



The
Inner East
Outer West
Project

The
Inner East
Outer West
Project

Published January 2014
ISBN: 978-0-9548819-4-8

Belfast Interface Project
2nd Floor
109-113 Royal Avenue
Belfast BT1 1FF

Tel: +44 (0)28 9024 2828
Email: info@belfastinterfaceproject.org
Web: www.belfastinterfaceproject.org

The views and opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission or the Special EU Programmes Body



*Belfast
Interface
Project*



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Investing in your future

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the European Regional Development Fund PEACE III Programme in funding this project and publication.

We also thank our partner project delivery agencies, groups and facilitators and note our particular gratitude to steering group member agencies including Ballymac Friendship Centre, Short Strand Community Forum, Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group and Oasis Caring in Action.

We'd like to gratefully acknowledge the support of Belfast City Council Peace III Programme Team in helping us to bring the Inner East Outer West project to completion.

Finally, we'd like to thank all of the people of Inner East and Outer West Belfast, young and old, who took part in the project. This book is for you.

Chris O'Halloran,
Practice Coordinator,
Belfast Interface Project.

Preface:

Belfast Interface Project

Belfast Interface Project (BIP), established in 1995, is a membership organisation committed to informing and supporting the development of effective regeneration strategies in Belfast's interface areas.

Our overall vision is of a Belfast in which today's interface communities:

- Are free of tension, intimidation and violence both within and between communities;
- Have come to terms with the legacies of the past;
- Are socially and economically vibrant, within an attractive physical environment;
- Enjoy freedom of movement in accessing facilities and services;
- Have respect for cultural difference and diversity.

BIP's aims:

- To influence policy and advocate for change;
- To advocate with agencies and others in order to address issues of safety in interface communities;
- To support interface communities to develop positive relationships;
- To ensure that our membership remains reflective of interface communities and that the organisation is managed efficiently and effectively.

The Inner East Outer West Project

The Inner East Outer West (IEOW) project is a local peace-building project in Belfast which was managed by Belfast Interface Project and funded through Belfast City Council's Good Relations Partnership under the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) PEACE III initiative over the period July 2012 to December 2013.

Short Strand is a predominantly Catholic/nationalist community on the inner-city edge of predominantly Protestant/unionist East Belfast.

'Inner East' Belfast is a term that describes communities living close to 'peacelines' which mark the boundaries between Short Strand and its neighbouring predominantly Protestant/unionist communities.

Suffolk estate is a small, predominantly Protestant/unionist community on the outer edge of predominantly Catholic/nationalist West Belfast.

'Outer West' Belfast, denotes the communities living close to the interfaces which mark the boundaries between Suffolk and its neighbouring predominantly Catholic/nationalist communities.

The IEOW project set out to facilitate groups of hard-to-reach young people, sometimes at risk of involvement in problem anti-social behaviour in Inner East Belfast and also in Outer West Belfast, as well as adult residents, to address issues relating to conflict and division, to meet through a facilitated contact programme, to identify and exchange perspectives and attitudes regarding their identities, and to develop positive relationships.

The aims of the project were to:

- Develop relationships across interfaces in Inner East and Outer West Belfast.
- Develop collaborative working relationships amongst community and voluntary groups across each interface and between areas.
- Increase levels of mobility amongst project participants.
- Reduce levels of inter-community tension and violence at these interfaces

Also, the project aimed to create opportunities for interaction and discussion of issues relating to conflict and division on a cross-interface basis and 'East meets West' of the city basis, including opportunities to visit each other's area.

Partnership working:

Whilst Belfast Interface Project was responsible for raising funds to deliver the project, and for overall administration and coordination of project activities, BIP worked with a number of key local groups and organisations which were crucial to the success of the project as it was through these agencies and groups that local young people and adults were recruited into the project and supported to engage with the project – these included the following:

Youth Programme

Ballymac Friendship Centre, Short Strand Community Forum, Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group, Charter NI, East Belfast Mission

Adult Programme

Inner East Local Area Network, Short Strand Community Forum, Charter NI, Pitt Park Women's Group, Oasis Caring In Action, Exit, Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group, Greater Andersonstown Safer Neighbourhoods Project, Suffolk Community Interface Project.

Project Elements:

The project contained a number of key elements:

- The youth programme included a number of single identity group sessions, including one social activity session. These sessions were to prepare each group for cross-community contact; sessions were carried out with groups from East Belfast PUL (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist) interface areas, Short Strand, Suffolk and Lenadoon.
- Two cross-community activity & relationship-building two-night residentials were held; one with young people from East Belfast PUL interface areas and Short Strand, and one with young people from Suffolk and Lenadoon.



"I have learned that Protestants and Catholics can become friends."



"Everyone got along."

- A cross-city activity & relationship-building two-night residential was also held, with young people from East Belfast PUL interface areas, Short Strand, Suffolk and Lenadoon.

Some quotes from the feedback forms that participants completed:



“I learned how to get on with other people.”

“We are all the same” .

“The trips were brilliant and I made new friends.”

The next phase of the youth programme, with new sets of young people, again included:

- Four sets of six single identity group sessions, each set including one social activity, one set with each group of young people from East Belfast PUL interface areas, Short Strand, Suffolk and Lenadoon
- Two cross-community activity & relationship-building residentials, one with young people from East Belfast PUL interface areas and Short Strand, and one with young people from Suffolk and Lenadoon

“We work together and become close. Leaders make it enjoyable.”

“Residential was class.”



“Stereotypes was brilliant, especially turning it round on their own stereotypes – it got them thinking.”

“Good thing is it was fun pier-jumping.”





“Simple and relaxed, leaving good space for relationships to form.”

“Short Strand and East Belfast Mission ones are best mates now, stuck together.”



- The youth programme also included a cross-city mixed (gender as well as community background) Soccer 7s competition with a community relations theme throughout, with events in Inner East and Outer West Belfast, and culminating in a cross-city event at Seaview football ground in North Belfast on September 15th.





“Class day, meeting new people.”

“Team mates are more important than their religion”.



“Fun day. Respect. Religion is not how you judge people.”

“Everyone is different. Respect cultures. Not to judge by religion.”

“Don’t judge people. Have fun! Don’t fight!”



“Football was class!”

The other major element within the project was a programme of work with adults in each area.

This programme included:

- A cross-city planning residential attended by five local practitioners from each of Suffolk, Lenadoon, Short Strand and PUL Inner East interface communities, in order to generate and plan a cross-community adult programme.
- Two cross-interface Inner East and two Outer West externally facilitated relationship-building residencials, each attended by local community activists from each community (i.e. each cross-interface residential attended by approximately twelve who live alongside interfaces in Inner East or Outer West)



“A lot more openness.”

“Got to sing republican songs and the Sash in/to the same company!”



“Showed potential as to how we can work together.”

“People interacted well and developed friendships.”

“Got to know each other as people / as humans.”

“Everyone contributed.”





“Some people here I have known for a while; some I have met for the first time, but now I feel I’ve known them all my life. I wish we could get all of Suffolk and Lenadoon together in one big conference to deal with issues and develop positive relations.”

- One cross-city externally facilitated relationship-building residential for approximately twenty four local community activists who live alongside interfaces in Inner East and Outer West.

“Thank you for this, giving me a chance to meet new people from other areas and hearing voices which I wouldn’t have heard before.”

“Spread the love.”

“I really enjoyed building relationships with East Belfast residents it was a great learning experience. Good facilitation. Well planned.”

“It was great to see how Short Strand and Suffolk are so alike, making you feel you’re not the only one.”

“I feel that it has created an expectation that life on the coal face of the interface can be improved and that people can take action to improve the quality of their own lives.”





- Delivery of an ‘exchanging perceptions’ photography programme with local residents in each area. The programme included a series of six cross-community photography workshops in Inner East Belfast, and six workshops in Outer West Belfast, using disposable cameras, facilitated by a professional photographer.

“I have learned that there are a lot of similarities between us and the other communities and we all have different perceptions of them.”

“It was good to learn about Lenadoon”. “I learned about Lenadoon and Suffolk similarities.” “Looking at different things in different ways, you may see something different from what others see.” “Stephen was a great teacher and made everyone feel their work was great.” “Very well managed.”

“Relationships built with the other community.” “Made me look at images in my community in a different way.”



- Following on from the photography workshops above, an exhibition of the images produced was staged at the Waterfront Hall over the period October 14th to 24th 2013. A broader selection of photographs produced through the workshops, together with accompanying narrative, forms part of this publication.



- A series of hosted and facilitated exchange visits to each others areas, allowing Inner East residents to visit Outer West, & vice versa, was accompanied by delivery by partner groups of some training sessions relevant to the needs of other partner groups.

“Very enjoyable and always looking forward to interacting with members of other communities.”

“Meeting new people from different places.”

“I enjoyed listening to the talk on how SLIG was formed and the issues faced by both communities.”

“Really enjoyable visit and very friendly people.”

“I enjoyed meeting new people and getting a better understanding of the residents across inner east Belfast.”

“Well looked after.” “Yous did a brilliant job.”

“The programme is a tool for peacebuilding. New mindsets can make a vast change in working class communities.”

“Realising the tragedy enacted by and on our people.” “Enjoyed the tour of the museum.”

“Excellent attitude, positivity for our future.”

“Like to see the project developed further over an extended time period.”

“Meeting the lovely people of Short Strand, making goals and enjoying new friendships.”



- Delivery of an externally facilitated planning day in Outer West Belfast in order to develop capacity to address local interface-related community safety issues and also strengthen relationships across the two main community safety groups (Safer Neighbourhoods Project and Suffolk Community Interface Project) in the Suffolk and Lenadoon area, alongside SLIG.



Single identity work programmes in Inner East Belfast:

- A programme of single identity work with young people, nominated through the Exit group in East Belfast and delivered by the Beyond Walls facilitation team, which aimed to assist young people to explore the current issues they face living in East Belfast, their views, vision and exploration of the potential for relationship-building processes with people from other communities.



"I would like to do more things like this." "Was class."

"Make it longer."

"More of these days." "Have more days like this." "I've learnt more about them."

"It made me think and understand more." "Amazing time." "I loved it." "Working as a team was good."

"It was baltic." "Best ever" "It was brilliant."

- A programme of single identity work with adult residents nominated through Exit, and delivered by the Beyond Walls facilitation team, which aimed to assist adult residents to explore the current issues they face living in East Belfast, their experiences of difficult relationships, and their views, vision and exploration of the potential for relationship-building processes with people from other communities in future.

“Really enjoyed myself and got me a break from all I’ve left back home.”

“It really helped me with issues and I was made feel so at ease from the word go.”

“Really enjoyed the programme.”

“Great weekend, great facilities, valued the programme.”

