

**Northern Ireland
Council
for Ethnic Minorities
(NICEM)**

**Annual Report
2002-2003**

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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 acceptable behaviour in our society. Policy and practice, through race mainstreaming, can be the guidance for racial equality. As a black voluntary sector umbrella organisation we should contribute our expertise and experience in developing good policy and practice for the public sector through partnership approach.

Race Equality Audit

NICEM developed the Audit in 2000 with additional funding from the Equality Commission to develop performance indicators and guidance of the Audit in 2001. Over the years we have more inquiry on our Audit by public authorities in GB, in particular the Scottish Executive. As a result, the Scottish Executive Equality web page links into NICEM web page on the Audit.

With the publication of the Race Equality Strategy, it is our current thinking and strategy to link the Audit to the Race Equality Strategy. The Audit is the prerequisite of the Strategy through the development of Management Framework of the Action Plan of the Strategy. The Audit will provide the framework for the purpose of the implementation of the Strategy. We commission an external consultant to develop the Management Framework to link the Audit to the Strategy. At last, the Audit will be mainstreaming to government policy and practice.

The UK National Action Plan on the UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR)

The Home Office organised the National Consultative Conference for the black sector on 20 November 2002 in Manchester as the follow-up on the UN World Conference Against Racism. The Manchester Conference became disaster as the proposed National Action Plan circulated to the participants a week before the Conference and most of the proposed Action Plan is the existing work anticipated under the Race Equality Duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It does not fulfil the requirement of the Programme of Action of the WCAR.

UK Race Europe Network (UKREN) raised these issues at the subsequent Home Office NGOs Steering Group (NICEM is the member of both) meeting in early 2003 with a research proposal to assist the UK Departments on the drafting of the National Action Plan. The proposal was in principle agreed by the Home Office but for one reason or others it was never materialise. At the same time, there is no more meeting since May this year.

In following-up to the Council of Europe process on WCAR, the Executive Director of NICEM, as the member of the NGOs Resource Group to preparing the European process, agreed with the Head of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) to cancel the Inter-governmental meeting in February/March 2003

to follow-up the 2002 meeting to progress the action of the Member States. In viewing no real progress and commitment from the most of the Member States, it will waste the resources to call for such a meeting.

In Northern Ireland the national action plan will mainstream into the Race Equality Strategy, which was published in March 2003. Action plan will be developed in the later stage. NICEM will ensure the Action Plan under the Race Equality Strategy will be in line with the Programme of Action of the WCAR.

EU Article 13 Project on the development and implementation of Anti-discrimination Training Measures in three European Cities (Belfast, Berlin and Altea of Spain) in the areas of health and education

The Centre European Juif d'Information (CEJI) in Brussels and NICEM were successful bidding the Project from the DG Employment & Social Affairs (among the 25 Projects selected out of 69). The other transnational partners are Berlin Senate Commissioner's Office for Foreigners, Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) and Municipal Government of Altea of Spain. The Project is to develop a training programme and manual to cut across all grounds of discrimination, which was based on the expertise of NICEM and CEJI in the training field of anti-racism, equality and diversity.

With the support of our government's Executive Office in Brussels and the former Minister of Education, Mr. Martin McGuinness, our Project progressed very well in both local and at European level (details see public awareness on racism and multiple-discrimination section). The Annual Report 2003 of the Fundamental Rights and Discrimination Unit of the European Commission DG Employment & Social Affairs also highlights the achievement of our Project.

Diversity Matters Project

This is a joint Project between Disability Action and NICEM to promote diversity of background in Northern Ireland in the field of employment through training and public awareness campaign. The Project ran very well over the year with the support from a wide ranging of partners from different grounds of discrimination, employers bodies and trade union bodies, government representative and Equality Commission.

The Project organised a launch event in June 2003 with sponsorship from the Department of Employment and Training at the Parliament Building, Stormont. And the Permanent Secretary of DEL officiate the event and delivered the keynote speech to the transnational partners of EQUAL from Greece, Italy and Sweden, local politician, public, private, voluntary and community sector.

Mainstreaming Race into government policy and practice

Policy work and lobbying is one of the core functions of NICEM to influence and effective change of government legislation, policy and practice through our strategy of race mainstreaming. We encourage the sector and our staff in particular to sit in different government working groups, public bodies, consultative bodies, etc. in order to influence and effective change. We also have our internal mainstreaming within NICEM in which all policy work must cut across the issues of Human Rights Act (including Bill of Rights in the future), Section 75 and capacity building for the sector.

Implementation of Race Directive & Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland

NICEM submitted the comment on 23 January 2003 to the UK Cabinet Office on the draft Race Regulations. The draft Regulations in Northern Ireland was published in February 2003. We were totally disappointed of the draft Race Regulations for three reasons. First, the decision to implement the Directive through a statutory instrument of Regulations, not primary legislation, has a very damaging impact on the integrity and coherence of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997. Second, the draft Regulations adopts the British minimalist and restrictive approaches to compliance with the Directive (almost copy word by word from the GB draft Regulations). Thirdly, certain key provisions of the Directive are either missing or misinterpret the principle that laid down in the Community Law.

Our meetings with official on our concerns of the Draft Regulation are paid off. As the result, the one that laid in the Parliament has far better protection than the GB one in the following aspects: 1. Definition of harassment does not have an exemption clause in; 2. It reinstates the clauses on social advantage and social protection where GB has no such protection (non-compliance of the Race Directive); 3. The Regulation also covers public appointment of the public office; 4. The Regulation will also cover Irish Travellers, but not colour and nationality (in line with GB position) and 5. The Regulation extends to all public authorities (in line with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000).

Our concerns on the coherence and integrity, as well as the gap between implementation of the Single Equality Bill and the Race Regulation (another two years time) are the on-going issues within the administration. The government is now considered to have primary legislation to rectify the problem of colour and nationality, as well as consolidate into one single race legislation prior to the Single Equality Bill in 2006.

UKREN, in the last meeting, agreed to write a letter to the Secretary General of the European Commission to start the formal complaint against the UK government of non-compliance of the Race Directive in relation to colour, social protection and social advantage clauses.

In early February 2003 the Direct Rule Minister Des Browne announced the appointment of eight-members Legal Expert Panel on the Single Equality Bill to

advise the government on the drafting of the Bill. The Executive Director of NICEM is appointed as the member of the Panel. Due to the political deadlock and the postponement of the election of the Assembly, the Single Equality Bill seems likely to slip from the original timetable.

Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

NICEM has been a key actor on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, participating in the Ad Hoc Human Rights Consortium (a coalition of more than 100 NGOs demanding for a comprehensive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland), and engaging in the debate through a variety of means, including our Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference.

NICEM has serious concern on the current draft Communal & Identities Rights. The current draft undermines the international human rights standard on minority protection. It is well established in the international law on the principle of majority rule and the minority protection. The Human Rights Commission twists the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minority by changing “minority protection” to “community protection” so that everyone is protected whether you are majority (“Catholic or Protestant) or minority (ethnic, linguistic and religious minority and travellers, etc.). We do not object to put everyone equal, but our concern is where is the minority protection, in particular assimilation or force integration in which the Convention is to protect ethnic, linguistic and cultural minority. Our concern is in line with the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Report on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, who strongly criticise this issue.

We also dismiss the Commission’s proposal, which is undermines the Good Friday Agreement and the existing equality legislation in relation to compulsory and voluntarily monitoring of the workforce (currently religion and gender are under statutory requirement, race and disability are voluntary). Due to Section 75 duty to promote equality of opportunity by all public authorities, most of the public authorities on their monitoring forms for the workforce have most of the category. The identity right clause will serious undermine all equality legislation as the result.

Due to local people lack of understanding of the protection and jurisdiction of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, NICEM will organise a series of training workshops in November onward with the support of the International Minority Rights Group (London based). The training workshops will open to both minority ethnic communities and local community in order to enhance the understanding of the issues on the one hand, to develop a common strategy in response to the Commission’s proposal on the others.

Executive Director’s Resignation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission The Executive Director of NICEM formally resigned from the Commission on 7 July 2003. The Executive Committee of NICEM supported his decision by issuing a statement to raise the same concerns of the Commission’s handling on the Communal and Identity Rights of the Bill of Rights, which is undermines equality and Good Friday Agreement.

Race Equality Strategy

The government finally published and launch of the Race Equality Strategy in March 2003. At the launch, it issued two consultation documents (both the Strategy and government's response to the recommendations from the PSI Travellers Report). Although the deadline of the consultation of the Strategy is set at the end of May, and now the government have a longer consultation as the result of the further suspension of the election of the Assembly (end of August).

We have serious concerns on Government's Response to the Recommendations of the PSI Traveller Report in which plays down all key recommendations from the original Report. The water-down version will discourage future participation from Irish Travellers who provides a lot of first hand experience and information to draw up the PSI Report. It also shows that the government have no commitment to tackle the most disadvantaged and socially excluded group in our society by doing nothing over the last two years waiting to the latest report. We presented the Traveller case at the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination hearing in August 2003 at Geneva arguing that the government is in breach of the CERD Recommendations XVII of 2001 on Roma, which is equally applied to Irish Travellers.

The Strategy was the product of our involvement at the Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group on Minority Ethnic People (PSI Working Group). The Strategy is also formed the backbone of our government's commitment to implement the National Action Plan of the UN World Conference on Racism in 2001.

The PSI Working Group also proposed to set up the Race Equality Forum, an inter-departmental forum with full representation from black and minority ethnic groups, to monitor and implement the Action Plan of the Race Equality Strategy. The first meeting was held in May 2003.

NICEM has worked out a consultation timetable for the sector. We organised around 10 consultation sessions with different grouping of minority ethnic organisations (both geographical area and thematic basis) during summer time. We also encourage minority ethnic groups to response to the Strategy by supporting individual organisation to run consultation, as well as preparing simple documents for discussion and priorities issues in each core functional departments. We also prepare a template for the sector to respond as well. We are particular like to say thank you to the entire staff team of NICEM who has been prepared for the process and working very hard during summer time to deliver this important task, as well as the community who assisted to organise the consultation meeting.

NICEM will also contribute to support the development of the Management Framework to draft the Action Plan from the Aims of the Strategy. We have been appointed a consultant who will work with the Executive Director to produce the framework to assist each Department to write their Action Plan. The Framework will include action objectives, targets, performance indicators, timetables, monitoring and evaluation process. It will also integrate the Framework to NICEM's Race Equality Audit, as well as the government's Best Value. The results of the consultation process

will feed to the consultant to the development of the priority issues of the sector that cut-across all key departments.

NICEM also sees our role to support the black and minority ethnic sector to participate at the Race Equality Forum in which it is a different level of playing field that disadvantages our sector. We are putting forward a funding application to provide support through social policy training and pre-meeting for the preparation of the Forum.

Review on “Consultation” of Section 75

NICEM was represented at the OFMDFM Advisory Group on the above Review. It commissioned a researcher to undertake research on a review of the consultation process. An Advisory Group has been set up, with representatives from 10 public authorities, 5 Joint Forum members (representing voluntary and community sector) and 5 Equality Coalition members, which, NICEM is represented. We raised a lot of issues at the Advisory Group, in particular best model of practice and malpractice by various departments and NDPB. We also intervened on the potential low participation from our sector, as well as others, on the mainstreaming consultation process of the review. As the result the researcher did organise a focus group for ethnic minority and others. Apparently, the final report, which has tabled for discussion on 4 February 2003, makes no significant change despite strong criticism by all sectors and the Equality Coalition. As the result, the Equality Coalition pulled out from the Advisory Group.

Racial and Sectarian Crime Consultation

The Northern Ireland Office published the consultation paper “Race and Sectarian Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland” in November 2002. NICEM takes the issues very seriously by organised the consultation seminar on 23 January 2003 at QUB Common Room with around 40 participants from the sector and other public authorities, as well as voluntary sector. We also prepared a briefing paper prior to the seminar to ensure the people understanding the issues.

The proposed legislation is overdue, but NICEM also focus on the effectiveness of the existing law to protect racial harassment and racial attack in which the former RUC and now the Police Service Northern Ireland has never used these legislations, such as Harassment (NI) Order 1997. We also raised the concerns about the treatment of black and minority ethnic people by the PSNI as victims of crime. It is not a matter that we do not have sufficient laws, it is more essential for the police to tackle institutional racism when black and ethnic minorities are either the victims or alleged perpetrators of crime. We submitted our comments to the Northern Ireland Office in February 2003, including extend the hate crime legislation to homophobic and others.

In response to the recent attack in June towards black migrants and asylum seekers (two pipe bombs) in Donegall Avenue, South Belfast, we worked closely with different political parties, in particular the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP). As the result, the PUP and the Ulster Research Group issued a joint statement to condemn

the vicious attack. We still monitor the situation in coming up to the Assembly election in which the extreme right wing Party under the flagship of BNP to distribute racist leaflets to the local people which targets migrants and asylum seekers. These asylum or black families being identified and received the racist leaflets. The pipe bombs attacks were happened after the leaflets distributed in the area.

The Executive Committee of NICEM and Staff had a meeting with the Chief Constable, the Chair of the Policing Board and their senior management team on 22 July 2003 at NICEM office discussing the outstanding issues arising from our submission to Patten Commission on Policing and NICEM work in racial harassment and racial attack and hate crime legislation. We are in particular raised the concerns on the BNP election tactics in Northern Ireland by employing their success experience in North England. The meeting was found to be useful and we agreed to regularise these meeting in the future.

On 18 August 2003 NICEM met the Liberal Democrat Northern Ireland spoke person Mr. Lempit Opak, MP at NICEM office to discuss the Hate Crime Bill, the policing issues and the way to move forward. We are in particular reminding Mr. Opak that if we have the Hate Crime Bill, it should also include homophobic and domestic violence. We also raised the issue of the recent racist attack and the BNP election tactics.

RAXAN

NICEM, Runnymede Trust, Refugee Council, CEMVO and Equality Commission join the consortium bidding with the Commission for Racial Equality as the lead partner. This is part of the research project for UK on various race policies, which is funded by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism in Vienna. Three research reports (employment, education and training) were published in late March 2003, previous round publication. In late April, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism approved the consortium bidding for another two years project. We are waiting the appointment of a new Research Worker from CRE to move the Project forward.

UK 16th Periodic Report to CERD

NICEM and 1990 Trust discussed the process to responds to the British Government 16th Periodic Report to CERD in April this year after the CERD confirmed the date for the hearing of the UK Report. As the result, we organised the first meeting to inform the key actors in the previous report (2000) to participate in the hearing in August 2003. At the first meeting, NICEM volunteered to draft the proposal for funding for the UK NGOs Shadow Report and UK NGOs delegations at CERD.

Over two months' time, the NGOs Steering Group worked very effectively to prepare the NGOs Report and published by the end of June. The Steering Group also selected 10 representatives to attend the UN CERD hearing, including NICEM, on 6-7 August 2003. The Special Rapporteur on UK, Mr. Pilai, uses a lot of material from our Report to questioning the British government on all those issues. We are awaiting the final conclusion remark which will be available on 22 August 2003.

The NGOs Steering Group agreed to follow-up the conclusion remarks and observation of the CERD through monitoring the government to implement the conclusion remarks and observation of the CERD.

DHSS & PS Review of Mental Health legislation, policy & provision and Regional Strategy on Health and Wellbeing

With the support of our volunteer, Dr. Angela O’Rowe, who is a medical doctor for more than 10 years experience and just finished her LLM on Human Rights Law, wrote the two pieces of submission for NICEM looking into UK experience of black and ethnic minorities and put both the human rights and equality issues and principles into the submission. It is a high quality piece of work and we would like to thank you for Angela’s excellence work for NICEM. We also attended the consultation meetings to raise our issues and concerns on these matters.

NICEM Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference

The main theme for this year Conference is “How to use Human Rights Act and Section 75 to scrutinize legislative process?” It aims at open another avenue of participation from NGOs sector on human rights and equality by directing the focus to the Northern Ireland Assembly. We line up with a group of powerful speakers from Joint Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Justice, academic, Human Rights Commission, Equality Commission, CAJ, ICTU and NICEM, etc. This year we broke another record in which we registered more than 170 participants at the Conference. This was organised on 5 June 2003 at Stormont Hotel. The conference also mandated NICEM to launch the Conference Report at Parliament Building once the Devolved Administration restore and invites all Assembly members to participate the debate in using Human Rights Act and Section 75 to scrutinize the legislative process and the administration.

Other key submissions, including S.75 consultation

We submitted the following priority responses to various consultation papers from October 2002 to April 2003 (over 150 consultation papers over the period):

- Response to the Programme for Government and Budget
- Submitted evidence to the Committee on Human Rights on the working of the NI Human Rights Commission.
- Submission on Review of Consultation processes draft report from OFM/DFM
- Submission to the Equality Commission on the Review of the Guide and Guidance on s. 75 & impact assessment
- Submission on the screening of policies consultation from the Northern Ireland Policing Board
- Submission on the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Sure Start Programme

- Department of Social Development consultation on the URBAN II Community Initiative
- DHSS & PS consultation on consent to examination of treatment
- South Eastern Education & Library Board consultation on Equality Consultation Guidelines
- OFMDFM questionnaire on the Review of Consultation Process
- Social Security Agency Payment Modernisation Scheme
- Response to Consultation on Cross-Departmental Equality & Social Need Research and Information Strategy

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 processes. 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 small organisation with no staff. Information and support requests over the past year have covered a variety of areas, including complaints, consultations, briefing, training and technical advice, etc.

New Strategy of Section 75 on Race

We will ensure that the Race Equality Strategy uses section 75 as the tools to tackle racial equality on multiple identity and multiple forms of discrimination against black and minority ethnic people. The current minds set of the civil servant on section 75 is that they treat ethnic minority as a single identity of race. They never think or consider we have ethnic minority women, ethnic minority disable people, black gay and lesbian, black single father and black single mother, etc.

Due to poor participation from the sector on section 75 as result of no immediate outcome nor substantial change of policy after input from the sector through consultation. The level of frustration and lack of resources to response in additional to the funding crisis within the voluntary and community sector, it reinforce NICEM should be more focus on particular policy and strategy. As a result, while we still engage at strategic level on key policy areas, our future strategy on section 75 will be more focus on the Race Equality Strategy to ensure section 75 is workable and have outcome, rather than spend a lot of time in response to consultation.

We will also continue to support the Sector through information and support on complaints, consultation, briefing, and technical support, 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 latest issues on section 75 and key consultation exercise, as well as meeting regularly with OFMDFM Equality Unit and the Equality Commission.

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

Equality Commission launch first Section 75 Report

The Executive Director was invited to speak at the launch of the Commission's first Section 75 Report alongside with the Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. The Executive Director highlights the culture of resistance for change by employing a tick box exercise in Section 75 process, politician does not understand and certain politicians do not believe Section 75 at all, promotion of good relations in the expenses of race and equality, as well as poor resources for both public and NGOs sector, in particular no resources for NGOs sector. The Executive Director proposed the Equality Commission should have full power of enforcement of Section 75, mirror the same power under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. In conclusion, Section 75 is about to change the culture and practice of an organisation to do business and thing. We should always ask ourselves the following questions: **“What is the impact (positive and negative) of my decision/department policy in any one of the nine groups? Section 75 can be more meaningful and more imaginative. The issue is whether we have our political will and commitment to get it done.”**

Equality Coalition Conference “Delivering on Equality”

The Research and Development Officer was invited to speak at the Equality Coalition Conference ‘Delivering on Equality’, along with speakers from academic, NGO and public sector backgrounds. The Conference aimed to bring forward some of the key debates on s. 75, and counter some of the myths that have grown up regarding what implementation means. The Research and Development Officer spoke about the issue of multiple identities, group rights, the linkages between s. 75 and NTSN, and tried to dispel the myth that looking at multiple identities means ticking 9x9 boxes!

Written response to consultation

Key points raised in every response relate to:

- Effective consultation, and problems with the consultation on the document (NICEM's consultation principles are also always sent);
- The need to consult with those “directly affected”;
- Critical comments on the process of either (a) drawing up the document, or for Equality Impact Assessments, (b) the EQIA process undertaken;
- All responses request an EQIA be done where one is not included; and
- Relevant research that needs to be considered.
- Response to the Northern Ireland Office on Race and Sectarian Hate Crime Legislation
- Response to OFM/DFM on the Draft Race Equality Strategy
- Response to the Draft Equality Scheme of the Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Response to the Draft Equality Scheme of the Community Foundation for NI

Section 75 Training, Advice and Support

NICEM offers free training for members of black and minority ethnic groups on Section 75 duties. This training can be tailored to the needs of each group. The present strategy is targeted training for individual groups, in particular those that have expressed a wish to become involved, but feel they do not have the capacity. It also covers awareness raising sessions to encourage people to express an interest.

NICEM also offers advice and support on Section 75 for black and minority ethnic groups. This ranges from initial explanations of what Section 75 is, to more formal advice on complaints mechanism and support in drafting complaints letters, as well as support and advice on consultations, etc.

Training, advice and support for the period of the report to the following groups

- Co-ordinated with BTEDG to set up a one-day s. 75 training session for staff, including discussion of the content and design. The training was delivered in late March 2003 with 8 participants (both staff and travellers).
- Work has been started on the design of a training session for the Indian Community centre, and will co-ordinate with Sharada Bhat regarding the design and date for the training.
- Delivered a short awareness-raising presentation for the Bangladeshi Community, as part of a Health awareness session. I have been invited back for a larger event, where I will be able to do a s. 75 awareness-raising presentation and question and answer session, details to be confirmed.
- Delivered a short awareness session for the Sikh community in Derry, again as part of a health awareness seminar.
- Training for Interpreters: s. 75 and Health. Held a half-day session for the Interpreters Training on s. 75, with a focus on the health. The session covered history, context, the standards, complaints mechanisms and terminology, and was designed specifically for the interpreters training, taking into account feedback from participants at an earlier training session. The methodology was presentations mixed with question and answer sessions, and was designed to be participatory.
- Awareness-raising sessions for Asylum-seekers and refugees, the Sikh community in Belfast and the Pakistani community in Belfast as part of health awareness days.
- Training on Economic Human Rights organised in partnership with the Institute of Popular Economics.

Complaints

The majority of complaints have been in relation to the refusal by various public authorities to provide an interpreter. These have been in relation to a variety of situations, including the registration of births, within the healthcare setting, and in taking the driving theory test. Some complainants have contacted the s. 75-support project directly; others have been referred by other projects within NICEM or external agencies. In some cases the complainant was given advice, and either chose to pursue the issue themselves, or not to continue. In two cases the complaints were

successfully resolved through liaison with the public authority concerned with assistance from the Research and Development Officer.

Consultation events:

- Held a consultation event in partnership with the Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards and the 5 Education and Library Boards on the Equality Impact Assessment of aspects of the recruitment, selection and promotion policies. The event also included an update from the Staff Commission on progress in producing an EQIA of the policy on support for children with English as an Additional language.
- Held a consultation event in partnership with the CCEA on the Review of the Curriculum.
- Worked with the DHSS&PS on a consultation event on the 20year strategy for health and social services. Unfortunately the event had to be called off.

Key S.75 Meetings / Forums and other human rights & equality

We attended the following key meetings/seminars/forum:

- On-going Home Office NGOs Steering Group on UN World Conference Against Racism follow-up and National Action Plan
- NICVA AGM Conference on “Policy Manifesto”
- Housing Executive Consultative Forum meeting
- Joint NICEM, NI Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission event on N.I. National Action Plan on World Conference Against Racism
- On-going meeting with the Equality Officer of the Belfast City Council
- CCEA on joint consultation event
- Home Office World Conference Against Racism follow-up Manchester Conference
- PSNI on S.75 implications of the mechanism for issuing and appealing fixed penalty tickets
- OFMDFM Advisory Group on the Review of Consultation
- A roundtable meeting which was organised by the Equality Commission on the review of the Guide and Guidance on s. 75 and impact assessment
- Youthnet on Equality & TSN training and meeting
- Meeting with DFID Minister Sally Keeble on black and ethnic minority contribution to DFID policy on poverty reduction at the meeting sponsored by Baroness Whitaker and the subsequent Ministerial visit Belfast to meet the black and ethnic minority sector that organised by NICEM
- ICTU, CAJ, Community Foundation for NI, ICCL and Combat Poverty Agency joint event on “Rights in action: from global to the local in Dundalk
- Community Foundation Standing Community Convention
- Launch of the UN Special Rapporteur Report on the Rights to Education in Northern Ireland
- UK UNISON Seminar on “Equality & Diversity: The Way Ahead” on single equality commission (speaking)

- European Network Against Racism Article 13 Race Directive Transposition Conference in Berlin (speaking)
- Human Rights Consortium Seminar on the Bill of Rights at Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont
- Runnymede Trust debate on “the enforcement role and mechanism of statutory duty on race equality-share of good practice” (speaking)
- Cumberland Lodge Conference on “Human Rights and International Development”
- Launch of Race Equality Strategy at Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont
- DHSS&PS Good Practice Review on Access to information
- Housing Executive Launch of the Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment Report
- Norwegian Study Group on A Single Equality Commission which was organised by the Equality Commission
- Children’s Rights Seminar organised by the Children Law Centre
- Mainstreaming Equality Seminar in Dublin which was organised by the Equality Authority of the Republic of Ireland
- NI Human Rights Commission on Economic and Social Rights of the Bill of Rights process
- Department of Law of the Queen’s University of Belfast “Racism in Ireland” Conference (speaker)
- SDLP Conference on Policing
- Economic and Social Research Council Conference on “Devolution in Northern Ireland: record and prospect”
- DHSS & PS Panel on Regional Strategy
- New Regional Strategy for Health and Well-being consultation
- Sinn Fein “Equality & Good Friday Agreement” Conference
- Democratic Dialogue seminar on “Identity without Groups”
- EU Conference on the Mid-Term Review of the Social Policy Agenda
- Magenta Foundation Conference on Internet Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) in Holland
- Human Rights Commission on Equality Rights of the Bill of Rights process
- Human Rights Commission on Identity Rights of the Bill of Rights process
- Galway University Human Rights Society “Human Rights in Ireland” Conference (speaking)
- Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network Conference on “National Action Plan for Social Inclusion”
- Northern Ireland Court Service on communication strategy and ethnic minorities
- Human Rights Commission meeting ethnic minority sector (on-going half-yearly joint event)
- Equality Coalition “Delivering on Equality” Conference
- DFP seminar on s. 75 and the work of the DFP
- Roundtable on the PfG and Budget 2003, held by the Equality Commission.
- Meeting between INVEST NI and the Equality Coalition on the revised INVEST NI Equality Scheme
- Equality Commission consultation with the Equality Coalition on the ECNI Corporate plan

- Meeting with the General Consumer Council on s. 75 implications of a Strategy to increase consumer awareness
 - Attended launch by the Staff Commission for Education and Library boards and the 5 Education and Library Boards of their 'Consultation guidelines and skills training pack'
 - Met with Michael Brothers of the Disability Rights Commission to discuss progress and lessons on s. 75
 - ANIC AGREE advisory panel on the development of work by the further education sector on good relations
 - Various meetings between the Human Rights Consortium and NI political parties.
 - Equality Commission Roundtable on Language rights in the Single Equality Bill.
 - Lecture by The Rights Honourable Beverly McLachlin, P.C. Chief Justice of Canada, organised by the CAJ.
 - Discrimination law Association 5th National Conference 'Making Rights Real: Challenging discrimination in the civil courts'
- Commission for Racial Equality Conference 'The Duty to promote Race Equality in Central Government: Best Practice and Future Directions'

Publications

NICEM continues to disseminate the Equality Duty Resource Pack. The pack attracts a lot of inquiry from public authorities, including public authorities from Great Britain. We are now planning to work in collaboration with the Commission for Racial Equality to use our pack to develop the Great Britain version. We are also planning to reprint the pack pending on further funding.

Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple-Discrimination

'Legislation cannot change hearts and minds but it can stop the heartless.'

(Martin Luther King)

Rationale for Anti-racism Education & Training

Changing hearts and minds to change policy and practice

- UN World Conference Against Racism Declaration & Programme of Action;
- European Conference against Racism: Proceedings from the European Commission against Racism & Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe;
- NICEM's Human Rights and Equality Agenda:

Combating Racism, Multiple Discrimination 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
- Fostering good relations

Global Perspective

Raising public awareness on issues relating to racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination, including Islamophobia, is one of the key elements in any strategic plan to combat racism and promote diversity as recommended at the World Conference against Racism¹. Such programmes can only meaningfully achieve behavioural, attitudinal and cultural change within institutions and society if they operate in conjunction with:

1. The introduction of strong and effective anti-discrimination legislation;
2. The implementation of policies and practices 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

Community Action Programme under Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty:

Transnational Project on the Development and Implementation of Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Training Measures in the Areas of Health and Education (Belfast, Berlin and Altea)

¹ In Durban, September 2001(WCAR Declaration & Programme of Action #95 and 97)

All Member States in the European Union have a duty to introduce both the Race Directive and Employment Framework Directive into domestic legislation. To facilitate the transposition process, the European Commission has established a Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination.

As part of the Community Action Programme, **CEJI** in Brussels (the Centre Europeen Juif d'Information /European Jewish Information Centre) and **NICEM** have been working on the implementation of Year I of a two-year Project.

The overarching aim of the Introduction of *Anti-discrimination Training Measures Within Public Authorities* project is to empower public authorities to combat multiple discrimination and promote diversity, and to:

“Mainstream equality and diversity into policy and practice through positive community relations and participation with the aims of assisting public authorities to eliminate discrimination and provide culturally sensitive, equitable, caring and quality services.”

Vision Statement, October 2001

As a means of achieving this aim, the Project has established a training model on anti-discrimination and diversity issues specifically designed for public authorities. The process for the training model is of particular importance as it entails the introduction of capacity building measures for partners among public authorities (PAs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The model is based on a shared philosophy that we cannot fight one form of discrimination without fighting **all** forms of discrimination, including under Article 13:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

In Belfast, Education sector public authorities and voluntary sector organisations representing Section 75 constituents (above grounds +political opinion, marital status and people with/out dependents) have successfully combined their efforts and commitment to implement the vision and principles of the Project. The needs assessment process has included consultation with all of the partners, in Berlin and Belfast, through a series of focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

YEAR I Activities (2002-2003)

NICEM is grateful to all the partners for the work and progress achieved through much enthusiasm and energy in Altea, Berlin and Belfast.

- Official launch of the Project at the NI Executive Office in Brussels September 2002;

- Publication of a European Trainers' Manual: *Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in Action* in January 2003, launched by the Lord Mayor at Belfast City Hall on 14 January 2003;
- Recruitment of Trainers from the voluntary sector and public authorities;
- Establishment of steering committees comprised of participating public authorities;
- Delivery of a week-long European Train the Trainers Programme for Trainers from the three cities, in Belfast in January 2003;
- Implementation of needs assessments in each of the three cities in order to identify issues faced by groups experiencing discrimination and in particular, multiple-discrimination.
- Design of training programmes for public authorities to raise their awareness and understanding of discrimination and diversity issues;
- Development of a local Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in Action participants' workbook. Printed by the Staff Commission;
- Delivery of the first round of three-day training sessions for public authorities in Berlin and Belfast from May to July 2003. The participating education sector public authorities were: Department of Education, Belfast Education and Library Board, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Staff Commission, NI Council for Integrated Education and Youth Council;
- Development of good relations between and among partners

YEAR II Activities (2003-2004)

Public Authorities will have the opportunity to develop an action plan with the support of the Trainers, City Co-ordinators and local steering groups. Year II of the Project will culminate in a European conference to encourage the exchange of good practice. The evaluation of the training model will continue.

For more information visit:

www.ceji.org

www.nicem.org

www.enar-eu.org

www.europa.eu.int/employment_social

Northern Ireland Perspective (Also UK and Republic of Ireland)

Anti-racism and Equality Training

Raising public awareness on racism and other forms of discrimination, not just in the workplace but also at home and in social life, has consistently featured high on NICEM's work programme through the years.

An increasingly wide range of organisations and groups has actively sought to implement policies driven by standards of non-discrimination and promotion of diversity as a norm. It has been encouraging to organise training with so many people, with numerous policy-makers in their midst, who display a personal commitment to ensure that cultural change, at organisational level and attitudinal and behavioural change, at individual level do occur.

The general feeling also points to the importance of strong leadership, organisational support, additional resources and further training. More particularly, participants find that training facilitates an increase in staff confidence in handling anti-discriminatory and diversity practice issues.

List of Participants

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

- Equality Commission for NI
- Wheelworks
- Childcare N.I.
- Family Placement Service, Craigavon and Branbridge Health and Community Trust
- Queen's University of Belfast: Multi-cultural Medicine
- Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group: Traveller Women
- Diversity Matters Project (in partnership with Disability Action)
- Belfast Education and Library Board: Citizenship Education For Teachers
- University of Ulster at Jordanstown: Community Youth Work
- British Council
- New Belfast Community Arts (Cathedral Quarters Festival)
- Train the Trainers: Introduction of Anti-discrimination Measures within Public Authorities: Article 13 Project
- Introduction of Anti-discrimination Measures within Public Authorities: Article 13 Project: Department of Education N.I., Belfast Education Library Board, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Staff Commission, Youth Council and N.I. Council for Integrated Schools.
- Train the Trainers: Black and Ethnic Minorities Trainers Network
- South Belfast Highway to Health Project
- Regent House Grammar School
- ARASI (Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland), Dublin
- Lisburn Youth Centre
- Community Fund

Anti-discrimination and Diversity Train-the-Trainer

Trainers from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups: Support Network

A new group of 12 Trainers from minority ethnic communities and/or working with those communities have been following an extensive and on-going training programme covering anti-discriminatory practice, equality, human rights, training skills, legislation and computer skills. The course is primarily aimed at building the capacity of Trainers from community groups who have already developed understanding and awareness of issues affecting these communities.

The Trainers have been studying for Trainer qualifications awarded by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD Certificate in Training) and Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE Certificate in Training Practice).

They will also complete the programme on anti-discrimination and diversity for Trainers developed by NICEM.

Another group of Trainee Trainers is scheduled to start a similar programme soon.

“Anti-racism & Equality in Action” Training Manual

Large-scale organisations have generally preferred to avail of the intensive Train the Trainer Programmes and use of NICEM’s material. Cascading the training within the organisation both speeds up the process of training delivery and is more cost-effective.

As a matter of good practice and overall effectiveness, organisations are encouraged to opt for co-facilitation between their internal Trainers and Trainers working in the field of anti-discrimination in the voluntary sector.

NICEM’s TRAINING: methodology and approach

Most participants have felt it more effective to deal with the multiple dimension of discrimination as well as with single identity issues.

The training sessions examine issues around the mainstreaming of equality and diversity into policy and practice. Information about UK and European anti-discrimination legislation and Equality legislation specific to NI is covered in the programme. In addition to focusing on employment and service provision issues, participants have the opportunity to explore and reflect on individual attitudes and values. The emphasis on professional as well personal exploration enables the participants to gain greater awareness about the challenges and benefits of diversity.

Activities are designed to stimulate active participation and interaction, discussion and reflective thinking.

Concepts of diversity, equality, discrimination, multiple discrimination and anti-discrimination are explored in detail. This is to give all participants opportunities to exchange views and perceptions, and to reflect on the meanings of these concepts in a safe environment. Issues of institutional and societal discrimination, as well as racism and other isms are key components of the training programmes.

NICEM’s TRAINING: evaluation

Feedback from most participants has been very positive. The general consensus is that the training sessions are stimulating, informative, challenging, useful and well facilitated. Participants find the emphasis on interactive and experiential learning conducive to an open and stimulating exchange of ideas.

Participants’ Comments (add other quotes)

- “Good use of my time.”
- “Thank you for the opportunity to learn about and address issues of equality and diversity in a secure and professional environment.”
- “This was a valuable and stimulating course....a tremendous amount of information in a short period of time.”
- “Very enjoyable and informative”
- “Very thought provoking programme. Led to a lot of self-examination and increased my awareness of many equality issues.”
- “A worthwhile learning experience for me.”
- “An excellent course. Well structured and professionally delivered.”

Contribution to events / seminars

- Council for Education in World Citizenship
- Youthnet
- Belfast Pride March
- Ulster/American Folk Park: Global Citizenship
- Police Service for NI: Community Relations fairs
- Diversity Matters (training project with Disability Action)
- NIHRC National Plan against Racism
- Thanksgiving celebration and fundraising with the NI Committee of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)

Representation

- Board Member of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Republic of Ireland
- 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)
- The Community Foundation for NI (formerly NIVT) Social Justice Initiatives Fund
- Belfast Pride Steering Committee

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Capacity building is an essential strand of community development and of social inclusion strategies. It involves working with community groups to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their aims and objectives – whether it is to deliver services to their community or contribute to policy and strategy development in their interest area.

Introduction

Over the last year, NICEM's Capacity Building programme has greatly expanded in terms of its nature, diversity and work. Its aims were to assist ethnic minority groups build their own capacity to deliver their services and develop the capacity of individuals to actively participate in and affect the decision-making processes which impact on their communities.

The Capacity Building team has now expanded to include an interpreter training project and service, a volunteer development project and ethnic minorities health advocacy project. With the arrival and implementation of these different projects we have as a team seen our direct contact with individuals and groups expand and have observed a considerable increase in participation from within our member groups and other ethnic minority groups.

However, despite a larger Capacity Building team, the workload on staff has also steadily risen and as a result we have begun the processes of streamlining the Capacity Building work we undertake in order to focus on direct support and advice to small emerging communities and more vulnerable organisations. We will in the future focus on more intensive support to groups which are facilitated on a completely voluntary basis, Ethnic Minority women's groups, groups working with children and young people and asylum seeker and refugee community groups.

We are also working more closely alongside the EQUAL project at NICEM supporting asylum seekers and refugees to access further education and develop their personal capacities in relation to voluntary and employment paths, a model which will also underpin the volunteering project.

Since we have begun to provide more structured services to organisations, the capacity building project has, over the past year, focused on the provision of more structured training delivery in a variety of areas including:

- Training on the PQASSO Quality Assurance System
- employment legislation
- developing a fundraising strategy, etc.

Direct support for organisations has varied according to the size and stage of development of groups. While many smaller groups are keen to secure small amounts of funding for activities to stimulate participation in the group, other communities are moving toward the development of policies to underpin and support their work,

particularly those groups which have recently employed staff or are actively recruiting and managing volunteers in more structured programmes.

We have been pleased to see a development within organisations in terms of the professionalism of their services as a result of our work, and the development of organisational policies and structures to support the work of communities. These areas of development will be the future of the sustainability of the sector. With increasingly limited resources, funders will be keen to ensure that the organisations, which their supports are able to effectively manage their resources and deliver required services.

Achievements over the year

One of the greatest achievements over the past year has been the considerable increase in levels of participation from within the smaller ethnic minority organisations, particularly those involved in the Health Advocacy project. We have seen many new representatives taking part in NICEM events and community events. As the Capacity Building team has diversified we have created more opportunities for individuals and groups to become involved in areas, which are of interest to them. Another achievement has been the successful integration of the new areas of work - such as volunteer development - into the existing work of NICEM and how these developments have enhanced our work and enabled us to reach out further to communities and individuals.

The year has been a great opportunity to reflect on upon the work of Capacity Building project and its effectiveness to date in consolidating the skills and structures within organisations. We have seen the numbers of ethnic minority community groups we have contact with rise from 20+ to 40+ in the past three to four years and NICEM has been able to provide support in varying degrees to most of these organisations.

Although we are delighted that our services are now reaching a wider audience and we are able to support groups and individuals to achieve their personal and organisational aims: there are still many minority ethnic individuals who are unaware of the type of support we can offer. We have not in the past focused very strongly on the promotion of our services, mainly due to the existing workload of staff members and teams. However, as a result, many individuals who are not associated with community groups but still require the type of support our team can offer are unaware of the work of NICEM. Our biggest challenge for the coming year will be to develop a strategy to reach further into the communities, raise awareness of our Capacity Building services and of the organisation as a whole, and promote the profile and diversity of services of the black and minority sector.

Direct Support and Advice Individual Ethnic Minority Groups

We provide administrative support, financial and management support, training for the committee members, advise and development on constitution and charity status, advise on funding and assistance in filling funding application, advise and

development on organising events to the following organisations during the period of this report:

- African Women's Group;
- Albanian Community;
- Al-Nisa Association;
- Bangladeshi Welfare Association;
- Hare Krishna Group;
- Indian Community Centre;
- Interact;
- Mandarin Speakers Association;
- Muslim Family Association
- Northern Ireland Committee of Refugees and Asylum Seekers;
- Oi-Kwan Chinese Women's Group;
- Romanian Community;
- Sikh Community Derry;
- Sikh Women and Children's Association (Belfast);
- Strabane Multi-cultural Group; and
- Zimbabwean Community Groups

Training

We provide the following training sessions for the ethnic minority voluntary sector:

- Employment Law and Discrimination Law (3 days session);
- Funding and funding applications (2 X 1 day session);
- PQASSO quality assurance system Introductory (I) (3 days session)
- PQASSO quality assurance system Introductory (II) (3 days session);
- PQASSO Action Planning Information Day (1 day session);
- Training day on fund raising and developing an organisational fund raising strategy;

Future Training Programmes:

- Financial management for small voluntary organisations;
- Financial management for administrative finance workers in large organisations;
- Governance training for unincorporated community groups;
- Governance training for incorporated community groups (Limited Company by guarantee without shares); and
- Interviewing skills and CV training open to member groups, women's network, previous ethnic minority job applicants to NICEM and volunteers.

Interpreter Training Project

With the continued support from the Belfast Local Strategy Board through Peace II funding (measures 3.2 and 3.3) we employed a Development Worker, Ronald Vellem, in May 2003 and an administrator, Ms. Tanya Tierney, in March 2003 (half of the time in the interpretation project). The Project is to increase the employability of

ethnic minority people through interpretation training and allocation of work from NICEM once they are qualified through our Interpreter Support Network.

The Project also enables NICEM to run our training independently in 2004 through our Development Worker with the training support from Making Training Work, a London based community training organisation. Making Training Work also assists us to transfer our training programmes to the Northern Ireland Open College Network accreditation. We are waiting our accreditation approval in September 2003. We use this opportunity to say thank you to Making Training Work in which they assist us to set up the entire interpretation training programmes over the last three years. We value the kind of partnership and look forward to the future collaboration on other training programmes.

Community Advocacy and Health Training (Sep 02-April 03)

The Training finished on 8 April 2003 with 5 trainers got the Advanced Level. Course attendance became very low due to some participants gained new employment in fields, which would not allow them to attend. Some of them missed more than 20% of attendance necessary for the qualification. Despite these difficulties, the evaluation is very positive by the participants.

The next round of basic interpreter training will start in November 2003 and recruitment process will be in place from September onward.

Register of Interpreters and interpretation services

NICEM has been set up the system for more than three years and working in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services and various Health Board and Trust. This includes a billing and contract out services system to provide interpreters through NICEM.

Over nine months period (October 2002-June 2003) our booking in using the interpretation services jump from 6 bookings in October 2002 to 62 bookings in June 2003 and total interpreting hours jump from 11.5 hours to 116.15 hours. This proves that a huge demands on the services and we are delighted

NICEM also agreed to be the pilot organisation in the National Refugee Forum, on a new quality assurance system for interpreting services, which is being developed by the Refugee Council QUARSO Project. This should include procedures and policies for booking, invoicing procedure, codes of practice, monitoring and evaluation system.

NI Open College Network accreditation for the Basic Community Interpreting Course

NICEM has contacted the Northern Ireland Open College Network to begin the transfer of the accreditation from the London Open College Network and we are pending the result.

Active Community Project

The Project was started in August 2002 as the new Development Worker (volunteering) has started to work with the financial support from Department of Social Development Active Community Scheme through Volunteer Development Agency. Sean Kelly, the new worker, who worked for Voluntary Service Belfast (VSB), has extensive experience in the field, will assist the Project to promote wider participation from minority ethnic sector through volunteering.

Developing mainstreaming provision for the support of volunteers

Following numerous meetings with Voluntary Service Belfast (VSB) it was highlighted the fact that the lack of support for minority volunteers as one of their annual targets; in reality this should lead to a more inclusive recruitment drive and physical attempt to engage more communities. We see NICEM's role as not only as representative but also as a bridge between the sectors. As with the census figures it is important that we encourage groups to register with the Volunteer Development Agency and impact on the current statistics to free up more resources. As the result, we start the data collection and identify it as our target to working with.

As the interest in volunteering from asylum seekers continues to swell so does the need to put appropriate systems in place with outside agencies. As the result, we published initial information booklets, and held preliminary meetings with key organisations in the volunteer sector to try and cultivate an atmosphere, which is less confusing and restrictive for both organisations and potential volunteers. **Currently we have recruited 60 volunteers who are asylum seekers. We also recruited another 60 volunteers who are working with NICEM.**

Monitoring data on volunteers who are under NICEM support programme:

Black and ethnic minority	130
Young people (24 and under)	23
People with dependent children	122
Volunteers not belonging to these categories	30

Accredited training programme for volunteers

With the support from the Training Department of NICEM, we start to develop the Accredited Training programme for volunteers. We are in the middle of consultation with the sector to ensure we provide the most effective and practical courses available. We will expect the programme can be delivered in autumn 2003.

Developing pathways for our current volunteers

As the interest in volunteering within NICEM grows it has become increasingly (60 volunteers) difficult to ensure that each and every volunteer is getting the most from their volunteers role, in response we develop a system of recording volunteers concerns and development as they pass through. This structured method of monitoring we can improve our volunteers experience and generate valuable records for the evaluation process.

Community Volunteering Scheme Funding

The current round of CVS Funding is in the process of evaluation and a new round has also been released. This funding has become very important as the volunteer

beaux's will now longer provide individual expenses and any group wishing to support volunteers must apply for their own grant. Whilst this does mean a lot of work it is very helpful in developing the capacity of small groups, and for many it can relieve a very large burden. The closing date for these applications is September 2003 and it will form a large part of our work until then.

Investment in Health

NICEM Ethnic Minority Health Advocacy Project

The Project was approved by Community Foundation for Northern Ireland as one of the 27 demonstration projects in Northern Ireland under the Department of Health Investment in Health Programme. The main activities of the Project is to provide a needs assessment on the health and other related social needs of the six small communities: Muslim, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sikh, Mandarin speaking Chinese, Asylum and refugees.

The needs assessment will provide the guidance of future action of the Project- the Action Plan, through capacity building of the targeted communities. The Action Plan is, therefore, involving the targeted communities to plan, participate and monitor the outcomes. The Action Plan also identifies common issues and concerns that are arising from the needs assessment in which collective action is encouraged and supported. The expected outcome of the Project is to reduce inequalities in the area of health and social services that experience by the targeted communities. The Project employed a Development Worker, Ms. Jiemin Tomita, in August 2002.

Steering Group

Steering Group has been set up with the following organisations as members:

- Bangladeshi Welfare Association;
- Belfast Islamic Centre;
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Association (Belfast);
- Mandarin Speakers Association;
- NI Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers;
- NI Muslim Association;
- NI Pakistani Community Association;
- NI Pakistani Cultural Association;
- NI Sikh Association (L'Derry);
- Sikh Women & Children's Association (Belfast);
- South & East Belfast Health & Social Service Trust;
- North & West Belfast Health & Social Service Trust;
- Ulster Community Hospital Trust; and
- NICEM

There were five Steering Group meetings up to end of July 2003.

The Project also an external Consultant, with additional funding from South & East Belfast Trust, carried out the needs assessment by interviewing various Focus Groups from the target audience. Five Focus Group meetings were organised. The initial response from individual community members was very positive with high return of the questionnaire. A lot of individual fills in asking for more information on specific

service areas. A steering group meeting is planned to discuss the feed-back on the process so far.

Through the process, a lot of internal referral on NICEM other areas of work and as a result, other project staff makes new contact with the five communities and provided training or different services.

The first draft Report was published in June and had subsequently consulted the members of the Steering Group. We will expect the final version will be approved and published in September. An Action Plan will be drawn from the Report and agreed by the participatory organisations.

NICEM Gender and Race Programme

We follow-up the “Visible Women Conference” by producing 5 issues of the “Ethnic Minority Women Newsletter” on various issues affecting minority ethnic women.

NICEM works in conjunction with Save the Children, Chinese Welfare Association and Parents Advice Centre published Anti-Bullying Booklet, which is a bi-lingual booklet, and launched on 19 March 2003 at the Equality Commission. Since then it has been widely distributed and there has been high demand from Belfast Education Library Board and other education providers. Having discussed with the South & East Education & Library Board, they are now considered to fund the publication in both Urdu and Arabic language. We also seek for more funding to reprint the current version which is almost out of stock.

Ethnic Minorities Women & Political Participation Project

This is a joint project between NICEM, Democratic Dialogue, Ulster Peoples College and the Equality Commission. It aims to encourage more participation by ethnic minority women in all levels of politics by examining barriers to participation and offering training (Active Citizenship course at Ulster People’s College). Project funding is being sought from the Race Equality Unit of the OFMDFM and application has been lodged.

NGO Forum for Children’s Commissioner and Children’s Strategy

NICEM represents the sector at the NGOs Forum, which advises the Children and Young People Unit of the OFMDFM on the Children’s Commissioner and future Children’s Strategy. Although the Children’s Commissioner has been appointed and the Children’s Strategy consultation document has been out, we still insist that “**Racism**” is mentioned in the consultation document as it is quite vague about this.

NICEM nomination of representatives from the sector to sit at Children & Young People Advisory Group and Children and Young Peoples Committees

We still play a first contact point for the sector in the children and youth services. We have been put forward names to the Children and Young Peoples Unit to sit on the Children and Young People Advisory Group, as well as the four area Children and Young Peoples Committee.

Childcare Partnership and Sure Start

NICEM represents the sector at both the South & East Belfast Childcare Partnership and the Eastern Childcare Partnership. We are now looking additional funds allocated to the Sure Start Programme to increase services to ethnic minority children at 0-3 age group and their families. We also have an outstanding application to the Childhood Fund to provide anti-racism and cultural awareness training for early years service providers.

Special Project

Young Women Making it Work

This is a joint consortium Project under EQUAL with leading partner Youth Action and others such as Disability Action, Derry Traveller Support Group and Western Education and Library Board. The programme is to promote employability of marginalised young women. We recruited 7 young ethnic minority women (2 Indian, 1 Zimbabwean, 1 Sri-Lankan, 1 Chinese, 1 Kosovo, 1 Czech republic. The Project has regular meeting for the group. The group also attended a transnational visit to Castellon in Spain with four of the young women who visited Gypsy association and other women's organisation working in the same issues.

My Space Project

This is a joint Project with the Wheelworks on the development of the photographic project on Identity and Young Ethnic Minorities in Northern Ireland. The Project was launched in June 2003.

Research on Young Ethnic Minorities in Northern Ireland

The grant finally arrived which is one year late due to different circumstances from the Northern Ireland Youth Council. This is a joint Project with the Save the Children to carrying out the research on the needs of minority ethnic young people. A new researcher has been appointed by Save the Children and the Project will be in full scale in September 2003.

This is where is Live, UK wide arts based project

This national Project is run by Runnymede Trust who seeks NICEM as partner in Northern Ireland. The Project is focus on difference and diversity in British Identity. We arranged the worker from Runnymede to visit the groups in Northern Ireland in April 2003 with follow-up with the groups.

ADVOCACY & ADVICE ON RACIAL HARASSMENT, ATTACK AND DISCRIMINATION

Prejudice is not only widespread in our society. There are extreme situations such as racial attacks and more familiar incidents such as racial discrimination. In such situations victims experience low self-esteem, usefulness and vulnerability. It is vital to assist and support victims of racial harassment, attack and discrimination who are living in isolated areas without help. They do not know where they can get confidential professional help. NICEM sees our roles to provide professional advice and support in these circumstances in line with the twin-track approach to demand for effective legislation to outlaw racial discrimination, harassment and attack; and formal and informal education to change the attitude of our society on racism, in particular institutional racism as defined in MacPherson's Report.

Over the year, we are working with local politician, police and local community groups to deal with the British National Party in the local election campaigns in Ballymena first, then to South Belfast. The BNP uses the asylums seekers, refugees and migrant workers as their successful tactics in North England. They issued racist leaflets negative portrait the asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. As a result in June 2003, two pipe bombs threw into two families (one are nurses from South Africa and the other are a black couple who had a six weeks born baby girl) without explosion. We visited the families and provided all necessary support including moving them away from the area with one family.

We got very great support from all political parties to condemn the incidents, in particular both the Progressive Unionist Party, which is the political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and the Ulster Political Research Group, who linked with the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), issued a joint statement to condemn the coward action and looks into matters of the extreme right wing party campaign in Northern Ireland.

Racial Harassment Advice and Advocacy Project

Brief Overview

People affected by racial harassment are ordinary people living everyday lives. They are men, women, parents, partners, spouses, work colleagues, friends, schoolmates and the list goes on. They are people who, by virtue of the diversity of their experiences and background, make an immense contribution to Northern Ireland society. However, racism spoils this by depriving people of their basic human rights, respect and dignity. We work with not only with people affected by racial harassment and violence but also with people throughout the statutory, voluntary and community sector that are working to combat racism. The Project was supported by the Comic Relief over three years funding from August 2003 with the appointment of Marie Keating as the Development Worker.

Support for Victims of Racial Harassment

Over the last year the two most common questions that we have faced in our work with people affected by racial harassment or violence are, "why me?" and "is this going to happen again?" These are hard questions and cut to the chase. We offer

victims of racial harassment and violence emotional and practical support. Our service extends to all minority ethnic people throughout Northern Ireland and is both free and confidential. We offer people a safe place to enable them to share their experiences and help people explore their options for the future. We also support people in whatever decisions they make for themselves. People who have used the service have fed back that they were relieved to get our help and assistance.

They appreciated not being referred on ad-hoc to other agencies and they felt supported. In practical everyday terms our services includes helping people prepare police statements, attending interviews, making re-housing application, co-ordinating specialist trauma support, making applications for Criminal Injuries Compensation Agencies, sourcing and making appropriate and supported referrals, all as appropriate. As well as linking in to other voluntary and public sector organisations.

We also liaise with counsellors, Members of the Legislative Assembly and MPs in trying to raise the profile of clients' cases. In one instance, we organised a Community Safety Meeting attended by about 60 local residents to look at issues around anti-social behaviour including racial harassment. In real terms each case is as unique as the person or family being worked with. In the space of a year we worked with over sixty clients and there is a lot of scope to develop the work including the establishment of better support networks.

Tackling Racial Harassment in Partnership

We have built up a very wide network of contacts (now over five hundred) within other organisations. By way of example, these include contacts within NICEM's member groups, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Educational Guidance Service for Adults, Housing Rights Association, Mediation Northern Ireland, Sure Start and Victim Support to name but a few.

We also liaise with Black and Minority Ethnic Support Organisations across the water when clients felt compelled by their circumstances to leave Northern Ireland. We have made numerous presentations to various groups with a view to raising awareness of racial harassment and its impact. Our audiences have included councillors, community representatives, and public sector staff as well as youth clubs. We also contributed to a number of newspaper articles, two television programmes and the NEWS. Part of the work of tackling racial harassment involves challenging our communities to recognise racial harassment as a problem that is relevant to them as a responsible member of the community.

Encouraging Reporting of Racist Incidents

It is well recognised that only a very small percentage of all crimes committed are actually reported to the police. The reasons for not reporting are manifold and some are more peculiar to certain communities than others. In the main we have identified a number of reasons for not reporting. These include feelings that the severity of the offence is not such to warrant police involvement, a belief that an investigation will not lend to criminal prosecution so there is no point, fear of reprisal or community disapproval, distrust of or lack of confidence in the police or fear that their report will not be treated seriously.

It is very clear that the greater confidence a person has in the police service the more likely they are to report incidents, in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Often unnecessary anxiety is aroused for the victim because the investigation process and follow-up is not clear. We have worked with many victims in supporting them to report incidents to the police and have worked with the police in encouraging the proper recording of racist incidents. We shall continue to work with the police around issues of third party reporting and lobbying for better training for police officers and also the implementation of specialist guidelines for Ethnic Minorities Liaison Officers.

Achievements

- ❑ Service users have reported feeling understood and supported. They have appreciated having their experiences validated and the practical and emotional support that has been provided to them through the service.
- ❑ The broader community is slowly developing a better understanding of the impact of racial harassment and racist violence through the presentations that I have given.

Difficulties:

- ❑ It is unrealistic to think that the project can properly serve the needs of people throughout all of Northern Ireland. Geographically this poses many problems.
- ❑ Racism and racial harassment remains to be recognised as an issue affecting many people from minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. Repeatedly we face comments such as, “there are so few people from ethnic minorities here” as if to suggest that it is the presence of people from ethnic minority communities that give rise ultimately to the problem of racism and not the racist attitudes of the broader community. Some people continue to fail to recognise the problem of racism because they are so keenly focused on the problem of sectarianism.

Racial Discrimination

Over the year we had a number of our old cases that we referred to the former Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland and now the Equality Commission have been arranged for the hearing at the Tribunal (average two to three years). We are very much concerned of the withdrawal of these cases, in our view have a strong case to answer, with dubious reasons. We also concern certain strong case in which the Commission using settlement tactics to pressurize the applicant to settle.

We appreciate the difficulty of the Commission facing as the result of their big deficit on legal costs. In response to all these changes we would like to set up our own legal advocacy strategy to support the victims. We are now explore new funding to support the victims of discrimination in light of the implementation of the Race Directive through the Race Relations (NI) Regulations 2003 which have a much better protection.

IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM AND REFUGEE SERVICE

Punitive legislation and policy, increasing caseload, limited resources and changes in demographic & migratory patterns, in the North of Ireland, have impacted on the work of NICEM's Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Services, during the course of the last year. The service has been faced with considerable and significant challenge, in dealing with an increase in the numbers of people accessing services and requests from external agencies and organisations to provide guidance and direction and provide on-hand support.

Amongst the many challenges, faced by NICEM's Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Service over the course of the last year, the most crucial has been the introduction of the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002 (NIA). At the time of writing NICEM's Annual Report 2001-2002, the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Bill, was just about to enter into its final passage through Westminster. NICEM recognised, at that point, the serious implications for the future of immigration & asylum policy and practice, both in terms of the impact on the lives of individuals and grave issues of human rights protections. Alongside other Refugee supporting organisations both locally and in GB, NICEM campaigned against many of the provisions in the legislation, particularly, with regards to **S.55 & S.57**, which have fundamentally altered the provision of support to destitute Asylum Seekers, arriving in Northern Ireland.

In the face of such adversity, NICEM's Immigration, Asylum & Refugee Service, has demonstrated a level of commitment, flexibility, focus, integrity and professionalism, which has secured the continued development and provision of key service.

‘One Stop’ Advice & Support Service for Asylum Seekers

In expanding and widening additional support for Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Northern Ireland, NICEM's ‘One Stop’ Advice & Support service, has secured and developed strong links with statutory agencies and the community & voluntary sector.

Amongst the many achievements of the ‘One Stop’ Advice & Support Service, the following have resulted in the sustained continuation and development of a key service;

- **Interface between GB and Northern Ireland and a clearly identifiable point of contact for matters relating to Immigration, Asylum & Refugees in the context of Northern Ireland;**
- **Partnerships with key statutory agencies and voluntary sector agencies in the North of Ireland and in GB;**
- **A secure, confidential and comprehensive advice & support service for individuals seeking asylum in Northern Ireland;**
- **A resource, reference and information point for external agencies.**

As governments, across the developed world continue to limit the scope of the Refugee Convention and introduce harsh controls on entry, for Asylum Seekers, the reasons for which, people continue to seek asylum are ever more apparent, as the world grows ever more politically, socially and economically unstable. In recognition of this shattering reality, NICEM's 'One Stop' Service will continue to develop services to address need and there are a number of key objectives:

- **Source, secure and target satisfactory resources;**
- **Appropriate and relevant training for staff;**
- **Continue to develop partnerships with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies locally and in GB**

Issues

The last year has seen an increase in the numbers of return clients seen by the two asylum advice & support workers. However since the start of the year the number of new clients has fallen, because of changes in the Immigration and Nationality Act 2002. From August 02 until January 03, clients were initially screened and briefed on NASS issues, and placed in Emergency Accommodation. After a period of about one week, they were moved to follow on accommodation, provided by NIHE, and their NASS support commenced.

However, from January 8th 2003, new government legislation regarding clients' eligibility for NASS has meant that significant problems have been caused to the service. Clients must now report to Immigration at Belfast International Airport for initial screening, in order to make their asylum claim. At that time, they are issued with a "pending" letter from NASS entitling them to Emergency Accommodation until such times as the Home Office decides if they claimed asylum "as soon as practically possible" after entering the country. If it is decided that they have claimed in time, the normal procedures apply. If they are declared not eligible, they must leave Emergency Accommodation within 24 hours, and are not entitled to any accommodation or financial support, and neither are they entitled to work in order to support themselves.

Problems

The main problem is that the Home Office has decided on only 2 cases since January 03, and as such there is an ever-increasing backlog in Emergency Accommodation. Clients have been in hostel accommodation, with no financial support, for many months. Because of this, many have disappeared from the system, and may be working illegally. This leads to exploitation, and difficulty in accessing health, education and other services.

Achievements

One difficulty, which clients were facing was having to travel to Belfast International Airport once a week after their initial screening, to report to Immigration officials. The cost of travel to the Airport - £9.00 return since April this year – was paid by the clients themselves. As clients over 25 receive £38.26 per week, and those under 25 receive only £30.28, this was a significant amount out of their income. Due to pressure from NICEM, as well as churches NICEM involved, clients may now report to their nearest Police Station, which significantly improves their financial situation.

Róisín O'Connor, and Moira McCombe from EQUAL, organised a very successful conference on Intercultural Counselling and Therapy in January 03. This addressed the issues facing asylum seekers, and other ethnic minorities, who may need counselling, and covered issues such as trauma counselling, working with interpreters, working with young people, and anti-racist practices in counselling.

Future Plans

Due to the ongoing problems with the asylum system, we have mainly been dealing with issues as they arise, and have not been able to create many new links to external organisations, or to strengthen bonds with existing ones. If the situation is resolved by NASS, and the backlog is cleared, we hope to continue with more development work to the project. This would hopefully include a higher media profile in relation to the issues facing asylum seekers, as the public is often swayed by tabloid “myths”. Also we would like to work more in educational settings, and public services, again to help raise awareness of the issues and difficulties facing asylum seekers.

Finally, Patricia Leong replaced Glen Phillips as asylum advice & support worker. As Patricia speaks both English and Mandarin, this has been extremely helpful to Chinese asylum seekers, who make up the greatest number of our clients.

Asylum Advice & Guidance Service - EQUAL

The EQUAL Asset UK programme at NICEM has been in existence since May, 2002. Its purpose is to establish “sustainable partnerships ... to develop a range of initiatives and activities which will enhance the skills and qualifications of Asylum Seekers resident in Northern Ireland”. The focus of the programme is to develop an advice, guidance and support service to assist Asylum Seekers in accessing education, training, employment and volunteering opportunities. A key element is the development (as part of a Transnational partnership) of a Skills Audit, which is used as part of the advice and guidance process and also will be used to inform future provision in the areas of education and training. The ultimate aim of the programme is the mainstreaming of services and opportunities for those seeking asylum in Northern Ireland, particularly within partner organizations.

In light of the above, the achievements of the programme have been dependant on both the commitment of partnership organisations and the activities of other organizations, as well as the partnerships between projects in NICEM.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Education & Training

- Concessionary fees offered to Asylum Seekers by further education colleges, including: Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education, East Antrim Institute, North East Institute of Further & Higher Education and North Down and Ards Institute.
- Free English classes with childcare have been offered to women by: Ballynafeigh Community Organisation and Windsor Women's Centre.

- North City Learn Direct gained permission from the Department for Employment & Learning to offer courses to Asylum Seekers at concessionary rates.
- Belfast Institute offered short courses with language support (some of which are accredited) during August – September, 2002 and July – September, 2003. These included English, Basic IT, Basic Food Hygiene, Driving Theory and this year also, Fork Lift Truck driving, Health & Safety and First Aid. In September, 2002, 12 people passed the Basic Food Hygiene qualification for Mandarin Speakers.
- Free English classes run by volunteers at An Droichead.

Volunteering

- 45 people were referred to the Volunteering Project and were successfully offered placements. Placements have included: youth work, administration, web design, English teaching.
- The Millenium Awards Scheme funded a project proposed by a volunteer, entitled 'Beyond Orange and Green'. The aim of this project was to offer orientation activities for Asylum Seekers, with participation by people from 'interface' areas in Belfast.

Employment

- Referrals to Belfast Gems have enabled service users to receive advice and guidance on employment issues, including job search, application forms, completing CVs and interview techniques. This service is also available to people applying for volunteer placements and courses. Four service users referred to Belfast Gems have secured employment.

Orientation

- The Red Cross is expanding its orientation service to include 3 and 6 month 'follow ups'. It is also assisting people in Emergency Accommodation to register with GPs and apply for help with health costs.
- A residential was held in Corrymeela in August, 2003. This included both new arrivals and those who had been here for a longer period. The programme was aimed at providing a varied range of activities and the opportunity to interact with people from Northern Ireland.

Others

- Discussions with members of Fitzroy Presbyterian Church led to the provision of a bus to the airport for those who need to sign weekly at immigration. This is provided on Mondays at a cost of £2.00. Both NICEM and organisations involved in providing the bus have contacted the Home Office regarding the hardship caused by signing at the airport. There has now been a change in policy, whereby people can now sign at their local police station until procedures have been set up to address the high cost of traveling to the airport.
- Discussion with banks has clarified the situation for Asylum Seekers who wish to open an account.
- There has been further development of the Skills Audit in conjunction with NIACE and the Danish Red Cross.
- A number of successful applications have been made to charitable funds for individuals. Through this, funding has been acquired for purposes such as: course related expenses, including fees, equipment, travel; fees to enable three

children to attend a homework club; travel costs to enable three children to be united with their parents; deposits for accommodation and assistance with furniture. The main organisations who have offered assistance have been Buttle Trust, Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army.

- Evidence of NASS support is now accepted by leisure centers for concessionary membership fees.

Difficulties

- Delays in receiving funding for the programme meant our target expenditure for beneficiary expenses were not met.
- The legislation introduced in January 2003 has meant people are being accommodated in Emergency Accommodation for much longer periods (up to 6 months at present). The programme has had to take account of this in terms of when it conducts Skills Audits (previously these were done when people moved to their 'follow on' accommodation). It has also had an effect on people's access to and continuation on courses. Because people receive no cash during this period, they cannot afford to pay for travel or books. Where NASS support is refused, people have to leave the Emergency Accommodation and are either left destitute or rely on friends, this makes continued attendance on courses extremely difficult.
- Demand for the service far outweighs the 35 beneficiaries who can be 'signed up' each year. Approaches for advice include ones from people outside the remit (i.e. not Asylum Seekers), including refugees, migrant workers, spouses from overseas, people from minority ethnic backgrounds from Northern Ireland and people from majority ethnic backgrounds. In these circumstances a 'sign posting' service is offered.
- Access to inexpensive childcare which is also geographically close to either accommodation or course venues is difficult to find, resulting in (mainly) women with pre-school children being limited in their opportunities to access education.
- The variation in policy concerning fee structures for Asylum Seekers in the Further Education Sector means that Asylum Seekers may not be able to access concessionary fees.

The future

The key development in the future would be to expand the access to the service to any person from a minority ethnic background.

Refugee Integration & Resettlement

An individual approach

With continued support and funding from the European Commission's Refugee Fund, NICEM continues to offer direct advice and guidance to individuals, who receive a positive decision on their claim for asylum or receive some form of protection.

NICEM's Refugee Integration & Re-settlement, links up with the initial Advice & Support Services and offers an opportunity for people who receive decisions, to explore their options, in terms of housing, benefits, employment, training & education and family re-unification. As reported in NICEM's Annual Report 2001-2002, the service is aimed at delivering a seamless and holistic approach and thereby ensuring that individuals are given options and choices, in how they wish to re-build and live their lives.

Building partnerships

Much of the success of the Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Service, in offering opportunities to individuals, has been the development of strong and sustainable partnerships with key statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Key statutory agencies are consulted with, to ensure that policy and practice is developed, to include Asylum Seekers and Refugees and that equality principles and mainstreaming are applied. Key agencies include:

- **The Northern Ireland Housing Executive;**
- **The Social Security Agency;**
- **The Department of Employment & Learning;**
- **The Department of Education;**
- **The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety;**
- **South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust.**

An increased focus on advocacy and the need to raise awareness, in respect of issues of inclusion and equality, has involved NICEM's Refugee Integration & Re-settlement Service participating in lobbying activities with partner organisations at both local, regional and European level. The service is represented on the N.I Anti-Poverty Network and also represents NIAPN at the European level on the European Anti-Poverty Network. This offers a unique opportunity for effective lobbying on refugee issues at strategic level and continues to draw the issue into the local arena, where, previously, there was no space for dealing with this issue in a Northern Ireland context.

Statistics: Refugee Integration and Resettlement Service data

Total number of service users: 72

39 singles and 10 families.

China: 17

Zimbabwe: 8

Afghanistan: 5

FRY: 4

The rest: Algeria, Albania, Sahara, Iran, Syria, Cameroon, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

Status: 35 Indefinite Leave to Remain, 13 Exceptional Leave to Remain and 1 Discretionary Leave to Remain

Social Welfare Benefits: 37 accessed social welfare benefits

Housing: 30 accessed housing

Training and Employment: 39 received advice on training and employment, 4 self-employment, 13 people applied for LIDL.

Travel Documents: 45 people received advice on travel document requirements, 35 documents completed, 1 Irish born child passport.

Volunteering: 22 people registered as volunteers with either NICEM or NICRAS.

Family Reunion: 7 service users were advised on this issue, 3 families were reunited.

Other advice and support is given on areas such as: Health, education, driving licensing, careers advice, mortgage, student grants/loans.

Refugee Community Development & Advocacy

The 3rd year of funding from the European Commission's Refugee Integration Fund, has provided for the continuation of the Community Development & Advocacy Service. This service has offered support to exiting and fledgling grassroots Refugee organisations, in terms of development and organising. NICEM firmly recognises that this service is not a replacement, in the absence of Refugee Community organisations and support groups but is a tool for facilitating growth and development and building links across all sectors, to promote inclusion and equality.

It is a very critical time for grassroots refugee community organisations in the North of Ireland, as they move to strengthen their position, in a climate of uncertainty. The purpose of NICEM's work is to work in partnership with grassroots organisations, to identify and secure resources and implement effective capacity building and training programmes.

Immigration Advice & Representation

The changes and developments in the work of NICEM's Immigration advice & representation service are reflective of changing migratory patterns in the North of Ireland. Caseload continues rise and the service have dealt with almost 3 times the number of enquiries as was reported in the previous annual report. As with the work of the Asylum Advice & Support Service, one of the biggest challenges, facing the service, in the course of the last year, has been the introduction of the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002.

Whilst, dealing with fundamental changes, as a result of legislation and policy, the service has striven to continue to deliver direct advice and assistance to individuals and also to act as a point of reference and information for other advice agencies, across the North of Ireland and in GB.

In recognising the need to deliver a comprehensive service, NICEM's Immigration Advice Service, has fostered and developed strategic links with key organisations in GB, the Republic of Ireland and Europe. As immigration issues move beyond national competence and are embedded within the competencies of European Union institutions, NICEM has participated in key activities with European partners, in contributing to the shaping of the NGO response to immigration law and practice;

Key successes, include;

- Recognition and representation, at local, GB, Republic of Ireland and European level;
- Continued delivery of a comprehensive, confidential and free advice service, in accordance with the standards of the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner;
- Lobbying and campaigning and dissemination of information, at strategic levels, including, political, media, trade unions, statutory and community & voluntary sector;

Case Load and Enquires

Nature of Enquiry (including telephone & one to one advice)	number
Asylum applications / Article 3 & Article 8 of ECHR	536
Marriage / Partner / Spouse	892
Entry Clearance / Visitor Visas	241
Application for British Citizenship	86
Application for Irish Citizenship	109
Work Permit Scheme	212
Student Visas	160
Miscellaneous	370
Current Live Files	300

National Asylum Support Services (NASS) Statistics

<u>Referrals</u>	<u>09/2002-04/2003</u>	<u>Aggregate Since 04/2001</u>
Total	184	422
NASS Application	100	254
Refer Social Service	15	29
Change of circumstances	5	21
Did Not / Could Not Apply	51	64
One Stop Service	29	80
Emergency Accommodation (individual)	155	326

NASS Results

Positive	94	237
Refused / Pending	23	27
Cancelled – dropped out (before follow-on)	1	7
Moved to follow-on	70	190
Subsistence Only	11	31
Left follow-on	10	20

Returns

Total	2,008	5,733
NASS Related Enquires	454	903
Accommodation Issues (EA & FO)	136	496
Follow on Briefing	174	347
Voucher Problems	136	324
Health	211	483
Clothing	8	50
Refer / Contact Solicitor	232	394
Immigration Enquiries	502	643
Adult Education	19	225
Shopping	2	30
Information on Vouchers	220	367
Other	454	1,515

Client Group Makeup

Unaccompanied Minors	3	7
Singles	148	347
Couples	16	28
Single Parent Families	4	15
Two Parent Families	12	27
Children with Families	35	81

<u>Nationality-individuals</u> <u>(Referred to NICEM)</u>	<u>09/2002-04/2003</u>	<u>Aggregate since 2000</u>
Afghanistan	5	16
Albania	4	23
Algeria	20	43
Angola	1	3
Bangladesh	1	4
Cameroon	11	14
Czech Republic	1	2
People's Republic of China	114	201
Congo	0	1
Former Soviet Union (Ethnic Russian)	6	13
Former Republic of Yugoslavia	8	22
Iran	0	19
Iraq	0	7
Kenya	1	2
Libya	1	7
Macedonia	0	7
Moldova	2	5
Nepal	1	2
Nigeria	3	4
Pakistan	2	3
Palestine	2	4
Polish (Roma)	1	18
Romania	1	76
Romanian (Roma)	43	65
Russia	0	5
Serbia	0	8
Slovakia	1	2
Sierra Leone	1	8
South Africa	0	2
Sri Lanka	1	10
St. Lucia	0	1
Sudan	0	4
Turkey	1	10
Western Sahara	1	3
Total	233	614

Networking and 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 European Union and Council of Europe.

UK Network

NICEM works in partnership with the key black organisations in the UK focusing on capacity building, race equality, human rights, asylum seekers and refugees, etc. We involve with the following organisations:

- Commission for Racial Equality
- UK Race Europe Network
- 1990 Trust
- Runnymede Trust
- Project Fullemploy
- Refugee Council
- National Refugee Forum
- Home Office Minister chairing National Refugee Integration Forum
- UK EQUAL Partnership Board
- Asylum Seeker Skills Audit Task Group
- UK Secretariat of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism & Xenophobia
- Race Equality Unit of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Justice
- Home Office NGOs Steering Group on follow-up of the World Conference Against Racism

Irish Network

North-South dimension is a key strategy for campaigning anti-racism on the island of Ireland. We involve work with the following organisations:

- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
- High Level Steering Group on Public Awareness Programme on Racism (Know Racism campaign)
- Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland (ARASI)
- Sociology Department of University College Dublin
- Irish Refugee Council
- Human Rights Centre of Galway University
- Irish Congress of Trade Union Task Force on Racism in Workplace
- Irish Human Rights Commission

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 race equality and human rights. We involve work with the following organisations:

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)
- Human Rights Directorate of the Council of Europe
- Anti-Discrimination Unit of the DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission
- European Monitoring Centre on Racism (EUMC)
- Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- Centre Europeen Juif d'Information

NICEM was nominated by the UK Secretariat of the EUMC on the first Jean Khan award. It is our privilege to have such nomination to recognise our contribution of anti-racism at the European level. We are waiting the result in September 2003.

Northern Ireland

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

- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Committee on the Administration of Justice
- Irish Congress of Trade Union
- UNISON
- Disability Action
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- Helped the Aged
- Women's Support Network
- Women into Politics
- Save the Children
- Children's Law Centre
- Law Centre (NI)
- Greater Belfast Community Network
- Childcare NI
- Youthnet
- Northern Ireland Youth Council
- Association of Independent Advice Centre
- Community Change
- Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
- NIACRO
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Red Cross (NI)
- St. Vincent de Paul

Organisational Development

NICEM five years Strategic Plan

We published our external evaluation in September 2002 and adopted at the Annual General Meeting in October. One of the recommendations is to develop a medium term strategic plan for the next five years. We commissioned the same consultant, who wrote the external evaluation report, to start the process. We finished a three days planning day for the staff and member of the Executive Committee in late June 2003. A draft Strategic Plan will be circulated for consultation in second half of the year.

Follow-up of the External Evaluation Report

We organised a meeting with all key funders of NICEM on the issues and recommendations of the Report in early July 2003. The meeting was very useful in the following regards:

- Recognise our achievements and contributions on the race issues
- Recognise the issues of resources and staff level on senior management team
- Agree to proceed a mapping out exercise to identify the sector who is doing what areas and their financial situation, subject to funding (both Race Equality Unit of the OFMDFM and Community Fund are interested to fund the Project). A proposal from our consultant is finished and is now submitted to the two funders for further advice.

PQASSO

With the support of Refugee Council we continue to monitor and review our policy and practice through the PQASSO process. A number of our staff from various teams involves the PQASSO Working group on specific policies of NICEM to ensure fully implementation and be reviewed.

Over the year, we have reviewed and revised the following policies:

- Core Values
- Equal Opportunities
- Grievance Procedure
- Harassment Policy
- Harassment Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Pension Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Referral Policy
- Training and Development Policy (new one)
- Role and Operation of NICEM Executive Committee
- Financial Support for member groups/staff/Exco Committee on conference and training (new services)

**NICEM 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**
 Traveller Movement (NI)
 (resigned in April 2003)

Treasurer: Ms. Anna Lo
 Chinese Welfare Association
 (resigned in August 2002)
 Mr. Tilak Raj Puri
 Indian Community Centre
 (from November 2002)

Other members:

Dr. Liming Wang
 Mandarin Speakers Association

Ms. Emma Clyde
 Northern Ireland Filipino Association

Mr. Paul Noonan
 Belfast Travellers Education & Development
 Group

Ms. Shanta Ram Sugumaran (from April 2003)
 Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees
 and Asylum Seekers

Mr. Alfred Abolarin (from April 2003)
 Interact NI

STAFF (2002-2003)

Central Administration Team

Executive Director	Mr. Patrick Yu
Administrative Manager	Ms. Nuala Moynagh
Administrator (Asylum Support	Ms. Eva McKelvey
Administrator (EQUAL)	Mr. Max Petrushkin
Administrator (Interpretation & Training)	Ms. Tanja Tierney
Receptionist (Part-time)	Ms. Stephanie Robinson

Policy and Capacity Building Team

Co-ordinator of Capacity Building	Ms. Gabrielle Doherty
Development Worker (Volunteer Development)	Mr. Sean Kelly
Development Worker (Health)	Ms. Jiemin Tomita
Development Worker (Interpreter Training)	Mr. Ronald Vellem
Co-ordinator of Training (Equality & Diversity)	Ms. Karima Zahi
Training Officer (Equality & Diversity)	Ms. Felice Kiel
Policy Development Worker	Ms. Tansy Hutchinson
Development Worker (Racial Harassment & Advocacy)	Ms. Marie Keating
Special Project (Women & Children) (Part-time)	Ms. Siobhan Molloy

Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Team

Co-ordinator of Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Services	Ms. Sharon Dillon
Development Worker (NASS)	Mr. Glen Phillips (resigned in June 2003)
	Ms. Roisin O'Connor
	Ms. Patricia Leong (from July 2003)
Development Worker (EQUAL)	Ms. Moira McCombe
Development Worker (Refugee Integration)	Ms. Lumturi Podrimaj
	Ms. Brenda Anthony (resigned in March 2003)
	Ms. Therese Fitzgerald (from May 2003)

NICEM MEMBER GROUPS

Al-Nisa Association NI
Bangladeshi Welfare Association
Barnardos Chinese Lay Health Project
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group
Belfast Travellers Support Group
Causeway Chinese Welfare Association
Craigavon Traveller Support Committee
Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association
Indian Community Centre
Interact NI
Mandarin Speakers Association
Muslim Family Association
Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Northern Ireland Filipino Association
Northern Ireland Filipino Community in Action
Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association
Oi Wah Chinese Women's Group
Oi Yin Bangor Chinese Women's Group
Sikh Women & Children's Association
Traveller Movement NI
Windsor Women's Centre Multi-cultural Group