



Belfast City Council
OPENCities Local Action Plan
2011

Annex: D - 'The Best of Belfast' – Best Practice Case Studies



The Best of Belfast OPENCities Belfast City Council Good Practice Case Studies

1. Belfast Migrant forum, Belfast City Council – Good Relations Unit
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1. Belfast City Council

Title of Project: Belfast Migrant Forum



Jenny McKeown, Peruvian Community - "I met my husband who was travelling for six months in Peru. He told me about the good weather and the lovely people in Belfast - about the people he was right!"

Website: <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations/peaceIIIfunding.asp>

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Contact Person: Leish Dolan – DolanL@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Background and description of the Project:

Since the accession of the A8 countries to the EU in 2004 there has been a dramatic increase in the level of migrant workers arriving in Northern Ireland and to Belfast City in particular. While there has been general acceptance that migrant workers were making a positive contribution to the economy and society, there were some indications that the public profile of migrant workers was an issue. This is indicated by the incidence of racially-motivated attacks, some of which involved migrant workers.

Belfast City Council commissioned some external research to provide information on the number and make up of the new migrant communities in Belfast. The purpose of the research was to help the council meet its responsibilities in challenging racism and inequality and in developing positive and inclusive responses to the changing face of the city.

Through this research, a number of recommendations were made including that Belfast City Council should explore how they could better support the work being carried out by community and voluntary groups in relationships between the established population and the new minority communities. In response to these recommendations, in 2008 Belfast City Council took the lead in establishing a Migrant Forum to develop effective partnership working in the City on issues relating to migration.

Objectives:

- Establish mechanisms to explore how the council can take the lead in helping to establish links with representatives and members of the various new minority communities across the city;
- Improve interagency cooperation within Belfast when addressing issues facing migrant and minority ethnic communities;
- Improve awareness of migrant worker and minority ethnic issues within the council;
- Support the development of community led initiatives that generate understanding and collaboration between new and host communities;
- Support migrant communities but also support settled communities to adapt to change in their community;
- To develop and deliver training programmes both within the council and externally with the aim of promoting better understanding around issues relating to diversity/inward migration.





Maciej Bator, Polish Community

Bilingual Migrant Worker Organiser, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), Volunteer and Secretary for the Polish Association of Northern Ireland - "I came here as a migrant worker in December 2004 to work in one of the food factories. After 12 different jobs, we decided to set up a Polish Association in Northern Ireland."

Main themes:

- 1) Networking with Migrant Groups
- 2) Improved integration across Government agencies
- 3) Leadership and Good Governance from City Leaders
- 4) Building Good Community Relations
- 5) Shared Culture

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The presence of a wider migrant population in Northern Ireland has come to be recognised and acknowledged within the past four years. This is primarily due to the publicity around relatively high levels of immigration associated with the recent enlargement of the European Union.

The recent patterns of migration were distinctive in terms of speed, the numbers of people and the countries they were coming from. This posed challenges in relation to the processes of integration, community cohesion, racism and xenophobia. It also generates problems in meeting the needs and providing appropriate services to the different members of the new communities. Having a key role in community development and local service provision, the council needed to consider the rapid changes taking place and the impact on the city and the indigenous population.

There is great deal of ethnic and national diversity among the new migrant population and their reasons for moving vary. Individuals move to learn a new language, to work for a short time to earn money or to progress in their careers. Some regard the move as long-term or permanent.

Attempts were made to engage with nationals from other eastern European countries who are residing in Belfast, but this has proved difficult. Statistics indicate that there are a growing number of Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovakian people living in the city, but it appears that they have not yet established community associations and networks in the same way as the Polish community.

As a result of research undertaken by the Institute for Conflict Research, Queen's University Belfast, many respondents believed that Belfast City Council should take a more active role in engaging with the issue of migration and the emergence of new minority communities. This might include developing a local strategy for the delivery of programmes and initiatives in relation to the new migrant communities, support for a migrant rights centre, and taking a more proactive role in assisting the new communities integrate into the wider community. Despite the fact that there were over twenty organisations involved in various aspects of working with minority migrant groups, there was no clear focal point for their efforts. On the basis of the feedback from local groups and the recommendations in the research, Belfast City Council took the initiative to establish the Belfast Migrant Forum which included representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.



Activities of the Project:

The Migrant Forum was established in February in 2008. There are over 25 members of the forum, drawn from partner statutory and voluntary organisations, working with or providing services to migrant / minority ethnic communities. The Forum meets five times per year and is involved in a number of activities including:

- Research good practice models and develop local area framework for migrant worker issues in Belfast by December 2009
- Co-ordinate a civic programme to promote a sense of belonging amongst newcomers with over 400 participants by December 2010
- Producing more accessible information on practical issues e.g. language, accommodation for migrant workers by June 2009
- Establish a cross border accredited programme to support the employment related needs of migrant workers
- Develop and deliver a migration awareness training aimed at providing factual information on migration issues and challenging current myths and misinformation.

The Forum has received an allocation of funds from the PEACE III programme of €300,000 to support the activities mentioned above and hope that some of the pilot actions may be taken into mainstream EU funding programmes.

Key Results and Impact:

Belfast is an over-governed city with a complex mix of organisations with different remits working on various projects, initiatives and strategies that impact on the city. As the democratically elected body within the city, we are committed to demonstrating civic leadership and working in partnership for the well-being of its citizens. In our role as a civic leader in the city, we regularly scan the policy environment to ensure complementarity and added value of our work and in this case it was clear that the City Council was well placed to take the lead in supporting the integration of new migrants in the City.

Working with diverse groups across the City, the council is taking the lead in establishing a vision of one city – an open city for all, based on equality and opportunity that requires a common vision and strategic framework for its effective development. The council has also agreed to embed partnership working, alongside key agencies within the city, which requires collaborative leadership.

Belfast City Council, like many other city councils in Europe, is taking the lead in bringing together the Migrant Forum. We are also working on a number of initiatives related to Shared Cultural Space including Inter-Faith Work, Culture and Arts Outreach and City of Festivals. The key outcomes and impact of the Migrant Forum will be:

- Citywide vision and coordinated approach to issues relating to migration and the integration of migrant workers
- Increased awareness of activities and communication between forum members with regard to migrant worker issues
- Increased sharing of local information and best practice
- Improved awareness and understanding of migrant worker issues within the council and among partner organisations
- Improved services for migrant workers
- Increased sense of belonging within the migrant and minority ethnic community.
- Development of a local action plan for the delivery of programmes and initiatives in relation to new migrant communities
- Delivery of training programmes within the council and externally aimed at promoting better understanding around issues relating to diversity / inward migration
- Delivery of a training for trainers programme to equip other people to deliver the migrant awareness training
- The establishment of an information point on Belfast City Council website for migrant information
- Translation of the A-Z of council services

Belfast City Council's good relations policy states that we "will encourage and support good relations between all citizens, promoting fair treatment, understanding and respect for people of all cultures". The

principle of equality of opportunity underpins the council's approach to all community relations issues; there cannot be good community relations without equality.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Sept 2008 – Aug 2010
- 2) €300,000
- 3) 70% EU Commission PEACE III
30% Department for Social Development

Project Partners:

- Initiators: Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

2) Decision- Making Actors and Process: Chairperson: Belfast City Council, 20 members from public, private and voluntary sectors constitute Migrants Forum. All participating organisations are responsible for implementation of their parts of the approach. Coordination is by the Good Relations Unit in Belfast City Council.

- Process – Meetings every two months
- Decision- Making: Based on partnership and consensus

Lessons Learned:

3) Ongoing Support and Co-ordination:

The Good Relations Unit is responsible for providing ongoing support for the planning and co-ordination of the Migrant Forum. The rest of the members represent the remaining partners. The group meets every two months with regular contact between the Unit and member organisations between meetings.

- Working to educate civic leaders on the particular challenges faced by new migrants taking their attention away from traditional divisions and tensions
- Making links with newly arrived migrant groups who were not well organised
- Access to accurate information on the number of migrants arriving in Belfast and their location
- Some migrant groups not well organised locally to represent their needs and council did not have language skills internally to reach out to new groups
- Working to get the interest of Central Government Ministries and agencies in co-operation and partnership at local levels
- Bringing together 20 partners from public, private and voluntary sector to reach agreement and develop vision of the role of Migrant Forum
- Questions over future sustainability of Forum when funding is spent
- Ensuring appropriate organisations are engaged
- Ensuring the continued participation of organisations given current funding shortages
- Ensuring the forum is kept relevant and does not become a talking shop
- In absence of co-ordinated response from Central Government City Councils are well placed to take the lead in bring together interest groups
- City Councils must dedicate time and resources or plan and organise events and action planning process

- The collaboration must be on the basis of desire to collaborate on a voluntary basis and decision making processes are by consensus



- The forums success is down to the level of expertise of the different agencies represented on it
- Sometimes difficult to tune into the key areas of action given the wide range of problems and different perspectives of the stakeholders and limited funding
- Good communication strategy is a basic requirement for the success of the project
- OPENCity concept can help to bring together different interest groups because it offers a very broad vision – something for everyone

Stella Tsang, Chinese Community Volunteer, Chinese Welfare Association

“I got married in 1974 and then came to Belfast. When I came here, I remember when you went down the town, or shopping, they needed to search your pockets and search your handbag. I remember the houses all broken down and boarded up with wood. Now it's all modern, all the new houses, it's quite different. Belfast is a beautiful city now”



European Union
European Regional Development Fund



2. Irish Congress of Trade Unions & Belfast City Council

Title of Project: A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Website: <http://www.ictu.ie/projects/> <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/migrants/index.asp>

Contact person: Leish Dolan, BCC - DolanL@BelfastCity.gov.uk
Kevin Doherty, ICTU – kevin.doherty@ictuni.org

Background and description of Project: 'A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future' is a programme developed by Belfast City Council in partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It is designed as a unique and innovative response to the challenges laid down by the movement of people across and into the European Union countries. Given that most of the experience of migrant workers living in Belfast will be shaped by their experience within the workplace, the project aims to build positive relations and to move towards a more inclusive and stable society by addressing the exploitation and vulnerability experienced by many migrant workers in their place of employment.

The project assists migrant workers in identifying and asserting their rights, ensuring migrant workers have the same access to employment protections and redress as other workers. The programme provides a comprehensive approach for developing and disseminating new ways of delivering integrated, inclusive and representative mechanisms for migrant workers and their families rooted in the principles of equality and social justice. Through the development of strategic partnerships, accredited training, outreach programmes and research it aims to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers.

Objectives:

- Provision of employment advice and support for migrant workers
- Working to develop shared workplace and relationships
- Develop and delivery of accredited training programmes tackling racism and sectarianism
- Increased involvement of trade union in promoting migrant rights

Main Themes:

1. Building shared workplace and relationships
2. Challenging racist and sectarian attitudes and perceptions,
3. Promoting shared culture.

Needs, Issues and Problems:

Given the recent significant changes in labour migration there is an increased need to focus on demands for the protection of migrant workers. It is because of the identification of migrants with 'migrant workers' that trade unions have a particular concern and responsibility for addressing these issues directly. Unions are often the first 'welfare agency' that migrant workers come into contact with in new countries and unions are often central in the defence of their social and economic rights in the workplace and at a political level.

Women workers are increasingly making up the majority of migrant workers and are often the chief sources of income for families and therefore those most at risk of exploitation in the workplace. Experience shows that in countries where the violation of migrant worker rights occurs, the rights of citizens are also further constrained and under threat. A modern European city cannot ignore entire populations of people and still fulfill its role in serving all the public and making effective policy decisions.

Further to research undertaken by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions aimed at providing advice and guidance to migrant workers, it became clear that there was a need to enhance the rights and representation of migrant workers in the workplace. ICTU research also provided evidence that without adequate representation migrant workers found it difficult to assert their rights in the workplace. The project is also focused on encouraging migrant workers to join trade unions for increased protection in their employment and to build positive relations with other workers which will also impact on attitudes and behaviours beyond the workplace.

The project has also worked through training interventions with trade union activists to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers by building the capacity of the trade union movement to make informed decisions that ensure the inclusion and participation of migrant workers.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- A permanent Migrant Workers Support Clinic providing employment rights advice and representation services has been established. Floating clinics provided at locations and events identified by partner organisations for ethnic minority groups.
- Trade union officials accompany and represent migrant workers in their workplace at industrial relations meetings.
- Training for trade union activists, which seeks to create a greater understanding of employment and welfare rights of migrant workers.
- Trade union leadership training for trade union members from a migrant worker background.
- Production of a publication exposing the myths which fuel racism.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reduce exploitation of migrant workers through ensuring access to their statutory employment rights;
- Facilitate good relationships between migrant and indigenous workers by directly addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance;
- Highlight the interdependent relationship between migrant and indigenous workers helping to create more welcoming and diverse workplaces;
- Encourage the participation of migrant workers in the trade union structures;
- Dispel the myths that foster racist attitudes and better equip trade union activists and others to challenge racism wherever they encounter it;
- Make Belfast a more open, tolerant, shared, peaceful, stable, equitable and prosperous city.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: October 2009 –December 2010.
- 2) €86,000
- 3) EU Commission Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners:

Initiators: Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council.

Decision Making/Delivery Actors: Project Board, Project Manager, Senior Supplier

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Ensuring that all migrant workers are aware of the service that the project provides.
- Dealing with cases that require representation can take considerable time and resources.
- Difficulties in helping migrant workers take disputes to Employment Tribunal.
- Securing long-term funding to continue this type of support service for migrant workers.



Lessons Learned:

- Seek additional funding to pursue cases through Employment Tribunals.
- Make the training available to more participants.
- Seek funding for a longer duration for the project because there is a core need for such public services.

3. Allstate Northern Ireland

Title of project: Talk-IT Diversity and Equality Programme

Website: <http://www.allstate.com/about/Northern-Ireland/diversity.aspx>

Contact person: Joy Chambers Allstate NI - jch26@allstate.com

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief Description:

Allstate Northern Ireland was established in Belfast in 1998 and provides high quality software development services and business process outsourcing solutions in support of its U.S parent's global operations. Currently, the company employs more than 1500 people in Northern Ireland. Allstate NI plays a strategic role in developing, transforming and maintaining the various technology platforms used within Allstate, to support it in its day to day business, looking after the different systems that you might expect one of the world's largest insurance giants to run. A significant factor in the success of Allstate NI's unprecedented growth in Northern Ireland has been the company's ability to attract, retain and develop a diverse workforce.

This case study provides an insight into the tools and techniques which Allstate NI has put in place to support this diverse working environment, which not only meets the needs of migrant workers, but also encourages gender diversity and positive policies to enhance employment opportunities for disabled workers. Allstate NI's Diversity and Equality Programme has successfully integrated diversity into the organisational culture. It is not a singular programme but an ongoing, integrated corporate initiative that enhances the company's ability to attract, motivate and retain a diverse pool of high performing employees necessary for a successful business. Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society.

Objectives:

- Design a “Work-IT” programme which supports migrant workers to acquire the English language skills they need in the workplace
- Successful integration of overseas staff into the organisation
- Augment the cultural life at ANI
- Enhance the ANI & NI workforce by improving the employability skills of those who do not have English as their first language

Main Themes:

- Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Workplace,
- Welcoming Corporate Culture,

Needs, Issues and Problems:

ANI recruited a significant number of overseas workers whose first language was not English and who they wanted to integrate successfully into the Allstate work culture and into NI society. Working in a large organisation with 1,500 staff across two different work sites, overseas workers appeared to be finding it difficult to integrate effectively in their work teams and there was a tendency for them to group together in their native language groups during work breaks and social events. This meant that their business communication was not sufficiently developed to enable them to participate in US team selection interviews, thereby limiting their career options. Without the successful integration of these workers ANI was also at risk of losing high value opportunities to other off-shore companies due to the skills shortage within the NI & UK IT sectors.

Activities of Programme:

- Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society. Allstate NI's initial welcome pack for newly recruited migrant workers includes flight assistance, airport pick up, Allstate NI meet & greet, sourced rental accommodation with 1 month's free rent provision, assistance with setting up a local bank account and a 1 day accompanied tour of Belfast providing directions to the office, local shops and amenities, emergency services etc.
- 'Allstate NI Welcome to Northern Ireland' booklet, which reiterates much of this information and provides local maps, details of restaurants, reliable taxi firm numbers etc.
- Allstate NI engaged a local training organisation GEMS NI to support the development and delivery of "Language for Work" classes for all overseas workers

Key Results and Impacts:

- Increased confidence and improved communication skills for new workers feeling more valued and able to contribute more effectively to organisational goals
- Better integration into the corporate and social networks within the company
- Enhanced corporate profile and competence for Allstate NI within Allstate group as a result of commitment to Equality and Diversity
- Improved career prospects and opportunities for participants in the training programmes commensurate with their skills
- Higher levels of representation of migrant workers on internal committees and working groups
- Improved language skills through better grammar and more vocabulary specifically related to business environment

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: 4 times per year since 2005
- 2) €3,000 per programme which is 40 hour programme over 10 weeks
- 3) Allstate NI funding

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Allstate NI

Delivery Actors: GEMS Northern Ireland Programme Development and Training Provider

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The programme needed to be flexible to hold the training at the employer's premises over lunch period to be least disruptive to the workplace. The employer gave the staff one hour and they gave their lunch hour.
- Level testing was used to gauge individual strengths and weaknesses and make sure participants were not out of their depth and could get benefit from the programme. There was a lot of emphasis put on the wishes of the participants regarding times of classes, eating times to ensure full commitment and motivation for the class and avoid drop out.
- The training was tailored to meet the needs of each group and the individual needs including work to match the business need with the individual needs.
- Each group had mixed abilities which created its own challenges and the need for the Tutor to prepare additional material for different participants.
- The participant's actual ability did not always reflect their own perception of their ability.

Lessons Learned:

- Learning has been applied to everyday lives – dealing with personal affairs and promoting relationships at neighbourhood and community level.
- Value to the company from investing in the integration process – leading to increased billable days for staff and enhanced reputation within the Allstate group in terms of performance.

4. Chinese Welfare Association & Polish Association for NI

Title of project: Bilingual Community Safety Advocacy (Chinese and Polish)

Website: www.cwa-ni.org

Contact person: Eileen Chan-Hu - Chinese Welfare Association
Maciek Bator – Polish Association for Northern Ireland

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description: This project is a bi-lingual advocate scheme which works towards developing trust and confidence in the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) principally within the Chinese and Polish Communities, but also with wider ethnic minority communities. The advocates facilitate information flows to local Police on any problems or perceived difficulties or criminal activities / behaviour within the communities and also encourage reporting of anti-social behaviour that may be occurring in the areas where various ethnic communities have settled. The channels of communication also help to provide an early insight into any perceived build up of tension in and between the communities. The Polish Advocate will support EU nationals and the Chinese Advocate will work with Non EU nationals of which over 60 countries are represented in UK.

Objectives:

- Develop role of community advocates to support improved linkages between migrant communities and policing and justice systems
- Participate through schools programmes in Citizenship and Safety Education Programme
- Work to develop information materials for ethnic communities to inform them of their role in promoting community safety
- Mapping exercise of minority ethnic communities in relation to Hate-Crime

Main Themes:

- Community Cohesion - building relationships between communities
- Good Relations
- Racial Reporting
- Support to victims of racial harassment/ incidents

Needs, Issues and Problems:

In 2003/2004 the Police Service of Northern Ireland reported 453 racial incidents, but in 2009 more than 1,000 incidents of racial hate crime were recorded. The importance of the scheme arose from the fact that in particular Chinese and Polish communities in Belfast felt that they were not fully engaged with the police service in relation to the reporting of crime, anti-social behaviour and the providing of information on issues associated with community safety. Community representatives believed that crime statistics did not represent the current facts on the ground where many people in ethnic communities did not feel they had the confidence to report anything to the police. This scheme was set up to build trust within these communities, and to give a sense of equality with other communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Activities of Project:

- Two Community Advocates working to enhance relationships between target ethnic communities and police and community safety representatives
- A dedicated 'Welcome Pack' developed with particular reference to access to police services and community safety
- Information materials to raise awareness of racism and hate crimes
- Schools Citizenship and Safety Education Programme.



Key Results and Impacts:

- Project has helped the police deliver on their objectives to ensure equality, promote diversity contribute to bettering relations, between different groups in society and contributed to building trust between communities.
- There is much evidence that delivering public services in consultation and conjunction with the service receivers has a much better outcome for all parties.
- The Project benefits the minority ethnic communities by: preventing and reducing crime effectively and providing responsive local policing in partnership with the community.
- Reducing incidence of Anti Social Behaviour - Improved information flows will also enable the police to target their response in relation to anti – social behaviour as well as hate crimes thus giving these communities vital visible reassurance as well as reducing the level of these incidents in these communities.
- Improved Community Cohesion and increasing trust in PSNI is apparent in Chinese and Polish Communities is apparent within the focus area. A long term aim is to encourage all communities to see the police as their police service and to consider policing as a viable career option. A more diverse and reflective workforce in PSNI will improve service delivery and community confidence.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2010 – March 2011.
- 2) £55,000 for 4 days x 2 bilingual advocates delivering services to EU and non-EU nationals.
- 3) Belfast City Council, Police Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Chinese Welfare Association and Polish Association for Northern Ireland

Partners: Police Service of Northern Ireland, Housing Executive, Community Safety Partnership, Good Relations Unit - Belfast City Council, South Belfast Roundtable, Northern Ireland Policing Board Minority Ethnic Group.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Channels of gaining commitment for innovative inter-agency work.
- Challenges in developing improved channels of communication with key public agencies.
- Development of improved practices in service delivery by statutory agencies.
- Policy-making processes in the absence of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy which will pave commitment from political leadership towards the issue of racism.
- Service delivery in demand from users and from statutory agencies; resulting in the need to expand the Project.

Lessons Learned:

- There is a need for Bilingual Advocacy as a main link to minority ethnic communities and to work in partnership with statutory agencies for effective communication and this is vital to the issues of racism.
- Advocates received training in housing and policing such as critical incidents, conflict management and community safety and how these factors impact communities affected by racial harassment. The Advocates are trained to ensure a flow of communication between their users and the service providers.
- Project helps develops trust, goodwill and confidence for all sectors and this in turn is important in effective service delivery.

5. South Belfast Integration Project

Title of project: South Belfast Integration Project

Website: www.southbelfast.org

Contact person: Denise Wright – Race Relations Coordinator denise.wright@sbrtr.org.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief description:

The South Belfast Integration Project is designed to develop a positive and inclusive response to the changing face of the city of Belfast. It recognizes the range of new migrant communities and individuals who, along with the indigenous communities and established minority ethnic communities, make up the population of South Belfast. The project involves interventions across 3 target groups - Level one – Individual level, Level two - Community Group Level – Community and Level three – Corporate.

Objectives:

- To run a “Belfast Friendship Club” which will provide a safe shared cultural space for a range of individuals from diverse backgrounds to meet others, socialise and build strong positive relationships.
- To hold a South Belfast Inclusion Festival which will bring together local communities, minority ethnic communities and local businesses to work in partnership to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- To recruit a team of South Belfast volunteers from the corporate sector to undertake Habitat for Humanity builds in NI and overseas.
- To introduce and embed both a local and global sense of interdependence to engender a sense of belonging and common purpose.
- To challenge and reduce sectarian and racist attitudes and behaviour in South Belfast at a range of levels, individual, community and corporate.
- To promote volunteering and provide opportunities for those who may feel excluded to participate and engage with wider society and to come into contact with those from other communities.

Main Themes:

- Building Good Community Relations
- Integration
- Community Cohesion
- Global Perspective

Needs, Issues and Problems:

South Belfast Roundtable, formed in 2004, is a partnership of over 80 community, voluntary, minority ethnic, statutory, political and faith groups who work to promote diversity and tackle racism. The group recognised the need for sustained good relations work within South Belfast in order to build a cohesive community and that this need increases as society becomes more diverse. Racism and the racist harassment of minority ethnic communities became publicly acknowledged as a problem in Northern Ireland in the mid 1990s.

There is also a need to challenge and reduce racist attitudes and behaviour through a strategic educational process. The partnership approach helps to deliver on the above and to share good practice within and between organisations in South Belfast. South Belfast Roundtable members identified the need to move beyond merely engaging with other communities to developing meaningful ongoing relationships, between such communities and to begin to set a global context for the change in demographics in order to promote greater respect and understanding and thus improve relationships at local level.



Activities of Programme:

- Level one – Individual level - Belfast Friendship Club meets informally one evening each week at Common Grounds Café and, while open to individuals from all communities, aims to have a particular welcome for newcomers.
- Level two - Community Group Level – Annual Inclusion Festival with a global dimension involving minority ethnic communities and local businesses work in partnership and a range of activities are planned to promote trust and mutual understanding and to develop and or strengthen relationships.
- Level three – Corporate - Individuals from a range of backgrounds working in private sector take part in Habitat for Humanity builds both within Belfast and overseas to alleviate poverty housing. Team building initiatives will be undertaken prior to the trip where participants will explore the theme of good relations and community cohesion.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.
- Helping to enable all communities, both those established and newly arrived, to work, integrate and better understand one another.
- This project offers participants safe forums to address conflict in the context of identity and affiliation alongside issues of belonging, trust, majority and minority relationships and dealing with difference.
- Helps newcomers to discover their rich contribution to civic society, to listen to experiences of being a minority and overcoming racism to make a life in a new land, and to discover customs of dress, food and religious practice.
- The Inclusion Community Festival and its link with Belfast Carnival help to further develop both shared cultural space and shared city space.
- The project provides the opportunity to engage at a range of levels in order to mainstream good relations and can be further built upon within participating groups to build shared organisational space.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2009 – Dec 2010.
- 2) €29,000
- 3) Belfast City Council, Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: South Belfast Roundtable

Partners: Common Grounds Café Belfast Friendship Club, Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland Community of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (NICRAS), Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland, Centre for Global Education

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Concerns about lack of buy in from individuals and groups, this risk was minimised by using our existing good relationships across groups in South Belfast.
- Difficulty in recruiting from the private sector for the overseas Habitat for Humanity Build due to the required commitment for individuals to fund raise costs of the trip at a time of economic down turn.

Lessons Learned:

- Need for a dedicated project officer to co-ordinate the various integration activities. The project officer provides a continuous link, is known to everyone and is thus able to make introductions, welcome new members, provide signposting to services as necessary and carry out the background organisation needed for events.
- The informal nature of the Belfast Friendship Club helps to welcome newcomers and to make first steps in engagement process.
- Local communities are willing to engage when a safe vehicle for engagement is provided. There are many “indigenous to Belfast” attending to get to know those who are new to the city.
- Equality is a key component for integration

- Social contact can facilitate people in being signposted to other services not only by the project officer but by other members who support and take an interest in each other.
- Coordination and making involvement easy is key to groups engaging. Groups were able to identify local needs and hold events that were appropriate to their constituencies. The coordinator was able to facilitate contact between local and minority ethnic groups.

6. Belfast City Council

Title of Project: Migration Awareness Training

Website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/migrants/index.asp

Contact Person: Leish Dolan dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk

Location: Belfast City

Brief description of Project:

Migrant Awareness Training is a half-day workshop designed by South Belfast Roundtable and Belfast City Council. It is an interactive session which explores inward and outward migration and the rights of migrant workers in Northern Ireland. It aims to dispel myths and provide practical information on issues relating to migration.

Objectives:

To challenge myths and misinformation around inward migration by encouraging discussion in a safe environment

Main themes:

- To look at current myths, misinformation and facts around inward migration
- To raise awareness of the global context of migration
- To understand the history of migration in Northern Ireland
- To look at the impact and challenges of migration at a local level

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The issue of migration is one of increasing importance in Belfast. There has been a significant increase in the number, background and diversity of migrant communities moving to Northern Ireland over recent years. This trend came to prominence with the arrival of substantial numbers of migrants to work in the food processing industries and the health sector, and the subsequent arrival of migrant workers from the European Countries that joined the European Union in 2004.

The changing demographics brought about by inward migration have presented opportunities and challenges for everyone involved. For migrant workers and minority ethnic communities who are creating new lives for themselves in a very different homeland and culture than previously experienced there are certainly challenges. There are also challenges for the community and voluntary sectors responding with limited resources to the needs and in many instances, the social exclusion of minority ethnic communities. For the council and other service providers there are challenges in responding to growing diversity within a challenging political environment and developing collaborative working.

The speed and scale of recent inward migration to Belfast took many by surprise and there is still considerable misunderstandings surrounding migration. This migration awareness training aims to encourage discussion around issues of inward migration in a safe environment. It aims to dispel some of the myths which can often give rise to suspicion and misunderstanding. It aims to contribute to good relations between communities by providing participants with factual information.

Activities of the Programme:

Interactive workshop



Key Results and Impact:

Developing the capacity of others to challenge myths and misinformation around inward migration with factual information

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Sept 2008 – Aug 2010
- 2) This project is supported by the European Regional Development Fund under the PEACE III Programme

Project Partners/Implementation:

The training was developed by the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council and South Belfast Roundtable. Both organisations deliver it on a monthly basis.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Constantly revising the training to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose
- Adapting the training to suit different needs / learning styles
- Questions over future sustainability of training when funding is spent
- Ensuring appropriate organisations are engaged

Lessons Learned:

- To sustain the training by developing training for trainers programme so that the training can be delivered to wider audiences.
- To extend the duration of the training from a half day workshop to a full day, to encourage a greater analysis of the subject.
- To constantly revise the training material to reflect changing trends, current issues and policy developments.

7. North Belfast Partnership Board

Title: Meet the Neighbours/War Years Remembered

Website: www.nbhbp.org www.waryearsremembered.co.uk

Contact Person: john.read@nthbp.org john.read@nihe.gov.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description of Project:

Meet The Neighbours/War Years Remembered is a practical, real time constantly adapting and user friendly hands on approach to encourage community engagement at community level. War Years remembered is an interactive mobile museum that travels the UK, ROI, and province and can be erected at any venue over a one-day period. It includes memorabilia and information on the Home Front, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, European, Polish, Indian and other Commonwealth forces in World War One and Two. The exhibition can be adapted and built to suit location, venue. It also includes the War Of Independence, 1912 and 1916 is sensitive to local needs but giving a broad perspective of communities local and new alike.

The inclusion of wartime information around Poland and the Polish brigade has had an impact on youth from all geographic areas and has given them a greater understanding of the contribution made by Poland and other commonwealth forces during World War Two thus reducing attacks on the Polish Community. Secondly the intergenerational aspect of the exhibition and the attendance of local schools create a secure and safe space for different individuals to meet and share ideas and have discussions on the futility of war and its impact on society as a whole. The Museum experience has been combined with meet the neighbours to provide ethnic dance, music and food thus encouraging participation from a wider range of individuals who may pick and choose between the areas on offer.

Objectives:

- Irish input into the services during the Great War and World War Two to educate the communities on the shared history of WW1 and WW2.
- Culture Swap element to educate a younger generation and create a intergenerational cross community project that actually works
- To combat sectarianism racism and anti-semitism in a realistic and quantifiable manner. Vehicle and restoration of exhibits project and specialist restoration works to combat skills loss and combat worklessness in North Belfast.
- Connect with Indian, Polish and Jewish Community to reflect section 75 groups and reflect wartime experiences to wider community to educate and decrease racism in a positive manner within North Belfast.
- Creation of permanent museum at identified venues.

Main themes:

- Education
- Good Relations
- Anti-Sectarianism
- Community Networking
- Intercommunity and Intercultural Shared History

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The concept grew from a lack of community cohesion and wider community acceptance of the migrant population in Newtownabbey and North Belfast in early 2005 and 2006 and an increase in attacks on the Polish community in the North Belfast and Newtownabbey areas.

Activities of the Project:

Workshops are provided on site at events with a focus on the Polish wartime contribution and the equivalent wartime contribution of the Irish soldier in real time translated into Polish for school groups, schools and youth attending from both communities. Fact sheets on the contribution of the Polish Air Force, Army and Resistance and connections with Northern Ireland such as Polish 303 squadron flying out of Ballyhalbert; Polish Air Crew Buried in Milltown; The Warsaw Rising. Fact sheets on Indian Army and contribution during WW2. Exhibits and talks on the War of Independence, The Irish Citizen Volunteers, Home rule, The Ulster Volunteer Force, Discussions around Identity, Perceptions of young people and Interface Issues.

Key Results and Impact:

The project produced a 100% reduction of attacks on the Polish community in Newtownabbey in specific geographic areas and led to the creation of a Polish youth group based in a perceived loyalist estate which in itself is a mixed youth group both culturally and on a co-religious basis with youth attending from North Belfast and Newtownabbey areas.

Integration of the Polish community in the area is complete with the Polish community actively participating in community events and the local population reciprocating.

At key events in Crumlin Road Gaol and Ballysillian the project was supported by All Political parties which in itself was a significant achievement. Community cohesion has been achieved in real time with long term relationships achieved between younger people, older people and across community, statutory and voluntary sectors. The intergenerational element of the project in which veterans, mill workers and combatants during WW2 interact with youth, on site at venues, has and is working with a hands on approach to history and shared experiences.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

1995-present

UniTd £5,000, Good Relations BCC £2,000, North Belfast Partnership £3,000, NIHE Good Relations Unit £4,000, Project funding sought for Continuation 2010 Onwards

Project Partners/ Implementation:

North Belfast Partnership, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, War Years Remembered
Meet The Neighbours

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

Difficulties in funding the project on a long term basis have been encountered with the proven success of the concept engaging with statutory agencies and encouraging the agencies of the need for the project to run on a city wide basis. Over 10,000 individuals attended events over 2008/09 ranging from school visits to community events in Crumlin Road Gaol, The Grove Healthy Living Centre, Ballysillian and over 30 schools across Northern Ireland. Support for the project has come from the President of Ireland, MLAs, MPs and councillors from ALL political parties which in itself is a recommendation. Funding to enlarge and develop the project has been sought from a wide range of agencies and government departments.

Lessons Learned:

- Project is continually reviewing its aims and objectives to meet the needs of communities and target groups, as an ongoing process.



8. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

Title of Policy: NIHE Race Relations Policy

Website: www.nihe.gov.uk

Contact Person: Linda Hutchinson, Linda.hutchinson@nihe.gov.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Background and brief description of Policy:

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is a non-departmental public body, established by the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971. Under this act, we took over the housing responsibilities of 65 separate authorities and became Northern Ireland's overall housing authority. We are also one of the province's largest public sector organisations. With a budget of over £600m and a staff of over 3,000 we make a substantial contribution to better health, education and wellbeing through housing. In Belfast City we are Landlord to over 22,000 properties and this equates to approximately 18% of all housing in the city (124,600 in 2006). We also have responsibilities in the Private Rented Sector of over 16,000 properties or 13% of properties. Our work with communities on housing services and the issues that affect local neighbourhoods adds real value to decision-making, service development and higher standards.

The Housing Executive is aware of our changing role in providing quality housing services to an increasingly diverse community. The Policy we are highlighting in this Case Study is our overall Race Relations Policy which brings together our key responsibilities and how they promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland. We have based this policy around a broad aim, key objectives and five themes. The aim is to ensure that all black and minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland can get full and fair access to housing services and employment opportunities within the Housing Executive. We aim to support the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups and communities. This contributes towards the overall themes of the Open Cities Project of Integration and Inclusion

Objectives:

- The prevention of discrimination and the promotion of the right to live peacefully without being harassed on racial grounds.
- The mainstreaming of black, minority ethnic and Traveller issues in housing policy and planning.
- The integration of race equality into housing services in line with "fairness and equality" as incorporated in the Targeting Social Need and Promoting Social Inclusion initiatives.
- The provision of culturally sensitive services which reflect the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, including the Traveller Community.
- To ensure compliance with legislation, and the promotion of best practice, in respect of delivering our services to a diverse customer base.
- To set the standards of good business practice in areas such as developing partnerships and consultation processes with black, minority ethnic and Traveller community organisations.
- To continue developing the Housing Executive's ethnic monitoring system and to carry out research to inform future policies and practices with regard to housing and community needs.
- To promote a diverse workforce, and provide positive action initiatives where appropriate.
- To raise the capacity of staff to deal with diversity, through awareness and skills training.
- To provide support for new arrivals to Northern Ireland, e.g. migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Main themes,

The Race Relations Policy themes can be summarised as follows;

- 1) Mainstreaming black and minority ethnic issues in policy development
- 2) Racial harassment and intimidation
- 3) Promoting black and minority ethnic social inclusion
- 4) Community participation and development
- 5) Migrant worker issues

Needs, Issues and Problems:

The Belfast City Baseline Study has identified key challenges linked to migration including the fact that minority ethnic communities are moving into a City still suffering from the legacy of the conflict and with a marked history of division. These challenges identified under Public Sector Policy are similar to those which the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy was developed to address, such as the need for accurate data on migration, identifying and responding to the diverse needs of new communities, improving communication, responding with local communities to local tensions and negative perceptions around inward migration particularly in areas where space is contested and where anxieties around limited resources has created tensions. Constraints on the housing market serve to direct new immigrants into some of the most disadvantaged areas characterised by high levels of unemployment and stretched public services. The response to the emerging clusters of migrants can often cause tensions.

More than half of the city's population now lives in wards that are either 90 per cent Protestant or 90 per cent Catholic. This presents challenges for migrants in terms of finding a safe niche within a city where space is contested and where territorialism is rife. The Housing Executive is aware of our changing role in providing quality housing services to this increasingly diverse community. Our duty is to ensure housing is provided on the basis of need and that all black and minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland can get full and fair access to housing services.

There is no doubt that community division and segregation exerts a high price which, in housing terms, prevents the best use being made of existing housing and land. Those who need housing in the social and affordable sectors must have greater choice. If we are to meet housing need in all its forms we must work to make progress. In this context the promotion of good relations is a key Housing Executive objective. Successful promotion of good relations calls for joined up thinking and working between communities, agencies and individuals.

Community cohesion and good Race Relations depends ultimately on trust and safety. While the delivery of this is beyond the remit of a single agency, the Housing Executive aims to make its contribution through its policies, partnerships, investment and resource allocation to speed up the pace of change.

Cultural Sensitivity

Housing services and how they are delivered must reflect the growing diversity of our customer base. Understanding the needs of minority ethnic communities is vital and can to some extent be achieved through consultation, research and community participation in the planning process. In the delivery of housing services consideration must be given to accountability, the targeting of marginalised or excluded communities, addressing community problems, and the utilisation of existing services, materials and resources, including community groups, to ensure that equal access is promoted. Working with existing community groups can short-circuit the link between service provision and use. This is being developed further with the Community and Voluntary sector.

Activities of the Policy:

Over the years the Housing Executive has made a substantial contribution to community relations through its mainstream policies and initiatives. Examples include our local presence in communities and our long-standing relationship with community groups through the Housing Community Network. We have also been to the forefront in dealing with community conflict, responding to intimidation and property damage, and implementing the SPED (Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings) and the POPPI (Protection of Private Properties at Interfaces) schemes. In relation to the Race Relations Policy a detailed Action Plan was developed which outlines a range of projects and programmes and identified specific issues which needed to be addressed.

Key Results and Impact:

Some examples of activities and key results include

- NIHE Community Cohesion Portal launched and available to all District Offices and staff with a section on Race Relations and Black and Minority Ethnic support organisations and Good practice.
- Hate Incidents Practical Actions Scheme (HIPA Scheme) implemented in partnership with NIO, PSNI and BCC Community Safety Unit to support victims of Hate incidents in Belfast. The Scheme was awarded 2nd runner up at the 2008 Criminal Justice Conference and Awards 2008.
- Hate Harassment Support Pack developed through consultation with the BME Housing Forum and launched April 2008.
- The Shared Race Relations Charter was launched by the Minister for Social Development – Margaret Ritchie in April 2008 to promote good race relations and help BME and Migrant Worker families settle into their new communities. All 35 District Housing Community Networks have signed up to the charter with over 349 community signatories. This unique Charter and Minimum Standards were developed by the Intercommunity Network, and include representatives from Black and Minority Communities. Belfast Districts are currently implementing this Charter with a small grant available to District Networks for the implementation of this programme.
- As part of the BME Forum 08/09 Action Plan, 24 participants attended the study visit on 27th May 2008 (International Neighbours Day). The tour included visiting several Housing Executive estates including Interface Areas to explore cultural issues between and within existing communities and visits to two Belfast Hostels for Homeless people. Excellent reviews received. Several other such Tours have also happened.
- The Community Cohesion Unit has contributed funding to the development of a 'Tension Monitoring system' in Belfast in Partnership with Belfast City Community Safety partnership and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The tension monitoring system would provide 'upstream' information of community dynamics and areas of potential conflict.
- The Community Cohesion Unit is working with the Belfast Community Safety Partnership's Thematic Group.
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Police Service of Northern Ireland in partnership with the Chinese Welfare Association, Polish Association N.I., Community Safety Partnership and Belfast City Council Good Relations Unit are launching a bi-lingual community safety Advocacy' Scheme in 09/10 to enhance good relations work and give support to our South and East Belfast Districts tackling race relations issues.
- The Housing Executive contributed to the DEL Migrant Worker Sub-Group's Strategy which was formulated in March 2008. The Community Cohesion Unit continues to provide ongoing information and training on the rights of Migrant Workers and people from abroad as they appear in legislation.
- The Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Forum was re-convened in December 2009 in order to directly engage with BME support groups and promote involvement of the BME sector in the Housing Community Network.
- A Welcome Pack template for community groups has been developed in partnership with the Intercommunity Network. This will be uploaded and made available on the portal by March 2010.
- As part of the "Improving Communication for All" initiative the Housing Executive has issued slips promoting the availability of interpreters and translators to all service outlets.



European Union
European Regional Development Fund



- The Intercultural Awareness Training programme is being reviewed and will be rolled out to front line staff in key Districts over the next year. This training has been included in the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 Certificate in Housing.
- The Housing Executive supported cultural exchange visits including attendance from the Chinese Welfare Association, PSNI, Polish Association, Belfast Islamic Women's Group and the Orange Order.
- The Housing Executive hosted Northern Ireland's first Human Library for staff development during the Anti-Racist Workplace Week Nov 2009 in partnership with NICEM and including members of the BME Forum. Excellent evaluation.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds

The Race Relations Action Plan was launched in 2005 and includes timescales. This plan is still in place and will be reviewed in line with developments in Government Policy such as Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

Project Partners/ Implementation

The list in Section 9 included names and details of several of our partners. The Housing Executive appreciates the value of working in partnership and on an inter-agency basis.

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

Some of the following issues presented challenges and difficulties:

- The speed of change and the wide range of new issues which needed to be dealt with
- Making links with newly arrived migrants who were not well organised to see what services they required and to let them know what we could provide
- Developing mapping on the number of migrants arriving in Belfast and their location and housing needs
- Providing support to local community networks to help them deal with the changes in their neighbourhoods.
- Providing training and support to staff to deal with the increasing diversity
- The lack of space to exchange ideas and share initiatives in the early years after 2004.
- Keeping up to date with developments such as new support groups, new communities and new needs
- Keeping a focus on both the needs of the new migrants and the needs of the more established BME communities.
- Dealing with the language difficulties.
- Dealing with these changes within a restricted budgetary setting
- Dealing with racism whether it is demonstrated through physical violence or unhelpful attitudes
- Ensuring all people are aware of their rights in relation to housing and providing support so that they can exercise these rights.
- Information overload is a problem.

Lessons Learned

- The Race Relations Policy and Action Plan were developed following a wide ranging consultation with various interested parties and their input and expertise at the initial stage helped avoid many problems.
- At the earliest possible stage there should be one central co-ordinated response from Central Government to support organisations, provide a clear lead and prevent duplication and wasted resources. The DEL Migrant Forum and the BCC Migrant Forum were invaluable in helping with this.
- Good practice should be promoted and time set aside to learn from others
- Feedback from the actual service users is vital. Migrant Workers views must be involved in all stages of planning and delivery.
- There are many people living within the community who have the willingness and ability to make a real difference within their neighbourhoods if they are supported and provided with resources. Partnership working is not just about the statutory organisations and large groups it is also about working in partnership with local communities.

9. Early Years

Title of Project: Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme (MIFC)

Website: www.early-years.org/mifc/

Contact Person: Eleanor Mearns – eleanorm@early-years.org

Location:

The programme is currently being delivered in pre-school and primary settings throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Background and brief description of Project:

The Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme (MIFC) was developed by Early Years - the organisation for young children in Northern Ireland and Pii - the Peace Initiatives Institution in the USA. It is an intervention programme aimed at improving long term outcomes so that children, practitioners, parents and communities become more aware of diversity and difference issues and positively change attitudes and behaviours to those people who are different. It aims to make a "respecting difference" approach an integrated experience for young children within the pre-school curriculum and is based on a meaningful partnership with parents.

It combines cartoon media messages around diversity with an early years programme. Together they aim to promote positive attitudes to cultural, social and physical differences amongst young children, practitioners and parents. The messages also address bullying behaviour and the sectarian problems prevalent throughout Northern Ireland.

The MIFC programme links into the pre-school and foundation stage curricula by addressing equal opportunities through a range of resources and activities. Children need opportunities to discuss and acknowledge the similarities and differences between themselves and others. They also need to be able to express more effectively feelings associated with similarities and differences, including those of exclusion and inclusion. The Initiative also links with the Revised Curriculum (personal development and mutual understanding) and the Community Relations School Programmes. The MIFC programme also provides children with opportunities to explore similarities and differences in a developmentally appropriate way, using age appropriate resources such as puppets, jigsaws, games, photographs and a variety of other activities.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme are:

- To increase awareness of diversity and difference issues in Northern Ireland and Ireland among children aged 3-6, their parents, teachers and management committees
- To help young children to understand what it feels like to be excluded and encourage them to be more willing to include children who are different from themselves
- To encourage young children to demonstrate respect and the active inclusion of others who are different, rather than ridiculing, fighting or rejecting them
- To make "respecting difference" a very real experience for young children and something that can be shared with their families

The expected outcomes for the project are: A positive change in children's, teachers and parents attitudes in relation to race and disability and other cultures and traditions. A general willingness to be inclusive of others, of the importance of doing diversity work and a resulting reduction in prejudices re: race, disability and religion.



Main themes

The Initiative works around five main themes:

- 1) Race
- 2) Ethnicity
- 3) Sectarianism
- 4) Disability
- 5) Bullying

This is done through the use of five media messages:

Kim Joins In – Aims to foster acceptance and respect for and encourage the inclusion of children who live in minority ethnic communities.

Kathleen Makes New Friends – Aims to support the inclusion of Traveller children.

Playing the Same Game - Aims to foster acceptance and respect for those from different traditions that have often been associated with sectarianism.

Tom Helps Out - Aims to foster acceptance and respect and encourage the inclusion of children who have a disability/physical difference.

We Can Stop the Bullying - Aims to help young children understand what bullying behaviours are and to ask for and give help when they need to.

Needs, Issues and Problems:

As Early Years was looking at ways to develop their anti-sectarian and diversity work, others in Northern Ireland were also developing theory and knowledge on ethnic differences and prejudice in young children. The development of the Media Initiative was greatly influenced by research entitled "Too Young to Notice?" carried out by Paul Connelly et al, from Queen's University Belfast. This research showed that children in Northern Ireland become aware of differences from about the age of two and three and are also beginning to develop preferences for the political symbols and events associated with their own community. By the age of six, the research estimates that a third of children in Northern Ireland are aware of the ethnic divide that exists and which group they belong to. The research also showed that by the age of six, a significant proportion of children (1 in 6) in Northern Ireland are making sectarian and racial remarks.

Activities of the Programme:

A range of methods are used by the initiative to engage with children, parents and practitioners:

- Media messages. Five one minute cartoon messages are shown on national television three times per year for a three week period. The aim is to give community support for the programme and create recognition of the approach before it is implemented in pre-school and primary classrooms.
- A pre-school programme and accompanying resources including a DVD of the media messages to provide opportunities for practitioners/ teachers to introduce issues of diversity and difference through activities in a developmentally appropriate way.
- A comprehensive programme of training for practitioners/teachers which enables them to reflect on their own attitudes and prejudices as well as providing opportunities for them to explore the MIFC Respecting Difference resources and become skilled and confident in using them.
- The support of an Early Years specialist (an external support person) to give an outside perspective in the process of development and evaluation.
- Engaging meaningfully with parents through information sessions, home-links exercises and interactive workshops which enable parents to reflect on their attitudes and prejudices as well as providing opportunities for them to discuss their role in implementing the programme at home.

- Community development training and support for management committees and Boards of Governors which enables them to create inclusive policies and practices within the pre-school centres and link with other services and activities within their communities.
- The cartoons are placed on children's television and within some adult programming. The use of television raises awareness about the programme with parents and children and creates a supportive environment within early years settings to implement the Respecting Difference programme. The use of the media also fosters wider community awareness about the programme.
- The five media messages are designed to support dialogue and understanding about a range of differences. However, they are only an example of some of the differences children may experience and are used to promote discussion about a range of differences that are relevant for children within their setting and their local context.
- The cartoons are set in a play park and feature characters that young children can easily identify with. The messages in the cartoons are reinforced in the early years setting through the use of resources and interactive activities that prompt children to talk about their feelings and attitudes to the issues explored in the cartoons.
- Engaging meaningfully with parents and the development of a community outreach approach is another key component of the programme. Home play activities have been incorporated into the programme and parents' workshops have been developed. A management committee workshop is also available.

Key Results and Impact:

The programme has been supported by rigorous academic research and a pilot programme of the initial three media messages was evaluated by Queen's University Belfast. After just three weeks the pilot programme was found to increase children's:

1. Willingness to play with others, including some of those who are different to themselves.
2. Ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel
3. Ability to recognize instances of exclusion without prompting

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

The Media Initiative for Children started with a pilot in 2004 and the project was initially funded by Pii who funded the development of the first three media messages and the broadcasting in the early stages of the initiative.

Further funding was then received from:

- 1)The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- 2)The Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- 3)The Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland
- 4)The EU PEACE II and PEACE III programmes
- 5)The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)

The current main funders of the Media Initiative are: Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI)

Project Partners/ Implementation:

Early Years and Pii established a formal partnership and were supported by an expert group of advisers from a range of backgrounds.

Partner organisations include: The Community Relations Council, The Department of Education in Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, St Patrick's College, LyleBaillie International, The Border Counties Childcare Network, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Irish Pre-school Play Association (IPPA), Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment



Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The amount of training required by practitioners in order to deliver the programme was greater than originally estimated
- There has been some resistance from groups in certain areas about taking part in the initiative
- There has been a lot of anxiety and a lack of confidence among some early years practitioners concerning their work with parents
- Convincing people of the need for the training - certain parts of Northern Ireland think "they do not need it" or "we don't have a problem here"
- There has been a capacity issue in some groups which hinders their ability to participate e.g. finding the money to pay sub cover while practitioners are taking part in training
- Initial difficulty for the researchers to develop the appropriate tools to evaluate the programme

Lessons Learned:

- The importance of training early year's practitioners in how to use the resource pack.
- The importance of encouraging early years practitioners to reflect upon their own attitudes and experiences.
- The need to provide early years practitioners with ongoing support.
- The importance of research and evaluation.
- One of the most significant lessons learned is how transferable the programme is. The Media Initiative is playing a central role in the development of a programmatic toolkit which Early Years is developing through its International Working Group on Peace Building for Young Children. Members of the group come from: Iraq, Serbia, South Africa, Colombia, Chad, Nepal, Lebanon, El Salvador. Many of these countries have approached Early Years with a view to customising the initiative for their own countries.

10. GEMS Northern Ireland Limited

Title: Project Profile Learning Language for Work (LLFW)

Contact Person: Susan Russam, Chief Executive Gems NI Ltd

Website: www.gemsni.org.uk **Email:** Susan.russam@gemsni.org.uk

Background and brief description of the project:

Learning Language for Work (LLFW) is an innovative learning for work programme which blends English language learning with employability skills. The programme covers all areas from sourcing jobs, to CV development, interview techniques and basic workplace information, in order to ensure the candidates can obtain and maintain worthwhile employment in Northern Ireland. In addition it introduces specific language needed for the recruitment process and increases knowledge of how the local recruitment process works.

Speaking about the LLFW project Shane Smith who manages the programme, noted:

“It is obvious that the vast majority of the LLFW target group have the motivation and work ethic to be an asset to our workforce. However they lack certain skills and knowledge around English language and how our recruitment process works. The Northern Ireland system tends to be more formal than a lot of other European and other overseas countries.”

LLFW has been designed for black and minority ethnic groups and migrant workers who are non-native speakers of English. The aim of LLFW is to enable them to engage in the local recruitment process, empowering them with the language required in order to enhance their employability and assist them to gain meaningful employment. In addition to the general barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive people, minority ethnic groups face further barriers:

Language - While the level of English can vary widely between clients, many have a low standard of English. This barrier impacts upon job search, interviews, willingness of employers to hire and isolation in the workplace

Transferability of skills - The skills and qualifications of minority ethnic clients are often not recognised/viewed equal or easily transferable to the local labour market

Work Experience - Their work experience is often viewed as being less relevant

Cultural Issues - Different cultural attitudes, particularly in relation to women in the workplace.

Exploitation - The above barriers can result in minority ethnic employees being treated less favourably than others in the workplace.

LLFW helps to overcome both the generic employability barriers and the specific employment barriers experienced by minority ethnic groups by providing English language training which integrates ESOL with employability and adds value by linking participants to other GEMS employment supports such as vocational guidance and counselling and access to jobs available in the local labour market through our jobs matching service.

Objectives:

The aim LLFW is to deliver vocationally-orientated language learning supported by vocational guidance counselling and access to local labour market opportunities for minority ethnic groups, providing them with vocational training and qualifications to improve their employability.

Main themes:

- 1) Unemployment/Economic Inactivity
- 2) Language Barriers
- 3) Social Exclusion
- 4) Skills development
- 5) Capacity building of migrant groups



Needs, issues and Problems:

LLFW supports economically inactive people from minority ethnic groups targeting in particular those who have no or low qualifications, women, people with disabilities, lone parents / other disadvantaged parents to improve their employability, aiming to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness of those with multiple barriers to employment and social exclusion, compounded by the language barrier

Activities of the Programme:

- LLFW will help 72 people per year (216 in total) who are the most disadvantaged in the labour market, to improve their employability and increase their potential to become employed and economically self-sufficient;
- LLFW will also help to address wider social exclusion through improving their ability to communicate and if necessary, self-advocate in English both in the workplace and their communities and neighbourhoods.
- LLFW will be delivered by six (12 participant) 72 hour training programmes per year consolidated by individual mentoring and vocational guidance including direct access to employment opportunities through GEMS jobs matching service, access to a range of sector specific pre-employment programmes and our extensive employer links across the sector skills range.

Key Results and Impact:

LLFW compliments and adds value to a range of DEL programmes such as LEMIS, Pathways to Work, Steps to Work and the New Deal Programme all of which work to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness through the provision of employment services linked to labour market realities and employers skills requirements. It also compliments current ESOL provision available to learners within the FE Sector. It is aligned to national programmes such as Jobcentre Plus which since April 2007, people with very poor language skills are supported to tackle the problem as part of the Jobseekers Agreement with the emphasis on work focused language courses for the most disadvantaged minority ethnic unemployed and economically inactive.

A key output of this transnational element is to enable partners to explore and identify areas of common interest and to determine how LLFW project deliverables could be developed through further transnational co-operation and provide opportunities to discuss and exchange best practice, methodologies and how LLFW could be modified to meet the needs of those minority ethnic groups that are furthest from the labour market in other European Countries

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

LLFW was developed by GEMS NI in 2003/04 and initially funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership and Laganside Corporation. Subsequently from 2008, it has been supported by the European Social Fund with GEMS NI self-matching the required 35% to enable the programme to continue to support Vocationally Orientated Language Learning (VOLL)

Project Partners/Implementation:

We have worked with the following European partners to enable them to develop **LLFW** in their own countries via a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Project:
Euregio Qualifizierungs-und Technologieforum (EQT) Germany
Supra Vita Nyelvstúdió Hungary
Ballymun Job Centre Ireland
Politehnica University of Bucharest, CTANM Center for Advanced Technologies





Pictured above: participants in the Learning Language for work class taken 31st March 2009

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

There have been very few challenges with the programme in terms of its content or participant attendance and outcomes. One difficulty has been scheduling classes to suit participants who are dependent on part-time/casual work. We have added additional conversation classes to support our learners and help those who have missed classes to catch up on specific modules/tasks.

Lessons learned:

We are integrating LLFW into another programme we have developed “Living in Belfast” to add value and enhance the experiences of participants in their living and working in Belfast with language acquisition for work and knowledge on living and working to support their integration and inclusion.

11. Belfast Metropolitan College

Title: Intensive ESOL with Information Technology (IT) and Citizenship

Website: www.belfastmet.ac.uk, ADaSilva@belfastmetropolitancollege.ac.uk

Contact Person: Andrea Da Silva, Belfast Metropolitan College

Brief description of Project:

Until 2004 only part-time classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) were offered in the college. However, according to research carried out by Philida Shellekens in *Breaking the Language Barriers*, it would take 10 years for a complete beginner attending two hours of English per week to reach a level of proficiency. As the number of migrants began to rise in Northern Ireland, so did the demand for more intensive ESOL classes with 15 hours of study per week over 1 semester. This way, learners could reach a standard of English which would allow them to access employment and/or further education more quickly, thereby enabling them to be more autonomous and facilitating integration into society. As many of our learners were lacking skills in the use of IT this was made an important component of the course. Initially one course was offered at intermediate level. By 2007 demand had grown so much that the college was offering one basic class, two at elementary level, three at pre-intermediate, three at intermediate, two at upper-intermediate and one at advanced.

As the profile of our learners became more varied due to the influx of migrant workers from the Accession EU states, it was decided to introduce Citizenship into the curriculum. This, along with the Skills for Life Speaking and Listening exam, gives successful learners below level 1 who progress by one level in the Speaking and Listening mode the possibility of applying for British citizenship.

Objectives:

- To enable learners to reach a standard of English within a shorter timeframe which would facilitate integration into the workplace, further or higher education, and society in general.
- To provide tuition and practice in IT skills.
- To provide learners with knowledge of living in our society through the Citizenship component.
- To provide learners with the opportunity to apply for British citizenship.

Main themes:

- 1) ESOL
- 2) IT skills (word processing, email, internet, PowerPoint)
- 3) Citizenship (rights and responsibilities, Northern Irish culture and society, health and education, politics)

Needs/ Issues and Problems:

To secure accommodation, to secure initial funding and to market the course.

Activities of the Programme:

15 hours of ESOL per week over 5 days – 3 hours per day

1 day was dedicated to IT and Citizenship

As the number of international students began to rise in the college, they were integrated into the intensive ESOL classes and were offered an additional 90 minutes tutorial per week.

In week 7 of the 17 week course, the learners are required to carry out a survey outside the classroom. This consists of researching amenities within Belfast, e.g. Leisure centres, parks, museums etc and delivering a presentation on the findings to the rest of the class. This is followed up by a written report and combines ESOL, IT and Citizenship skills.

Key Results and Impact:

Demand for more intensive courses increased dramatically and in order to offer progression more courses were gradually offered at a range of levels.

Learners were able to progress to other vocational courses within the college.

More employment opportunities for ESOL tutors as the number of courses increased

To ensure top-quality teaching the need for teacher training arose. The college was able to meet this demand by offering the Certificate for English Language Teaching to Adults.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

One year, initial funding obtained by winning a project run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) on integrating IT into the curriculum. In the 2nd year the course was mainstreamed at the cost of £20,000.

Project Partners/ Implementation:

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) NI

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered

Shortage of accommodation in college

Finding experienced tutors

Dealing with students who were already IT proficient

Accommodating students with literacy problems

Some tutors became hung up with the IT component thinking it was an IT class rather than an ESOL through IT class. An IT and citizenship co-ordinator was appointed to help tutors in relation to this.

Lessons Learned:

By providing intensive language training, learners will progress more quickly and will be able to access further/higher education and/or employment sooner.

Learners are more motivated to learn if they can access intensive language classes.

It is important to present the IT component as ESOL through IT rather than as an IT class as learners are at different stages in IT competency.

Intensive classes should be team taught so that learners are exposed to different styles of teaching and the responsibility of teaching a class is shared.

12. GEMS Northern Ireland Limited

Title: Minority Ethnic Employment Support Project (MEESP)

Contact Person: Susan Russam, Chief Executive Gems NI Ltd

Website: www.gemsni.org.uk **Email:** Susan.russam@gemsni.org.uk

Title: Project Profile Minority Ethnic Employment Support Project (MEESP)

Background and brief description of Project:

The MEESP project is a proactive employability service which addresses the barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Migrant Worker groups within the Priority 1 target group. It aims to increase employment and reduce economic inactivity and worklessness of those with multiple barriers to employment and social exclusion, compounded by the language barrier. The project will deliver a one-to-one personal advice guidance counselling and mentoring service which improve their ability to access employment in the local labour market. The MEESP project provides a comprehensive employability support service consolidated by extensive knowledge of the additional barriers to employment experienced by the minority ethnic target group and proven expertise in addressing these barriers.

Objectives

Address the barriers to employment experienced by long-term unemployed and economically inactive minority ethnic groups. Individual MEESP beneficiaries will be encouraged to avail of the full range of supports available, including:

- Comprehensive employability assessment with individuals using methods appropriate to the individual's linguistic needs and ethnicity and culture.
- Individual employability action planning and job search skills
- Personal mentoring to build confidence in communicating in English in the recruitment and selection process
- Personal mentoring to build confidence in communicating in English with supervisors, colleagues and customers in the workplace
- Support to access training and development opportunities
- Access to personal development programmes to improve confidence and reduce isolation
- Language for Work classes and other training programmes
- Direct links to employers through GEMS Jobs Matching service
- Better of calculations and other benefits advice
- Work Sampling and workplace orientation
- In-work support

Main Themes:

- Social and economic exclusion
- Access to employment
- Employability & mentoring support

Needs, Issues and Problems:

'Helping People into Work', is a key strategic objective for Department for Employment & Learning. The focus is on identifying and supporting people who are economically inactive, including those on incapacity benefit, to address their personal barriers to employment helping them to make the transition from welfare to work. The MEESP project compliments and adds value to current provision targeted at addressing economic inactivity and worklessness in the greater Belfast area including the LEMIS service, Pathways to Work, Steps to Work and Training for success and New Deal programmes, providing the cultural competence required to support minority ethnic groups to benefit from these mainstream Government programmes and increasing uptake rates to these programmes from minority ethnic communities.

Activities of the Project:

The MEESP project provides one to one guidance and support to up to 600 beneficiaries aimed at maximising their potential to gain sustainable employment, including access to GEMS NI job clubs, pre-employment programmes and job matching service as additional support. All participants with low or no English language Skill are encouraged to attend English for Speakers of Other Languages, either through GEMS own Language for Work programme or signposting to other providers. Language for Work Participants' are given the option of gaining ESOL Skills for Life level 1 or 2; Level 2 is considered by CCEA to be equivalent to a GCSE grade (a-c) Participants are provided with information of a wide range of courses and qualification depending on their vocational interest and experience and discrete needs. GEMS will also assist MEESP participants to access a range of learning and development opportunities currently available within statutory, voluntary and community provision.

Key Results and Impact:

Helena's experience of the MEESP Service: "I have been using the GEMS service since 2006 when I first came to Belfast and a friend told me to go to GEMS to get help with my CV and job search as things here were very different to Spain. From the start I found Maeve helpful and easy going and willing to help people with little English explaining how things are done here. We developed a CV and started to do application forms. Soon I got invited to interview and worked through a practice interview with Maeve. The practice and feedback really helped me prepare and I knew what to expect for the real thing. I was more alert for the different types of questions they asked and I got the first job. I have moved a few times since and always know I can ask Maeve for help if I need it again. I have recommended GEMS to loads of friends, particularly new arrivals so they can get the same help I did. Anything you need, Maeve can help you very cheerfully. If she doesn't know about a course or something she always knows someone who does."

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

Match funding provided for 2009/2011 by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

Project Partners: MEESP works in partnership with a multi-stakeholder collaborative network to share information, knowledge and best practice and also in joint work to support individual clients and client referrals to the project and referrals to other services from the project

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

The resources available to MEESP are very limited and demand for support from the project is very high with many clients presenting complex problems and issues including homelessness and destitution. The economic recession has resulted in many clients losing their jobs and problems with welfare benefit eligibility.

Lessons Learned:

We have learned that we should consider integrating our vocationally orientated language learning and Living and Belfast training programmes directly into the MEESP project increasing the resources for the project and enabling a more co-ordinated approach to addressing Careers Information Advice and Guidance, VOLL and integration and inclusion for BME/migrant workers.



Maeve McKeag MEESP Co-ordinator (left) pictured with Helena, MEESP Client

The MEESP Project provides a culturally competent information advice and guidance service which supports Black and Minority Ethnic unemployed people and migrant workers to increase their employability and access to employment opportunities through one to one guidance and advice on available training and development opportunities linked to their personal employment plan.