

Minority Ethnic Young People and Their Experiences of Disadvantage, Discrimination and Racism in Education and Social Service Delivery in Northern Ireland¹

1. Introduction

This scoping paper outlines minority ethnic² young people's experiences of disadvantage, discrimination and racism in education and social service delivery in Northern Ireland. Data drawn mainly from official sources, including the Annual School Census and the 2001 population census, summarizes key demographic and education information, highlighting areas of concern with regards to minority ethnic young people. In particular, differential attainment rates and rising levels of EAL pupils requiring additional educational support stand out.

A review of qualitative studies of racism and discrimination in Northern Ireland, as well as outputs from projects devised and delivered by NICEM itself, presents what little is currently known about young people's reported experiences of racism and their concerns relating to discrimination and inclusion, mostly focusing on education and the school setting. The paper also draws comparison with experiences of minority ethnic young people in England in areas where the numbers of young people from minority ethnic groups is small (similar in proportion to Northern Ireland). Issues of concern highlighted include racist bullying, relative isolation, lack of understanding on the part of teachers/schools and stereotyping and low expectations.

The purpose of this scoping paper is to act as a stimulus for discussion between NICEM members and Officials, particularly from the Department of Education and the Education and Skills Authority, at a forthcoming NICEM seminar. It is also the background/baseline data and knowledge summary in preparation for an extensive survey research project that will be undertaken by NICEM in early 2010. A summary of this scoping paper is also planned for dissemination to NICEM members and other community groups for whom the issues are relevant.

2. The Minority Ethnic Population in Northern Ireland

The 2001 Census collected information on the ethnic background of people in Northern for the first time, using the following 12 categories: White, Irish Traveller, Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black, Chinese and Other Ethnic Group. The Census recorded 14,279 minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland, amounting to just less than 1% of the total population (Table 1).

These numbers, however, have been disputed by many, not least NICEM. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Census figures were out by 100%, meaning that the minority ethnic population of Northern Ireland was even then in 2001 closer to 30,000-35,000, and that the Chinese population alone was closer to 10,000.³

¹ This scoping paper was researched and drafted for NICEM by Michelynn Laflèche with Professor Chris Gaine.

² 'Minority ethnic' in this paper refers to people from the established black and minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, as well as new migrant groups including white minority ethnic people from Eastern European countries. The situation of Travellers in education and service delivery is radically different from that of other minority groups and is not covered in this paper. However, for a good outline of the key issues see: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (November 2008b).

³ Khan, O. and Berkeley, R. (2006a).

The Census figures also did not include White minority ethnic groups as part of the minority ethnic population, such as the Portuguese who lived in significant numbers in Northern Ireland, but rather subsumed these groups under the White ethnicity category. Other Eastern European groups were also not recorded as 'minority ethnic', who were estimated to account for roughly 2,000 residents,⁴ a number that has grown substantially since then.

Table 1: Minority Ethnic Population of Northern Ireland, 2001 Census		
Ethnic Group	Number	Minority ethnic (%)
Chinese	4,145	29.03
Mixed	3,319	23.24
Irish Traveller	1,710	11.98
Indian	1,567	10.97
Other Ethnic Group	1,290	9.03
Pakistani	666	4.66
Black African	494	3.46
Other Black	387	2.71
Black Caribbean	255	1.79
Bangladeshi	252	1.76
Other Asian	194	1.36
TOTAL	14,279	100.00

Indeed, using the Annual Population and Labour Force Surveys, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently estimated that 18,000 individuals resident in Northern Ireland in 2008 were born in one of the A8 countries of the European Union (but mostly Poland at 13,000) – and likewise for residents who held A8 nationality – compared to 1,000 officially recorded in the same sources in 2004.⁵ A recent government report states that the rate of increase in the population of Northern Ireland had in fact doubled annually from 2004 to 2007, a significant proportion of which was due to migration (Table 2), in particular migration from the expanded European Union (from A8 countries, in other words).⁶ School figures discussed later show the numbers of ME pupils needing EAL support (and not all do) is around 6,500.

Table 2: Estimated Net International Migration, July 2000 – June 2008			
Time-period	Estimated International Inflows	Estimated International Outflows	Estimated Net International Migration
Jul 2000 - Jun 2001	6,737	8,605	-1,868
Jul 2001 - Jun 2002	8,791	9,613	-822
Jul 2002 - Jun 2003	7,230	8,332	-1,102
Jul 2003 - Jun 2004	8,060	7,644	416
Jul 2004 - Jun 2005	13,607	8,936	4,671
Jul 2005 - Jun 2006	18,118	9,095	9,023
Jul 2006 - Jun 2007	19,369	11,332	8,037
Jul 2007 - Jun 2008	15,350	11,039	4,311
Total	97,262	74,596	22,666
Source: NISRA (July 2009) http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Net_Mig0708.xls			

⁴ Bell, K. et al. (2004).

⁵ European Union A8 consists of the Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. For all UK population by country of birth and by country of nationality statistics see <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15147>

⁶ NISRA (27 August 2009b).

3. The Minority Ethnic School Population in Northern Ireland

Whatever the correct figures on minority ethnic populations in Northern Ireland, what is clear and most important is that there is an increasing diversity of minority ethnic groups as well as increasing numbers, in particular in relation to the many White minority ethnic groups from Eastern Europe. This is also reflected in the school-aged population.

Minority ethnic pupils make up 2.3% (n=7,296) of the total pupil population in Northern Ireland, including nursery schools and special schools (Table 3).⁷ Of the post-primary age group (11-18 year olds), the main focus of this scoping paper and the planned survey research to follow in early 2010, minority ethnic pupils account for 2,261 pupils, or only 1.5%, reflecting the younger age structure of minority ethnic groups (where they account for 2.4% of primary pupils and 3.8% of nursery classes & reception enrolments).

Table 3: Ethnicity of Pupils by School Type, 2008/09										
	All pupils	White (excl. Irish Traveller)	Minority ethnic groups							All minority ethnic groups
			Chinese	Irish Traveller	Indian/Sri Lankan	Pakistani	Black	Other ethnic group	Mixed ethnic group	
Nursery Schools	5,869	5,661	22	#	44	*	13	56	63	198
Nursery Classes & Reception	8,817	8,482	42	22	75	10	34	73	79	335
Primary Schools & Prep. Departments (Year 1 - Year 7)	155,994	151,886	414	573	562	135	361	1,021	1,042	3,694
Secondary (Non Grammar) Schools	85,576	84,161	207	190	108	47	149	443	271	1,161
Grammar Schools (Year 8 - Year 14)	62,410	61,275	404	*	172	#	57	227	240	1,100
Special Schools	4,598	4,503	10	23	10	5	7	16	24	95
ALL NURSERY, PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS	323,264	315,968	1,099	817	971	233	621	1,836	1,719	7,296
* Fewer than 5 cases. # Number suppressed. Source: Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2008/09 http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk/Ethnicity%20of%20pupils%20by%20school%20type%20nursery%20primary%20post%20and%20special%20schools.xls										

The different patterns of grammar school presence between different minority groups is worth noting, since it shows how misleading it can be to generalize about all groups as if their experience is the same. The most obvious contrast here is between Irish Travellers, virtually non-existent in grammar schools (as is the case in England) and Chinese secondary age pupils, two-thirds of who are in grammar schools. Indeed, for those minority ethnic groups who are underrepresented at grammar schools compared to the average for the White population – Irish Travellers, Pakistani, Black and Other Minority Ethnic pupils – concerns about indirect discrimination through transfer processes have recently been expressed. In NICEM's response to the Department of Education's consultation on its equality impact assessment of the 2010 Transfer Guidance, questions were raised about the use of Free School Meal (FSM) **take-up**, rather than FSM **entitlement**, as one of the main selection criteria, which it is believed

⁷ Ethnic minority group categories in the School Census include: Irish Traveller, Chinese/Hong Kong, Indian/Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African, Black Other, Korean, Mixed Ethnic Group and Other Ethnic Group. Eastern European and other White minority ethnic groups are subsumed under the White ethnicity category.

will result in indirect discrimination because some minority ethnic groups – for a variety of reasons – are less likely to take up their FSM entitlement.⁸

The number of English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils mirrors the pattern of increased and sustained migration from the A8 countries from 2004 onwards. However, unlike the slow down in net migration seen in 2007 reported above (Table 2), numbers of EAL pupils have continued to rise year on year. By 2008/09, 4,660 primary and 2,142 post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland schools required additional support as a result of their English language skills compared to 868 and 463 respectively in 2001/02 (Table 4).

Table 4: Number of Pupils with English as an Additional Language¹ at Schools in Northern Ireland, 2001/02 – 2008/9								
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<u>Nursery Schools</u>								
Full-time	n.a.	n.a.	31	26	44	63	79	114
Part-time	n.a.	n.a.	17	32	32	49	33	46
TOTAL NURSERY SCHOOLS	35	46	48	58	76	112	112	160
<u>Primary Schools</u>								
<u>Nursery class pupils</u>								
Full-time	n.a.	n.a.	32	48	64	129	152	217
Part-time	n.a.	n.a.	33	31	54	63	97	108
TOTAL NURSERY CLASS PUPILS	41	#	#	79	118	192	249	325
Primary: reception	8	*	*	14	13	13	18	24
Grammar preparatory: reception	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL RECEPTION PUPILS	8	*	*	14	13	13	18	24
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	766	647	878	1199	1740	2401	3522	4302
Grammar school prep Depts.(year 1 - 7)	53	43	39	41	31	24	20	9
TOTAL YEAR 1 - 7 PUPILS	819	690	917	1,240	1,771	2,425	3,542	4,311
TOTAL PRIMARY PUPILS	868	735	985	1,333	1,902	2,630	3,809	4,660
<u>Post Primary Schools</u>								
Secondary (non grammar) schools	195	242	249	390	435	909	1365	1807
Grammar Schools	268	267	232	275	268	239	349	335
TOTAL POST PRIMARY PUPILS	463	509	481	665	703	1,148	1,714	2,142
<u>Special Schools TOTAL</u>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21	30	33
GRAND TOTAL ALL SCHOOLS	1,366	1,290	1,514	2,056	2,681	3,911	5,665	6,995
1. Definition used is those children whose first language is not English and who have significant difficulties with the English language and who require additional support. n.a. = data not available "*" means less than 5 cases. "#" means figure has been treated under rules of disclosure. http://www.deni.gov.uk/eal_time_series_-_suppressed_updated_0809-2.xls								

Further evidence of the growing numbers and diversity of pupils from minority ethnic groups can be gleaned from the number of first languages on record. 40 first languages of EAL pupils at primary level, and 28 at post-primary level were recorded in the 2008 school census. Top of the list for primary and post-primary was Polish, followed by Lithuanian, both national languages of A8 countries (Table 5). Again, the pattern of migration increases is reflected in the distribution of languages and the change from 2005 to 2008, where EAL pupils with Polish as their first languages increase by 8 times at primary level and 3 times at post-primary level (2006 to 2008).

⁸ NICEM (June 2009).

Table 5: Top 10 First Languages of Children with English as an Additional Language in Year 1 - Year 7 and at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland, 2005 – 2008 School Census

Schools in Northern Ireland, 2005 - 2008 School Census				
Language other than English/Nationality	NI 2005 School Census Count (Year 1 to Year 7)	NI 2006 School Census Count (Year 1 to Year 7)	NI 2007 School Census Count (Year 1 to Year 7)	NI 2008 School Census Count (Year 1 to Year 7)
1. Polish	196	610	1,224	1,604
2. Lithuanian	175	362	420	533
3. Portuguese	139	217	244	317
4. Filipino	177	168	224	221
5. Malayalam	70	86	24	166
6. Cantonese	195	142	159	153
7. Slovakian	20	39	38	127
8. Latvian	14	43	64	84
9. Indian (not specified)	25	41	17	83
10. Hindi	63	63	75	80
Language other than English/Nationality	NI 2005 School Census Count (Post Primary)	NI 2006 School Census Count (Post Primary)	NI 2007 School Census Count (Post Primary)	NI 2008 School Census Count (Post Primary)
1. Polish	-	246	513	769
2. Lithuanian	-	174	208	272
3. Cantonese (including Chinese)	207	186	272	266
4. Portuguese	-	116	130	172
5. Filipino	-	58	71	110
6. Slovakian	-	-	23	57
7. Latvian	-	30	45	54
8. Malayalam	-	-	7	41
9. Hungarian	-	10	20	36
10. Tagalog	-	-	-	24

- Count less than 5

Source: Department for Education - Northern Ireland (March 2009)

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/In_Mig0708.xls

The impact of migration on the education system, and likewise on the planning and delivery of social services more broadly, is not evenly spread. As would be expected, Belfast has the highest numbers of EAL pupils at 807 for primary and 469 for post-primary levels, but proportionally, other areas, notably Dungannon, Craigavon and Cookstown, had higher levels of EAL pupils in their schools (Table 6). Notably, these three districts also have some of the highest proportions of the more established minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland,⁹ suggesting a longer history of having to respond to diversity that should (but is not in all cases) help to inform practice on managing the current trends.

The challenges posed for schools by new EAL pupil enrolment are not diminishing. Though some pupils have returned to their country of origin, and though net migration is decreasing compared to its peak in 2005/06, new migrants are still arriving, and with children, and some young recent migrants contribute to new births. In 2008, 2,042 and 825 new EAL pupils at primary and post-primary levels (respectively) arrived in the last school year,¹⁰ suggesting that long-term planning for the delivery of education and other services to new migrants is essential, a point strongly made in a recent ECNI-commissioned report on migration and further emphasized by ECNI in their statement on key education inequalities.¹¹

⁹ School districts with highest proportions of BME pupils (shown as a percentage of the district's total pupil population) in 2008: **Primary:** Belfast (4.8%, n=1,193); Dungannon (4.6%, n=253); Craigavon (4.4%, n=389); Castlereagh (4.4%, n=248); Newtownabbey (2.8%, n=187). **Post-primary:** Dungannon (3.7%, n=218); Belfast (2.9%, n=859); Castlereagh (2.6%, n=108); Cookstown (2.3%, n=40); Craigavon (2.1%, n=151). School Census Tables 1.20 & 1.21, supplied by DENI for this paper.

¹⁰ See http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/In_Mig0708.xls

¹¹ Martynowicz, A. and Jarman, N. (January 2009) and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (November 2008a).

Table 6: Number of Primary and Post-Primary School Pupils with English as an Additional Language by the Local Government District of the School, 2008 School Census

School (LGD)	PRIMARY PUPILS			POST-PRIMARY PUPILS		
	Number of Primary Pupils with English as an Additional Language (2008)	Primary Pupils Population (2008)	As a %	Number of Post Primary Pupils with English as an Additional Language (2008)	Post Primary Pupils Population (2008)	As a %
Antrim	120	4,900	2%	35	2,200	2%
Ards	73	5,800	1%	20	3,900	1%
Armagh	147	5,500	3%	89	4,900	2%
Ballymena	156	5,400	3%	70	6,100	1%
Ballymoney	34	2,600	1%	10	1,800	1%
Banbridge	73	4,500	2%	19	4,000	1%
Belfast	807	23,300	4%	469	30,000	2%
Carrickfergus	32	3,300	1%	28	2,900	1%
Castlereagh	145	5,200	3%	62	4,100	2%
Coleraine	142	4,800	3%	43	4,400	1%
Cookstown	121	3,500	4%	68	1,700	4%
Craigavon	495	8,000	6%	229	7,100	3%
Derry	164	11,000	2%	42	10,800	0%
Down	79	6,300	1%	47	6,400	1%
Dungannon	524	5,400	10%	328	5,900	6%
Fermanagh	150	5,300	3%	84	5,300	2%
Larne	16	2,300	1%	10	2,000	1%
Limavady	24	2,800	1%	24	2,700	1%
Lisburn	197	9,700	2%	93	5,600	2%
Magherafelt	93	4,200	2%	42	5,700	1%
Moyle	17	1,400	1%	9	1,600	1%
Newry & Mourne	290	9,700	3%	149	9,900	2%
Newtownabbey	141	6,500	2%	60	5,700	1%
North Down	74	5,900	1%	24	5,400	0%
Omagh	160	4,900	3%	68	5,200	1%
Strabane	37	3,800	1%	20	2,700	1%
Northern Ireland	4,311	156,000	3%	2,142	148,000	1%

Source: Department for Education - Northern Ireland (March 2009)

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/In_Mig0708.xls

4. Schooling Outcomes for Minority Ethnic Pupils

Minority ethnic pupils are represented at both the top and the bottom of the qualifications table (Table 7). 54.7% of minority ethnic school leavers achieved 3 or more A levels in 2008, compared to only 43.8% of White pupils. But at the bottom end of the table, minority ethnic young people were over 1.6 times more likely than White young people to have left school with no GCSEs or with no formal qualifications what-so-ever. Though the A level achievement results look good for minority ethnic school leavers, and indeed those with no formal qualifications are a small real number, there is still something askew at GCSE school leaver level. In 2008, of those school leavers who left after GCSEs, only 9.7% gained 5+ A*-C GCSEs and 16.5% only 1-4 GCSEs, when in previous years we have seen a much more even split between these two (i.e. 14.5% and 16.5% respectively in 2006/7). Qualifications for White minority ethnic young people unfortunately are not available for consideration in this paper, but given the high incidence of EAL pupils amongst the White minority ethnic population, we can expect achievement levels to be considerably lower for some of this group. Indeed, EAL children were identified as an underachieving group in the ECNI's *Statement of Key Inequalities*.¹²

¹² Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (October 2007) *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ECNI.

Table 7: Highest Qualification of School Leavers by Ethnic Origin⁽¹⁾		
	2007/2008 Total	
	Numbers	%
WHITE⁽²⁾		
A levels		
3 or more (or equivalent) ⁽³⁾	10,426	43.8
2 (or equivalent) ⁽³⁾	642	2.7
1 ⁽³⁾	520	2.2
GCSEs		
5+ A*-C (or equivalent) ⁽⁴⁾	4,302	18.1
1-4 A*-C (or equivalent) ⁽⁴⁾	4,713	19.8
Other grades (1+ D-G) ⁽⁵⁾	2,321	9.8
5+ A*-G (or equivalent) ⁽⁶⁾	9,758	41
1-4 A*-G (or equivalent) ⁽⁶⁾	1,578	6.6
No GCSEs ⁽⁷⁾	858	3.6
No Formal Qualifications ⁽⁸⁾	657	2.8
TOTAL WHITE	23,782	100
MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS⁽²⁾		
A levels		
3 or more (or equivalent) ⁽³⁾	169	54.7
2 (or equivalent) ⁽³⁾	11	3.6
1 ⁽³⁾	7	2.3
GCSEs		
5+ A*-C (or equivalent) ⁽⁴⁾	30	9.7
1-4 A*-C (or equivalent) ⁽⁴⁾	51	16.5
Other grades (1+ D-G) ⁽⁵⁾	22	7.1
5+ A*-G (or equivalent) ⁽⁶⁾	80	25.9
1-4 A*-G (or equivalent) ⁽⁶⁾	23	7.4
No GCSEs ⁽⁷⁾	19	6.1
No Formal Qualifications ⁽⁸⁾	14	4.5
TOTAL MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	309	100
1. Excludes special and independent schools. 2. Minority Ethnic Groups' includes Irish Travellers. The 'White' figures do not include Irish Travellers. 3. Includes AVCE qualifications. 4. Includes Grades A*-C only and GNVQ Intermediate qualifications. 5. Includes Grades D - G only and GNVQ Foundation qualifications. 6. Includes GNVQ Intermediate and GNVQ Foundation qualifications. 7. Includes those who undertook no GCSE examinations or obtained no graded results but who obtained other qualifications such as RSA, Pitman, City and Guilds etc. 8. Includes only those with no qualifications of any kind. NB: The non-shaded rows sum to the total. Figures in the shaded rows overlap with other rows. In addition there were 24 pupils for whom an Ethnic group was not given. Source: Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2007/08 http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk/Highest%20qualification%20of%20school%20leavers%20by%20ethnic%20origin.xls		

Achievement levels tell us something about disadvantage and that some groups are not reaching their potential, however, they do not necessarily correlate with discrimination or experiences of racism. A study of Black high-achievers in two London schools showed that students still reported differential treatment from teachers that they perceived to be racialised and experienced as racist, and interviews with the teachers revealed marked racial stereotyping of the pupils that resulted in differential treatment.¹³ So, while the educational outcomes for many minority ethnic young people may well be good, it does not mean that these same young people are not at the receiving end of racism or discrimination that could disadvantage them in other ways or in the future. This is an area that must not be treated with complacency, and needs further investigation in the Northern Ireland context. The experience of minority pupils at the hands of other pupils is discussed later.

¹³ Rollock, N. (2007).

The picture for minority ethnic pupils on the road to further or higher education also looks relatively good compared to White pupils (Table 8), with almost 50% going on to higher education and a further 26.5% to further education, compared to nearly 40% and 29.5% of White young people. Table 8 also seems to show a relatively positive picture of employment prospects for those who do not go into education or training. Indeed, the future looks bright for many, with 50% of minority ethnic people who are employed being employed in the professional or managerial occupations.¹⁴ However, this may be misleading on two counts. First, it reflects the educational level of some parents who have been recruited for their skills (Malayalam or Tagalog speaking nurses, for instance). Second, many minority ethnic people in these occupations run their own businesses, which skews their occupational category but may nevertheless be a reflection of perceived and possibly real labour market discrimination.¹⁵ In addition and despite this, minority ethnic adults of working age still have higher rates of economic inactivity compared to White adults of working age (36% vs. 30%), with Travellers having the worst outcomes in this regard (63%).¹⁶ Both these issues may potentially affect the future employment prospects of even the highest achievers among minority ethnic young people.

Table 8: Destination of School Leavers by Ethnic Origin⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾		
	2007/2008 Total	
	Numbers	%
WHITE⁽³⁾		
Institutions of Higher Education ⁽⁴⁾	9,454	39.8
Institutions of Further Education	7,025	29.5
Employment	2,431	10.2
Unemployment	834	3.5
Training ⁽⁵⁾	3,552	14.9
Destinations Unknown	486	2.0
TOTAL WHITE	23,782	100.0
MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS⁽³⁾		
Institutions of Higher Education ⁽⁴⁾	154	49.8
Institutions of Further Education	82	26.5
Employment	37	12.0
Unemployment	8	2.6
Training ⁽⁵⁾	22	7.1
Destinations Unknown	6	1.9
TOTAL MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	309	100.0
1. Excludes special and independent schools. 2. Destination is defined by Institution. Institution may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education Levels 3. Minority Ethnic Groups' includes Irish Travellers. The 'White' figures do not include Irish Travellers. 4. Includes universities and teacher training colleges. 5. Numbers entering training include those entering the Jobskills programme, operated by the Department for Employment and Learning. Training on Jobskills is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Jobskills train Source: Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2007/08 http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk/Destinations%20of%20school%20leavers%20by%20ethnic%20origin.xls		

Unlike their counterparts in Great Britain, minority ethnic pupils are no more likely than White pupils in Northern Ireland to be suspended and less likely to be expelled.¹⁷

¹⁴ OFMDFM (January 2009).

¹⁵ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000a) and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (October 2007).

¹⁶ OFMDFM (January 2009) *Good Relations Indicators 2008 Update*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

¹⁷ For more details on suspensions and expulsions, see

<http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk/Pupils%20suspended%20in%20school%20year%20broken%20down%20by%20frequency%20of%20suspension%20and%20ethnicity.xls> and

<http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk/Pupils%20expelled%20in%20school%20year%20broken%20down%20by%20ethnicity.xls>

5. Attitudes Towards Minority Ethnic Groups and New Migrants

In one of the first comprehensive studies of racism in Northern Ireland, Connelly and Keenan (2000) found racial prejudice was twice as negative as sectarian prejudice, and that this prejudice was being expressed in the form of racist harassment. The situation has not changed markedly since then, except perhaps with worsening attitudes being expressed towards Travellers, and new data showing serious levels of negative views of migrants, a situation particularly alarming considering the larger numbers of migrants in Northern Ireland today.

People feel as if asylum seekers and people who are immigrating over here...are taking over but they are not...when someone goes from here to a different country they are not treated in a bad way, they are welcomed. When people come over here, maybe it's because it is such a big percentage, it's like 'what are they doing in our country? They are taking our jobs'. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

The Equality Awareness Survey, conducted by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, published its latest results for 2008 recently and found that attitudes to minority groups, migrants in particular, were more evident in 2008 than they were at the time of the last survey in 2005.¹⁸ Indeed, 54% of respondents felt that racial discrimination was more prevalent in 2008 than it was in 2003 – a result considerably higher than for any other equality ground. Other key findings from this survey include the following:

- “In considering which group was treated most unfairly in Northern Ireland society, ethnic groups (24%), Travellers (16%), older people (15%) and LGB persons (12%) ranked highest. Women (2%) and Men (0.3%) ranked lowest. This was broadly similar to 2005, except for Travellers who were perceived to be treated more unfairly in 2008.
- However, when asked to indicate their general perceptions of particular groups, respondents noted they felt most negative towards Travellers (28%); 21% said they felt negative towards lesbian women or gay men; and 20% said they felt negative towards Eastern European migrants. Further when asked to about their views in particular circumstances:
 - 51% would mind having a Traveller as a neighbour or as an in-law, and 38% said they would mind having a Traveller as a work colleague.
 - 28% would mind having a migrant worker as an in-law, and 23% and 22% respectively would mind having a migrant worker as a neighbour or a work colleague.
 - The most negative attitudes were reserved for Travellers: just over half (51%) minded having a Traveller as a neighbour or an in-law, while 38% were opposed to working with a Traveller
 - Migrant workers also evoked strong responses, with 28% saying they would mind if a close relative were to marry a migrant, while 23% would mind having a migrant as a neighbour and 22% as a work colleague.”

Though this is not a survey of young people themselves, these general views and attitudes matter because they reflect and create the society in which our young people live and attend school. It is likely that the views of parents and carers are at the very least made known to youngsters, and at the worst adopted by the youngsters themselves. This has an impact on what happens in schools and other social settings.

I think that mostly they are bullying us because of their education from their parents. I think we have to change the minds of the parents first. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

¹⁸ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2009).

Indeed, racist incidents, perhaps a barometer of on-the-ground prejudice and ignorance, rose dramatically over the last 10 years and remain at high levels today (Table 9). The majority of race hate motivated crimes were against property (burglary, theft or criminal damage) in 2008/09 at 59%, but it is none-the-less concerning that 39% (n=302) of these were violent (crimes against the person, sexual offences or robbery), a figure that rose in the last year, though still not at its high of 45.7% in 2005/06.

6. Racist Bullying in Schools

Racist bullying appears to be a problem in Northern Ireland schools, something that young people themselves are very worried about.²¹ The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as:

²² Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (November 2007).

Research has raised serious concerns around the prevalence of racist bullying in Northern Ireland. A recent study found that perceptions of racist bullying were widespread among Year 6 and Year 9 pupils, with 46% and 61% (respectively) saying that they felt that a pupil's race or skin colour could make them more likely to be bullied.²³ Research on the Further Education (FE) sector in Northern Ireland also demonstrates the prevalence of this problem, where 45% of full-time students taking part in a recent survey reported being harassed at College, with 1 in 5 saying they were experiencing it on a weekly basis. But these findings are not new: a report published in 2000 found that racist bullying and harassment was commonly experienced by minority ethnic children in Northern Ireland schools, with two thirds of minority ethnic children in that study reporting they had been racially harassed, mostly in the form of name calling, but also including some instances of physical abuse.²⁴ In a study of the experiences of minority ethnic people in mainly white schools in England, a third of pupils reported having experienced similar forms of harassment, and half of these said that it was ongoing over a long period, a finding replicated by other studies in England, and which requires investigation in Northern Ireland.²⁵ What is also known, but not always made clear in much of the research, is that racist bullying tends to be pupil on pupil bullying.

People pick on you because of your name and where you come from and laugh at you...that would quite hurt as well. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

If they people know you well, they won't name calling you or anything; they will treat you really nice. If they do not know you; they will and they will just bullying you and name calling you. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

This high level of both perception and reported experience of racist bullying and harassment is despite policy and legal measures to prevent and address bullying. Although there is no single piece of legislation in Northern Ireland that specifically deals with bullying, it can be addressed through a range of other legal concepts, including harassment,²⁶ though a legal question about the liability of schools in cases of pupil on pupil bullying or harassment remains unanswered, a situation that requires immediate resolution. Currently, specific orders that can be applied include:

- The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, Article 20 (general duty for the provision of services without racial discrimination)
- The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, Articles 17 (promoting welfare of registered pupils), 18 (child protection policy) and 19 (disciplinary policy with specific mention of the need to prevent bullying).
- Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997, Articles 3 and 4 (constitutes bullying and/or harassment as a criminal offence)
- Criminal Justice (No2) (NI) Order 2004 – Hate Crime Legislation

How have schools responded to racist bullying? In 2000, quite poorly according to Connelly and Keenan. A 'good' response in their analysis meant taking reports of racist bullying seriously and taking swift and decisive action, as well as the presence of teachers who listened to and understood the experiences of those being bullied.²⁷ Most schools were not meeting that standard, however, and many

²³ Livesey, G. et al. (2007). Again, as with the Equality Awareness Survey, it is unfortunate that this extensive study did not analyse the experiences and perceptions of bullying by religious minorities in the current context where Islamophobia appears to be on the rise.

²⁴ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000a).

²⁵ Cline, T. et al. (2002) and Gaine, C. (2005).

²⁶ The legal definition of harassment in Northern Ireland is taken from the RRO, Article 4A: "4A. – (1) A person ("A") subjects another person ("B") to harassment in any circumstances relevant for the purposes of any provision referred to in Article 3(1B) where, on grounds of race or ethnic or national origins, A engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of - (a) violating B's dignity, or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for B."

²⁷ For a more detailed list of good practice on dealing with racist bullying in schools see Richardson, R. and Wood, A. (eds.) (2004), pp.16-17.

responded so inappropriately as to exacerbate the problem for many pupils. Things have not improved – despite more knowledge and defined practice about identifying and handling racist bullying, and more regulation to make schools deal with it. Indeed, in 2007, 41% of Year 9 boys and girls who bullied other pupils said that their teachers had not talked with them about their behaviour/actions.²⁸

In primary school, yes...people have said racist comments to me but I find that no matter what we say to teachers they never do anything to resolve it and I think that's a big problem; they haven't done anything to resolve it. I have had a lot of racism and I don't think its very nice and it does get me down at times. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

Another problem associated with dealing with racist bullying is its under-reporting, and the worrying prevalence rates that we do have from research studies are probably just the tip of the iceberg. Many pupils do not tell teachers or even their parents that they are being bullied – often because they do not believe that the teacher or their parents are able or willing to do anything about it, or that reporting it will make the situation worse, or because they lack confidence to do so. Families, too, are often unwilling to report racist bullying of their children to schools, either in deference to their child's wishes or because they, too, believe that the schools will not take appropriate action or because they themselves also lack the confidence to do so. Indeed, it has been found that some teachers treat racist bullying on par with other forms of insult or abuse, such as reference to one's hair colour, and not seriously enough and/or underestimate the extent and seriousness of the abuse.²⁹ If this is widespread, then the need for resolution of the current legal doubt as to school liability for pupils bullying other pupils is even more immediately necessary.

I get abuse like get called names...but I just ignore it. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

7. Other Persistent Issues in Relation to Education

While racist bullying is perhaps the most worrying problem in relation to minority ethnic pupils at present, other long-standing issues persist.

EAL pupils not only face barriers in accessing the curriculum due to the English language skills, but without adequate support to resolve the language problem, research has suggested that they are being further disadvantaged in a manner that amounts to **systemic discrimination** in so far as other opportunities, notably access to grammar school, are effectively out of reach which in the long-term hamper their life chances.³⁰

Relative isolation is also an ongoing problem. In Connelly and Keenan's 2000 research, they found, for example, that Black Africans who came to NI to study, train or gain work experience reported a sense of isolation, something that continued into their work life for those who remained and settled in NI, and which was made worse by ignorance and/or prejudice from their white colleagues.³¹ This finding was corroborated again several years later when 'indigenous' FE students were more likely to view staff as "very welcoming" (58.7%) compared with minority ethnic students (33.6%). Further, over a third of full-time minority ethnic FE students said they felt the need to hide elements of their ethnic background at college to fit-in.³²

²⁸ Livesey, G. et al. (2007), p.49.

²⁹ Cline, T. et al. (2002), Gaine, C. (2005) and Richardson, R. and Wood, A. (eds.) (2004).

³⁰ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (November 2008a) and Martynowicz, A. and Jarman, N. (January 2009).

³¹ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000a).

³² Peer Consulting (November 2007).

For EAL pupils, **relative isolation extends to their families as well**. Not only do EAL pupils face barriers themselves in their learning and integration in the school environment, but in cases where their parents lack English language skills, they are unable to communicate with schools and their involvement in their children's education is limited. Some schools and teachers still treat this non-involvement as a 'cultural' choice rather than the result of systemic failures to understand and meet the needs of EAL parents, despite evidence to the contrary from many countries.³³ It is more likely to occur in schools with little previous contact with EAL pupils and parents.

Evidence of the **lack of understanding on the part of teachers and/or schools** toward the needs of minority ethnic pupils and communities has been building up for well over 10 years now. Calls from minority ethnic communities for a curriculum that better reflected the diversity of Northern Ireland and that both celebrated cultural diversity while at the same time challenged racism and racist harassment have been many.³⁴

If you have different kind of people in your country, ethnic minority people, you should teach them about it. You should teach them from small, like from primary schools...they will be able to understand it. Whereas, if you just don't teach them anything about it, they just think 'well they are different colour, I don't care'. (Working Together Youth Summit 2006 DVD)

Teachers have reported being **ill-equipped to deal with cultural diversity and racism** in their classrooms. Research conducted in 1998 found the vast majority of teachers, especially at post-primary level, had direct contact with minority ethnic pupils but they had not received adequate training – 96% said they had had no information in their initial training, and 85% had still received none as part of their ongoing professional development.³⁵ By 2003, the situation had improved, but there was still a varied response to equality issues in teacher training and teachers' ability to address diversity in the classroom, with an emphasis on SEN rather than other s.75 equality strands, and teachers were still feeling ill-equipped.³⁶ This mirrors the situation in mainly White schools in England where "one of the key difficulties facing mainly white schools is a lack of familiarity with dealing with race and ethnic diversity, whether in terms of being comfortable with appropriate language, discussing difference with parents or pupils, or dealing with overt racism."³⁷

Related to preparedness to teach about cultural diversity and handle racism among teachers is that it has been shown **that teachers frequently downplay the seriousness of racist harassment or bullying** and/or do not recognize when it is happening or have low awareness.³⁸ The difference between how minority ethnic FE students rated the question "racism is a problem at my college" compared to FE staff is striking, where the students were 3 times more likely to agree with this statement than FE staff, 26% and 8.5% respectively, suggesting that staff are unaware of the extent of discrimination and harassment that minority ethnic students experience.³⁹

There is a substantial body of evidence to show that **stereotyping and low expectations** of minority ethnic pupils exist in the UK-wide literature, and this has been recognized as a problem which is

³³ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000a), Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (November 2008a) and Martynowicz, A. and Jarman, N. (January 2009).

³⁴ Connolly, P. and Keenan, M. (2000a) and Mann-Kler, D. (1997).

³⁵ Gallagher, T. and Leitch, R. (2001).

³⁶ Elwood, J. et al (2004).

³⁷ Gaine, C. (2005).

³⁸ Pearce, S. (2005), Jones, R. (1999), van Driel, B. (ed.) (2004).

³⁹ Peer Consulting (November 2007).

There is much research in England on the experiences of minority ethnic pupils and communities in mainly White schools that may closely reflect experiences in Northern Ireland and should inform future research here. Cline et al's research summarises the key issues nicely, and though written in 2002 has been shown to hold true. His key findings include:

- ## 8. Other Social Services

The first major review of racism and racial prejudice by Connelly and Keenan in 2000 concluded that:

- As could be seen within the context of education outlined in this paper, these general issues remain true for minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. A NICEM seminar held in 2006 with adult members of the minority ethnic communities heard all of these points again. In addition, participants expressed concern about: the denial of racism in public services by front-line service providers; bureaucratic, tick-box approaches to addressing race equality (and inequality) in response to s.75 requirements; and, the

⁴³ Connolly, P and Keenan, M. (2000b).

inability of service provider staff to see the multiple identities of minority ethnic people resulting in misinterpretations or skewed interpretations of individuals' needs and poor service delivery.⁴⁴

ECNI's 2007 *Statement on Inequalities*⁴⁵ highlights persisting inequalities experienced by minority ethnic communities:

- New migrants experience access to basic healthcare problems not just because of language barriers, but also due to prejudicial attitudes of healthcare staff;
- Minority ethnic people, in particular migrant workers, are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination in housing;
- Minority ethnic people are still under-representation in participation in public life of ethnic minorities; and,
- Minority ethnic people and migrant workers experience high levels of racial harassment and intimidation in the community, filtering into the workplace resulting in workplace based harassment and discrimination – the number of people contacting the Equality Commission about racial discrimination or harassment increased by 46% from 220 in 2006 to 321 in 2007.

9. Conclusion

These are all issues to be addressed in realizing the goals of *Helping Our Children and Young People to Achieve Through Education* (PSA 10) and *Raising Standards In Our Schools* (PSA 19).⁴⁶ In particular, we might consider Objective 2 of PSA 10: 'Reduce the gap in educational outcomes by addressing the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people', an objective which will be measured by:

- (i) An increase in the proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving at least a level 2 qualification (GSCE A*-C or equivalent) in English and Maths by the time they leave school
- (ii) A reduction in the proportion of young people leaving school with no qualifications at GSCE level (or equivalent)
- (iii) An increase in participation rate of 16-17 year olds in full-time education or training.

But before we can do this, the experiences and needs of minority ethnic young people in Northern Ireland need to be properly examined and understood, which is the next stage of NICEM's work on this important policy agenda.

Challenges and Responsibilities for NICEM and for Northern Ireland Officials

The areas examined in this scoping paper address the access to, experiences and outcomes of education in Northern Ireland for minority ethnic young people. NICEM believes racist harassment and bullying in schools requires the effective implementation of an anti-racist bullying policy, which includes victim support and a mechanism whereby victims can safely report incidents. More broadly, this paper has demonstrated the need for an attitude of inclusion within schools, where there is sensitivity for cultural and religious needs and language support to ensure that young people achieve their full potential.

In addition, the outcomes of education for minority ethnic young people in Northern Ireland are critical when considering future opportunities to access further education, training and employment. The

⁴⁴ Collier, R. (2006).

⁴⁵ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (October 2007).

⁴⁶ See http://www.deni.gov.uk/psa10_delivery_agreement.pdf and http://www.deni.gov.uk/psa19_delivery_agreement.pdf for the full PSA statements.

importance of educational attainment on future prospects shows the acute need to address the issue of minority ethnic people leaving schools with no qualifications.

The experiences and outcomes of education for minority young people in Northern Ireland present crucial challenges for NICEM and for education officials. For NICEM, our challenge is to continue to advocate for the needs of minority ethnic young people in Northern Ireland through the research that we will carry out in early 2010. The task of this research will be to build the evidence base of experiences of minority ethnic young people in Northern Ireland, to fill the current gaps in information and to advocate for effective change. The responsibility of education officials will be to address these issues in order to bring about the removal of disadvantage, discrimination and racism in education and service delivery in Northern Ireland. These challenges and responsibilities are real and must be met in order to improve the experiences of minority ethnic young people and their families in Northern Ireland.

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September 2009

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