



# **Annual Report**

## **2011-2012**

## **Our Vision:**

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

## **Our Mission:**

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

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

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## **Strategic Priorities 2010-2015**

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

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

During this period, there has been extensive lobbying in Westminster, Scottish Parliament and at the Dail on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland in which NICEM participated as the Board member of the Human Rights Consortium.

We also made our submission to the UK Bill of Rights Commission in November 2011 highlights that "NICEM does not believe that there is a need for a UK-wide Bill of Rights. The current Human Rights Act 1998 already fulfils the function of a UK Bill of Rights with regard to civil and political rights."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Our submission could be download from the following link:

[http://www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/NICEM\\_Submission\\_to\\_the\\_Commission\\_on\\_a\\_Bill\\_of\\_Rights\\_.pdf](http://www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/NICEM_Submission_to_the_Commission_on_a_Bill_of_Rights_.pdf)

During the British Presidency of the Council of Europe NICEM sent out an open letter to all the Permanent Representatives of all member states to the Council of Europe, alongside with the key human rights organisations in the UK, to raise serious concerns with the UK Government's Draft Declaration on the future of the European Court of Human Rights. The current debates on the protection of human rights, in particular the Human Rights Act, are extremely worrying and we believe these domestic issues have tainted the UK's Draft Declaration.

Whilst there are practical concerns with the Court, including on-going efforts to reduce the case backlog, many of the proposals suggest a government seeking to avoid international scrutiny rather than champion on human rights protection. At the end the Declaration was amended and adopted on 19 April 2012. Though, we welcome the clear message for governments to do more to protect human rights within their countries, we are concerned that the reforms may compromise the independence of the European Court of Human Rights and reduce accountability of member states.

### **1.2 Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference**

Our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference was on 23 March 2012 with the theme "Fundamental Rights Protection in Europe". We lined up with speakers from EU, UK and the island of Ireland looking at the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the opportunities for NGOs to use it for protection. Worrying the topic is too legalistic we still registered over 90 participants.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is a new double lock protection in addition to the ECHR to extend the rights towards the economic, social and cultural arenas that based on the principle and case law that established in the EU Court of Justice. NICEM will seek EU funding to train NGOs in both at home and on NICEM's EU partners. One of the ideas is to write a NGO manual for both training and awareness raising.

### **1.3 Section 75 Equality Schemes**

NICEM is a founding member of the Equality Coalition, which brings together NGOs working in the equality field. The work of the Equality

Coalition has focused on section 75 (of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and interaction with the Equality Commission. Following publication of the third edition of its Guide to the Statutory Duties, the Commission has called for revised equality schemes from Government Departments and the health sector. These will replace the schemes approved by the Commission in 2001.

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

We have also attended three Equality Coalition consultation events on 28 September 2011, where we had the opportunity to speak directly with public authorities, prior to their submission of revised schemes, and audits and action plans, to the Equality Commission. In June 2012 the Executive Director made a presentation on the Education and Library Board's Audit of Inequality Report and Action Plan for the at the Joint Consultative Equality Forum for Education Sector, alongside with other S.75 sector.

During the period we also made submission to the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) to raise our concerns on the consultation paper "The Early Removal Scheme for foreign prisoners" in which the consultation period is cut short for 8 weeks and no equality impact assessment attached the consultation paper<sup>2</sup>.

#### **1.4 All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic Communities**

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

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<sup>2</sup> The details of the submission could be download from the following link:  
[http://www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/NICEM\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_NIPS\\_consultation\\_21June12.pdf](http://www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/NICEM_response_to_the_NIPS_consultation_21June12.pdf)

From September 2011 to August 2012, the Group met 9 times. The issues discussed in the agenda included:

**Conclusion Observation of the UK's 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Periodical Report from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**

A delegation of BME and Trade Union representatives under NICEM went to Geneva in August 2011 to report to the CERD on issues facing ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland. The Conclusion Observation from the Committee was circulated to the APG and each of the recommendations regarding Northern Ireland was explained in details. The APG discussed the next step to be taken following the recommendations.

**Race Hate Crime and Human Trafficking**

At the October meeting, 4 representatives of the Department of Justice and the PSNI came to discuss issues of Race Hate Crime and Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland. Following the discussion the chair of the APG agreed to put questions to the DoJ in November regarding 2 new pieces of legislation. The secretariat suggested to organise a seminar on such issues in January. The seminar took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January and was very successful with over 70 attendees. The APG recognised that progress had been made in the criminal justice agencies response to those issues since the first seminar that was organised by the APG on such issues in 2006, but that much still remains to be done. The APG discussed what actions should be taken forward following the seminar.

Following on the discussions and seminar in January a new All Party Group on Human Trafficking was set up by the key members of the APG. The new Chair is Anna Lo and the Vice-Chair David McIlveen. The Secretariat is the Amnesty International. The two APGs are working together with NICEM to organise a Chatham House Seminar on Human Trafficking that based on NICEM's briefing paper "Analysis of Current Responses to Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland" by Professor Tom Obokata. This seminar will be hosted on 14 November 2012.



### **MLAs not being able to contact the UKBA directly**

In November 2010, a letter from the UKBA was sent to all MLAs notifying them that they were not to send direct correspondence to the UKBA, that this should be done by MPs. In March 2011, the then chair of the APG, Dawn Purvis, wrote to the Minister Damian Green on behalf of the group to raise the issue. No reply was received. The APG agreed to write to the Minister again as some MLAs have received new letters from the UKBA restating this position. The Alliance Party MP Naomi Long agreed to ask a question in Westminster and will report back in September meeting.

### **Research Report on the Filipino community in NI (discussion and endorsement)**

At the December meeting, NICEM presented the findings of their latest research on the Filipino Community in NI. The group welcomed the new research and found some of the findings very helpful in assisting other non-EU migrants to raise similar issues and lobby together. At the February 2012 meeting, NICEM asked if the APG would be willing to endorse the report and put forward a motion debate. Some members needed more time for reflection and the item was added to the March meeting. At the March meeting, 2 representatives from the Alliance of Filipino Communities in NI came to explain the importance of endorsing the report recommendations and asking for a motion debate. The APG endorsed the recommendations and the motion debate which was drafted by the secretariat was approved in May meeting. The Equal Protection for Agency Worker Motion was lodged with the Business Committee by the Chair and signed off by all parties. The Motion proposed is as follows:

“That this Assembly takes note of recent research conducted by NICEM in relation to the experiences of the Filipino Community in Northern Ireland, and calls on the OFMDFM to consider whether our equality legislation adequately provides protection for agency workers regardless of whether they are EU or non-EU”

### **Research project on Race and the Criminal Justice system in NI**

At the January 2012 meeting, Robbie McVeigh gave an overview of the research he previously conducted for NICEM on policing and

racist violence in Northern Ireland in 2006. The McPherson recommendations have not been implemented in Northern Ireland, unlike the other regions of UK. Robbie will be conducting a new research extending to all the criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland and was keen to get as many BME groups and individuals contribution as possible.

### **Recruitment Campaign from the Prison Service NI**

Originally scheduled to come at the November meeting, 2 representatives from the Prison Service came to discuss their new recruitment campaign at the February meeting. They also presented the new structural and cultural reforms due to be implemented in the service. The NIPS are aware that ethnic minorities are very under-represented in the service and affirmative action plans have been put in place to encourage applications.

### **Cohesion, Sharing and Integration programme and the new Racial Equality Strategy**

The Racial Equality Strategy has been an ongoing issue of concern for the group. The Racial Equality Panel had been reconvened in June 2011 and worked on redrafting the Racial Equality Strategy but nothing happened since then.

The CSI programme is undergoing redrafting following the consultation process of October 2010 but is not in the final stages yet. The group proposed to invite representatives from the OFMDFM to explain the lack of movement on those key issues. Two representatives of the OFMDFM came to the February 2012 meeting but the discussion was centred around the Ethnic Minority Development Fund. Funding had become an emergency issue for many groups whose funding was due to stop on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2012, such groups had received no details on future funding or the possible extension of the existing round. The OFMDFM argued that due to a lack of resources the Racial Equality Strategy and funding issues could be dealt with at the same time and that the priority was currently the EMDF.

### **Minority Ethnic Development Fund (MEDF)**

Following the June 2011 meeting, the APG sent a letter to the OFMDFM regarding concerns over the distribution of the EMDF. The

First Minister's adviser had said that 75% of the groups that have received core funding are not BME-led groups, as a result the capacity building for BME groups has been very poor, which is a real problem for them to compete with local groups for other funding opportunities.

The OFMDFM have asked the groups to undergo an evaluation process and groups asked if the results would be published. At the February and March meetings in 2012, long discussions took place regarding the uncertainties around the MEDF and the survival of the groups joint efforts were made to move the issue forward as quickly as possible.

At last the OFMDFM published the Consultation Paper "Proposal for the future Minority Ethnic Development Fund 2012-2015" in mid-August 2012 which caused a lot of our concerns. Firstly the new proposal is published before the revised Racial Equality Strategy. Secondly neither the Racial Equality Panel nor the Racial Equality Forum has been consulted the document before publication. Thirdly there is only 4 weeks consultation.

As the result the Chair of APG wrote to the First Minister and deputy First Minister prior to the September APG full meeting to seeking for 6 months extension in order to have a new revised Strategy on one hand to have sufficient time for consultation with the BME groups on the others. A formal response prepared by the Secretariat was sent to the Racial Equality Unit to highlight the issues, concerns and recommendations.

On 6th November the OFMDFM sent out letter to the current grantees of MEDF said, "Ministers have decided that the Minority Ethnic Development Fund is to be extended for a further 6 months until 31 March 2013 to those groups currently in receipt of development funding. The extension will allow for engagement and consultation around the development of a revised Racial Equality Strategy and how it relates to a longer term fund, and to put in place arrangements for the longer term fund." The APG is very please to see the concrete result of the intervention.

### **Request from OFMDFM officials to attend meetings as observers on a regular basis**

At the March 2012 meeting, the secretariat received a request from the OFMDFM to attend APG meetings regularly. The APG discussed and voted that their attendance at every meeting would not be appropriate but that regular communication should be maintained by other means such as regular reports or invitation to contribute to meetings when the agenda allows it.

### **The UK Border Agency**

The APG actively engaged with the UKBA. Following on the Immigration Seminar in 2011 the APG followed-up with a letter to address the outstanding issues arising from the Seminar. The Assistance Director of the UKBA in Northern Ireland and Scotland and his colleagues attended the May meeting to answer and to discuss these outstanding issues. The discussion was fruitful and we continue to invite the UKBA in the future meeting.

### **Collaboration with the APG in Scotland**

The secretariat received an invitation from the Parliamentary Group on Equalities and Racism (equivalent to the APG on EMC) to meet in Edinburgh. A provisional date was set up for the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. The secretariat of the Scottish group would explore funding opportunities to enable the 2 jurisdictions to come together.

### **APG Questionnaire**

In January the incoming chair suggested that it would be beneficial to review how effective the APG was in terms of membership participation, a questionnaire was sent to all members and follow up phone calls were made by the secretariat. As a result it was suggested and agreed that an evening event could be beneficial in encouraging individuals and groups who would not normally attend the APG to get involved with their Politicians. An event entitled “Questions that Matter – an evening with Politicians and Officials” was organized in the Stormont Brasserie on 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2012.

The event was oversubscribed and was attended by both BME community members (34), politicians (7) including a Junior Minister and a number of Committee Chairs or Vice-Chair, as well as other statutory and voluntary sector (6). Audience members submitted

questions in advance ensuring that a wide range of topics and issues could be addressed through an impartial chair. Following the event a report<sup>3</sup> was prepared containing 10 follow-up actions which will form the basis of action of the APG in the future.

### **Ethnic Minority Community Groups Presentation to APG**

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

- Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
- An Munia Tober
- The Kenyan Association NI
- World Wide Women @ North Down
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Thai Ni Community Group
- Armagh Traveller Support Group

### **Other Presentation to APG**

The following Department/Agency/organisation/individual made presentation to the APG:

- Department of Justice on Race Hate Crime
- Police Service Northern Ireland on Human Trafficking
- Prison Service Northern Ireland on Recruitment of Ethnic Minorities
- Dr. Robbie McVeigh on Research Project on Race and Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland
- UKBA on Immigration Law
- Department of Justice Black and Minority Ethnic Network on their aims and works

### **Events organised by the APG**

The following events were organised by the APG during the period:

- Immigration Seminar on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011 with 56 participants

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<sup>3</sup> The Report could be download from the following link:

<http://www.nicem.org.uk/userFiles/File/Report-%20Questions%20that%20Matter%20.pdf>

- Hate Crime and Human Trafficking Seminar on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012 with 52 participants
- Questions that Matter Evening Event on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012 with 46 participants.

### **1.5 Follow-up to the Conclusion Observation of the United Nations Committee on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on the UK Periodical Report in 2011**

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

- A presentation to the Committee of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011;
- NICEM urged the committee to instigate an inquiry into racism and racial discrimination in Northern Ireland based on the Conclusion Observation and NICEM's submission;
- NICEM met with Ministerial Advisors from one of the parties in OFMDFM (DUP) on 1<sup>st</sup> September to inform them of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee, in particular the intersectional issues of religion and race. The Advisers acknowledged the international pressure arising from the Concluding Observations and it was recognised that human rights and equality issues should be reflected in the CSI Strategy and the revised Racial Equality Strategy. The Advisors also agreed to use NICEM's submission on the UN Committee to inform the revised Racial Equality Strategy.
- NICEM also met with the new Director of Equality and Strategies of the OFMDFM and the Department Lead on Racial Equality on 16 September.
- We also met other political representatives from the SDLP and Alliance Party on NICEM's proposed CSI framework on human rights on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and equality who were supportive of our position in particular on the Bill of Rights and the Single Equality Bill.

Our Alternative Report to the UN Committee and the Conclusion Observation of the Committee have shaped our policy priorities in the coming year since the hearing, and formed the foundation of our work in informing the Government of priorities for the revised Racial Equality Strategy.

## **1.6 Gender and Race**

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

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

NICEM has developed experience in interacting with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and, in Summer 2011, we began compiling a submission ahead of the UK’s examination in 2013. We have also contributed to an inquiry regarding women’s participation in politics on UN Resolution 1325<sup>4</sup> through the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security. Through these mechanisms we hope to build the capacity of ethnic minority women and raise awareness of issues which affect them.

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is effectively a piece of international law binding on all UN member states. It calls for the participation of women in peace processes, and the protection of women and girls and respect for their rights; it also calls for gender mainstreaming in the reporting and implementation systems of the UN relating to conflict, peace and security. We believe that the effect of the conflict in Northern Ireland has had a detrimental impact on the rights of BME women in NI and therefore participating in such consultations is very useful.

In light of the scheduled 2013 hearing of the CEDAW Committee on UK Report NICEM has devised a plan of work. At the heart of much of this work will be a series of focus groups and trainings with BME women's groups. These sessions will provide evidence base for NICEM's Alternative Report, as well as empower those involved and equip them with knowledge of their rights whilst actively engaging them in lobbying. Accompanying further research and campaigning will also take place to support the process. Based on the CERD intervention model, we will also bring with a group of BME women from Northern Ireland who involve in the process of empowerment.

### **1.7 The revised Racial Equality Strategy and the Minority Ethnic Development Fund**

Most of our work in these two areas is under the APG as NICEM serves as the Secretariat (see above 1.4). In our view the APG is more effective to push the racial equality agenda in the Assembly, as well as monitoring the progress and accountability of the officials. Both the revised Racial Equality Strategy and the Minority Ethnic Development Fund are the two successful examples.

We also prepared a draft of the Revised Racial Equality Strategy (Chapter 1 to Chapter 4 (finished half of it)) for the officials of the Racial Equality Unit to use it as a reference in order to fastening the process to develop a new revised Racial Equality Strategy. Due to heavy workload over the last 9 months and lack of focus of priority to finish to rest of the chapters we sent what we finished to the officials in August 2012.

In short we redrafted and rewording the 6 aims to fit the current context, in particular the transfer of criminal justice to Northern Ireland in Chapter 1. The revised aims are under the human rights and racial equality framework and implement through a new positive action programme or measures through Departmental Action Plan.

No drafted document of the revised Racial Equality Strategy has been made by the OFMDFM and the Racial Equality Panel, which was tasked to develop the Strategy, has no meeting since August 2011, our drafted Chapters will definitely fasten the process. Both NICEM and the APG will monitor the progress and to ensure the



Strategy will be published before the current financial year as promised by the Minister.

### **1.8 Research Report “Filipino Community in Northern Ireland and the Review of Race Relations (NI) Order 1997**

The Research Report was launched at the evening on 23 January 2012 at Long Gallery, Parliament Building. The Launch is sponsored by the APG with the Chair, Steven Agnew MLA, making a remarkable speech to welcome the Filipino Community in Northern Ireland. We had around 100 Filipino attended with another 20 plus from other communities. The Minister of Employment and Learning, Dr. Stephen Farry MLA, and the Chair of the Committee for Employment and Learning, Basil McCrea MLA, addressed the issues and concerns arising from the Report.

NICEM has continued to work with the Filipino community to highlight issues and recommendations from the Report through lobbying different committees in Stormont. We also used the findings of the Report to prepare a three years development plan for the Filipino community.

NICEM was before the OFMDFM Committee on 18 April 2012 presenting the findings and issues of the Report. We highlight the lack of legal protection for any Agency Worker, in particular the Filipino seafarers, which constituted 28% workforce of the Filipino community and nearly 42% Filipino experienced discrimination at the workplace. NICEM asked the Committee should focus to have a comprehensive amendment of the Race Relations Order, in viewing of no hope for the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland, rather than piece meal by piece meal amendment which is denial the basic rights of ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland.<sup>5</sup> The Assembly in 2009 voted unanimously to support the motion to review the Racial Relations Order (NI) Order 1997.

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<sup>5</sup> The presentation and discussions at the OFMDFM Committee could be download with the following link: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Official-Reports/OFMdFM/2011-2012/Ethnic%20Minorities%20in%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf>

We were also before the Committee for Employment and Learning on 26 June 2012 to present the issues of the agency worker protection and the Filipino community, in particular the Filipino seafarers. We highlight to the Committee that two judgements<sup>6</sup>, one in Northern Ireland and one in Great Britain, prior to the introduction of the EU Agency Workers Directive have no protection whatsoever in the areas of employment and discrimination under the new adopted Agency Workers Regulations.<sup>7</sup>

Through the APG mechanism a Motion has been lodged to the Business Committee of the Assembly in June 2012 and will expect the Assembly debate in autumn this year. The Motion is as follows:

“That this Assembly notes that research carried out by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities in relation to the experiences of the Filipino community in Northern Ireland; and call on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Department of Employment and Learning to consider whether the existing equality and employment legislation provide adequate protection for agency workers, regardless whether they are EU or non-EU citizens.”

### **1.9 Ethnic Monitoring Pilot Project**

This is the on-going follow-up of the Baseline Data Roundtable in 2009 and the Project was set up in 2010. The aim is to lead a pilot, and share learning, on the development of common Ethnic Monitoring information routinely available on the Child Health Care System, Community System (SOSCARE) and Hospital System (PAS) to promote equality and diversity within Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland.

The pilot aims to support the capacity to robustly capture critical patient/service user information, in particular information which relates to the diversity of patients and service users, to help the

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<sup>6</sup> *Bohill v Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)* [2011]NICA2 and *Muschett v HM Prison Services (HMPS)* [2010]ESCA Civ 25

<sup>7</sup> The Regulations could be down load through the following link:  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2011/350/pdfs/nisr\\_20110350\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2011/350/pdfs/nisr_20110350_en.pdf)

HSCB plan develop and enhance service provision to all members of the community.

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

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

The key partners of the Project are the Southern Trust, Southeast Trust, Belfast Trust and the Department of Health and OFMDFM. We are in particular have the support from the statistics department to assist and support the Pilot Project.

Pilot has been gone through the new ethnic /nationality questions in the new Child Health Book, as well as the Patient Administration System (PAS) in the hospital and the Care System (Children and Young People under care). As the successful of the Pilot, the parallel process which is co-ordinated by the OFDFM on Ethnic Monitoring, started to draft the Guidance for Monitoring Racial Equality. The Guidance was officially published in July 2011 with the official press release to quote from the Executive Director of NICEM:

“This is a milestone for the equality of opportunity for all. I look forward to seeing much improved equality monitoring of minority ethnic people and migrants in a year or two's time across all departments and their next step agencies. These equality monitoring data will benchmark fair and equal access to all public services. It is a great achievement and I would like

to say a big thank to the team from various departments for their combined effort in pulling the guidance together."<sup>8</sup>

### **1.10 Action Research leading to regional policy submission**

NICEM Policy Team has completed a day of research methods training by the research department at NICVA. Working closely with communities at the grassroots level, each development officer has identified initial research needs in their areas. The Belfast Development Officer will focus on relationship breakdown in the Thai community specifically, the mid Ulster Development Officer will look at issues of health and childcare faced by BME mothers groups and the N/W Officer will look at the economic downturn and debt issues amongst the Polish community.

Initial questionnaires have been devised for each piece of research. In the coming month these questionnaires will be piloted amongst targeted community members, then a target sample size will be formulated and the questionnaires will be disseminated; the first results of such surveys will be available in late 2012. The researchers at NICVA will assist in methodologies of compiling data. The research will then be analysed and the first regional policy submission will be compiled, ready for publication in early 2013.

### **1.11 Research Steering Group on the BME Health data collection**

Following on from work done in Phase 1 of the project that established the Ethnic Monitoring Pilot project using the current computerised patient admission systems, a need for further data collection and research relative to BME health was identified.

The 5 Health Trust's Audit of Inequality Report also highlighted the need for such work. In June 2012 NICEM convened a steering group comprised of the 5 Equality leads in each NI Health and Social Care Trust, and an initial meeting to discuss ideas and potential

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<sup>8</sup> The Guidance and the press release could be download from the following link:  
<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-ofmdfm-270711-publication-of-guidance>

methodologies was held. As a result, Evan Bates, an external consultant in this field, was appointed to conduct the research, as well as prepare the proposal and questionnaire for the 5 Trusts' internal endorsement. The research will mobilize the local ethnic community and/or Trust staff to collect data. Currently we are at the stage of finalizing the questionnaire. In viewing the current progress, we will expect the full research will be conducted in early next year.

### **1.12 Policy Papers**

We commission the following works during the reporting period:

- Professor Tom Obokata : “Analysis of Current Responses to Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland”

We also produced the following Policy Papers:

- Education Policy Paper on “Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration”

### **1.13 Human Rights and Equality Booklet Series**

We commission the following works during the reporting period:

- Ms. Tansy Hutchinson “Section 75 and Human Rights Series” to rewrite a new revised Section 75 Booklets and a general leaflet.
- Professor Gordon Anthony “Public Interests Law Toolkits”

### **1.14 NICEM Policy Magazine “Minority Rights Now!”**

At the end of March 2012 the NICEM Annual Human Rights & Equality Conference was held. This year's focus was European Protection of Fundamental Rights. We made use of the excellent contents of the Conference by the speakers to produce a special edition on EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Due to the difficulty to get the article from the speakers, we will delay the publication of this special issue.

The recently appointed Parliamentary and Campaigns Officer has reconstituted the Editorial Board with a variety of experts and activists with a strong interest in human rights and racial equality. The newly appointed board will have its first meeting in early autumn with the aim of ensuring the magazine has targeted articles to contribute to policy change, whilst being as accessible and relative to BME community members. A blog function to complement the magazine will be developed on the website in order to encourage debate and reaction to articles.

#### **1.14 Public Interest Litigation**

NICEM is playing an active role in the Public Interest Litigation Support (PILS) Stakeholder Forum. We also, with participation of member staff, attended a number of training and conference organized by the PILS.

We also continue to provide advice and support to our member groups and the wider population on issues around harassment, intimidation, employment, benefits and discrimination, etc. These are the potential mechanisms to get a testing case for the purpose of public interests law.

Over the period we have identified a number of issues which are merit for a legal opinion, such as the Seafarers Regulations 2012, the Welfare Reform Bill, the Agency Worker Regulations, etc. by using the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU Charter of Right will be our crucial testing ground over the next few years, particularly in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights.

#### **1.15 Consultations**

We made the following submissions during the reporting period:

- Response to Department of Education Draft Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan
- Response to the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) on the introduction of an early removal scheme for foreign prisoners
- Response to the Department of Justice consultation in engagement in relation to Human Trafficking

- NICEM submission to PPSNI consultation on prosecution of Human Trafficking
- NICEM submission to DEL on Employment Law Review
- NICEM submission to Department of Education on Education Performance
- NICEM submission to CEDAW pre-sessional hearing
- NICEM submission to DOJ Criminal Justice Bill 2012

### **1.16 Media Training**

We provided another media training delivered by experienced Communication Officer of the Migrant Rights Network in London on 24 November 2011. Due to the equipments and other limitation we could train up 6 people each time. We were pleased to see a lot of enthusiastic from member groups to participate in this training programme. We had run 5 media training with 30 participants from member groups and NICEM staff since 2009.

### **1.17 Website, Facebook page and Twitter feed**

The website continues to be updated regularly with relevant news, publications and events. In order to respond to user needs, reflect the new regional offices and make it more cost efficient, it is currently being overhauled. We have also been exploring the possibility of obtaining the assistance of a creative cooperative to help with maintenance and design. The Facebook and Twitter feed are updated daily by all team members across all the regional offices, and figures show a steady regular increase in followers and fans.

## **2. Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple Discrimination**

### **2.1 Anti-racism and Equality Training**

Good policy and practice through education and training is one of our strategies to support the legal framework in standard setting. The law defines what is the minimum acceptable behaviour in our society. Policy and practice are the guidelines for the implementation of racial equality. Without education and training on policy and practice it is difficult to deliver good quality standards at all levels. Only education and training will guarantee the staff's support for racial equality on the one hand, and change the organisational culture through new 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 promotion of diversity as a norm. We continue to provide awareness raising sessions and workshops to help groups implement good practice around Anti-Racism and Equality issues.

Over the last 12 months we focus on our OCN Accredited Level 2 Equality and Diversity Training. Understanding Equality and Diversity is a two-day course, accredited at Open College Network (OCN) Level 2, which aims to explore the dynamics of racism and equality on an individual and organisational level. By the end of the course the participant should have a better understanding of the value of equality and diversity, how to identify discrimination and oppression and be equipped with the tools to challenge racism. The training gives the participant an opportunity to examine how they interact with others from a diverse background and the opportunity to examine the organisations they are involved with and how to better ensure equality in policy and practice.

#### **Key areas as a learner**

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



We also trained up our Policy Team staffs through the accredited Trainer Training. In the future our Policy Team staffs will conduct the accredited training on Equality and Diversity with our member groups and local statutory, voluntary and community sector in the three regional offices. The following groups participated in these sessions over the past year:

- Young Adult Leadership Programme, Omagh (2 sessions with 20 participants);
- NICRAS, Belfast (4 sessions with 23 participants, 5 achieved Level 2 accreditation);
- Mixed group from Belfast (2 sessions with 10 participants, 4 achieved Level 2 accreditation);
- Windsor Women's Centre, Belfast (4 sessions with 10 women, 8 achieved Level 2 accreditation) and
- Strabane Ethnic Community Association (15 participants, pending the approved accreditation)

We will expect to conduct more Equality and Diversity training in the three regional offices over the next few years by our Development Officers.

### **3. Capacity Building Black and Minority Ethnic communities**

#### **3.1 Regional Development: NICEM Regional Offices**

NICEM received 24 months funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies (April 2012 to March 2013) to fund 3 Development Officers in three regions to support BME groups and organisations at local level. This is the first time in NICEM's history that we have such resources to develop local ethnic minority groups and the regions through a comprehensive capacity building programmes, training and support, in addition to the core policy works.

The objectives of our regional development strategy are as follows:

1. Support individuals and community representatives to take an effective role in public life through building the capacity and leadership of BME groups and individuals on human rights, equality and governance;
2. Identify local needs and issues faced by BME communities;
3. Provide advocacy, advice and support to BME people whether they are migrants, asylum seekers/ refugees or settled BME communities;
4. Create an environment for and promote BME communities participation at local, regional and national level; and
5. Monitor the obligations of the local district council to promote Racial Equality.

The new Development Officer has started to set up 3 Regional Offices, they are Northwest that based in L'derry; Mid-Ulster and Down in Lurgan and Belfast and Northeast in Belfast. The roles of the staff are to provide advice, information, development and support, as well as identify local issues and needs through collective actions. The Regional Offices also provide Advice Clinic to BME individuals and their family, the extension of the model developed by the Belfast Migrant Centre in Belfast.

The Regional Offices also assists local BME communities and groups to carry out community based action research on the issues which they identify as important. This type of participatory research will

establish a strong evidence base from which policy recommendations will be made. Thus, it will provide BME leadership and participation in decision-making mechanism at both local and regional level. Such recommendations will be brought to the appropriate decision-makers and relevant stakeholders and agencies for change.

The establishment of the new Regional Offices has enabled greater resources for capacity building of new and existing groups. Such groups will have the governance credentials and the know how to apply for funding in order to sustain their works. The facilitation of this process is essential for creating sustainable communities with accountable leadership empowered to participate at all levels of decision-making.

### **3.2 Funding issues and support**

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

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

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

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

at some other stage, but this inevitably leads to limited development of the BME organisations with an uncertain future.

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

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

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

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

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

Although NICEM no longer has funding to provide coordinated capacity building support to the wider sector, we continue to work with our member groups providing advice and support for small

groups, developing their internal programmes, assisting groups in developing funding applications and ensuring that groups can monitor and evaluate their funded programmes correctly.

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

In this reporting period we provide support, as mentioned above, to the following groups:

- Thai Northern Ireland Community Group;
- Indian Community Centre;
- Turkish Welfare Association;
- Migrant Worker Social Group (Downpatrick);
- Sikh Women and Children's Group;
- Nigerian Association Northern Ireland;
- Balmoreal Filipino Group;
- Congo Support Project (NI Branch);
- NASZ CZAS – Polish Mother Support Group, Lurgan;
- Splash Surestart – Polish Family Support Workers, Lurgan;
- Alliance of Filipino Community in Northern Ireland ;
- Fajar Pagi (East Timorese Group);
- Springwell Centre Lurgan – Polish Family Support Workers;
- Chrysalis Women's Centre Multicultural Women's Group Lurgan;
- Polish Abroad, L'derry
- Ethnic Minorities Empowerment Association, Colearine (EMEA)
- Al-Nisa Association NI;
- Northern Ireland Multi-Cultural Association (Dunmurry);
- An Munia Tober;
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association (Belfast);
- Strabane Ethnic Community Association and
- Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association

### **3.3 PQASSO – Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations**

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

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

We conducted two information seminars about the PQASSO quality assurance system. These seminars gave participants an overview of the PQASSO system and how it could improve the quality of systems and governance within their organisation. Six different groups for a total of 15 individuals participated in these seminars. These groups are follows:

- NICRAS
- ACSONI
- EEMA, Coleraine
- Shah Jalal Mosque Bangladeshi Community Centre
- NI Muslim Family Association; and
- South Belfast Roundtable

Out of this we were able to support two individuals in obtaining their PQASSO Mentors License which means they are now able to mentor other organisations through the PQASSO system. This also means that the groups are not dependent upon us for this service and gives them the skills and training to ensure that there is good practice within the sector.

### **3.4 Community Development Training**

During the Planning Days for Regional Development it was identified that in order to create a sustainable grassroots community groups with a value base grounded in social justice, there was a need for community development training both amongst the staff and the BME communities. In July 2012, Ashok Ohri, a veteran community worker and racial equality champion and consultant delivered 3 full day community development training in three Regional Offices. Fifty five

community members from a wide range of local groups attended, and the evaluation was very positive. As a result further follow-up work has been planned to build on the momentum created.

The external trainer, Ashok Ohri, will also put forward a report on the future training needs for each of the Regional Office.

Ashok delivered a three days training package for all the staff of NICEM, whether they are in the Policy Team, the Belfast Migrant Centre or the CONNECT-NICEM. A report will also put forward for the future training need of NICEM staff.

### **3.5 Policy and other related training**

We ran a policy development and response workshop to equip people to respond to policy consultations on behalf of their organisations. Three organisations were participated in the workshop. They are NICRAS, ASONI and EMMA, Coleraine.

We also hosted a mental health workshop in partnership with Mind Wise, We also hosted another session about dealing with trauma and bereavement delivered by Cruse Bereavement. There were a total of 18 participants in these two trainings.

### **3.6 English Classes**

We provided the following English Classes in the reporting period:

- 4 Beginners with 37 participants
- 4 Intermediate with 37 participants
- 1 Upper intermediate with 17 participants
- 1 accredited ESOL with 10 participants

### **3.7 CONNECT-NICEM**

#### **(i) Service delivery**

CONNECT NICEM holds the contract to provide minority language interpreters to the criminal justice system in 24/7 setting as well as a range of other customers. We work toward continual improvement in our services in order to provide high quality audit trails for customers and we offer interpreters the opportunities to continually improve their skills and knowledge.

#### **(ii) Training for interpreters**

Three training courses took place during 2011-12. With 41 learners completing a range of OCN Interpreting qualifications at levels 3 and 4 in Community Interpreting and Interpreting within the Criminal Justice sector.

Learners and new interpreters were recruited from the following language groups: Mandarin, Cantonese, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Latvian, Urdu, French, German, Spanish, Thai, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak and Czech.

CONNECT also held two induction sessions for new interpreters to our service who hold qualifications from other training providers.

Gender breakdown for learners during 2011/12 was 32 female learners and 9 male learners

### **(iii) Review of entry criteria for CONNECT-NICEM**

During 2011-12 CONNECT conducted a review of the entry criteria for our service. We issued updated criteria and will now conduct an annual review of entry criteria in the light of new training available and needs of the service.

### **Training development 2011-12**

During the year we continue to innovate and develop programmes to improve interpreters skills and knowledge in specific areas. This year work was undertaken in the development of a course on interpreting within the courts. As part of this development we met with a representative from the judiciary in order that the course can be based on practice within local services. The course will be delivered throughout 2013.

As part of an updated induction process, interpreters who have undertaken training with other providers will be required to undertake a short accredited conversion course beginning 2013, to broaden knowledge within particular services. The course development has been completed and further details of this will be circulated to interpreters next year.

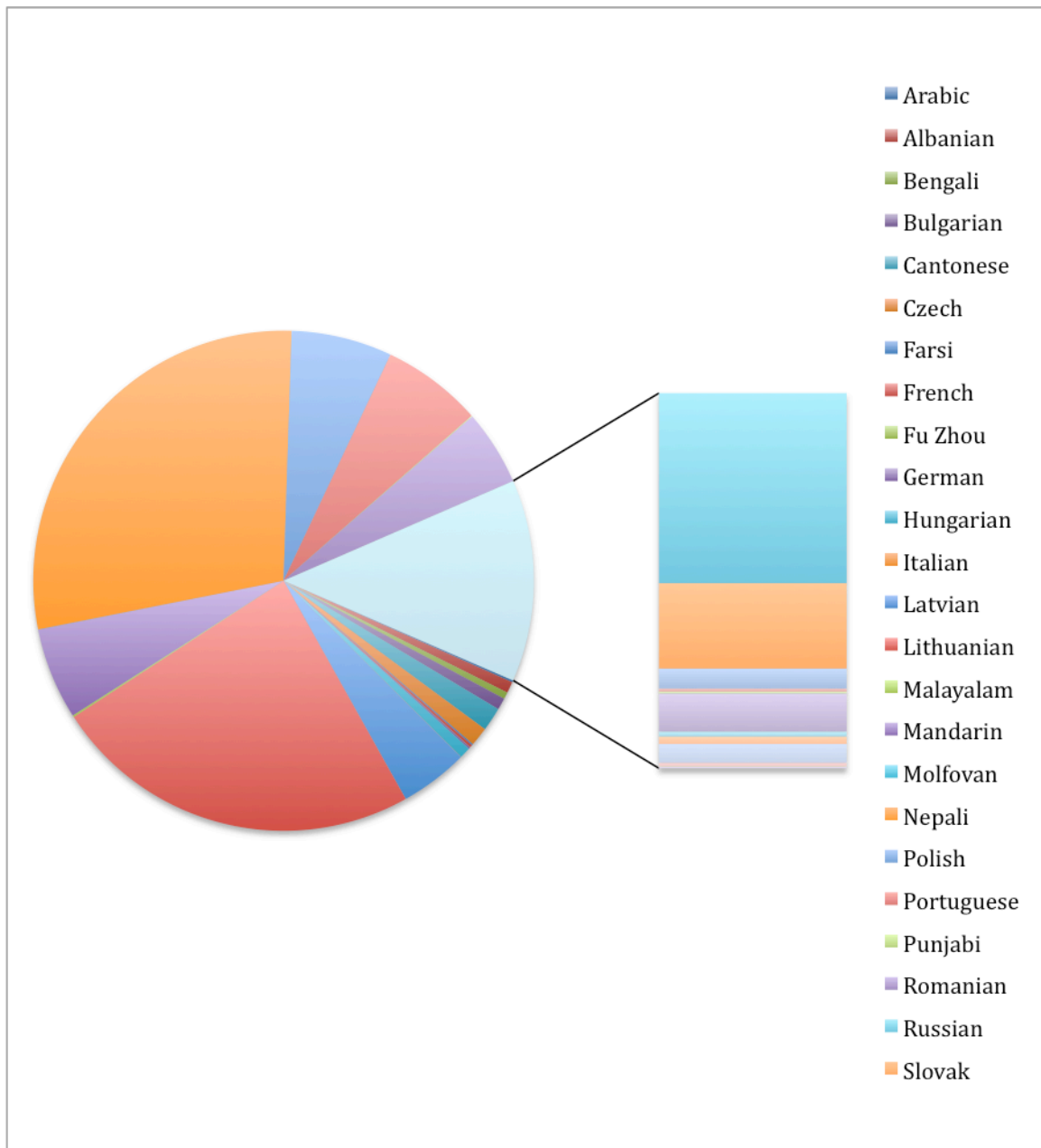
### **(iv) MA in Interpreting with Queen's University Belfast**

CONNECT's relationship with the School of Languages, literatures and Performing Arts, continued during 2011-12 with NICEM awarding



the first of 12 bursaries to our Polish interpreters who undertook the MA in Interpreting.  
CONNECT staff also take part in the annual seminar series organised by the school.

#### (v) Language demand



### **3.8 Volunteer Development**

Our work with volunteers has continued to evolve over the past year. We have been running information sessions in partnership with Volunteer Now to inform people of their rights and responsibilities as volunteers. Additionally, participants are able to register their volunteering interest at the sessions for further opportunities. To date there have been 22 people who have participated in our volunteering activities.

We continue to offer volunteer and intern opportunities in NICEM. We continue our relationship with universities in Hong Kong and the United States and have now developed new partnerships with universities in Spain, France and Germany.

In addition, we have two independent regular volunteers and we have just completed recruitment for bi-lingual volunteer advisors, which is a brand new programme that we are starting. This new programme will allow us to provide specialised skills to people and will also help us in ensuring that we keep up with demand for our advice services.

We are also aware of our funding toward the Belfast Migrant Centre coming to an end and the gap in independent advice services for those who have little or no English. We will also run recruitment for volunteers outside of the Belfast area in partnership with our new Regional Offices.

## 4. Support Vulnerable Groups in our Society

### 4.1 Belfast Migrant Centre

The Belfast Migrant Centre completed its second year of operation in August 2012. The constant high demands on our casework put our workload to the limit. Current we have 2 full-time advisors and 2 part-time job-sharing advisors to cope with the huge demands. This year we witness the caseload has been doubled from the previous year of 822 cases.

We have had to start using a waiting list system to cope with the demand. We also have started training volunteer advisors to ensure that we continue to meet the demand on one hand as the long terms sustainability if we could not have further funding when the Big Lottery expires June next year on others.

The following is a breakdown of our cases by type as well as a breakdown of nationality/ethnicity.

#### Nature of case:

Action against police	6
Academic	2
Clinical Negligence	1
Consumer/general contract	2
Counselling and psychotherapy	3
Debt	12
Domestic violence	5
Education	23
Employment	184
General	23
Housing	217
Immigration / Asylum	326
Family	26
Mental Health	6
Miscellaneous	330
Personal injury	5
Public law	17
Welfare Benefits	1,227
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,415</b>

Through our advice and advocacy services we come into contact with several individuals who are in need of skills improvement and support to find jobs. We have assisted on 1,227 cases in the biggest area of work with individuals, namely, benefits including employment and tax credits.

We continue to work closely with the trade unions. We firmly believe that in viewing the resources become scarce to sustain our works migrant workers should join the trade union to protect their employment rights as our long-term strategy.

We also ran two different employment awareness events in partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to encourage membership in unions and provide people with information about the different unions that are available. The first one is the May Day Parade which had 40 families and their children attended. The second one is the employment rights quiz held in the John Hewitt accompanied by entertainment and a raffle. The event was attended over 55 people.

We continue to refer employment cases to ICTU. All cases that need negotiation with an employer, unless they are at the employment tribunal stage, are referred and supported in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Migrant Worker Support Project. They take on the negotiation with the employer as a recognised union and we are able to deal with the practical support issues that arise when an individual's employment is disrupted or under threat (i.e., housing, benefits, food/clothing donations etc).

We have continued our work with the UNISON Race Group as the core of our user forum. Currently UNISON NI has over 1,600 members who are ethnic minorities. The Race Group has a membership of 40 migrant workers who attend the group on a monthly basis. And members discuss issues that they are facing in work as well as action that can be taken to resolve them. We are regular attendance at these meetings to provide guidance as well as receive feedback from members about strategies and how we can improve the help we offer to migrants and their family.

We also ran immigration seminar with the Race Group, one of the top demands from Philippine and Indian national. We also provide immigration advice through the Race Group Immigration Clinic. Further we participate with UNISON in delivering equality training and other UNISON activities.

Since our Regional Offices have been set up in L'derry and Lurgan we will continue to work with UNISON to provide support their members and encourage them to set up self-organised group at the local level. Our L'derry Office is in fact based in UNISON L'derry Office.

(a) Advice and Advocacy to Homeless, Destitution and Crisis Situations

We continue to provide this support through our mainstream advice services. However we have also witnessed more vulnerable people who are being forced to destitution as the result of the delay decision on all benefit renewal cases. The delay could be 8 to 12 months long and as the result it also increases the likelihood of destitution and homelessness.

The Belfast Migrant Centre is one of the 10 centres across Northern Ireland to distribute Crisis Fund for those in needs. Over the period we had 86 cases which we distributed 83 in accordance with the distribution guidelines. The crisis fund is used for those who have no recourse to public funds and are therefore made destitute and put in emergency situations which cannot be negotiated through statutory or government agencies.

We continue to start fundraising through the annual Belfast Marathon and other events in order to top up our own crisis fund. We only distribute money as the last resort and in most cases we find other alternatives to support them. But money is always going quicker than you could have.

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

This project has been ongoing since 2002 and the demand has remained constant. This post has not been funded publicly since 2008 and we use our own generated income to continue this important work to support the most vulnerable people in our society.

Due to our own reserve become thinner and thinner and the post-holder took a new position to head up our L'derry Regional Office. The current workload is managed by the Migrant Centre Manager. As result we could not take additional casework unless it is a very serious one. Due to the fact that the Manager also needs to clear the current live cases as well. Now we are signposting to other agencies. And at the same time we are planning to train up more volunteers to provide the advice and support to victims of racist hate crime.

There continues to be issues around physical attacks, harassment in the home, verbal abuse and criminal damage. Our advisor and the Manager is often dealing with urgent cases that need immediate attention and require an intense amount of work. Our advisor and the Manager successfully advocated on several issues resulting in victims being rehoused, receiving support from the Equality Commission and establishing a support protocol for a victims with the police.

Over the past year we have supported cases ranging from helping people get re-housed to supporting people in reporting to the police and taking complaints to the Police Ombudsman. We also participate in the Belfast City Council Tension Monitoring Group and Hate Crime Thematic Group, and in the PSNI Independent Advisory Group which relies on evidence we are collecting from service users to improve policy and practice within the organisations to better meet victims' needs. We also now have a volunteer coming three days a week to develop a support network for victims and a support group for bullying.

Additionally we continue to offer support to those who have experienced discrimination in employment. We are still very limited as to support that can be offered, as we do not have the expertise or resources to represent individuals in a Tribunal or court setting. This remains as a huge gap in the support that is available for individuals who experience discrimination.

### **Case Study 1:**

A 25 years old father of a Somali refugee family came to the office in November 2011. He had been living in Northern Ireland for two years as an Asylum Seeker in a bedsit. When his refugee status came

through, his wife and two young children joined him. Unable to find employment and the family is living off of his limited entitlement to benefits. Additionally, the family was unable to move to suitable accommodation and had to live in a bedsit. Not only were he and his pregnant wife sharing a bedroom with their two sons (who did not even have mattresses to sleep on), their heating did not work. It was during this period that we were providing the family with money from the crisis fund to help pay for food and heating. We also assisted them with contacting Social Services and helping them communicate the issues they were facing in their situation. Fortunately, a social worker has since intervened and placed them in temporary accommodation. We are continuing to assist the family with ongoing issues.

### **Case Study 2:**

A Latvian woman required assistance due to the delay in administering the tax credit (working tax credit element) to help her with heating oil after having to move into rented accommodation as result of the sudden death of her partner. Crisis fund monies were given until the benefit will be administered and backdated. She was working part time and could not afford to pay a deposit, first month's rent and oil all at once. Timely intervention from our crisis fund assisted the move and ensured that there was some heating in the house in the coldest months. The award of the benefit is still outstanding and we are assisting her in resolving this issue.

### **Case Study 3:**

Mr. P came to us initially with his wife as they were having problems with benefits delays. After sorting this issue out for them Mr. P returned as his alcoholism had lead to a relationship breakdown. He had very little English and did not know where to go after leaving his home. He ended up sleeping rough for a week before he came to our offices to ask for help. We were able to help with food donations and a hostel for a few days until we could establish what could be done and his eligibility for housing. We also assisted Mr. P in getting support for mental health issues that were the result of the relationship breakdown. We were able to get Mr. P rehoused in a supported housing unit that would help with his alcohol issues as well as provide him with some stability.

**Case Study 4:**

Male and Female, Polish, 2011, North Belfast

Clients had been in contact with us in the past regarding a debt issue. They returned to us, as they had been experiencing ongoing harassment in their home: rubbish thrown through their windows, several incidents of damage to their car, name-calling and other incidents of this nature. The incidents had been happening on a daily basis at all hours of the day for several months. The clients both suffer from serious health problems and wanted to leave the area.

The incidents had not been reported to the PSNI. We contacted the PSNI to report the incidents and the housing executive to start the process. The PSNI officer was very helpful they took into account all of the incidents from the beginning and wrote a report to reflect the ongoing harassment that was then sent to the housing executive. They also increased patrols in the area and were in regular communication with us to make sure the client was kept updated. They were also helpful in coordinating a meeting with the Belfast City Council safety officers who could then also check in on the area. Because of the proactive PSNI officer the process with the housing executive went quicker than it normally would have and the client was relocated.

**Case Study 5:**

Single mother, 9-year-old son

There were three issues when her son's school principal, who was concerned that the boy didn't have appropriate footwear, contacted us.

Mother is self-employed working 16 hours per week as a cleaner. She had made an application for Child Benefit in December 2009 and when we met with her in May 2011 the decision for Child Benefit was still not made. We intervened by giving her money from our crisis fund. After we lodged two complaints about the Child Benefit delay, she received over £1800 backdated and we received what looks like an apology from HMRC in relation to her case.

Unfortunately, there was also an issue with racist harassment at her home. There were a number of individuals in the area calling names, damaging the home, and throwing stones, etc. We were able to



organise a meeting with PSNI community liaison officers from Maghera District. Swift action was taken, and the PSNI increased patrols in the area. Individuals involved in intimidation were quickly identified and dealt with. Also a local coach was spoken to as the individuals all played a sport together and this also made a difference. The attacks have now stopped and no one is harassing them any more. They even say hello instead of name calling like they did in the past.

**(c) Immigration Advisor**

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

Our second immigration advisor has approved her Level 2 status, in order to undertake the high demands immigration casework, in late last year. We handled 326 cases last year to demonstrate such a high demands. As result we train up new volunteers to cope with the huge demands and for the long-term sustainability.

**Case Study**

*Client M, originally from Syria, naturalised as a British citizen over 20 years ago, and lives in Belfast. He has always worked in the UK and has never claimed benefits. He owns his own house, and is able to comfortably provide for himself and his family. In 2010 he married a Syrian national, B. At the time, his wife was unsure whether she wanted to move to the UK or not. B had a good job working at a university in Damascus. The couple decided not to apply for a spouse visa, as at the time, B did not have the intention to settle in the UK permanently (although they satisfied all the other requirements of the immigration rule at the time, including the financial requirements). They applied instead for a visit visa, to enable B*

*to come to the UK and decide together whether to make their future home here. Their application was initially refused and the couple had to wait nine months for the appeal to be listed in the First Tier Tribunal in Belfast. At the hearing, the appeal was allowed immediately, with the Immigration Judge criticising the poor quality of the initial decision of the Entry Clearance Officer and the lack of an adequate review by the Entry Clearance Manager.*

#### **4.2 Work with Black and Minority Ethnic Carers**

Through our advice services we identified a need for support for parents of children with disabilities with a BME background. The outcome of the project was to provide relief and information for 8-10 parents through 15 sessions. The project was finished by early 2011.

We were unsuccessful to get on-going funding to continue our support to the group. At the moment we plan to have another go with the Belfast Trust.

## **5. Networking and Partnership Building**

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

### **5.1 UK Network**

NICEM works in partnership with the key Black organisations in the UK focusing on human rights, race equality and capacity building. Our strategic concern relates to the following issues: Single Equality Act 2010 public sector duty regulations and the recent judgments on austerity cuts by using public sector duty; UK Bill of Rights Commission and the austerity cuts towards the Equality and Human Rights Commission. On the UK Bill of Rights Commission we work closely with the British Institute of Human Rights. This includes the recent Final Declaration under the British Presidency of the Council of Europe.

On austerity cuts and poverty we work in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and other key Black organisations in this field. NICEM was successful lobbying the Foundation to include Northern Ireland as part of the National Race and Poverty Research Programme. Currently NICEM sits at the Research Steering Group on their first piece of research in Northern Ireland. The final draft has circulated for comments in late August. We will expect the launch will be at the early next year.

NICEM is also part of the UK wide Migrant Rights Network which is an off-shoot project of the UK Race Europe Network. The Migrants Rights Network is leading the whole campaign on migrant rights in which the Belfast Migrant Centre is represented. NICEM is also the Steering Group Member of the UK Race Europe Network (UKREN).

Our partners are as follows:

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

## **5.2 Irish Network**

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

Recently we appointed our Legal Policy Officer who is coming from Dublin. She was also the former volunteer worker in Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC). Through her connection and network we are now fill that vacuums.

Our joint application to the DG Justice with the Irish Council for Civil Liberty (Lead partner) did not succeed but we will find other co-operation and opportunities in the future.

## **5.3 European Network**

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

In May 2011 the Executive Director made presentation at the European Conference on the development of the new General Recommendation on discrimination in field of employment with emphasis on migrants for the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In August ECRI informed NICEM that the

General Recommendations 14 on Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in Employment<sup>9</sup> has been adopted by ECRI in June and will formally announce in September 2012.

We made two applications to the DG Justice under Fundamental Rights Programme in early January this year. One application is on racist hate crime and the other one is on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Racial Equality. The partners of the two projects include The Office for the Implementation of Equal Treatment (*Büro zur Umsetzung von Gleichbehandlung e.V. (BUG)*) in Berlin; Documentation and Advice Centre on Racial Discrimination, Copenhagen; KISA – Action for Equality and Anti-racism, Cyprus; The Legal Information Centre in Estonia; and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and PSNI.

We are also the Associate Partner of the Transnational Project “Good Relations” Project led by the Finish Ministry of Interior and the Sweden Department of Labour. Our role will be an external consultant to develop and to evaluate the programme for both governments.

We work in partnership with the following organisations:

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)
- Human Rights Directorate of the Council of Europe
- Special Envoy on Roma Council of Europe
- European Fundamental Rights Agency
- Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels
- Finish Ministry of Interior
- Swedish Department of Labour
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- Public Interest Law Institute in Budapest
- European Roma Rights Centre
- European Roma Information Centre
- Article 1 in Netherland (the former LBR)
- BUGS in Berlin

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<sup>9</sup> The General Recommendation 14 could be download the following link:  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/GPR/EN/Recommendation\\_N14/e-GPR%2014%20-%20A4.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/GPR/EN/Recommendation_N14/e-GPR%2014%20-%20A4.pdf)

Denmark Documentation Centre on Racism  
Open Society Justice Initiative  
Minority Rights Group International  
Latvian Centre for Human Rights  
Legal Information Centre on Human Rights, Estonia  
KISA – Action for Equality, Support and Anti-racism, Cyprus  
People for Change Foundation, Malta

#### **5.4 Northern Ireland**

NICEM has established strategic partnerships with organisations across the sectors in order to promote human rights and equality in Northern Ireland, covering issues such as Section 75, the Single Equality Bill, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, racial violence, asylum seekers and refugees, Irish Travellers and Roma, etc. These organisations include:

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

NIACRO  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Red Cross (NI)  
St. Vincent de Paul

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

Promotion of Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership under the Department of Social Development;  
Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Steering Group (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust);  
PPI communication sub-group (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust);  
Health Inequality Forum (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)  
Employment and Learning Migrant Workers Thematic Sub-group;  
British Medical Association Patient Liaison Group;  
Department of Health, Social Service and Public Services Regional Equality Liaison Panel;  
DHSS & PS and PSNI Regional Strategy Working Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence;  
Public Health Agency BME Health and Wellbeing Steering Group;  
Northern Ireland Migration Advisory Committee Stakeholders Forum (Home Office);  
NI Human Rights Commission Consultative Stakeholder Group on Hate Crime Investigation;  
Gender Advisory Group (OFMDFM Gender Unit);  
Racial Equality Panel (OFMDFM Race Unit);  
Racial Equality Forum Sub-group on Immigration;  
Women's National Commission, UK;  
BME Housing Forum (Northern Ireland Housing Executive);  
Policing Board BME Reference Group;  
Hate Crime Thematic Group (Belfast City Council);  
Housing Executive Forum on Equality;  
Policing Board BME Reference Group;  
Joint Consultative Forum (Staff Commission for Education and Library Board);  
Belfast City Council Consultative Forum;  
Belfast City Council Tension Monitoring Group;  
Criminal Justice Issue Advisory Group (NICVA);  
Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) Steering Group

(Department of Justice)  
OFMDFM Strategic Planning and Review Group of the Children's Strategy;  
Department of the Environment Consultative Forum;  
OFMDFM Strategic Planning and Review Group of the Children's Strategy;  
'I Am Roma' Advisory Group (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust);  
Criminal Justice Issues Advisory Group (NICVA);  
Youth BME Issues Group (Youthnet);  
Shadow Migrant Forum (Belfast City Council);  
Independent Advisory Group (PSNI);  
Domestic Violence Partnership Regional;  
All Ireland PQASSO mentors working group;  
East Belfast Minority Ethnic Forum;  
Challenge Hate Crime Steering Group (NIACRO);  
Intercultural Arts Strategy Steering Group (Arts Council NI);  
Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum;  
Voluntary Sector Housing Forum;  
All Party Working Group on Ethnic Minority Communities; and  
All Party Working Group on Human Trafficking.



## **6. Organisational Development**

### **6.1 Media and Communication Work**

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

### **6.2 Annual Review and Planning**

In preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> application of the Atlantic Philanthropies we started the process in early 2011 with participation from the staff and the Board to review the progress from the first application. We also organized two consultation meetings with the member group in June, one in Belfast and one in Omagh to identify key issues and priorities.

Based on the evaluation and consultative process the external consultant had worked closely with the Executive Director to develop the draft for the policy team and the board for approval. The final one was approved in December 2011 and put forward to the AP Belfast Team for comments. The "Strategic Advocacy" Phase 2 application was finally endorsed by the AP Board in New York in March 2011.

### **6.3 NICEM Internal PQASSO quality task group**

NICEM uses the PQASSO system as a tool for improving governance of the organisation. PQASSO provides a mechanism for internal assessment of an organisation against a set of nationally recognised standards for the management of voluntary sector organisations.

PQASSO enables organisations to tackle issues such as planning and development, staff and volunteer management and financial management in a structured way. This allows the organisation to work toward quality improvement at a pace which suits its own capacity.

Within NICEM we have five trained PQASSO mentors and three qualified peer reviewer who are licensed by the Charities Evaluation Service to assess organisations that have applied for the PQASSO Quality Mark. The Quality Mark is officially recognised as a stamp of quality by the Charities Commission for England and Wales.

NICEM implements PQASSO improvements through the mechanism of an internal quality task group. This group identifies gaps and areas for improvement using the PQASSO self-assessment tools and based on this develops and actions plan for organisational improvement annually. Membership of the group is drawn from all

During 2011-12, NICEM combined the PQASSO audit with the results of our internal financial audit and has been working toward an overall quality action plan for the organisation and continue to make significant changes which have improved organisational management and services for users.

## **NICEM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2011-2013)**

Chair: Dr. Wasif Naeem  
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association

Vice-chair: Mr. Bobby Rao  
Strabane Ethnic Community Organisation

Secretary: Ms. Monica Yang  
Mandarin Speakers Association

Treasurer: Zeshan Zafar  
NI Multi Cultural Association

Other members:  
Jason Braga  
Alliance of Filipino Communities in NI

Clea Devlin  
Portuguese Speakers Association

G S Sandhu  
Northern Ireland Sikh Association

Dana Bruno (co-opted member)

Joe Ifediora (co-opted member)

Advisory members: Ms. Eddis Nicholl  
Ms. Dawn Purvis  
Ms. Tansy Hutchinson  
Ms. Sheila Rogers  
Professor Colm Campbell  
Professor Tom Obokata  
Dr. Sirin Sung  
Dr. Onder Bakircioglu

## STAFF LIST (Sept 2011-August 2012)

### Central Administration Team

Executive Director	Patrick Yu
Finance/Administration Manager	Nuala Moynagh

### Policy Team

Deputy Director	Barry Fitzpatrick ( <i>leaver November 2011</i> )
Strategic Advocacy Manager	Helena Macormac ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Legal Policy Officer	Helena Macormac ( <i>to March 2012</i> )
Legal Policy Officer	Karen McLaughlin ( <i>from May 2012</i> )
Parliamentary & Campaign Officer	Elizabeth Nelson ( <i>from June 2012</i> )
Development Worker ( <i>Belfast &amp; Northeast</i> )	Sophie Romantzoff ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Development Support Worker ( <i>Mid Ulster &amp; Down</i> )	Mark Caffery ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Development Worker ( <i>Northwest</i> )	Max Petrushkin ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Development Worker/Immigration Policy	Lume Podrimaj ( <i>from April 2012</i> )

Communication Officer	Francoise Barlet ( <i>leaver May 2012</i> )
Research Officer	Eoin Rooney ( <i>leaver December 2011</i> )
Administration Officer <i>2012</i> )	Sophie Romantzoff ( <i>to March</i>

### **Belfast Migrant Centre**

Advocacy & Advice Manager	Jolena Flett
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker <i>Job Share</i>	Marzena Szkaradek ( <i>Maternity leave to April 2012</i> )
Outreach Worker <i>Job Share</i>	Roisin O'Connor ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Outreach Worker <i>Mid Ulster &amp; Down Part Time</i>	Liz Connor-Kerr
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker	Alicja Matwiejczuk
Bi-Lingual Outreach Worker <i>Part Time</i>	Agnieszka Wlodarska ( <i>maternity cover to April 2012</i> )
Bi-Lingual Administrator <i>Part Time</i>	Anna Wojtun ( <i>to April 2012</i> )
Bi-Lingual Administrator	Agnieszka Wlodarska ( <i>from April 2012</i> )
Racial Harassment Support Advocacy Worker	Max Petrushkin ( <i>to March &amp; 2012</i> )
Immigration Advice Officer <i>Part time</i>	Ayesha Christie

## **CONNECT-NICEM**

Executive Director of CONNECT	Gabrielle Doherty
Bookings Manager	Aruna Djalo
Finance Manager	Stewart Robinson
Development Manager	Sarah Maitland
Administrator - Bookings	Katarzyna Gelger
Administrator – Bookings	Ano Mario Vaz
Administrator – Bookings	Dominic O'Neill
Administrator – Finance	Claire Choulavong Denise Dos Santos
Reception	Mark Caffrey ( <i>to April 2012</i> )
Reception/Finance Administrator	Chris Newell ( <i>from May 2012</i> )
Administrator – Out of Hours	Rumena Kostadinova-McCabe
Administrator – Out of Hours	Tanja Tierney

### **Internship**

Hong Kong University Social Innovation and Global Citizenship  
Kenny Chiu & Tisha Yap (June – August 2012)

Hong Kong Institute of Education  
John Wong (June - August 2012)

Northeastern University  
Kathryn Breen (June-December 2011)  
Jacob Kostrzewski (January - June 2012)  
Victoria Bautista (June - December 2012)

EUROACCIO Programme  
Berta Rierola Carrera (September - December 2011)  
Ariadna Guell Sans (January - May 2012)

Queen's University of Belfast LLM Human Rights internship:  
Therese Hoeritzauer (August – October 2012)

Queen's University of Belfast MSc Political Psychology  
Mary Sheahan (August – October 2012)

University of Ulster LLM Human Rights internship: Ivanley Noisette  
(Fulbright Scholar) (January – April 2012)

Barcelona Leonardo Scholarship: Berta Rierola Carrera

**Volunteers (General):**

Louise Higgins, Kathryn Crane  
Nicola Gunn  
Kholoud Abu Irsheid  
Anna Sobeczko

**Work Placement:**

Kavita Thanki January - March 2012

**Volunteer Advisors:**

Katarzyna Pranke (Lurgan)  
Slavka Smith  
Lukasz Karpinski  
Anastassia Golovanova  
Magdalena Zaluska - Pal

**Strategic Advocacy Project Board (to August 2012)**

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

**Belfast Migrant Centre Board**

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

**NICEM MEMBER GROUPS (2011-2012)**

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

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities  
(NICEM)

Ascot House, 3/F  
24-31 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DB  
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9023 8645  
Fax: +44 (0) 28 9031 9485  
Website: [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)