNI
Mary Hollywood	Habinteg Housing Assoc
Ulf Hansson	Institute for Conflict Research
Rebecca Thomas	Institute for Conflict Research
Anne Moore	NICVA
Michael Burns	Star Neighbourhood Centre
Wayne Murphy	123 House
Mark Breslin	123 House
Patrick Yu	NICEM
Wessam M Abh	Belfast Islamic Centre
Mrs A.S Khan	Al-Nisa Association NI
Una Casey	University of Ulster
Briege McLaughlin	Western Education & Library Board
Anne Odling'Smee	NIMMA
Kathy Wolfe	Community Relations Forum
Claire Fox	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Jean Fulton	BIH Housing Association
Neal Willis	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Raymond Nicholl	BIH Housing Association
Karen Jardine	OFMDFM
Helen Brides	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Diana Farrelly	Armagh College
Geraldine Tutin	Greencastle CEP
Bridget Hughes	CLASP Greencastle CEP
Roseleen Mullan	CLASP Greencastle CEP
Geraldine O'Kane	Greencastle CEP
Scott Nicolson	Boys Brigade Northern Ireland

Name	Group
Sue Gallagher	Derry City Council
Hedley Abernethy	YMCA Ireland
Bill Shaw	174 Trust
Peter Neill	Community Relations Unit
Stephen Farry	Alliance Party
Allan Leonard	Alliance Party
Eileen Bell MLA	Alliance Party
Wilma Young	Belfast Model School for Girls
Mary McGrath	Youth Service Interboard
Katrina Lloyd	Ark, Queens University Belfast
Andrew Mattison	West Tyrone Voice
Laurie Randall	Mediation NI
Bernie Laverty	
Mark Healy	Scoutlink
Steven Malcolm	Lisburn City Council
Laura McMahan	Banardo's
Brian Mullan	Lower Antrim Road Regeneration Initiative
Sally Armstrong	Larne Millennium Initiative
Pastor Gordon Graham	Larne Millennium Initiative
Evelyn Cummins	North Belfast Community Action Unit
Colin Burms	NICHS
Pol Magee	NICHS
Dominic Mooney	NICHS
Paddy Doherty	NICHS
Catherine Black	Larne Borough Council
Doreen Lappin	Armagh College
Ward Erwin	NIO
Anna Rankin	ECONI
Mary McCabe	Greencastle Community Assoc
Paul McKernon	Greencastle Community Assoc
Connor Maskey	Intercomm