

NICEM

Annual Report

2001/2002

CONTENTS

Forward

Policy Work & Lobbying

Standard Setting

Section 75

Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple-Discrimination

Capacity Building Minority Ethnic Community Organisations

Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Services

Advocacy and Advice on Racial Harassment Attack and Discrimination

Networking and Partnership Building

Organisation Development

FORWARD

The post September 11 impact, tilt and tack of the Palestinian and Israel conflicts and raging the war against Saddam Hussan and the influx of asylum seekers in both side of the Irish sea provide the backdrops of the race relations in the UK.

At the home front, this background translates into action on the grounds: mosques are constantly being attacked, the Unionist politicians prevent to build a mosque in Craigavon which has substantial Muslim population, far more interesting is the fact that Palestinian and Israel flags are displayed alongside with paramilitary flags in both republican and loyalist strong-hold areas to fuel to our own conflicts, racial harassment and racial attack are more common experience of the member of the Muslim, asylum seeker and refugee community.

The suspension of devolved administration and the Northern Ireland Assembly has significant impact on minority ethnic community. The Race Equality Strategy has been delayed for a few more months. The implementation of the Race Directive and the Framework Directive on Employment will undoubtedly follow the Great Britain minimalist approach through Regulations in which we strongly oppose to it.

The most worst scenario is that the recommendations from the Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group Report on Travellers, which has significant input from the Travelling community, will indefinitely be delayed (published two years ago) and water down from the response by the administration. We urge the government to launch the Race Equality Strategy as soon as possible, as well as implementing fully of the recommendations of the PSI Working Group Report on Travellers.

At the forefront of human rights and equality, we are still not happy on the minority protection in the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The current proposal put the majority rights (Catholic and Protestant) alongside the minority protection (by using community rights to replace minority rights) is undermine the international human rights standard, in particular the whole concept of group rights. If everyone is share the same rights in that context without differentiate the power structure and disadvantage position of black and minority ethnic communities (including Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees). It gives the impression that we are in arms length without addressing daily experience of discrimination. Moreover, try to use one size to fit all approach also highlights the danger to use the minority protection standards to justify the abolition of the Fair Employment legislation requirement for compulsory monitoring of workforce in both majority communities, the so-called compartmentalisation of religion and political belief, is inconsistency with the equality principle.

NICEM makes it clear to our position. We have no objection to have a specific clause on rights concerning identity and communities for the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland in order to ensure "parity of esteem and just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities". Equally it is important to have separate clause on specific rights for the protection of national minorities" mirrors the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, in particular national minorities may exercise the rights and freedoms individually as well as in the community with others.

The operation of S.75 is under critical period in which over-burden of consultation without resources on the one hand, the prevalent tick-box exercise culture on the others. There is no creative thinking to implement the statutory duty on equality. It becomes the procedural exercise of the wider bureaucratic process. Despite the frustration, NICEM and the sector (more and more lost interests) are working very hard to respond to all consultation. This is one of the successes of S.75 to consult each sector of the nine groupings. There are some good examples and best practices have been developed by the public authorities on meaningful consultation with the outcome of changing the policy and practice within the organisation.

To NICEM S.75 is as simple as when the public authorities making a decision they should consider the disadvantage position of the nine groupings and feed into their issues and needs in order to develop a best policy to accommodate all. That simple exercise is and should be outcome oriented. It is not the bureaucratic exercise to delay, to certain extent to block, the implementation of their equality duty. Without adequate resources for section 75 grouping to response to equality duty requirements, it will curtail the participation of civil society and in turn curtail the effectiveness of section 75 duties.

NICEM will fight collectively with the Equality Coalition to bring the real change through human rights protection and equality principle.

Patrick Yu
Executive Director
NICEM

POLICY WORK & LOBBYING

Mainstreaming race into government policy and practice has been our key strategy in policy work. Mainstreaming can be defined as the integration of equality principles, strategies and practices into everyday decision-making work of government and other public bodies. It leads to better-informed policy making and it helps to tackle the democratic deficit by encouraging wider participation in the policy process through effective consultation mechanisms.

1. Implementation of the Race Directive and Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland

- 1.1 with the publication of the Cabinet Office consultation paper on the implementation of the Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty in December 2001, the debate re-emerged again. NICEM was very disappointed in the minimalist approach of the British Government on the transposition of Article 13. NICEM and CRE in London played significant roles to get the powerful Race Directive in place at European level and saw our Government fail to grasp the opportunity to remedy the existing outdated Race Relations Act 1976.
- 1.2 That minimalist approach also affects Northern Ireland, with the intervention from officials in the mainland not having a higher standard of equality legislation in Northern Ireland. That creates a two-tier system within the UK jurisdiction. The two tiers system will create political pressure on Westminster to lower the standard of the law.
- 1.3 Due to the Assembly election next year, the entire legislative timetable has been changed. Firstly, the Executive Government in Northern Ireland failed to use primary legislation for the implementation of Article 13. If the Executive still insists on using the same minimalist approach, by using Regulation under Section 2(2)(10(a) of the European Communities Act 1972, as the Cabinet Office, they will face the same consequences in breach of Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights. This will make the Regulation void in Northern Ireland but not in Westminster.
- 1.4 Recently, the Equality Commission prepared a new legal argument by using Section 2(2)(1)(a) and (b) to implement the two Directives under Article 13. NICEM whole-heartedly supports that legal argument which takes into account the existing higher standard of both the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1999 and the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997. This approach will remedy the existing limitations of Article 13 in the areas of nationality, national origin under Race Directive and Service provisions and political opinion under the Framework Directive on Employment on the one hand, and have more scope to deal with the creative part of the Article 13 such as definitions of indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation, positive action, exception and exemption, etc.
- 1.5 Over the year, we had numerous meetings with officials on both the implementation of the Race Directive and the Single Equality Bill with good progress. In a recent meeting with the two Junior Ministers of the First Minister and Deputy First Ministers' Office, NICEM raised all these

issues to the Ministers. The concerns were well received and we await responses from the officials on the legal opinion of the Equality commission's argument.

- 1.6 In NICEM's view the use of Regulations to implement Article 13 will preempt the main features of the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland. We should be vigilant for the final proposal of the Regulations which will be submitted to the Assembly in February 2003.
- 1.7 With the assistance of Dr Mark Bell, the legal expert on Article 13, we produced our submission to the Cabinet Office in response to the consultation document and the legal opinion on the breach of Article 6 of the ECHR by using Regulation under Section 2(2)(1)(a) of the European Community Act. We also produced NICEM's proposal (part 10 on the implementation of the Race Directive).

2. The Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

- 2.1 NICEM has been a key actor in the debate on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, participating in the Ad Hoc Human Rights Consortium, and engaging in the debate through a variety of means.
- 2.2 Organising the consultation meetings for the minority ethnic sector on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission consultation document "Making a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland". We received assistance from international (such as Minority Rights Group) and local experts on minority rights, equality and economic and social rights.
- 2.3 Based on the results of the consultation workshop and NICEM's expertise in Human Rights law, we produced a detailed response on behalf of the sector, specifically focusing on minority rights, equality rights and economic and social rights.
- 2.4 NICEM organised our Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference in April 2002 on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to focus the debate on key areas. It brought together NGOs and public authorities, legal practitioners, experts from the Council of Europe on Human Rights and equality, and local experts from NGOs and trade unions, the Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission. The conference was highly successful in focussing the debate and broadening participation, with four workshops ensuring a participative approach and panel discussions in each workshop enabling extensive use of experts in each key area. The conference report will be produced and used in the next stages of the debate and for lobbying in key areas.
- 2.5 NICEM used the unique opportunity of speaking at the SDLP conference on United in Diversity, to voice our concerns that the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission will diminish international human rights standards on minority rights by picking and choosing from the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities in the Bill of Rights consultation document. We raised the fundamental concern of the use of the wording 'Community Rights' to replace 'Minority Rights' making a law without distinguishing between the majority rights

(the two communities) and minority protection (ethnic, linguistic and other religious minorities under the Framework Convention) into a single clause in the proposed Bill of Rights. This deliberate omission will have the consequences of diminishing minority protection under the international law.

- 2.6 NICEM also raised concerns that the Human Rights Commission was not following the standard practice of consulting the Council of Europe by using the Framework Convention prior to publishing the proposal, neither was there any official consultation with the Council of Europe thereafter.

3. Race Strategy document and the Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group on minority ethnic people.

- 3.1 The PSI working group did not recall any meeting within the last twelve months, until June 2002 after our intervention at the SDLP launch of the European Week on Racism in May. We understand that the Race Equality Unit of the OFMDFM has a shortage of staff and were busy with the assessment of the core funding and project funding applications and distribution, nevertheless it delayed the whole working timetable as promised in the first Programme for Government.
- 3.2 The working group is almost at the final stage of approving the Race Strategy document as promised in the recent draft Programme for Government (the third one). The Race Strategy document will go for public consultation in November 2002. NICEM has agreed to play a proactive role in facilitating the process of consultation for the sector, alongside two regional consultations organised by the OFMDFM: one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry. This document will become the backbone of race equality within the Administration that cut-across all departments in Northern Ireland.
- 3.3 The Race Strategy document will also propose the setting up of an interdepartmental Race Forum with participation from the sector. This infrastructure will deal with policy and practice across all departments in the future.
- 3.4 From NICEM's perspective it gives a golden opportunity for both the Administration and the sector to work together to tackle institutional racism through the development of good policy and practice, anti-racism, Section 75, diversity and equality training, as well as a diversity workforce within the administration. We now await the contents and the terms of reference of the Race Forum before we commit ourselves.
- 3.5 NICEM is extremely disappointed that no progress has been made over the last 18 months in relation to the adoption of the recommendations of the PSI Working Group on Travellers Report. Departments continue to pass the buck without any commitment to the most disadvantaged and the most socially excluded groups in our society. We are particularly concerned that the two DUP Ministers, who should take a leading role on Travellers, have made no commitment so far. This is classical institutional racism against Irish Travellers in Northern Ireland within the definition of the McPherson Report.

STANDARD SETTING

Good policy and practice through education and training is one of our strategies to support the legal framework in standard setting. The law defines what is acceptable behaviour in our society. Policy and practice are the guidelines for race equality. As a black voluntary sector organisation umbrella organisation we should contribute to our expertise and experience in developing good policy and practice for the public sector through the partnership approach.

1. Race Equality Audit

- 1.1 We have been waiting for 12 months from the Equality Commission whether they will use our Audit as the mainstreaming process on race equality. Time is now running out for our own initiation.
- 1.2 We have developed the Audit and with the financial support from the Equality Commission, we also developed Performance indicators in six core areas of the Audit. There are new circumstances within which the Audit has a vital role to play, such as the Race Strategy consultation document. When the Race Strategy is in place next year, the Audit will provide the framework for the purposes of the implementation of the Race Strategy.
- 1.3 The CEJI-NICEM joint project on Equality and Diversity, which is under the European Commission Community Action Programme on Combating Discrimination and Disability Action-NICEM joint project on Diversity Matters, which is under the local EQUAL programme are committed to the use of the Race Audit as the framework and to extend it to other grounds. This means that the Race Audit will be used both at local and at European Level.
- 1.4 Currently the Commission for Racial Equality in London is considering using NICEM's experience in Section 75 Duty and the Race Equality Audit to develop a Trainers' Training programme on Race Equality Duty for the black and minority ethnic sector.
- 1.5 This new environment and new circumstances will provide us with more opportunities to share our experience and expertise with our partners in local, UK and at European levels. We will prepare for the challenges and all the necessary training programmes in order to capacity build black and minority ethnic organisations.

2. The UK National Action Plan on the UN World Conference Against Racism

- 2.1 The Home Office has at last set an NGO steering group in January 2002 to prepare the National Action Plan. NICEM is the only NGO from Northern Ireland involved in the preparation process. Due to the lack of Ministerial commitment the original National Consultative Conference for the black sector has been postponed to 20th November 2002.

- 2.2 The NGO steering group has managed to provide much input during the preparation process, including the key themes to be discussed at the National Consultation Conference.
- 2.3 UKREN has been commissioned to organise the regional consultation meetings prior to the National Consultation Conference based on the experience in previous years, in order to prepare the NGOs National Report for the British Government.
- 2.4 In Northern Ireland the devolved Administration is committed to our own National Action Plan, which is linked to the Race Strategy document as proposed by NICEM, as part of the National Process. The Northern Ireland plan also includes a North/South dimension to tackling racism in the island of Ireland. Currently our Education and Training Officer, who represents NICEM at the Irish Steering Group on the Irish National Action Plan which is ahead of any European country in the process of preparation.
- 2.5 NICEM, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission set up the ad-hoc working group to organise the Northern Ireland consultation, which was scheduled for the 25th September at the Human Rights Commission office. The consultation was focused on three main themes of the WCAR: legal protection, policy and practice and public awareness on racism. The Northern Ireland Report will be collated to the National report, which will be presented at the National Consultation conference.
- 2.6 NICEM is also represented as one of the seven members of the NGO Resource Group at the Council of Europe, European preparation for the UN World Conference Against Racism. At the latest inter-governmental meeting on the follow-up of the Durban conference, which was held in February 2002 in Strasbourg, NICEM has serious concerns and doubts on the commitment of Western Europe on the National Action Plan as the adverse consequences of September 11 and the splits among European NGOs on Israel and Palestinian issues. NICEM will monitor the situation and work alongside with the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and our NGO partners in the Continent to make the governments accountable to their ratification of the Durban declaration and programme of action.

3. Diversity Matters Project

- 3.1 Disability Action and NICEM were successful in a bid for the local EQUAL programme on equality in the field of employment. The project aims to develop the new concept of diversity in the workforce through training programmes and campaign. The target audience is the employer, in particular the public sector and big companies.
- 3.2 The partners in this project are ICTU, Carers NI, COSO, Help the Aged, the Equality Forum, Equality Commission, Statutory Duty Unit of the OFMDFM and the Women's Support Network.

SECTION 75 SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE SECTOR

NICEM acts as the focal point for both the sector and the public authorities in the section 75 process. The public authorities have recognised NICEM as the umbrella organisation for the sector. We also provide advice, technical support and training for the sector, in particular for smaller organisations with no staff. Information and support requests over the past year have covered a variety of areas, including complaints, consultations, briefings, training, technical advice, etc.

Representation

NICEM has represented the sector attending different functions organised by public authorities and the Equality Commission. We also represent the sector at the Equality Coalition, which convenes monthly meetings parallel to the section 75 process.

Key areas over the past year have included Annual review meetings with key departments, various consultations from the Equality Commission, including consultative councils, monitoring and review of the Equality Impact Assessment processes, meetings regarding the review of opportunities for Public Private Partnerships, a roundtable on the Executives' Position report on the Programme for Government, consultations around the Single Equality Bill, the Bill of Rights, screening by the Community Fund and the Police Ombudsman, as well as a number of other consultation meetings and events.

The Equality Coalition has also organised consultation events with Inter-Trade Ireland, briefing sessions on PPP/PFI and the rating review, and regular meetings with the statutory duty unit within the Equality Commission, and the Equality Directorate of OFM/DFM.

Training and Briefing

NICEM offers training and awareness raising sessions tailored to the needs of each group, as well as broader sessions. We organised and delivered the following sessions during the year:

- A training session as part of NICEM's training of community interpreters;
- An awareness raising session for the Chinese Forum, organised in partnership with the Chinese Welfare Association;
- A training session for the Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group.

Developing consultation mechanisms with public authorities

NICEM continues to work with public authorities to develop effective consultation mechanisms, including the dissemination of our consultation principles. Based on these consultation principles, NICEM has worked with a number of public authorities on developing effective mechanisms for consulting with the sector, including:

- Representation of the sector on the Advisory group set up to oversee the review of consultation processes by OFM/DFM;
- Representation of the sector in discussions around the Equality Impact Assessment and consultation processes with the Equality Commission and consultants working on their behalf;

Direct work with public authorities, jointly setting up consultation events, including:

- Consultation on the reform of the law in relation to the physical punishment of children, with the Office of Law Reform;
- Consultation on the screening of policies by the Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund;
- Consultation on the screening of policies for the Further and Higher education sector, organised with the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, on behalf of the 16 Institutes of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland;
- Begun work on a joint consultation event with the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, involving the QCA, on the screening of policies and the Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- Attending and arranging meetings with public authorities on the consultation process, including the Northern Ireland Office regarding forthcoming consultation on reform of the laws on race hate crimes;
- General discussion and advice both in person and on the phone;
- Direct contact with public authorities where there are concerns about the particular consultations at an early stage in the process;
- Raising the issue of effective consultation at meetings and conferences
- Participation in focus groups on effective consultation;

Publications

NICEM continues to disseminate the Equality Duty Resource Pack. The following are some of the publications produced this year:

- A newsletter on s. 75 for members of black and minority ethnic groups;
- A general response to the New TSN action plans of the Health Trusts (March 2002);
- NICEM's response to the Draft Equality Scheme of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (April 2002);
- NICEM's Response to the draft Equality Scheme of the Police Ombudsman (March 2002);
- NICEM's Response to the Northern Ireland Office consultation on the Review of Powers of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (August 2002);
- NICEM's response to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commissions Draft Strategic Plan (August 2002);
- NICEM's response to the Review of Healthcare Services to prisoners (August 2002);
- NICEM's response to the screening of policies informed by the Criminal justice Review recommendations by the Court Service (January 2002);

- NICEM's response to the screening of policies by the Probation Board (October 2001);
- A preliminary response to the consultation on employment policies by the Staff Commission for education and Library Boards (August 2002);
- A preliminary response to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Issues paper (March 2002);
- A response to the Equality Commission's questionnaire on the review of the s. 75 guidance to public authorities (August 2002);
- A flow chart on responding to consultations;
- A flow chart on producing a written response;
- An article on s. 75 for the Department of Regional Development's Equality magazine 'Equality Times';
- An article on s. 75 for NICEM's 'Mainstreaming' magazine.

Networking

European: NICEM was represented at the Minority Rights Group meeting on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Budapest. Renewed contact with groups working on minority rights in other countries, as well as contributing to the discussion on the way forward for the Framework Convention, and on methods of using the convention at domestic level.

NICEM has agreed to become a partner on an international project producing awareness-raising materials on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Minority Rights Group International. Funding application submitted to the EU by MRG (lead partner), a decision on the application should be reached by early 2003.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS ON RACISM AND MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATION

Rationale for Anti-racism Education & Training

- UN World Conference Against Racism Declaration & Programme of Action
- European Commission against Racism & Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe:

Activities with Relevance to Combating Racism and Intolerance

- Legislation: National, European, International Standards
- Promoting a culture of human rights, equality and justice
- Moral and professional obligations
- Good business practice
- Race equality and equal opportunities are central to good practice
- Recognise diversity and its strength
- Social inclusion and cohesion

Global Perspective

One of the most important recommendations agreed at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in September 2001(WCAR Declaration & Programme of Action #95 and 97) is the necessity to raise public awareness on issues relating to racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.

Participants from all parts of the globe strongly supported the idea that public awareness, educational and training programmes are paramount to any strategic plan to combat racism and promote diversity.

In addition such programmes can only be effective in achieving change of behaviour, attitude, cultural change within institutions and society if they operate in conjunction with:

1. The introduction of strong anti-discrimination legislation
2. The implementation of adequate policies where equality is mainstreamed and;
3. Commitment from the media to avoid conveying oppressive stereotypical images of ethnic minorities and contribute to the education of the general public on issues of racial equality.

European Perspective

Anti-discrimination training in three European Cities Project

All Member States in the European Union have a duty to introduce into domestic legislation both the Race Directive and Employment Framework Directive based on Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty.

To support the implementation of Article 13 through a range of trans-national projects involving public authorities and non-governmental organisations, a Community Action Programme was put in place under the aegis of the European Commission.

As a result of six months of intensive preparation, the Centre Européen Juif d'Information in Brussels (European Jewish Information Centre) and NICEM were successful in Stage II selection of the Programme (among the 25

Projects selected out of 69 submitted) for the implementation of our Project starting in September 2002 for a two-year period, with the possibility of being selected for the Evaluation in Stage III.

The Project is to establish a new training framework for anti-discrimination and diversity to cover all grounds under Article 13 to address the social trends in many European cities of demographic change and increasing social exclusion and discrimination. It is based on a shared philosophy that we cannot fight one form of discrimination without fighting all forms of discrimination including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity
- Religious Belief
- Sexual Orientation

CEJI and NICEM will share their extensive expertise and experience in equality training with advocates from the above categories in a Train the Trainer Programme. This will contribute to the empowerment of those sectors at national and European levels as well as provide new training programmes to facilitate the development of action plans for public partners in the health and education sectors in Altea (Spain), Belfast (Department of Education) and Berlin (Office of the Berlin Commissioner of Foreigner).

Manual and Replicable Model of Training

A needs assessment will be carried out in an attempt to identify issues pertaining to the mainstreaming of equality in employment and service provision in the health and education sectors. This will give the opportunity to participants from those sectors and NGO representatives to work together in focus groups and assist in the development of case studies to feature in a training manual to be completed near the final phase of the Project. More importantly, it is the inclusive and participative process of developing such training, which we believe will be a blue print of Equality and Diversity Training.

www.ceji.org

www.nicem.org

Northern Ireland Perspective

Anti-racism and Equality Training

Raising public awareness on racism and other forms of discrimination, not just in the workplace but also at home, has consistently featured high on NICEM's work programme through the years. An increasingly wide range of organisations and groups have actively sought to implement policies driven by standards of non-discrimination and promotion of diversity as a norm. It has been encouraging to work with so many people, with numerous policy-makers in their midst, who displayed a personal commitment to ensuring the occurrence of cultural change at organisational level.

In the evaluation of training, it appears that most individuals favour a horizontal approach to combat discrimination and implement the wider strategy to promote race equality as a core issue. The general feeling also pointed to the importance of strong leadership, organisational support, additional resources and further training to facilitate an increase in staff confidence in handling anti-discriminatory and diversity practice issues.

The above is on the basis of 60 training sessions including over 1200 participants.

NICEM wishes to thank the following organisations (and many others in the process of starting their training programme) and their employees for working with us to achieve equality of opportunity and outcome.

- Beeches Training Centre (Equality Officers in health)
- British Council in NI
- Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (Social Work)
- Craigavon and Banbridge Community Health and Social Service Trust
- Childline NI
- Child Support Agency
- Community Fund
- Guardian Ad Litem Agency
- Equality Commission for NI
- Muirheavmore Youth Project (Dundalk)
- Royal Hospital, Communications system Department
- Social Security Agency
- Association of NI Colleges
- Stranmillis College University
- University of Ulster
- Ulster Hospital and Community Health & Social Service Trust
- Youth Action NI (Armagh)

Training for Trainers based on “Anti-racism & Equality in Action”

Training Manual

Large-scale organisations have generally preferred to avail of the intensive Train the Trainer Programmes with a view to cascade the training within the organisation, hence speeding up the process of training delivery. Much interest and enthusiasm have been expressed for the user-friendly training pack as the best option for the delivery of equality training to staff.

Anti-Racism Training Support Network: Trainers from minority ethnic groups

A group of Trainers, around 10 people, from minority ethnic communities and/or working with those communities have been following an extensive and on-going training programme covering equality, human rights, training skills, legislation and computer skills.

The Trainers have taken part in the delivery of training programmes and studying for Trainer qualifications awarded by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

A similar training programme for another group of Trainee Trainers will be starting to run concurrently.

Equality Training Consortium

An Equality Training Consortium was set up under the aegis of the Equality Coalition involving Section 75 groups. It is envisaged that NICEM and Disability Action, in conjunction with the Article 13 Project and the Equal Project on employment will play a crucial role in the development of a new framework of anti-discrimination and equality training. The ultimate aim of this Project is to work with other NGOs in the consortium on the delivery of training relevant to public authorities and their duties under Section 75.

Contribution to events / seminar by other organisations

Contribution by way of presentation or other in:

- Awareness on employment issues for ethnic minorities with Belfast Traveller Support Group for public authorities organised by Business in the Community
- European Network against Racism (ENAR) conference on Citizenship focusing on issues of inclusion of third country nationals
- Troubled Images produced by the Linenhall Library
- PSNI Trainers
- BIFHE and DEL graduate ceremony
- Queerspace discussion panel during Pride Week
- Launch of Draft Programme for a National Plan Against Racism with NCCRI and the Department of Justice and Law Reform (Dublin)

Representation in

- Board Member of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Republic of Ireland
- Board Member of Women Into Politics (WIP)
- Member of the Steering Group on a National Plan against Racism, Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
- Human Rights Consortium
- Human Rights and Education Forum
- Know Racism Campaign (Republic of Ireland)
- NIVT Social Justice Fund
- Social Care Council

CAPACITY BUILDING BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

NICEM's Capacity Building Project is designed to provide support and advice services which enables more effective participation by ethnic minority community organisations in decisions effecting their communities. The project also assists minority ethnic groups to improve upon the existing services, which they provide to their communities, to build on the existing skills within those communities and organisations and to develop systems for managing organisations more effectively.

The year 2001-2002 saw an increase in staff numbers, working in areas which had already been supported by the project on a smaller scale and which were identified as key areas for support by member organisations, particularly the smaller organisations and vulnerable groups. These projects focus on the areas of Volunteer development within the sector and Health Advocacy with a number of smaller and vulnerable ethnic minority communities, including the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Community.

The remit of the project is very wide and incorporates many strands of support from direct support and advice to community organisations, to structured training programmes for organisational development and facilitating information systems which link the ethnic minority sector with both the rest of the voluntary sector and with statutory agencies.

Direct support and advice for minority ethnic community organisations

The past year has seen a marked rise in the number of ethnic minority community organisations in Northern Ireland, particularly in regions outside of Belfast. We have seen the emergence and development of newer groups such as a Sikh Women and Children's organisation in North Belfast, a community group of Asylum Seekers and Refugees and groups in regional areas such as the Mid-Ulster International Group. The role of the Capacity Building Project has been to both encourage the emergence and development of these organisations and give direct support and assistance to those groups.

A large proportion of assistance to ethnic minority organisations over the past year has focused on the formalisation of a number of groups in the sector. This has taken the form of supporting groups through the processes of developing effective constitutions, registering as charitable organisations with the Inland Revenue and when necessary for larger organisations, becoming Companies Limited by Guarantee. This type of organisational development is becoming increasingly important for communities particularly those growing in terms of staff or volunteers, and in the current funding climate groups need to establish effective systems for management and delivery of their services, particularly when competing for funds with the wider voluntary sector.

With a lower level of staff resources in the project in the earlier part of the year, much of the rest of direct support and advice to groups was focused on the smaller completely voluntary organisations and those addressing a particular need such as ethnic minority women's organisations. The support required by these smaller organisations varies considerably depending upon the aims of the organisations and how active they are. We have assisted groups to develop training programmes and activities at all stages, including consulting with their communities on the needs within those communities, developing programmes, applying for funding for programmes such as, cultural awareness programmes, summer schemes for children, producing awareness raising materials on their own communities and liaising and linking those minority ethnic groups with the wider voluntary sector and statutory sector to mainstream ethnic minority issues into those sectors where support may already be available and models of good practice can be adapted or replicated.

Other staff members in NICEM have also played a key role in supporting organisations directly especially in the areas of financial control and management. Direct advice and assistance on budgeting, and monitoring and financial returns in relation to funding has been provided by the administration and finance team particularly in relation to those groups receiving core funding from the Office of the First & Deputy First Minister.

Organisational Development for Minority Ethnic Organisations & building on existing skills within the sector

Alongside such direct support at a grassroots level, we also organised parallel structured training for member organisations and other ethnic minority groups in order to build upon existing skills in the sector, to raise awareness of key issues affecting the sector and to establish a level of good practice in the sector to build the capacity of the ethnic minority community groups involved.

Accredited training for community interpreters & Interpreting services

NICEM seeks to ensure that those individuals and community organisations providing community-interpreting services have the appropriate skills and knowledge to provide a high quality effective services to the ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland.

NICEM currently offers the only accredited courses for community interpreters in Northern Ireland in partnership with Making Training Work, a training and consultancy organisation based in London specialising in language and basic skills. Making Training Work designs and delivers a range of courses which enable those disadvantaged within the labour market to develop their skills and secure qualifications and employment. The training is accredited by the Open College Network, a nationally recognised qualification body. The trainers work with smaller groups and trainees receive a high level of personal tutorial support in their learning.

During 2001 – 2002 NICEM has offered two of these training programmes at different levels. The Office of the First and Deputy supported the first programme, 'Basic training for Community Interpreters' in October 2001. Throughout each module the participants look at the specific issues of the role of community interpreters, interpreting techniques and modes, stages of an interpreting session, confidentiality, applying codes of practice and conduct, cultural awareness, advocacy and exploring personal prejudices. At each stage of the training professionals practicing in specific areas such as the health service or education service are involved in delivering the training.

This was the second time this basic training had been carried out in Northern Ireland and was aimed at increasing the range of languages available through trained interpreters. Following on from this very successful course, we then successfully secured funding from the 'Investing in Healthier Communities' funding programme delivered by the Community Foundation, for an advanced course focusing on the health Sector. This training for interpreters began in September 2002. Entitled 'Community Advocacy and Health', this course is delivered by NICEM and Making Training Work within Belfast City Hospital Trust Training Department and includes visits to health promotion facilities, specialist hospital units such as maternity and other relevant locations. The course will be completed in April 2003.

Making Training Work has transferred the existing modules, course plans and assessment structures to the Northern Ireland Open College Network, with NICEM as the delivery organisation. Following on from this, we plan to deliver a 'Trainer's Training course' for any individuals who have undertaken the basic training course and are interested in delivering this course as a trainer based in Northern Ireland on behalf of NICEM.

OFMDFM funded Capacity Building Training

The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister has funded NICEM to facilitate a programme of capacity building training sessions aimed at the organisational development of groups in the black and minority ethnic sector. The first of these training programmes took place in September 2002 on Employment Law and Discrimination law for the Black and Ethnic Minority Sector.

As the Black and ethnic minority sector grows, more organisations are employing staff for many different roles on both part time and full times basis. As with any employers, minority ethnic organisations have certain responsibilities and roles when employing and managing staff. Just as in other employment sectors, disputes can arise in relation to recruitment, selection, employment contracts and behaviour within the workplace. This series of training seminars was designed to inform both employers and employees in the sector of roles and responsibilities and the law as it currently is applied.

The take up of this training was very low among the community organisations, which perhaps in itself is a reflection of the lack of resources or support for the focus of this type of quality assurance work within community organisations. We are planning working to support community organisations to focus on an implement quality assurance measures within their organisations through the PQASSO quality assurance programme, again supported by the OFMDFM, later in 2002. By committing to such a programme organisations will not only improve practice but

also increase their capacity to secure the type of long term funding required and which is lacking at the moment.

Ethnic Minorities Health Advocacy Project

In the latter half of 2001-2002, NICEM recruited a worker in the area of health advocacy to undertake a specific project in relation to six smaller minority ethnic communities. In partnership with representative organisations from the Muslim community, Pakistani community, Bangladeshi community, Sikh community, Mandarin speaking Chinese community and the Asylum seeker and Refugee community this worker is in the early stages of facilitating a health and social needs assessment of these communities. Upon completion of the research this project worker will assist community organisations and relevant statutory bodies, take forward recommendations of this research.

A key process within this project is developing skills of individuals within these community organisations in the field of health advocacy and support, and developing their participation in the various decision-making processes affecting the communities. The project will achieve this skills development by linking with NICEM's volunteering programme and offering key individuals a structured support and training programme in these areas.

Increasing participation through volunteering

During 2001-2002 thanks to support from the Community Fund, NICEM introduced a volunteering programme within the organisation. This programme currently has 22 volunteers working in a variety of roles including

- 'Mainstreaming' magazine
- Library and information development
- One to one language support for English as a second language classes for Asylum Seekers & Refugees
- Section 75 policy work
- Working with Youth Action on a training programme for young ethnic minority women seeking employment

In the later part of 2001-2002 NICEM recruited a Development Worker to work specifically in this area of work. The project aims to develop and promote the recruitment and support of volunteers within ethnic minority groups, and to assist groups to develop policies and secure funding to support such volunteers.

Future developments in the programme will incorporate NICEM's new projects on racial harassment and health advocacy, aimed at developing individuals' skills in these areas within communities and therefore enabling those communities to provide direct support & advice to community members who require health advocacy support or support on racial harassment issues. We also aim to recruit volunteers to work in

the area of immigration advice in order to build up the expertise in this particular area. NICEM's volunteering scheme incorporates role specific training.

Supporting Communities develop the next generation

Although this is a relatively new area of work, during 2001-2002 NICEM secured funding from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland to carry out research together with Save the Children on issues facing young people from minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. This research is due to be completed in early 2003 and should hopefully form the basis for ethnic minority community organisations to stimulate and develop youth work within individual community organisations.

Since NICEM aims to bring ethnic minority communities together to identify common issues and tackle such issues in co-operation, there are also plans for a second stage of this programme. Together with member organisations and other ethnic minority groups we aim to identify key young people within communities and support the development of leadership skills which they can take back to their community organisations develop youth work within those communities.

One of the key issues arising from the 'Visible Women' conference facilitated by NICEM in October 2002 was the difficulty ethnic minority women are facing in securing employment in Northern Ireland. This issue is now being addressed by NICEM and Youth Action NI who are currently recruiting young women from minority ethnic backgrounds aged 16-25 who are finding it hard to find employment or indeed appropriate employment, for a training programme entitled 'Young Women Making it Work', which will identify gaps in skills or confidence among young women and aims to increase employability. This programme includes an exchange visit to a partner organisation in either Spain or Austria in early 2003.

NICEM Race and Gender programme

Following the success of the 'Visible Women' conference in October 2002, organised by NICEM and made possible with the support of local ethnic minority women's groups such as 'Women of the World' in Enniskillen, Oi-Wah Chinese Women's group, the Northern Ireland Filipino Association and the Al-Nisa Association NI we have continued to develop work in this area.

One of the recommendations of the conference was that ethnic minority women's groups could benefit from continued information sharing and working together. As a result NICEM has undertaken the role of Secretariat for an Ethnic Minority Women's Network, which in the future can become an independent support and information sharing system for minority ethnic women in Northern Ireland. We have held a number of consultation meetings on a possible structure of the network and this process is continuing. NICEM currently produces a bi-monthly newsletter on behalf of the network including information on the voluntary, statutory and funding sectors relevant to ethnic minority women.

IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM & REFUGEE SERVICES

Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Services: Successes & challenges

The work and influence of NICEM's Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Service, has expanded rapidly, in the course of the last year and as well as developing and consolidating essential core functions, the service has expanded to include a range of additional services. Whilst this annual report, highlights the many successes and achievements of the service, the development of the service has not come without a considerable amount of pressure, brought to bear by external factors, particularly, fundamental changes in policy and legislation.

Immigration, Asylum & Refugee and Nationality work, is an ever evolving field and as the Westminster administration move towards the enactment of a 4th major piece of legislation, NICEM is faced with the challenge of responding, in order to develop appropriate services, whilst maintaining a level of commitment, which will address the needs of individuals needing assistance in terms of advice, representation and accessing services.

The One Stop Service

NICEM provides the Reception Assistant function for asylum seekers and a "One Stop Shop" service to all asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland. We are funded to do this by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) through the Refugee Council in Britain.

NICEM's 'One Stop' Service for Asylum Seekers & Refugees has faced the challenge of an increase in numbers of people claiming asylum in Northern Ireland. The service continues to provide direct advice, assistance & guidance to newly arrived Asylum Seekers, in accessing essential support, accommodation, health care and education. Significant relationships have been developed with key agencies in both the voluntary and statutory sector and the service is recognised officially at both local and national level, as the main point of contact for Asylum Seekers & Refugees.

Asylum seekers are referred to NICEM from various agencies including the Immigration Service, the RUC/PSNI and community groups. If a client is eligible, a claim is made to NASS for support. If they have no family or friends who can help, emergency accommodation can be arranged. Generally this would be for up to one week. If NASS agree to support them, they are placed in follow-on accommodation while their asylum claim is dealt with. This is usually a room in a shared house (for singles and some couples) or a flat or a house (for families). According to the British Government asylum seekers should receive a final decision within six months, however this has not been the case for any of our clients.

This year has seen a continued increase in the number of people seeking advice from the service (see statistics for details from April 2001 – July 2002). We are seeing up to 20 new people (and their families) each month as well as up to 300 return appointments. The summer has seen a sharp increase in our workload; whether this continues remains to be seen.

While asylum seekers are being supported by NASS, we offer them continual support through our One Stop Shop. This support takes many of the following forms:

Key responsibilities and activities of the 'One Stop Shop' Service

- To facilitate access to and arrange emergency accommodation for destitute Asylum Seekers, over 18 and families with children (unaccompanied minors are the responsibility of Social Services);
- Assist in the completion and forwarding of applications for NASS support either financial support or financial support and accommodation;
- Arranging interpreters;
- Arranging GP, dental and optician appointments;
- Referrals and liaison with Health Visitor and local Health & Social Services Trusts;
- Arranging solicitor appointments;
- Providing out-of-hours, evenings and week-ends, emergency phone service, to arrange emergency accommodation for Asylum Seekers, who arrive out-side office hours;
- Arranging follow-on accommodation with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
- Referrals for victims of trauma and torture;
- Preparing and presenting reports on the service to NICEM management, staff, Refugee Council & NASS;
- Preparing and presenting reports to Northern Ireland Co-ordinating Committee on Asylum Seekers & Refugees;
- Service user record up-dates, maintaining and up-dating manual and electronic filing systems;
- Co-ordinating English language classes for service users;
- Co-ordinating weekly 'drop-in' sessions for Asylum Seekers & Refugees;
- Referrals to Red Cross, community groups and St. Vincent de Paul for additional support;
- Awareness raising and training with statutory and voluntary sector on Asylum Seeker & Refugee issues.

Whilst the primary function of the service, is to ensure that individuals are provided with support in accessing essential services, the 'One Stop' Service, has also been instrumental in lobbying for and influencing, the way services are delivered and significant relationships have been developed with accommodation, health & social services and education providers. Over the course of the last year, the 'One Stop' Service has made significant progress in the following areas;

Achievements of 'One Stop Shop' Service

- Establishment of formal links with key statutory providers, including Health & Social Service providers, mainly Health Boards and Health & Social Services Trusts, education providers, Community Affairs and Foreign Nationals Branch of the Police Service for Northern Ireland, Immigration Service and National Asylum Support Services;
- Establishment and development of 3 English language classes per week in accessible venues across Belfast, to meet individual needs in terms of location and caring responsibilities;
- Establishment and development of weekly drop-in centre, to provide access to recreational activities and English language conversation and an opportunity to meet other people. Staff from the 'One Stop Shop' Service attend to provide advice if required and volunteers also assist with activities and English language conversation;
- Providing training to police on issues affecting Asylum Seekers & Refugees;
- Official launch of 'One Stop Shop' Service during Refugee Week;
- Organising and hosting a Seminar in September 2001, in partnership with South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust, funded by NASS. Presentations by NASS representative, Nick Hardwick, Chief Executive Refugee Council and Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium, to discuss setting up multi-agency approach to the delivery of services for Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Northern Ireland. Well attended by key representatives from the statutory sector and key recommendations were made.
- Establishment of referral arrangements with counselling services for victims of trauma and torture;
- Assisting Red Cross, in development of volunteering & orientation programme for newly arrived Asylum Seekers;
- Presentation to conference in October on the health needs of Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Northern Ireland;
- Hosting of seminar in March, on the Government White Paper on Immigration, Asylum & Citizenship. Presentations by Chief Executive Refugee Council, Co-ordinator Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Service, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission;
- Continued development of multi-agency service delivery for Asylum Seekers;
- Continued development and delivery of advice and support services for Asylum Seekers

The One Stop Shop works very closely with many agencies, both statutory and voluntary sector. We work closest with Belfast International Hostel (who provide the emergency accommodation) and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (who provide the follow-on accommodation).

During the year Fiona Watters from BIFHE was on an industrial placement with the One Stop Shop, which proved to be extremely successful. Fiona negotiated fee

arrangements for Further Education courses at BIFHE for all asylum seekers and gave course guidance to dozens of others. As a result many of our clients progressed from learning English to joining vocational courses. As well as working with BIFHE, we arranged English and computer classes at various venues throughout Belfast. We also facilitated visits to a number of job fairs and health days.

During this year we have further developed our links with various other organisations. We have worked with, amongst others:

- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Scoil An Droichead
- Confederation of Religious in Ireland
- Church Action on Poverty
- Windsor Women's Centre
- Belfast GEMS
- Prince's Trust
- British Red Cross
- BIFHE
- Sure Start
- South & East Belfast HSS Trust
- Chinese Welfare Association
- Family Trauma Centre
- Wheelworks
- Belfast Xposed
- Workers Educational Association
- UNISON
- WAVE
- Various Government departments

Two key changes in legislation this year have had major effects on clients of the service. Firstly the universally condemned NASS voucher scheme was abolished. This has had a great effect on asylum seekers as they now receive their allowance (which is still only 70% of Income Support) in cash. They are now able to decide how and where to spend their money – just like everyone else. The second change has been the abolition of the right of asylum seekers to work six months after entry. This means people have no choice but to claim support from NASS even if they want to, and are able to, support themselves.

One of the most difficult areas we work in is with people who have reached the end of the asylum process and face deportation. We also try and maintain links with asylum seekers who have been detained in Maghaberry Prison.

Recognising that many asylum seekers face isolation living in the city and do not get the chance to see the countryside, the One Stop Shop organised several trips throughout the year. We took people to Newcastle and Crawfordsburn and also arranged walks up Cavehill and Black Mountain. The highlight for many of our clients was a five-day residential at the Corrymeela Community on the north Antrim coast.

NICEM organised several events to coincide with Refugee Week in Britain. These included a football match for asylum seekers against locals from Ballynafeigh and a "meet, eat and karaoke" party. Both these were very successful with the former featuring on BBC local news.

Refugee Integration & Resettlement

In September 2001, 'One Stop Shop' Service received funding from the European Refugee Fund, through the Home Office. The aim of this funding is to assist the setting up of projects to work on crucial matters such as Refugee Integration & Resettlement, following the grant of Refugee status or Exceptional Leave to Remain.

In August 2001, NICEM appointed the Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Worker, to develop and carry forward the work of the Service and the Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Worker is part of the 'One Stop Shop' team.

Over the course of the last year, the main area of the work of the Refugee Integration & Resettlement Worker has been the development of links with key statutory providers in Northern Ireland, to ensure that services are in place for people granted Refugee status and Exceptional Leave to Remain and that individuals are able to make a smooth transition from Asylum Seeker status to settled status and can access mainstream services without encountering difficulties.

The service has identified serious gaps in terms of the level of awareness amongst key statutory providers, of the particular needs of Refugees, which has, in a significant number of cases, to gaps in service provision. The findings of an Audit of Service provision, carried out by the Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Service, amongst the statutory sector, indicated that there was a limited level of awareness of issues, affecting Asylum Seekers & Refugees and that this had a subsequent impact on the delivery of services.

In response to this, the Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Service has been engaged in a process of consultation and awareness raising. Initially, a briefing paper was circulated to statutory service providers, including health, education and training, social security and housing, to inform on the circumstances of Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Northern Ireland. Regular consultation is held with the Department of Social Development, the Social Security Agency, Department of Education, Education & Library Boards and Health & Social Services Boards & Trusts, across Northern Ireland.

The Refugee Integration & Resettlement Worker has also been working with individual Refugees and people with Exceptional Leave to Remain, in accessing services such as Social Security, housing, Training & Employment Agency and New Deal.

Refugee Community Development & Advocacy

We encourage asylum seekers, both individually and as a group, to develop strategies to ensure they can access all services they are entitled to, as well as speaking out about problems they face. To this end we laid the foundations for the eventual setting up of the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Prior to March 2002, there was no such a group in Northern Ireland to advocate directly on issues relating to Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

Additional funding was secured from the 2002 round of the European Refugee Fund, to assist in the setting up and development of a Refugee Community Organisation in Northern Ireland.

The work of Refugee Community Development & Advocacy, forms an integral part of the work and activities of the 'One Stop Shop' Service and has been aimed at identifying individuals from the Asylum Seeker and Refugee community in Northern Ireland and assisting in the establishment a group, following community development principles, who can represent the interests and concerns of Asylum Seekers & Refugees, living in Northern Ireland.

The key aim of Refugee Community Development & Advocacy is that Asylum Seekers & Refugees will be able to advocate on issues which affect them directly.

A key success of this work was the establishment of the first grass roots, Asylum Seeker & Refugee Community organisation. NICRAS (The Northern Ireland Committee of Refugees & Asylum Seekers) was officially launched on International Refugee Day, 18th June 2002.

Key areas of work will be lobbying political representatives and statutory providers, to raise awareness about the particular circumstances and needs of Asylum Seekers & Refugees in the context of Northern Ireland.

Asylum Advice & Guidance Services

NICEM is a member of the UK EQUAL Partnership for the development of training and guidance services for Asylum Seekers in the UK. The partnership consists of a number of national agencies, from the Refugee Sector and Education sector and was set up to explore and develop strategies and activities, which will improve training, education and employment opportunities for Asylum Seekers and will aid the long term re-settlement for people who are granted Exceptional Leave to Remain. The project is funded by the European Social Fund 'EQUAL' programme and match funding has been requested from the Department of Employment & Learning in Northern Ireland and the Community Fund. The service commenced in June 2002 and was officially launched during Refugee Week in June.

The Asylum Advice & Guidance service will form part of the 'One Stop Shop' Service and aims to provide a continuous, seamless support service for people accessing the 'One Stop Shop' Service. The key aims and activities of the service is to develop programmes and activities for Asylum Seekers, in terms of orientation, volunteering, training (vocational & professional) and education, exploring and accessing employment opportunities for people who receive permission to work and sourcing IT and English language training at a number of different levels. The objective is that at the end of the 3 years, programmes will be successfully mainstreamed and local partnerships will have been established to carry forward the development and delivery of programmes and activities. At present local partners have been identified as volunteer development agencies, Red Cross, Prince's Trust, Belfast Institute for Further & Higher Education, St. Vincent de Paul, the Department for Employment &

Learning for Northern Ireland, the South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust and Windsor Women's Centre.

PROVISION OF IMMIGRATION ADVICE

NICEM continues to provide assistance and representation, in respect of immigration, nationality and asylum & refugee, related issues and is currently examining and exploring funding opportunities for the development and consolidation of the service.

NICEM is exempted by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, in the provision of immigration advice and exemption was granted in June 2001, allowing NICEM to provide advice and representation up to Level 2 (casework). The OISC carried out an audit of NICEM's immigration work in February 2002 and the report has been positive, allowing NICEM to continue providing advice and representation.

CASE LOAD & ENQUIRIES

<i>NATURE OF ENQUIRY</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>
*(Including telephone & one-to-one advice)	
Asylum Applications (including representation at interview and submissions to IND)	312
Marriage/Partner/Spouse Domestic & European	700
Entry clearance/Visitor visas	127
Application for British Citizenship (Post-nuptial & Residency)	72
Application for Irish Citizenship Post-nuptial & Birth	47
Refugee Travel Documents	10
Applications for Leave to Remain under the Regularisation Scheme for Overstayers	4
Work Permit Scheme	61
Student Visas (Applications and Extensions)	63
Miscellaneous	504
Current Live Files	246

*** Term used for assisting newly arrived asylum seekers, who are destitute, with access to emergency accommodation and support from the National Asylum Support Service.**

Representation

The Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Service, is active at a number of different levels and is involved in continued partnership for development and participating in a number of different forums:

- Representing NICEM and the 'One Stop Shop' Service on the Northern Ireland Co-ordinating Committee on Asylum Seekers & Refugees, which is convened by the Home Office and are aimed at tackling issues arising with regard to Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Northern Ireland-meetings are held every 6-8 weeks and there are several key sub-groups, dealing with issues such as health, education and advocacy, all of which the 'One Stop Shop' Service is represented on;
- Representing NICEM & the project on the National Refugee Forum and attending quarterly meetings;
- Representing NICEM at Home Office Minister chairing National Refugee Integration Forum;
- Representing NICEM on UK EQUAL partnership board and Asylum Seeker Skills Audit Task Group – meetings held monthly;
- Representing NICEM on Immigration Practitioners Group for Northern Ireland;

ADVOCACY & ADVICE ON RACIAL HARASSMENT, ATTACK AND DISCRIMINATION

Prejudice is not only widespread in Northern Ireland. There are extreme situations such as racial attacks and more familiar incidents such as racial harassment and discrimination. In such circumstances victims experience low self esteem, uselessness and vulnerability. It is vital to assist and support victims of racial harassment, attack and discrimination who are vulnerable and living in isolated areas without support or help. In most cases they do not know where they can get confidential and professional support. For this reason NICEM provides professional advice and support work with other agencies in order to widen the web of effective support.

1. Racial Harassment Support and Advocacy Project

- 1.1 Over the year we received around 30 new cases. Most of the work is focused on advice and referral. We have at long last appointed a new Development Worker, who started work in August 2002, working with victims and other agencies with funding support from Comic Relief.
- 1.2 The project gives support to victims, who experience racial harassment and racial attack. It also aims to use the multi-agency approach to support the victims. A number of meetings have been held to explore this approach with the Equality Commission and the Police Service NI. As a result a seminar was organised in June to pursue this matter through a wider audience for discussion.
- 1.3 A referral system has been set up with member groups and other agencies. We expect a lot of work needs to be done in the area, given that the number of attacks are increasing.

2. Racial Discrimination

- 2.1 The number of complaints we received over the year was 16. Most of the cases were referred to the Equality Commission to pursue further. The Equality Commission recently told those victims that they are no longer in a position to financially support any new cases in terms of legal costs. This news alarmed NICEM since its statutory function is to provide legal advice and support for victims of discrimination. We understand their difficulties in such circumstances; we will support the Commission in the call for more resources to support victims. In the meantime we will also explore new funding to support this area of work.

NETWORKING & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Networking and partnership building have become one of NICEM's core functions and activities in pursuing collective action on racial justice and equality. It is also a practice used to bring knowledge and experience to Northern Ireland and at the same time shares our unique experiences and struggle. Networking also forms the basis of collective action through partnership building. Through our involvement and contribution, NICEM plays a significant role in the UK, on the Island of Ireland and in the EU.

1. UK Network

1.1 Most of the work is through UKREN (UK Race and Europe Network), an organisation in which NICEM is a member of the steering group. UKREN plays a key role in the preparation and follow-up of the UN World Conference Against Racism. A new area of work which has been developed is migration and asylum policy from the EU and UK. These issues and area of work are of benefit to the Northern Ireland situation. UKREN represents the UK at the Board of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

1.2 We work closely with the CRE in relation to the implementation of the Race Directive, in particular in relation to the Cabinet Minister's announcement of the "Single Equality Commission" project. NICEM made important contributions on the one single equality Commission based on our experience in Northern Ireland. In particular the partnership approach of the Equality Coalition in Northern Ireland. As a result we were invited to a number of seminars. Private meetings and starting up networking and partnership building to support their issues and concerns.

1.3 Recently we were approached by the CRE to use our expertise and experience on Section 75 and the Race Equality Audit to develop a package of Trainers' Training programme for the black voluntary sector organisations on the Race Equality Duty. This project if it is approved will provide a golden opportunity for NICEM to engage in further networking and partnership building in the UK.

2. Irish Network

2.1 With the appointment of our Education and Training Officer by the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform as a member of Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and also a member of the Working Group on the National Action Plan following the WCAR; NICEM will play a more significant role on the Island of Ireland on anti-racism campaigning. The Executive Director is also a member of a High Level Steering Group on Public Awareness Programmes on Racism since May 2001. One of our roles is to develop common issues and concerns in relation to the North-South dimension. Currently we are lobbying that the same public awareness programme on racism should be established in Northern Ireland through the NI National Action Plan and the PSI working group.

2.2 We will develop a working programme with the Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland (ARASI) on capacity building in Dublin to share our experiences and support through partnership.

2.3 NICEM is also a member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Task Force on Racism in the Workplace. We contributed our experience and expertise in order to tackle the basic employment rights issue.

3. European Network

3.1 The Executive Director is the co-board member of the European Network Against Racism. ENAR is now facing a huge challenge in both internal and external affairs. As usual, we focus more on the transposition of the Race Directive and EU Migration and Asylum policies and issues.

3.2 As a member of the NGOs Resource Group of the Council of Europe on WCAR, we will continue to monitor the member states on their National Action Plans. An intergovernmental meeting was held in February 2002 in Strasbourg which was attended by NICEM. The member states will report on their progress on the National Action Plans in February 2003.

4. Northern Ireland

4.1 NICEM has established a strategy in partnership across sectors in order to promote human rights and race equality in Northern Ireland, issue such as Section 75, Single Equality Bill, the Bill of Rights, Asylum and Refugees, etc. These organisations include:

- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Law Centre (NI)
- Committee on the Administration of Justice
- Greater Belfast Community Network
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- Disability Action
- Help the Aged
- Women's Support Network
- Women into Politics
- Women's Aid
- Children's Law Centre
- Save the Children
- Childcare NI
- Association of Independent Advice Centres
- Community Change
- NICVA
- ICTU
- UNISON
- NIACRO
- Housing Executive
- NI Youth Hostel
- Red Cross
- Belfast Institute of Higher and Further Education
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Youthnet
- Youth Council NI

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ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

While we focus on our daily core functions and activities of NICEM, we have not lost sight of our internal organisational development.

1. External Evaluation of NICEM's performance

1.1 We appointed the Blue Print Consultancy to carry out an independent review of NICEM's work. A report was published in late September. This report will provide NICEM with our future blueprint for development as part of the wider process of working on our future five year median plan.

2. PQASSO

2.1 With more new staff, a working group on PQASSO has been set up with support from the Refugee Council in London. This will monitor our internal policies and practice as well as carrying out an on-going review of our existing policies and practice. Over the year, we re-developed our Equal Opportunity Policy and Harassment Policy. We also reviewed a number of

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(2001-2003)**

Chair: **Mr. Javaid Naveed**
Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association

Vice-chair: **Mrs. A. S. Khan**
Al-Nisa Women Group

Secretary: **Ms. Margaret Donaghy**
Travellers Movement (NI)

Treasurer: **Ms. Anna Lo**
Chinese Welfare Association (NI)
(resigned in August 2002)

Other members:

Dr. Liming Wang
Mandarin Speakers Association

Ms. Emma Clyde
Northern Ireland Filipino Association

Mr. Paul Noonan
Belfast Travellers Education & Development Group

STAFF

Central Administration

Executive Director
Administrative Manager
Administrator (Asylum Support)
Administrator (EQUAL)

Mr. Patrick Yu
Ms. Nuala Moynagh
Ms. Eva McKelvey
Mr. Max Petrushkin

Policy and Capacity Building Team

Development Worker: Capacity Building
Development Worker: Volunteer Development
Development Worker: Health
Training & Education Officer
Trainer
Policy & Research Development Officer
Development Worker: Racial Harassment
Short-term Project on Women & Children

Ms. Gabrielle Doherty
Mr. Sean Kelly
Ms. Jiemin Tomita
Ms. Karima Zahi
Ms. Felice Kiel
Ms. Tansy Hutchinson
Ms. Marie Keating
Ms. Siobhan Molloy

Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Team

Co-ordinator of Immigration, Asylum and
Refugee Services
Development Worker (EQUAL)
Development Worker
(National Asylum Support Services)
Development Worker
(National Asylum Support Services)
Development Worker
(Refugee Integration)
Development Worker
(Refugee Integration)

Ms. Sharon Dillon
Ms. Moira McCombe

Ms. Roisin O'Connor

Mr. Glen Phillips

Ms. Brenda Anthony

Ms. Lumturi Podrimaj

