



Annual Report

2007/2008

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.

Executive Director's Remarks

The last two days we witness the sea change in the American history: the first Black President, Barack Obama, was elected. The dream of Martin Luther King becomes the reality. It enlightens with hope to the century of black struggles against slavery, racism and racial barriers in the United States of America.

“Yes, we can!” The “change” campaign unites the racial divide into a grand vision of one nation: A nation of change and a nation of hope. There is a long journey ahead and the new president has created for himself many additional challenges by raising a high level of expectations of change.

And what strikes me, impassioned by his words and his way in this election, such as people who didn't engage with civic activity turning into activists of the campaign, is that I'm sitting here 3000 miles away wondering what lessons can we learn from them.

We are still living in a deeply divided society between the two majorities; and the majority and the minority despise under the so-called “post-conflicts” era. What is our shared future? How the majority can be integrated alongside the minority? How can we create a shared grand vision and common core values of our society to unite people in this society? How can we ensure that human rights protection and equality principle is the common standards of this society, and not the party politics? And how we can translate this standard into scrutinizing mechanism of the Northern Ireland Assembly?

How we ensure that the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission when they produce their advice to the Secretary of State on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland will not be the lower denominator? How we ensure that the Bill of Rights will have a comprehensive scope of protection to address the economic, social and cultural rights on one side, the additional civil and political rights on the other to redress the social exclusion, discrimination and inequality of the past and the post-conflicts society?

How we ensure that the current government will put the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland into their radar? We really need a modern and 21st century equality legislation to redress the existing inequality among different vulnerable groups, particularly racial inequality.

How we ensure the current government, as the matters of urgency, put forward the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration paper (the so-called “CSI programme”) to the OFMDFM Committee and the subsequent consultation process to unfold the political stalemate of the Shared Future Framework Policy and the Racial Equality Strategy 2005-2010?

How we ensure that the CSI programme and the Racial Equality Strategy will compliment each other? How we ensure that all departments will involve with the black and minority ethnic community, whether they are settled ethnic or religious minority, new migrant communities, asylum seekers and refugees, or other status, in order to develop their departmental Action Plan, which are strategic intervention with

impacts for the purpose of the Race Strategy, not the usual functional areas or works? And how we ensure that each department has sufficient resources to implement these Action Plans?

How can we develop a shared strategy on integration for both communities of the majority and the majority and the minority? How can we create a colourful society of rainbow instead a society of two colours, orange and green? How we ensure that a shared housing, public services, space, working environment, leisure and entertainment is the key component of our future?

How we ensure that the politicians understand the relationship between equality and good relations under Section 75 is the two side of the same coin? Without equality to address social deprivation and inequality, good relations will not happen! Without good relations to accept differences and diversity in our society, equality will not work either.

How we ensure that we have support and necessary services for victims of racial harassment, racist attacks and racial discrimination? How we ensure that their justice will be addressed in a prompt and quick manner? How we ensure that their treatments in the criminal justice system or civil court without differentiation? How we also ensure that the entire criminal justice system will have compulsory anti-racism training for their entire staff (from the very top to the very bottom) to prevent and to deter institutional racism?

How we ensure that the education performance of the BME children and young people, particularly those who do not have qualification when leaving school, have a place in our society?

How we ensure that capacity building programme is available to the BME communities and groups in order to empower their participation and the development of their organisation, particularly sufficient resources to invest in the BME sector?

How we ensure that the government core-funding scheme for the BME sector will be earmark? How we also ensure that the BME sector will use the most efficient and effective way to deliver their work and services without duplication?

How we ensure that in light of the economic down turn, the migrants will not being scapegoat and sufficient safeguard to prevent racial harassment and racist attacks on one hand, to promote good relations and community cohesion on the others? How we ensure that the contribution of the migrants and the BME communities to the society is being recognised?

Yes, we can! This can be our dream come true as enlightens by the newly elected Black President in the United States of America. This is also the dream of NICEM and among other partners and sectors. And it is also the struggles of NICEM through the delivery of our work!

Patrick Yu
6 November 2008

Work in Progress:

1. Mainstreaming racial equality into government policy and practice

1.1 A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

The Bill of Rights Forum continued their work in drawing up their recommendations for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The Forum was comprised of 14 representatives from civil society and 14 representatives from the five main political parties. NICEM and An Munia Tober jointly represented the black and minority ethnic (BME) sector in the Forum. We had 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 work for the business of the Working Groups and the monthly Forum meetings occupied a great deal of our time, particularly during February and March 2008 in the period towards the end of the process. We also made use of our Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference to further the debate on minority protection. This took place on 6th December 2007 with the theme - Non-nationals' Protection: International Standards and the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. We were very pleased to have over 130 participants from a variety of sectors to participate in the debate.

At last the Forum handed over its final report to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on the 31st March 2008. Regarding the recommendations of the Report we have serious concerns with the provisions on equality and right to culture, language and identity. Regarding the right to culture, language and identity NICEM made the following statement of position for the sector (see p.73-74 of the Report):

- Ethnic minority sector opposes the use of "community" to replace "minority", the sector was alone in this view in the Working Group and throughout subsequent discussions. The use of "community" undermines the minority protection under international law and distorts the entire section of the recommendations.

- Clause 5 and 6 in Option A (Final Bill of Rights Forum Report) create a hierarchy of rights between the “two communities” and “ethnic minority communities”. We have been opposed to this all along. However, we accepted that both “Irish and Ulster-Scot language” should have special language status to reflect the Good Friday Agreement in our compromise Clause 6 in Option B.
- We are strongly opposed to Clause 4 (self-identification) in Option A. By exercising the “community” rights it undermines the existing equality law, equality monitoring and the designation on cross-community voting in the Assembly.
- The inclusion of “sexual orientation” in reference to “community” also creates confusion (original Clause 1 and 2 and now revised Clause 3 and 4 in Option B) as it is outside the remit of Article 26 of the ICCPR, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the terms of reference of the Working Group on Culture, Identity and Language.
- The ethnic minority sector vigorously supports the position that rights in relation to identities and cultures of sexual orientation should be in the Bill of Rights, but the sector strongly feels that it is not in the right section. It would be more appropriate under either the Equality clause alongside the gender and disability references or as a stand-alone clause on Identity and Culture of Sexual Orientation. Due to lack of time for further discussion we accept and support Clause 3 and 4, despite this, the Sexual Orientation Sector accepts our proposal.

We also have other reservations with regard to the brevity of the document; many of the recommendations are too detailed and too prescriptive, many provisions would be more suitable for implementation through policy or legislative measures rather than in the Bill of Rights. One positive result from the entire process is that it is the first time in history politicians have sat side by side with civil society representatives to discuss, debate, agree and disagree on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Although it has been at times a frustrating process, as politicians can't agree on a number of key issues, this dialogue and engagement has been highly significant. NICEM would like to see this engagement continue in the on-going processes of the creation of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

1.2 Race Relations Order Review and the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland

We need the Single Equality Bill to address the imbalance of protection on racial discrimination as the result of the UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The introduction of this act has meant a higher level of protection now exists for England, Wales and Scotland than Northern Ireland. The situation became worse as a result of the new Race Relations (NI) Order Regulations 2003 (the transposition of the EU Race Directive to Northern Ireland). The 2003 Regulation has essentially created a two-tier system of protection, with colour and nationality having a lower level of protection than the other grounds of race and ethnic or national origins. We need to rectify such disparity immediately as it creates confusion for employers, service providers and victims of racial discrimination alike as such complexities make it difficult to understand or to adhere fully to the new law.

As the Single Equality Bill appears to be outside the agenda of the current government, we need to lobby for a formal review of the Race Relations Order. We have been waiting for the Single Equality Bill for the last 5 years and as such justice has been delayed and denied.

The review not only ratifies the Amin judgement (a landmark case which was the result of the Amendment Act 2000, it also addresses the two-tier system and the definition of "indirect discrimination" and "instruct to discriminate" under the 2003 Regulations. Another key area in need of improvement can be found under Article 67 of the Order and is in relation to the statutory duty of local council. Article 67 should be strengthened, including enforcement options, to envisage the new roles and functions of the local council as the result of the Review of Public Administration.

NICEM has started to lobby the All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minorities and will lobby the OFMDFM Committee and the Equality Commission. We will report back the progress in our next report.

1.3 Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) Paper and the Racial Equality Strategy 2005-2010

In our last report we highlighted the five action points by the Deputy First Minister in his concluding remarks during the debate on the Racial Equality Strategy in the Assembly. None of these action points have materialised over the last year, particularly with regard to a new three year programme to address both sectarianism and racism. This programme is now known as Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI).

The OFMDFM Committee, as well as the All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minorities, has raised serious concerns on the on-going delay of the paper. Clarification is needed concerning the status of both the Shared Future Framework Policy and the Racial Equality Strategy. NICEM and the sector has particular concerns that the Racial Equality Forum has been grounded thus leaving the sector with no consultation structure to provide information and facilitate debate on key policies such as sectoral Core Funding and the status of Departmental Action Plans (such action plans were a requirement under the Racial Equality Strategy however the sector has been unaware of any advancements in these strategies in a significant amount of time).

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In order to ensure the CSI Programme is effective it should have an overarching framework to address the relationships between equality and good relations, as well as human rights protection and good relations. Such a framework, grounded in principles of human rights and equality, alongside principles of good relations, effectively tackle both sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland.

NICEM would like to see the CSI Programme address the lack of local infrastructure for ethnic minorities. Without capacity building at the local level ethnic minorities cannot organise themselves. Without participation from organised ethnic minorities the CSI Programme is doomed to fail as it will not redress the imbalanced power relationship between the ethnic majority and ethnic minority at a local level. It will also fail to adequately address the new roles and functions of local councils on housing, health and education which affects the equality access to these local public service by ethnic minority communities.

1.4 Developing a Shared Strategy on Integration and Race Relations Project

The project entitled "From Europe to Northern Ireland, A Shared Future of Race Relations" ran from May 2007 until June 2008, it brought expertise and experience from across Europe in order to inform and shape how Northern Ireland continues to respond to its changing demographic.

The objectives of the Project were:

- To build relationships between black and minority ethnic communities and the wider community (through seminars, training, a conference and the implementation of strategies);

- To identify and share relevant best practice at International and European level on integration and race relations (through seminars, training, a conference and the publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To raise awareness of European standards and strategies on Integration and race relations (through seminars, training, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To build relationships between local and European organisations and networks (through seminars, training, a 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 (through seminars, training, NGO site visits, a conference and the publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- To develop strategies to apply identified best practice to integration and race relations in Northern Ireland (through training, NGO site visits and a conference);
- Develop networks of cooperation across majority and minority communities (seminars, training, conference and publication of seminar reports and training manual);
- Adapt European best practice training tools for use in the local context (through training, publication of training manual and seminar reports); and
- Share best practice training tools through publication of seminar reports and training manual.

A key focus of the project was the development of strategies on integration and good race relations that facilitated the promotion of equality and respect for diversity at the local level. These strategies were developed through the project training programme, the training equipped participants with knowledge and understanding of issues and mechanisms concerning equality and diversity in Northern Ireland. The programme facilitated the establishment of networks of cooperation across all communities. The training sessions brought together representatives from both the minority ethnic and majority community groups in 6 different target areas; North Belfast, East Belfast, Lisburn, Enniskillen, Strabane and Omagh. The first phase of the training programme was held in August and October 2007 in Belfast and the second phase was held in February 2008 in Enniskillen.

The Project also developed an Advisory group comprised of local experts who provided guidance, specialist advice and support on the development of the Project. The training materials are a local adaptation of a highly successful training programme that

previously ran at the European level for which NICEM acted as a lead partner, it was 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. SOLID trainers from across Europe delivered the programme providing a highly comprehensive and well informed experience for participants.

Prior to the first training session a half day conference was held in July 2007 entitled "European Policy and Practice: Principles, Models and Methods". In May 2008 we held the closing conference for the project. The transcripts of both events and the workshops they involved can be found in the final report of the project that was published in August 2008. Both events attracted a wide and varied audience consisting of representatives from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, local majority community groups, trade unions, statutory agencies, local and regional government and many other organisations with a role in peace building. Both events were significant milestones in further advancing the debate around a shared future of race relations in Northern Ireland, the feedback received from all conference attendees and participants in the project as a whole has been hugely positive.

Overall the Project facilitated the establishment of positive relationships between local community groups and BME groups, such relationships enable the cultural, attitudinal and social change that will lead to the development of a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society.

1.5 Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project

The aim of the Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project was to empower the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) sector and influence the Action Plans on the Racial Equality Strategy which runs from 2005-2010. The Project was completed in June 2008.

There were three strands to the Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project. The evaluation considers each strand separately in terms of operational effectiveness and then draws the key learning points together in a singular template.

The first strand was a series of six seminars and 3 roundtables covering government structures, cohesion, equality and difference, cultural rights, minority rights, women's rights, policing, education, health and employment. These were held in Belfast and Omagh,

attracting an attendance between 10-15 persons at each event. A total of 65 participants from 21 BME groups or faith groups attended 6 lectures. A report documenting the seminars and the roundtable event is now available on our website.

The second strand to the Project was the organisation of a Shadow Race Forum. The objective of this element was to facilitate a united voice on the Race Forum, it was also proposed to act as a feedback mechanism for representatives to the wider sector and contribute to the work of the Bill of Rights Forum. Since there is no meeting for the Race Forum, the Shadow Forum was also grounded as the result.

The third strand of Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project was the provision of a secretariat to an ad hoc all party working group on Black and Minority Ethnic people. It was formally constituted in the Assembly as All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic People.

1.6 All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic People

The All Party Assembly Group on Minority Ethnic People was formally constituted in the Assembly in June 2008. The Chair is Mr. Robin Newton (DUP), MLA and the Vice-Chair is Ms. Jennifer McCann (Sinn Féin), MLA. The Secretary is Mr. Danny Kennedy (UUP), MLA and the Treasurer is Mr. Declan O'Loan (SDLP), MLA. The office-bearers will rotate every six months.

NICEM serves as the Secretariat of the All Party Assembly Group. Our role includes setting the agendas for the monthly meetings with the aid of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the follow-up of action points from previous meetings, taking the minutes and sending out the agenda, minutes and other relevant documents in preparation for the meeting to both the politicians and the sector representatives.

The All Party Assembly Group maintains a monthly meeting on 2nd Tuesday every month at 12pm for 12:30pm in the Parliament Building. Prior to the group becoming an officially constituted group of the Assembly, we had monthly meeting under the name of the All Party Working Group on BME People.

The All Party Assembly Group has a very high participation rate from the sector with average 15-20 people attending the meeting. This is due to the fact that minority ethnic groups can talk directly to the politicians and raise their issues of concerns directly. Over

the last 12 months the main focus of most agendas has concerned two key issues: the Racial Equality Strategy (including the required Departmental Action Plans) and the Core Funding for the sector.

The All Party Assembly Group provides an infrastructure for the participation of BME people. It is also an effective avenue for engagement with politicians on BME policies (both devolved and non-devolved matters), as well as a scrutinising system for the administration of the Departmental Action Plans on the Racial Equality Strategy. Overall it provides an opportunity for confidence building and participation in policy debates for the sector.

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

NICEM is the Lead Partner of the Project with Core Partner the European Network Against Racism and six other Partners: Public Interest Law Initiative (part of the Columbia Law School in New York and recently renamed as the Public Interest Law Institute) in Budapest, the European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest, Interights in London, the National Bureau against Racial Discrimination (LBR) in Rotterdam and the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC/DACoRD) in Copenhagen.

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

The objectives of the training programmes are:

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

Over the last 12 months we focused on two areas: firstly Denmark specific SOLID training and secondly the exploration of further training in other EU Member States who have previously experienced SOLID training. With financial support from the Open Society Justice Initiative the Denmark training was completed from

15-18 November 2007 in Copenhagen. The objectives of the Denmark Training were as follows:

1. To organise SOLID training in Denmark in order to expand national support and identify potential testing cases as pilots for future training;
2. To work with the national team of Danish SOLID participants to deliver the training programme at a local level;
3. To work with the national team of Danish SOLID participants to identify testing cases and to provide advice and support to victims, including those of Islamic faith;
4. To work with the national team of Danish participants to implement their Action Plan; and
5. To support SOLID participants on potential testing cases with the help of OSJI lawyers.

The Project officer of DRC/DACoRD recruited 22 participants in which 3 participants came from Jylland. This exceeds the proposed target of 20. The participants are representative of a highly diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and NGOs. This created a mixed group comprised of lawyers, advisors and non-lawyers. All came from local or national ethnic group or NGOs. Unfortunately four participants dropped out (one through illness and the other three for reasons unknown). An additional participant, who was not registered before the training, attended the full training, too. Sebastian Kohn of OSJI also attended the training and the promotion of the work of the OSJI.

The lead Trainer was Neils-Erik Hansen (DRC), along with with Barbara Cohen (equality consultant) and Alan Anstead (ERRC). Neils co-facilitated with Maxim Ferschtman (OSJI) on international case studies in which the success of the Czech Republic Case D.H. was presented. Alan Anstead provided additional information on the practical difficulties of the strategic litigation that he was involved with during the D.H. Case, such training was hugely successful. Patrick Yu (NICEM) co-ordinated the training and oversaw the pace of the sessions during the training. Lene Timm provided logistical and additional support.

The participants, in general, found the training very useful and each group developed their action plans as a follow-up. The education group met as planned at the end of January 2008. A group of five participants from 5 different organisations continued a common project developing materials and training for teachers on discrimination/anti discrimination including cases on strategic

litigation. Due to the high workload, the group has decided to extend the project a few more months. In the meantime all members have a task to collect materials on discrimination / anti discrimination to ensure that we will not copy existing programmes but instead utilize what has been developed so far, and use this as a starting point.

To our knowledge the other groups have not met since the training. But participants have been in contact with DRC in connection with other activities and tasks in DRC. Five complaints on discrimination have been put forward to DRC for advice and assistance. According to DRC they strongly feel that SOLID training has strengthened their network with other civil society organisations working in the field of discrimination based on ethnicity. We have also explored the possibility of using the SOLID programme in other Member States, including Finland and Latvia. In the mean time the SOLID Resource CD-Rom has been completed and disseminated.

1.8 Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on its examination of the sixth report of the government of Britain and Northern Ireland

As part of NICEM's Racial Equality Strategy Capacity Building Project, a series of workshops were held with ethnic minority women on women's rights and CEDAW. The issues raised by workshop participants highlight the multiple nature of discrimination experienced by ethnic minority women in Northern Ireland. The experiences and stories related to by participants at the workshop highlighted the sense of marginalisation and exclusion they feel as they attempt to negotiate their daily lives in society which, in a multitude of ways failed to understand or meet their needs. The final report is available on our website.

In order to ensure the information contained in our submission was used effectively NICEM attended the hearing of the CEDAW committee in the UN headquarters. This was the first time a delegation from Northern Ireland had ever lobbied the committee. The direct lobbying of committee members ensured that key issues affecting ethnic minority women in Northern Ireland were adequately dealt with by specific committee members who had expertise in the relevant areas. Such attendance ensured effective strategic lobbying as witnessing other countries that were examined prior to the UK enabled us to identify trends and areas of specific

interest to the committee. It also facilitated networking with international experts on the rights of minority women.

The lobbying of such committees at the UN level is highly significant as it is a mechanism whereby the UK government can be held to account. Given the failure of implementation of both the Racial Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Strategy by the Northern Ireland Assembly, access to such mechanisms is more important than ever. The committee highlighted the inequality of protection for women throughout the devolved regions with specific reference to the situation in Northern Ireland and the multiple nature of discrimination faced by ethnic minority women. the committee's full report can be found on the UN website.

1.9 Core Funding for Black and Minority Ethnic Sector

NICEM welcomes the funding package for the black and minority sector which was launched by the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister on 18th May 2008. Despite this, we have serious concerns about the new funding package, which has changed the nature of core funding for the sector as it has become a good relations funding programme. In this round of funding 11 out of 18 groups awarded funding were local community groups rather than ethnic minority specific groups.

The Ethnic Minority Funding Scheme was set up under the recommendations of the Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group (PSI). Their recommendations included setting up the Race Equality Unit to implement the funding and the development of the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland. NICEM played a crucial role to secure this new policy through our proposal (including setting up a new unit to develop the race strategy and administer the funding), which was agreed by the Working Group.

NICEM has no objection to extending the funding scheme to local groups in order to promote racial equality and social cohesion. However, such funding should not come from the core-funding scheme, rather it should come from the project funding scheme. The main reason why the first Executive set up the Ethnic Minority Funding (composed of core funding and project funding) in the first place was that ethnic minority groups were excluded from any Departmental specific core funding. Therefore the core-funding scheme ring fenced specific funds for ethnic minority groups with additional project funding extended to local groups, funding was to be divided at a ratio of 70:30.

To ensure just distribution core funding should only be awarded at any one time by one department, applicants should not receive core funding from more than one department at one time (so-called "double funding"). Notably, the Voluntary and Community Unit of the Department of Social Development has a core-funding programme for the voluntary and community sector. The same also applies to the core funding from Department of Employment and Learning and the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Security.

Another issue of just distribution concerns the project funding. There are three organisations (including two ethnic groups) that have been awarded both. Since the ethnic sector has only a very limited amount of funding, the general principle should be that no organisation should be awarded both. Attention should be paid to those ethnic minority groups who have limited capacity to engage, funding for such groups should take priority in order to build capacity and develop the local ethnic minority infrastructure (Aim 6 of the Racial Equality Strategy). This was the original purpose of project funding for local ethnic groups and/or new emerging ethnic groups.

Moreover, the local councils have had access to the good relations funding scheme and the forthcoming Peace III funding which will address sectarianism and racism. In most cases ethnic minority groups have had less opportunity to tap into local resources because of their poor capacity or no local ethnic minority infrastructure, except in Belfast.

Taking such factors into consideration leads us to question the wisdom of the funding round to award 11 out of 18 local groups core funding. Significantly, the change of the policy for the Ethnic Minority Funding Scheme without consultation is in serious breach of the S.75 duty, this policy has now proved to have had negative impact on sector as a whole.

NICEM has recorded our discontent to the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, as well as the OFMDFM Committee and the All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority People of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.10 Charities Bill 2008

NICEM welcomes the introduction of the Charities Bill 2008 which is long overdue. The new Bill will put Northern Ireland in line with

Great Britain in its regulation of the registration of charities, particularly regarding the control of funding raising and public charitable collections.

We welcome the replacement of the four heads of charity (relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion and advancement of arts and culture) by 12 charitable purposes (Clause 2). The expansion of the definition of charity reflects the wide range of charitable organisations in our society and thus modernises the current charity law. The new additions should help to officially recognise the charitable work of many Northern Ireland groups in the areas of peace and reconciliation, as well racism, sexism, sectarianism, homophobia, ageism, etc. in our society. For example NICEM is under the Inland Revenue Charitable Status with the purpose to promote racial equality in Northern Ireland.

NICEM agrees that in order to register as a charity in Northern Ireland, an organisation must have one or more of the charitable purposes as listed in the Order and it must prove its public benefit (Clause 3) in Northern Ireland or elsewhere. We also agree that the public benefit test should be set out specifically in the legislation. NICEM agrees that the public benefit test should take into account any benefit to individuals who are not legitimate beneficiaries and the consideration as to whether their activities would be detrimental to the public. The test will also consider whether any conditions on obtaining that benefit are unduly restrictive such as any charge or fee for the benefit. We firmly believes that this will ensure charities which levy a high charge or fee, such as a private school, will have to *demonstrate* charitable activity.

NICEM has strong reservations on Clause 166 (which sets the specific criteria which organisations must meet in order to obtain designated religious charity status) for two main reasons. Firstly sub-section (3), which sets out numerical requirements and duration needed to be established as a charity, may have a detrimental impact on minority religions whose congregation size and duration of establishment may fall short of the regulations. Secondly the proposed clause will not be compatible to both Article 9 and 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom [ECHR] (specifically the rights concerning religion, belief and non-discrimination). Both the numerical and durational tests will not comply with the proportionality test which is the cornerstone of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

NICEM made a submission to the Social Development Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. We also organised the faith minority groups to meet the Minister of Social Development, Ms. Margaret Ritchie, MLA, on 3rd April 2008. This was an opportunity to directly raise our concerns over Clause 166. The Minister took on board our concerns and made several amendments to the Social Development Committee. These included the reducing the qualifying criteria in Clause 166 (3)(c) from 10 years to 5 years and the removal of the membership criterion in clause 166(d) which previously stood at 1,000 members.

1.11 Section 75 Consultations

NICEM has responded only to priority consultations this year.

Responses have been submitted to the following consultations:

- Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy: The Law and Clinical Practice in Northern Ireland (The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Consultation Paper on the Termination of Pregnancy); and
- Submission to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development on the abolition of the Agricultural Wage Board.
- We have also provided comment with regard to the Home Office UK border Agency consultation paper on strengthening the common travel area.

We have also participated in a number of consultative forums and events as members of the various fora listed in the followings:

- Bill of Rights Forum of the Northern Ireland Office
- Racial Equality Forum of the OFMDFM
- All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority People of the Northern Ireland Assembly
- Thematic Working Group on Migrants of the Department of Employment and Learning
- Promotion of Social Inclusion Working Group on Homelessness of the Department of Social Development
- Volunteering Strategy Steering Group of the Department of Social Development
- Regional Equality Liaison Panel of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Security
- White Paper Advisory Group of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Good Relations Performance Indicators Working Group of the OFMDFM
- Holocaust Memorial Day Advisory Group of the OFMDFM
- Queen's Award for Voluntary Services (QAVS) of the OFMDFM
- Asylum Co-ordinating Meeting of the UK Border Agency - Scotland and Northern Ireland Region
- Racial Equality Shadow Forum
- Belfast Local Strategic Partnership
- Equality Coalition
- UNISON Northern Ireland Black Committee
- Belfast City Council Migrant Shadow Forum
- Faith in Pluralistic Society Project Advisory Group of the Contemporary Christian Centre
- Ethnic Minority Health Forum of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- European Programme Advisory Group (Peace III and Interreg) of NICVA
- Joint Consultative Forum for Education Sector
- British Medical Association Patient Liason Group
- The Gender Advisory Panel of the OFMDFM
- Ad-hoc Women's working group
- Women's National Commission
- Children's Strategy, Planning and Review Group of the OFMDFM
- Queen's Higher Education Equality Consultative forum
- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Equality Panel
- Human Rights Consortium

2. Public Awareness on Racism and Multiple Discrimination

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

(Martin Luther King)

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 it buy-in the staff's support for racial equality on one hand, to change the organisational culture through new policy and practice on the others.

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

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

Over the last 12 months we provided training to 15 organisations with over 300 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:

Hosford House
Down District Volunteer Centre
Groundwork NI
Strabane Ethnic Community Association
Banbridge & District Youth Council
Aware Defeat Depression

Derry City Council
Triangle Housing Association
Regeneration & Development of the Armagh City & District Council
NASUWT
Banbridge Integrated College
Forthspring Youth club
Common Purpose
Polish Youth Group Newtownabbey
Samaritans Belfast

We also provided a half day "human rights and equality" training for the Accredited NVQ Level III Community Interpreters' Training Programme which was organised by CONNECT-NICEM in Letterkenny and Tullamore.

We also provided a three-hours "race relations law" training for the Queen's University of Belfast Social Work students (both undergraduate and graduate programme).

Due to lack of sufficient incomes that generated to support a full-time trainer, we made a painful decision to cut the Training and Education Officer post. As a result, training and education programme for the general public are now spread among staffs who take additional responsibility. This will assist us to ease our on-going financial burden.

3. Capacity Building black and minority ethnic communities

During 2007-2008 a number of BME groups have suffered from a loss of funding for programmes and staff and are facing the same funding difficulties as the wider community and voluntary sector. However, because BME community groups find difficulty in accessing more mainstream funds which are available for geographically based projects or for funding aimed at tackling issues more relevant to the wider communities such as sectarianism, these funding losses have had a greater impact on small BME organisations who have lost core staff and new BME organisations who find it difficult to fit within funding programmes with themes which do not address their particular issues.

This poses a problem not just for BME communities themselves, but more so for the wider community, voluntary and public sector who wish to work together with BME communities and consult on important public policy issues. Since, without funding small groups can still provide social support, guidance and cultural or religious services for their own communities (which will be their priority), they no longer have the capacity, time or staff available to involve the wider community or to engage in additional work outside of their own community programmes. In the longer term this will impact on the delivery of the wider equality agenda for public sector services.

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

- Assisting communities to organize and develop their community associations, developing constitutions.
- 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 QualityTask 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
- Indian Community Centre
- Bulgarian Association NI
- Indonesian Association NI
- Polish Association NI

3.1 Research: The Minority Ethnic NI Programme (MENI)

During 2007-08 NICEM was commissioned to undertake a piece of research aimed at pulling together existing data on ethnic minority populations in Northern Ireland and identifying training and employment needs.

The project, to be delivered by the consortium including Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd, Aventurene, South Eastern College and North Down Development Organisation will take a holistic approach to the training and employment needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) individuals across Northern Ireland. Initially the project will be piloted in the areas of North Down and Ards, and seeks to provide support measures to address the employment, skills development and training needs of BME individuals and communities in the area.

The MENI Programme is an innovative training and development initiative aimed at helping minority ethnic individuals across Northern Ireland to realise their full potential. The Project takes a holistic view to the needs of these individuals and seeks to provide support measures that will address the needs (primarily employment, self-employment, skills development and volunteering) identified within a single integrated programme of support.

NICEM was commissioned to undertake research in order to provide contextual information, and establish the potential level for uptake by BME populations in Northern Ireland and in particular the North Down and Ards areas, which historically has been difficult to estimate and record because of a lack of statutory monitoring data on ethnicity in Northern Ireland.

This research draws together information from a wide variety of agencies where a limited amount of ethnic monitoring and recording in relation to ethnicity and language has been carried out.

Information gathered also includes estimates from BME communities, living and working in Northern Ireland.

By pulling together existing data on ethnicity and research on the education and training experiences and needs of the BME communities in Northern Ireland, we hoped to estimate current populations in Northern Ireland and identify the main communities, how the communities have changed over the past 10 years and suggest how changes in the economy and immigration rules may effect the sizes and needs of these communities over the coming 5 years. This includes the needs of the second generation, which will have different needs, and face different barriers to education and employment compared to their parents.

In this piece of work we attempted to summarise this local data to give an overall picture of the BME communities and individuals in the area from the data available. Training education and employment needs also include the needs of the second generation, which will be different and they face different barriers to education and employment compared to their parents. Information is limited for this group, however through discussions with local communities we have identified some of the main issues

3.2 Interpreter training: Queen's University Belfast - MA in Translation

In Summer 2007, NICEM participated in a QUB summer school programme for students of the new QUB MA in Translation which began in September 2007.

Two staff from NICEM conducted a workshop with students raising awareness of the issues, problems and practical implications of engaging in work as an interpreter or translator.

NICEM's OCN training programme in Community Interpreting was offered as a module on the MA in Translation during 2007-08 and completed by 5 of the QUB students. The course is offered as part of the MA in order that those students studying the theoretical issues around translation of texts, can also understand the wider practical implications and difficulties which arise when working as an interpreter. The course and subsequent interpreting opportunities for students enable them to gain a broader understanding of the interpreting and translation sector.

3.3 Open College Network accredited training for community interpreters

NICEM continues to deliver our accredited training programme for community interpreters and during 2007-2008 delivered 4 of our 12-week training programmes to over 60 new interpreters. This year we expanded our delivery to include training in the South of Ireland, following an approach by the Donegal Local Development Company. We completed the training course in Spring 2008 and in September 2008 began delivering our accredited training programme in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, with a course scheduled for Galway in early 2009.

With local support from the voluntary and public sector organisations in the South of Ireland we have been able to successfully, adapt our course to suit the needs of interpreting students in those areas and would encourage those interpreters continue their professional development wherever possible through the higher education courses available at the moment through Dublin City University.

We will continue to deliver our accredited programmes through 2008-2009 with courses planned for Derry, Galway, Belfast, Lisburn, Coleraine and possibly another course in the Donegal area. For student registration please contact NICEM.

3.4 Continually improving quality and standards

Over the past 4 years CONNECT-NICEM has recognised the need to monitor the professional conduct of interpreters (adherence to our Code of Practice) and also the accuracy of the interpreting carried out by interpreters in a range of situations.

Most importantly through customer complaints and feedback which we strongly encourage, we have been made aware of breaches of conduct which resulted in the removal of interpreters from our register. Customer complaints & feedback is one of the most important elements in our procedures for monitoring interpreters, since it is within the actual session that the client can identify behaviours or attitudes which they are unhappy with

During 2007-2008 we have developed and introduced a spot checking and quality monitoring process which our staff use to monitor interpreters conduct during sessions, and where possible the accuracy of their language use. CONNECT staff attend random interpreting sessions (with the permission of the client) and observe

the interpreter in action. Staff has attended sessions in police stations, courts and with other public sector services. The advantage of having a locally based service is that we can carry out this on the ground observation of the work of interpreters and identify problems and issues which arise, and which may be larger issues for the criminal justice sector.

3.5 Interpreter Support Network and Professional Development Programme

In addition to delivery of our accredited training programmes for interpreters, CONNECT-NICEM also arranges regular skills development sessions, as part of our Professional Development and Programme.

During 2007-2008 we arranged a number sessions for interpreters to build up their knowledge of particular public sector services and gave them the opportunity to improve on their terminology and understanding of services. This enables interpreters to be more effective in their interpreting. The following services and departments delivered sessions

- PSNI Serious Crimes Branch
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland – key procedures and terminology
- Northern Ireland Prison Service – key procedures and terminology
- Inland Revenue – Becoming self employed
- Social Security Agency – The Social Fund
- NICEM – International and National Human Rights Legislation
- PSNI – Human Trafficking Unit
- PSNI – Special Operations Branch. Two half day awareness raising sessions on working with officers involved in specialist operations including raids, hostage situations, etc. This course was offered to a limited number of interpreters however, we hope to expand this to encompass more languages in the future.

3.6 Northern Belfast Quality Support Programme

NICEM continued to work as a delivery partner in the above programme during 2007-2008. Working with three voluntary sector organisations in the North Belfast area, using the PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance for Small Organisations) system.

The Quality Support Programme (the 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. A need has been identified 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 will include:

- 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.

3.8 CONNECT-NICEM

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, equality and diversity training 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. Among other services, company profits are used to:

- support work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities and individuals throughout Northern Ireland,
- further improve the standards and professional development of interpreters.

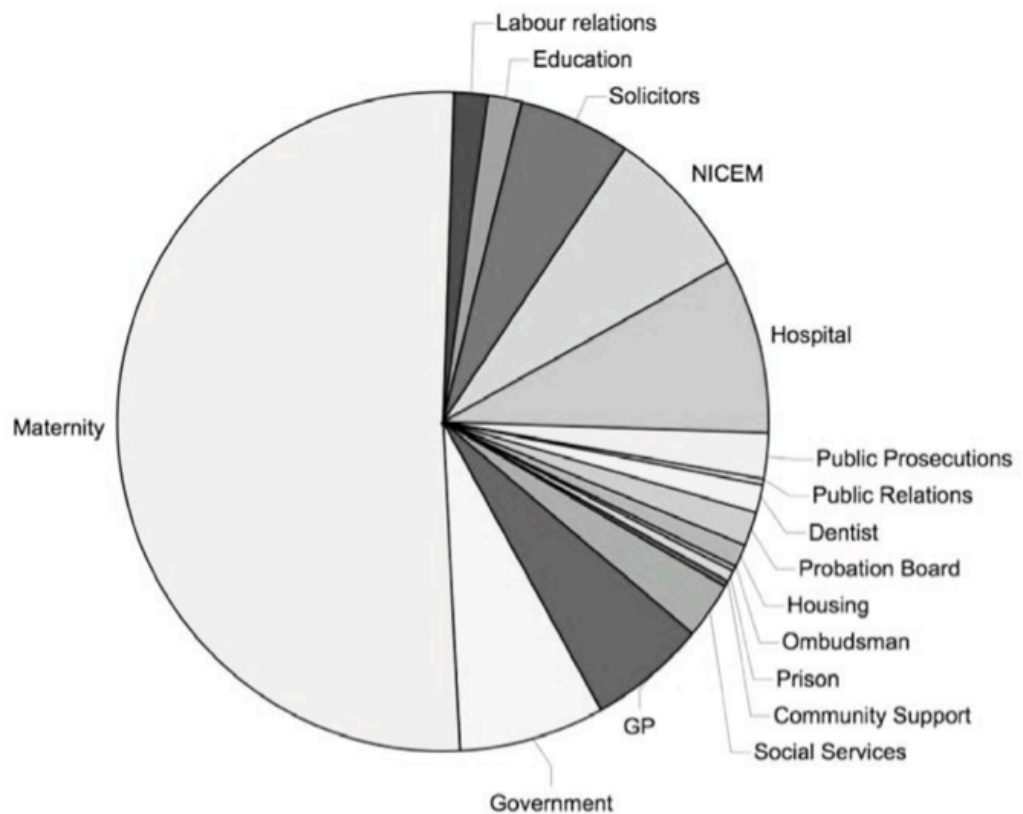
CONNECT-NICEM provides interpreting services, interpreter training and consultancy services.

During 2007-2008 CONNECT-NICEM completed a strategic planning

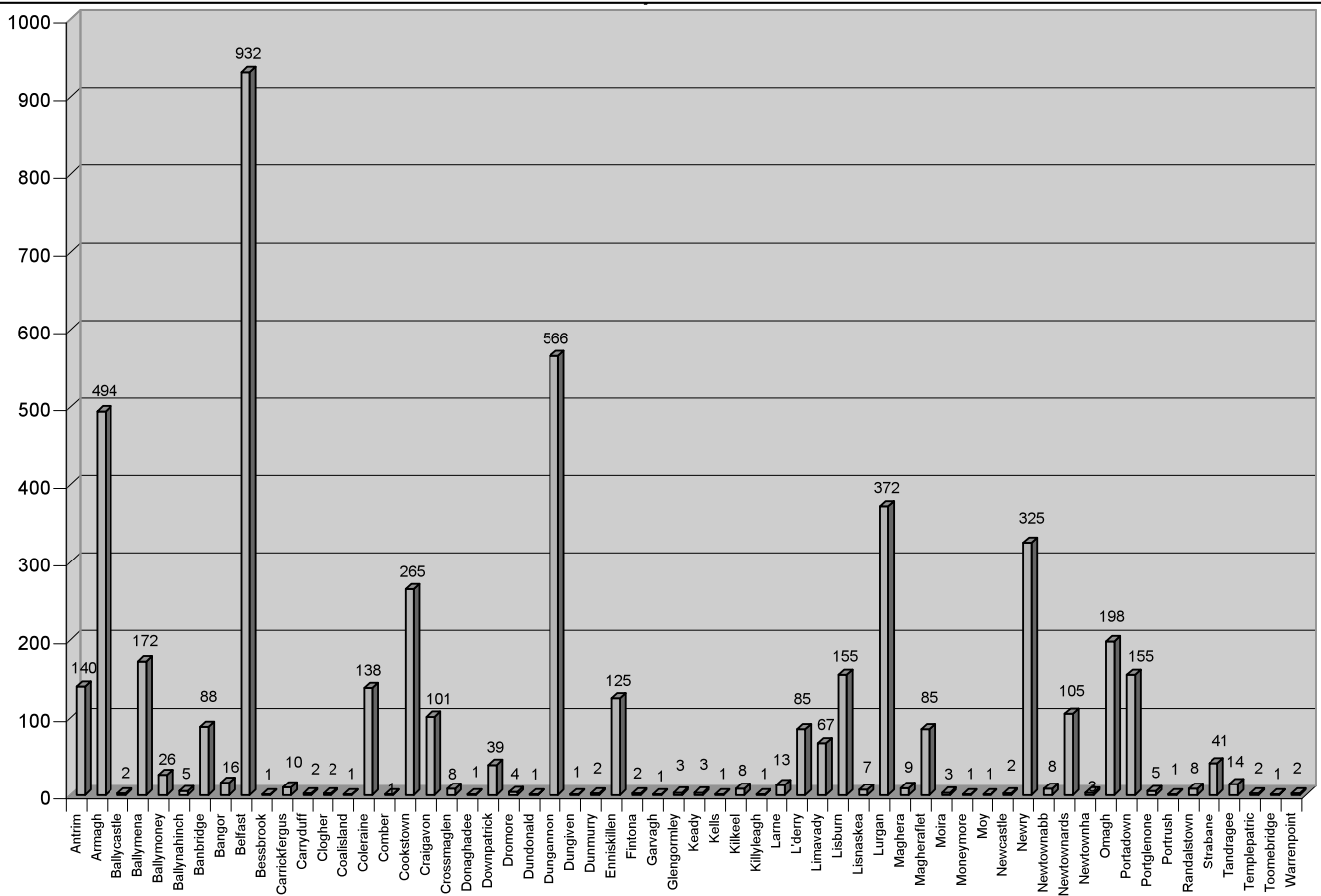
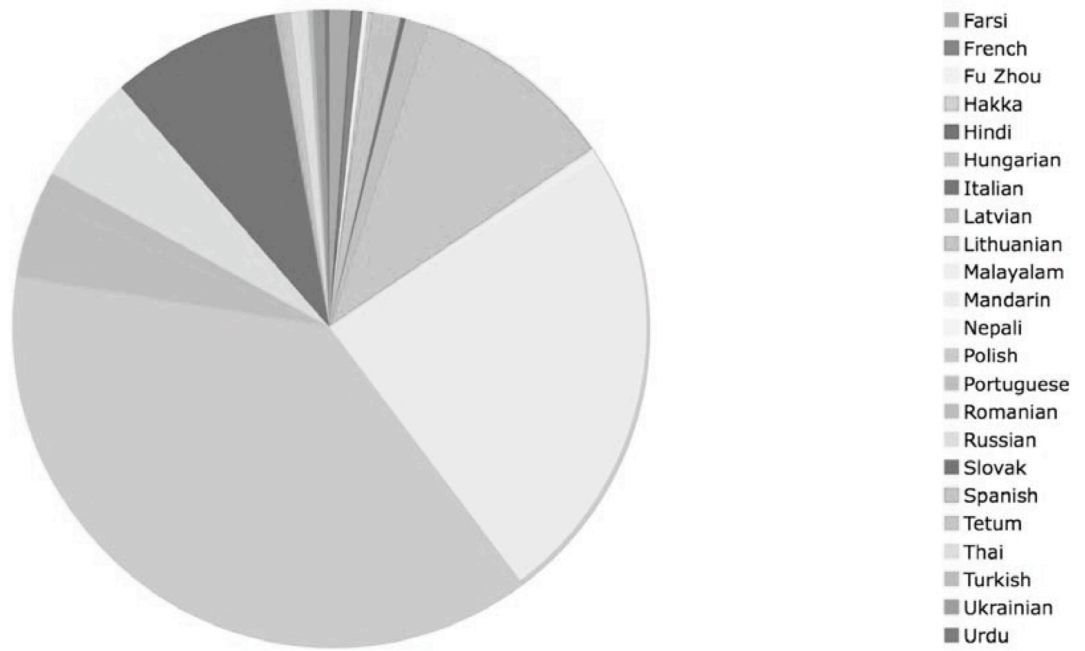
process which has already proved very useful in improving and developing services during this year.

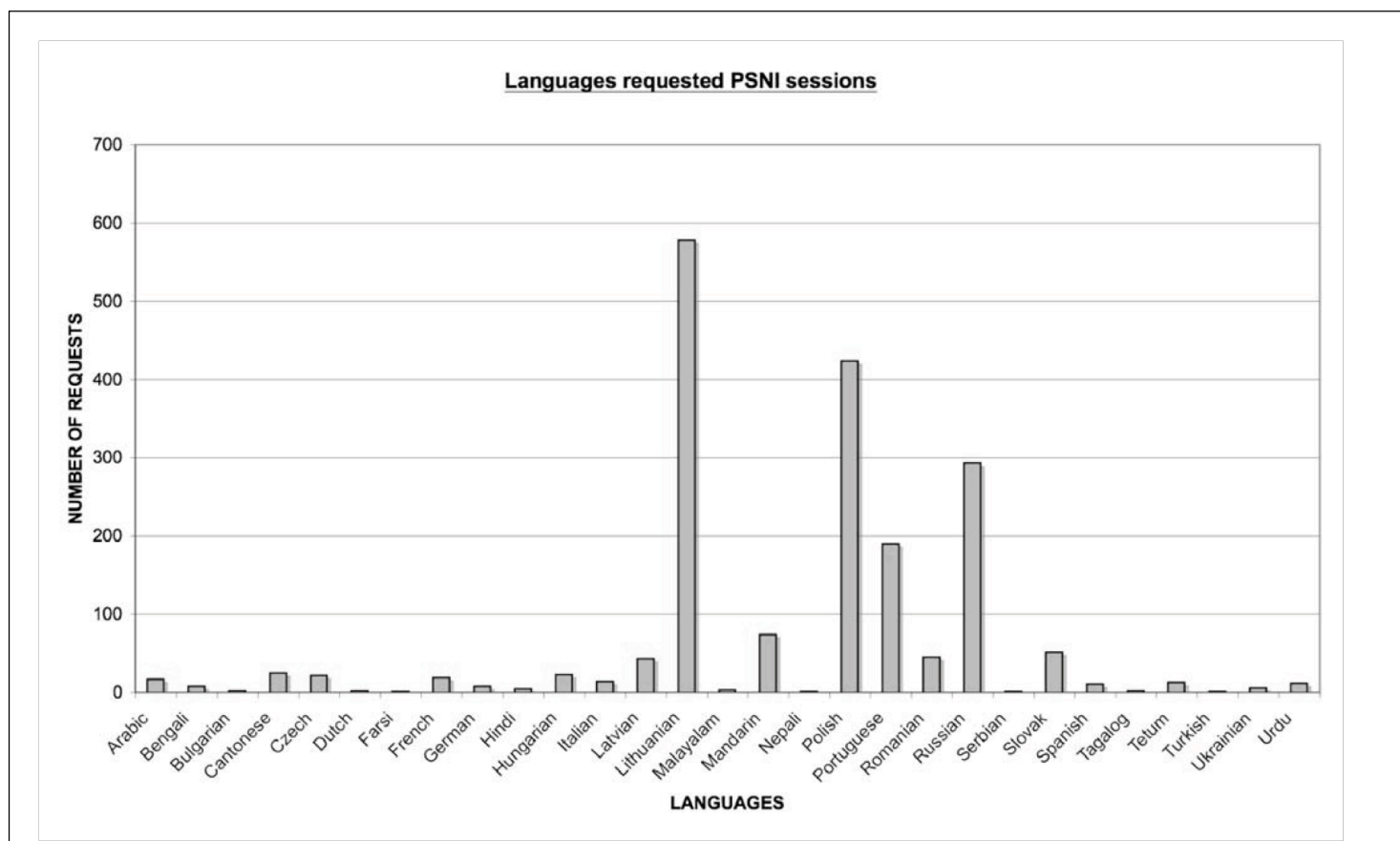
Interpreting requests

CONNECT-NICEM processed requests during the period and has seen a steady rise in requests over the year to 3500+ requests, from contracted existing and new customers. Below is an overview of customer sectors and language demand and spread:



Languages requested by service providers (non-PSNI)





3.9 Representation within the voluntary sector and committees

NICEM is represented through capacity building staff on the boards of

- Wheelworks (Youth Arts Organisation)
- Voluntary Services Bureau (Belfast) VSB
- An Munia Tober
- CAN Peace III partnership

4. Support Vulnerable Groups in our Society

4.1 Refugee Integration & Resettlement

Direct Support Services

NICEM continues to signpost those would like to apply for asylum status to the Bryson One Stop Service. For the 12 months (April 2007 – March 2008) period we provided support for 64 individuals and/or families with the following breakdown:

Refugee or other status:	32
Family Reunion:	4 families (13 people)
First time service users but got status sometime ago:	19

We provide services to assist the above target groups in accessing benefits, housing, education, training and employment, skills assessment, English classes, support with producing a CV, assisting job applications (including notification of any vacancies) and referral to other agencies such as the Law Centre for family reunion assistance. We also provide an orientation programme, arrange schools for children and young people, GP registration, English classes etc. for those family reunion cases. The breakdown of users for our advice services are as follows:

Housing:	36
National Insurance/Benefits:	42
Health:	28
Education:	51
Training:	52
Employment:	52
Skills Assessment:	48
Family Reunion:	31
Law Centre referral:	43
Other signposting:	93

Integration programmes for asylum seekers and refugees

We run orientation workshops to help those who have experienced problems in Northern Ireland with different aspects of their daily life, ranging from schools, church, symbols, child rearing and support services, etc. We also run citizenship workshops relaying the necessary information for the citizenship test and naturalisation process. The breakdown of the workshops is as follows:

Orientation Workshops:	4
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Number of participants:	27
Citizenship workshop:	4
Number of participants:	35

Refugee Integration Policy

NICEM has the vision to develop integration policy for refugees in Northern Ireland in line with the government's 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 in order to ascertain the needs of the most 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.

Refugee Week 2007

This year we also got funding from the Home Office to support a number of events for Refugee Week, which were a combination of programmes from NICEM and NICRAS.

The All Party Working Group on BME People sponsored the launch event at the Parliament Building, Stormont on 15 June 2007. The Chair of the All Party Working Group, Mr. Alex Maskey MLA, made an opening speech to welcome the asylum seekers and refugees who are living in Northern Ireland. The event at Stormont gave the refugee issue a high profile. There were around 120 people attending the launch.

The highlight of the event itself was a dramatic performance by actors from NICRAS and the Tinderbox Theatre Company in Belfast. We organised the workshop with Tinderbox and brought NICRAS members to discuss the contents of the plays. Through 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.

We also organised the Photographic Exhibition on "The Life of Refugees in Northern Ireland" (a photo collection from last years events) which documented the lives of refugees and asylum seekers living in Northern Ireland. The Exhibition was successfully displayed at Castle Court in Belfast (the largest shopping mall in NI) on 26 June 2008. We estimate that more than 1,300 people spent time looking at these photographs when displayed in Belfast.

Unity Club Football Match for Refugee Week

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

NICRAS held a seminar on "Contemporary Slavery", on 21 June 2007, 45 people attended the event in the Linen Hall Street Library. They also organised their Annual General Meeting and a Cultural Diversity Party on 22 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 out-door trip to Newcastle, County Down on 30 June 2007 with 41 people.

Volunteering programme for NICRAS

As NICEM is planning to phase out the asylum and refugee services, we transferred our grant aid from the Volunteer Development Agency and staff to the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) to deliver the volunteering programme for asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland. NICEM is still managing the Project whereas NICRAS is doing the delivery. It is sensible to transfer the resources to the grassroots organisation in order to promote capacity building in the community. In addition NICEM also provides QUASRO (a modified version of PQASSO for refugee grassroots organisations) support in post-training to ensure good governance.

4.2 Migrant Workers

Trade Unions alliance building

NICEM and UNISON working for the last few years to support the nurses and health care workers from Philippine, India and South Africa, as well as more migrant workers from EU A8 countries on low paid jobs such as cleaning and canteen work, a Black Committee was set up as the result. We were pleased to hear that UNISON has recruited more than 1,200 new members from migrants community (mainly Filipino).

Recent issues include fighting the change of immigration rule on the new five years rule for permanent resident status (from four years previously). We work closely in this issue with our partners UNISON in London and Glasgow and TUC in London. A signature campaign to

the local politicians, including MPs and MLAs was organised by the Filipino community. We also assisted to organise a press conference to present their case at UNISON office. Just week before the press conference, the UK government back down the rule as the result of negative impacts on all professional migrants, as well as a legal challenge to the new immigration rule.

We also provide support to them if they experience harassment or attacks in their living and working (UNISON will deal with) environment.

Over the year, we have developed the UNISON Race Group bringing active members together to form the infrastructure to deal with their issues and concerns. As a result new leadership has been developed and new members from A8 and A2 countries also represented.

We also work in collaboration with Irish Congress of Trade Union (ICTU) on migrant issues. Recently ICTU, UNISON, Polish Association (NI) and NICEM put forward a joint funding application to the Big Lottery under "Reaching the Community" programme to set up a Belfast Migrant Centre to provide support and services to this most vulnerable group in our society.

BME Floating Support Project for Migrant Workers

NICEM's BME Floating Support Services has 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 Headquarters), the project's remit covers the entire NHSSB area, (excluding Cookstown borough council as STEP provides support in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas). This project has been created through the partnership of the Housing Executive's Supporting People Fund, the NHSSB and NICEM to ensure that the various needs of the BME community in the North East of the province are being met, in particular migrant workers.

This project was created to promote independent living and to improve the quality of family life among the Board's BME population in general, targeting migrant workers who experience crisis situations and have to overcome obstacles in accessing public services due to language and cultural barriers in particular.

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

- Orientation and guidance for people settling in the new area;
- Identifying, sourcing and referring to health care and accommodation providers;
- Access and referral to immigration and employment rights advice, support and counselling (where appropriate) for the victims of racial harassment and intimidation;
- Identifying, sourcing and referral to additional training and educational services;
- Arranging basic advice and guidance in property maintenance;
- Provision of welfare rights information to service users, ensuring they are in receipt of their entitlement, acting as an advocate and assisting them in making the informed decisions.

Advice and Support Services

The two Project workers have provided practical assistance and advice/referral services to those migrant workers 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 staff members have focused on generating an interagency approach to tackle issues faced by black and minority ethnic people, particularly migrant workers. They have already generated a lot of support for the project from both statutory and voluntary agencies that work with migrant workers. The success of this project and its ability to assist migrants depends on the ability of all-involved agencies to communicate with each other and to actively refer clients to the appropriate organisations if they cannot support the client themselves. Therefore the BME Floating Support Project both receives and gives referrals depending on the client's needs.

The project has become very successful in recent months with outside agencies making case referrals due to its close working partnership with agencies such as the many sectors of the Health and Education Boards, employers, councils, PSNI, Community Safety Partnership, libraries, the Law Centre, community groups, charities and, importantly various councils' community fora.

The funding of the Project was depleted on 20 July 2008 as the proposed Project extension from the Housing Executive was rejected (NIHE had contributed one-third in 2008-2009) as the needed one-third funding from the NHSSB was not available and

despite NICEM agreeing to contribute the other one-third. Due to the fact that there is an overwhelming demand of such support services for migrant workers, we could not afford to stop the project completely. Instead we decided to use our own resources to keep the support services running at least at minimum capacity to avoid disruption of delivery. We extended the staff contracts so they now work 3 days a week in order to provide advice and support to migrant workers. In the mean time, we are waiting for the new Peace III Programme so we can apply for new funding to continue our work.

Currently we have advice clinics in the following council areas once a week:

- Coleraine (Monday 5-8pm)
- Ballymoney (Wednesday 6-8pm)
- Magherafelt (Thursday 6-8pm)
- Rasharkin (Alternate Fridays 6-8pm)
- Newtownabbey (Thursday 7-9pm)

From 2007-2008 (September – August) we dealt with 2,482 cases, the following breakdown is the nature of these cases:

Health	312
Education	77
Employment	494
Housing	184
Harassment	14
Immigration	202
PSNI	46
<u>Welfare</u>	<u>1,118</u>
Total:	2,482

The breakdown of the Welfare cases (January – August 08) is as follows:

Child Benefits	178
Tax Credits	460
Housing Benefits	113
Disability Benefits	18
Maternity Benefits	38
Income Support	46
<u>Others</u>	<u>73</u>
Total:	926

Due to a high level of new comers from the new EU Member States, many of whom arrived at our doorstep seeking help, we decided to extend the part-time advisor post into a full-time Bi-lingual Migrant Organiser from June 2007. A lack of funding from various government departments to support such services, meant we had to use our own resources to deliver basic support services for migrant workers.

In 2007-2008 we provided advice and took action to support 216 service users (both individuals and family units). The breakdown of their nationality is as follows:

- Polish 175
- Lithuanians 24
- Slovaks 9
- Romanians 5
- Hungarian 2
- Latvian 1

The nature of the cases were:

- Benefit information request 127
- Education advice on school 36
- Homelessness and alcohol issue 31
- New documents 19
- Problems with employers 2
- Anti-social behaviour 1

Most all cases were completed by the Organiser within one month of the initial meeting with the service user (depending on the nature of the case). We also provided advice and active support through telephone and email for initial contact along with face-to-face advice sessions as a follow-up. We estimate there were around 1,000 inquiries over the same period.

In order to cope with the huge demands in Belfast we put forward funding proposal to the future Peace III and the Big Lottery Fund to set up a Belfast Migrant Centre to develop and achieve the more long-term objective of the integration of migrants through advice, support, capacity building and participation.

4.3 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 cases, on average, each month as well as maintaining its previous caseload. Over the past financial year the project took action on 68 enquiries about harassment, took on 32 new clients and has a current caseload of 36 active files. At present the service has done casework and one-time advice sessions with over 300 people. As well as new cases, there were 10 clients that would be counted as reactivated cases. The service continues to recognise the need to support victims of racial harassment and the limitation posed by only one worker for the project. This need is especially apparent as incidents of racial harassment and hate crime continue to increase.

We continue to address the issue of limited resources by carrying out on going partnership work with community groups and councils. Over the past year we have been developing a partnership with member groups in Strabane, Omagh, Enniskillen, Londonderry/Derry and with new groups in the Donegal area. However without further resources these partnerships cannot be fully developed. We continue to understand and recognise that the most effective way to provide support to victims of racial harassment is through partnership working on a local level and development of a regional network. We feel confident that pending the necessary funding we will be able to provide comprehensive support more effectively throughout Northern Ireland.

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. Additionally, because we feel the work is a priority we continue to support it through our own limited resources.

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.

Participation in community fora

Housing Rights Editorial Committee
Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum
Housing Rights Practitioners Forum
Independent Advisory Group PSNI
Housing Rights Manual Editorial Group
Foyle PSNI BME Engagement Protocol Forum
Policing Board BME Reference Group
Unison Race Group
North Down DPP
Greater Shankill Community Safety Network
Intercommunity Housing Network
Hate Crime Thematic Group Belfast City Council
Supporting Communities NI Management Committee
East Belfast Independent Advice Centre Management Committee
BME Housing Forum Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Hate Incidents Working Group NIO
Advice Services Alliance Specialist Advisory Panel
Police Ombudsman Consultation

Presentations

Old Warren Partnership Lisburn Anti-Racism Training
Hate Crime presentation to community groups
Glastry College Anti-Racism Workshop
Police and Policing Seminar Hate Crime Presentation
Portadown Community Day
Model UN CEWNI Moderator
NASUWT Presentation to teachers about race hate crime
Banbridge Integrated College
Forthspring youth raising awareness workshop
Presentation to Joint Parliamentary Committee
Interpreter Anti-Racism Training

Common Purpose Youth Leadership

Education

Criminal Justice Inspectorate NI Stakeholders Conference

Restorative Practice Conference

ACPO Criminal Justice Conference

WAVE Supporting Victims Conference

Race Action Net Tackling Hate Crime Conference

NICEM Human Rights Conference

Minority Rights and International Law Workshop

INCORE Preventing Hate Training for Trainers

Northern Ireland Community Builders Programme (NYC)

5. Networking and Partnership Building

Networking and partnership building has 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 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, UK Bill of Rights, EU Framework Directive on Services and the Commission of Equality and Human Rights. On the Single Equality Bill and the EU Framework Directive on Services we work closely with the Discrimination Law Association. We also had meetings with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights on the issues of the Bill of Rights debate with both sides of jurisdiction. NICEM is also the Board Member of UKREN. Our partners are as follows:

- Commission for Equality and Human Rights
- Discrimination Law Association
- UK Race Europe Network (UKREN)
- 1990 Trust
- Runnymede Trust
- Operational Black Vote
- Refugee Council
- Justice
- Interights
- Monitoring Group, UK

5.2 Irish Network

The North-South dimension is a key strategic consideration for campaigning anti-racism on the island of Ireland. Due to limited staff and resources we did not develop much of the work on the island of Ireland. Instead we focussed on responding to certain needs they expressed. Over the last 12 months, we have a huge demand and requests to provide accredited interpreters' training to

the south. As a result we have successfully delivered the interpreters' training in Letterkenny in partnership with the Western Health Board Asylum Support Services and there is ongoing training in Tullamore with the local council. We are also planning to deliver a new course in Galway early next year.

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. Since Tansy Hutchinson left NICEM last year to work in ENAR, we slowed down a little bit. Despite this set back, we continue to have a robust working relationship with ENAR.

We participated in the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Anti-Discrimination on 26-27 March 2008 in preparation for the EU Framework Directive on Services. We also work in partnership to develop a new Transnational Project on "Supporting the Victim: Training Measures, Policy and Practice on Racial and Religious Hate Crime in the EU". However a lack of matched funding meant we had to postpone our application until next year when the DG Justice, Freedom and Security opens another call for Projects. In the mean time, we were commissioned by ENAR to write a new advocacy booklet using the experiences of victims of racial and religious hate crime in the EU to be used in training and as an advice and advocacy tool. These testimonies will also inform our partnership work on the delivery of victim support in the EU.

The work of the SOLID Project has been crucial in linking NGOs in the 25 Member States. We also ran an additional training in Denmark in November 2007 with the possibility in Finland and Latvia, subject to funding. In addition, a SOLID Training Resources CD-Rom has been published.

We have also successfully lobbied the European Commission (in conjunction with the Equality Commission and the NI Executive Office) to host the Commission's annual anti-discrimination conference in Belfast. The 5th Anti-discrimination Annual Thematic Conference was held in Belfast on 5-6 June 2008 with the theme "Communicating Anti-discrimination in European Union". The Executive Director also chaired and reported back the Workshop sessions.

We will participate in the Impact Assessment Conference of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities

in early October 2008 which has been organised by the Council of Europe as the first decade on the implementation of the Framework Convention has been reached.

We work in partnership 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
- European Roma Rights Centre
- European Roma Information Centre
- Article 1 in Netherland (the former LBR)
- Denmark Documentation Centre on Racism
- Open Society Justice Initiative
- Minority Rights Group International
- Latvian Centre for Human Rights

5.4 Northern Ireland

NICEM has established a strategic partnerships with organisations across the sectors in order to promote human rights, equality and race equality in Northern Ireland, covering issues such as Section 75, the Single Equality Bill, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, asylum seekers and refugees, and 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 Unions
- UNISON
- Equality Coalition
- Human Rights Consortium
- Disability Action
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- Helped the Aged
- Age Concern
- 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 Centres
- Community Change
- Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
- NIACRO
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Red Cross (NI)
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Old Warren Partnership

6. Organisational Development

Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO)

With on-going support from the Refugee Council we continue to monitor and review our organizational development, policy and practice through the PQASSO process. A number of our staff 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 2007-2008 using both the PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) for organisational development and the QASRO (Quality Assurance System for Refugee Organisations) to assess the development of policies, procedures and systems for specific services and teams within the organisation.

The Quality Task Group continues to work on the organisation's Quality Action Plan for 2007-2008 and is planning a review of the plan and next annual self-assessment exercise for the organisation for 2008-2009.

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

NICEM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2007-2009)

Chair: Mr. Javaid Naveed
NI Pakistani Cultural Association

Vice-chair: Ms. Maria Ellis
Women of the World

Secretary: Mr. Muhammad Al-Qarryooti
Belfast Islamic Centre

Treasurer: Mr. Tilak Raj Puri
Indian Community Centre

Other members:

Mrs. A S Khan
Al-Nisa Association

Alicja Nowakowska
Polish Association NI

Shuyb Miah
Shah Jalal Mosque Bangladeshi Community Centre

Julius Anakaa
Afro Community Support Organisation NI
(ACSONI)

Bobby Rao
Strabane Ethnic Community Organisation

Advisory members: Ms. Eddis Nicholl
Ms. Anne Brown
Ms. Inez McCromac
Dr. Joseph Mwaura

STAFF LIST (Sept 2007-August 2008)

Central Administration Team

Executive Director	Patrick Yu
Finance/Administration Manager	Nuala Moynagh
Administrator (Policy team)	Christopher McAfee
Receptionist (part-time)	Sophie Romantzoff (from November 2007)
Administrator (Floating Support team)	Tomasz Matuszczah (Jan – July 08)

Policy & Capacity Building Team

Development Worker – Policy & Research	Terry Deehen (left 30 th June 2008)
Development Worker - Policy & Research	Helena Macormac
Development Worker – Racial Harassment and Victim Support	Jolena Flett
Training Officer / Refugee Integration	Ronald Vellem (Left 30 th April 2008)
Advice and Support Worker - Floating Support Team	Elizabeth Connor-Kerr (Left 21 st June 2008)
Bi-Lingual Support Worker - Floating Support Team	Marzena Szkaradek
Advice and Support Worker	Michelle Lyons (started September 07)
Bi-lingual Migrant Worker Organiser	Maciek Bator (Left 30 th June 2008)

Capacity Building and CONNECT NICEM Team

Co-ordinator of Capacity Building & Executive Director of CONNECT NICEM	Gabrielle Doherty
Development Worker (Social Economy)	Sean Kelly (Left 31 st Sep. 2007)
Administrator (CONNECT)	Krzysztof Frankiewicz (Left 31 st August 2008)
Senior Administrator (CONNECT)	Aruna Djalo
Senior Administrator (CONNECT)	Stewart Robinson
Senior Administrator (CONNECT)	Sarah Maitland
Administrator (Booking)	Katarzyna Gelger (Nov. 2007 – May 2008)
Administrator (Finance)	Nicole Atkinson (Nov. 2007 – May 2008)
Administrator (CONNECT) (Out of Hours Interpreting Service)	Michaela McClelland
Administrator (CONNECT) (Out of Hours Interpreting Service)	Rumena Kostadinova-McCabe (on maternity Leave from 1 st June 08)
Administrator (CONNECT) (Out of Hours Interpreting Service)	Tanya Tierney (from 1 st June 2008)

NICEM MEMBER GROUPS (2007-2008)

Afro Community Support Organisation Northern Ireland
Al-Nisa Association NI
An Munia Tober
Barnardos Chinese Lay Health Project
Belfast Islamic Centre
Bulgaria Association Northern Ireland
Causeway Chinese Welfare Association
Craigavon Traveller Support Committee
Filipino Communities in Northern Ireland
Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association
Indonesian Association Northern Ireland
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 Multicultural Association
Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association
Northern Ireland Sikh Association
Polish Association Northern Ireland
Derry Traveller Support Group
Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group
Shah Jalal Mosque Bangladeshi Community Centre
Strabane Ethnic Community Association
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