



• Northern Ireland Council

**N1CEM**  
FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES

Annual Report 2005 / 2006

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## *Appendix*

*Executive Committee Members 2003-2005*

*Staff Members*

*Member Groups*

## *WORK IN PROGRESS*

### *1. Mainstreaming Race into government policy and practice*

#### *1.1 Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland*

Over the past year there has been little progress on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. This is a key safeguard under the Good Friday Agreement, but without the local political and civil society's engagement and support it will harm the democratic principle by the imposition of Westminster legislation through direct rule. NICEM, therefore, has supported the Joint Declaration commitment in 2003 to establish a Roundtable Forum of politicians and civil society, with an independent, internationally renowned Chair and independent secretariat, to move the way forward.

There is also no news from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on the same issue. The current Chief Commissioner and majority of the Commissioners have been in post for more than a year. We still do not know the view of the Commissioners, individually or collectively, on the content of the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, nor have they given any position on the contentious proposal by their previous Commissioners.

This scenario creates the frustrations experienced by NGOs on the Bill of Rights process, with the delay in setting up the roundtable and the lack of a view from the Commission making it difficult to engage in a meaningful debate.

NICEM has however continued to engage with other NGOs fighting collectively to have a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland through the Human Rights Consortium (a collective of over 100 trade unions and NGOs). This engagement has been important in emphasising that the Bill of Rights needs to be about the human rights protection for all and is a means of engaging to see an effective process even while there is little movement on content. Our colleague, Tansy Hutchinson (Coordinator of Policy and Research), was elected as the Deputy Chair

of the Consortium. The Consortium plays a vital role to lobby all political parties on engaging with the debate on a Bill of Rights and for the government to put it as a priority area of work. As the member of the Consortium we have met David Hanson MP, the Minister in charge of Human Rights and Equality. We have also testified before the Dail Foreign Affairs Committee and met with Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern and staff from Department of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Ireland as well as meeting with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and various political parties. We have also played a key role in the strategic development of the Consortium, including the review that led to securing funding for a more vigorous campaign and have contributed to the development of the campaigns work including the recent 'Take the Bill by the Horns' campaign'.

## *1.2 Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland*

The Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland has the same fate as the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. It is not on the radar of the Direct Rule Minister. We had expected a White Paper to be published in April-May 2006 but this did not materialise. Without the certainty of the Assembly the process will face further delays. We need the Single Equality Bill to redress the imbalance of the protection on racial discrimination as the result of the UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (which means that a higher level of protection now exists for England, Scotland and Wales than Northern Ireland), and the situation created through the Race Relations (NI) Order Regulations 2003 (the transposition of the EU Race Directive to Northern Ireland) which created a two-tier system of protection, with colour and nationality having a lower level of protection. We need to rectify that mess immediately as it creates a nightmare for the employers, services providers and victims of racial discrimination alike as the complexity makes it difficult to understand or to follow the law.

NICEM has lobbied for the administration to amend the Race Relations Order to fill the gap left by the delays in the Single Equality Bill, but without success. We had commissioned Professor Barry Fitzpatrick to prepare a legal paper detailing the areas of the Race Relations Order that need to be amended and putting forward proposals on how to do this. Unfortunately this has not been adopted by the administration, and we would like to see this taken forward as part of our contribution to compliment the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland in the future.

### *1.3 A Shared Future: The policy and strategic framework for good relations in NI*

The Shared Future document, which aims to promote good relations within Northern Ireland, has been officially linked to the Race Equality Strategy. This should mean that race equality is given a high priority and reduces the danger that the issue is lost in the shadow of the 'two communities' in the work that is being taken forward to build a shared future for Northern Ireland. The administration has established a Working Group on the Indicators for Monitoring the High Level Outcome of A Shared Future, which also links up with the Race Equality Strategy. The Executive Director of NICEM is a member of the Working Group representing the interests and priorities of the sector. Draft performance indicators have been agreed by the Working Group through various, hotly debated, meetings. We expect the draft to go out for consultation before it is finalised. During the process it was difficult to push for a priority focus on race in comparison with the two communities. NICEM strongly advocated the view that for a shared future it is essential to tackle the substantial disadvantage and inequality faced by black and minority ethnic people. Good relations must work hand in hand with positive equality and human rights protection, as without these as the safeguards it is easy to slip into window dressing that does not address the root causes of the problem. We would like to see substantial changes in all communities, not just considering the two communities, so that everyone enjoy the same rights to be free from fear, intimidation, harassment and discrimination and are fully able to participate in all areas of working, family and public life.

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### *1.4 Race Equality Strategy*

The main focus of NICEM's policy work has been on the implementation of the Race Equality Strategy by seeking to mobilise the sector around this and influence the Action Plans that each government department must produce.

Following on from the Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference on the Race Equality Strategy in 2005, at the beginning of 2006 NICEM organised a series of three Training Seminars on the Race Equality Strategy focusing on Action Plans, a Race Equality Tool Kit and Ethnic Monitoring. Rohan Collier, an independent consultant, Lorraine Martins from the Audit Commission and Manawar Jan-Khan a Specialist Advisor on Equality and Diversity facilitated the seminars.

It is now the most exciting time for NICEM as we embark on a new direction by

working in partnership on the Race Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010 (the Race Strategy). We have teamed up with the Runnymede Trust, a London based think-tank and a long time working partner of NICEM, to bring their expertise on racial equality, in particular "The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain" process which gave a detailed examination to all areas of public policy and produced recommendations for the promotion of race equality, but was not linked to Northern Ireland in 2000 when it was carried out.

We were commissioned by the Racial Equality Unit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to develop a process to bring the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) sector and departments and agencies together in order to facilitate the development of the Action Plans that each Department are required to produce. The Action Plans must cut across the six aims of the Race Strategy. This process is called "Working Together."

*The aims of Working Together are:  
To support the Northern Ireland Race Equality Forum  
in delivering on their*

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1. Race Equality Action Plan for 2005-2010
2. To engage community-based organisations in effective policymaking on race equality
3. To engage young people from minority ethnic communities in policymaking on race equality in Northern Ireland
4. To support the policymakers, community-based organisations, and public services in Northern Ireland in implementing the NI Race Equality Strategy

Based on our experience working with BME young people through the Children and Young People Strategy consultation and leadership training in 2005, we are pioneering the use of the experiences of the BME young people to scope the issues based on the six aims of the Race Strategy. To this end a Youth Summit was held at Parliament Buildings on Thursday May 4th. Young people from NICEMs Leadership course were trained to facilitate the workshops of BME young people drawn from across Northern Ireland and from all different BME groups. A debate was held in the Senate Room and workshops in Long Gallery and more than 60 BME young people participated. We also ran parallel workshops for the staff and

teachers who accompanied the young people. The Education and Library Boards (Belfast, South-Eastern and North-Eastern) supported this Summit by identifying and organising BME young people from schools to participate. A separate meeting was held for those from the Southern Education and Library Board to ensure the voices of young people from across Northern Ireland were heard (just under 20 young people). The summit was the basis of scoping issues for future seminars.

We also organised two sets of seminars (one in May and one in September 2006) bringing the BME sector, departments, agencies and other voluntary and community sectors together, based on the papers that Runnymede prepared to look at the six aims of the Strategy. The first seminar was focused on the first 3 aims (eliminate racial discrimination, equal protection and equality access) and the second seminar was focused on the last 3 aims (dialogue, participation and capacity building) of the Strategy. The OFMDFM also organised another seminar for the 26 local councils in preparation for their shared future and race equality strategy action plans.

The Project has produced a discussion paper on each strand of the Strategy, a Report on the Youth Summit and Seminar and draft reports from the two seminars. With the support of Northern Visions TV (NVTv), we have also produced a DVD of the Youth Summit. We are now planning the final phase of the Project, with the following Aims:

- To embed learning from the process so that it impacts on development of the action plan 2007;
- To engage a larger number of government officials;
- To engage a wider cohort from community and voluntary sector;
- To provide resources that can be used by others to develop their race equality planning and practice

We were a little bit disappointed as the participation from the BME sector was below average, when officials from departments are enthusiastically looking for the views from the sector in order to integrate the issues and needs of BME communities into their Action Plan. NICEM is planning to do a mini-round up bringing those who did not engage in the previous process together giving a last chance to influence



the government policy.

With high expectations and hope from the BME sector and our commitment to ensure maximum impact of the Race Strategy on the ground over the next few years (through the Action Plan), NICEM is committed to working to achieve real change for BME communities.

## *1.5 Racial Equality Forum and the Sector Shadow Forum*

A key structure for the Race Equality Strategy is the Race Equality Forum, which brings together BME groups, the statutory, voluntary, trade union and business sectors to work together to implement the Strategy. NICEM sees a strong need to mobilise the sector around this and influence the Action Plans that each government department must produce. Following Maggie Beirne's Report in July 2005 on the sector working together on policy issues and the Racial Equality Forum, the Chinese Welfare Association, the Multi-Cultural Resources Centre and NICEM, the three Co- Convenors, started to organise meetings in preparation for the Racial Equality Forum meeting. NICEM provides the secretariat for the Sector Shadow Forum for BME representatives on the Race Forum to meet with the wider sector to discuss issues and have a united voice on the Forum.

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There were meetings in October 05, December 05 and March 06, June 06 and September 06. The overall aim of the meetings were to bring the sector together to discuss and agree common issues that need to be reflected at the Racial Equality Forum (the Forum) in order to create a single voice from the sector. It was agreed that those representatives who sit at the Forum from the sector should have more accountability on the issues and how they are raised. It was also agreed that those representatives should have a short meeting, one hour, just prior to the Forum meeting (this was done for the June and September meetings in 2006) in order to have a consensus within the sector on the issues we need to raise and a common position on key points. It has proved to be useful and the sector is now speaking with one voice on many areas at the Forum meetings.

At the time of writing this Report we have been informed that NICEM has been successful in gaining funding from Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI)

for a new Project called “Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building and Development Project” (to run for 17 months from September 2006). The objectives of the Project are:

- To build bridges between the disadvantaged ethnic minority community, local community and policy makers;
- To build bridges between the sector and the Race Equality Forum;
- To capacity build ethnic minority groups and individual to engage in policy debates through the development of Action Plans of the Racial Equality Strategy with the 11 departments;
- To develop good policy and practice on consultation with the sector and government officials to inform department’s Action Plans;
- To provide support as well as the deliver the views of the sector to the representatives of the sector at the Race Equality Forum;
- To deliver a mapping out exercise to scope four policy areas through the involvement of the ethnic minority groups and individuals.
- To develop and publish the four policy papers and pass it to the Race Equality Forum formally adopt;
- To act as Secretariat to support the sector on the process of the Project, and organise regular meetings for the sector and feed information of the meeting back to the Race Equality Forum;
- To organise and deliver 8 policy seminars as a capacity building process to fine tune the early four policy papers;
- To develop and publish 8 policy papers and pass it to the Race Equality Forum formally adopt it; and
- To monitor the outcomes and performance indicators of the Action Plans in the life time of the Project

The new resources will assist NICEM to capacity build the sector on policy engagement and intervention through the principle of empowerment to create a level of playing field for equal and effective participation. This programme will empower BME groups to participate in policy consultation and decision-making processes, as well as participate in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan of the Race Strategy.

## *1.6 All Party Working Group on Black and Minority Ethnic People*

It is part of our strategic approach to tackling racism in Northern Ireland to engage with politicians, in particular during the peak of the racist attacks in 2004. As the working relationship has been built NICEM saw a need to have a formal structure to cut across the political spectrum to deal with race issues. Moreover, we also need all the parties to support the Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan, with or without devolved administration. They can play a vital role to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and ensure the officials are accountable on the race issue. The result was an exploratory meeting that we organised in June 2006.

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The meeting saw endorsement from all parties attending. They also agreed that Patricia Lewsley from SDLP was to be the Convenor of the All Party Working Group and that it will focus on a few issues under the Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan, racist attacks and migrant workers, rather than having a long list of issues without any focus. The first meeting is arranged for September in Stormont the BME sector will be invited to participate in order to agree on the terms of reference of the Working Group and the priority issues.

This is an exciting time as we move to enable the sector to engage with another high level of policy intervention by working in partnership with politicians from all parties.

## 1.7 Section 75 consultations

NICEM uses the Race Strategy as the key process of for mainstreaming government policy and practice. As a result we responded to only a few priority consultation documents. More broadly, we have linked these priority policy issues into the Race Equality Strategy work through our meetings with various departments and agencies.

We still actively engage in the Equality Coalition, the body that co-ordinates Section 75 issues at a regular monthly meeting. We have also engaged with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the consultants that they have brought in on the Review of the Effectiveness of s. 75 that is currently being carried out. There are concerns that this review will not produce the results needed to bolster the implementation of s. 75 and we will continue to engage to see the process improve. NICEM is still the Co-Chair of the Education Joint Consultative Forum. We are also a member of the Equality Forum for the Housing Executive and are a member of the Advisory Group of the Gender Equality Strategy.

We have submitted our views on the following key consultation documents either through written responses or consultation meetings.

- Children and Young People Consultation with Minister Rooker
- Dept of Employment and Learning's Draft Skills Strategy for NI
- Equality Commission – Traveller Education Consultation

NICEM has also met with relevant Departments to discuss issues of concern to the sector

- Dept of Education- English as Additional Language Policy (EAL) (see further below)
- Dept of Education – Review of Religious Education Curriculum Process. (See further below)

## 1.8 Migrant Workers

Demographic changes recently in Northern Ireland, due to inwards migration, has had enormous impact on our society. It signals that our economy needs to rely on an external workforce of both cheap labours, to increase the competitiveness of certain sectors, and professionals who provide vital services to our society, in particular our health system.

At the same time it is a golden opportunity for this natural process in our society to move towards a multicultural society. It is now more than orange and green in our society, with increasing rainbow of a diverse population and should embrace ethnic and cultural diversity as a core value of our society. But unfortunately this opportunity cannot be taken for granted. The society in general and the politicians in particular have not recognised the contribution of the migrants towards our society. Conversely some people see it as a threat as we have witnessed more racist attacks and some increasingly vicious arson attacks and petrol bombing.

At the same time unfortunately the exploitation of cheap labour, due to their vulnerability of those with language barriers and a lack of knowledge of our employment, immigration and benefits rights, creates a lot of hardship and crisis for the new comers. Migrant workers also have difficulty in getting access to the basic public services. Indeed, the settled BME communities in Northern Ireland have also gone through the same experiences and processes as the new migrants therefore, the experiences of the settled BME communities will also be a part of the solution for the new comers. It is important that such experiences are used rather than it starting everything from scratch or reinventing the wheel.

### 1.8.1 Supportive Services

As more people from Poland, Lithuania, Portugal, Russia and the rest of the A8 countries came to our doorstep asking for help, we decided to appoint a part-time (3 days a week) Polish-bilingual organiser in April 2006 despite having no funding. It was a matter of need and necessity as we have seen more people becoming victims of exploitation, vicious racist attacks and racial discrimination.

NICEM has provided support (unlike organisations claiming to provide support but actually providing signposting services) to migrant workers, including advice and casework on employment, benefits, homelessness, discrimination, harassment

and racist attacks; and victim support services. One key role of the Polish-bilingual organiser is to provide support, and the second is to organise the Polish community across the Province on the others. So far substantial work has been done in Belfast, Newry, Craigavon and Banbridge. We also provide on-going support to the Polish Association Northern Ireland through our Capacity Building Team.

Work carried out by the migrant support worker includes

From 04/08/06 the staff member has dealt with 62 clients cases at NICEM from different nationalities: 54 Poles, 4 Slovaks, 2 Hungarians, 1 Latvian, 1 Lithuanian.

The majority of clients had enquiries about social services in Northern Ireland, including: child benefit, housing benefit, tax credits and maternity allowance. 10 clients have sought advice on passports, 14 how to find a place in the school for their children and 5 of them were homeless and needed help with accommodation.

Since starting work for NICEM the staff member has organised a number of events and information days together with different organizations from N.I.

- conference with Polish Consul General in London with polish community in Wellington Park Hotel
- Polish Picnic, Botanic Gardens
- Together with IFA and The Village Focus Group and Round Table on Racism trip on Lagan River for polish and local families from The Village.
- Together with H2H information event about Health Service in N.I.
- Meeting in Carrickfergus City Council, and Belfast CC with Polish Consul General In Edinburgh
- Conference for Polish Representation from different organizations from N.I. with Consul General
- Consular duty for Polish Community; Belfast
- Information session about employment rights organized together with Equality Commission

- Meeting with people from BARKA
- Meeting in Warsaw with representation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Conference with representatives of new polish emigration from  
hole Europe
- Meeting with representative of polish senate
- Seminary about situation of polish emigration (WSPOLNOTA POLSKA)

The project has also worked with different polish organisations across Northern Ireland:

- International Support Group Aughnadoy – help with status
- Polish Association of Integration Lurgan – help with status, and  
application to Small Lottery Grants
- Association of Polish Christian Community “BETLEJEM”- help with status,  
and application to Small Lottery Grants
- Banbridge
- The Polish Research Centre Newry

### ***1.8.2 Partnership with UNISON and Old Warren Partnership***

NICEM also works in partnership with UNISON in supporting the nurses working in both the NHS system and private nursing homes to tackle the issues of racism at both the workplace and at home. We have had regular meetings on a number of projects such as research and a good practice guide for overseas employees for the health sector. Now a Black Committee with representation from the overseas nurses has been put in place within UNISON. It is the first Black Committee in Northern Ireland labour movement. We have also commissioned Sheila Rogers to write up a good practice guide. Now “the Good Practice Guide for Northern

Ireland Health and Social Services: Supporting Nursing Staff from Overseas" has been approved and we are now planning a formal launch of the Guide.

Old Warren Partnership, UNISON and NICEM have set up a consortium and have been successful securing funding from the CFNI to tackle the issues of migrant workers who resided in Lisburn Council areas. It is a successful partnership and a Polish bilingual worker has been appointed and the partnership is waiting to appoint another Lithuanian bilingual worker. The Project is to provide support and organise ethnic minorities, in particular migrant workers in the local area. Due to a number of high profile attacks in Lisburn areas, Old Warren organised a vigil at end of June 2006 to convey the message to the local community that this is not the acceptable behaviour within the community. Now they also provide full service of support to victims of racist attacks which links to NICEM Racial Harassment and Advice Service.

### ***1.8.3 Derry SEEDS Group***

SEEDS is a new partner of NICEM to support migrant workers in Derry areas. They are committed to providing a lot of work through volunteering. As a result we have also put the group as a priority group for our Capacity Building programmes and the Racial Harassment and Advice Service. SEEDS has organised a number of migrant communities with over 300 people from different nationalities and we would like to facilitate further development of support and capacity building.

We are also planning to provide training to SEEDS Group's member to handle cases of racist attacks as part of the recommendations from the external Evaluation Report on Racial Harassment Support and Advice Project.

## ***1.9 Racist Hate Crime***

### ***1.9.1 Northern Ireland Affairs Committee***

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee published its Ninth Report of Session 2004-2005 on 8th April 2005 a report into hate crime in Northern Ireland: "The Challenge of Diversity: Hate Crime in NI" [HC 548-1]. And the Committee subsequently published its Fourth Special Report of Session 2005-2006 on 19 July 2005: "The Challenge of Diversity: Hate Crime in NI: Government Response to the Committee's



Ninth Report of Session 2004-2005" [HC 396].

More than a year after the critical report from the Committee, the government still has no overall strategy in tackling the problem. Each agency using a "do their best approach" will not ease the situation. Indeed the numbers of racial incidents have increased 15% with 936 incidents (2005-2006). We need to have a multi-agency approach on this increasing difficult issue facing by our society.

The Working Group on Racism, part of the Race Equality Forum, did not have a meeting for a year. The Working Group on the Recording Incidents of Hate (RIOH) was rarely had meetings since the end of 2005, which has significant impacts on the piloting scheme of RIOH in south Belfast. NICEM is the member of both working groups and we did not see any firm commitment from the government to tackle the core of the problems, nor to provide more supports to victims of racial hate crime, which the current Victim Support system cannot provide due to language and other factors. The major factor, after all, is the re-distribution of resources towards the race issue, which is a low priority among all others.

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### ***1.9.2 International Monitoring Commission Report on paramilitaries in NI***

We welcome the International Monitoring Commission (IMC) 8th Report (Feb. 2006) and 10th Report (April 2006) highlighting that the Loyalist Paramilitaries, both UDA and UVF, are still targeting ethnic minorities in terms of racist attacks. At least there is an acknowledgement the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues. We do hope that the IMC will continue to monitor the paramilitary involvement on racist attacks in the future report.

### ***1.9.3 PSNI***

We also welcome that the PSNI have put a policy in place on Hate Crime (Policy Directive on Police Response to Hate Crime) for which we provided substantial inputs in the pre-consultative process. It is an important watershed as the Policy Directive has detailed procedural guidance for the officers in response to hate crime. The bigger challenge for the PSNI is how to ensure the officers, who work on the ground, will carry out the same standard of practice? From NICEM's perspective

it is the right time to kick the training in, to ensure the same professional standards are applied to all, in particular anti-racism training to challenge the organisational culture and individual prejudice, rather than the usual cultural awareness training.

#### ***1.9.4 “The Next Stephen Lawrence?: Racist Violence and Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland” Research Report***

NICEM commissioned Dr. Robbie McVeigh to conduct a research on racist attacks based on the victims that received our support services. The Research Report “The Next Stephen Lawrence?: Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland” official launched at the Conference in June 2006 with intensive media attention. We had more than 120 participants from various criminal justice agencies, government departments, BME groups and the voluntary sector participating in the debate on racist violence in Northern Ireland.

NICEM had meetings with the PSNI and other criminal justice agencies looking at the recommendations of the Report and ensure future policy change in line with the recommendations.

## *1.10 English as Additional Language (EAL) and Religious Education in Northern Ireland*

In our last Annual Report we highlighted the issue of the cutbacks in EAL provision but we have seen little progress as, despite earlier provision of information by the Department's Equality unit. NICEM was later sidelined by the Department, despite our constructive engagement on the issue. We have continued to engage through the Education Joint Consultative Forum attempting to break through the confusion, which sees the Department claiming that more money is available for EAL provision, while that provision has been almost completely removed except in a handful of schools.

The Department went against our and others advice not to use a Consultancy firm to carry out the consultation but they chose to appoint the same firm which produced the report upon which the Department are apparently basing their policy and undertaking the same consultation process. NICEM was invited for a pre-consultation meeting at very short notice (with less than a week's notice) and without proper papers, as we were not provided with a copy of the Consultancy Report. The result being that there was no point in having a meeting about the future delivery system of EAL without the full consultancy report. We have been kept in the dark about the strength and weakness of the proposed system nor are we aware of what delivery options are being proposed by the Consultancy firm's report.

We have had a similar experience with the Department of Education on the proposed core curriculum on religious education. The Department of Education established a working group of the four main Christian Churches to review and re-write the core curriculum for Religious Education in Northern Ireland. At that time we warned them that this risked a breach of the equality and human rights legislation and declined to assist the Churches (through the Department) in consulting on a flawed and potentially illegal proposal. Instead we submitted a formal complaint under s. 75. The Department of Education this year issued an Equality Impact Assessment that was seriously flawed and did not include any options that would not, in our view, breach the equality and human rights laws. We therefore submitted a second complaint under s. 75 and awaiting the results of the Equality Impact Assessment before deciding on what further action to take.

## *1.11 Strategy On Litigation tackling Discrimination (SOLID) Project: EU Community Action Programme against Discrimination*

NICEM is the Lead Partner of the Project with the Core Partner the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and six other Partners: Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) (part of the Columbia Law School in New York) based in Budapest, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) also based in Budapest, Interights in London, the National Bureau against Racial Discrimination (LBR) in Rotterdam and the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC/DACoRD) in Copenhagen. The project is aimed at the achievement of effective transposition and implementation of the European Union Race Equality and Framework Directives, through empowerment, capacity building and partnership, promoting equality for Ethnic and Racial Minority groups across the European Union.

The objectives of the training programmes are

1. To contribute to effective transposition and implementation of the Race Directive;
2. Strengthening the connection between NGOs and lawyers;
3. Bringing together NGOs with different expertise to develop a strategy on: litigation to support victims; and build an infrastructure on access to legal remedies at the national level; and
4. Develop EU and/or regional support network.

It is an ambitious and strategic project at EU level. It reflects NICEM's credentials in the area and our leading role in Europe. Over the 12 months period we have organised 6 rounds of NGOs training (2 pilots and 4 full training) for the 25 Member States of the EU with around 200 trainees.

The seminar consists of a 3-day intensive training on legal concepts, country situation, public interest law, strategy on litigation, national litigation support network and national action plan framework. At the end of the training each country group had been facilitated to produce an agreed vision and action plan on strategic litigation of the Race Equality Directive, tailored to the key issues at the national level. The action plan is designed to be implemented following the training by the national group.

We have now compiled 22 national reports including strategies and action plans on the transposition of the Race Directive in the Member States. We are now planning for the final evaluation meeting and the follow-up strategies of the Project in Budapest in October 2006.

NICEM is also committed to bringing the training back home to empower the NGOs in Northern Ireland on how to use human rights and equality legislation to get policy change and support victims of human rights violations and discrimination. We are looking for new resources to develop this new area of work in Northern Ireland.

## *2. 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;
- Northern Ireland 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

## 2.1 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 Racism <sup>1</sup>. 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.

## 2.2 Current developments in Northern Ireland: Race Equality Strategy

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The Direct-rule Minister of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFM/DFM) has signed off the Race Strategy to combat racism and racial discrimination. The Race Strategy constitutes a national plan against racism developed within the specific context of Northern Ireland (NI).

As reported in the last session, NICE and the OFMDFM, through the 'Working Together' process, encouraged and built the capacity of BME groups to participate in the process.

We are disappointed that in the 2005 Race Strategy Action Plan all departments did not have anti-racism training, nor plan to have it. Rather, most of the departments intend to use the general equality and/or diversity training instead. We foresee that the consequence of this is that without challenging organisational culture and practice, and individual prejudice, which are key components of as the key components of NICE's anti-racism training, the training will be just another day without action or effects.

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

## 2.3 *Anti-racism and Equality Training*

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

An increasingly wide range of organisations and groups have actively sought to implement policies driven by standards of non-discrimination and promotion of diversity as a norm. It has been encouraging to 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.

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

Our key trainer, Ronald Vellem, provided 22 training sessions of 385 participants. NICEM wishes to thank the following organisations, their partners and employees for working with us to achieve equality of opportunity and outcome through training:

- Eastern Health and Social Service Board
- North West Belfast Health & Social Service Trust
- Derry City Council
- Medical Students at QUB
- Student teachers of St. Mary Teachers' Training College
- NICEM interpreters training
- Strabane District Council
- Strabane Ethnic Community Group



- Omagh Ethnic Minority Forum
- Newtownabbey Borough Council
- NIACRO
- Drumcree College
- Fermanagh College

The feedback from these training sessions has been very positive with participants saying they have made aware of sensitivities when engaging people from diverse backgrounds and also a lot of the participants have admitted to being challenged in terms of their attitudes and prejudices.

Most organisations unfortunately do not allocate enough time for these sessions as most want to do it over half a day, which is not enough to cover the topics in adequate detail.

## ***2.4 Other educational events***

We are involved in facilitation of the Council of Europe All Different All Equal Programme in Strasbourg. The trainer has also participated in and assisted in the facilitation of the Human Rights Education Forum of the NI Human Rights Commission, south Belfast Roundtable on racism, the Holocaust Memorial Events, Youth Summit and 'Working together Seminars', Police Service Northern Ireland Hate Crime Conference, Diversity Works Partnership, Education and Library Boards on citizenship classes.

## *3. Capacity Building Programmes*

### *3.1 General support programme*

NICEM continues to work closely with small and emerging Black and Minority Ethnic community organisations in Northern Ireland supporting their organisational development, community development activities, access to funding and building effective internal structures.

During 2005-2006 we have supported a number of small organisations to secure funding for a wide variety of purposes including initial set up costs, promotional events and general administrative costs for the running of organisations.

We also continue to work with new and existing communities on developing and updating their governing documents, becoming a registered charity, planning & delivery of their services and bridging the gap between the black and minority ethnic community groups and mainstream organisations which can support their work.

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### *3.2 Good Governance mentoring and support project for Black and Minority Ethnic Community organisation using the PQASSO system.*

What is PQASSO?

PQASSO is a practical quality assurance system for small organisations, or for projects within larger organisations. It's a low-cost, straightforward quality system, written in plain English and designed specifically for voluntary sector organisations. PQASSO provides a flexible, step-by-step approach to working out if your organisation is fulfilling legal responsibilities, what your organisation is doing well, where the gaps are and what could be improved.

NICEM currently works with 10 BME organisations supporting governance and management using the principles of PQASSO. The black and minority ethnic sector is diverse in size and capacity, so the project worker has had to adapt the

approach of the project to suit each individual organisation. For larger organisations the existing PQASSO quality assurance assessment exercises are workable; however for the majority of organisations the we have adapted the assessments of PQASSO to simplify the process and complexity. Also because of the nature of the sector, lack of funding and the short-term nature of employment, agreed actions and action plans have often had to change at short notice to incorporate demand of a new project or new staff. However, even taking part in the assessment exercises themselves have raised awareness of minimum standards for management and community activities and is improving practice in the sector.

The Co-ordinator of Capacity Building meets with the quality task groups within community organisations to advise and offer practical support on the implementation of their action plans, and assist groups to access funding and training to support implementation. These meetings take place according to the needs and capacity of the organisation.

The project staff has met on a regular basis with all community association reps involved in the improving the management of their organisations.

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With the majority of the smaller organisations NICEM has provided regular support for organisational development including guidance and practical support with funding and future projects, support with action planning for staff in new projects, supporting management committees on recruitment and selection and sitting on selection panels for recruitment with organisations and advising and supporting organisations on internal human resource management issues.

A bank of policies and procedures has been gathered and is continuously updated for use by groups in order to improve organisational management. These include policies and procedures on

- Recruitment & selection
- Staff training
- Conflict of interest

- ·Volunteering policies
- Complaints policies and procedures
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Staff and volunteer induction
- Financial control
- Staff supervision

### *3.3 Interpreter training and development programmes*

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NICEM continues to be the leading organisation in Northern Ireland in the field of development and delivery of accredited training for community interpreters in minority languages.

CONNECT-NICEM is a social economy enterprise established in November 2005 by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) to provide interpreting, training and consultancy services.

CONNECT-NICEM is a company limited by guarantee and accepted as charity by HM Revenue & Customs. CONNECT-NICEM is operated as a social enterprise on 'not for individual profit' basis.

### 3.3.1 *Interpreter Training*

Since 1998, NICEM has continued to deliver training for community interpreters in order to increase professional standards and to promote quality control within the sector. NICEM delivered three basic training courses over the period 2005-2006 with 55 interpreters.

NICEM is committed to continually improving quality and standards in interpreting provision in Northern Ireland. NICEM supports continuing skills development for interpreters and in the longer term wishes to see interpreters working in Northern Ireland to similar standards and levels of qualification as interpreters working across the UK. However, this will only be possible through a programme of continuing skills development for interpreters, which NICEM together with CONNECT-NICEM will support & develop over the next two years.

NICEM's training for community interpreters is accredited by the Northern Ireland Open College Network and we are in the process of exploring pathways for learners into further & higher education in this field with Queen's University Belfast.

### *Current Accredited courses available or in development*

- Basic Training for Community Interpreters (Units at levels 2 & 3, accredited by NIOCN)
- Advocacy & Mediation in Health (All units level 3, Accredited by NIOCN)
- Interpreting within the Criminal Justice System (Police, Courts & Immigration Services, all units at level 3 accredited by NIOCN) including study of the current Police & Criminal Evidence (PACE) legislation and its implications for interpreters working within the system.
- Mental Health Advocacy for bi-lingual individuals (in development)

### *3.3.2 Improving standards in interpreting services*

From summer 2006, NICEM introduced a number of improvements in our interpreter training programmes. We will now require all interpreters registered and working with the CONNECT-NICEM service to hold a recognised qualification in English language proficiency. In order to achieve this NICEM is working together with the QUB English Language Support Unit, and interpreters with CONNECT-NICEM (who do not currently have an English language qualification) will be able to undertake and pass the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) at a minimum of level 6.

As a result of the new requirement for English language qualification we have introduced an English language assessment exercise facilitated by QUB, as part of the selection process. Then following successful completion of the Interpreter training programme, interpreters will then be required to pursue the IELTS qualification in order to undertake work with the CONNECT-NICEM interpreting service.

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### *3.3.3 Handbook for interpreters working with the PSNI*

The involvement of the Police Service for Northern Ireland has been key in the development and delivery of materials for the NICEM training course on 'Interpreting within the Criminal Justice System', and since June 2005 NICEM has also worked together with the Police Service Northern Ireland in the production of a new PSNI handbook for Interpreters and Police Officers which was launched in November 2006.

The handbook was developed by the PSNI, Joan Colin, NICEM staff and RNID staff. Joan Colin is a former trainer for the Magistrates Association, and independent trainer of interpreters and lawyers in relation to interpreting and communication. Joan is also joint author of 'Interpreters and the legal process' (Waterside Press, Winchester 1996), a key text for practitioners in the UK and has worked with NICEM on Interpreter training since 1999.

### 3.4 NICEM Interpreting Service - 'CONNECT-NICEM'

NICEM has been delivering interpreting services since 2002. However, in November 2005, NICEM established the social economy enterprise 'CONNECT-NICEM' to deliver interpreting services, a support network for interpreters, anti-racism & equality training and consultancy services.

CONNECT-NICEM operates a highly flexible and reliable service, adapted to fit the needs of individual client organisations.

CONNECT-NICEM has grown into a comprehensive province-wide service providing sessional interpreters to over 150 public, private and voluntary sector organisations. In 2004, NICEM secured a substantial contract with the Police Service for Northern Ireland.

CONNECT-NICEM IS able to provide interpreting services in 56 languages covering all major minority ethnic languages in Northern Ireland. Our language list is continually updated as new interpreters join our Register of Community Interpreters. The service has currently registered over 200 self-employed sessional interpreters based across Northern Ireland who are available to attend interpreting sessions across Northern Ireland.

Interpreters can be booked between 9.00am – 5.00pm from Monday to Friday and Interpreters are available to work within "Normal working hours", weekends and Bank holidays. Rates vary accordingly and can be seen in the pricing schedule.

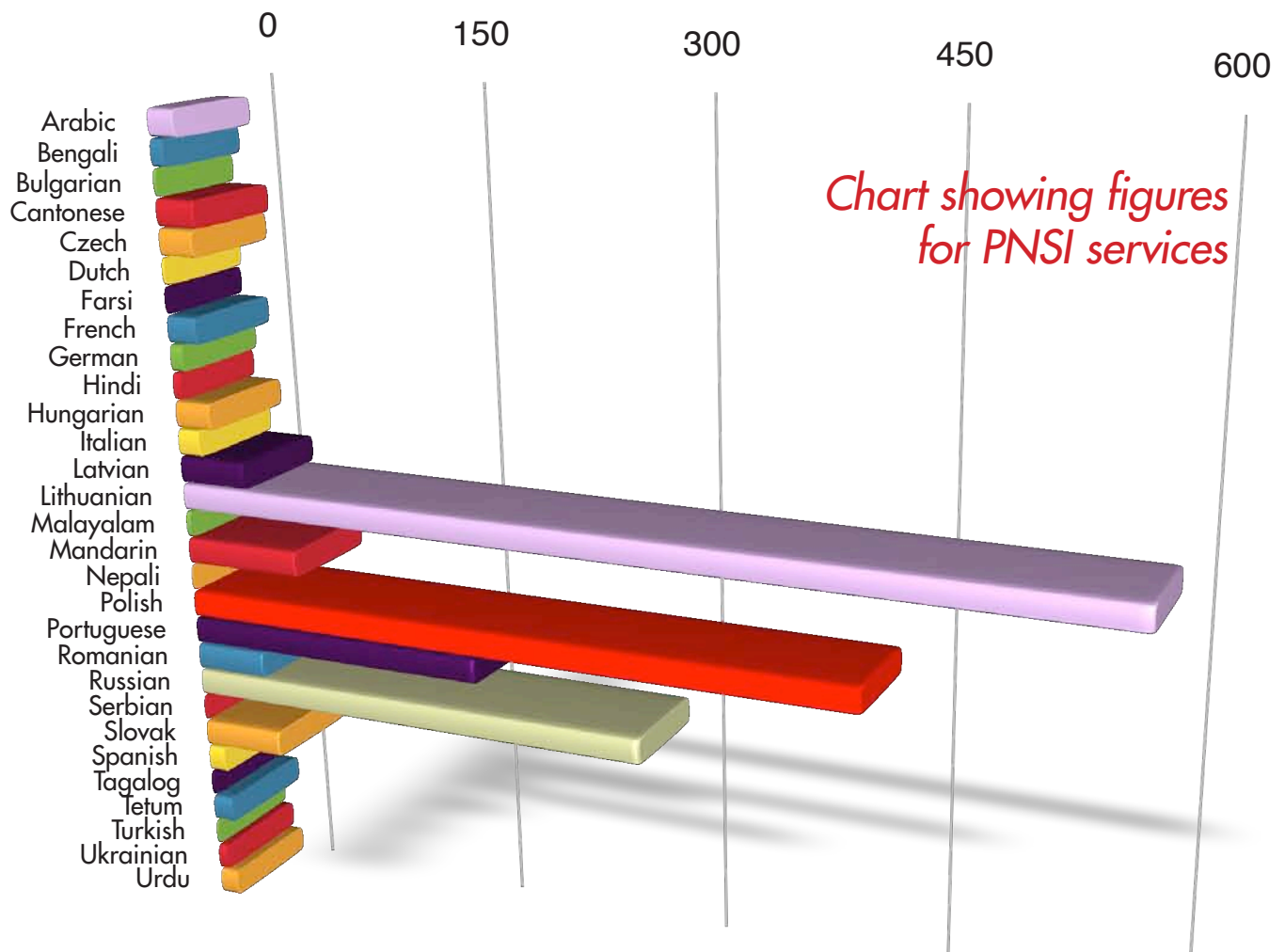
We have successfully delivered 2234 interpreting sessions province wide over the past twelve months.

CONNECT-NICEM meets regularly with the PSNI to review current provision and resolve any potential problems or issues which have been identified by either party. We have been able to identify patterns in requests which have been fed back to the PSNI over the past year and will be used to form the basis of educational programmes for communities on particular aspects of the law in Northern Ireland.

The service operates the following procedures to support quality standards:

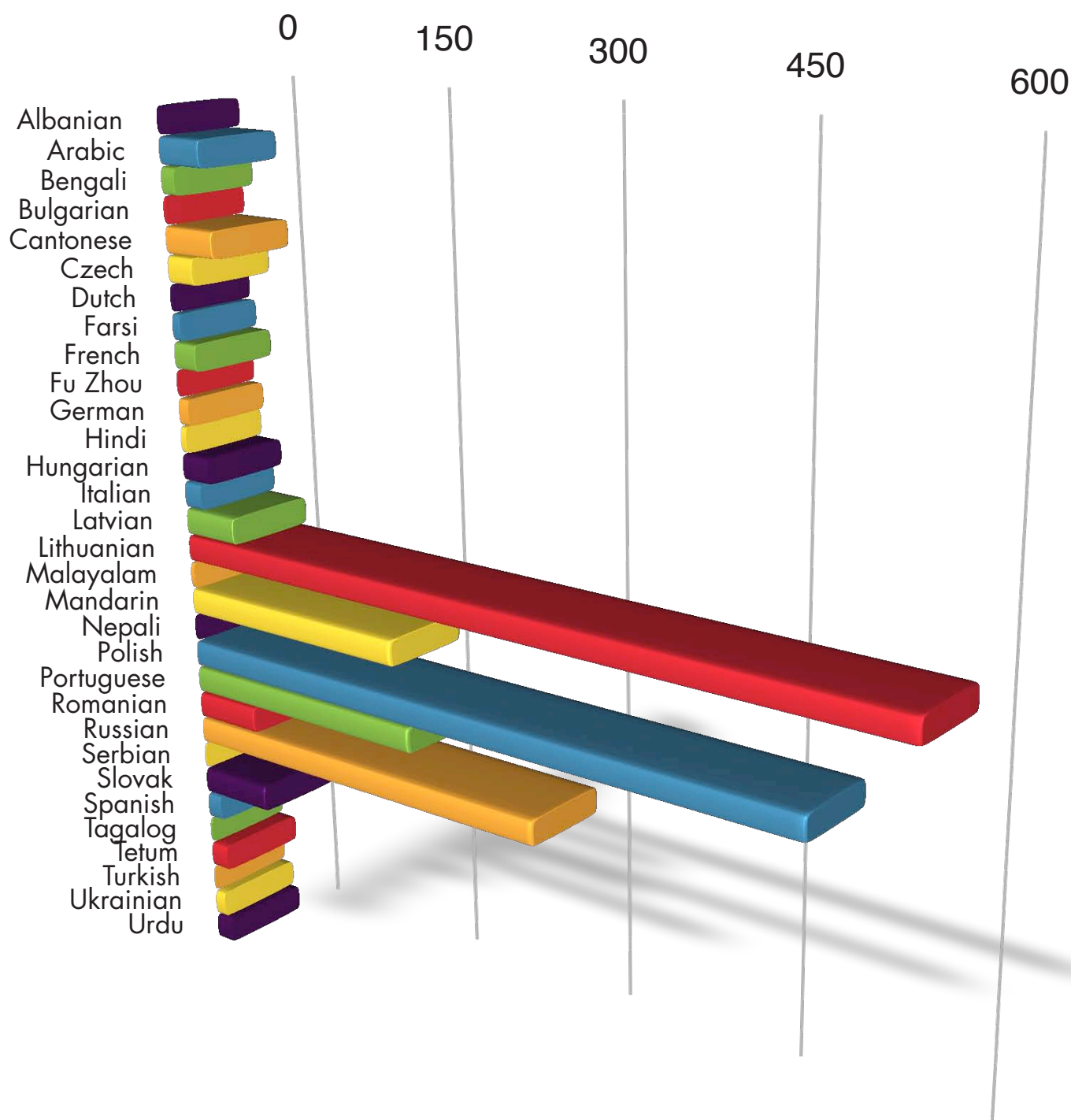
- Clear, efficient booking procedures,
- Confirmation of bookings
- Statistical reports on contractual work
- Written records of session details
- A computerised database for handling bookings, invoicing, payments and statistics.
- A detailed register of interpreters including qualifications, experience, availability and PSNI security clearance confirmation
- NICEM Internal Feedback procedureS and feedback according to the needs of specific organisations.

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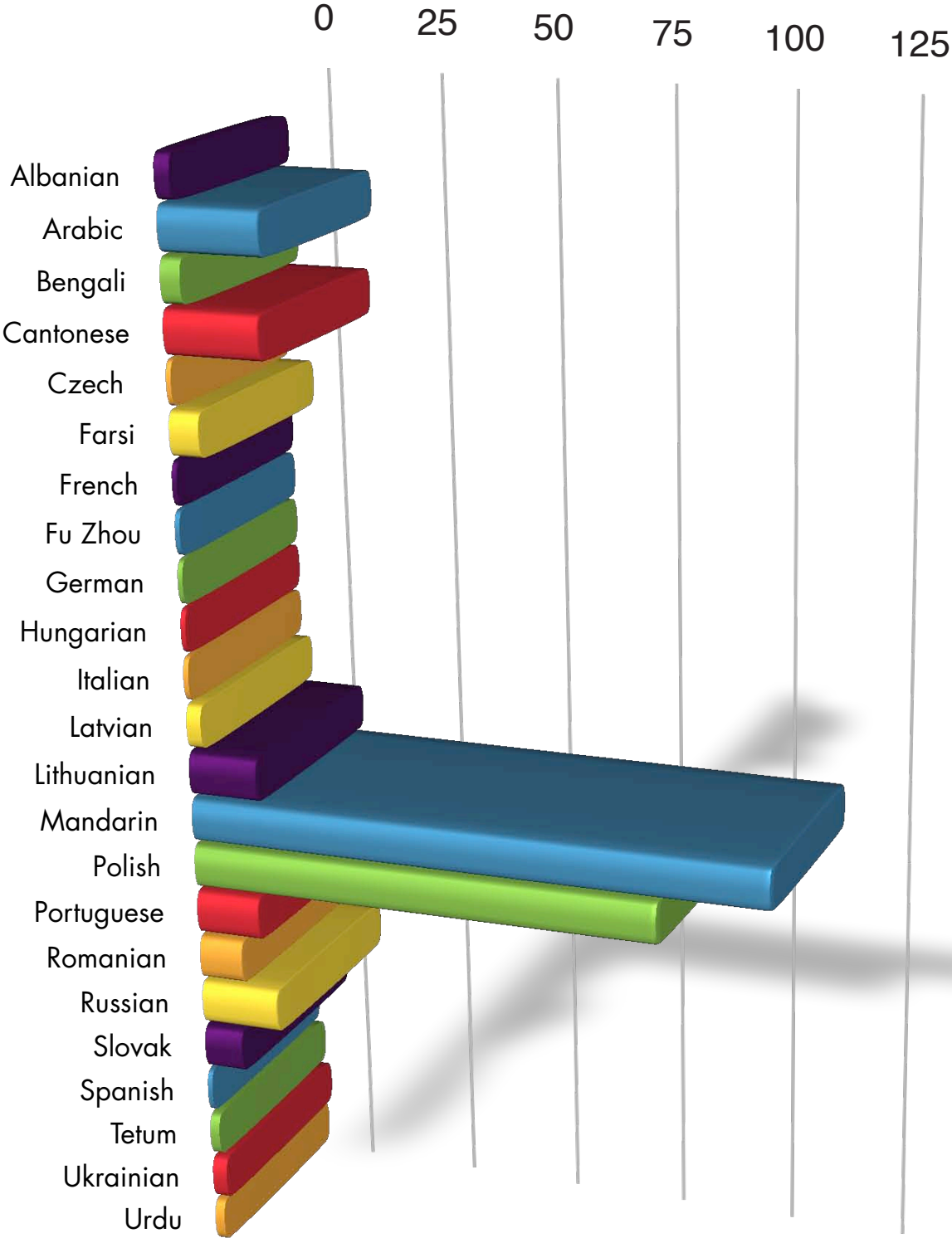




*Chart showing figures for overall delivery of interpreting services*



*Chart showing figures for provision of interpreting services to agencies other than PSNI*



### 3.5 Social Economy

NICEM was one of the four organisations in a consortium bid (Work West, East Belfast Social Enterprise and South Belfast Partnership Board) to develop social economy programmes at community level. It includes awareness building, training, support and advice on community enterprise. It is also part of our strategy of looking at the new way to generate income and robust good governance on the sustainability of the sector.

Funded by BLSP under measure 3.1 of the peace programme, the rationale for the Social Economy Awareness and Development Programme was rooted in the belief that there needed to be a long-term strategic legacy for the social economy. The overall aim of the programme was:

“To raise awareness of the Social Economy in Belfast and to develop the capacity of organisations to become actively involved in the Social Economy”

The Strategic Objectives of social economy Belfast

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- To build awareness and promote the benefits of the social economy to people and organisations working in community development;
- To develop business competencies and entrepreneurship among local enterprises;
- To develop tailored business solutions to support the individual needs of organizations working in the social economy; and
- To develop and maintain formal and informal support networks in order to build a durable social economy.

September 2006 saw the completion of our social economy project; working with three partner organisations across the city under the banner of Social Economy Belfast we delivered a hugely successful programme offering support to over 160 community groups across the city.

- 169 groups participated

- 227 training sessions delivered
- 493 people trained
- 286 mentoring sessions
- 34 feasibility studies/business plans completed
- 5 national best practice visits held
- 292 people attending cross community events, best practice exchanges and conferences
- Average 1,000 hits per month to SEB website

Over 120 delegates at “Does my bottom line look BIG in this?” conference, Belfast City Hall, 3rd May 2006

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The ethnic minority element of the programme accounted for 20% of this total output and saw us actively engage with 18 minority communities who took advantage of a the full range of services and support available by the close of the project we had delivered 38 training sessions 42 mentoring sessions 7 best practice visits and 4 feasibility studies.

The range of ideas generated and currently under development include: Translation services, Credit unions, Retail, Training Sports facilities, Childcare, Internet café, Recruitment agencies, Restaurants and Publishing. Whilst the majority of these business ideas are still in the development stage the communities involved had been making great strides and taking the necessary steps in developing the skills and knowledge which will enable them to launce their social business.

As the process of transition and development for a social enterprise takes a long time we remain committed to supporting these communities in the development of alternative streams of funding and we remain active partners in the Social Economy Belfast project.

### ***3.6 Black & Ethnic Minority Health & Well-being Development Project 2005-2006***

The Project began the process of addressing the deficits in engagement with BME

communities living and working in North & West Belfast areas. Due to the historically smaller numbers of established BME community organisations based in the area the process of consultation and engagement has been a much more difficult process than in other areas of Belfast. One of the aims of the Project is to provide improved understanding of the needs of the BME communities in service planning in the area in relation to health and social care needs. The Project also made recommendations for the development of sustainable modes for involving BME communities in services planning and delivery.

The Project worker began the project in May 2005 and the final report of the project is to be launched in October 2006. The following communities participated in the project

- Mandarin Speaker Association
- Chinese Welfare Association
- Muslim community
- Sikh community
- Jewish community
- Asylum seekers and refugees in the North & West Belfast area
- Migrant workers
- Indian community and Indian Elderly Group

The project involved a major stakeholder event in June 2005 which 50 people attended, a mid-project stakeholder meeting and a launch of the final report in October 2006

The processes undertaken during the research project included:

- Consultations, interviews, focus groups with communities

- consultation with organisations providing support to BME communities in North & West
- Identified issues for specific communities and common issues across communities
- Met with service managers across services and trusts to agree achievable realistic actions for tackling issues and moving forward

Key issues identified by the project for BME communities and health sector providers in North and West Belfast

- Language & communication remain an important issue
- Very weak BME community infrastructure in North & West Belfast compared to other areas of Belfast
- Level of capacity to engage with local trust services and inform planning and delivery of services is very low
- Lack of recording and monitoring data makes it difficult to assess size of communities and locations
- GP services are often gateway to other trust services
- Mental health was identified as important across communities but a low level of awareness of how to deal with issues
- Languages most in demand in the area are both Cantonese & Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian

Brief summary of recommendations and actions

- A high level of outreach work is required from the local trusts particularly the NWBHSST to build the capacity of the BME communities and individuals to engage effectively on health issues of planning and consultation of services

- Ethnic monitoring is required in order to assess the baseline for uptake of services and the effectiveness of future work with communities
- Local health service providers need to work closely in partnership to co-ordinate and standardise activities and services and share good practice effectively
- There are specific recommendations for action in particular areas including services for older people, health promotion and mental health services
- A multi-agency approach is required to tackle issues in the local area affecting health and well-being including racially motivated crime
- Additional financial and staffing resources are required in order to implement the recommendations and actions. The capacity of BME communities in the North & West Belfast area to participate must be raised to a level at which they are able to engage effectively with health and social services and inform decision making at a local level.

For full copies of the report of the project or the executive summary, please contact NICEM.

## *4. Support Vulnerable Groups in our Society*

### *4.1 Asylum and Refugee Services*

#### *4.1.1 National Asylum Support Services (NASS)*

NICEM provides a range of services to all asylum seekers and refugees. This is through a subcontract agreement with the Refugee Council and NASS. The provisions include a One Stop Service (OSS) and Reception Assistant Function in Northern Ireland. The service provides on-going assistance to service users on the basis of face to face contact, telephone and out of hours.

The types of services NICEM OSS continues to provide include:

- Screening service users for support and assisting and guiding individuals in seeking essential support and accommodation, including NASS, social services and through other support structures, where appropriate;
- Arranging emergency accommodation;
- Assisting with timely completion and submission of NASS application forms for support and advising procedures;
- Arranging appropriate translation and interpretation for service users;
- Arranging and maintaining on-going contact with legal representatives;
- Maintaining regular contact with service users awaiting decisions on support;
- Developing service delivery policy and practice, to meet the needs of service users;
- Developing links with housing providers, health and social service providers, education services and other relevant statutory and voluntary



sector agencies in Northern Ireland;

- Providing information and up-dates on NASS and asylum support procedures to service users and other stakeholders, including statutory service providers;
- Providing and 'Out-of-Hours' emergency help-line for newly arrived asylum seekers, with regards to accessing emergency accommodation;
- Developing wider support networks in Northern Ireland;
- Developing Asylum Awareness Presentation, to promote asylum services in Northern Ireland;
- Arranging referrals for specialist services, including education, health care, social services, children's services, cultural, social and religious needs;
- Arranging referrals for individuals receiving positive decisions;
- Arranging volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees;

## Statistics

The numbers of new service users provided with a service within the team in the last year reflect a stable pattern over the past two years, with an increase in visits.

The total number of new service users has decreased by 7.83% from 166 from August 04 – July 05, to 153 from August 05 – July 06.

The number of single applicants has increased from 61 from 04–05, to 129 from 05–06, a rise of 52.71%, and the number of families fell from 30 from 04–05, to 24 from 05–06, a drop of 20%.

Return visits from service users increased by 19.83% with 2737 from August 04-05, and 3414 during the same period this year.

This year there has been an increase in the number of service users each Advice Worker sees per day, compared to last year.

The Asylum team have continued to perform well in the processing of NASS applications, this has continued at a rate of 100% of applications being sent within the requisite time frame. Further to the One Stop Service the team provided another vital function with 'move on' advice sessions.

In addition, the team have been committed to all follow up work, external and internal meetings, and continue involvement in other NICEM projects.

### ***4.1.2 Volunteer Project***

Since the volunteer project commenced in February 2006, we have had a total of 39 asylum seekers volunteering in a variety of capacities. We have also recruited 6 local volunteers to support these initiatives. During the first half of the project, we have encouraged and supported volunteers to take up activities at NICEM and at organizations in Belfast such as Common Grounds Café, Conservation Volunteers, Save the Children Charity Shop, NICRAS (Northern Ireland Committee of Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Committee and Drop In, Chest and Stroke Association, Muslim Family Association, Habitat for Humanity, Ulster Television/Irish Film Board.

The volunteer project coordinated a Football Team called 'NICEM World United' in partnership with Crusaders Football Club and the Irish Football Association (IFA). There are 18 asylum seekers from the Volunteer Project who started training on June 8 and will continue to train throughout the Summer and Autumn. Matches between local teams will begin in August and continue throughout the football season. The football team will be participating in 'anti-racism' training and there will be opportunities for players to take training in coaching.

Volunteers began taking Drama workshops facilitated by Tinderbox Theatre Company in early May. The aim of the workshops is to develop skills and creative forms of expression. The workshops have been very popular and are attended by 5-10 participants each week. With the assistance of Tinderbox, the actors wrote and performed a short play on the theme of 'Home' during the Refugee Week Seminar on June 21.

Volunteer members of NICRAS (Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asy-

lum Seekers) organized a weekly drop-in centre. This centre provides a space where asylum seekers and refugees can meet to receive peer support, a hot meal and information about community services and upcoming volunteer opportunities.

### **4.1.3 Education**

15 asylum seekers undertaking the above volunteer activities have taken or are currently registered at the time of this report for courses in areas such computers, A level, GCSE's, Health and Social Care, Hair design, Fashion, Car maintenance, Electrical Engineering and Food Preparation.

30 Asylum seekers have taken courses in EOSL at Belfast Institute for Further Education. In addition to this NICEM has offered weekly English classes to asylum seekers on NICEM premises partially run by volunteer tutors. Approximately 25 asylum seekers have benefited from these classes in the past 6 months.

7 asylum seekers have taken a course in Food Hygiene offered by BIFHE and have passed and received their certificates. These people volunteer to cook food from their countries for the NICRAS Drop In and for other events such as our Cultural Diversity party that took place during Refugee Week this year.

### **4.1.4 Refugee Week 2006**

NICEM organized a successful series of events and activities to celebrate Refugee Week (June 19-25). The theme for Refugee Week 2006 in Northern Ireland this year was 'Home: Building an Integrated Society'. The aim of the week was to celebrate the contribution that refugees make to our communities and to explore ways forward in order to improve the lives of refugees living here in Northern Ireland.

Our events included a successful arts/essay competition with various secondary schools in the Belfast area. The theme of the competition was 'Home', and the students were encouraged to think about some of the reasons why people would leave their countries of origin and to consider some of the ways that we can make refugees feel welcome and appreciated in our communities. Prizes were presented to the winning students by the Lord Mayor at Belfast City Hall during the Launch of Refugee Week on June 16th. The poem that took 1st prize was recited at the launch.

NICEM also hosted the Howard Davies Photographic Exhibition that documented the lives of refugees and asylum seekers living in Ireland. The exhibition comprised work undertaken by Howard Davies for the Irish Refugee Council in 2002 and 2004. The Exhibition was displayed during the Week's events in Castle Court in Belfast and at the Guild Hall in Derry.

One of the highlights of Refugee Week in Northern Ireland this year was our Seminar, 'A New Home: Building an Integrated Society' which took place at Wellington Park Hotel in Belfast on June 21. The event was attended by people from a variety of backgrounds and professions. The seminar examined current policies and services, both at the regional and national levels that affect the lives of asylum seekers and refugees living in Northern Ireland. Seminar participants were encouraged to think critically in the hope that they will explore new ways forward that will foster understanding and acceptance and ultimately improve the lives of refugees living in the region.

Our speakers included Chetan Patel, the Head of Refugee Integration Policy at the Home Office and Dr. Roger Grimshaw from the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Kings College, University of London, who examined how the media representation of asylum seekers impacts on community relations.

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The highlight of the event itself was a dramatic performance by actors from NICEM and the Tinderbox Theatre Company in Belfast. In the spring of this year, members of NICEM's Asylum Volunteer Project began drama workshops with Tinderbox Theatre. Through these workshops they developed a short play on the theme of 'Home' to perform at the Seminar. The performance was well received and the drama group will continue to meet in the future.

The week finished off with the NICRAS AGM and a Cultural Diversity Party. Volunteers provided entertainment and prepared and served food from a variety of cultures.

## 4.1.5 Refugee integration & Resettlement

### Case Work

The casework aspect of the project continues to be busy, covering a range of issues from support and advice for those who have recently received a positive decision to assistance for those who had previously received leave to remain but have now been joined by their family. The main issues covered are: accommodation, benefits, education and training (including school places), employment and volunteering. The project also offers a referral and signposting service to agencies such as: Belfast Gems, CAB, Education & Welfare Services, EGSA, Housing Rights. Finally, the project has successfully fundraised for accommodation deposits and furniture.

### Education, Employment, Training & Volunteering

Service Users are assisted in sourcing educational courses and training which enhances their existing skills and contributes to their longer term career aims. In addition, assistance is given in applying for jobs, including providing references; accessing volunteer placements and examining options. Courses and training can be funded through the project and through applications to trust funds which support students. Of particular interest has been the training offered by the Business Enterprise Agency.

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### Citizenship & Orientation Workshops/Information Sessions

To date four citizenship workshops have been completed and there are plans for three more. Two were cancelled because the member of staff was not available. There are two separate workshops: one which covers the Citizenship Test and the Skills for Life ESOL Course and one which covers the legal aspects. Both have proven popular.

The Orientation workshops planned so far have had to be postponed due to low sign up numbers however, four are planned to take place before the end of October: Parenting in the UK, NI Politics; Setting up a business; Co-ownership. Other areas of interest for those wishing to settle in the UK have been covered by agencies and organisations being invited to the weekly NICRAS Drop In.

### Newsletter

The Newsletter has been successfully revived by Sarah Maitland and is now a very attractive and professional looking publication. Many enquiries have been gener-

ated by information contained in the Newsletter. Since the start of the work six newsletters have been produced with additional information sent out as necessary. In particular, there is now a special section which covers NICRAS News which has done much to raise the profile of this organisation.

#### NI Committee for Refugee and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)

Since the start of the work, NICRAS has developed considerably and now has a strong committee which is enthusiastic in ensuring it becomes an organisation which represents and supports Asylum Seekers and Refugees in NI. In particular, the availability of a new office space and meeting room through the One Vision Project has allowed it to become much more high profile. Over the last year NICRAS has been involved in numerous committees and working groups, including the Race Forum and has organised various events and activities for its membership. One of the newest innovations has been the production of membership cards and the development of a web site.

#### Activities and Events

NICRAS arranged a series of trips and a residential during the summer. The activities started with Refugee Week in June and for this NICRAS arranged a coach trip to the Mournes and also held their AGM, after which was a party. NICEM's Volunteering Project supported these events. During July and August four further trips were arranged as well as a residential in Corrymeela. NICRAS also participated in the City Church Fun Day.

#### Drop In

The Drop In restarted in April 2006 at Kinghan Hall. It started with an opening event where a range of agencies attended and continued until July 2006 as a weekly event. Lunch was provided and a range of agencies were invited to talk informally to those who attended. The issues covered included health, smoking cessation, stress management, co-ownership and education. It proved a popular meeting place, particularly for people who had just arrived in NI. The Drop In was also supported by the Volunteering Project.

#### Training

NICRAS committee members are currently undertaking QASRO Training with the Refugee Council and are being offered training in Public Finance, Negotiation Skills and Leadership by the One Vision project.

### 4.1.6 Future Development

The main aim of NICEM is to promote good race relations and to eliminate racial discrimination. We do not have a specific mandate on refugee issues but rather to identify and respond to the needs of ethnic minority communities. However, because: i) there was no BME group in Northern Ireland which could support such a vulnerable group or provide the wide range of necessary services and ii) the dispersal policy for Asylum Seekers in GB created unnecessary tensions between the local community and the new comers, NICEM, at that time, saw it as being within our strategic role to support this vulnerable group. In addition our other services and activities (interpretations, racial harassment and discrimination and capacity building) meant we were in a position to fully understand the language and cultural barriers which could make access to public services difficult.

In our Strategic Plan 2004-2009 we stated one of our core functions is to provide a One Stop Service to Asylum Seekers and Refugees. This function was reviewed in January 2005. Both the staff and Management Committee members agreed that it was the appropriate time for NICEM to build a permanent refugee infrastructure in Northern Ireland through the existing stakeholders. This means that we hope to transfer the existing work (or negotiate new contracts for the new organisation) from the Asylum and Refugee Services to the new organisation. It is our intention to set up a new sister organisation to take over existing services for asylum and refugee. Over a nine month period a steering group from the stakeholders of the asylum and refugee services was set up to progress the idea. During Refugee Week in June 2006 we announced the setting up of a Refugee Centre to carry on the work for the future. Unfortunately the participation of stakeholders in these meetings was not great (average less than half of the group) and NICEM could not take sole responsibility or the leading role in the new organisation. As a result we will put more effort into supporting the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugee and Asylum Seeker (NICRAS) through our Capacity Building Programme, including funding for NICRAS).

NICEM will not take on a new contract from Refugee Council for NASS from April 2007. We will also transfer a member of our staff to work with NICRAS on a new Volunteering Programme for Asylum Seeker and Refugee from April 2007, which will be funded by Volunteer Development Agency.

## *4.2 Floating Support Services for Migrant Workers*

### *BME Floating Support Pilot Project*

NICEM's BME Floating Support Pilot Project has been supporting black minority ethnic people and the agencies that assist them within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area (NHSSB) since November 2005. Although the project office is based in Ballymoney (Causeway Trust), the project's remit covers the entire NHSSB area, (excluding Cookstown borough council). This project has been created through the partnership of the Housing Executive's Supporting People Fund, the NHSSB and NICEM to ensure that the various needs of the BMEs in the North East of the province are being met.

This project was created to promote independent living among the Board's ethnic minority (including migrant workers and travellers) population. The project has two main objectives in order to accomplish this. The two development workers (Max Petrushkin and Elizabeth Connor) will complete a mapping out exercise to determine what services are already being provided to the BME population, while also ascertaining if there are any gaps within the existing level of service provision. Additionally, NICEM's workers provide their own practical assistance and advice/referral services to those ethnic minorities who require such assistance usually in crisis situations. The project offers support when people are dealing with issues such as: housing, access to healthcare and education, welfare and employment rights, English language needs and racial harassment.

The development workers have focused on generating an interagency approach to issues of black and minority ethnic people in NHSSB. The project staff have already generated a lot of support for the project from both statutory and voluntary agencies who work with ethnic minorities. The success of this project and its ability to assist BMEs depends on the ability of all-involved agencies to communicate with each other and to actively refer clients to the appropriate organisations if they cannot support the client themselves. Therefore the BME Floating Support Project both receives and gives referrals depending on the client's needs. The project has become very successful in recent months due to its close working partnership with agencies such as the many sectors of the Health and Education Boards, employers, councils, PSNI, Community Safety Partnership, libraries, the Law Centre, community groups, charities and, importantly, various councils' community fora.



The biggest source of referrals has come from the health services via the health visitors, closely followed by the housing executive district offices staff. The clients have mainly needed support with issues surrounding employment, G.P. and worker's registration and welfare rights.

## *4.3 Advocacy and Advice on Racial Harassment and Racist Attacks*

### *4.3.1 Casework*

NICEM is currently the only agency providing a comprehensive casework support to victims of racial hate crime in Northern Ireland. It is the first of this type of service that delivers in Northern Ireland since 2002 with the following tasks:

1. Provide a safe place to enable victims to share their experiences (listening through support) and encourage them to report the case to both RICOH and the local police station;
2. Risk assessment and explore options in order to respond to the needs of the victims and her/his family;
3. Draw up action plans that agreed with the victims;
4. Assist victims to prepare police statements and accompany victims to attend police interviews;
5. Liaise with police in providing follow-up support;
6. Assist victims to make applications to the NIHE under homelessness legislation or to reassess points under the Common Selection Scheme and also liaise with local Housing Association to identify suitable accommodation arrangement;
7. Make referrals to local and regional organisation if necessary, in particular specialist assistance such as criminal injuries compensation, trauma centre, social workers and special needs for children; and
8. Assist victims to make complaints to the concerned agencies;

Over the 12 months period we dealt with 53 new cases and 30+ reactivated old cases, which means that further victimisation took place again. In view of having only 1 full time staff handling all these cases, it is difficult to cope with these demands despite little publicity and advertising of the service. Moreover we also work with other agencies, local groups and network in order to support the victims.

### ***4.3.2 Education and Training***

We provide training and presentation on racism and racist attacks for the following organisations and events:

- SCA follow-up Conference
- Tackling Racism, Ormagh Arts Festival
- Armagh Unemployment Group AGM
- UN Model CEWC-NI at Stormont
- Youth Conference, Belfast Castle
- Victoria College
- Moyle Council Good Relations Conference, Ballycastle
- NICE Youth Summit follow-up conference
- Anti-Racism Workshop Fermanagh
- Belfast Boys Model Anti-Racism Policy Development
- UNISON Race Forum Seminar

### ***4.3.3 Networks and Agencies meetings***

We participate the following networks and agencies meeting on racist attacks:

- NI Housing Executive Community Network

- South Belfast Ethnic Minority Forum (PSNI)
- SBPB Roundtable
- Migrant Workers Forum Portadown
- Belfast City Council Community Safety Partnership task group and Vulnerable Persons Action Plan
- Housing Rights Manual Steering Group
- Derry PSNI Partnership Protocol
- Queens Student Union Roundtable on Racism
- BME Independent Advisory Group for PSNI
- South Belfast Roundtable on Racism
- Old Warren Partnership
- SEEDS in Derry

#### ***4.3.4 External Evaluation of Racial Harassment and Advice Project***

With additional funding from the Community Safety Unit of the Northern Ireland Office we assisted the external consultants Mary McMahon and Arlington Trotman with the interviews with service users and other external organisations and agencies. The Report was published in early April and was launched alongside with 'the Next Stephen Lawrence?: the Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland Research Report', in June 2006.

The Report recommended NICEM should set up a Regional Support Service for Victims of Racist Attacks, and based on the experiences over the year by teaming up with local partners to deliver the existing casework approach across the province. NICEM will take the proposal forwards through meetings with local govern-

ment and NIO exploring for future funding and resources in order to implement the recommendations of the Report.

#### ***4.3.5 “Next Stephen Lawrence?: Racist Violence and Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland” Research Report***

The staff also assisted Dr. Robbie McVeigh, who was commissioned by NICEM to look at the experiences of the victims, from our service users, in the entire criminal justice system on racist hate crime, on the Next Stephen Lawrence? Research Report. We also organised the launch Conference in June with a high level of publicity for the Report.

#### ***4.3.6 Development of local partnership to support victims***

Due to the heavy casework workload (both new and reactivated case) and one full-time staff only, we have developed partnerships with local groups in order to support victims. Over the year we have worked with Old Warren Partnership, RE-ACT in Armagh and SEEDS in Derry to start the support of victims of racist attacks. This new experience and development will provide more support to victims on the ground.

## 5. 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 share 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.

### 5.1 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. Over the year, our strategic concern has been the debate on a Single Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Single Equality Bill. On the Single Equality Bill we developed a joint project proposal with the Discrimination Law Association. But unfortunately we did not succeed in securing the funding. We are involved with the following organisations:

- ⇒ Commission for Racial Equality
- ⇒ Discrimination Law Association
- ⇒ UK Race Europe Network
- ⇒ 1990 Trust
- ⇒ Runnymede Trust
- ⇒ Operation Black Vote
- ⇒ Refugee Council
- ⇒ Justice
- ⇒ Interights
- ⇒ Monitoring Group, UK

## 5.2 Irish Network

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

- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
- 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
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties
- Human Rights Centre, University College, Galway

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## 5.3 European Network

NICEM still plays an active role at the European level in terms of working with both the European Union and the Council of Europe on race equality and human rights. This year our main task is the SOLID Project. The Executive Director also assisted Rapporteur Sharma of the EU Economic & Social Committee, as an Expert, drafting the Opinions for the Committee on the EU Human Rights Agency. The Opinion was approved by the Committee in February 2006. We are involved in work with the following organisations:

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)
- Human Rights Directorate of the Council of Europe
- Anti-Discrimination and Civil Society Unit of the DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission
- European Monitoring Centre on Racism (EUMC)

- EU Economic Social Committee
- Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- Public Interests Law Initiative in Budapest (Columbia Law School)
- European Roma Rights Centre
- European Roma Information Centre
- LBR (Dutch Bureau against Racial Discrimination)
- Denmark Documentation Centre on Racism

## *5.4 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
- Northern Ireland Commissioner of Children and Young People
- 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
- Old Warren Partnership
- Derry SEEDS Group
- Equality Coalition



## 6. Organisational Development

### 6.1 Community Aid Foundation (CAF)

NICEM received consultancy support from CAF as a result of our application for the Deputy Director and Core Costs for the organisation. The consultancy work was to carry out an organisational health check for NICEM. A Report was published in summer 2006. The Report made a number of recommendations such as "...NICEM needs the resource to appoint a Deputy Director to relieve the heavy workload of the CEO, through, taking responsibility for staff supervision. Other pressing core staff needs include, a need to bolster the organisation's Finance Department, to appoint staff with responsibility for fundraising and communications and to appoint additional staff to deal with administrative tasks." (p. 35 Report Summary and Conclusions)

The Executive Committee agreed the findings of the Health Check Report and will monitor the implementation of the recommendations over a period of time. And will follow-up with CAF to explore the Deputy Director and Core Costs for NICEM.

### 6.2 PQASSO

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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 Steering group under the leadership of Gabrielle Doherty on the review of specific policies of NICEM to ensure fully implementation and improvement.

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
- Role and Operation of NICEM Executive Committee
- Financial Support for member groups/staff/Executive Committee on conference and training

# Executive Committee

## *NICEM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2004-2006)*

Chair:	Mr. Javaid Naveed NI Pakistani Cultural Association
Vice-chair:	Ms. Monica Yang Mandarin Speakers Association
Secretary:	Mr. Joseph Mwaura Afro Community Support Organisation NI (ASCONI)
Treasurer:	Mr. Tilak Raj Puri Indian Community Centre

### Other members:

Mrs. A S Khan  
Al-Nisa Association

Mrs. Lillian Vellem  
Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees  
and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)

Mr. Derek Hanway  
An Munia Tober

### Co-opted members:

Mr. Shuyb Miah  
Bangladeshi Welfare Association

Ms. Dana Bruno  
GMB (trade union)

Mr. Joe Ifediora  
IT Manager of the Royal Hospital Trust

Advisory member: Ms. Eddis Nicholl

*(2005-2006)*

*Central Administration team*

Executive Director	Patrick Yu
Administration Manager	Nuala Moynagh
Administrator (NASS) 05)	Charlotte McEvoy (Leaving Oct.
Administrator (NASS) 06)	Audaye Elesedy (Oct. 05 – Jan.
Administrator (NASS)	Colleen Marshall (From Jan. 06)
Administrator (Refugee)	Sarah Maitland (From Mar. 06)
Administrator (regional training)	Stewart Robinson (Leaving Oct. 05)
Administrator (Interpreting)	Tanja Tierney (Moved to CONNECT from Nov. 05)
Administrator (Interpreting)	Aruna Djalo (Moved to CONNECT from Nov. 05)
Administrator (Interpreting) CONNCEt from Nov. 05)	Stewart Robinson (Moved to
Administrator (Interpreting) (Moved to CONNCET from Nov. 05)	Rumena Kostadinova-McCabe
Administrator (Interpreting) CONNCET from Nov. 05)	Michaela McClelland (Moved to
Administrator (SOLID)	Francoise Barlet

## *Policy & Capacity Building Team*

Co-ordinator of Capacity Building	Gabrielle Doherty
Development Worker (Social Economy)	Sean Kelly
Development Worker (Health)	Jean Luc Revest (leaving May06)
Co-ordinator Policy & Research & Co-ordinator of SOLID Project	Tansy Hutchinson
Development Worker (Policy & Research) (Refugee Integration)	Terry Deehen (Sep. 05 – Mar. 06) Terry Deehen (Apr. – Aug. 06)
Development Worker (Racial Harassment) Development Worker (Regional Training)	Jolena Flett Moirra McCombe (June-October 05)
Training Officer	Ronald Vellem (Moved to CONNECT from Nov. 05)
Development Worker (Supporting People)	Maxim Petrushkin (From Oct. 05)
Development Worker (Supporting People)	Elizabeth Connor-Kerr (From May 2006)
Migrant Organiser (part-time)	Maciek Bator (from May 06)

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## *Asylum and Refugee Services*

Advice Worker (NASS)	Patricia Leong
Advice Worker (NASS)	Lumturi Podrimaj
Advice Worker (NASS)	Maxim Petrushkin (June-September 05)

Advice Worker (NASS)

Fazila Joyiyat-Khatir  
(From Oct. 05)

Development Worker  
(Refugee Integratin & Resettlement)

Moirra McCombe  
(from Oct. 05)

Development Worker (Asylum)

Jean Walsh  
(from February 2006)

# Member Groups

- Al-Nisa Association NI
- Bangladeshi Welfare Association
- Barnardos Chinese Lay Health Project
- An Munia Tober
- Causeway Chinese Welfare Association
- Craigavon Traveller Support Committee
- Filipino Communities in Northern Ireland
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association
- Indian Community Centre
- Mandarin Speakers Association
- Northern Ireland 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
- Windsor Women's Centre Multi-cultural Group
- Afro Community Support Organisation NI
- Derry Traveller Support Group
- Women of the World, Enniskillen
- World Wide Women at North Down
- Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group
- Strabane Ethnic Community Association
- Polish Association Northern Ireland









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