



Annual Report

2006/2007

Our Vision:

A society where differences are recognised, respected and valued, a society free from all forms of racism and discrimination, where human rights are guaranteed.

Our Mission:

To work in partnership, to bring about social change, by achieving equality of outcome and full participation in society.

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Strategic Priority 2004-2009

1. To create an environment that supports and enables individuals and groups from black and minority ethnic communities to participate fully in accessing their rights;
2. To mainstream minority ethnic into government policy and practice;
3. To raise public awareness on racism and multiple discrimination and bring about a positive change;
4. To promote equality of access to education, training and employment for black and minority ethnic people; and
5. To ensure that priority areas of works are supported by appropriate organisational structures and resources.

Work in Progress:

1. Mainstreaming racial equality into government policy and practice

A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

NICEM has continued to engage with the 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 120 trade unions and NGOs). This engagement has been important in emphasising that the Bill of Rights needs to be about human rights protection for all and is a means of engagement and ownership from all sections of the community. It is also a process to develop the culture of rights that enables the empowerment of groups that experience social exclusion, disadvantage and discrimination.

Our colleague, Tansy Hutchinson (Co-ordinator of Policy and Research) was the Deputy Chair of the Consortium until she resigned in April 2007. As a result NICEM appointed Patrick Yu to replace Tansy at the Board of the Consortium since May 2007.

We also organised our Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference in January 2007 with the theme: "Minority Rights and Protection- International Human Rights Standards and the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland". This was to prepare our sector as well as other sectors prior to engagement with the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland debate. We were very successful in getting a number of international speakers who shared their experience and expertise in the facilitation of the process. Their inputs were excellent and were documented in the Conference Report as a means to lobbying on what rights should be protected in regard to the issues that affect BME communities.

The St. Andrew Agreement (the Agreement) reignites the political process for the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. A Bill of Rights Forum was set up under the Agreement, it is composed of 14 members from the four main political parties and another 14 members from the civic society and it is chaired by an independent international human rights expert (for details of membership and minutes of meetings see the Forum website: www.billofrightsforum.org).

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) put out a consultation on the Forum and the nominations for civic society. NICEM, in response to this consultation, informed the sector of the issues through a submission to the NIO: "We

endorse the Consortium's view that it would be more in the interests of sectors/groupings to have strategic discussions about how their interests would be best represented, rather than every group simply proposing themselves as participating. While recognising that there are many sectors of interest within the community and voluntary sector, and diversities even within those sectors, the reality is that there will only be a limited number of seats available. It was therefore felt that prior discussion and agreement on representation among groups may be preferable than decisions on this being handed down by government."

Unfortunately the NIO, with support from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), used the Racial Equality Forum (an inter-departmental Forum with representation from the BME sector) to approve the sectors nominations to the Bill of Rights Forum. This was highly inappropriate as a government department should not have been present at the sectors decision-making process, as well as the Forum is not the BME sector forum.

Despite NICEM raised these concerns at the meeting the Forum went ahead the discussion for nomination. The fact that this motion was passed at AOB item served to exacerbate the situation as half of the initial attendees has already left thus the majority of support came from Departments and individual ethnic minority groups who were unrepresentative of the majority of the BME sector. At the end a compromise was reached where by Derek Hanway of An Munia Tober was chosen to represent the BME sector. Consequently a meeting was organised to ratify that decision and elect another substitute.

NICEM followed-up the decision and arranged a sector meeting in January 2007. With overwhelming support from the sector, Derek Hanway of An Munia Tober and Tansy Hutchinson of NICEM were appointed to jointly represent the BME sector at the Forum by way of alternately rotating their official position at the Forum. Due to Tansy's departure from NICEM in April 2007, Patrick Yu was appointed to replace her as the alternate member of the BME sector on the Forum.

The Chair of the Forum, Chris Sidoti, was appointed by the NIO in March 2007. The Forum officially began in April with the decision that meetings would be held monthly. By July the Forum had agreed on a number of key documents, including the Terms of Reference, the Procedures and the Timescales, the Forum Process Paper, the Rules and Procedures, a Forum Outreach Paper and the Forum Working Groups (details can download from the Forum website).

There are six Working Groups these were established in July 2007. They are: Children, Young People and Women, Criminal Justice and Victims, Economic and Social Rights, including Equality issues, Civil and Political Rights, including equality issues, Culture, Identity and Language and Preamble, Enforceability and Implementation.

The BME sector has seats at the following Working Groups: Children, Young People and Women (Helena Macormac of NICEM), Economic and Social Rights, including equality issues (Derek Hanway of An Munia Tober), Culture, Identity and Language (Patrick Yu of NICEM) and Preamble, Enforceability and Implementation (Patrick Yu of NICEM). The preparatory works for the business of the Working Groups and the monthly Forum meetings have occupied a great deal of our time.

The Forum also agreed on the Outreach Paper and the outreach strategy with the aim of

- Raising awareness about the Bill of Rights
- Providing information about the Forum and its work
- Conducting consultations to assist the Forum in developing its advice to the NIHRC, prioritising consultations with identified groups who were not previously or sufficiently involved in previous Bill of Rights discussions and
- Building support for the Forum's proposals.

In formulating the outreach strategy the Forum identified the following priority groups:

- children and young people
- people with disability
- new immigrant communities
- travellers
- women
- older people
- carers
- unionist communities (e.g. Loyal Orders, evangelical churches)
- LGBT people
- linguistic minorities (users of languages other than English)
- low socio-economic groups and areas (new TSN), and
- rural and remote communities

As a result the BME sector representatives will present a more detailed strategy to engage the sector in autumn 2007. This will include training, facilitation and consultation. NICEM will also organise the 10th Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference on 6 December 2007 at Wellington Park Hotel with specific focus on 'the Rights of Non-National (migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented persons).

There is a huge challenge to both the politicians and civic society in the Forum process. The necessary political negotiations are of considerable magnitude; we all have our own differences and preferences, we can agree the disagreed, however we need to have more professionalism and political accommodation in order to understand the perspective of those from all facets of society. NICEM firmly believes that a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland is still possible if the representatives of both civic society and the political sphere work together

with the best interests to our society and our future generations at the heart of their motivations.

Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland

We need the Single Equality Bill to address imbalances of protection in relation to racial discrimination legislation within the UK. The UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 provides a higher level of protection for England, Wales and Scotland than Northern Ireland. This situation became worse following the enactment of the Race Relations (NI) Order Regulations 2003 (the transposition of the EU Race Directive to Northern Ireland). The new regulations within the legislation served to create a two-tier system of protection, with colour and nationality receiving a lower level of protection than race, ethnic and national origin. We need to rectify such conflicting standards within the law immediately as it creates incomprehensible complexities for employers, service providers and victims of racial discrimination alike.

Last year NICEM has lobbied for the OFMDFM to amend the Race Relations Order to fill the gap left by the delays in the Single Equality Bill, without success. We also commissioned Professor Barry Fitzpatrick to prepare a legal paper detailing the areas of the Race Relations Order that need to be amended and what proposals need to be put forward to achieve this. We will use our Annual General Meeting 2007 to address this issue in light of the 10th anniversary of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997. 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.

The OFMDFM sent out a pre-consultation document in February 2007 outlining the issues of the Single Equality Bill. The paper had serious shortcomings as these issues had already been addressed through the Green Paper which outlined options to tackle these issues. The Green Paper Response highlighted that a majority would be in favour to improve the equality legislation in each option for consultation. What we are waiting for is the White Paper for the legislative proposal as the final part of the process, not another consultation process to merely replicate previous work.

NICEM continues to fight for this important piece of legislation in partnership with the Equality Coalition (a network of more than 100 NGOs) and with the support of our sector in order to have equality for all and to address the increasingly neglected issues of multiple identities and subsequent multiple forms of discrimination.

The Race Equality Strategy and its Action Plans for Year 2

The purpose of the Racial Equality Strategy (the Race Strategy) is:

- To tackle racial inequality in Northern Ireland and to open up opportunity for all;
- To eradicate racism and hate crime; and
- Together with A Shared Future, to initiate actions to promote good race relations.

NICEM is committed to ensuring that the Race Strategy, which is both comprehensive and visionary, will have sufficient impact on the ground, in particular for the children and young people of BME communities. This will be achieved through departmental Action Plans. As a result NICEM has invested a lot of time and resources into assisting departments and their next step agencies to develop the right action plan. NICEM also assists the BME sector in its engagement with this process through capacity building objectives.

(i) "Working Together"

We were commissioned by the OFMDFM, in partnership with Runnymede Trusts (a London based think tank on racial equality), to develop a process to bring the BME sector and the governmental departments and agencies together to facilitate the development of the Action Plans that each Department are required to produce. The Action Plan must cut across the six aims of the Racial Equality Strategy (Race Strategy). This process is called "Working Together".

The aims of Working Together is (1) to support the Northern Ireland Race Equality Forum in delivering their Race Equality Action Plan; (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 and (4) to support the policymakers, community based organisations and public services in Northern Ireland in implementing the NI Race Equality Strategy.

We organised the third seminar in September 2006 which focused specifically on the last three aims of the Strategy (dialogue, participation and capacity building). We had more than 60 people from both the BME sector and the governmental departments and agencies.

We also finalised the related seminar reports and we plan to publish them in conjunction with the last event of Working Together. Due to the Devolved government in place and the recent Assembly debate on the Shared Future Framework and the Race Strategy, the last event is indefinitely postpone until the Shared Future policy is reviewed and the Executive and the Assembly can agree on it, alongside with the Race Strategy (details see below).

(ii) Meeting with Race Champions

We met the following Departmental Race Champions in June and July 2007 with our response to their draft Year 2 Action Plan: DETI, DRD, DCAL, DEL,

DE, DARD and DFP. We wish to outline the following comments which applied to all departments:

1. All departments outlined their functional areas as head notes underneath which they outlined their existing work as the departmental Action Plan on Race Strategy. This approach has the following defects:
 - No strategic thinking or evidence of a comprehensive joined up approach;
 - Too many actions without priority and strategic impacts;
 - No outcome measurement in the departmental template except output;
 - No baseline data to monitor progress or benchmarking mechanism;
 - No indications on the availability of resources;
 - Substantial departments did not have actions on Aim 4 to Aim 6 (Dialogue, Participation and Capacity Building); and
 - Lack of understanding on race issues and no dialogue or meetings with BME groups in preparation for Year 2 Action Plan.
2. We suggested that each Department should still outline their functional areas in their Action Plan with the view that the BME sector will assist to improve the areas of work (taking into account the BME sector does not necessarily understand each department's functional areas);
3. We also suggested that each Department takes on no more than 2 strategic actions, with more strategic thinking and a joined up approach to determine the priority of actions. This should be rolled out over the next five years with adequate resources for implementation in order to make sure that the Race Strategy has sufficient impacts on the ground;
4. We also urged each department to take into account NICEM's four specific training seminars as this will assist the departments and their next step agencies in developing their Race Equality Action Plans. The Working Together seminars will facilitate the scoping of issues on the six aims of the Race Strategy.

(iii) Recent Assembly debate on Shared Future Framework and Race Strategy

The Shared Future Framework was debated in the Assembly on 4th June 2007 with the amended motion resolved:

That this Assembly notes the strategic direction of and underpinning principles contained in the documents 'A Shared Future' (March 2005) and 'A Shared Future: Triennial Action Plan' (April 2006), and recognises that the Executive and the Assembly will wish to consider carefully the progress to date and bring forward detailed plans, consistent with the pledge of office, to promote the interests of the whole community towards the goal of a shared future and a prosperous, peaceful and settled society.

The original motion was to endorse the policy document and the Triennial Action Plan.

In other words the Assembly did not approve the Shared Future document and the Triennial Action Plan. The First Minister in response to the debate highlighted that 'The Executive must review carefully the progress on 'A Shared Future' and, importantly, its sister document, 'A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland'.

In contrast the Race Strategy was debated in the Assembly on 3rd July 2007 with the following amended motion resolved:

That this Assembly urges the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to review, as a matter of urgency, progress on implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010 and the First Annual Implementation Plan; and to bring forward proposals for its own detailed plans for the period 2008-2011 to achieve racial equality and an inclusive society for our increasingly diverse community.

Unlike the Shared Future document all parties supported the Race Strategy in order to tackle racism, exclusion and disadvantage. There is a united voice to tackle racism from across all parties. They also had a lot of criticism on the Action Plans that were developed by each Department.

The Deputy First Minister, in his summing up of the arguments, proposed the following five key action areas that are necessary for progress:

- Introduce an ethnic monitoring system in consultation with the Equality Commission;
- The two Junior Ministers will attend the next Racial Equality Forum meeting and report back to the Assembly in light of the criticism that has been made that the forum has become too big;
- NICEM will be asked to continue working with all Departments to deepen their understanding of the actions that are required to support racial equality;
- The OFMDFM will review progress on the strategy and the first Action Plan in consultation with the Committee of First Minister and Deputy First Minister;
- The OFMDFM will bring forward a new three-year action plan for 2008-2009 to coincide with the first year of spending after the Priorities and Budget exercise (The action plan needs to focus on a small number of important actions in key policy areas that will make a real impact on the lives of minority ethnic people).

Despite the overwhelming support of the Race Strategy the two documents (A Shared Future and the Race Strategy) will be reviewed by the Executive before any action can be taken. As a result everything is being parked, including the Racial Equality Forum, the inter-departmental Forum (which includes representation from BME sector and has had no meetings since

December 2006), the draft Action Plan Year 2 and the last event of 'Working Together'. NICEM has grievous concerns about using this approach to delay the progress that was made in both the Race Strategy and the Race Equality Forum.

We look forward to seeing the progress on the above five action areas highlighted by the Deputy First Minister we also look forward to the Review from the Executive to move the Shared Future Framework and Race Strategy forward in the Assembly.

(iv) Meeting with the Committee of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

We also met the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on 6 September 2007. We briefed them on our concerns for the Race Equality Action Plans (see meeting with Race Champion above), the recent debates on a Shared Future Framework and the Race Strategy, the core funding for the BME sector and the internal mainstreaming of the OFMDFM on various strategies (such as Shared Future, gender, anti-poverty, race, children and young people, etc.).

(v) Racial Equality Capacity Building Project

NICEM has been working through a series of Capacity Building Seminars, the Shadow Race Forum and the All Party Working Group for BME People. The overall aim is to build the capacity of BME groups and individuals to respond to the opportunities provided by the Race Strategy. The objectives of the Project are:

- To build confidence in BME groups and individuals so as they may participate in policy discussions and debate which will affect their quality of life;
- To address the weak community infrastructure of the BME communities by developing skills and structures that will build the capacity of the BME sector;
- Capacity building so that BME groups and individual are able to engage and participate in policy debates through structured mapping out exercises in scoping the policy and the development of Action Plans and policy seminars;
- To building bridges between the disadvantaged BME community, local community and policy makers;
- To provide support and the views of the sector to the BME sector representatives at the Race Forum;
- To develop positive working relationships between the sector and government officials;
- To provide support for, and information concerning the views of the sector to the representatives of the BME sector at the Race Forum; and

- To contribute to 'good relations' by building positive relationships between disadvantaged BME communities, policy makers, politicians and wider civic society.

NICEM is keen to drive the Race Strategy forward informed by the issues and concerns raised by the BME sector. This will only be possible with the involvement and participation of the sector as a whole.

(a) Capacity Building Seminar Series

The Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project initially did a scoping exercise to identify issues across a range of departments. From this we prioritised issues and subsequently ran a series of seminars delivered in Belfast and in Omagh. We ran 4 seminars in both Belfast and Omagh from January to July 2007. At each seminar we had on average 8-10 people from Belfast and 12-15 people from Omagh. Areas covered so far are:

- Government Structures and Policy Training
- Cohesion, Equality and Difference from a Human Rights perspective
- Women's Rights
- Police and Policing

In autumn 2007 the seminars will cover:

- Cultural Rights – Equality and Disadvantage from a Traveller case study
- Community Infra-Structure

The programme has been extended to include three roundtables on education, employment and learning, and health. From the issues that were addressed in this series of seminars and roundtables, papers will be brought forward to inform departments on their Action Plan of the Race Strategy.

(b) Shadow Race Forum

NICEM, in conjunction with the Chinese Welfare Association and the Multi-Cultural Resources Centre, have convened the Shadow Race Forum (Shadow Forum) for the BME sector since 2005. NICEM also acts as secretariat for the Shadow Forum.

There were two meetings in 2006 (September and December), one meeting in 2007 (February) and two pre-meetings for the BME representatives an hour prior to the Race Forum meeting (September and December). These meetings aimed to bring issues from across the sector, in particular from those who are not the members of the Race Forum, in order to reflect relevant issues and concerns to the Race Forum with a unified voice.

The Shadow Forum has not met since February 2007 due to the meetings being placed on hold pending the Executive formally approving the Race Strategy. There is a future meeting scheduled at the beginning of October to review the progress.

The last three meetings mainly focused on the reform of the Race Forum due to the current membership being far too big without any mechanism to sanction the membership. In February the meeting of the Shadow Forum invited representatives of the Race Unit of the OFMDFM to give an input on the proposed new structure of the Race Forum.

The BME sector raised concerns on the accountability of those who represented their sector and as such a number of recommendations to reform the Race Forum were brought forward. This included the suggestion of joint convenors of the Race Forum which would be comprised of the Junior Ministers and the BME sector representative. It was also put forward that the number of BME representatives should be equated with the number of departmental representatives, also, more participation from BME sector should be generated through Working Groups (for those are not Forum members) and there should be fixed meeting dates for the whole year and the agenda and papers should send to members at least two weeks in advance (with special circumstances on papers).

At that meeting it also agreed that the Shadow Forum should deal with all policy issues for the sector, such as the Bill of Rights Forum and the future working groups of the Forum. As a result the Shadow Forum agreed to send questionnaires to the sector consulting them on their views concerning the accountability issues and the running of the Shadow Forum.

(c) All Party Working Group

As part of our strategic approach to engage politicians in tackling racism in Northern Ireland and in anticipation of the Devolved administration, NICEM worked in partnership with political parties to set up an All Party Working Group on BME people (APWG) in September 2006.

The APWG provides a forum for dialogue between political parties and BME groups thus enabling them to work together towards the following vision:

“A society in which racial diversity is supported, understood, valued and respected, where racism in any of its forms is not tolerated and where we live together as a society and enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection” (from the Race Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010)

This vision will set the parameters of the work of the APWG and the principles by which it will operate.

The APWG will:

- On the basis of key priorities identified by the APWG, monitor and support the implementation of the Race Strategy for Northern Ireland and the 'Shared Future' policy as it relates to Race Equality;
- Consider, identify and take forward actions that Political Parties can take, individually, collectively and internally, in pursuance of the vision outlined above;

- Consider, identify and take forward recommendations for action by Government in pursuance of the vision outlined above;
- Have as a primary focus devolved (transferred) matters, however the APWG will consider reserved and excepted matters when it considers that they are a priority;
- Consider methods for liaison with the work of the Race Equality Forum, established as part of the Race Equality Strategy.

Status of the APWG

The APWG is an ad-hoc working group. Its status will be reviewed following the initial set of meetings (late November 2006) to consider the most effective structure for taking forward the purpose and principles of the group in the context of political developments.

Membership

- Northern Ireland Political Parties
- Representatives of BME communities

There have been 4 meetings (September, November, February and May) so far and most of the issues discussed at these meetings surrounded the 2nd Year Action Plans. The APWG followed up certain issues by writing a number of letters to government departments and local councils addressing concerns on the 2nd Year Action Plans. At the request of the All Party Working Group Ken Fraser of the Race Equality Unit and Drew Haire of the Good Relations Unit of the OFMDFM addressed a meeting of the group on the Racial Equality Strategy and Shared Future.

Kit Chivers, Chief Inspector, NI Criminal Justice Inspectorate, gave a briefing to the APWG on the Inspectorate's Hate Crime Report. The APWG also sponsored the Launch of Refugee Week at The Long Gallery in Stormont in June.

With the Assembly now re-established the process of transforming the All Party Working Group in to an official Assembly Working Group is underway and it is envisaged that this will come about in the next few months.

1.4 Section 75 Consultations

NICEM has responded only to priority consultations this year as the main focus of the policy work has been on the Race Strategy and its Action Plans. This was because it presents a key opportunity for mainstreaming racial equality into government policy and practice.

Responses have been submitted to the following consultations:

- Racial Equality in the Provision of Housing and Accommodation (Equality Commission);

- Policy on Supporting Ethnic Minority children and young people who have English as an Additional Language (Department of Education); and
- Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (Equality Commission).

We are still actively involved in the Equality Coalition, which is jointly convened by the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and UNISON, and brings together voluntary and community organisations along with the Unions to consider the operation and responses to consultations.

1.5 Strategy On Litigation tackling Discrimination (SOLID) Project: EU Community Action Against Discrimination

NICEM is the Lead Partner of the Project with the Core Partner as the European Network Against Racism and six other Partners: Public Interest Law Initiative (part of the Columbia Law School in New York and recently became independent and renamed as Public Interests Law Institute) in Budapest, European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest, Interights in London, the National Bureau against Racial Discrimination (LBR) in Rotterdam (LBR renamed as Article 1 in order to provide support against discrimination on all grounds since January 2007) and the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC/DACoRD) in Copenhagen.

The project aims to achieve the effective transposition and implementation of the European Union Race Equality Directive and the Framework Directives on Employment. It aims to do this through empowerment, capacity building and partnership and the promotion of equality for Ethnic and Racial Minority groups across the European Union.

The objectives of the training programmes are:

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

It is an ambitious and strategic project at EU level of intervention. It reflects NICEM's credentials in the area and our leading roles in Europe. By October 2006 we had organised 6 rounds of NGO training (2 pilots and 4 full training) for 25 Member States of the EU with around 200 trainees over a 12 month period. We also published our Training Manual as an open resource on the SOLID website (www.solid-eu.org) to encourage the wider use of the

methodology that we had developed through the SOLID programme. We submitted our Final Report to the European Commission in February 2007.

The final evaluation of the Project envisioned a future that it would be realistic to work towards. This future is one in which:

- Case law has been brought to the European Court of Justice (ECJ);
- Networks based on the SOLID project are in all Member States and relevant third countries are working across all grounds of discrimination;
- NGOs:
 - * There is improved use of strategic litigation by NGOs
 - * NGOs are shadowing specialist bodies as a source of pressure to ensure they meet their requirements
 - * NGOs are raising the awareness of the rights and responsibilities of public service providing authorities
 - * NGOs are forming coalitions

Following the evaluation in October 2006 in Budapest, it was agreed that the SOLID Project would continue in the form of follow up training with a selected group of countries that would focus on (a) building and broadening the SOLID national group as a coalition, (b) the further development, refinement and practical implementation of the Strategy developed during the SOLID training and (c) the bringing of test cases to court.

The Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) has expressed an interest in becoming partners in the SOLID project follow up. They add to the existing partnership by bringing both potential resources for the initial follow up projects and in providing expert legal support to achieve objective (c); that of bringing test cases, which matches OSJI plans on strategic litigation of contemporary forms of racism in the EU.

NICEM has secured funding to use the SOLID training model (SOLID brought Home), as an example of European best practice, in developing integration and good race relations strategies for majority and minority groups in Northern Ireland. This provides a model for how the SOLID model can be applied in the national context as part of the SOLID follow up. The SOLID model can also apply easily to the future Commission's bid on their priority areas.

Currently there are also concrete plans for follow up in Finland (project supported by the Finnish Government) and Denmark (proposal for support from OSJI)

Next steps

There is a partners meeting scheduled for 19th September, with representation from each of the existing project partners, plus the OSJI European Lawyer, the OSJI European office representative Barbara Cohen and Françoise Barlet. This meeting will consider the plans for the future of the SOLID project

1.6 Developing a Shared Strategy on Integration and Race Relations Project

The project aims to bring expertise and experience from across Europe to inform and shape how Northern Ireland responds to its changing demographics, so that it may develop strategies on integration and good race relations that promote equality and respect diversity.

On the basis of this expertise, and using training tools developed at the European level, networks of cooperation across all communities in Northern Ireland will be developed. Participants in these networks will be facilitated to develop Strategies on Integration and Good Race Relations. The Project consists of two expert public seminars and two 3 day intensive training programmes for local BME groups and individual and local voluntary and community sector organisations to work together to develop a shared strategy on integration and race relations.

The objectives of the Project are:

- To build relationships between black and minority ethnic communities and the wider community (seminars, training, conference and implementation of strategies);
- To identify and share relevant best practice at International and European level on integration and race relations (seminars, training, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To raise awareness of European standards and strategies on Integration and race relations (seminars, training, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To build relationships between local and European organisations and networks (seminars, training, conference and NGO site visits);
- To identify and share strategies from different national and regional contexts and examine their relevance for peace building in Northern Ireland (seminars, training, NGO site visits, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To develop strategies to apply identified best practice to integration and race relations in Northern Ireland (Training, NGO site visits and a conference);

- To develop networks of cooperation across majority and minority communities (seminars, training, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To adapt European best practice training tools for use in the local context (training, publication of training manual and seminar reports); and
- To share best practice training tools through the publication of seminar reports and training manual.

The Project has also developed an advisory group comprised of local experts who provide guidance, specialist advice and support on the development of the Project.

The first expert seminar entitled 'European Integration Policy and Practice: Principles, Models and Methods' was held on 2nd July 2007. The seminar attracted a broad range of participants from BME groups and local community groups as well as trade unions, government departments, local government, government agencies and politicians (MLA and councillors). There were five key speakers who brought expertise and examples of best practice from European agencies, human rights organisations and NGOs. The feed back from the participant evaluation sheets was very positive and the Seminar Report is ready to publish.

Recruitment for the first training programme is now complete, under the guidance of the Advisory Group it was determined that the training programme would establish networks of support and good relations within 3 key local areas that are experiencing a demographic change. The 3 chosen areas were North Belfast, East Belfast and Lisburn.

We recruited 30 participants in total, half from local community groups and the other half from BME groups. The preliminary training session, which consisted of the established NICEM Anti-racism and Equality in Action training programme, was successfully held on 22nd August 2007. The session concluded with participants drawing up an action plan as to how best to establish anti-discriminatory practice in their local areas. These action plans will be developed further in the main training session, this session will be held on 4th – 7th October 2007 in Belfast.

The training materials are a local adaptation of a highly successful aforementioned training programme entitled 'SOLID: development of NGOs National Strategy on Strategic Litigation and Support at National level'. In addition to the existing SOLID materials, modifications and case studies relevant to the local areas were added. We also contacted the SOLID trainers who will deliver the training for this Project.

Overall the Project will facilitate the establishment of positive relationships between local community groups and BME groups so that cultural, attitudinal and social change will be enabled that will lead to the development of a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society through the local action plan.

1.7 Racial Hate Crime

(i) PSNI Recorded Hate Incident

In 2003-2004 there were 453 racial incidents recorded by the PSNI. By 2006-2007 there were 1,047 racial incidents recorded, an increase of 131% over the last four year period (2004/05: 813, 2005/06: 936). In 2005-2006 there were 746 offences recorded from 936 racial incidents (79.7%). Of these, 45.7% were violent crime and 52.3% were property crime. In 2006-2007 there were 861 offences recorded from 1,047 racial incidents (82.2%). Of these, 37.6% were violent crime and 61% were property crime. We anticipate attacks will increase by 12% each year over the next five years.

It is not surprising therefore that when Sir Hugh Orde, the Chief Constable, was interviewed by the New Statesman last November, he said that the major emerging threat in his work is racist attacks against migrants. The recorded racial incidents and crime statistics from the PSNI are only the tip of the iceberg. There are a lot of unreported racist incidents and crimes with a variety of reasons why BME people do not go to the police in these circumstances (details see NICEM Research Report)¹. These include poor experiences in the past with the police on reporting racial incidents and crimes, the perception that the police could not help or that the matters would not be treated seriously. Also, fear of revenge and negative perceptions of the police by some members of BME communities, in particular Irish Travellers. The first Hate Crime Report by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate, published in January 2007, confirmed NICEM's concern of under reporting in this area and the reasons for this.

Most alarming is the PSNI percentage clearance rate for racially motivated offences. In 2005-2006 it was 20.5% (13.1% is sanction one and 7.4% is non sanction one) and in 2006-2007 it is 13.4% (11.7% is sanction one and 1.6% is non sanction one). The poor clearance rate raises a fundamental question: where is the justice for the victims of racist hate crime?

The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland Hate Crime Report portrayed the same concerns on low clearance rates, which was far below the

¹ Robbie McVeigh, "The Next Stephen Lawrence?: the experiences of victims in criminal justice system in Northern Ireland", NICEM, May 2006.

national comparators. If there is no justice for BME victims it will have serious consequences for the confidence of the BME communities in the criminal justice system, as well as good race relations in Northern Ireland.

(ii) PSNI Conference: Dealing with Racism in Northern Ireland

In response to NICEM's Research Report 'The Next Stephen Lawrence?: the experiences of victims in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland' the PSNI organised an internal conference on 6th November 2006. The issues raised in the report were debated. Approximately 100 officers representing different ranks and files from across the province attended. The researcher, Dr. Robbie McVeigh and the Executive Director of NICEM, Mr. Patrick Yu were among the speakers on the day. The Executive Director presented the issues of 'Institutional Racism in Policing'. Other speakers included representatives from the Black Police Association from London and their branch in Northern Ireland and the Equality Commission. NICEM appreciated the PSNI taking such a positive step to look at the issues from the Research Report with local officers.

(iii) Northern Ireland Policing Board 'Human Rights Report 2007'

NICEM meets with the Policing Board's Human Rights Advisor on an annual basis to review the issues around victims of racial hate crime. This year we met the Advisor, Ms. Jane Gordon, in July 2007. NICEM raised the concern that operational officers were not applying the definition of racial hate crime and gave anecdotal accounts of cases where the PSNI had failed to pursue crimes perceived by victims as racially motivated. This might lead to the non-reporting of hate crime if the experiences of BME people when doing so to the police is thus. The Human Rights Advisor agreed on the potential impact of under reporting and made recommendations to change such shortcomings.

NICEM, while recognising the progress the PSNI has made in tackling hate crime, has raised concerns about the PSNI's interaction with other public authorities, in particular the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). NICEM has suggested that the PSNI and PPS's policies on hate crime should incorporate standard definitions and a more integrated approach to the prosecution of hate crime. The Human Rights Advisor agreed with this suggestion and made a further recommendation to the PSNI on this.

As a result of our intervention there were two recommendations in the 'Human Rights Report 2007' on this issue:

"The PSNI should require all Minority Liaison Officers to review the district command and control log on a monthly basis as a matter of standard practice to identify incidents which may constitute hate incidents and crimes but which may not be recorded as such." (Recommendation 29 at p. 207)

"The PSNI should work with the Public Prosecution Services (PPS) to agree

standard definitions and policies and a more integrated approach to the prosecution of hate crime.” (Recommendation 30 at p. 208)

The full Report can be downloaded at the following website:
www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/final_pdf_of_1.pdf

(iv) Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland Steering Group on Hate Crime

We also participated in the Steering Group on Hate Crime set up by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI), to inspect the management of hate crime across all agencies. The first Inspectorate Report ‘Hate Crime in Northern Ireland: A thematic inspection of the management of hate crime by the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland’ was published in January 2007. This Report outlines the results of the first inspection across all criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland on hate crime. The Inspection Report made 19 recommendations in four subject areas, namely: Partnership, Strategy, Policy and Procedural Development, Management Information and PSNI specific recommendations.

NICEM will follow-up with the issues and recommendations arising from the Inspectorate Report. The full report can download from the website:
www.cjini.org/Publications/documents/HATEREPORTWEB.pdf

The Executive Director was also part of the Panel for a discussion on the Hate Crime Inspectorate report at the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland Annual Stakeholder Conference on 17th January 2007.

(iv) Public Prosecution Services Equality and Diversity Training

As part of our strategy of targeting the criminal justice agencies to tackle racial and other hate crime NICEM provided Equality and Diversity Training to the Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Services (PPS) between January and February 2007. There were 7 training sessions attended by more than 150 lawyers, senior management team (senior Directors) and support team staff.

We also had a post-training meeting in March 2007 on the follow-up work to develop policy and practice on hate crime within the PPS (The Crown Prosecution Services (CPS) has a policy but this does not extend to Northern Ireland). NICEM supported the PPS in its development of their hate crime policy furthermore NICEM suggested that a link should be made with the PSNI so that the same concept and practice are adopted. Of particular relevance here is the evidential requirement for the prosecution under the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004. Within this the judge can impose a longer sentence if it can be proven that the aggressor’s hostility towards the victim was based on his or her community background, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

1.8 English as Additional Language (EAL) and Religious Education (RE) in Northern Ireland

In our last Annual Report we highlighted our concerns about the way the Departments treated NICEM with regard to the above two outstanding issues (for more than 2 years now). We met with the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Will Hare, and other officials in January 2007 (a joint meeting with NICEM and the Interfaith Forum).

We reiterated our concerns from both organisations on EAL and RE in Northern Ireland. For EAL we welcome the Department obtained additional resources to implement it, despite sufficient resources there are no transitional arrangement on delivery of EAL in place. As a result there are schools that have BME students who do not have EAL support and often schools just provide EAL tuition to those who have arrived in Northern Ireland within 2 years (this being in line with the previous inadequate policy of the Department).

On the RE issue we were very disappointed. The new curriculum only has one comparatively lacking component dealing with religious diversity in post-primary arrangement. By adopting such a weak stance the department has lost the opportunity to integrate and promote religious diversity in Northern Ireland.

Both issues are substantially in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights (Article 2, Protocol 1) and the Race Relations law in Northern Ireland. Recently we also found that EAL is also in breach of the EU Directive on Education of the Children of Migrant Workers (77/486/EEC).

We also wrote a letter to the new Education Minister in late May 2007 asking for a meeting to discuss the legal concerns surrounding both EAL and RE. We are still waiting for the response to this request. At this stage NICEM is not ruling out the use of litigation to settle the above issues.

We also made our submission to the Department of Education regarding their policy on supporting ethnic minority children and young people who already have English as an additional language.

1.9 Migrant Workers

(i) Alliance building with Trade Unions

For the past few years NICEM and UNISON have been working in support of the nurses and health care workers from the Philippines, India and South Africa, as well as migrant workers from the European Union Accession countries (EU A8) on low paid jobs such as cleaning and canteen work. As a result of this work a Black Committee was set up in order to address such

issues. We were pleased to hear that UNISON has recruited more than 800 new members from the migrant worker community (mainly Filipino).

Recent campaigning has focused on issues including the change of the immigration rule for permanent resident status (this was increased from four years to five years). We have worked closely on this issue with our partners UNISON in London and Glasgow and the TUC in London. The results of a signature campaign organised by the Filipino community on this very issue were presented to local politicians, including MPs and MLAs. Then the Black Committee took the lead by organising a press conference to present the case. Just a week before the press conference, the UK government backed down on the rule due to the negative impacts on all professional migrants as well as a legal challenge to the new rule.

NICEM also provides a support service to migrant workers if they are experiencing harassment or attacks in their living and working environment (we also refer cases to UNISON).

(ii) Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Research Project on Migrants

The original idea for this research came jointly from NICEM and UNISON in response to racial harassment in the workplace and racist attacks in the working environment that overseas nurses and health care staff were experiencing. We appointed Dr. Robbie McVeigh to conduct the proposed research. After a series of meetings we agreed to do a wider research on all migrants (both EU and non-EU). This idea was then passed to the ICTU.

We were pleased to see the ICTU taking the lead and also invited other unions with migrant worker members to be involved in the Research Steering Group. The Research Report was launched on 18 December 2006 to coincide the International Day on Migrants. The full Report can be download at the ICTU website: www.ictuni.org (under the publication link).

(iii) Thematic Working Group on Migrant Workers

The Working Group was set up under the Race Equality Forum to address the migrant issues. The key issues that need to be addressed are:

- The need for reliable data on labour migration
- The identification and subsequent modification of any service and information gaps
- A joined up response from all government departments

The thematic group on Migrant Workers issues will:

- Promote the principles and aims of the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy;

- Facilitate a partnership approach by jointly working with: Government Departments; statutory bodies; voluntary and community organisations; and other agencies - to help participating organisations avoid duplication of effort and share resources;
- Assist the Forum in its work of monitoring and reviewing progress on the implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy;
- Provide an arena for exchange of information; identification of best practice and lessons learned; suggest possible areas where more research is needed including information needs for longer term policy planning, demographic projections, etc;

The Working Group consists of around 40 members from various departments, next step agencies, voluntary and community sectors. An Action Plan was agreed by the Working Group members in June 2007 and a number of sub-groups were set up to look at research, data and best practice.

(iv) Old Warren Partnership Welcome House

The Old Warren Partnership, UNISON and NICEM are working in partnership to support migrants in the Lisburn area through the Welcome House. We were successful in getting financial support from the Peace II plus funding, this enabled the recruitment of two bi-lingual workers (Polish and Lithuanian) and a local worker in 2006.

With the support of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, in March 2007 the Old Warren Partnership was able to establish the Welcome House – a centre specifically for migrant workers. The staff have been working tirelessly with their local partners (Old Warren partners) to tackle a lot of local issues such as racist attacks, policing, anti-social behaviour, employment and training, etc. The partnership model in Lisburn is a good model of best practice in that it highlights successful examples of the engagement of local groups working in partnership with and supporting BME people in the local areas.

2. Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple Discrimination

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

(Martin Luther King)

Anti-racism and Equality Training

Education and training inform good policy and practice and as such it is one of our strategies to support the legal framework in standard setting. The law defines what acceptable behaviour in our society is. Policy and practice are the guidelines for the implementation of racial equality. With education and training, good quality standards are reflected in policy and practice at all levels. It gives a buy-in from the staff and support for racial equality on one hand and changes the organisational culture through policy and practice on the other.

An increasingly wide range of organisations and groups have actively sought to implement policies driven by standards of non-discrimination and the promotion of diversity as the norm. It has been encouraging to organise training with so many people, including policy-makers who display a personal commitment to ensuring cultural change both at an organisational level and at an individual level.

Key to this process is the importance of strong leadership, organisational support, additional resources and further training. Specifically, participants find that the training leads to an increase in staff confidence in handling anti-discriminatory and diversity practice issues.

Currently our strategy is to target the criminal justice system on the back of our research finding of institutional racism from the experiences of victims of racial harassment and racist attacks.

Our trainer, Ronald Vellem, provided 20 training sessions to over 350 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:

- Public Prosecution Services for Northern Ireland;
- St. Mary College;
- Royal Victoria Hospital Trust;
- Belfast Metropolitan College (the former BIFHE);
- Queen's University Department of Medicine;
- South Eastern Education and Library Board; and
- Department of Social Development.

The feedback from these training sessions has been very positive with participants reporting increasing awareness of sensitivities when engaging with people from diverse backgrounds. Many participants also admitted to having been personally challenged in terms of their own attitudes and prejudices.

3. Capacity Building Black and Minority Ethnic communities

3.1 Capacity Building work with black and minority ethnic groups

NICEM continues to support black and minority ethnic groups, with a particular focus on organisational development including guidance and practical support with:

- Facilitating recruitment and selection processes for small groups;
- Advising and supporting organisations on internal human resources, staff and management issues;
- Assisting small organisations to plan programmes and identify and secure funds;
- Implementing PQASSO within organisations and providing materials, facilitating meetings of and supporting for the work of their Quality Task Groups;
- Developing publicity materials and publications;
- Facilitating planning exercises for small organizations; and
- Supporting small organisations to fulfill funders requirements setting up monitoring procedures and submitting accurate and clear monitoring and evaluation reports.

NICEM staff have advised and supported a number of BME groups during the year with combinations of the above issues including:

- Northern Ireland Sikh Cultural Centre (Derry)
- Strabane Ethnic Communities Association
- Al-Nisa Association NI
- An Munia Tober
- Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association
- Northern Ireland Community of Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Northern Ireland Muslim Families Association
- Belfast Islamic Centre
- Indian Community Centre

3.2 CONNECT-NICEM

3.2.1 Purpose and values of CONNECT-NICEM:

Mission

'Working in partnership, connecting you and your organisation to the people and quality services you need, to achieve race equality and human rights standards'

CONNECT-NICEM is a social economy enterprise incorporated in 2002, by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM). NICEM transferred responsibility for delivery of interpreting, anti-racism and consultancy services in November 2005.

CONNECT-NICEM is a company limited by guarantee and accepted as charity by HM Revenue and Customs. CONNECT-NICEM is operated as a social enterprise on 'not for individual profit' basis. Company profits are used to support work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities and individuals throughout Northern Ireland, and further improve the standards and professional development of interpreters.

CONNECT-NICEM provides a wide range of services and products including

- *Interpreting services to clients including the PSNI, Public Prosecution Service, Prison Service, Royal Victoria Hospital and private solicitors*
- *Interpreter training programme – National Open College Network accredited training in Community Interpreting, Advocacy and Mediation in Health & Interpreting within the Criminal Justice System at levels 2 & 3*
- *Anti-racism and Equality Training programmes*
- *PQASSO Quality Assurance consultancy services and licensed PQASSO mentor services*
- *Research & consultancy services on Black & Minority Ethnic issues*

Underpinning values of CONNECT-NICEM:

Quality	Connecting people
Delivery	Empowerment and progression
Innovation	Human Rights and Equality
Ethics	Independence

3.2.2 Background to the work programmes 2007-2009

Since 1999, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities has led the way in Northern Ireland in the field of interpreter training and interpreting services in minority languages. In 1999 NICEM delivered the very first training programme for Community Interpreters in Northern Ireland, accredited Northern Ireland Open College Network level 3.

Until this point, individuals working as interpreters within the public, private and voluntary sectors required no recognised qualification or minimum standard of training to work as interpreters. In order to begin the process of improving standards in this area and bring Northern Ireland interpreters to standards equivalent to those used in the UK, NICEM initiated a programme of work in the field.

Through training delivery NICEM also works to support the public sector to deliver their services in the most effective way. Importantly, NICEM's rights-based approach to the issues of language and interpreting is aimed at improving and supporting access, equality and human rights particularly in the field of criminal justice.

3.2.3 Sharing expertise

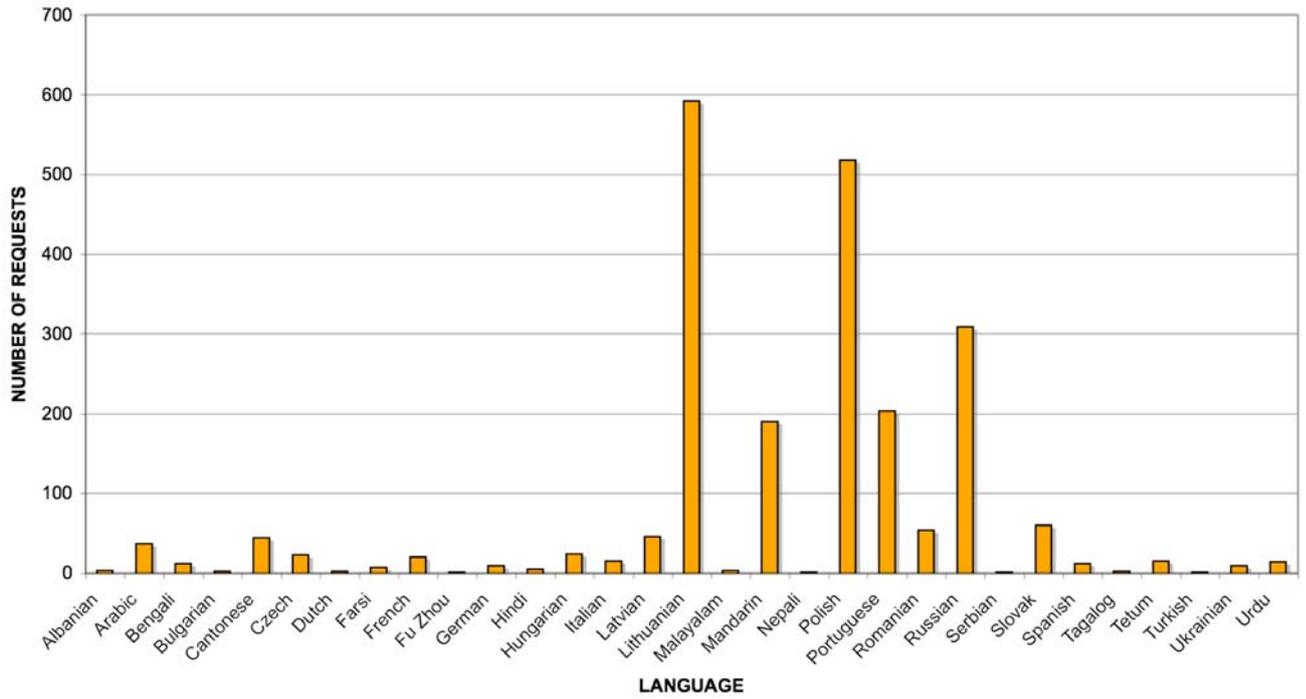
Following eight years of training delivery by NICEM to over 200 interpreters, the OCN qualification in community interpreting is now recognised as the baseline standard for the majority of public sector organisations in Northern Ireland. NICEM's original model of Interpreter training and interpreting delivery has now been replicated by number of organisations.

Perhaps most importantly, NICEM was approached by the DHSSPS in 2001 and subsequently with our assistance the Department put forward a proposal for Executive Programme funds. The Department secured funding to pilot a three-year interpreting project within the DHSSPS based on NICEM's training programme and model of delivery. This project was then passed to the EHSSB for management and implementation. The Regional Health and Social Services Project for Minority Ethnic groups, including the Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Interpreting Service (Regional Health Interpreting Service) is now managed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

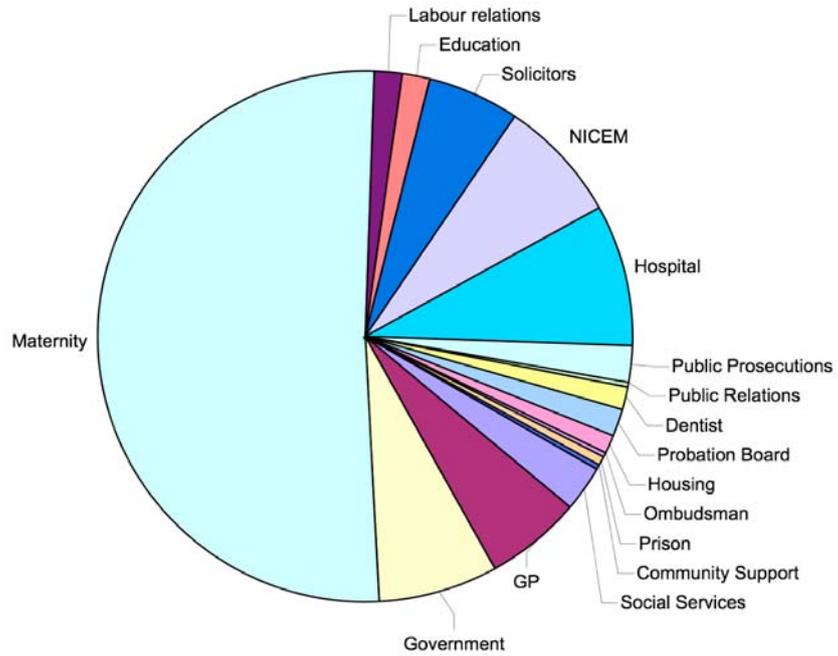
3.2.4 Number of requests

CONNECT-NICEM processed requests during the period and has seen a steady rise in requests over the year. Below is an overview of language demand.

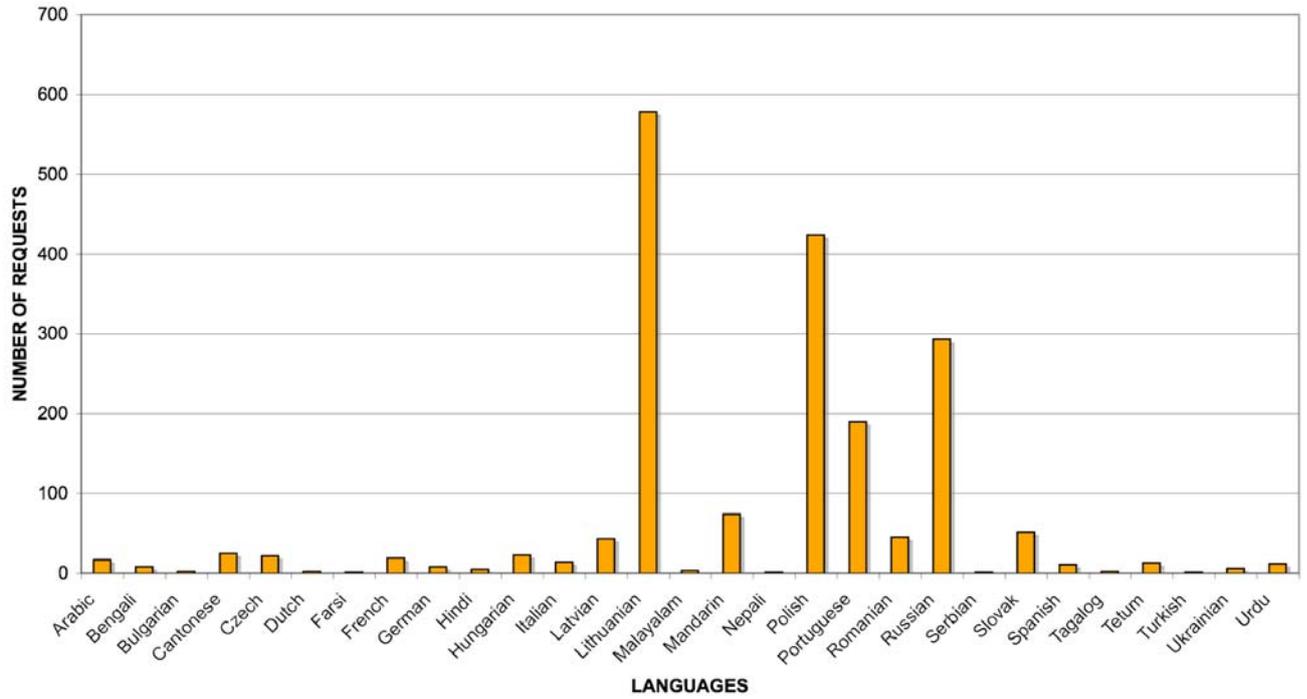
TOTAL NUMBER OF REQUESTS BY LANGUAGE 06-07



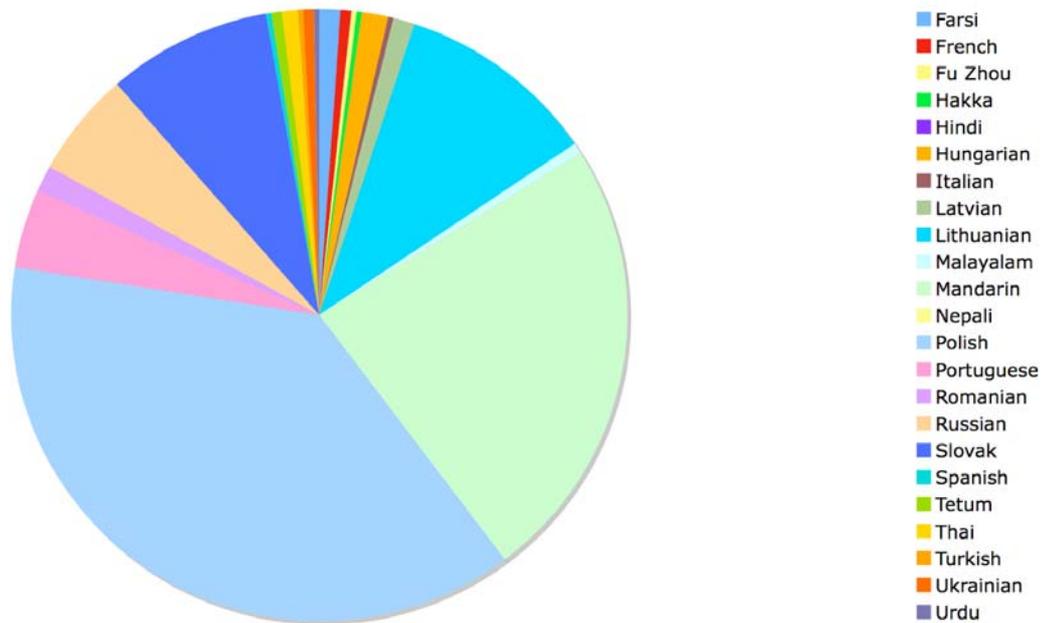
GENERAL REQUESTS BY SERVICE PROVIDER 06-07



Languages requested PSNI sessions



Languages requested by service providers (non-PSNI)



3.2.5 Quality Assurance progress

CONNECT-NICEM is a provider of interpreting services to over 150 different customers from the public, voluntary and private sector. In order to provide quality of service to our clients we operate a number of quality assurance systems and mechanisms within the organisation both in relation to the operation of the service and improving the quality and monitoring the work of interpreters.

During 2006-07, we completed the development of our ISO 9001 quality system for the delivery of services and have tendered for the audit of our system, timetabled for Autumn '07. This quality system ensures the standards at which we deliver our interpreting services to clients. This covers internal systems including performance, complaints and feedback and staff experience and training.

As a voluntary sector charitable organisation, CONNECT-NICEM also uses the PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) Quality system to improve and develop our internal policies and procedures.

3.2.6 Qualifications for community interpreters

Between August 2006 to September 2007 the organisation delivered 4 of our NOCN level 3 accredited training for Community Interpreters in both Belfast and Derry. Three courses were delivered in Belfast with one course being delivered in Derry for the first time, in the premises of SEEDS (Solidarity, Equality, Education, Diversity, Support), The One World Centre, Foyle Street Derry. SEEDS seeks to promote racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in the North West of Ireland thus maintaining a commitment to promote equality and integration.

3.2.7 Training statistics

In total 60 students have undertaken the accredited training over this period. A language and gender breakdown is given below.

Language	Percentage of learners
Polish	46.60%
Lithuanian	10.00%
Russian	6.67%
Czech	5.00%
French	5.00%
Mandarin	5.00%
Cantonese	3.33%

Portuguese	5.00%
Latvian	3.33%
Romanian	3.33%
Spanish	3.33%
Albanian	1.67%
Arabic	1.67%
German	1.67%

Gender	Percentage of learners
Male	77.97%
Female	22.03%

It is interesting to note that during 2006-07 we have observed a sharp rise in the number of male learners on the course. In previous years, female learners significantly outnumbered male learners and subsequently on our register of interpreters we had a majority of female interpreters. We can see with the figures for last year this imbalance is now being addressed and will result in a rise in the numbers of male interpreters working in the field.

Dropout rate

The overall dropout rate for learners over the year was approximately 10%. This is low rate which reflects well on both the delivery and content of the training programmes.

3.2.8 Course content and guest speakers

All of the courses had valuable input from guest speakers from the following public sector and specific issues relevant to the interpreters:

- Education
- Health
- PSNI
- Family Trauma Centre
- Migrant worker issues – Law Centre
- Anti-racism & Equality
- Section 75
- Court services
- Social services
- Welfare and benefits
- NI Housing Executive

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those guest speakers who have been involved this year in the training for their time, hard work and enthusiasm. Their professional input is essential for the interpreters to understand fully the different situations and contexts within which they will find themselves interpreting.

This year we also managed to create links with public sector agencies in particular outside of the Belfast area in Derry. This is important for both interpreters and service providers in the area and contributes towards a better understanding of the issues on both sides.

3.2.9 Specialised training qualification for Interpreters working within the Criminal Justice System

CONNECT-NICEM has developed the only specialised training course for interpreters in the Northern Ireland working within the criminal justice system. Accredited through the NOCN the course has been developed by CONNECT-NICEM with advice and guidance from independent consultant Joan Colin. The course was submitted for accreditation in 2005, and is currently composed of 5 distinct units accredited at level 3.

Unit titles:

1. Interpreting within the police service
2. Interpreting within the court service
3. Interpreting within the immigration service
4. Interpreting and Translation skills in the legal system
5. Research and report writing techniques.

Although we were unable to schedule these units during 06-07, we have planned delivery of units 1, 5 and 5 for 2008. For further information please contact CONNECT-NICEM.

3.2.10 Interpreter Support Network Skills Development Programme

Toward the end of the period 2006-2007 we were once again able to schedule our professional development sessions for interpreter. We refer to this series of information and training sessions at our 'Skills Development Programme'. Certificates of attendance are issued for those interpreters attending sessions and the records of attendance are recorded and are used within our selection criteria when arranging sessions.

Our 'Interpreter Support Network - Skills Development Programme', provides additional information and training sessions for interpreters during the year, recognising the changes and developments in public sector services, procedures, terminology and other issues identified by Interpreters. Continuing Professional

Development is the personal responsibility of all active interpreters and we aim to support our interpreters to access the information they need through our various networks and working partnerships.

The Autumn programme 2007 includes sessions from:

- NICEM on Human Rights legislation, International, National and Local (completed sept 07)
- NI Prison Service (completed Oct 07)
- NI Probation Board (completed Oct 07)
- PSNI Serious Crimes Branch (completed Oct 07)
- NI Housing Executive (Scheduled Nov 07)
- Housing Rights (scheduled Nov 07)
- Information on the Home Office Workers Registration Scheme (Scheduled Dec 07)
- Session on Working Family Tax Credits and Child Benefit (Scheduled Dec 07)
- The Social Fund (Scheduled Dec 07)

Spring programme

During 2006-2007, we also have been planning our Skills Development Programme for Spring 2008 involving a number of public sector and voluntary sector organisations.

3.2.11 Future qualifications and in professional standards

Diploma/MA in Interpreting – CONNECT-NICEM in partnership with Queen's University Belfast Department of Modern Languages, is now in the process of developing a new higher-level qualification for interpreters in Northern Ireland, Diploma (with MA option) in Interpreting initially in 10 languages.

The implementation of this qualification will bring the standard of qualification for interpreting in Northern Ireland to a higher level currently required by public sector services in the rest of UK. We are currently in the process of securing funds for the development of course and will work together with the public sector to promote this new level of qualification as the new minimum standard, particularly within the field of criminal justice.

It will take a number of years to establish a large pool of interpreters; however we believe it is essential to continually improve upon existing skills and professional abilities. CONNECT-NICEM staff will be involved in the delivery of the Diploma/MA. QUB is also currently beginning an MA in Translation studies 2007-2008 and CONNECT-NICEM will be delivering training to QUB students as a module of the course.

3.2.12 Strategic planning

The Company has enjoyed a remarkable and rapid phase of growth, trading very successfully. A consequence of the rapid development has been limited time to reflect on the longer term challenges facing Connect, its core purpose and value system.

To address this, the Staff Team agreed that it would be useful to organise a strategic planning exercise which took place in May 2007 was also considered useful to have an external facilitator to assist the discussions (Joe McVey – Blueprint Consultancy).

The purpose of the workshop was to support the Connect NICEM Team to develop a plan of action to guide its development over the coming 3 years

3.3 DSD research on participation from non-Christian faith groups

NICEM successfully tendered for a piece of research commission by the Department for Social Development (DSD). Arlington Trotman the former Director of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (including Northern Ireland with expertise on the UK Community Renewal programme, carried out the research on behalf of NICEM, with support from NICEM Capacity Building Team on identifying, arranging and facilitating focus groups.

The researcher undertook a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups with non-Christian faith communities both within Belfast and outside of Belfast. The research also included **reference** to relevant UK policies, procedures, practice guides etc on non-Christian faith communities and assess these with regard to the relevance for the Northern Ireland context.

Brief overview of analysis and findings

Below is brief overview of some of the key findings, for further information and copies of the full report can be obtained from the Department of Social Development

According to the 2001 census there were 5,506 people of non-Christian faith backgrounds living in Northern Ireland, which is about 0.3% of the total population. Currently we estimate² the numbers as follows:

FAITH	NUMBER	%
Bahá'í	300	3
Buddhist	500	5
Hindu	4,000	42
Jewish	300	3
Muslim	4,000	42
Sikh	300	3
Other/s	200	2
TOTAL	9,600	100

Number of non-Christian faith groups in NI

These organisations include: Al-Nisa Association NI (a Muslim Women's Group); Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland (BCNI); Belfast Jewish Community (BJC); Belfast Islamic Centre (BIC); Hare Krishna Temple; Northern Ireland Hindu Cultural Centre and Temple; Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association (NIMFA); and Northern Ireland Sikh Cultural and Community Centre.

Engagement with Government

The overall findings of the report showed that there is a marked absence of non-Christian Faith groups engaging with Government. Some have a measure of involvement through the NI Race Forum and the Interfaith Forum, and NICEM. Primarily these receive small one off project funding from OFMDFM, and can sometimes respond to public policy consultations.

Contribution to civil society

The findings also show that although there is a small number of non-Christian faith groups in Northern Ireland (NCFGsNI) and they significantly lack capacity, they still provide a broad range of support of high quality to their own communities whilst remaining opened to wider society.

Barriers to participation and involvement

Discussions with the communities highlighted that all the groups testify to numerous barriers with Government. Often, faith groups are thought of as 'a bit of an add-on' when the Government is considering issues around religious belief; there was also a deep sense of tokenism, and a telling lack of capacity. However, all of the groups expressed unreserved openness to formal and informal ways of collaborating with Government and civil society.

Within the Muslim community there was the belief that the anti-terrorism laws, in which the Government 'tries to balance their act in the interest of other political parties' creates a barrier for Muslims.

3.4 North Belfast Quality Support programme

The Background to the Programme

In 2006-2007, CONNECT-NICEM became a delivery partner in a consortium developed by Brian Stratford Associates and Blueprint Consultancy. The consortium secured a tender to support voluntary sector organisations from North Belfast to identify and implement a range of quality systems according to their needs. The systems offered include ISO 9001, Investors in People, Investing in Volunteers and PQASSO.

The North Belfast Quality Support Programme aims to provide voluntary and community sector organisations in North Belfast with the opportunity to contribute to their long-term development and sustainability through the development of policies and procedures outlining their operations and systems through the use of quality systems. The project aims to embed an ethos of continuous improvement in community and voluntary organisations, raising standards of performance, contributing to the community capacity to deliver and improving the overall governance arrangements that exist.

Support Available

The Programme incorporates a range of support measures designed to provide organisations with the opportunity to follow a 'quality' approach to their development. This includes:

- One-to-one support from a mentor to develop policies and procedures.
- Using the mentoring support to review existing systems in place.
- Assistance with gaining accreditation to a Quality Standard.
- Staff training and development.
- Governance training for Management Committees.
- Best practice visits to learn from other voluntary organisations.

PQASSO licence

In June 2007, the Director CONNECT-NICEM completed the training programme organised by the Charities Evaluation Services to become a licensed PQASSO mentor.

The programme was successfully completed, and CONNECT-NICEM now offers PQASSO training and mentor support on a consultancy basis to three organisations under the Northern Belfast Quality Support Programme.

3.5 Youthsearch

In 2006-07 Youthsearch, was a research project commissioned by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, co-ordinated by Wheel Works Youth Arts, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM).

The project undertook work to identify and collect information on as many minority ethnic groups and associations (including faith groups) involving young people throughout Northern Ireland as possible within a 6 month timeframe.

The primary project aim was to create an easily accessible database which included contact details as well as relevant information, such as groups' activities, organisational needs and interests which would be useful to all those working in the statutory, voluntary and youth sectors, individuals and other minority ethnic groups wishing to work with or find out about each other. We hope this database will go some way to promoting good practice in information sharing between agencies and help develop new networks of communication and co-operation between minority ethnic communities themselves and the wider society in Northern Ireland, by raising awareness of the existence of the range of different ethnic groups and making contact more straightforward for interested parties.

The project does not claim to have produced a definitive picture of all operational minority ethnic groups which involve young people in Northern Ireland at this time, but in attempting to collect and collate this information in one widely accessible place we hope that we have provided a starting point for all those interested in information sharing and seeking a small glimpse of the range of ethnicities, faiths and the activities that are currently being undertaken. Wheelworks and NICEM would like to express our thanks to all the groups who filled in our questionnaire and to the organisations below for their help, advice and interest:

- Arts Council of Northern
- Ireland Bahá'í Council of Northern Ireland
- Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Services
- Ballymena Community Forum Ethnic Community Association
- Equality Commission
- Children in Northern Ireland
- Community Foundation Northern Ireland
- Mandarin Speakers Association
- Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
- Northern Visions
- One World Centre Northern Ireland
- The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
- Voluntary Arts Ireland

NICEM would like to thank Sheelagh Colclough and Lucy McCullagh from Wheelworks for their work in the completion of this project it is a very important piece of work for the future development of work with young people and particularly new communities in Northern Ireland.

3.6 Student Work Placements 2006-2007

Each year, CONNECT-NICEM and NICEM take school work placements and university students on placement opportunities related to their areas of study or career interests. During 2006-2007 CONNECT-NICEM facilitated placements for:

- Gladys Chung (Victoria College)
- Hoi-ling Kang (Victoria College)
- Cathryn Corken (Victoria College)
- Robin Gonzalez (Lagan College)
- Mamadu Saliu Sal (Newtownbreda High School)
- Katuscia Vaccarini (On placement from Italy)

4. Support Vulnerable Groups in our Society

4.1 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

4.1.1 National Asylum Support Services (NASS)

NICEM no longer provides the National Asylum Support Services (NASS). As of 8th May 2007, the NASS has been transferred to the Bryson One Stop Service. This included staffs who were willing to transfer under the Transfer of Undertaking Law.

NICEM had previously provided a range of services to all asylum seekers and refugees under the NASS provision which is subcontracted from the Refugee Council. 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 type of services NICEM OSS provided included the following:

- Screening service users for support and assisting individuals to obtain essential support including accommodation, NASS, social services and 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 services when required;
- Arranging and maintaining the on-going contact with legal representatives;
- Maintaining regular contact with service users awaiting decisions on support;
- Developing service delivery policies 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 an 'Out-of-Hours' emergency help-line for newly arrived asylum seekers to access emergency accommodation;
- Developing a wider support network in Northern Ireland;
- Developing an 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 status decisions;
- Arranging volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees;

From 1st September 2006 to 30 April 2007 the OSS had 2,125 service users contact them (1,731 in person and 394 by phone). From this the OSS provided 2,122 instances of direct advice and action and 3 instances of sign-posting individuals to other organisations or agencies.

The breakdown of advice and action were follows:

• Accessing NASS support	617
• Assistance with NASS correspondence	410
• Referrals to school/education authority	325
• General Support and Advice	202
• Other statutory or voluntary services	157
• Advice to other agencies	119
• Legal referrals	91
• Referrals to the doctor/health authority	76
• Change of circumstances	69
• Section 4	48
• Completion of NASS1s	29
• Dealing with complaints from accommodation Providers	8
	Total: 2,157

Over the same period the OSS provided support to 44 new asylum applicants and arranged emergency accommodation in addition to assisting the applicants with their asylum claims.

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 of the theme of 'Home' during the Refugee Week Seminar on June 21.

Volunteer members of NICRAS (Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) organized a weekly drop-in centre. This drop-in, provides a space for asylum seekers and refugees, can meet to receive peer support, a hot meal and information about community services and upcoming volunteer opportunities.

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.

4.1.3 Refugee Integration & Resettlement

Direct Support Services

For the 12 month period (April 06-March 07) NICEM provided support for 63 individuals and/or families as follows:

Refugee or other status:	29
Family Reunion:	9 families (16 people)
First time service user but with status:	18

NICEM provided services to assist the above groups in getting access to benefits, housing, education, training and employment, skills assessment and English classes. Support was provided on producing a CV, assistance with job applications (including notification of vacancies) and referrals to other agencies including the Law Centre (as in the family reunion situation). NICEM also provided an orientation programme, arranged schools for children and young people and arranged registration at GP practices as well as many other services.

The breakdowns of advice services were as follows:

Housing:	32
National Insurance/Benefits:	50
Health:	24
Education:	47
Training:	52
Employment:	52
Skills Assessment:	56
Family Reunion:	41
Law Centre referral:	41
Other signposting:	52

Integration programmes for asylum seekers and refugees

NICEM ran orientation workshops to address difficulties people had reporting experiences in aspects of their daily lives in Northern Ireland. This ranged from issues around schools, churches and symbols to child rearing and access to support services. NICEM also ran citizenship workshops to provide information for those preparing for the citizenship test and naturalisation process.

The breakdown of the workshops are as follows:

Orientation Workshops:	4
Number of participants:	31
Citizenship workshop:	4
Number of participants:	32

4.1.4 Refugee Integration Policy

NICEM has a vision of developing an integration policy for refugees in Northern Ireland in line with the government Racial Equality Strategy 2005 2010. As a result, we commissioned a research report on "MEETING THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN NORTHERN

IRELAND: Providing support and integration services” in early 2007. This was to ascertain the needs of the such vulnerable groups in our society. The final Report was published in June 2007 with a number of recommendations to the devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

4.1.5 Refugee Week

This year NICEM also obtained funding from the Home Office to support a number of events for “Refugee Week”. The programme had a combination of events from NICEM and NICRAS.

The All Party Working Group on BME People sponsored the launch at Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 15 June 2007. The Chair of the All Party Working Group, Mr. Alex Maskey MLA, gave the opening speech welcoming asylum seekers and refugees who are living in Northern Ireland. This raised the profile of the refugee issue along with a strong attendance of approximately 120 people.

The highlight was a dramatic performance by actors from NICRAS and the Tinderbox Theatre Company in Belfast. NICEM organised the workshops with Tinderbox and NICRAS members to discuss the content. From these workshops they developed a short play on the theme of “Home” (a revised version from last year) to perform at the launch. The performance was well received.

NICEM organised a Photographic Exhibition on “The Life of Refugees in Northern Ireland” (from photographs collected from last years events). The exhibition documented the lives of refugees and asylum seekers living in Northern Ireland, it was successfully displayed at Castle Court in Belfast (the largest shopping mall in NI) on 26 June 2007. We estimated more than 1,300 people spent time looking at this exhibition.

Unity Club Football Match for Refugee Week

This year the Irish Football Association agreed to host the Unity Club Football Match for the Refugee Week. There were 12 local, ethnic minority and mixed teams who played at heats on 2nd and 9th of June with the final held on 23rd June. Over 200 players and spectators were involved in the event.

The NICRAS seminar entitled “Contemporary Slavery” was held in the Linen Hall Library in June 2007. Around 45 people participated. NICRAS also organised an Annual General Meeting and Cultural Diversity Party on 22nd June 2007. Members and volunteers of NICRAS provided entertainment and prepared and served food from a variety of cultures. There were around 100 participants at the event. There was also a trip to Newcastle, County Down on 30th June 2007 for which 41 people were in attendance.

4.1.6 Volunteering programme for NICRAS

As NICEM is planning to phase out the asylum and refugee services, we have transferred our grant aid from the Volunteer Development Agency along with one member of staff to the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS). Therefore NICRAS now delivers the volunteering programme for asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland under the management of NICEM. This is in line with NICEM's policy of supporting capacity building with grassroots organisations. In addition NICEM also provides QUASSO (a modified version of PQASSO for refugee grassroots organisations) support following training sessions to ensure good governance.

4.2 Migrant Workers

4.2.1 BME Floating Support Project for Migrant Workers

NICEM's BME Floating Support Services have been supporting BME 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 Headquarter), the project's remit covers the entire NHSSB area, (excluding Cookstown Borough Council as STEP will provide the same in Dungannon and Cookstown areas). This project has been created by the partnership of the Housing Executive's Supporting People Fund, the NHSSB and NICEM to ensure the various needs of the BME population in the North East of the province are being met, in particular the needs of the new migrant worker population.

This project was created in order to promote the independence and quality of family life among the Board's BME population in general. There was a specific focus on targeting migrant workers who have experienced crisis situations and those who may have barriers to accessing public services due to language and culture.

The pilot Project has two key tasks: 1. Conducting a mapping-out exercise to identify who is doing and providing what to BME people at local level within the Board's boundary from both the statutory and voluntary and community sector. This will enable the understanding of the needs and the necessary strategy of delivery in the next stage; and 2. Providing a direct advice and practical support service to the BME population in general, with a specific focus on potential migrant workers in crisis situations. Such situations include accessing and maintaining stability in suitable and appropriate housing.

The aims of the BME Floating Support Project are as follows:

- To orientate and guide people settling in the new area;
- To identify, source and make referrals to health care and accommodation providers;
- To provide access and give referrals to immigration and employment rights advice services, to support and counsel (where appropriate) the victims of racial harassment and intimidation;
- To identify, source and refer clients to additional training and educational services;
- To arrange basic advice and guidance in property maintenance;
- To provide welfare rights information to service users, ensuring they are in receipt of their entitlement and to act as an advocate in assisting them in making informed decisions.

The Project was officially launched on 24th October 2006 in Ballymena with the Chair of the NIHE, Mr. Brian Rowntree, the Executive Director of NICEM,

Mr. Patrick Yu and Mr. Brian Mullin of the Northern Health and Social Service Board.

Advice and Support Services

The two Project workers have been providing practical assistance, advice and referrals to service providers for those from the BME population 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 Project staffs have focused on developing an interagency approach to the issues of the BME population in NHSSB. They have already generated a lot of support for the project from both statutory and voluntary agencies that work with ethnic minorities. The success of this project and its ability to assist the BME population depends on the ability of all agencies involved to communicate with each other and to actively refer clients to the appropriate organisations if they cannot support the particular client themselves. 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 relationship with agencies such as the Health and Education Boards, employers, councils, the PSNI, the Community Safety Partnership, libraries, the Law Centre, community groups, charities and, importantly, various councils' community forums.

Up to 11th June 2007 we have provided advice and support to 78 cases. Among these cases 35 users have had multiple needs and 18 users have had crisis situations that require intensive support (mainly homelessness). Moreover, 44 users were either directly or indirectly using the services to address housing needs.

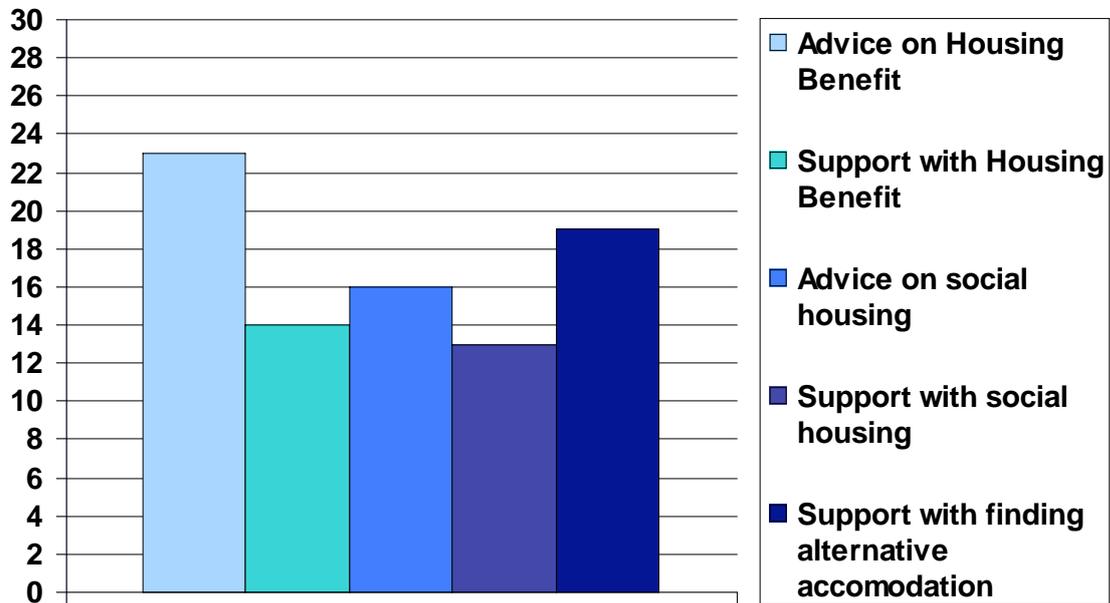
(I) Housing related case analysis

More than half of the cases are housing related (56.4%). The 44 users with specific housing issues mainly have issues with their Housing benefit situation- only 1/3 of them meet the criteria which is required for eligibility of application. Fewer people need information about social housing than housing benefit as few are eligible for social housing. There is a quite high demand for alternative housing, the two main reasons for this are homelessness and racist attacks in the current accommodation.

(II) Case referrals analysis

The biggest source of referrals from agencies came from the health services via the health visitors (28%), closely followed by the housing executive district offices staff (18%). Among all referrals received, self-referral constituted 40%, followed by 8% from recruitment agencies, 3% from the

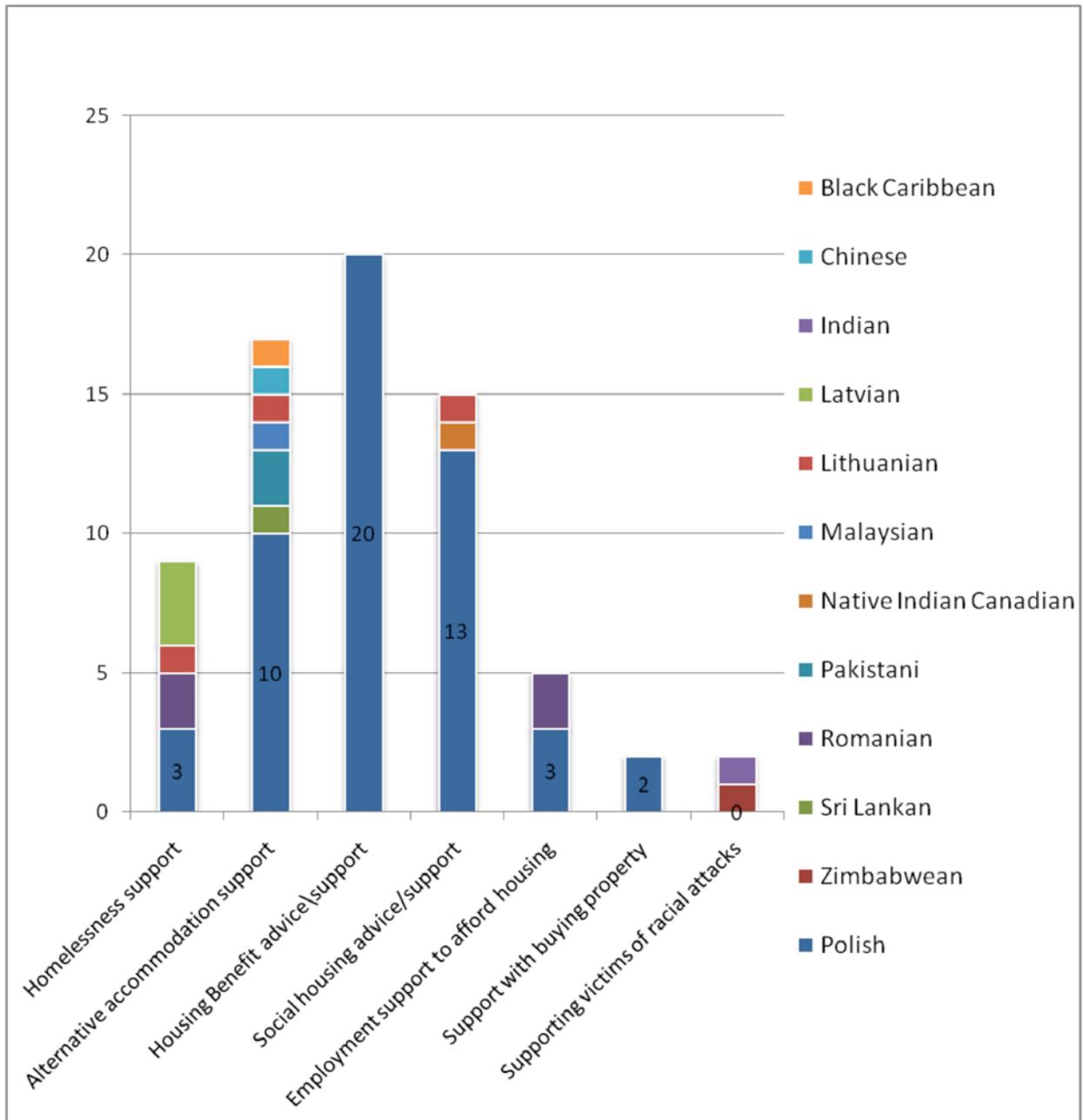
Breakdown of users' needs within housing issues



voluntary sector and 3% from the PSNI. Nearly half of the cases (46%) are coming from the local statutory sector and this reflects the success of the inter-agency referrals. The referrals from the recruitment agencies also show the project is now widely known by the employers and the employment agencies, as well as PSNI. Fewer referrals from the voluntary sector reflect the fact that most of the newcomers do not know about the roles of the voluntary and community sector in providing both referrals and expert services (this reflects client perceptions of NGOs in their own countries).

The high percentage of self-referral indicates the success of using the community out-reach and home visit approach to our service users (it is more time consuming but more user-friendly and it helps to establish trust and develop confidence building). Rarely do users drop into our offices for help (only 2 cases so far) and this is simply because our office is not convenient for most clients. Most of the self-referrals are by word of mouth from previous users who introduced our services to their community members. This highlights the best method of publicity is through the users themselves as they see the Project as providing the vital services for their wellbeing.

Ethnicity breakdown of Housing related cases



Starting from May 2007 we used the local library to pilot the advice surgery as part of the out-reach programme, with the following case result:

- **Ballycastle:** Initially 3 clients, more were recruited through word of mouth
- **Carrickfergus:** Signed up 5 clients (mainly families)
- **Larne:** Got 3 clients

The level of self-referrals also reflects the fact that most of these new comers either are not aware of the mainstreaming services providers (statutory, voluntary and community sectors) or there are other factors that hinder their access to these basic services. The mapping of the service users will be crucial to inform this Project, as well as the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, on the precise needs of the new emerging community and their experience in getting access to public services.

(III) Nature of cases analysis

The users have mainly needed support with issues surrounding welfare (23 cases), housing (22), health (10), general inquiry (13), Crisis (18), national insurance (5), social issues (3), harassment (6), employment (22), worker registration scheme (11) and education (6). Most of the required supports are directly related to the public services (welfare, housing, health, crisis, national insurance registration, worker registration, education, social issues and general inquiry). Only 35.9% (harassment and employment) is non-service related issue. Among non-service related issue, majority are employment related (78.6%).

Most of the issues are housing related (for details see the above Housing Related Case Analysis). And we also have a high percentage of crisis situations that require intensive care and support (23.1%) There are 35 cases which have multiple needs (44.9%).

(IV) Users' ethnicity composition

The users' ethnicity is wide ranging; 18 different ethnic groups have used our services. This is a good sign that most of the key ethnic groups know and use our services. Moreover, the trend of new comers telling their community about our services will assist with the publicity and inform those in needs of our services.

In total 43.6% of the service users are Polish, this is the largest ethnic group residing in the local areas. The next largest ethnic group Latvian and Lithuanian (7.8% respectively), Slovak (6.4%), Czech and Romanian (5.1% respectively), British, Chinese and Estonian (3.8% respectively), Ukrainian (2.6%), Sri Lankan, Malaysian, Canadian Indian, Zimbabwean, Portuguese, Lesotho, Jordanian, and Pakistani (1.3% respectively).

The low percentage of the settled ethnic groups (Chinese, Malaysian, Pakistani, Black African (Lesotho) and Sri Lankan, etc.) reflect that these groups may have known about the local service providers through knowledge gained over time.

(V) Council area breakdown

We have 28% of cases coming from Newtownabbey, this is followed by Ballymena (24%), Coleraine (14%), Moyle (10%), Carrick (10%), Larne (8%), Antrim (5%) and Ballymoney (3%).

The research concerning the geographical spread of clients can guide us in the next phase of the project when we will have to decide where to locate our regular advice surgery. Currently we propose Coleraine, as a result of support from the local schools and the ethnic community. Antrim is also a strong contender as it has the highest incidence of racial attacks and the highest concentration of new migrants.

4.2.2 Belfast Advice and Support to migrant work

Last year we appointed a part-time bi-lingual migrant organiser to provide advice and support to the new comers from Eastern Europe. This was in response to the demand from increasing numbers of people seeking this help from NICEM. Although there was no specific funding for this position we were able to use our own resources generated from the community business. However, due to huge demands on this service we put on extra resources for a full time post starting from June 2007. Currently we have 3 Polish staff (a part-time receptionist, a full-time bi-lingual migrant organiser and a full-time administrator). Two of these staff can also provide advice and support if the bi-lingual migrant organiser is not available.

In 2006-2007 we provided advice and specific action to 112 service users (both individual and family). The breakdown of their nationality is as follows:

- Polish 94
- Lithuanians 7
- Slovaks 5
- Romanians 1
- Latvian 1
- Hungarian 1

The nature of the cases is as follows:

- Benefit information request 67
- Education advice on schools 13
- Homelessness and alcohol issue 21
- New documents 7
- Problems with employers 3
- Anti-social behaviour 1

All of these cases were closed by the bi-lingual organiser within one month of the first meeting with the service user (time taken dependant on the nature of the case). NICEM also provided advice and action through initial telephone or email contact and this was followed up if necessary with face-to-face contact. We estimated there were around 500 initial inquiries over this period.

In response to the huge demands in Belfast NICEM is planning, subject to funding, to set up a Belfast Migrant Centre. The aim is to provide a one-stop shop service to migrant workers (both EU and non-EU). NICEM is approaching government departments for funding with the long-term objective of developing integration of migrants through advice, support, capacity building and participation.

4.3 Victims of racial harassment, racist attacks and racial discrimination

4.3.1 Racial Harassment Support and Advocacy

The Racial Harassment and Advocacy project continues to provide a comprehensive support service for victims of racial harassment and racist attacks which includes:

1. Providing a safe, confidential environment where they can share and talk about their experience
2. Risk assessment of the immediate situation
3. Advice and support in drawing up action plans
4. Liaising with appropriate statutory agencies advocating on the victim's behalf
5. Assisting with police statements and accompanying to the station when requested
6. Filling out Compensation forms and monitoring application status; including attending appeal hearings
7. Dealing with housing issues and assisting with points assessments and appeals
8. Making appropriate referrals to other support, medical or public bodies
9. Assisting with complaints including support in preparing employment tribunals

The service continues to provide support to 3 new clients, on average, each month as well as maintaining its previous caseload. At present the service has done casework and one-time advice sessions with close to 300 people. Over the past year the service has had 48 cases including those from new clients and reactivated cases. The service continues to recognise the need for support of victims of racial harassment and the limitation posed by only one worker for the project.

To address the issue of limited resources we have been working towards building a regional partnership between community groups and councils and ourselves. In September 2006 a meeting was held with community relations officers and/or community safety officers from all 26 district councils. Also in attendance were the NIO and a representative from OFMDFM. This workshop was held to bring the councils on board with a regional partnership as well as giving them a chance to feedback. The meeting proved very successful and the feedback was positive.

Following on from this we have begun partnership meetings with community groups from Armagh, Craigavon, Londonderry/Derry, Lisburn and Omagh, with potential partners in Antrim, North Belfast and the BME Floating Support Project. We feel confident that pending the necessary funding we will be able to provide comprehensive support more effectively throughout Northern Ireland.

In addition to the main work of the project we continue to participate with several groups and forums throughout Northern Ireland to support and influence policy and practice. This includes the work that we do with Anti-Racism training, awareness raising workshops and presentations at conferences. This participation is vital to supporting agencies in their bid to stop racial harassment and attacks.

In our last Report we reported that an external evaluation had been done through an independent consultant and recommendation was made to establish the Regional Support Service for Victims of Racial Harassment and Racist Attacks. This external evaluation was funded by the NIO Community Safety Unit in conjunction to their financial support of the Project.

Unfortunately the Project funding finished in December 2006 and our proposal for the continuation of the external evaluation process was rejected. NICEM met with the Minister, David Hanson MP, in January to discuss our funding proposal for the long-term support for victims of racist attacks through the Regional Support Services. The Minister disagreed the resources should go to NICEM and instead they were directed to Victim Support NI.

NICEM were disappointed with this decision. We feel it reflects the poor advice the Minister received from the NIO who tend to favour the traditional voluntary sector and organisations such as Victim Support, even though they are aware that Victim Support cannot provide the same level of services currently provided by NICEM. Indeed this is precisely why we started the Racial Harassment Project five years ago with funding from Comic Relief for 3 years and then from the NIO for an additional 18 months. The specific support services for victims of racial hate crime are similar to the specialist expertise provided to victims of domestic violence as offered by Women's Aid.

Currently we still use our own resources to continue this important area of work to support the most vulnerable groups in our society. We urge the government to review their decision in light of an average 12% annual increase in racial incidents and 15% in racial hate crimes.

Participation in community fora

Migrant workers forum

SEEDS

North Belfast Regeneration Forum

WAVE

Carrickfergus Parent's Support Group (development)

BME Independent Advice Group (PSNI)

Diversity Sub-Group Belfast City Council

Foyle District BME Protocol Development Forum

Housing Rights Practitioners Forum

Housing Rights Manual Sub-Group

Save the Children Bullying Forum
Labour Relations Agency
Unison Race Group
Intercommunity Network (Housing)
BME Housing Forum
EURES
Alternatives
CEWC Anti Racism Charter
Mediation NI
Community Network Craigavon
CEWC Model UN

Presentations

Youth Summit
Carrickfergus DPP
Union of Agricultural Workers
Simon Community
Victoria College
Queens Human Rights Module
Enniskillen Technical College
Community Safety Partnership Antrim
Community Safety Partnership Newtownabbey
NIACRO
South Belfast PSNI Anti Racism Training
East Belfast PSNI Anti Racism Training
Crusaders Football Club
Clanmill Housing Association
Ballyclare DPP

Education

Housing Issues for the BME community
CJSNI Conference
Compensation Agency Stakeholders
Moyle Council Conference
Race Action Net
PSNI Annual Conference

4.4 Racial Discrimination

We dealt with 26 cases from the period September 06 to August 2007. We referred most of the cases to the Equality Commission. Most of the cases are employment related issues. We also provided 5 cases, that of public interests in nature, of legal aid by using our appointed lawyers to deal with the cases.

NICEM is now planning and developing litigation strategy in the area of public interests law. We are waiting for the funding for strategic advocacy, including litigation option from the Atlantic Philanthropy.

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, shares our unique experiences and struggle. Networking also forms the basis of collective action through partnership building. Through our involvement and contribution, NICEM plays a significant role in the UK, on the island of Ireland and in the European Union and Council of Europe.

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 is the debate on a Single Equality Bill and Human Rights and Equality Commission. On the Single Equality Bill and the Commission for Human Rights and Equality we work closely with the Commission for Racial Equality, 1990 Trust and Runnymede Trust, Discrimination Law Association. Our partners are as follows:

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

5.2 Irish Network

North-South dimension is a key strategy for campaigning anti-racism on the island of Ireland. We have the following partners:

- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Inter-culturalism
- 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

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. The SOLID Project is the key work to link NGOs in the 25 Member States. We involve 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) and now the European Fundamental Rights Agency
- EU Economic Social Committee
- Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- Public Interests Law Institute in Budapest (Columbia Law School)
- European Roma Rights Centre
- European Roma Information Centre
- Article 1 in Netherland (the former LBR)
- Denmark Documentation Centre on Racism
- Open Society Justice Initiative

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, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, 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
- Age Concerns
- 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
- Human Rights Consortium

6. Organisational Development

6.1 Review of NICEM Strategic Plan 2004-2009

We commissioned Mary MaMahon, an independent consultant, to review our Strategic Plan 2004-2009. As a result staffs and committee members took part in a 2 days review work. And the staffs follow-up on the Review Report and developed an Action Plan 2007-2009.

6.2 Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisation (PQASSO)

With the support of Refugee Council we continue to monitor and review our organizational development, policy and practice through the PQASSO process. A number of our staffs from each of NICEM's teams are involved in the PQASSO Quality task group under the leadership of the Quality Champion Gabrielle Doherty.

This Quality Task group organised an annual Quality self assessment day for 2006-2007 using both the PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) for organizational development and the QASRO (Quality Assurance System for Refugee Organisations) on development of policies, procedure and systems for specific services and teams within the organisation.

The Quality Task continues to work on the organisation's Quality Action Plan for the and is planning a review of the plan and next annual self-assessment exercise for the organisation for 2007-2008.

This annual process and work of the Quality Task Group ensures continual improvement of standards of service within the organisation, and facilitated the involved of staff, committee and volunteers in different areas of expertise.

NICEM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2005-2007)

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. Lilian 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
Ms. Anne Brown
Ms. Inez McCromac
Ms. Tansy Hutchinson

STAFFS LIST (Sept 2006-August 2007)

Central Administration Team

Executive Director	Patrick Yu
Finance/Administration Manager	Nuala Moynagh
Administrator (Policy)	Christopher McAfee (From May 07)
Administrator (Policy)	Maciek Bator (To March 07)
Administrator (NASS)	Colleen Marshal (leaver 15/09/06)
Administrator (NASS)	Elisa Pagram (Leaver 31/05/07)

Policy & Capacity Building Team

Co-ordinator Policy & Research	Tansy Hutchinson (Leaver 31/04/07)
Development Worker – Policy & Research	Terry Deehen
Development Worker - Policy & Research	Helena Macormac (From May 07)
Development Worker – Racial Harassment and Victim Support	Jolena Flett
Training Officer / Refugee Integration	Ronald Vellem
Support Worker – Floating Support	Max Petrushkin (Leaver 05/05/07)
Support Worker – Floating Support	Elizabeth Connor-Kerr
Bi-Lingual Support Worker – Floating Support	Marzena Szkaradek (from June 07)

Bi-lingual Migrant Worker
Organiser

Maciek Bator (From April 07)

Asylum and Refugee Services

Advice Worker (NASS)

Patricia Leong (Leaver 03/10/06)

Advice Worker (NASS)

Lumturi Podrimaj (Service Transferred
07/05/07)

Advice Worker (NASS)

Jean Walsh (Service Transferred
07/05/07)

Advice Worker (NASS)

Fazila Jogiyat-Khatir (Leaver
22/03/07)

Development Worker - Refugee
Re-settlement & Integration

Moira McCombe (Leaver 31/03/07)

Development Worker – Asylum
Volunteer Co-ordinator

Jean Walsh (Project ended Jan 07)

Capacity Building and CONNECT NICEM Team

Co-ordinator of Capacity Building &
Executive Director of CONNECT NICEM

Gabrielle Doherty

Development Worker –
Social Economy

Sean Kelly

Administrator (CONNECT)

Krzysztof Frankiewicz
(From July 07)

Administrator (CONNECT)

Aruna Djalo

Administrator (CONNECT)

Tanja Tierney

Administrator (CONNECT)

Stewart Robinson

Administrator (CONNECT)

Sarah Maitland

Administrator (CONNECT)
(Out of Hours Interpreting Service)

Michaela McClelland

Administrator (CONNECT)
(Out of Hours Interpreting Service)

Rumena Kostadinova-McCabe

Administrator (CONNECT)
(Out of Hours Interpreting Service)

Alexandra Kremser (6 months
maternity cover)

NICEM MEMBER GROUPS (2006-2007)

Al-Nisa Association NI
An Munia Tober
Bangladeshi Welfare Association
Barnardos Chinese Lay Health Project
Belfast Islamic Centre
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
Northern Ireland Sikh Association
Polish Association Northern Ireland
Windsor Women's Centre Multi-cultural Group
Afro Community Support Organisation Northern Ireland
Derry Traveller Support Group
Women of the World, Enniskillen
World Wide Women at North Down
Ormagh Ethnic Communities Support Group
Strabane Ethnic Community Association

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