



NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

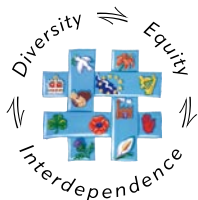
16th Annual Report 05-06



Community Relations Council



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EQUITY DIVERSITY INTERDEPENDENCE

The Council seeks through its membership to be broadly representative of the Northern Ireland community. Council Members are appointed for a period of three years and serve in an unpaid, voluntary capacity. Two-thirds of the potential membership is chosen by the existing Council and up to one third may be appointed by the Government Minister for Community Relations. The places for Government nominees have remained vacant since 2000. Since June 1998 the non-government vacancies have been filled after interview following public advertisement for nominations. The criteria for membership are as follows:

ESSENTIAL

A proven capacity to understand and support the need for community relations and cultural diversity work.

An ability to represent and work for the overall tasks of the Council, as opposed to a particular constituency focus.

A track record which will contribute to the overall credibility of the Council.

Sufficient time to undertake the work (approximately one day per month).

DESIRABLE

A history in actively supporting and/or facilitating cross-community and cultural diversity activity.

A capacity to contribute to the strategic development of community relations work within an important sector.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

APRIL 2005-MARCH 2006



David Adams (from November 2005)
Former loyalist politician, now a writer and broadcaster

Maria Bannon (née Miskelly)
Policy, Research and Equality Manager,
Association of NI Colleges

John Cousins
Business consultant

Ward Erwin
Principal Officer, NI Housing Executive

Eileen Gallagher (from May 2005)
Co-Chair of Fermanagh Churches Forum

Maureen Hetherington
Director, The Junction,
Community Relations Resource Centre, L'Derry

Eamonn McCartan (Chair)
Chief Executive, Sports Council NI

Nelson McCausland
Director, Ulster Scots Heritage Council,
and Belfast City Councillor

Tony McCusker (from November 2005)
Retired civil servant, now actively involved in community relations and youth work in the voluntary sector

Maura Muldoon
Corporate Diversity Manager, PSNI

Colin Neilands
Assistant Director, Workers Educational Association

Chris O'Halloran
Director, Belfast Interface Project

Declan O'Loan
Ballymena Borough Councillor and former schoolteacher

David Stevens
Leader of the Corrymeela Community

Michael Wardlow
Chief Executive, NI Council for Integrated Education

Caroline Wilson
Good Relations Officer, Belfast City Council

Robin Wilson
Director, Democratic Dialogue

CRC STAFF: APRIL 2005-MARCH 2006

Jo Adamson Human Resources Manager
Gemma Attwood Policy Development Officer from January 06
Patricia Armstrong Development Officer (European)
Joan Clements Victims Core-funding Officer (Funding and Development)
Maurna Crozier Programme Director (Cultural Diversity)
Theresa Cullen Centre Attendant (Dungannon) from July 05
Catherine Curran Resource Centre Assistant until June 05
Eileen Deacon Administrative Officer (European)
Jim Dennison Programme Director (European)
John Fitzsimons Programme Director (Finance, Administration and Personnel)
Jacqueline Irwin Director of Operations
Paul Jordan Assistant Programme Director (Funding and Development)
Alison Keenan (née Montgomery) Core-funding Officer (Funding and Development)
Marianne Laird Administrative Assistant (Funding and Development)
Michaela Mackin Programme Director (Funding and Development)
Ali McAllister Project Officer (Creating Common Ground) until Dec.05
and Shared Future Policy Officer from Jan.06
Elizabeth McCann Development Support Officer (European) from Nov.05
Frances McClelland Project Officer (Funding and Development)
Vanessa McCrory Senior Finance Officer (European)
Dympna McGrade Programme Director (Policy Development)
Roisin McGuire Project Officer (Funding and Development)

Duncan Morrow Chief Executive

Brian Mullan Victims Core-funding Officer (Funding and Development)
Ray Mullan Programme Director (Communications and Learning Resources)
Patricia O'Neill Resource Centre Manager
Mary Pantaleoni Receptionist and Administrative Assistant
Sean Pettis Project Manager (European)
Rachel Quigley Administrative Assistant (Victims) from Sept.to Nov.05
David Russell Project Officer (Policy Development) until August 05
Holly Scott Secretary to the Chief Executive
Emma Shields Finance Officer (European) from Nov.05
Libby Smit Research Officer (European)
Carol Taylor Victims Development Officer (Funding and Development)
Ian Thompson Administrative Officer (Finance)
Peter Thompson Administrative Assistant (Policy Development)
Ellana Tomasso Resource Centre Assistant Manager
Claudine Walls Development Officer (European)



CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This sixteenth Annual Report of the Community Relations Council marks the mid point of progress in the Council's Strategic Plan for 2004-07 the main aim of which has been to lead and support change- change towards a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society founded on the achievement of reconciliation, equality, co-operation, respect, mutual trust and good relations.

Specifically in the year 2005-06 the Council's work has been dominated by efforts to promote change from rhetoric to reality in the Shared Future strategy produced by government in March 2005. This high level document, which has enormous potential to transform Northern Ireland, has major implications for public policy in all areas of government here, and is also a call to civic society in general to establish sharing rather than separation as the basis for social and economic well-being. For the Council itself, the Shared Future strategy presented exciting challenges and the prospect of significant organisational change in preparation for an enhanced role.

Progress has been slow in translating the vision from A Shared Future into tangible actions but by the Spring of 2006 triennial action plans from all government departments had been produced by community relations minister Lord Rooker. Meanwhile the Community Relations Council has remained in constant dialogue with the Community Relations Unit of OFMDFM to map out the necessary changes to enable the Council to play its full role in building A Shared Future. The Council also encouraged more detailed policy debate on some

of the core themes and sought to ensure that A Shared Future remained a central strand in other government initiatives and reviews.

Planning for the future has not prevented the Council from continuing to provide practical support in the present for community relations initiatives. As will be seen in the detail of this report £4.7 million in grant aid was provided by the Council to more than 700 projects at community level, allowing crucial groundwork to be laid in healing and co-operation. In addition to this the Council was able to act yet again as an intermediary funding body for the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation which in May 2005 extended Peace II for another two years.

Importantly, in addition to its role in funding local projects, the Council has continued to forge partnerships with other organisations at every level and has played a valuable role in shaping discussions and public debate on a range of contentious issues which impact on good relations.

In reporting on its work the Council acknowledges the support of the Community Relations Unit at the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and also of the Victims Liaison Unit. Thanks are also due to Council Members and various committee members who freely contributed their time, experience and expertise in numerous meetings in the course of the year and helped steer us in the right direction. Finally, Council staff have undertaken a heavy burden of work which has been performed to the credit of the Council and lays the foundation for a better tomorrow.

Eamonn McCartan



Council Members with Irish President Mary McAleese and her husband Martin during an official visit to the Council in February 2006.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

TACKLING DIVISION - SUPPORTING CHANGE.

The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council exists to support the emergence of a society which is committed to ensuring justice and fairness for all, delights in and celebrates peacefully shared differences and is committed to the inclusion of everyone in this common endeavour. These principles shape all of our activity, and define the priorities for the Council's work whether in funding, development, research or policy. Above all, the arrival of so many new people into Northern Ireland for the first time is challenging us to apply these principles in practice in many new and exiting areas.



Of course, the Council's work takes place in a society which has been riddled with violent conflict for decades, drawing on grievances which may be rooted in economic and social inequality, bitter religious differences or the experience that political power and violence have left a legacy of grief, anger and exclusion. In such a context, CRC's task of leading and supporting change can only begin to be effective if it can encourage people and institutions at every level of society to engage in the necessary changes. Against this background, CRC was pleased with the outcome of the government's review of community relations which began before the collapse of devolution in 2001 and concluded with the publication of *A Shared Future*, the government's high level strategy document in March 2005. While the detail and priorities of policy are rightly the object of ongoing political and social scrutiny, the fact that government accepts that the promotion of sharing over separation as an area for practical public action in so many areas of policy is potentially a huge breakthrough in public policy for those interested in inter-community reconciliation.



In the year since the publication of *A Shared Future*, we have been reminded of two things above all: the distance that still has to be travelled to make mutual trust a practical reality, even a decade after the groundbreaking ceasefires, and the degree of change which will be required to establish a new norm of partnership and engagement in the face of a history which normalised suspicion and polarisation. Even the announcement that the IRA had indeed carried out a huge act of decommissioning along with a statement indicating that the republican movement was committed to purely peaceful means was insufficient to generate real political engagement. The past continues to cast a long shadow, evident in the short but telling exchange between Unionist and Nationalist in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in Belfast, where one accused the IRA of a campaign of genocide and the other described Unionism in power in terms of fascism. Meanwhile, too many of the new arrivals to Ireland are confronted with violence and exclusion which has its roots in old practices, but its effects on vulnerable new minorities.

TOP: Duncan Morrow with the Dalai Lama (centre) in November 2005.

BOTTOM: Duncan Morrow with Antoine Rutayisire of the Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in September 2005.



The sheer cost of violence and its disruptive capacity was laid bare in September by the riots and disorder which followed the re-routing of the re-arranged Whiterock Orange parade. The measurable cost of managing events to the PSNI of £3 million in one week did not take into account the cost to GDP of offices across Northern Ireland closing early for a week, the cost of damage to property resulting from riots, the opportunity costs of investment foregone or tourism lost as a result of renewed worldwide publicity.

Once again, these costs underline the critical importance of reconciliation to our economic and social future as well as the huge value for money which CRC's relatively limited expenditure on constructive and creative inter-community peacebuilding activity represents. None of this is the soft stuff of community relations once described as 'cucumber sandwiches'. The promise of A Shared Future is that more resources will be devoted to supporting sharing over separation in key areas such as education, social development, culture, investment, planning and law and order. What is now urgent is that government moves from strategy to action, including implementing all of the structural changes foreseen in the strategy and putting practical meat on the bones of clear vision and goals. Furthermore A Shared Future based on clear principles of equality should be at the heart of subsequent government policies to address social and economic issues. Above all, CRC believes that it is vital to avoid any impression of dealing with difficult social issues on the basis of competitive or 'zero-sum' single identity strategies without reference to equality and interdependence. In this regard, the Council was pleased to see that the policy had been given significant weight by Ministers in relation to the Review of Public Administration, perhaps the single- most important administrative reform to have taken place in Northern Ireland since 1972.

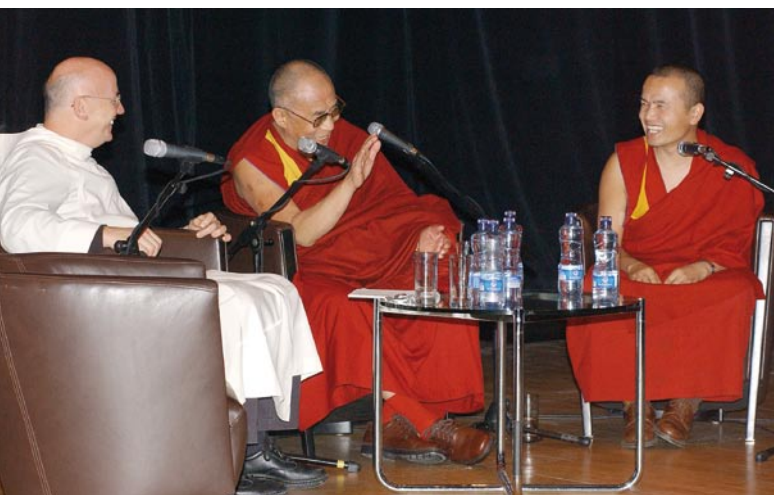
While it is clear that there can be no long term sustainable reconciliation without real political decisions and agreement, CRC's work during 2005/06 shows how much can be done in advance of final decisions. Work with Victims and Survivors continued, focussing on the real needs of carers and their families who have too often been left to cope with heavy burdens for many years. We are looking forward to the report of the Interim Commissioner on Victims and Survivors as she tries to chart a way forward for this area of work in the years to come.

TOP: Duncan Morrow and CRC Victims Officer Joan Clements with Interim Victims Commissioner Bertha McDougal and Carers representatives at CRC's Carers' Conference in Omagh.
RIGHT: Council Members Ward Erwin, Chris O'Halloran and Maura Muldoon during the visit of President McAleese.



Through the EU PEACE programme, huge numbers of people have engaged with the practical tasks of peacebuilding in many sectors of society. During 2005/06, CRC once again distributed millions of pounds in pursuit of reconciliation for sustainable peace as part of the EU PEACE II extension, in areas as diverse as interface work, work with young people, work with people from a minority ethnic background and work with churches. Without the support of the EU over many years, many of the practical partnerships which are now taken for granted across Northern Ireland and the border counties would not have come into existence. The level of interest in the scheme was overwhelming, representing a measurable increase in the number of people and agencies anxious to make a practical contribution to building and sustaining bridging social capital. Furthermore, as has become clear from the seminars which CRC has co-ordinated on behalf of the PEACE programme, peace-building has begun to infect the consciousness of people on both sides of the border, in the public sector and in private industry. All of this augurs well for the long-run sustainability of peace-building, even when there are delays or setbacks along the way.

During 2005/6 we received enormous encouragement from visitors to the Council from outside the six counties. The visit of President Mary McAleese in February, of the Dalai Lama in November and of Antoine Rutayasire, Vice President of the Rwandan Commission for Reconciliation and Unity



were both uplifting and practical for all those who attended. We also build constructive partnerships with many other organisations including central and local government, housing, education and investment organisations, the Equality and Human Rights Commissions and members of every political party. CRC can also witness to the same enthusiasm for peace building in broad swathes of the research, academic and voluntary sectors in Northern Ireland. As part of our contribution to A Shared Future, the Council organised a series of policy workshops on many of the areas outlined in the original strategy document. During 2006/7 these ideas will form part of the ongoing work of the Council, including the development of wider policy networks around core themes. Already during 2005/6, we launched our own academic journal, Shared Space, which has given welcome focus to the quality of research now being sponsored by the Council or undertaken by both academics and applied practitioners.

Funding remains a perennial problem. All of our grant schemes now receive many more applications for support than we have resources to meet them. In many ways this is a healthy development, far removed from the early days of CRC in the 1990s when the Council sought out partners wherever anyone was prepared to take a risk. As A Shared Future and the Review of Public Administration take root, it will be important to ensure that the values, principles and practice of equity, diversity and interdependence shape

TOP: Launch of the 'Our People- Our Times' touring exhibition at Belfast City Hall.
 BELOW: The Dalai Lama (centre) at the Waterfront Hall during a public forum on reconciliation organised by CRC.

resource allocation in areas which were once thought of as distinct from community relations such as all of the areas of culture arts and leisure, festivals policy, community development policy, urban and rural regeneration as well as the heart of schools and youth work. In the interim, the credibility of A Shared Future will depend on its clear prioritisation as part of the comprehensive spending review during 2006. From our own point of view, the current level of demand on funding, alongside important advances in evaluation and the changing policy environment are encouraging a root and branch review of our own priorities and mechanisms which will develop over the coming years.

During 2005/6 there was no breakthrough to final peace in Northern Ireland. At the same time, huge amounts of constructive effort by many people went in to ensuring that the direction of travel remains on course. As chief executive of CRC, I wish in particular to commend the efforts of all of the staff of the Council, who have worked well beyond the call of duty to maximise the value of resources with which we have been entrusted. Much has been achieved, even as more has to be done on the way to a safe, just and sustainable shared future.

Duncan Morrow



REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2005-06

(1) Providing advice and support for community relations work:

As public violence flared once more during 2005-06 and recurrent issues such as parading, interface violence and sectarian and racist attacks came again to the fore, there was a perception in both the media and general public that progress in the building of peace in Northern Ireland was limited. The work of the Community Relations Council and its experience with funded groups, however, goes some way to refuting this perception.

More than 700 projects (749) were directly funded by the Council during 2005-06 and a further 62 projects were supported by the Council through the EU Peace II Programme (Measure 2.1). This covered a range of projects from interface work, community relations training, victim support, research, inter-community dialogue, mediation, cultural diversity work, public exhibitions and performances, publications and film-making. The Council's small grant scheme was available for more short-term initiatives such as training workshops and cultural awareness events but core-funding was available for projects providing sustained and strategic interventions. By engaging in dialogue and mediation processes and other approaches these provided opportunities for groups and communities in conflict to express their opinions and frustrations through mechanisms other than violence. Progress at a community level has long been far in advance of that being made at a political level and the organisations which the Council seeks to support are key to affecting positive change in local community life and relationships.

The Council's various grant schemes continued to support community-based organisations operating at interface areas to reduce tension, avert violence and dispel rumours. This included maintaining support for mobile phone networks in the greater Belfast area which increased communication between communities and contributed to a reduction in violence.



The value of the Council's record since 1990 in supporting local community relations initiatives was recognised in May 2005 when the European Commission formally re-appointed the Council as an intermediary funding body (IFB) to deliver part of the extension to the Peace II Programme (measure 2.1, 'Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace') until 2008. The Council was inundated with applications with the first tranche of £3m massively oversubscribed by the ratio of 6 to 1. The high quality of many of the applications was indicative of the development and investment in Northern Ireland in the previous period and the limitation in available funds disappointed many. The difficult decisions that the Council had to make were assisted by the fact that priority areas for the awards had been agreed, namely churches, rural peace-building programmes, youth-based activity, interface work and resource development.

In addition to its financial support for community relations projects the Council's staff also provided assistance in kind to groups involved in community relations work. This included participation in staff recruitment processes, chairing public meetings, facilitating workshops, speaking at local events and launches. The Council's office and conference centre in Dungannon was also available to provide outreach and support to communities west of the Bann and it was well used with 46 different groups using it as a safe and neutral space for workshops, seminars and conferences. The Council's Resource Centre in Belfast and its highly successful website was also available to provide information and advice and use of the website reached a record high.

In November 2005 in Newry the Council held its annual Live Issues Conference aimed at community relations practitioners. This was the third in the series and provided an opportunity for networking and discussion of issues of direct concern to community relations workers.



(2) Assisting organisations to develop good relations policies and practices:

In addition to its grants work the Community Relations Council offers its expertise to other organisations which are aiming to develop their own community relations policies and programmes. In 2005-06 Council staff worked with the NI Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit in developing its Inter-Community Network. This sought to address community relations issues affecting local communities by involving local people and demonstrating that safer communities could be built by creating respect for diversity. In particular the production of a local community guide to managing flags, emblems and sectional symbols helped to lead the way in alleviating tension and developing safe and shared spaces on housing estates.

The Council in recent years has allocated staff to a policy development programme dedicated specifically to encouraging and advising other organisations in the development of good relations approaches and policies. In 2005-06 the Council made formal responses to a number of public consultations. These included the NI Housing Executive's Statement of Policy and Procedures on Anti-Social Behaviour and on its Draft Corporate Plan 2006-09, the Equality Commission's Corporate Plan, the NI Human Rights Commission's Strategic Plan 2006-09, the Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI's draft mediation model, the Northern Ireland Office's Community-Based Restorative Justice Schemes, the NI Department of Education's draft education order, the NI Museum Council's Cultural Diversity Policy Strategy and the Education and Library Boards' approaches to cultural diversity through libraries. In its responses the Council focused on the principles of A Shared Future, the Good Relations Duty of the Northern Ireland Act (section 75.2) and the Racial Equality Strategy. It also highlighted the need to use A Shared Future as a baseline when developing new policies and strategies.

Council staff also sat on the NI Housing Executive's Mixed Community Housing Advisory Panel, the NUS-USI Promoting and Managing Diversity in Tertiary Education Advisory Group and the North-South Ad Hoc Group.

(3) Advancing progress on A Shared Future:

In March 2005 the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) issued A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland. This came after a period of lengthy and extensive public consultation by government. The final Shared Future document, although welcomed by the Community Relations Council which it was announced was to have an enhanced role, was high on aspiration but lacking in detailed plans for action to encourage movement towards reconciliation. A series of triennial action plans from all government departments setting out detailed actions to implement A Shared Future was promised for the autumn of 2005 but these were delayed until April 2006.

The Council was anxious that practical actions should follow the publication of the Shared Future framework document and in January 2006 was able to secure OFMDFM support for the Council's appointment of a Shared Future Policy Officer who could encourage this process. A series of research papers was commissioned by the Council early in 2006 to produce recommendations for policy actions to implement A Shared Future over a range of themes. These included young people, race relations, interfaces, mixed housing, flags and emblems, community development/ community relations, shared education and monitoring and evaluation. The research was accompanied and assisted by a series of focussed consultative seminars in February and March 2006 with the intention to publish the recommendations at a special Policy Conference in April 2006 to which the Government Minister for Community Relations would also be invited.



Meanwhile the Council also began to engage other organisations to build on the principles of the Shared Future framework. Political parties had already been engaged on A Shared Future by the Council in the earlier consultative process and plans were now developed to take this further. In February 2006 the Council organised a fringe event at the Alliance Party Annual Conference and was in discussion with other parties for events later in the year.

An early opportunity was presented to the Council to illustrate how some of the key priority issues identified in the Shared Future framework might be acted upon. Research commissioned by St. Columb's Park House in Derry/Londonderry to establish the extent and causes of Protestant alienation and migration in the city, and to make recommendations to promote inclusion and reconciliation, mirrored many of the same key issues as in A Shared Future. These included the reclaiming of shared space, tackling the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism, and the behaviour of young people. The research report, 'Population Change and Social Inclusion Study', was published in September 2005, with a Council publication grant, and the Council was represented on the group established to assist in the rolling out of the recommended actions.

The St Columb's Park House research, carried out by local university academics, identified the need for 'comprehensive and collective planning to place the Protestant community on a more progressive and confident future'. It proposed that this be done in a constructive, inclusive and transparent way through the development of Delivery Alliances to address specific interests. The project explored the Protestant community's place within the Derry City Council area but with the aim of 'identifying the structures and policies needed to encourage new forms of co-operation and sharing in Derry/Londonderry'. This approach fitted well with the Shared Future policy. How the future is shared requires dialogue and compromise. Time and projects such as the St Columb's Park House social inclusion project are needed to mend relationships, heal wounds, repair fractured communities and move us to a more confident and better place.

(4) Dealing with the legacy of conflict:

The Council continued to provide support to voluntary organisations working with victims and survivors of the Troubles. Two Council grant schemes, victims core funding and development support, provided core-funding to 50 projects and development support to another 376. This amounted to £2.4 million in grants in 2005-06 and involved four dedicated Council staff working in this sensitive area.

There are significant levels of burnout in those caring for victims of the Northern Ireland conflict and this is a forgotten and invisible side of the conflict in Northern Ireland. In March 2006 the Council held a conference in Omagh, attended by the Interim Victims Commissioner, to discuss a research report 'Who Cares for the Carers?' which a number of victim support organisations had commissioned with the support of the Council. This identified the need for a strategy between Health and Social Service Boards and Trusts and victims groups to develop services for those who care for victims. More than three quarters of carers consulted provided care day and night for on average 69 hours per week, and half of those consulted had been providing care for over 20 years. The Council encouraged the development of support groups for carers.

At the Omagh conference the Council also announced the introduction of scheme to support volunteer groups in offering a befriending service for individual victims and survivors of the Troubles on a one-to-one basis. This was possible because of a fund of £0.5 million made available to the Council by the government's Victims' Unit (OFMDFM).



TOP: Speakers at CRC's Live Issues Conference in Newry, November 2005: (from left) Kat Healy (CFNI), David Stevens (CRC), Jim Dennison (CRC), Shaun Henry (SEUPB) and Breige Gadd (Big Lottery).

RIGHT: Participants at CRC's Victims Conference, 'Who Cares for the Carers?', in Omagh, March 2006.

(5) Supporting work to improve inter-ethnic relations:

The Council's work to increase understanding and respect between cultures in Northern Ireland covers the more recent arrivals as well as the indigenous communities. Sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland are unfortunately sides of the same problem.

The Council's media grant scheme was used to commission a series of short film documentaries on the theme of 'A Sense of Belonging' to tell the experiences of those whose families came to Northern Ireland in recent years. The films, made by Westway Productions and supported by the NI Film and Television Commission, showed how migrant communities are as varied within themselves as those indigenous to the region and share the same basic needs. Each of the films showed the efforts made by incomers to master the local language and integrate to society here, their contribution to the local economy and some of the challenges they face. The films were broadcast on Ulster Television in November and December 2005 and were also added to the Community Archive at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. A new series has been commissioned on the same theme for broadcast next year.

Support in the form of a Publications Grant was also given to the Al-Nisa Association for Muslim women in Northern Ireland for the publication of a book profiling the contributions and achievements of over 50 Muslims currently living and working in Northern Ireland. The book, which also contained an historical introduction outlining the development of the Muslim community in Ireland over the last two centuries, sought to celebrate the positive aspects of Northern Ireland's increasing ethnic diversity.

An exhibition, 'Our People, Our Times' illustrating the diverse origins of Northern Ireland's population was organised by the Northern Ireland Museums Council with the support of the Community Relations Council. The exhibition toured throughout Northern Ireland from April 2005, appearing in Belfast, Newtownards, Omagh, Derry/Londonderry, Downpatrick, Craigavon and Enniskillen with more venues



planned for later in 2006 and 2007. In each museum where the exhibition appeared local incomer communities were involved in adding objects from a variety of cultures and traditions, and events were organised to bring new audiences to the museums and link these with longer established communities.

Tackling racism and assisting ethnic minority communities to integrate into the wider community has also received support from the Council's small grant scheme. Belfast City Council was supported in an arts project involving the Belfast Film Festival and Connection Filmmakers to look at ways in which local artists could use art to address racial issues. The Rural Community Network was supported to organise a conference which provided opportunities for people to learn about the difficulties experienced by people from different ethnic minorities who had come to live and work in Northern Ireland. Support was also provided to the South Belfast Roundtable on Racism, where the Council is a key partner, to enable them to develop a crisis management system to provide help to victims of racial attack and to engage local communities to tackle racism at an early stage.

In addition to grant aiding projects the Council was also involved in supporting the development of policy initiatives to tackle racism. The Council became a key partner with the Springfarm and District Community Association in addressing the problem of increasing incidences of race hate crime on the Springfarm housing estate in Antrim, an area of social and economic deprivation where many of the vacant properties had been used to house migrant workers employed in the healthcare and service industries. The Council worked closely with the Association to thoroughly research the nature of the problem and its causes, consult all key stakeholders and produce a report on the next steps to deal with the problem. In addition to issuing a vision statement denouncing racism and supporting the principle of racial equality, it was agreed to establish a Springfarm Roundtable on Racism, based on the South Belfast model. This was to be driven by the local community and include as partners the Springfarm and District Community Association, the Community Relations Council, Antrim Borough Council, the Education and Library Board, the Health Service, the NI Housing Executive and PSNI.



(6) Learning the lessons from peace and conflict:

The Community Relations Council does not pretend to know all the answers for dealing with difficult issues. We are a small organisation tasked with a big job, trying to address a conflict which is decades and even centuries old whilst trying to build a future where we all can live, work and play without fear or intimidation. In this process it is important that we highlight the progress that has been made and try to learn lessons from our mistakes. To this end the Council was tasked by the European Commission's Peace and Reconciliation Programme to deliver a series of seminars, 'Learning from Peace II', focussed on the projects funded across the entire EU Peace Programme. The first two of these conferences were held in October and December 2004, the third in May 2005 and the fourth in January 2006. The themes covered were the churches, economically-based peace-making, cross-border work and delivering peace at the local level. The seminars were all well attended and resulted in publications. A final seminar is planned for 2007.

The Council recognises the importance of research in analysing the difficulties in managing and resolving conflict and identifying new approaches to community relations work. Research projects have been supported by the Council both through a strand of the EU Peace II Programme and directly by awards granted under the Council's small grant scheme. Twelve research projects supported by Peace II funding in 2005-06 and four by awards from the Council's small grants programme.

Among the research projects was one by Democratic Dialogue to examine the role that community organisations and voluntary groups play in facilitating reconciliation processes at a community level, and their relationships with local councils. The research developed a definition of reconciliation that has been used as a guideline by EU Programme Body for all Peace II extension funding applications.

Another project was the ARK Young Life and Times Survey, a joint university project between Queen's University and the University of Ulster. This aimed to monitor changing attitudes



to community relations issues among 16 year olds across Northern Ireland and continues to be of great interest to community groups, academics and policy makers.

All the research projects led to publication or dissemination of their findings through seminars. In 2005 the Council also published its own research journal, entitled 'Shared Space', which aimed to disseminate new learning on community relations issues to policy makers and practitioners and to encourage the academic community to join in the search for pathways towards a Shared Future. The first issue of the journal was published in September 2005 and the second was planned for May 2006. Many of the articles arose out of Council-funded research, including work on interface areas, truth-telling processes and ethnic minorities but the journal is also a platform for other new research on community relations matters.

TOP (from left): Researchers Frances McCandless (NICVA) and Professor Joanne Hughes with CRC Shared Future Officer, Ali McAllister, and CRC Policy Director, Dympna McGlade, at one of a series of research seminars on actions for A Shared Future.



LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Future programme work of the Council needs to enhance and promote the themes outlined in A Shared Future.
2. There is a need for a sense of collective responsibility for peace building and reconciliation and for the policy support structure such as can be provided by A Shared Future
3. In the absence of an Assembly and elected Executive at Stormont the objectives of A Shared Future need to be driven forward locally through power-sharing, inclusion and recognising the value of diversity.
4. The Council needs to be working more closely with Government Departments to help them embed A Shared Future into their thinking and activity.
5. Good Relations will not happen without guidance, planning and support. The Council should be proactive in providing this in both the public and the private sector.
6. The media needs to be more actively involved in promoting the positive development of A Shared Future.
7. The Council needs to be resourced to publicize and give a higher profile to the work of promoting A Shared Future.
8. There is a need to identify, document and highlight good practice in community relations work and to challenge negative perceptions.
9. Closer liaison by the Council with its funded groups is advantageous and helps in telling the good news stories.
10. A structured call for grant applications based on themes is better than an open call (EU Programme experience) as it is a more effective way of prioritising approaches to peace-building work.
11. Declining future funding from the European Community for community relations work will mean that a lot of potentially good projects will not happen. Future EU funding needs to prepare projects for a soft landing as the EU funding eventually is withdrawn.
12. There is a need to develop services for those who care for victims of the Troubles.
13. Victim Support groups need to keep in contact with each other and share good practice. The Council should facilitate an annual conference and quarterly seminars in support of this.
14. All communities must be prepared for a growing multi-cultural society. We ignore or accommodate racism at our peril as we have learned from sectarianism. Race crime, abuse and harassment need to be tackled systematically by a range of organisations.
15. The Council needs to retain and develop its research capacity.



TOP: Live Issues Conference, Newry.

BOTTOM: Duncan Morrow and researcher Dr Rosellen Roche with CRC policy staff Ali McAllister and Gemma Attwood.

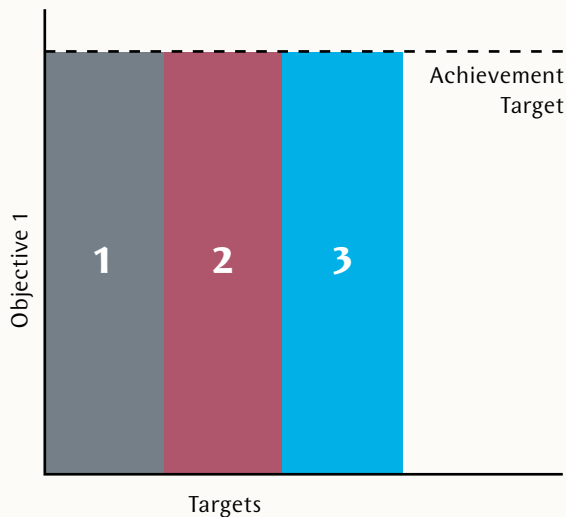
PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2005-06

The current strategic plan for the Community Relations Council runs from 2004-2007. This is therefore the second year of its implementation. The plan has five objectives and performance is here reviewed against the targets set. (A fuller analysis of this performance is available from the Council.)

OBJECTIVE 1

To establish a shared vision of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and translate it into practical policies and action.

Performance Indicator: Demonstration of implementation of a programme of work to establish a shared vision of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust.



Target 1

Promulgation of a new set of key messages for targeted audiences and evidence of promulgation.

Target achieved.

Target 2

85% of all funded groups in 2005-2006 to achieve project plans (that contribute to a shared vision of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust) in agreed timescale.

Target achieved.

Target 3

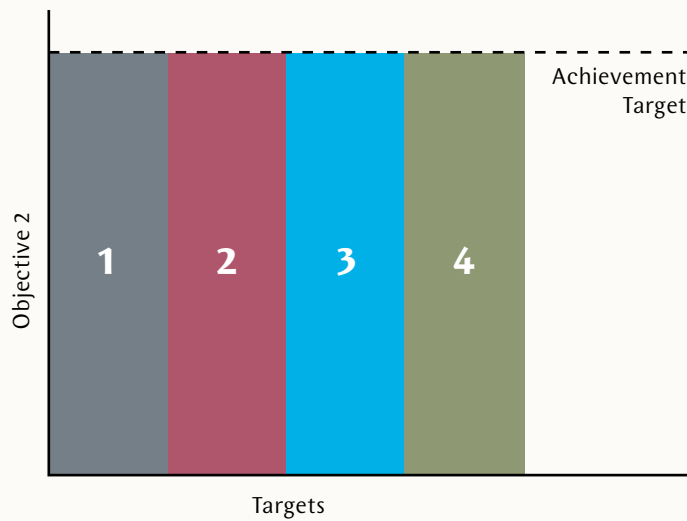
3 conferences throughout 2005-2006 aimed at developing a shared vision of reconciliation, tolerance and trust.

Target achieved.

OBJECTIVE 2

To develop relevant CRC responses to critical issues and disputes

Performance Indicator: Demonstration of relevant CRC responses, where appropriate in collaboration with others, to critical issues and disputes



Target 1

Evidence of an active relationship with 20 groups working in areas of high conflict

Target achieved.

Target 2

At least 3 meetings of the new forum dealing with issues relating to victims of the troubles

Target achieved.

Target 3

Evidence of implementation of a programme of work focussing on community relations in North Belfast

Target achieved.

Target 4

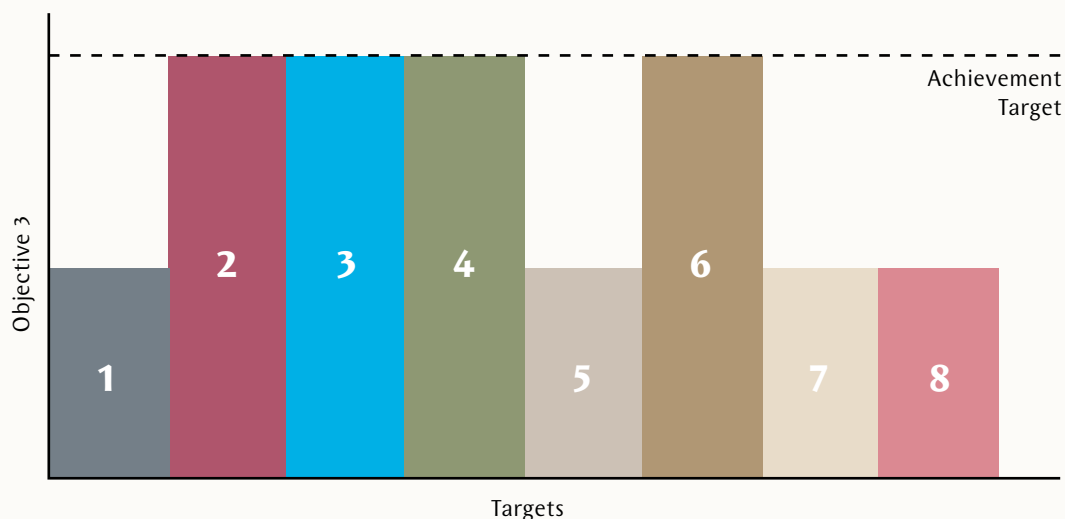
Evidence of implementation of a programme of work focussed on development of good relations.

Target achieved.

OBJECTIVE 3

To refine and implement the CRC's role as an intermediary body developing dialogue, inquiry and partnership

Performance Indicator: Ability to demonstrate active development of CRC's role as an intermediary body developing dialogue, inquiry and partnership.



Target 1

Implementation of a change plan that responds appropriately and sufficiently to the government's high level strategic document "A Shared Future".

Target not achieved. Awaiting information and clarification from CRU on role of CRC in a number of areas.

Target 2

5 active CRC fora supporting and training practitioners

Target achieved.

Target 3

A CRC web-site providing up-to-date information with evidence of a 30% increase (on last year) in users.

Target achieved.

Target 4

3 CRC sponsored contributions to the body of research on community relations

Target achieved.

Target 5

Publication of a record of the seminar programme on historical and contemporary issues in community relations and cultural diversity carried out in 04-05

Target not achieved. Two contributors to the series have not yet returned their written articles.

Target 6

CRC sponsored discussions with stakeholders on 3 key community relations issues.

Target achieved.

Target 7

Redrafting of the memorandum of understanding between CRC and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in the light of "A Shared Future".

Target not achieved. Draft in negotiation.

Target 8

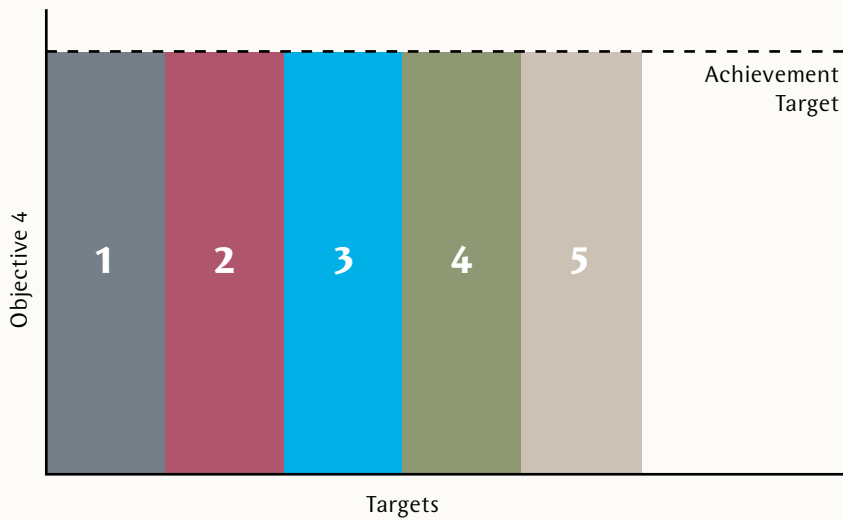
Development of a memorandum of understanding between CRC and the Human Rights Commission.

Target not achieved. Draft memorandum in preparation.

OBJECTIVE 4

To identify and promote models of sustainable inter-community relationships across Northern Ireland

Performance Indicator: Ability to demonstration promotion of models of sustainable inter-community relationships across Northern Ireland.



Target 1

20 networks (community and institutional) across Northern Ireland with which CRC is actively engaged.

Target achieved.

Target 2

Positive CRC impact in 5 policy areas by March 2006 (housing, policing, race, parading, local government)

Target achieved.

Target 3

25% of CRC grants in 2005-2006 to be awarded to projects outside of Belfast and Derry.

Target achieved.

Target 4

Successful roll-out of the CRC Peace II programme extension. Target achieved for those aspects of the programme that were due for release in 05-06.

Target 5

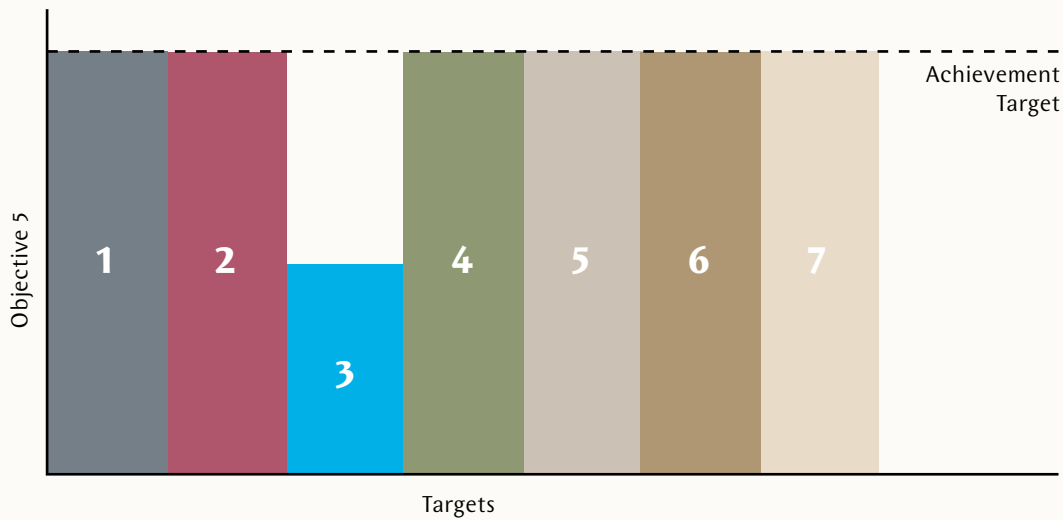
Implementation, in partnership with SEUPB, of a seminar series (those elements timetabled for 05-06) on the legacy of the PEACE II programme.

Target achieved.

OBJECTIVE 5

To effectively deliver all services by the efficient management of resources

Performance Indicator: Ability to demonstrate effectiveness, efficiency and economy



Target 1

1% saving on costs by March 2006 through the greater use of internal resources.

Target achieved.

Target 2

75% of all small grant applications processed within 12 weeks of receipt.

Target achieved.

Target 3

90% of core grant applications processed within 12 weeks of closing date for receipt.

Target not achieved (52% within 12 weeks, 100% within 16 weeks).

Target 4

80% of victims fund applications processed within 12 weeks of closing date for receipt.

Target achieved.

Target 5

80% of EU funded applications processed within 16 weeks of closing date for receipt.

Target achieved.

Target 6

90% of Media grant applications processed within 12 weeks of receipt.

Target achieved.

Target 7

80% Publications grant applications processed within 12 weeks of receipt.

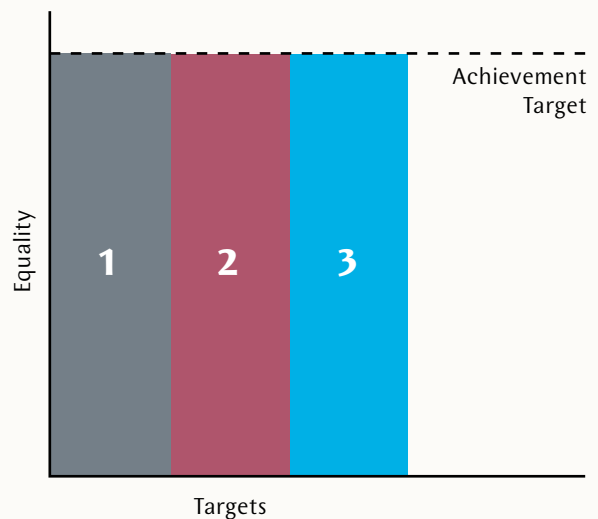
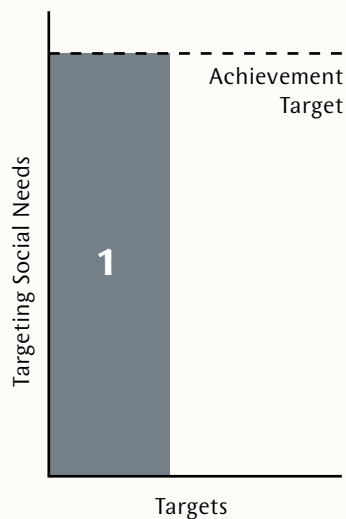
Target achieved.

TARGETING SOCIAL NEEDS

EQUALITY

Performance Indicator: Ability to demonstrate that the CRC is supporting work in areas of highest need.

Performance Indicator: Ability of the CRC to demonstrate fair and equal treatment.



Target

1. At least 15% of CRC grants to go to groups in disadvantaged areas during 2005-2006

Target achieved.

Target 1

Appointment of members to the Community Relations Council during 2005-2006 to reflect fair and equal treatment

Target achieved.

Target 2

Distribution of grants during 2005-2006 to demonstrate fair and equal treatment

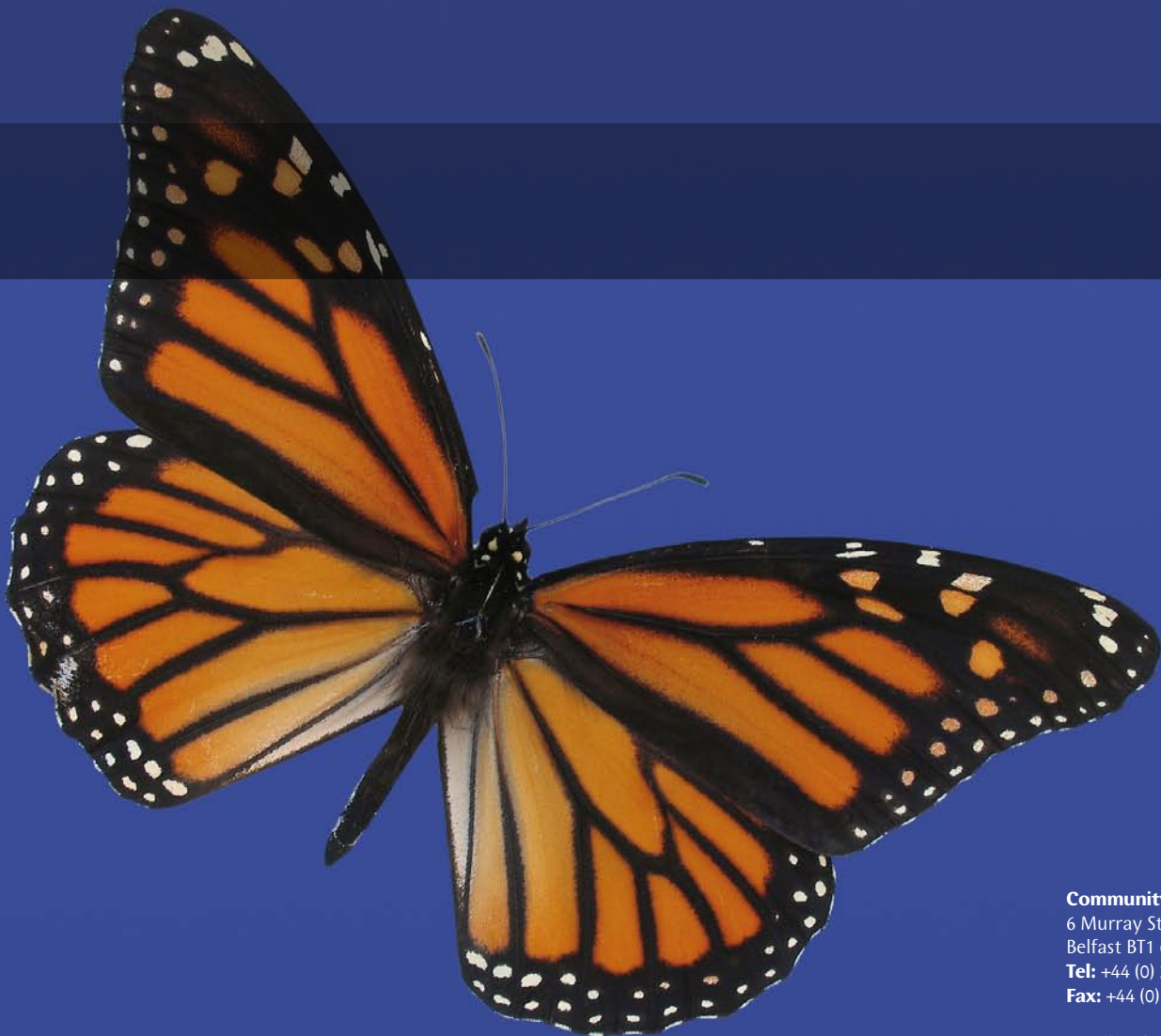
Target achieved.

Target 3

Processes for the appointment of Council staff during 2005-2006 to reflect fair and equal treatment

Target achieved.

A supplement to this Annual Report, **Accounts and Grant Awards**,
is also available in print version or from the CRC website www.nicrc.org.uk



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