

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL
FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS
TRAINERS AND PRACTITIONERS

FORWARD

LESSONS FROM ANTI-RACISM

Eleanor McKnight explores anti-racist training
and its relevance for Northern Ireland

Issue No.3

Summer 1993

Published by the Northern Ireland
Community Relations Council

CRC

EDITORIAL

Northern Ireland
Community Relations Council
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN
Tel: (0232) 439953
Fax: (0232) 235208

The views expressed are those of the contributors and should not necessarily be attributed to the Community Relations Council.

Welcome to our third edition; we hope you enjoy it.

Our first article, from Fiona Molloy, Community Relations Officer, Dungannon, explores the special features of working for a local elected council, and of being part of a 'balanced' team.

Paul Murray's article, detailing training innovations at Glebe House, reveals a refreshing approach to the problems of how to move beyond the "contact hypothesis". His co-facilitation experience with Maria McManus and shift to shorter term work camps provide a valuable case study and insight to good practice.

In response to Edwin Graham's article in our last Journal, Dr Colin Knox and Dr Joanne Hughes, University of Ulster, raise the thorny themes of "performance measurement" as key issues for work funded by the state. Clear questions emerge as to the limitations of current research techniques for qualitative change measurement and the dilemmas of outcome prediction, prescription and analysis are unpicked.

This edition signals diary dates for recruitment to the 93/94 Action Learning Programme. John McQuade's short piece provides a snapshot of Action Learning from the trainee's perspective. A full Action Learning Programme brochure will be available in September.

Sustaining Dave Duggan and Clem McCartney's internationalist theme from our last edition, Brendan McAllister, Director of the Northern Ireland Conflict and Mediation Network, reflects on John Paul Lederach's recent Northern Ireland visit (he is Sociology Professor in Virginia, USA). Brendan affirms Prof Lederach's belief that conflict resolution work requires redefinition as "conflict transformation". Reliance upon the implicit skill and knowledge of local participants in conflict, and focusing on developing confidence to facilitate the rediscovery of local leadership, Lederach's thesis has the flavour of Paulo Freire.

In our 'cover' article, Eleanor McKnight, Race Relations Advisor to the Northern Ireland Chinese Welfare Association, provides stimulating and thorough analysis of the pitfalls experienced in multi-culturalism and race awareness training in Britain.

Eleanor throws light on a key issue for legislators, equity bodies, community relations practitioners and trainers. Community relations work cannot afford to marginalise race and other equity issues from policy development and training agendas. In declaring our endemic racism and sectarianism, Eleanor makes sharp connections between all forms of institutionalised oppression. Her challenging analysis is both timely and welcome.

Feedback from (Prejudice Awareness/Anti-sectarianism/ Group Work Skills) courses which took place during April and May suggest the need for more experiential training, with current case studies and quality training support materials. Training packs and programmes will follow in the autumn.

Keep the feedback coming; unsolicited articles are welcome and our diary section is open to all community relations contributors. The deadline for our next (quarterly) issue is 30th August 1993.

Fergus Cumiskey
Rob Fairmichael

Cover illustration:
Strip cartoon by John Kindess from
Belfast Peoples Comic No.1 (c.1975);
circular logo from Zebra Project's
handbook on multi-racial education.

○ **Fiona Molloy** reflects on the role played by herself & **Norma McKeown** as CROs for Dungannon Council

“A short time ago in the town of Dungannon, where many’s the initiative myself had a hand in...”

Developing community relations in Dungannon

When entering the post of Community Relations Officer in Dungannon District Council and initially becoming acquainted with one another, neither Norma nor I realised how much solace we would bring to one another in the months ahead. The fact that we were able to discuss, disseminate and decide together what projects were viable and which were not was somewhat taken for granted until we experienced our first CRO Forum where individuals complained of complete isolation within Council. Most CROs were indeed working alone, and it seemed that their plight was altogether more difficult than was our own.

I cannot remember feeling any of the threat or insecurity others spoke of, only the challenge of a new job and the support of a new colleague as we stumbled along together in the darkness. No Community Services Department existed in Dungannon, therefore all contacts had now to be established by us. We gave each other confidence in the early days and in retrospect I realise we gave each other much more.

Dungannon chose to appoint one Community Relations Officer from either tradition, Protestant and Catholic, in our opinion a very wise choice. The Dungannon District is sharply divided, almost evenly, and how we are perceived in the area certainly affects the ease with which we can operate and the success with which we can communicate. Individuals and community groups seeking help or funding had less opportunity to typecast the Council as unfair employers or feel that we were there for “only one side or another” - we were there for all.

Firstly, we found that implementing projects together gave us more credibility with groups. There was always the group or individual who felt that their needs were more likely to be met by “one of their own”. We didn’t mind this attitude as our aim was to prove that not only would either of us be equally approachable, but we would also be an example of Community Relations in action.

“In the County Tyrone, near the town of Dungannon, where many’s the ruction myself had a han’ in...”

Like most others in Northern Ireland, Norma and I came to the post with our prejudices, our bigotry, maybe even more than most. I hailed from the largely nationalist town of Coalisland, and Norma from the opposite end of the district, Fivemiletown, a quiet protestant village. We often considered how we had secured the posts of Community Relations Officers and concluded that our conviction in our own cultural heritage may have been a help rather than a hindrance. Our close working proximity to one another became an education in itself.

Venues, times and people’s sensitivities had to be considered in the running of projects, and this threw up many discussion points for us. Firstly our differing perspectives helped us to consider all aspects of a venture, therefore there was a greater likelihood of success. In building up respect for one another as colleagues we became more accepting of one another’s political viewpoints. As our defences began to diminish we gave each other a fairer hearing. We were more able to openly listen to the sincere and fearful anxieties of individuals and community groups. We do not believe this level of understanding would have been possible without our co-working relationship.

Having come a long way we implemented our first series of WEA (Workers Educational Association) CR training workshops. We had not experienced these workshops and so attended all of them. They became such a success, and our presence so integral to the group structure (as we too were learning), that we decided to also attend the second series, even some repeats. We found the small group situation, where we

could practise facilitation, invaluable. Many individuals became quite friendly throughout the workshop process and wanted to meet again, asking if we could provide the context. In May, our first group residential explored possible directions for this local Community Relations workshop group.

Other projects which we would consider successful include the William Carleton Summer School which generated much discussion around religious and cultural perspectives past and present, Outward Bound and Inter School Contact Scheme for Secondary Schools, a Cross-community Basketball League and Football Coaching, Senior Citizens and Playgroup Meetings.

As Community Relations Officers we are accountable to the elected council members. In Dungannon there is a power-sharing agreement and council support for the CR programme is strong evidence of a commitment to improve community relations in this district. As the council's CR development workers we initiate project proposals and seek council approval, which to date has been most forthcoming.

The bureaucratic nature of Council structures can be inhibiting in community work which often requires spontaneity and the

quick release of funds to ensure the smooth running of a project. We endeavour to counteract this difficulty by being involved with most projects that we are funding. Unfortunately this eats up time we would hope to spend training or facilitating. We are presently seeking a better system to alleviate these minor problems.

Sadly many atrocities have occurred in the Dungannon District in recent months. This can send individuals who are mellow in political opinion back into extreme defensiveness, usually through fear. Events in the community can affect our work and attitudes towards Community relations initiatives generally.

The only other factor which brings difficulty to the work is the short term contract conditions under which we are employed. However, this is a common element of development posts in general nowadays, and we can only hope that in our limited time span we can render our posts and Community Relations work indispensable.

Illustration on page 3 by Hector McDonnell from the Ould Orange Flute published by Blackstaff Press and used by kind permission.

○ Paul Murray reflects on work/study camps

Harmony in a temporary community?

Harmony Community Trust is an independent Northern Irish charity which was established in 1975 to promote reconciliation and understanding between groups. In 1975, the Trust bought Glebe House near Strangford in Co. Down. This small farm is now well established as a centre where peace and reconciliation work takes place. Much of the organisation's programme involves children and young people, but from its inception Harmony Community Trust has also undertaken projects aimed at adults.

Since 1987 Glebe House has been involved in running Work/Study Camps. There have been a number of variations in terms of the participants and the length of the camps but the basic idea has remained the same. Each camp is made up of three elements: a manual work project, study sessions and social events.

The idea for the camps emerged out of a development in Glebe's children's holiday programme. In the mid to late 80's the organisation was beginning to run more overt or focused community relations activities with groups of children. There was some anxiety amongst the volunteers who were working on the children's programme about doing this work. One way of addressing fears was to provide some training for the volunteers in which they could explore some of the issues for themselves. Such training was also seen as a form of personal development training offered by Glebe and as such fitted in well with its past history of offering projects for groups of adults as well as children.

The first camp was run in 1987. It ran in conjunction with International Voluntary Service who had an interest in developing models of conflict resolution. The facilitators on the camps have been made up largely from the Glebe House staff team with some volunteers and some outside facilitators also providing input. The camps were originally 10 days long and covered a wide range of issues and topics. These included sectarianism, gender issues, development issues, conflict resolution, often several or all of these issues were raised in one camp.

The participants were Glebe House volunteers. As the camps originated as an effort to provide volunteers with the necessary confidence to work on difficult issues with children, new volunteers were targeted as participants on the camps. This tended to mean that the age group of participants was quite young. This tendency increased over the years. The direct link between

the camps and holidays was quickly lost but the association with the camps and teenagers remained.

When I began working for Glebe House (1990) the pattern was of a 10 day camp, with in-house facilitators, an upper age limit of 25 and a group of participants mostly aged 17 - 19. The first camp I facilitated followed this pattern. In retrospect I found it a very dissatisfying experience.

Many of the participants seemed to see the camp as an extension of Glebe's holiday programme. Many of them had been to Glebe as children. This made it difficult to address some of the issues we wished to cover. Much of my energy was spent trying to get the group and individuals to take responsibility for themselves. This included motivating them to do the manual work, getting up in the morning, going to bed, use/abuse of alcohol etc. While these might be useful things for young people to be exposed to it seemed that the camps were moving away from their original idea.

I felt some changes were needed to revitalize the camps. In summary the changes were: removal of the upper age limit, a lower age limit of 18, reduction of the camps from 10 to 5 days and the introduction of a single theme for the camps. I was also interested in developing a close working relationship with a co-facilitator. Maria McManus is a occupational therapist, Gestalt trainee and a former Glebe House volunteer. We have worked together on the last two camps.

We both felt that a crucial element to the camps was the nature of the relationship between the facilitators. We spent a long time prior to the first camp working on our relationship. We felt it important to be clear on our preferred styles of working, our

strengths and weakness, our opinions, views and beliefs and our areas of agreement and disagreement. We spent at least as much time on this as we did in discussion of a programme for the camp.

On the first of our two camps we made some use of materials developed by the Understanding Conflict project. The study sessions were more closely focused on the participants' experiences of the conflict in N. Ireland. It was a powerful and at times fearful experience. The work Maria and I had done before had paid off, in the sense that we were able to trust each other to follow our feelings rather than feel obliged to stick to a pre-agreed programme. We were also able to openly disagree in the group without undermining each other or the work of the group.

October 1992 Timetable			
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Thursday	Introduction		Icebreakers
Friday	Setting the agenda. Manual work	Deciding on topics and social events. Sharing a place	Group exercise. Disco
Saturday	Manual work	Symbols of division	Theatre trip
Sunday	Manual work	Walk. Looking at rituals	Games & videos
Monday	Manual work	Scape-goating	Making a Change & Charter for Change
Tuesday	Conclusion, evaluation & clean-up	Depart	

The methods of working we chose to use in our first camp were:

1. Group living

The eleven members of the group lived together for the duration of the camp. It was hoped that living together in close proximity would help the group to form quickly, and allow developments in the group process that would otherwise not have been possible in five days.

The residential aspect of the camp was supportive to the work

of the group. Glebe House is a place where all the participants have a degree of ownership and of personal investment in the ethos of the project.

In addition it is known as a shared space for people from different cultural traditions. This feeling of commonality supported the development of group cohesion.

That the whole group was living under one roof ensured a high level of attendance at all sessions and in all aspects of the work. Therefore the potential for purposeful interaction and thus personal change through contact with others was high.

2. Socialising

A number of events of a social nature were organised, these were in addition to the banter and crack that developed between the group members. It was hoped that these events would help the group form and allow individuals to get to know one another. They were also seen as a break from the other demanding and sometimes difficult work the group was doing.

Social activities were agreed by the whole group. Socializing prolonged the opportunity for the group to enjoy each others company. This helped maintain contact between group members, supporting friendships and allowing risky, fearful work to continue within group sessions.

3. Group work

The study elements of the camp were conducted through working in a group.

It was hoped that the style of experiential learning and the focusing on participants' experiences would make these sessions more accessible, more easily understood and more relevant. The materials chosen to work with and the experience of the facilitators also made this style of working most appropriate.

The study element was the most challenging aspect of the camp. There is no doubt that it was also the most fearful aspect of the programme. Within this forum the focus for our work included the individual, subgroups and the developing life of the group perceived and nurtured as an organism. Attitudes, behaviour and perceptions were examined and explored. This aspect of the camp was very effective in raising the awareness of individuals and collective responsibilities.

4. Manual work project

The group carried out repairs and renewals on the adventure playground at Glebe House. It was hoped that this element of the camp would not only be of service to Glebe House, but also aid the group building process, allow time for participants to chat in more casual surroundings and provide a break from and contrast to the other work of the group.

The manual work was essential in maintaining the energy of the group. The group's approach to this work was a close parallel to the group process.

For the participants too the experience seems to have been worthwhile as these extracts from the evaluation of the camp show:

“to be more tolerant of other people’s views even if they are different to mine.”

“It made me realize that with a bit of work I can learn to trust people.”

“....sometimes it was hard and uncomfortable, very intense at some points but interesting.”

“I was able to listen to other points of view without blowing my top.”

The shorter camp allowed people in employment to take part in the camp. On the October 1992 camp one third of the participants were in employment, On the April 1993 camp almost half were employed. The shorter time scale also allowed the work to continue at an intensity which I do not believe could have been continued for ten days. The age group of both camps was older - averaging about 23 or 24. The higher level of maturity of the groups made it possible to explore in more depth it also allowed us to transfer the responsibility for learning to the participants. The group were exploring issues of importance and interest to them with the support of the facilitators rather than being taught a series of ideas or views.

The April '93 camp explored the dynamics of conflict as the theme. It succeeded in attracting participants from outside

Glebe House. This had been an aim for some time but was the first time we managed to attract people from other organisations.

The study aspect consisted of a series of experiential group sessions. The emphasis was on 'learning by doing', using the individuals own experience and that of the group to provide the focus for exploring the theme of conflict. The role of the facilitators was to support individuals and the group to share their experiences, listen to each other and apply and relate their learning to their personal lives and the social context within which they live and work. Participants were encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their own learning.

Each day was a mixture of the three elements of the camp. Most days had a time put aside for 'unfinished business' this was an opportunity to make general comments on the camp or to carry on with something from a previous session.

Again participants indicated their satisfaction with the camp through comments in the evaluation.

“I didn’t enjoy the emotional strain involved when confronting sensitive issues but I feel that this was positive and a worthwhile experience!”

“That to solve a conflict you have to find common ground without this and negotiation there are no winners.”

“More about myself and how I deal with conflict situations and other suggestions by other people.”

“The conflicts that we couldn’t resolve in the group sessions. What can happen in real life if you can’t resolve a problem in a game?”

I feel that now is an appropriate time to take another look at the development of the camps. I feel sure that each of the camps has been useful to some or all of the participants but I am unclear about the impact such work has in promoting better community relations. I am planning to conduct a survey with as many of the past participants as I can contact to see if the experience of the work/study camp has had an impact on their lives, and to detail the nature of that impact in terms of attitude change and what people are doing differently.

The camps began as an attempt to prepare Glebe House volunteers to do focused community relations work with children. This work carries on though in a different format. The camps have become part of Glebe’s programme of projects aimed at community relations work with adults. This is likely to be an area of growth and development within the organisation in the next few years. The experience of the camps and our learning from them may well prove very useful for that development.

The next Work/Study camp will be held from 21st - 26th October 1993. For information on this or copies of reports on previous camps contact: Paul Murray, Glebe House, 122 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7BG. Tel 0232 243223.

April 1993 Timetable			
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Friday			Introduction. Setting ground rules. Facilitator's expectations
Saturday	Listening exercise. Expectations. Places you are from	Manual work. Unfinished business	Dodge ball. Group exercise
Sunday	Trip to Tollymore.	Exploring conflict	Manual work
Monday	Unfinished business. Manual work	Power	Going out for a meal
Tuesday	Ways of making a difference	Clean up. Depart	

○ A rejoinder from **Colin Knox** and **Joanne Hughes** (University of Ulster)

Measuring success in Community Relations

Measuring the success, or to use the jargon “effectiveness”, of community relations programmes and training is now integral to the work of those involved in such schemes. Edwin Graham’s article in Issue 2 of the Trainers’ Journal (*Spring 1993*) opened the discussions on factors amenable to measurement in community relations groupwork - participation, questioning and security. All three factors, according to Edwin Graham, can be used to judge the success of groupwork. Whilst it is conceivable that the first two factors could be “measured” it would be difficult, without devising a reliable and valid scale, to test for “security”.

More importantly, however, is Edwin Graham’s reference to the “outcomes” of community relations training. The three success factors outlined could apply to any kind of groupwork setting ranging from, say a student seminar in university to a meeting of alcoholics anonymous. In these circumstances the groupwork could be deemed successful or not judged against the three criteria (assuming security could be measured). What is important in our discussions, however, is the “outcome” of such gatherings. Examples cited by Edwin Graham include

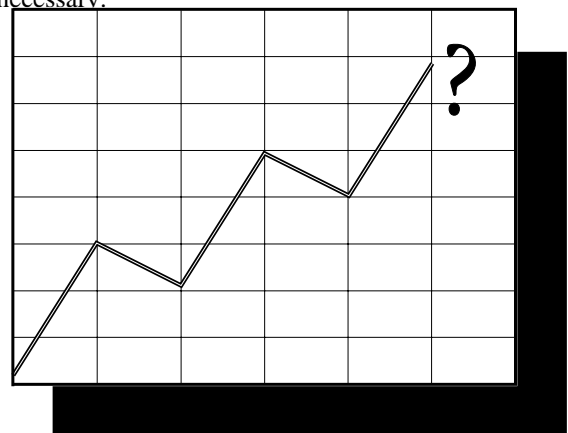
“the way individuals behave in relation to other outside groups;....the way individuals feel about others;....activities planned as a result of the discussions.”

Therein lies the problem of measuring success in community relations work. The “outcomes” are frequently about changing attitudes and behaviour both of which present measurement difficulties, particularly in the short term.

Before addressing these difficulties one might reasonably pose the question - why is there such an emphasis on measurement in community relations? A number of points can be made in response. Firstly, community relations as a policy area has not been singled out for attention. All functions which receive government funding must address the following evaluative questions: “what is to be achieved by the policy, by when and at what cost, and how this achievement is to be measured”.¹ Secondly, public finance allocated to community relations is money not available for other pressing needs such as housing, education and health. In short, there is an opportunity

cost involved in community relations practice which is ineffectual. Finally, some reflection on how community relations as a function is delivered will help in assessing the performance of existing projects and can highlight evidence of outdated, misdirected or unsatisfactory schemes.

Returning to the question of measurement, it is self-evident that success is predicated upon some understanding of what it is we are trying to achieve. Objectives are therefore crucial to any measure of effectiveness. The success of community relations groupwork sessions, as in Edwin Graham’s case, must therefore be judged against the objectives for such a project. To expect behavioural and attitudinal changes, particularly if such groupwork is one-off and with a variety of groups, would seem too ambitious. It may be the case that this type of project is part of a more comprehensive developmental approach such as the community relations programme in some district councils. If this is so, then some indication of how such groupwork training is contributing to the objectives of this programme is necessary.



Measuring success therefore involves, as a starting point, some reference to objectives and an assessment of the extent to which they are being achieved. This is a deceptively simple explanation for something which is more problematic in practice. The following example illustrates an evolving process of measurement which is iterative rather than definitive.

The Government’s own policy on community relations provides an interesting insight into objective setting and measures to assess attainment. The main objectives of the community relations strategy are to:

- ensure that all sides of the community enjoy equality

- of opportunity and equity of treatment;
- develop cross-community contact and co-operation;
- encourage and develop mutual respect and understanding.

Effectiveness is assessed by Government at two levels.² At the macro level a range of indicators measures the extent to which overall relationships between the different parts of the community are improving as a result of Government policies and programmes. At the micro or programme level, the impact of specific community relations projects is examined. Indicators used at the macro level include attitudes to social integration, politics and the “other” community from the Social Attitudes Surveys. Other indicators such as changes in the levels of violence, intimidation and equality of opportunity will also be used. At the micro or programme level indicators include the number of: schools and youth groups involved in the cross community contact scheme, projects supported by district council community relations officers, cross-community contact and cultural traditions programmes supported by the Community Relations Council (CRC).

The Community Relations Council, in line with Government indicators at the macro level, has also identified some tentative indicators.³ These include the amount of cross-community interactions, the number of organisations adopting anti-sectarian policies, integrated schools, district councils involved in “responsibility sharing”, cross-community cultural marches, bands and fairs.

The example illustrates two issues of importance. Firstly, the numerical nature of many of the success criteria and, as a result, a neglect of programme quality. Secondly, a lack of attention to the relationship between “outputs” or the volume of community relations activity and “outcomes” or the attainment of community relations objectives. In other words, do all activities supported contribute equally to “developing mutual respect and understanding”, for example, or are some more effective than others? To use the jargon, what is the nature of the causal link?

There is no intention on the part of the Government or CRC to eschew either the quality of programmes on offer or the resulting outcomes. However, both Edwin Graham’s experience of providing community relations programmes and the example outlined above highlight the need for the following:

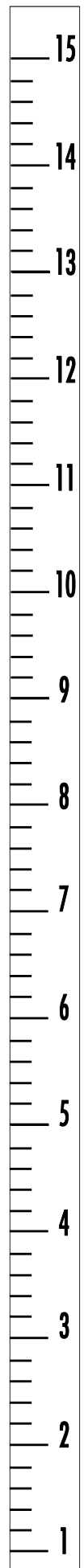
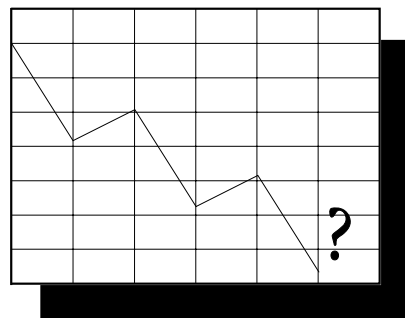
- (1) A concise specification of the objectives of community relations projects/programmes, to include performance indicators where possible;
- (2) Where proven performance indicators do not exist, an emphasis on assessing how the community relations programme is put into

practice, what happens on the ground and how this relates to the way in which the programme is meant to work. This is known as a process evaluation⁴ and helps to explore the causal link between “outputs” and “outcomes”. In Edwin Graham’s article the three factors, participation, questioning and security are process issues which contribute to the success of the workshops;

- (3) A more qualitative approach to measuring success which affords an opportunity to observe behaviour and probe, in detail, attitudes of those participating in community relations programmes;
- (4) The development of more suitable measurement scales than those currently adopted/adapted for community relations work, notwithstanding point 3. - Existing psychometric and sociometric scales, such as the Bogardus social distance scale, Matthews and Prothro’s racial stereotype index and the Adorno ethnocentrism scale⁵ have only a tenuous link with measuring community relations attitudes in Northern Ireland.

References

- 1 Northern Ireland Audit Office (1993), *Policy Evaluation in Government Departments in Northern Ireland*. London: HMSO.
- 2 Department of Finance and Personnel (1992), *Northern Ireland Expenditure Plans and Priorities: The Government’s Expenditure Plans 1992-93 to 1994-95*. Cm 1917, Belfast: HMSO.
- 3 Fitzduff, M. (1993), “Trend based criteria for measuring community relations”. Extract from conference paper, Belfast: CRC.
- 4 Department of the Environment (1992), *Policy Evaluation: The Role of Social Research*. London: HMSO.
- 5 Miller, D.C. (1991), 5th ed, *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*. London: Sage.



○ John McQuade

Action Learning Programme - Reflections on process

Back in October 1992 I received a letter confirming my enrolment on the Action Learning Programme run by CRC and Youth Action. With the letter of acceptance came a familiarisation paper. It was a fairly daunting document and when I saw it I began to have second thoughts about becoming involved in the Action Learning process. It talked about amongst other things; “technical diagnosis, energy diagnosis, supportive frameworks and leverage points” - all of which seemed to bear more relation to my ‘O’ level physics than to any form of community relations training that I had ever experienced.

However I’m very glad to say that in spite of the familiarisation paper I stuck with the process and discovered that when all of the above were translated into plain English and when the process was applied to actual situations within the group it became the source of considerable learning. Or maybe, more accurately, the process enabled group members to learn a lot about themselves and about each other. Maybe I shouldn’t speak of how the programme affected the group as a whole but I am sure that each of us has been affected to some degree or other by the experience of having taken part in the programme.

None of us, embarking on the programme all those months ago, really knew what to expect. I suppose, I expected it to be like every other training session I had been to, that’s not to say that training isn’t worthwhile (indeed that’s what I make a living doing) but rather to say that the Action Learning Programme was rather more than a training programme. Training which is based solely on presentations and tutor input may be interesting but unless it can be integrated into day to day work practice, it remains little more than an intellectual exercise - new thinking needs to lead to action. Deciding what the programme was about was rather more difficult, indeed reflecting back now it is not easy to pin-point exactly what effect the programme has had. However, a number of things stay with me about the experience.

- 1 The group itself - the honesty and openness of the group, the willingness of everyone to participate fully in discussions of potentially divisive subjects. This was made possible because of the trust and security that were established within the group.
- 2 The support provided by the group - and particularly by members of the Action Learning Set both in terms of advice, contacts and information but also in terms of providing space to explore issues.
- 3 The very practical nature of the programme established from the outset the relationship between the Action

learning Programme and real life situations - the programme provided a framework for understanding the purpose and benefits of the training and group activities - as a trainer it is essential to establish that link between training and real life situations - otherwise the whole training process is irrelevant.

- 4 The opportunity to practise a skill, though sometimes embarrassing, is crucial if a skill is to be mastered. You cannot learn how to mediate a conflict by being told how to do so. Only by doing it and receiving supportive feedback from the group can we acquire new skills.
- 5 Learning means change and change is difficult to sustain without follow-up and support - as a trainer I’m very aware of the need for follow-up sessions if learning is to be really valuable. The Action Learning Programme provided quality group support and follow-up both in terms of the residential experiences and in terms of the Action Learning Sets.
- 6 Social experience - great bunch of people whose company I thoroughly enjoyed over the months - particularly on the last night. Also benefitted from their insights and experiences.
- 7 Sense of being personally challenged - being made to think afresh about issues - being confronted by other very different perspectives on issues very close to us all.

Training is only worthwhile if the training experience in some way changes the way in which we work. My organisation, who have invested considerable time and resources allowing me to take part in the programme, also require some dividend on their investment. So how has the experience impacted upon me and upon Playboard?

- 1 Established a network of contacts within the community relations field - people that I know I will be able to call upon in the future for support, advice or involvement in joint projects.
- 2 New directions for the work - particularly in terms of human rights issues - UN convention on the rights of the child/children.
- 3 New and challenging approaches to training. New confidence and enthusiasm for work. Currently reviewing our training programmes to include some of

Continued on next page

○ Brendan McAllister

Building local conflict skills

The Conflict Mediation Network aims to be a network of people across Northern Ireland with enhanced skills for engaging conflict. The Conflict Mediation Network (CMN) views conflict as an inescapable fact of life which can be dealt with in negative, destructive ways or in positive, productive ways. This applies to our experience of conflict wherever it occurs, in personal relationships, family life, the work place and school, in our neighbourhood and, or of course, in our community. CMN provides training for individuals and groups in all walks of life. Our principal method of work is mediation and, when necessary, we provide mediators for various kinds of disputes in Northern Ireland.

When I took up my position as CMN's first full-time Director in September last year, I was confronted by a relatively small group of zealous individuals who were up to their eyes in training events on conflict and mediation up and down the country. But despite their obvious commitment, one thing they all had in common was a sense of unease about some of the underlying principles of mediation training and practice in N. Ireland. Indeed, this was partly based on feedback from training courses. For some people the whole vocabulary of conflict resolution was a bit too mid-Atlantic. Some things looked great in America but didn't feel quite the same here.

However, I was assured that help was on its way in the form of a young professor of sociology named John Paul Lederach who was being sent to us from the Mennonite college in Virginia. He had established a name for himself as Director of the Mennonite's International Conciliation Service which was established in 1989 in response to requests for assistance from conflict resolvers all over the world. Lederach spends half the year teaching and appraising conflict theory and methodology. He spends the other half of each year travelling the globe as a consultant to groups engaged in conflict resolution work. He is therefore a rare breed: someone whose academia is constantly informed by involvement in practice.

One central conviction which all his travelling has confirmed in John Paul Lederach is that there is no such thing as a single, simple model of conflict resolution which can be transported all over the world. The best approaches to conflict are those which are rooted in the traditions, culture and social mores of one's own people.

We asked the Mennonites to give us Professor Lederach for one week. In the event we got him for only four days because his services were also in demand as an advisor to people on the ground in Somalia.

A group of CMN trainers spent two days closeted away with John Paul Lederach in Corrymeela, examining our method of training people in N. Ireland.

John Paul Lederach speaking at the CMN public meeting at the beginning of March; Brendan McAllister (Director of CMN) is seated on the right.

Continued from previous page

the exercises that we used on the Action Learning Programme. More than the exercises is a new approach to training - less tutor input, more experiential group work, more role-plays and looking at ways of using process observers, more flexibility in my approach. Reaffirmation of a belief that people learn more through discovery than through having information presented to them. Active versus passive learning - as a one time teacher the limitations of passive learning are all too apparent.

- 4 When a group environment is supportive and trusting the potential for learning is greatly enhanced - now spend more time with groups developing that sense of mutual support.

The ALP was more than a training programme - it was training but it was also a pragmatic guide to practice, it was a forum for support, it was challenging and it was good crack! As for the programme's long-term impact, that is more difficult to determine, however, to steal one of Fergus's favourite metaphors, I suspect that the depth charges will continue to explode.

John McQuade is Anti-sectarianism Training and Research Officer for Playboard NI.

Lederach's view of traditional methods of training is of particular interest. He describes the traditional way as the "Prescriptive Model" wherein the trainer comes as an expert and prescribes the 'right' way to do things. But, according to Lederach, much of what passes for training is actually "the packaging and selling of social knowledge". There are two kinds of knowledge present at any training workshop. Firstly, "explicit knowledge" which the trainer brings and which is largely unknown by the trainees. Secondly, "implicit knowledge" which is possessed by all the trainees and represents the insights which they have been taught by their experience of life itself. Unfortunately, say Lederach, implicit knowledge is grossly undervalued in traditional training where the expert-trainer hands down the 'right way' like tablets of stone.

Lederach prefers to promote what he calls the 'Elicitive Model' of training wherein the trainer acts as 'facilitator' rather than 'expert' and facilitates the discovery of the insights carried within the trainees. Therefore, training becomes a process aimed at assisting 'trainees' to identify and use their existing knowledge-base and skills in order to devise their own ways of tackling conflict.

And the foundation for much creative conflict resolution work lies within the particular culture and traditions of each society. For example, in parts of Asia, it is considered important for people in conflict to save face when resolving a dispute. Therefore, it is less appropriate to invite people to talk very personally in a dispute. Some Native American tribes pass around a talking stick which confers on the holder the right to speak when working through conflict.

In one sense, we in CMN felt threatened by John Paul Lederach's view of training because it fits with our own instinct that the best way forward for our work in N. Ireland is for us to strive to enhance those conflict resolution skills which already exist within individuals across the community, in towns and villages, in schools and churches. Wherever we are, we all know people to whom we can turn when in dispute. CMN wishes to encourage and support such people.

In another sense, Lederach's legacy is the challenge to continue refining our method of mediation itself so that it feels totally right for people in conflict here.

Another feature of John Paul Lederach's visit was the public address which he gave to a packed audience at a Quaker meeting house in Belfast on 3rd March. This was an opportunity for John Paul to share his views on building peace in our community.

In this respect he suggested that we in N. Ireland should think less in terms of 'conflict resolution' and more in terms of 'conflict transformation'. Since conflict, disagreement, differences was part of life, it was simplistic to seek to abolish it. Rather, we could transform enmity into toleration of difference; tit for tat attacks could be replaced by peaceful co-existence. The process of peace-making was ultimately long-term and progress could often be measured by how many steps backwards we did not take in a given period.

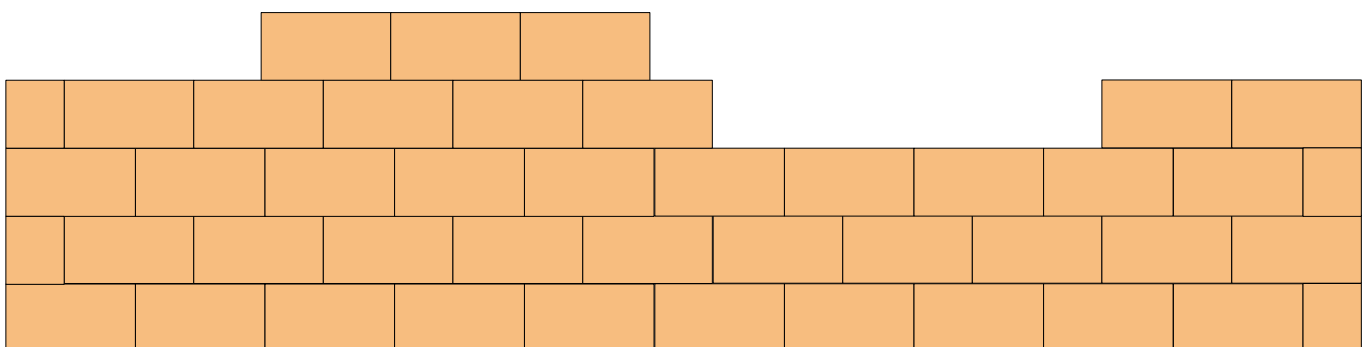
It was important to build a 'peace infrastructure'. This involved community-building and supporting leaders at all levels of society. For Lederach, the inability to establish a peace process in former-Yugoslavia was in part due to the lack of attention being paid to the long process of encouraging and supporting constructive leadership and relationship building at the grass roots level of communities there.

Ultimately, peace would only be secured by identifying and using the resources that already exist in our community. Therefore, the people of N. Ireland should not be viewed as the problem but, rather, as the only source of a solution.

Finally, Professor Lederach warned his audience not to be too preoccupied with an "event-driven view of peace" which centred purely on agreements among political leaders. There was no such thing as a formula for a quick fix. Rather peace should be viewed as a long process of relationship building.

Therefore we should not rely on outside experts to solve our problems. While they may be of help and support, the best methods of conflict transformation are to be found among the traditions of our own families, streets and communities.

The Conflict Mediation Network is available to any group or individual interested in developing and enhancing their conflict resolution skills. It also provides a mediation service if required. It can be contacted at: 28 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7FE, phone 438614.



○ Eleanor McKnight

The relevance of anti-racism training in Northern Ireland

Minority ethnic groups living in Northern Ireland over the past thirty to forty years have each had to adapt to the political, social and economic consequences of the situation in a country which is still very much a white society dominated by its own concerns and attempting to cope with the manifestations of discrimination based upon factors other than the colour of a person's skin. Whilst there are similarities in theory and practice between sectarianism and racism, it is obviously the particular dimensions of racism which are explored in the work of the Chinese Welfare Association.

We have therefore been pleased to see that requests to our organisation for anti-racism training sessions have been growing steadily in number over recent years even though the discomforting fact is that this has probably more to do with the necessity of conforming to the introduction of national training and examination requirements set by English qualification and validation boards (for social work, community work and education), than from any increasing commitment to recognising its significance here!

Realistically, of course, since it is denied that racism is a problem for us in the first place, it follows that anti-racism policies are mostly considered irrelevant and that anti-racism training takes up valuable teaching time which many would argue should be focusing instead on the sectarian issue (the relevance of which no-one can question).

For white community workers here, like everyone else, racism has become so much a part of white society that it is scarcely even noticed; it has become a norm that they accept without thinking. There is a consequent lack of understanding and a fear as to the true nature of racism. The traditional training approach to race relations in Great Britain did little to allow white people to confront their fear, particularly in areas of Scotland, for example, where, like Northern Ireland, there are few large black communities. Dorothy Neoh, a Chinese Community Officer in Edinburgh who spoke at the Committee on the Administration of Justice conference, "*Racism in Northern Ireland*", pointed out that: "The historical legacy and experience of the Scottish people who have been colonised and oppressed over the centuries is sometimes given to defend the perpetuation of this myth" (no black people equated no racial problems).

As Irish people, we should be only too aware of our own history of oppression and experience of discrimination, and to use this knowledge to prevent a situation where we take on that very same role of oppressor. As far as the minority ethnic communities are concerned, it is a lesson not yet well learnt. There is therefore a tremendous need for anti-racism training in predominantly all-white areas where "external influences rarely feature in daily life" (Neoh, 1992) and individuals from these communities are subjected to negative, stereotypical attitudes and harassment.

I personally believe that we have much to learn from looking more closely at the history of "race relations" training in Great Britain in order to be able to use the good practice and avoid repeating the bad.

Cultural Awareness Training

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the official line of thinking regarding the "problem" of race relations was that what was needed was mutual understanding and the acceptance of cultural diversity. Black people should be given a higher profile and before long, exposure to this cultural diversity would lead to white acceptance. Racial prejudice and any disadvantages the black communities were found to be experiencing could therefore be removed by personal contact and the provision of information on cultural backgrounds.

It should be pointed out here that some people in Great Britain identify themselves as 'black' in order to stress the extent to which people from racial or other minorities share a common political situation; in this sense, the word 'black' is used in a positive way although we are aware that there is no single accepted term and that there are people who do not identify themselves as 'black' but who share a common experience of racism.

Many community activists, black and white, challenged the kind of training, mentioned above, which appeared to have nothing at all to do with confronting racist attitudes and which at most might widen a few white people's horizons at the end of it.

Typical training comprised a series of lectures from individuals who were regarded as experts on the cultural practices of ethnic minority groups. Speakers were members of the black

community - the extent of white racism being such that it was considered appropriate to request an East African Asian to talk about the Asian culture, meaning the cultural practices of the many diverse groups living in the Indian sub-continent. Such crude generalising by whites is one of the most destructive effects of racism. (*Satow A: Trainer with the Racism Awareness Programme Unit*).

In fact it is easy to see how multiculturalism has diverted attention away from the racist nature of society and I quote here the black activist A. Sivanandan: "Just to learn about other people's cultures, though, is not to learn about the racism of one's own. To learn about the racism of one's own culture, on the other hand, is to approach other cultures objectively". (*"Roots of Racism", Institute of Race Relations, 1982.*)

Secondly, some would argue that teaching about other 'cultures' (or the customs and lifestyle which pass here for culture) means that they become frozen out of time and place, stereotyped for white comprehension and - dangerously - the assumption made that workers have now "dealt with" racism and can safely move on to other issues.

Trainers rapidly became unhappy with this particular model and, somewhat coincidentally, a new form of training, which demanded instead a turning inward to locate the source of the problem, was imported from the USA (this was called Racism Awareness Training (or RAT for short).

Racism Awareness Training

This training technique was based on certain definitions:

RACIALISM=PREJUDICED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOUR

RACISM = PREJUDICE + POWER

WHEN PREJUDICE BECOMES FULLY SYSTEMATISED INTO A PHILOSOPHY OF RACE SUPERIORITY, AND WHEN THIS BECOMES A PART OF THE WAY SOCIETY IS ORGANISED, THEN **R A C I S M**.

(*Central Council for the Education and Training in Social Work training pack, 1985.*)

and certain objectives:

1. To increase participants' awareness of the causes, nature and effects of personal and institutional racism (examine the general position of black people in society).
2. To provide an opportunity for participants to explore their racist conditioning and resultant feelings, attitudes and responses to racism (look at specific minority ethnic groups).
3. To foster anti-racist initiatives in the personal and professional lives of participants, and enable them to develop effective practices for challenging personal and institutional racism (relate these to service delivery and practice).

Trainers in Race Awareness tell participants that racism resides in the white individual and to that extent it is a white 'problem'. The training involves increasing the individual's awareness of himself, his culture and the practical consequences of institutional racism and addresses racism as a practical problem with a practical solution, that is, put enough black people, and racially aware whites, into high level positions and the racism of those institutions will vanish.

Large numbers of organisations in Great Britain now consider RAT is essential for the elimination of personal and institutional racism. Crucial to its success is the belief that the most important resource which a worker has is himself and the assumption that increased self knowledge leads to more effective behaviour.

In keeping with the analysis of racism as a white problem the majority of the workshops have included white participants only. Judy Katz, who has probably written the most influential book on RAT to date, advocated "white on white" training first since she argued it would not be fair to expose black people to yet more racism, in the form of a request from white people to help them understand precisely how they are racist, and what they can do about it. It is now considered useful, when training mixed racial groups, to use two trainers, one black and one white.

Among the central elements of a RAT programme are:

- a thorough insight into the way in which racism is structurally and historically embedded in British society.
- a safe atmosphere to explore how workers have been effected by growing up white in a white racist society, and how white people hurt themselves each time they tolerate racism in themselves and others.
- the implications of white people's tendency to think of themselves as individuals, and never as white, belonging to a white culture, i.e. the ethno-centric nature of white society.
- clarifications of the difference between racist, non-racist and anti-racist behaviour, Many people equate the National Front with racism but fail to recognise how it is part of everyday experience for black people.
- a commitment to change, discussing what needs to be changed and designing strategies for achieving this change.
- support groups to take the work forward. This training is seen as only a very small beginning.

Racism Awareness training has obviously been of great benefit to some individuals. However in Ahmed Gurnah's book on the subject, he looks at some of the criticisms as well as its strengths. He points out that it can come across as highly moralistic in so far as some trainers set a tone which is uncomfortably accusatory when one is constantly being put on

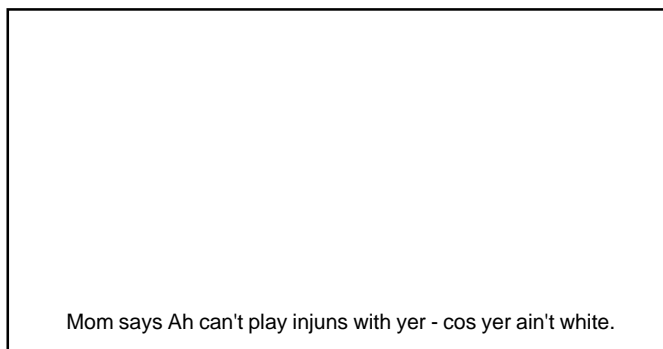
the spot and demanded to confess one's inherent racism. And Katz advocates twenty-six hours of this before any effect will be seen!

Nor is it clear that feeling and accepting guilt will necessarily lead to positive action. Indeed one of the negative consequences of RAT is said to be its tokenism in providing white people in positions of power with the acceptable language of anti-racism, while effectively maintaining the status quo.

Following on from this, another major criticism of RAT is that changing individual attitudes will not on its own get rid of racism. In the last analysis, the only real measure of anti-racist success is a concrete transformation of black people's conditions in this country. To achieve this we require political and economic change to reduce the damage done. Anti-racism is the cause which seeks that change.

Anti-Racism Training

The educational approach adopted here is less confrontational and more "experiential". This approach argues that learners learn best when they are able to involve their own experiences and relate them to the experiences of others. The training begins where the students are and emphasises the importance of behaviour and potential practice as opposed to feelings. Since most anti-racism training is constrained by time (and cost!) many trainers - while acknowledging the importance of engaging feelings - accept that there are problems in "processing" guilt and other emotional reactions if there is not enough time to do this effectively. In any case, a firm commitment to fighting racism is probably more productive ultimately than the negative emotion of guilt (CCETSW, 1985)



A major part of this training is also to do with practical strategies, such as working on how to deal with racist comments and designing good anti-racist changes for people's workplaces.

The action objectives people end up with will hopefully form the basis for future action, for example, - developing resource materials, changing management committee structures, introducing anti-racist policies and tackling personal racism.

Exercises such as case studies are easily adapted to local situations. Trainers have their own preferences but some of the most successful are;

- a game which involves two very different cultures and an immigration control point which raises questions of how we perceive people who are "different", and the

way in which discrimination can be easily carried out on instruction, without thought.

- "Being British" examines the idea of culture further, and that the idea is not easily defined.
- "First experiences of Black People" allows students to examine the negative stereotypes of black people and where these are acquired - from the media, language, religion etc.

There are also a number of videos which form part of the training. These examine stereotypes and personal prejudice. "Black" traces the roots of Racism and looks at how it operates in structures such as the media, housing, education and employment.

SO - IS ANY OF THE ABOVE TRAINING RELEVANT IN NORTHERN IRELAND?

I believe it is relevant in two ways:

1. Directly relevant once we accept certain premises:
 - a) Northern Ireland is a multiracial and multicultural society.
 - b) It is not a requirement of racism that there be any or large numbers of Black or minority ethnic people in a given society for it to exist.
 - c) Northern Ireland is a racist society.
2. Indirectly relevant with regard to the parallels which can be drawn between:
 - a) *sectarianism and racism*
 These perceived parallels are outlined in a recent article by J Brewer in a Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) publication: "*One small step towards racial justice.*" It is therefore unnecessary for me to repeat his rationale, but - The obvious points to make are: sectarianism and racism are both examples of discrimination, both patterns of inequality and both forms of oppression and exclusion.
 - b) *Travellers and other minority communities*
 The Travelling community, given the basic right to name themselves as a minority ethnic group and have the distinct Traveller identity recognised, face similar racial prejudice and discrimination to that faced by, for example, Chinese people in Northern Ireland.

In his paper entitled: "*The specificity of Irish Racism: North and South*" (in "*Race and Class*"), Dr Robbie McVeigh succinctly argues that the "...racialization of the Irish Travelling population is not separate from the racialization of other minority ethnic groups" and that further, there is a specificity to Irish racism, which, in the North, "...continues to be structured by sectarianism in a way that racism in the South does not".

Charles Husband (in a seminar on "*Ethnicity and Racism*" organised by Dublin Travellers Education and Development group) also stressed the need:

"To link ethnicity with racism. The way I want to link

NOTICE BOARD

'Dealing with prejudice'

An Octopus/NCBI residential with Cherie Brown and Jerry Tyrrell; Corrymeela, Ballycastle. 18 - 20 June 1993. Details; Jerry Tyrrell, Octopus, Magee College, Londonderry BT48 7JL (phone 0504 - 265621).

Trainer training:

- Facilitating Political Discussion (at Ulster Peoples College); 17 and 23 June (this is a date alteration).
- Advanced Group Work Skills; Autumn (Dates not yet confirmed). Full brochure available from CRC.

Trainers Network Meeting:

Colin Knox and Joanne Hughes (see piece this issue) will be presenting their interim report on CRO programme evaluation. Friday 25 June, 10 am - 2 pm (this is a date alteration).

Community Relations Action Learning Programme:

Run by CRC with Youth Action NW, the next course runs over 12 days (including 3 residentials) from 8 November '93 to 1 April '94. See piece by John McQuade this issue. Full brochure from CRC.

ATGWU Video and booklet:

The ATGWU are primed to publish a booklet and training video aligning anti-sectarianism with other equity issues whilst affirming the primacy of anti-sectarianism given the immediacy and urgency of the issue for Trade Union members in the Northern Ireland work context. For details contact; Avila Kilmurray, Equality Officer, ATGWU (Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union), phone 0232 - 232381.

Training Management bursaries:

CRC has provided two bursary places for CR training practitioners (to add to "Training for Trainers" input) on the prestigious 1993-4 Institute of Training and Development Diploma in Training Management. Full brochure available on request.

Continued from previous page

it is through the idea of power institutional racism is about power, it is about who has the right to give resources to who..."

c) Other forms of discrimination, i.e. sexism, ageism etc.

Through a deeper knowledge of what it means to be in oppressive relationships with black people participants gain insight to other oppressive structures.

But - and it is a big but - to argue that racism is just another aspect of discrimination and prejudice - and that general anti-discriminatory training is the way forward - could lead to the practising of a colour-blind approach, based upon the assumption that the needs of those discriminated against, and the forms of discrimination they face, are all broadly the same. This is not necessarily the case for Chinese people for example, who are particularly vulnerable due to reasons such as their being visibly different, face an enormous language barrier and lack the knowledge about the systems and structures of this society, severe isolation and total lack of political representation.

Anti-racism as a concept acknowledges other forms of oppression and the need to struggle against their continued existence. It is equally important that they are not 'played-off' against each other as a means of weakening the fight of one. We also have to remind ourselves here that anti-sectarianism

training is carried out under the auspices of strong legislation which protects against direct and indirect religious discrimination. There are NO LAWS in Northern Ireland to offer similar protection to black and minority ethnic people living here.

This piece is really about informing readers what "Community Relations" means elsewhere. It is also about the significance of what is happening for Northern Ireland. The context may be different but the need for effective and comprehensive anti-racist training is not.

Community Relations work, including education for mutual understanding and conflict mediation skills, has to a great extent precluded racism as an issue because it was not generally perceived to be relevant to our specific situation here. On both a theoretical and practical level I would have to question the wisdom of such an assumption or anyone's right to make it. Discrimination in any of its manifestations is wrong. Individuals within black and minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland KNOW racial discrimination is wrong. As trainers we have the power to decide whether to continue to marginalise this racial discrimination or to begin to challenge it.

Eleanor McKnight is Race Relations Adviser to the Chinese Welfare Association (17 Eblana Street, Belfast BT7, telephone 0232 - 238220)

Journal is published by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, 6 Murray Street, Belfast BT1 6DN. Telephone (0232) 439953. Facsimile (0232) 235208. The C.R.C. is a registered charity (no. XOI 108) and independent company limited by guarantee (no. NI 24026).