



Annual Report

2010-2011

Our Vision:

A society where equality and diversity are respected, valued and embraced, a society free from all forms of racism, sectarianism, discrimination and social exclusion, where human rights are guaranteed.

Our Mission:

NICEM works in partnership, to bring about social change through partnership and alliance building, and to achieve equality of outcome and full participation in society.

In this document “black and minority ethnic communities” or “minority ethnic people” or “minority ethnic communities” or “minority ethnic group” means people whether they are settled ethnic minority (including Travellers, Roma and Gypsy) or settled religious minority (non-Christian faith), migrants (EU and non-EU), asylum seekers and refugees or other immigration status. It has an inclusive meaning to unite all minority communities.

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Strategic Priorities 2010-2015

1. To sustain, growth and change an environment that supports and enables individuals and groups from BME communities to participate fully in accessing their rights;
2. To mainstream and to monitor ethnic minorities into government policy and practice;
3. To raise public awareness on racism and multiple discriminations and bring about a positive change;
4. To address socio-economic disadvantage and systematic discrimination in education, training and employment for BME people; and
5. To deliver a Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and build sustainability of NICEM.

WORK IN PROGRESS

1. Mainstreaming human rights and racial equality into government policy and practice

1.1 A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

(a). NICEM position on A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

NICEM supports a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, which is essential for enshrining the principles of human rights as the cornerstone of peace building in Northern Ireland. A high profile Bill of Rights with rigorous enforcement mechanisms would give a voice to those most marginalised in Northern Ireland's post-conflicts society. We welcome the opportunity that the creation of a Bill of Rights presents as a key step in acknowledging that conflict, whilst moving beyond the traditional "two communities' approach in building a more inclusive and increasingly diverse society.

NICEM has been campaigning for a meaningful and all encompassing Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland for more than 10 years along with other civil society organisations. NICEM endorses the advice proposed by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to the Secretary of State and regards it as the best option that we can have in this moment of time, though we acknowledge that there are some areas in need of improvement.

(b). Bill of Rights lobbying and the UK Bill of Rights debates

During this period, there has been extensive lobbying in the United States, at Westminster and at the NI Assembly in which we play an active part. The Bill of Rights has also been identified as a key issue for our Alternative Report on the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In our Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference the Bill of Rights remained at the centre of this year's conference. We also work in partnership with the British Institute of Human Rights to bring the UK BoR debate to our conference in order to inform the issues and the process.

(c). Human Rights Consortium

NICEM is currently an active member of the Human Rights Consortium and is represented on their Board. In the past year NICEM has been actively involved in lobbying activities with the consortium in the United States, at Westminster and at the NI Assembly.

The Consortium has had a presence at several NICEM events throughout the year and we are delighted that this presence has contributed to the growing membership base of the Consortium. The Consortium has produced materials which highlight the advantages that a Bill of Rights would bring to ethnic minorities. We are keen to develop this and use it to mobilise support and promote understanding amongst grass roots communities.

1.2 International Migrant Rights conference

Following on from NICEM's AGM on 9 December 2010, a conference on international migrants' rights was held. Keynote speakers included Patrick Taran, International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, Anastasia Crickley, Irish Member, UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and Don Flynn, Director, Migrants Rights Network, UK. More than 120 participants attended.

1.3 Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference

Our 13th Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference took place on the 1 July at the Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast, with over 110 attendees. The Bill of Rights remained at the centre of this year's conference, which was organised around 4 key areas:

- 1: Judicial Review of the year in Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- 2: Austerity cuts and economic and social rights
- 3: Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland
- 4: Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

Keynote speakers included Dr Catherine Donnelly (Blackstone Chambers), Professor Gordon Anthony (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Vinodh Jaichand (Irish Centre for Human Rights), Patricia McKeown (UNISON), Glynis Craig (Commission for Equality and Human Rights), Debbie Kohner (Committee on the Administration of Justice), Sanchita Hosali (British Institute of Human Rights), Patrick Corrigan (Amnesty International).

The event was a success and lively discussions lasted well past the set finishing time.

1.4 Section 75 Equality Schemes

NICEM is a founding member of the Equality Coalition, which brings together NGOs working in the equality field. The work of the Equality Coalition has focused on section 75 (of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and interaction with the Equality Commission. Following publication of the third edition of its Guide to the Statutory Duties, the Commission has called for revised equality schemes from

Government Departments and the health sector. These will replace the schemes approved by the Commission in 2001.

On NICEM's initiative, members of the Equality Coalition met the Equality Commission on 27 September 2010 to discuss proposed amendments to its draft Model Scheme. As a result, a number of points have been clarified in the Model Scheme, which has, in turn, been used as a template by public authorities in preparing their revised schemes.

An innovation in this generation of equality schemes is that the Commission is recommending that public authorities conduct an 'audit of inequalities' across the 9 grounds in section 75. This should lead to an action plan, appended to the scheme, which sets out the positive actions the authority intends to take to tackle inequality during its corporate planning process.

Again, NICEM has been deeply involved in scrutiny of the draft documents. We have been reviewing draft schemes, audits and action plans, both as part of the Coalition's work and also to develop NICEM's own response to them. We met with a range of Health Trusts on 20 December 2010 to discuss what was required in an audit of inequalities.

We have responded to a wide range of consultations on draft equality schemes, audits of inequalities and action plans from Government Departments, the health sector, the education sector, institutions of further and higher education and the justice system.

We have also attended three Equality Coalition consultation events on 9 March, 8 June and 28 September 2011, where we had the opportunity to speak directly with public authorities, prior to their submission of revised schemes, and audits and action plans, to the Equality Commission.

1.5 Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consultative document (CSI)

Our staff spent nearly two months, in the Autumn of 2010, organising a dozen consultations and facilitation meetings. At least two members of staff attended each of the 11 OFMDFM public consultation meetings across the province. Representatives of our member groups also attended some of these events. NICEM organised a well-attended pre-meeting on 5 October, prior to an OFMDFM sectoral consultation meeting on 12 October. Each individual member of staff took the responsibility to support one or two member groups and meetings were arranged with them to discuss the issues surrounding CSI. These processes empowered our member groups and the sector to make submissions based on NICEM's template.

As a result of our support and facilitation, more than a dozen groups made their submissions which had both the common template of the issues raised by the black and minority ethnic sector, as well as their community's unique issues. We also drafted the submission for the All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority Communities. The following groups attended our events and/or support and facilitation:

ACSONI
MCRC
Wah Hip Chinese Association
An Munia Tober
Belfast Islamic Centre
Polish Association (NI)
Belfast Islamic Centre Women Group
Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group
Strabane Ethnic Community Association
Women of the World, Enniskillen
Indian Community Centre
Alliance of Filipino Communities in NI
Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
NI Pakistani Cultural Association
NI Muslim Family Association
NI Multicultural Association
Mandarin Speakers Association
CONNECT-NICEM and interpreters

Our submission provided a sound human rights and equality framework to accommodate all vulnerable groups under the overarching CSI framework. Under the current good relations duty, priority is given to sectarianism and racism. We proposed that each vulnerable group should have a specific strategy, such as an Anti-Sectarianism Strategy, Racial Equality Strategy, Sexual Orientation Strategy, Gender Strategy, etc.

1.6 All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic Communities

We continue to provide secretariat support and advice on racial equality issues to the Assembly Group. Due to the introduction of new regulations the group had to change its name from 'All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority Communities' to the 'All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities'. An All Party Assembly Group consists of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), whereas an "All Party Group" can consist of MLAs and Invitees.

From September 2010 to August 2011, the Group met 7 times. The Group does not meet during recess in July and August or during the Assembly election period which took place from late March till May 2011. At each meeting, the average attendance from the Assembly was 4 MLAs (or their representatives).

The APG rotates the office bearers every six months.

The Office Bearers from September 2010 to December 2010 were:

Chair – Alliance Party (Anna Lo MLA)

Vice-Chair – Independent (Dawn Purvis MLA)

Secretary – Green Party (Steven Agnew for Brian Wilson MLA)

Treasurer – DUP (Robin Newton MLA)

The Office Bearers for the first three months of 2011 before the Assembly dissolved were as follows:

Chair –Independent (Dawn Purvis MLA)

Vice-Chair – Green Party (Steven Agnew for Brian Wilson MLA)

Secretary – DUP (Robin Newton MLA)

Treasurer – Sinn Fein (Billy Leonard MLA]

The June meeting was the AGM, at which the following MLAs were endorsed as office bearers for the period of September 2011- December 2011:

Chair- Green Party (Steven Agnew MLA)

Vice-chair – DUP (David McIlveen MLA)

Secretary- Sinn Fein (Fra McCann MLA)

Treasurer- UUP (Danny Kinahan MLA)

In the new political mandate there were a substantial number of new members in the APG and so the Secretariat, in conjunction with the Chair, organised a briefing session for the new members at the start of September 2011.

The following Ethnic Minority Community groups were invited to give short presentations on their work at the APG in this period:-

Windsor Women's Centre Multicultural Group;

Belfast Migrant Centre;

Women of the World, Enniskillen;

SEEDS;

ASCONI;

Worldwide Women @ North Down.

The issues discussed included:

Racial Equality Forum and the Shadow Forum;
NICEM research proposal on the Core funding for the sector;
Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consultation;
Larne Detention Centre;
New terms of reference and membership of the APG;
Opting out for religious education;
Migration Impact Funds and Crisis Fund;
Racial Equality Panel and new revised Racial Equality Strategy;
DSD Social Protection Fund;
NICEM education research;
DEL NEET's Strategy "Pathways to success Consultation";
DEL "Agency Worker Regulations Consultation";
Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on Racial; and Discrimination on the UK 18th – 20th Periodical Report.

Issues discussed:-

Racial Equality Forum and the Racial Equality Panel

We invited Ken Fraser from OFMDFM to brief the APG on the progress of both the Racial Equality Forum and the Panel at the September meeting. The first Panel meeting was held in November and reported back to the December APG meeting on the progress of the Crisis Fund and the review of the Racial Equality Strategy 2005-2010.

CSI programme

The CSI programme was a major topic of discussion at the APG during this period. Concerns were expressed at the vagueness of the document and the lack of an action plan accompanying it. The relationship between the CSI programme and the Race Equality Strategy was also unclear.

A response, drafted by the Secretariat on behalf of the APG, was adopted at the October 2010 meeting of the Group and submitted to OFMDFM.

Larne Detention Centre

Concerns were expressed at the November meeting about the planned opening of a detention centre in Larne. Michael Golden, Assistant Director of the UK Border Agency, attended the December meeting. He confirmed that the detention centre was a short-term holding centre. Many criticisms were made of the way in which the UKBA had handled the situation, including lack of consultation with local people. This failure allowed the BNP to produce misleading propaganda about the centre. Mr Golden also agreed to discuss

wider immigration issues with the APG at some future date.

Immigration Seminar in Long Gallery

After Michael Golden attended the group in December 2010, it was decided that the group wanted to discuss more varied issues with him. He was invited to participate in a seminar in the Long Gallery. The earliest available date was September 2011. Over the summer the Secretariat worked closely with the Belfast Migrant Centre, the Law Centre (NI), NICRAS and other APG members in order to formulate the programme for this event.

New Terms of reference and membership of the APG

At the October meeting, Anna Lo, Chair of the APG, explained that membership of All Party Assembly Groups was confined to MLAs. An All Party Group was one comprising of MLAs but with outside groups and individuals invited to attend. The Group would therefore be known as the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities.

The terms of reference of the APG were revised by the Secretariat and adopted at the October meeting. As such, membership of the APG is open to BME groups, umbrella groups, representatives of projects with an interest in the BME sector. The Londonderry/Derry based group, SEEDS, was admitted to membership of the APG.

Presentation from NICEM on its Education Research Report

At the June meeting, Eoin Rooney, Research Officer at NICEM, presented the key findings of the research on the experiences of post-primary school pupils. The group was very responsive to the research and suggested areas for follow up work.

1.7 Intervention to the United Nations Committee on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on the UK Periodical Report in 2011

In February 2010, a working group was convened from the BME sector in order to look at the UK's Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In the summer of 2010, "Introduction to CERD" training was held with BME community members. In Autumn 2010, the second stage of training took place. Topics covered included how to influence the Committee, how to interact with the Committee and how to use the findings of the Committee to influence the Government in Northern Ireland. Feedback from the training was very positive.

These sessions, combined with further evidence gathering efforts, enabled the

production of a highly comprehensive Alternative Report which was endorsed by 27 ethnic minority groups from across Northern Ireland.

The training also assisted in identifying a delegation of ethnic minority community members from Northern Ireland to travel to Geneva and present their issues directly to the Committee in late August 2011. Due to immigration restrictions recently introduced by Switzerland, three members of the NI delegation were not eligible for a visa. As a result we put together a new delegation at short notice. It was comprised of four people from NICEM and other representatives from An Munia Tober, the Filipino Alliance and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The delegation addressed the Committee members in the plenary session on 22 August 2011 and presented oral statements on a range of issues particular to Northern Ireland. The Committee members were very attentive and asked several questions of direct relevance to Northern Ireland. The delegation also participated in a NGO briefing session at lunchtime on 23 August and played an active lobbying role during the UK hearing (which started on 23 August afternoon and ended on 24 August).

NICEM also played a crucial role in relation to the UN Secretariat with regard to UK wide NGO co-ordination (in conjunction with the Runnymede Trust, which co-ordinated 'UK NGOs Against Racism' and other groups). In particular NICEM assisted the Dalit anti-caste discrimination group and also a group of women from the Chagos Islands. NICEM's established long working relationship with the Secretariat and the Committee enabled us to assist extensively in influencing the Committee members and the secretary of the UK Rapporteur.

In its submission and during the hearing, the NI Human Rights Commission argued that sectarianism should be treated as a form of racism. NICEM expressed strong reservations about such a position. NICEM holds that it would be unwise to conflate issues of sectarianism and racism in the NI context. To extend race relations legislation to cover issues of sectarianism would draw the courts and others into disputes about parading, Irish language and issues that are "majority" concerns, in that they affect Protestants/Unionists and Catholics/Nationalists, but not the minority racial and religious groups found in NI. Separate provision exists in law, as well as police practices, to cover issues of sectarianism, and that is welcome, but using race relations legislation would, in our view, distract from the very real needs and concerns of the minority ethnic community in NI. Moreover, it would cut across and potentially undermine many of the gains already made (eg domestic legislation penalising crime that is motivated by either racism or sectarianism).

The NI Human Rights Commission did not discuss the issue with any NGOs before their submission was compiled. It was unfortunate that this issue dominated coverage in the NI media as many important issues brought up by the NI NGOs delegation, such as hate crime and the rights of migrant workers, did not receive the media attention they deserved.

In our view the UK government should show leadership by introducing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as promised in the peace accords. Human right protection and equality for all, and the creation of human rights culture are the only remedies to resolve our sectarian politics.

The Concluding Observations were published on 2 September 2011. There were an unprecedented number of recommendations. NI specific recommendations included the need for a Bill of Rights and Single Equality Legislation. There has been extensive follow up work done since these observations were published. This work has included:

- A presentation to the Committee on the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was scheduled for Autumn 2011; NICEM will urge the committee to instigate an inquiry into racism and racial discrimination in Northern Ireland based on the Conclusion Observation and NICEM's submission;
- NICEM met with Ministerial Advisors from one of the parties in OFMDFM (DUP) to inform them of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee, in particular the intersectional issues of religion and race. The Advisers acknowledged the international pressure arising from the Concluding Observations and it was recognised that human rights and equality issues should be reflected in the CSI Strategy and the revised Racial Equality Strategy. The Advisors also agreed to use NICEM's submission on the UN Committee to inform the revised Racial Equality Strategy.
- NICEM also met with the new Director of Equality and Strategies of the OFMDFM and the Department Lead on Racial Equality.
- We also met other political representatives from the SDLP and Alliance Party on NICEM's proposed CSI framework on human rights and equality who were supportive of our position in particular on the Bill of Rights and the Single Equality Bill. We intend to do further follow up work with politicians in Autumn 2011.

1.8 Budget cuts

NICEM has been involved in challenging spending cuts on various levels. At an early stage in the process, NICEM attended a meeting convened by the Childrens' Law Centre at the Public Interest Law Support (PILS) Project on 3

September 2010 to discuss possible legal strategies towards the cuts. It was decided to send a joint letter from NICEM, the Children's Law Centre and the Law Centre (NI) to OFMDFM requiring it to ensure that the equality and human rights obligations of Government Departments were observed.

Preparations were made at the end of this reporting cycle for the announcement of spending cuts in light of the Budget statement by the Minister of Finance in December 2010. Given the lack of detail in Departmental spending plans, we are not conducting an analysis as such. We are seeking to influence resource decisions by identifying spending programmes that are particularly important to BME communities and pointing out to government that these areas should be afforded due protection under equality and human rights law. We will then monitor expenditure in these areas over time to ensure compliance with equality and human rights obligations and to provide an evidence base for lobbying work.

We are engaging with our member groups to build up a more complete picture of the effect of spending cuts on ethnic and religious minority communities.

1.9 Assembly Elections Manifesto

We developed our election manifesto in January 2011. It included an introduction to NICEM's work, a presentation of the situation of BME communities in NI, the objectives of the manifesto, election pledges, and a detailed section on targeted policy areas.

We launched our Manifesto for the Assembly Elections on 18 March and held a pre-election debate on 19 April. The panel included candidates of most of the main political parties in NI and the debate was hosted by a senior political reporter and writer, Henry McDonald of the Guardian group. More than fifty ethnic minority individuals, participated in a live debate with the candidates.

We had meetings with a number of political parties prior to the Elections. The Manifesto was widely distributed within the sector in preparation of NICEM's pre-election debate. The Manifesto was well received and there was a large audience, being mostly made up of BME people.

1.10 Gender and Race

Ethnic minority women face multiple discrimination in terms of access to a range of services and entitlements, including employment, training and education, by virtue of being both a woman and a member of an ethnic minority community in Northern Ireland.

NICEM is an active member of the Gender Equality Panel (which advises OFMDFM) and more recently the Domestic Violence Partnership. Lack of acknowledgement of multiple identity issues in the “Tackling Violence at Home” Strategy action plans and the Gender Equality Strategy Action plans has been a frustration.

We assisted Amnesty International and Women’s Aid in organising a seminar in conjunction with the Southall Black Sisters and the End Violence Against Women Campaign on 16 November 2010. In consequence, NICEM strongly advocates a separate strategy to tackle the complex issue of violence against BME women. Such a strategy should encompass issues of human trafficking, harmful cultural practices, forced marriage and domestic violence. NICEM recognises the huge under-development of the BME women’s sector in NI. NICEM believes that BME women should be empowered in order to tackle issues within their own communities.

NICEM has developed experience in interacting with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and, in Summer 2011, we began compiling a submission ahead of the UK’s examination in 2012. We have also contributed to an inquiry regarding women’s participation in politics on UN Resolution 1325¹ through the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security. Through these mechanisms we hope to build the capacity of ethnic minority women and raise awareness of issues which affect them.

1.11 Ethnic Monitoring Pilot Project

The ‘Ethnic Monitoring Pilot Project’ is the direct follow-up of NICEM’s Baseline Data Roundtable on 28 April 2009. The Project is a partnership of three Health Trusts (Southern, South-Eastern and Belfast), the Department of Health, OFMDFM and NICEM. Other health agencies, such as the Business Services Organisation (BSO), have been involved recently. The Project is chaired by the Southern Trust.

¹ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is effectively a piece of international law binding on all UN member states. It calls for the participation of women in peace processes, and the protection of women and girls and respect for their rights; it also calls for gender mainstreaming in the reporting and implementation systems of the UN relating to conflict, peace and security. We believe that the effect of the conflict in Northern Ireland has had a detrimental impact on the rights of BME women in NI and therefore participating in such consultations is very useful.

This pilot aims to support the capacity to robustly capture critical patient/service user information, in particular information which relates to the diversity of patients and service users. It also aims to help the Health and Social Care Board (HSC) plan, develop and enhance service provision to all members of the community.

To date, there are no accurate, common, systematic or streamlined patient/service user profiling information systems that capture equality/ethnic data in place in the HSC. Therefore, it is not possible to accurately detail the diverse profile of people using health services.

This has serious implications for service planners and service providers who do not have accurate evidence to state that they are in compliance with equality legislation such as Section 75 (in the Northern Ireland Act 1998), and that their services are meeting health targets, or that they are addressing issues of health inequalities. Furthermore, HSC are required to improve and enhance the provision of public services to all communities, including minority communities.

There were three meetings held over the past year with the following developments and outcomes:

The Child Health System has been redeveloped to facilitate the capture, analysis and initial reporting of Mother's country of origin, First language and Ethnicity (2011 census level). This development is now fully implemented regionally on CHS.

The System of Social Care (SOSCARE) has added 2011 Ethnicity Codes to the SOSCARE / UNOCINI system using the same codes agreed for the Child Health System. Regarding the possibility of changing the Nationality field to Country of Origin and using the same codes agreed for the Child Health System, it appears that this might not be a major issue as both the Department and the BSO agreed to move forward on this.

It was noted that the only field currently on the Patient Administration System (PAS) is Ethnic Group and that there may be significant expense in incorporating a new field. However, there is a field on the system called Place of Birth which was originally set up to record hospital site/town which is a free text field – it is currently being checked if this field could be changed to Country of Origin. As an interim measure, the Project looked at a “work around” in relation to the PAS system to amalgamate the ethnic code and country of origin code where possible into the Ethnic Group field on the PAS system that map directly to the NHS values.

The Project partnership agreed that it would be very beneficial if standardised recording and codes were also captured within GP systems. A staff member from BSO has been nominated to the Ethnic Monitoring Sub-group from the General Monitoring System ICT Team and will input to the group in respect of the GP systems in place across Northern Ireland.

The success of the pilot of the Ethnic Monitoring Project with the three Trusts and the support from DHSSPS paved the way for the OFMDFM Ethnic Monitoring Guidance. OFMDFM finally published the guidance on 27 July 2011. The new Ethnic Monitoring Guidance is now in place and sets the standard for all Departments and their next step agencies.

The Executive Director was being asked to give a statement of support in the OFMDFM press release which quoted "The Executive Director, Mr. Patrick Yu, said: "This is a milestone for the equality of opportunity for all. I look forward to seeing much improved equality monitoring of minority ethnic people and migrants in a year or two's time across all departments and their next step agencies. These equality monitoring data will benchmark fair and equal access to all public services. It is a great achievement and I would like to say a big thank to the team from various departments for their combined effort in pulling the guidance together."

1.12 Employment Research on the Impact of economic downturn

(a) Research on the impact on the Polish community

We have conducted an audit of the policy recommendations of the research report, 'Za Chlebem' The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Polish Community in Northern Ireland'. Two recommendations have been implemented, progress is being made on six, and no progress has been made on one. NICEM is pursuing the remaining recommendations at Ministerial level.

(b) Research on the impact on the Filipino community

We continue working on the complementary research to the Polish community research project, this time examining the effect of the economic downturn on the Filipino community in Northern Ireland. A questionnaire has been agreed with the Alliance of Filipino Communities and distributed among the Filipino community. 147 responses have been received to date. This quantitative data will be complemented with interviews with members of the Filipino community. 19 interviews have been completed so far. The report will be published by the end of the calendar year.

1.13 Education Research: Educational needs of minority ethnic children and young people

An Education Steering Group was established and held its first meeting on 31 March 2010. It was reconvened on 7 October. It was made up of representatives of the Equality Commission NI, National Children's Bureau NI, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, Belfast Education and Library Board, Southern Education and Library Board and NAS/UWT.

The Steering Group gave detailed and valuable guidance on the draft questionnaire, discussed access to schools and the timing of focus groups.

A draft survey was piloted with member groups in October 2010. DENI had identified 30 post-primary schools, on the basis of criteria supplied by NICEM to its Statistics Department. 16 of these schools agreed to participate in the research. The survey went 'live' in December and January, generating 91 responses.

Focus groups with 26 post-primary pupils were arranged through our member groups and interviews were conducted with five parents and five teachers.

The research report was launched at the Indian Community Centre on 30 June. The Minister for Education gave an opening address and contributions were made by NICEM's Research Officer, an ethnic minority student and a number of educationalists. A broad cross-section of those involved in the education sector were present.

We are at present awaiting a response from the Department of Education to the recommendations of the research report. We also have been working on a policy paper directed specifically at the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in Northern Ireland, and the Joint Council on Qualifications across the UK, on access arrangements for students for whom English is an additional language. The policy paper has been sent to the Runnymede Trust and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to gain their support for our approach.

1.14 Policy Papers

We have contracted with Robbie McVeigh, consultant and researcher, to conduct a scoping paper on the changes of policy and practice since our 2006 report, 'The Next Stephen Lawrence? Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland'. A draft scoping paper was submitted in early December 2010 and the final draft was published in March. This scoping paper will form the basis on our new research into the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

We also commissioned Marie Austin, the retired former Equality Manager of the Southern Trust and the key architect of the Audit of Inequality report for all the Trusts, to conduct a scoping paper on the Health of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland. The scoping paper was published in June 2011.

1.15 NICEM Policy Magazine “Minority Rights Now!”

The Editorial Board was reconstituted during this period. Liz Griffith, Law Centre (NI), joined the Board in January 2011. A productive Board meeting was held on 25 January to consider the contents of the fourth issue and review potential future issues. The Editorial Team was complimented by Board members, first, for developing the magazine to its fourth issue and, secondly, for striking a good balance between detailed analysis and accessibility in a lively format.

Issue 4, entitled ‘Together we grow’ (issue looking at challenges of the new decade) was published in early May 2011. It included articles by staff and contributions from Conall McDevitt MLA (SDLP), Steven Agnew MLA (Leader, Green Party), Evelyn Collins (Chief Executive, Equality Commission NI), Robbie McVeigh (writer, researcher), Henry McDonald (author, reporter), Fidelma Carolan (Unison) and Conor Brady (Department of Employment and Learning).

There were also contributions from NICEM member groups: Afro Community Support Organisation NI and Strabane Ethnic Community Association.

The Editorial Board met again on 4 July to review issue 5 (education) and discuss ideas for issue 6 (criminal justice).

Issue 5, entitled ‘A lesson in equality’ (on education), was published in September 2011. It focused on the Education Research Report, with a wide range of contributions including by NICEM staff. It included contributions from John O’Dowd (Education Minister), Jackie Reid (Ulster Teachers’ Union), Agnes Schiphof (European Network against Racism), Ngila Bevan (Mental Disability Center, Budapest), Liz Griffith (Law Centre NI), Vijay Tandon (Botanic Primary School, Belfast) and Agnieszka Zajak (Polish Saturday School, Ballymena). The member group featured was The Baha’I Council of Northern Ireland.

Education issues have received extensive coverage on UTV Live, and through a variety of press outlets. Further media coverage is planned.

1.16 Public Interest Litigation

NICEM is represented on the Public Interest Litigation Support (PILS)

Stakeholder Forum. NICEM became one of the first members of the Forum to receive in-house training on public interest litigation from PILS on 16 March 2011.

As a result of the development of a legal strategy on spending cuts (see section 1.6), NICEM was involved in developing a brief to Counsel, coordinated by the CAJ and funded by PILS. This Opinion has provided a valuable 'roadmap' on the legal options open to members of the Equality Coalition in the furtherance of its, and NICEM's, broader campaign against the spending cuts.

NICEM has made a successful application to PILS for funding for a Counsel's Opinion on NI planning policy and Traveller accommodation. The Opinion established that planning policy is covered by the Race Relations Order 1997 and the EU Race Directive 2000 and that NI planning policy can be directly or indirectly discriminatory against Traveller families seeking planning permission, particularly for permanent serviced sites.

We worked with Community Places on these issues and submitted our response to the Department of the Environment's consultation on reform to planning policy on 30 September 2011.

1.17 Consultations

(a) Section 75 Consultations

On equality issues, we have responded to a range of consultations on draft equality schemes, audits of inequalities and action plans from Government Departments, the health sector, the education sector and institutions of further and higher education.

- Response to the Northern Ireland Law Commission Consultation Paper Bail In Criminal Proceedings;
- Response to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on its draft Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan;
- Response to the Department of Environment on its Draft Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan;
- response to the Department of Employment and Learning on its Draft Equality Scheme;
- Response to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on its draft Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan;
- Response to the University of Ulster on its Draft Equality Scheme;

- Response to the Southern Education and Library Board on its Draft Equality Scheme;
- Response to the Department of Justice on its Draft Equality Scheme and Action Plan;

(b) Other Consultations

- Response to the NI Law Commission on Proposals for Bail Reform;
- Response to the Department of Employment and Learning's consultation on the Agency Workers Directive; and
- Response to the Public Prosecution Service Hate Crime Policy;

(c) Consultation Events Attended

- Migration Advisory Committee on Tier 2 labour shortage list;
- Policing with the Community (PSNI);
- Community Safety Strategy (DOJ) – by written submission as well;
- Victim and Witness Strategy (DOJ)
- Equality and Diversity Strategy (PSNI) – by written submission as well; and
- Hate Crime Strategy (Belfast City Council Community Safety Partnership).

2. Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple Discrimination

2.1 Anti-racism and Equality Training

We continue to provide awareness raising sessions and workshops to help groups implement good practice around Anti-Racism and Equality issues. The training was delivered to local groups as well as NICEM member groups. The following groups participated in these sessions over the past year. The total number of people who participated in the training was 231. This also includes groups that participated in our one-day Anti-Racism and Equality training.

- Springboard Employment Programme
- Belfast High School
- Stranmillis University College
- Venture Outdoors
- Strabane community groups
- Indian Community Centre 50+ group
- Castlederg Youth Club
- Hammer Youth Centre
- North Belfast youth organised by Alternatives and hosted by Crusaders Football Club
- North West Academy Londonderry
- UNISON Stewards in partnership with UNISON

We also hosted groups from outside organisations to talk to them about the work we are doing in NICEM: student group from National University, Maynooth, Belfast Social Services student group and a delegation from Spain that was visiting GEMSNI.

3. Capacity Building Black and Minority Ethnic communities

3.1 Funding issues and support

As with the wider voluntary and community sector, the severe reduction in funding opportunities has resulted in the reduction of community activity within a number of BME support organisations. Staff redundancies, difficulties in securing core funding and a high reliance on volunteer support means less time to support members of their communities on more complex issues.

This of course has also left many smaller groups finding it more difficult to participate within the wider community sector or to meaningfully engage in policy issues while their volunteers fill the gaps of service delivery and support.

In these difficult financial times, governance, management and strategic direction becomes more important as groups compete with the more experienced, and well developed, wider voluntary and community sector for limited resources to support work on BME issues.

However, the demands on those volunteers' time increases on issues that are more urgent and have a wider impact on their BME communities and families. Practical support, such as that for victims of racists attacks, fundraising and signposting those left in financial hardship caused by the economic downturn and cuts, are quite rightly prioritised. That of course leaves governance issues to be dealt with at some other stage, but this inevitably leads to limited development of the BME organisations with an uncertain future.

NICEM favours a focus on improving governance to support development of community organisations through the use of the PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)(see section 3.2) system which can be tailored to the needs of BME groups of all sizes. But again here, time is the key resource, which is becoming more and more limited for BME groups with a sharp fall in resources and staffing for day-to-day issues.

With volunteer board members taking on more operational responsibility, little time is left for taking time to look at how organisations fit within the wider context of tackling racism and discrimination.

Government expectations of BME communities in terms of participation and support for the implementation of policies and strategies remains high. However, distribution of funding through a range of programmes fails to recognise the

fundamental relationship between resources and participation.

While local non BME groups access funding to provide services to BME communities, the proportion of BME individuals able to participate in social policy development implementation, and to represent their own community, falls as a direct consequence.

Support for local groups providing vital services is necessary, but this approach does nothing to increase BME visibility or participation at decision-making levels in the longer term. This approach appears to be in direct opposition to the key aims of current strategies and thinking on tackling racism and discrimination in Northern Ireland which promote improved participation and involvement from BME people and communities, attempting to move away from the representation of BME communities by experienced local voluntary sector organisations.

Although NICEM no longer has funding to provide coordinated capacity building support to the sector, we continue to work with our member groups providing advice and support for small groups, developing their internal programmes, assisting groups in developing funding applications and ensuring that groups can monitor and evaluate their funded programmes correctly.

Once more this year, the majority of our support over this period has been assistance to groups in managing their small projects, staff management, human resources/personnel issues and financial management and reporting. With a lack of core funding for specific personnel within groups to address these operational processes and obligations to funders, NICEM must step in to give as much practical support as possible to enable groups to operate.

During the year we have provided direct advice, support for their activities and training programmes on governance for the following member groups:

- Strabane Ethnic Communities Association;
- Al-Nisa Association NI ;
- Northern Ireland Multi-Cultural Association (Dunmurry);
- An Munia Tober;
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association (Belfast);
- Indian Community Centre;
- Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association; and
- Antioch Church (Belfast).

3.2 PQASSO – Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations

Work around PQASSO with the member groups has been a gradual process. While PQASSO is tailored to small community organisations the work that we have been doing has focused more on preparing and building the groups up to the stage where they have the capacity to use PQASSO.

Our capacity building and governance work with our member groups continues to progress. We continue to work in supporting member groups on adopting a quality assurance system.

As well as our current member groups we have also done work with new groups forming in the Belfast area as well as the North Down area. We ran a PQASSO information and assessment session for the St. Ignatius Elias Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church NI and Bangor PL (a Polish association). These sessions were aimed at supporting groups with governance and setting up a self-assessment system within the organisations.

3.3 NICEM accredited training course on Anti-racism and Equality

This year saw exciting changes and developments for the NICEM Anti-Racism and Equality training. Understanding Equality and Diversity is a two-day course, accredited at Open College Network (OCN) Level 2, which aims to explore the dynamics of racism and equality on an individual and organisational level. By the end of the course the participant should have a better understanding of the value of equality and diversity, how to identify discrimination and oppression and be equipped with the tools to challenge racism. The training gives the participant an opportunity to examine how they interact with others from a diverse background and the opportunity to examine the organisations they are involved with and how to better ensure equality in policy and practice.

Key areas as a learner

- Better understanding of Equality Laws
- Better understanding of public policy
- Better understanding of oppression
- Better understanding of discrimination in all its forms
- Better understanding of how to challenge oppression and discrimination
- Better understanding of how to use policy

Two courses were run this year. The first was a pilot session and took place in Belfast on 1 and 30 April 2011 and had six participants made up of NICEM employees and volunteers.

The second session took place in Strabane on 21 and 27 June, organised by our member group, Strabane Ethnic Community Association, with 12

participants, including independent members of the local community and two PSNI officers.

We look forward to next year as we develop a training calendar and deliver this training on a regular basis throughout Northern Ireland.

3.4 Human Rights Training

In November 2010 we completed the second stage of our training as part of the work of the CERD Working Group (see section 1.5). This included:-

How to influence before/after and during the hearing to ensure that our issues are heard;

How representatives of ethnic minorities can interact with members of the CERD Committee; and

How to use the findings of the CERD committee to influence the Government in Northern Ireland.

We had three sessions of this training, on 16 and 29 November 2010 in Belfast and on 17 November in Omagh. They were well attended with 29 people from groups and provoked lively debate and discussion.

3.5 Media Training for Member Groups and staff

The third media training was successfully held in the Strabane Ethnic Community Association's offices on 12 November 2010, including participants from Women of the World (Enniskillen), the Derry Travellers Association, and three NICEM members of staff. The training was taken over by Henry McDonald, reporter for The Guardian, following the passing of Jim Dougal.

3.6 CONNECT-NICEM

CONNECT-NICEM continues to provide interpreters to a range of customers from the wider public sector and the community and voluntary sector.

We have also worked closely with our customers over this period in order to improve our services, their own internal systems, the skills of our interpreters and auditing of services.

We provided detailed and regular statistical reports to our customers from the criminal justice sector, tailor-made to their specific requirements to allow them to review their use and demand within their services.

a) Results of quarterly and annual feedback exercises from customers

We carry out feedback exercises on a quarterly and annual basis with our customers. Below are results of feedback during 2010/11

Connect NICEM staff team	Very helpful 73% 73	Helpful 27% 27	Not helpful
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Interpreter professionalism	Excellent % 36	Very Good % 22	Good % 31	Fair % 6	Poor % 5
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Interpreter understanding of the task	Excellent % 37	Very Good % 21	Good % 30	Fair % 6	Poor % 1
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Overall quality of service provided by the interpreter	Excellent % 31	Very Good % 25	Good % 33	Fair % 4	Poor % 7
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b) Language Demand across the service (% of overall requests) 2010-11

Language	Percentage
Albanian	0.25
Amharic	0.02
Arabic	0.76
Bengali	0.43
Bulgarian	1.18
Cantonese	1.33
Croatian	0.02
Czech	1.05
Estonian	0.03
Farsi	0.37
French	0.59
Fu Zhou	0.02
German	0.14
Hindi	0.06
Hungarian	1.42
Ilokano	0.02
Italian	0.11
Latvian	3.77
Lithuanian	25.73
Malayalam	1.02
Mandarin	5.63
Pashto	0.02
Polish	31.44
Portuguese	6.79
Punjabi	0.08
Romanian	4.81
Russian	5.77
Serbian	0.03
Slovak	3.76
Somali	0.45
Spanish	0.54
Tagalog	0.15
Tetum	1.38
Thai	0.12
Tiwi	0.02
Turkish	0.25
Ukrainian	0.22
Urdu	0.25
Yoruba	0.14

c) Training & Development

We continue to improve the skills and knowledge of interpreters in Northern Ireland. A key part of this role is to ensure that we keep updated on changes in relation to interpreting practices and provisions in Northern Ireland, Great Britain

and the rest of Europe.

Interpreter Training delivery

OCN Level 4 NICEM Interpreting course

Over the period NICEM delivered two OCN level 4 interpreter training programmes to a total of 31 Learners from the following language groups:

- Eritrean
- Czech
- Polish
- Mandarin
- Lithuanian
- Romanian
- Farsi
- Yoruba
- Russian
- Latvian
- Portuguese

OCN Level 3 Community Interpreting course

NICEM also delivered a Level 3 community interpreting course as an optional unit on the Queen's University MA course on Translation to 11 students from the following language groups:

- Portuguese
- Spanish
- German
- French
- Greek
- Polish

OCN Level 3 – Interpreting with police services

Over this period NICEM delivered two courses on interpreting with police services. The course was delivered to 25 Learners from the following language groups:

- Lithuanian
- Russian
- Portuguese
- Cantonese
- Czech
- Romanian

Polish
Latvian
Arabic

Breakdown of learners by gender

Male learners % of total learners: 25%
Female learners % of total learners: 75%

Full credits achieved at target level

Full completion and certificates issued: 27%
Target levels achieved and awaiting certificates: 59%
Learners not successful or did not complete yet: 13%

4. Support Vulnerable Groups in our Society

4.1 Belfast Migrant Centre

The Belfast Migrant Centre completed its first year of operation in August 2011. Despite the delays that are inherent in setting up a new operation, we managed to deal with 822 cases and find that the demand for services is increasing. The following is a breakdown of our cases by type as well as a breakdown of nationality/ethnicity.

Nature of case:

Community care	3
Consumer/general contract	6
Debt	15
Domestic violence	4
Education	18
Employment	103
Money guidance	2
General	13
Housing	74
Immigration / Asylum	106
Family	21
Miscellaneous	150
Personal injury	4
Welfare benefits	296
Action against police	1
Counselling and psychotherapy	1
Mental health	2
Public law	3
Total:	822

Ethnicity

Not specified	151
Asian or Asian British Indian	2
Black or Black British African	15
Black or Black British Caribbean	1
Black or Black British other	4
British	1
Chinese	4
Eastern Europe	277
Irish	3

Mixed White & other background	1
Other	2
Other African	1
Other Asian	2
Other Black	1
Romany, Gypsy, Traveller	6
White	78
White European	40
White British	1
White Other	1

Through our advice and advocacy services we come into contact with several individuals who are in need of skills improvement and support to find jobs. We have assisted on 363 cases in the biggest area of work with individuals, namely, benefits including employment and tax credits. We continue to work closely with our partners in the trade union movement. All cases that need negotiation with an employer, unless they are at the employment tribunal stage, are referred and supported in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Migrant Worker Support Project. They take on the negotiation with the employer as a recognised union and we are able to deal with the practical support issues that arise when an individual's employment is disrupted or under threat (i.e., housing, benefits, food/clothing donations etc). Further we participate with UNISON in delivering equality training, working with its Race Group and other union activities.

In October 2010, we sent out feedback forms to 152 new service users to determine how they felt about the service and to see what changes they would suggest. We had a 20% reply rate. The majority of the feedback was positive; all but one of the respondents said they would recommend the services to a friend. The suggestions for improvement were focused around increasing the capacity of the Centre to take on more work rather than any suggestion of improvement around the quality of the advice and support given. We have been very successful in delivering our services for the past year. From the positive feedback we have received it is clear that we are delivering a high standard of advice and support.

(a) Advice and Advocacy to Homeless and Crisis Situations

We continue to provide this support through our mainstream advice services. However we have also had the need to start fundraising to set up a crisis fund. Through the advocacy services we have helped with 79 cases and through the crisis fund support we have helped an additional 45 individuals. The crisis fund is used for those who have no recourse to public funds and are therefore made

destitute and put in emergency situations which cannot be negotiated through statutory or government agencies.

(b) Advice and Advocacy to victims of racism/racist attacks

This project has been ongoing since 2002 and the demand has remained constant. This post has not been funded publicly since 2008 and we use our own generated income to continue this important work to support the most vulnerable people in our society. The individuals that have approached us have experienced harassment and attacks leading to personal injury, criminal damage as well as experiencing discrimination and racism in the workplace. Over the past year we have supported 200 cases ranging from helping people get re-housed to supporting people in reporting to the police and taking complaints to the Police Ombudsman. We also participate in the Belfast City Council Tension Monitoring Group and Hate Crime Thematic Group, and in the PSNI Independent Advisory Group which rely on evidence we are collecting from service users to improve policy and practice within the organisations to better meet victims' needs. We also now have a volunteer coming three days a week to develop a support network for victims and a support group for bullying.

Case Study 1:

M came to the Centre over the Christmas period. She was a Polish national but had no recourse to public funds as she had not worked the required 12 months due to pregnancy. M had been living with her partner but when the relationship broke down she had no accommodation and no access to any help or support through benefits or the Housing Executive. At the time she approached us M was about to go into hospital as her baby was due. However there was nowhere for her to go after discharge. Our advisor was able to provide donations of food and clothing for the baby, negotiated housing with the landlord and was able to secure benefits for the baby. Due to this help M avoided having to be on the streets and was relieved of the stress that the situation was causing her.

Case Study 2:

S came to us as he had been experiencing racist harassment and intimidation in his home. He is a Lithuanian national who has been living and working in Northern Ireland for over 10 years. He was afraid to continue living there. S also has alcohol and mental health issues which were being exacerbated by the harassment. Our advisor was able to support S by reporting the incident to the police, making sure this was also recorded by the Housing Executive and securing housing points. S was then able to move into more secure accommodation. The advisor continued supporting S and helped him enrol on to a programme to help with his substance abuse and by ensuring that he was receiving the benefits for which he was eligible. This allowed S to become well

enough to enrol on an IT course and pursue employment.

Case Study 3:

P is a Polish national that came to us in relation to his entitlement to benefits. He was being refused as Jobs and Benefits claimed that he had not registered on the Worker's Registration Scheme and had not worked the required 12 months. P was destitute as he was off work due to illness and was not receiving any support. The advisor disputed the decision and was able to win the right to the benefits by proving to Jobs and Benefits that P had been correctly registered and was still employed but was not working at the present time due to illness. Jobs and Benefits reconsidered their decision on the case and P was rewarded £1795 in back payments.

Case Study 4:

L, a single mother with a young son, had three main issues when her son's school contacted us concerned that the boy had no appropriate footwear. Mother is self-employed and only working part time. She had made an application for Child Benefit in 2009 and by 2011 the decision on Child Benefit had still not been made. We intervened by giving her money from our crisis fund for shoes. After we lodged two complaints about the Child Benefit delay, she received over £1800 backdated. Additionally, there were a number of youngsters in the area calling names and damaging the property, throwing stones, etc. We were able to organise a meeting with PSNI community liaison officers, swift action was taken, and the PSNI increased patrols of the area. Individuals involved in intimidation were quickly identified and their parents spoken to. Also a local coach was spoken to as the individuals all played a sport together and this also made a difference. The attacks have now stopped and no one is harassing them any more. They even say hello instead of name calling like they did in the past.

(c) Immigration Advisor

NICEM provides immigration advice and representation services through the Belfast Migrant Centre at the Office of Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) Level 3. This has involved assisting clients with a variety of immigration applications, ranging from Points Based System work permits, spousal visas, EEA applications, British citizenship applications, and assistance with travel documents. Our Immigration Advice Officer also represents clients at the First Tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal, with successful outcomes.

Our Immigration Advice Officer utilises external expertise to assist clients of Belfast Migrant Centre. This has included liaising with a solicitor to bring a judicial review against the unlawful detention of an asylum applicant who was

later granted refugee status on consideration of her application, and working with a barrister to assist a migrant student to bring a successful claim for breach of contract against a recruitment agency that failed to provide her with a work placement as agreed. Our Immigration Advice Officer also works on immigration policy issues, in particular those specific to migrants living in Northern Ireland.

Belfast Migrant Centre is now training a second advisor to OISC Level 2 in order to undertake immigration casework.

Case Study

A British citizen wanted his non-EU national wife to visit him in the UK for six months in order for her to experience life in Northern Ireland and for them to decide where they wished to make their marital home. His wife was granted a leave of absence from her job abroad, to visit the UK. Our client applied for a visitor's visa for his wife. However, her visa was refused, despite providing all of the necessary documentation. Our Immigration Advice Officer prepared his wife's appeal against the refusal of her visitor's visa, including information as to the poor quality of decision making at the relevant Entry Clearance Post abroad. At the appeal hearing, the Immigration Judge allowed the appeal outright. Our client's wife has now been granted a visa and has come to the UK to visit her husband.

4.2 Volunteer Development

At the current time we have worked with eight volunteers within the centre and have hosted four interns from international universities (USA and Hong Kong). We also referred two volunteers who were successful in gaining placements at the East Belfast Independent Advice Centre. We met with Volunteer Now about the best way to create links for volunteers and to that end we have developed a volunteer policy and induction form. We are currently organising and will be hosting a volunteer sampler session for member groups in conjunction with Volunteer Now.

4.3 English Class Provision

We have supported two English classes by providing referrals and facilities. One class was being offered through the Portuguese Association and the other is based at 174 Trust.

We established a new beginners class for Polish speakers, which we were able to do by offering financial support for a tutor. This class will be continuing into the next year. Additionally we will have four new classes starting in October 2011, two beginners and two intermediate.

4.4 Other Development Work

We have also worked alongside groups to support development and capacity in providing activities for their community. We secured funding and worked in partnership to deliver an Eat Well Play Well Sports Day for the Filipino and Polish communities, which centred around a basketball tournament, and included players from the local community. The project also provided funding for the basketball teams to secure premises to practice leading up to the Sports Day. The day was well attended with over 60 families coming to watch the basketball teams. There was a free throw competition and a healthy lunch was provided for all attendees. The day promoted exercise and healthy eating and was funded by the Belfast Health and Social Services Trust.

4.3 Work with Black and Minority Ethnic Carers

Through our advice services we identified a need for support for parents of children with disabilities with a BME background. The outcome of the project was to provide relief and information for 8-10 parents through 15 sessions.

We ran the project from September to December 2010. We led weekly sessions lasting one and a half hours over 15 weeks. Each session was different and the programme was designed to provide information, provide activities, and help improve parenting and coping skills. We arranged for speakers from Social Services, the Health Trust, and our advisors, as well as aromatherapy specialists, Barnardos and others. Additionally, in response to the participants, we provided dinner for every session for the parents and the children who attended the crèche facilities. We also provided interpreters, financial support for home childcare, if needed, and transportation.

We did two evaluations during the project, one in the middle and the other at the end of the project to get feedback from the parents. The feedback was positive and all of the parents said they would like to see the project or something similar continued in the future. This gave us a new area to look at in regards to meeting the needs of migrant families and also gave us a good pilot project to learn from in order to build on similar future projects. The Respite Project also created a link with Disability Action who we are now developing a stronger partnership to address the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals with disabilities.

Further, in responding to the needs that had been highlighted through our Respite Project, we organised a Carers Seminar in conjunction with the Belfast Health Trust to highlight the needs of Minority Ethnic carers. Three member groups were represented at this seminar and several BME individuals attended for a total of 21 participants.

5. Networking and Partnership Building

Networking and partnership building have become one of NICEM's core functions along with promoting activities, which pursue collective action on racial justice and equality. We actively use good practice to bring knowledge and experience to Northern Ireland and, at the same time, share our unique experiences and struggles. Networking also forms the basis of collective action through partnership building. Through our involvement and contribution, NICEM plays a significant role in networking and partnership building in the UK, on the island of Ireland, in the European Union and the Council of Europe.

5.1 UK Network

NICEM works in partnership with the key Black organisations in the UK focusing on human rights, race equality and capacity building. Our strategic concern relates to the following issues: Single Equality Act 2010, in particular public sector duty; UK Bill of Rights Commission, austerity cuts and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. On the Single Equality Act and austerity cuts, we work closely with the Discrimination Law Association (DLA) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. On the Bill of Rights Commission we work closely with the British Institute of Human Rights. Recently we have teamed up with UNISON and Kanlungan (a national Filipino alliance) to campaign for the rights of the Senior Care Assistant post in both public and private nursing homes, including strategic litigation.

On austerity cuts and poverty we will work in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and other key Black organisations in this field. NICEM is also part of the UK wide Migrant Rights Network which is an off-shoot project of the UK Race Europe Network. The Migrants Rights Network is leading the whole campaign on migrant rights in which the Belfast Migrant Centre is represented.

The Runnymede Trust, Equanomics UK and NICEM also work in partnership to co-ordinate and to prepare the Alternative Report of the UK NGOs Against Racism and to lobby this year's UK hearing under the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the UK 18-20 Periodical Report. We established new partnerships and networks after the lobbying such as the anti-caste alliance, Just West Yorkshire, Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, etc. NICEM is also the Board Member of the UK Race Europe Network (UKREN). Our partners are as follows:

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Discrimination Law Association
UK Race Europe Network (UKREN)
Equanomics UK
Runnymede Trust
Operational Black Vote
Monitoring Group, UK
UNISON
Kanlungan
Migrant Rights Network
Joseph Rowntree Foundation

5.2 Irish Network

The North-South dimension is a key strategic consideration for campaigning for anti-racism on the island of Ireland. Due to limited staff and resources we were prevented from developing our work plans efficiently in the Republic of Ireland. Instead we focused on responding to certain needs that we had identified.

We put forward a new PEACE III 2.2 application to develop the capacity building skills of new migrant and local communities to tackle racism and racial hate crime in the North West region with the cross-border partners. These include Donegal County Council, Inishowen Development Partnership, the NI Sikh Association (Derry), Strabane Ethnic Community Association, Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group and Women of the World in Enniskillen. This partnership will strengthen our work in the region.

We continue to provide interpretation training and to assist our partners in setting up interpretation service systems that mirror our successful CONNECT-NICEM.

Recently we had a meeting with the Irish Council for Civil Liberties on catching up on our work in both jurisdictions with the hope to have partnership work on the island of Ireland.

5.3 European Network

NICEM still plays an active role at the European level in terms of working with both the European Union and the Council of Europe on human rights and race equality.

The Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities liaised with NICEM regarding their UK visit (including Northern Ireland) on the UK's 3rd Periodical Report. We published our submission prior to meeting the delegation from the Framework Convention Advisory Committee on

7 March 2011. Both the Executive Director and the Legal Policy Officer met the delegations with which we raised our concerns on certain issues.

The Executive Director was invited by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe to do a presentation on “Racism and Racial Discrimination in Employment” at the Seminar for National Independent Authorities Combating Discrimination in Employment in Strasbourg on 26-27 May 2011. At the Conference the Executive Director also met a former colleague at the Human Rights Directorate who is now the Special Envoy on Roma, appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. NICEM was asked to comment on their first year report.

The Executive Director also attended the ENAR Board meeting in late April as the temporary substitute to the current UK Board member who was on maternity leave. During the meeting the Director of ENAR requested NICEM to advise and support their work on racial discrimination and other related projects. As a result we organised a meeting with the previous SOLID partners in London to discuss the possibility of projects with ENAR, including the EU Transnational Project on a new call from DG Justice and DG Employment.

We work in partnership with the following organisations:

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

Human Rights Directorate of the Council of Europe

Special Envoy on Roma Council of Europe

European Fundamental Rights Agency

Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

Public Interest Law Institute in Budapest

European Roma Rights Centre

European Roma Information Centre

Article 1 in Netherland (the former LBR)

Denmark Documentation Centre on Racism

Open Society Justice Initiative

Minority Rights Group International

Latvian Centre for Human Rights

KISA – Action for Equality, Support and Anti-racism, Cyprus

People for Change Foundation, Malta

5.4 Northern Ireland

NICEM has established strategic partnerships with organisations across the sectors in order to promote human rights and equality in Northern Ireland, covering issues such as Section 75, the Single Equality Bill, a Bill of Rights for

Northern Ireland, racial violence, asylum seekers and refugees, Irish Travellers and Roma, etc. These organisations include:

All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic Communities
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
UNISON
Equality Coalition
Human Rights Consortium
Disability Action
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
Age NI
Women's Support Network
Women into Politics
Save the Children
Children's Law Centre
Law Centre (NI)
Childcare NI
Youthnet
Northern Ireland Youth Council
Association of Independent Advice Centres
Community Change
Community Place
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIACRO
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Red Cross (NI)
St. Vincent de Paul

Members of the Policy Team have been engaged actively in various statutory policy working groups:

Opting Out of Religious Education Research Advisory Group (Institute of Good Governance of the Queen's University of Belfast);
Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group on Homelessness under the Department of Social Development;
Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Steering Group (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust);
PPI communication sub-group (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust);

Health Inequality Forum (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)
Employment and Learning Migrant Workers Thematic Sub-group;
British Medical Association Patient Liaison Group;
Department of Health, Social Service and Public Services Regional Equality
Liaison Panel;
Public Health Agency BME Health and Wellbeing Steering Group;
Northern Ireland Migration Advisory Committee Stakeholders Forum (Home
Office);
Gender Advisory Group (OFMDFM Gender Unit);
Racial Equality Panel (OFMDFM Race Unit);
Racial Equality Forum Sub-group on Immigration;
Women's National Commission, UK;
BME Housing Forum (Northern Ireland Housing Executive);
Policing Board BME Reference Group;
Hate Crime Thematic Group (Belfast City Council);
Housing Executive Forum on Equality;
Policing Board BME Reference Group;
Joint Consultative Forum (Staff Commission for Education and Library Board);
Belfast City Council Consultative Forum;
Criminal Justice Issue Advisory Group (NICVA);
Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) Steering Group
(Department of Justice)
OFMDFM Strategic Planning and Review Group of the Children's Strategy;
Department of the Environment Consultative Forum;
OFMDFM Strategic Planning and Review Group of the Children's Strategy;
Hate Crime Task and Finish Group (Belfast City Council);
'I Am Roma' Advisory Group (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust);
Criminal Justice Issues Advisory Group (NICVA);
Youth BME Issues Group (Youthnet);
Migrant Forum (Belfast City Council);
Independent Advisory Group (PSNI);
Tension Monitoring Task Group (Belfast City Council);
Domestic Violence Partnership Regional;
All Ireland PQASSO mentors working group;
Challenge Hate Crime Steering Group (NIACRO);
Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum; and
Voluntary Sector Housing Forum.

6. Organisational Development

6.1 Media and Communication Work

a) Combining media to increase efficiency

Combining old media and new media has proved to be a highly effective way of disseminating information in real time, improving lobbying activities, networking, promoting news stories, and managing urgent communications. Most press releases led to follow up media work. NICEM's strategy of using 3 complementary social media tools (website, Facebook page and Twitter) has proved successful as statistics show that more people now visit the site via Facebook. An increasing number of new visitors is proof of social media synergy.

b) Website

In June, NICEM planned a revamp of the website in cooperation with our web designer, Starfish. The home page was amended to reflect the main points of interest of web visitors. The e-library was expanded to 2 sections: e-publications and e-links. The e-publications section of the internet library is now live. The new e-links section is being developed, with the aim to make it a one-stop resource for all BME-related queries.

c) Media work and empowerment

Coordination of media interviews

NICEM is now the first point of contact for the media who break news with minority ethnic contents, for example the issue of racist bullying in schools (June to September). NICEM have also actively encouraged their members to be pro-active with the media. Two groups' representatives now regularly do media work (An Munia Tober and Strabane Ethnic Community Association).

d) Pro-active media coverage

NICEM, apart from actively reacting to media stories, have also actively participated in creating stories, to promote its achievements and flag up issues. A sign of success and efficiency is that NICEM is now requested to contribute to main media audio and TV programmes, local and national: The Nolan Show, BBC Radio 4, BBC live (TV) and UTV Live (TV), internet radios.

NICEM has for instance actively promoted its Education Research Report, published in June 2011. The report has received very significant media attention: BBC TV (BBC Newslines) & radio (BBC Evening Extra), a large selection of written press and internet news outlets (organisations' blogs, online BBC and UTV news, etc) have covered the story.

e) NICEM's film

NICEM has received funding from the Belfast City Council for the production on a film on how sports help minority ethnic communities to integrate in Northern Ireland.

The film was completed and successfully launched at NICEM's pre-elections debate. We are seeking further funding to produce copies for distribution.

The film will be used as an educational tool in schools, libraries, seminars, etc. In the meantime, the film will shortly be made available for downloading from NICEM's website and from Youtube.

6.2 Annual Review and Planning

Two planning days were held on 24 and 25 November 2010. The Policy Team, including the Advice Team, attended, as did members of the Strategic Advocacy Project Board and the Executive Committee.

6.3 PQASSO standards to improve Good Governance of NICEM

NICEM uses the PQASSO system as a tool for improving our own governance, tackling the issues of planning and development, staff and volunteer management, and improving quality and accountability to their stakeholders.

NICEM also remains a key partner in the All Ireland PQASSO network. Together this network will support and promote the use of quality improvement mechanisms on the island of Ireland.

Three members of NICEM staff are licensed PQASSO members and are also trained and licensed peer reviewers for the PQASSO quality mark. NICEM's own internal PQASSO quality task group held eight meetings over the period 2010/11 to complete a thorough review of all our internal policies and procedures and develop a number of new policies identified from the quality action plan for the period; this included the following policies and procedures:

Reception service standards and procedures

Code of Conduct

Staff training and Development policy

Work Life Balance policy (incorporating all absence from work policies and procedures)

Staff supervision policy

Conflict of Interest policy

Health and Safety policy

Vulnerable Adults policy
Internship policy
Guidelines on expenses

The review ensures that we incorporate all new relevant legislative developments and includes the development of some new policies and procedures which improve the operation of the organisation.

The use of PQASSO standards enables the NICEM Staff team to work together to identify where gaps exist and where we can develop new policies and systems to improve the work of the organisation for our users and other stakeholders including staff.

NICEM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2009-2011)

Chair: Mr. Bobby Rao
Strabane Ethnic Community Organisation

Vice-chair: Ms. Monica Yang
Mandarin Speakers Association

Secretary: Zeshan Zafar
NI Multi Cultural Association

Treasurer: Justyna Samolyk
Polish Association NI

Other members:

Dr Khanyisela Moyo
Afro Community Support Organisation

Dr Saleem Tareen (resigned on 4 October 2010)
Dr. Wasif Naeem (appointed on 1 May 2011)
NI Pakistani Cultural Association

Jet Tirol
Alliance of Filipino Communities in NI

Clea Devlin (co-opted from Jan 2010)
Portuguese Speakers Association

Dana Bruno (co-opted from May 2010)

Muhammad Al-Quaryooti (co-opted from September 2010)
Belfast Islamic Centre

Advisory members: Ms. Eddis Nicholl
Ms. Anne Brown
Ms. Tansy Hutchinson

STAFF LIST (Sept 2010-August 2011)

Central Administration team

Executive Director	Patrick Yu
Finance/Administration Manager	Nuala Moynagh
Reception/Administrator	Denise Dos Santos <i>(from September 2010)</i>

Policy Team

Deputy Director	Barry Fitzpatrick
Legal Policy Officer	Helena Macormac
Communication Officer	Françoise Barlet
Research Officer	Eoin Rooney
Administration Officer	Sophie Romantzoff

Belfast Migrant Centre

Advocacy & Advice Manager	Jolena Flett
Immigration Advice Officer	Ayesha Christie (August 2011 on compassionate leave) Lumturi Podrimaj (from August 2011 on leave cover for 6 months)
Racial Harassment Support & Advocacy Officer	Max Petrushkin
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker Job Share	<i>Marzena Graham (maternity leave)</i>

Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker JobShare	Liz Connor-Kerr (from April 2011)
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker	Alicja Matwiejczuk
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker Part-time	Agnieszka Wlodarska (maternity cover)
Bi-Lingual Administrator Part-time	Agnieszka Wlodarska Agnieszka Wlodarska (from July 2011)
Part-time	Anna Wojtun (from July 2011)

Capacity Building and CONNECT-NICEM Team

Co-ordinator of Capacity Building & Executive Director of CONNECT	Gabrielle Doherty
Bookings Manager	Aruna Djalo
Finance Manager	Stewart Robinson
Development Manager	Sarah Maitland
Administrator - Bookings Part-time	Katarzyna Gelger
Administrator – Bookings	Ano Mario Vaz
Administrator – Bookings	Dominic O’Neill
Administrator – Finance	Claire Choulavong
Administrator – Out of Hours	Rumena Kostadinova-McCabe
Administrator – Out of Hours	Tanja Tierney

Internship

Hong Kong University Social Innovation and Global Citizenship internship:
Jenny Liu and Jake Chan

Queen's University of Belfast LLM Human Rights internship: Maria Mullan and
Sean Conley

Northeastern University, US: Kathryn Breen, Noreen Leahy and Brittany
Hellreich

Barcelona Leonardo Scholarship: Berta Rierola Carrera

Volunteers: Louise Higgins, Conmilah Manjoo, Tijana Vukicevic, Kathryn
Crane, Yasmin Malik, Corina Costea and Brenda Skillen.

Strategic Advocacy Project Board

Ms. Eddis Nicholl (Chair), Ms. Tansy Hutchinson, Professor Colm Campbell, Ms.
Sheila Rogers, Dr. Tomoya Obokata and Dr Khanyisela Moyo.

Belfast Migrant Centre Board

Ms. Pamela Dooley (UNISON), Kevin Doherty (Irish Congress of Trade Union),
Maicek Bator (Polish Association NI) and Patrick Yu (NICEM)

NICEM MEMBER GROUPS (2010-2011)

Afro Community Support Organisation Northern Ireland
Alliance of Filipino Communities Northern Ireland
Al-Nisa Association NI
An Munia Tober
Barnardos Chinese Lay Health Project
Belfast Islamic Centre
Bulgaria Association Northern Ireland
Craigavon Traveller Support Committee
Derry Traveller Support Group
Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association
Indonesian Association Northern Ireland
Indian Community Centre
Mandarin Speakers Association
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
Northern Ireland Community for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Northern Ireland Multicultural Association
Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association
Northern Ireland Sikh Association
Polish Association Northern Ireland
Portuguese Speakers Association
Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group
Shah Jalal Mosque Bangladeshi Community Centre
Strabane Ethnic Community Association
Windsor Women's Centre Multi-cultural Group
Women of the World, Enniskillen
World Wide Women at North Down

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
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