



2nd floor, Cathedral Quarter Managed Workspace,
109-113 Royal Ave, Belfast BT1 1FF
t 028 9024 2828 f 028 9031 4829
e info@belfastinterfaceproject.org w www.belfastinterfaceproject.org

Belfast Interface Project Annual Report December 7th 2012 – February 21st 2014 Summary

Overview:

This is a summary of the Belfast Interface Project's (BIP) main achievements over the period Dec. 2012 – Feb. 2014

Belfast Interface Project (BIP) has sought in recent years to develop our work in three key areas; Policy, Advocacy and Conflict Transformation. This has enabled us to focus on issues that impact on interface areas at different levels and to be proactive in linking and involving local communities in changing policy and encouraging transformation that is of practical benefit to interface communities.

- 1. Policy** in terms of response to public consultation, engagement with statutory partners and to promote for legislative change if necessary. To engage and empower local communities to be able to create change that is realistic and beneficial to interface areas.
- 2. Advocacy** in relation to consultation with our membership, community partners and interface communities in general. To support interface communities to develop positive relationships by encouraging and enabling cooperation, promoting articulation and understanding of key issues involved in sharing and division, and providing support through change.
- 3. Conflict Transformation** with regard to actual drilled down peacebuilding, community development and capacity building with and between communities. To support interface communities and to lobby statutory agencies and others in order to address issues of safety in interface communities and safe access to work and services, through improved relationships between communities, increased labour mobility and the development of shared services.

1. Policy: People & Places

- Therefore it is incumbent that we have a strong, confident, cohesive and well resourced sector to progress the important issues in relation to interface areas. BIP have tried to address that need through our support for and participation in projects and structures such as the Interface Practice Collective (IPC), Interface Community Partners (ICP), Inter Agency Group

(IAG) and Belfast City Council, Tension Monitoring Group and Community Safety Partnership.

- Sustainability of projects and programmes to deliver this type of work has always been vital and it will become an increasingly important issue in the coming years. BIP has always seen the benefit of encouraging, supporting and advising a strong social economy programme to be a key aspect of the work of many community organisations. Which is why we continue to research and support this area of work and our staff are on the boards of many important social economy projects such as Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project (SRRP), Cromac Regeneration Initiative (CRI), Templemore Avenue School Trust and Skainos in East Belfast.
- The necessary ingredients for success in this area are resources, planning and well informed research. Which is why in recent years we have tried to develop various partnerships and build a catalogue of informed research to help assist and support social economy initiatives in interface communities. Some of those partners I have already mentioned and others would include the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR), Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and our Universities and colleges such as QUB, UUU, Belfast Metropolitan College (BelMet) and other important contributors such as CRC and NIHE. Our work in terms of supportive publications has included, 'Crossing the Line', 'Belfast Interfaces'.
- BIP continues to engage with a number of projects outside the Belfast and area we retain an interest in securing a niche in this area which would complement the work of existing groups including the Rural Community Network. We are also continuing to develop relationships regionally with organisations such as the Tyrone/Donnegal Partnership for who, among many others we have facilitated a number of visits to interface areas of Belfast.

2. Advocacy: Culture & Identity

- We currently have a generation of young people who have grown up not in 'peacetime', not in a 'shared future' but in a relatively demilitarised vacuum disengaged from their communities, disaffected from society and 'at risk' from a whole plethora of influences. This is the DNA of the 'recreational rioter' now. That is why BIP have been to the forefront in lobbying for strategic, planned, year round and long term intervention for young people particularly in interface areas. That is why we are delivering a multi-layer intervention in terms of our Youth Intervention Programme (POBAL), Inner East Outer West Project (BCC Peace 3), Youth Engagement Project (BCC Tenders) and our joint (BURC) Leonardo programme which is mainstream European funded.
- We have also expanded our catalogue of publications with two recent additions 'Polish Residents in Belfast' and 'Exchanging Perceptions'. A collection of photographs and views from participants on our Inner East Outer West project. The photographs in this collection have already been exhibited twice recently in the Waterfront Hall and Red Barn Gallery.
- There is one thing Belfast Interface Project is reasonably certain off with regard to all we have already outlined and that is, if we don't begin to work together in a more realistic way then all our communities will lose. We need to fast track our approach in relation to partnerships at a political, statutory and community level, we need to get out of the silos and get real. That is why we

are seeking to build genuine, transparent and inclusive relationships with many other groups and organizations within the sector.

3. Conflict Transformation: Society & Structure

- While we have a Peace process and a Political process which the majority of the community generally support. What is becoming ever clearer is what we urgently need in not only interface communities but right across the board is a Peacebuilding plan that is inter-generational in implementation and engagement and inclusive and transparent in it's delivery and connectivity. This is why the current Uniting Communities Programme and Social Investment Fund have a vital role to play particularly in marginalised communities.
- The Mediation NI-led Mediation Capacity Building Project, of which we were a member, ended in 2012 and we worked with MNI and other partners to draw up a Phase II project which was also funded under Peace 3. This began in early 2013 and is also now completed and our final piece of work in this field has been funded by the Dept. of Foreign Affairs with BIP as lead partner focussed on the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement '15 years On'.
- We have had meetings with a number of groups to discuss the possibility of a 'Sporting Chance' project having an input into interface areas or with our membership organisations. We have recently held a meeting with interested partners and communities and intend to progress this in tandem with our Youth Intervention Project.
- At the invitation of UJJ we have begun to developed in partnership with SLIG the design and content of a new UJJ 'Community Youth Work in an Interface Context' training module and this is being progressed by our P.C. We are also hoping to develop in partnership with Bel Met a level II/III programme based on our intervention projects

4. Governance: Management & Administration

- Belfast Interface Project has made significant progress in the last few years in a very difficult funding and economic climate it is essential that we maintain an effective staff team. Like many other organisations it seems that every year significant time is taken up trying to secure funding for salaries and continuous short term contracts impact on the effectiveness of our delivery. If we are to professionally and efficiently deliver quality of service in response to need in interface communities then this is a serious issue the sector, funders and government need to resolve.
- We are keen to grow our membership and our database but if we are to really consider collaborative working relationships then as well as BIP advocating on behalf of our membership, our membership need to become advocates for Belfast Interface Project. We will soon begin work on our new 5 year Strategic Plan and we see this as an excellent opportunity to enable our staff, board and membership to engage constructively and positively on our future direction. So that we are best placed to deliver the change necessary for the communities we represent.
- While it is important to have the proper policies and procedures in place and BIP constantly keeps this issue under review good governance is about much more, good governance is about ensuring that your organisation runs effectively, efficiently and follows good practice, that's what we do!

- BIP has been a willing student in terms of the social media and we are keen to develop our social media network. We have launched our new website which includes our mapping of Belfast interfaces as an interactive programme. BIP has also increased its public and media profile significantly in recent times and we have set up a social media network including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- Belfast Interface Project has not only been eager as I have outlined in various parts of the report to grow our organisation regionally and nationally. But we have also been conscious of the increasing international relevance of our work. So we have been fortunate this year to have hosted visits from many individuals, groups and organisations from around the world.

**Belfast Interface Project
Annual Report
December 7th 2012 – February 21st 2014**

Policy: People & Places

Aim 1: To be proactive in linking and involving local communities in changing policy and in advocating for change that is of practical benefit to interface communities

Objectives:

1.1. BIP will work in partnership to influence policy.

Actions:

1.1.1 Develop a practitioner's network from BIP membership and the interface community sector.

Actions

We assisted the development of IPC (Interface Practice Collective) by holding a series of citywide meetings ensuring both community and geographical balance, agreeing terms of reference and detailing a programme of work. This continues to be an important objective for BIP as a means to create a more cohesive, collaborative and structured sector across Belfast. It has however gone into hibernation recently although we are trying to rekindle interest by linking to the Interface Community Partners structure. There is an ICP (Interface Community Partners) residential planned for March 2014 which BIP will organise and coordinate.

1.2. Promote over a three to five year period the importance of an integrated strategy to transform interface communities into cohesive communities.

Actions:

1.2.1 Annual review of opportunities to influence policy areas by working in partnership with agencies and departments over a 3-5 year period

BIP have tried to address this need through our support for and participation in projects and structures such as the Interface Practice Collective (IPC), Interface Community Partners (ICP), Inter Agency Group (IAG) and Belfast City Council, Tension Monitoring Group and Community Safety Partnership.

BIP has been working with BCC Tension Monitoring/Community Safety projects with a view to bringing this forward in a more structured manner. Two of BIP's board/staff members have also been appointed onto the IAG on behalf of the ICP (community representation Joe O'Donnell / Ian McLaughlin) A meeting is currently being arranged with OFMDFM to clarify the situation around the Good Relations funding programme for 2014/2015

Over the past year, BIP has been represented on the board of the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR), Tides Training and Forthspring. BIP staff are also represented on a number of significant regeneration projects across the city including; Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project (SRRP), Cromac Regeneration Initiative (CRI), Templemore Ave. School Trust and Skainos.

A recent addition to our online catalogue of publications and research has been a survey within the Polish community entitled 'Polish Residents in Belfast (issues of discrimination, safety and integration)' researched by our previous Grundtvig placement Iwona Wardach. This assessed the connection / engagement within the Polish community to or with statutory / community / Police etc and areas of potential discrimination.

Belfast Interface Project are also members of the E3 Campus Multi Agency Group and with a view to building on our programme of engagement and collaboration. The S/D met with the Director and Senior Staff from Belfast Met and after a broad discussion we approved the following points,

- Belfast Met agreed to work with BIP (if the tender was successful) on Part II of the Youth Engagement Programme with Belfast City Council;
- Belfast Met agreed that BIP would be invited to join the Multi-agency (Springvale) Group;
- Belfast Met will join the Belfast Interface Project (BIP) Cluster groups – to be organised through BIP;
- Belfast Met will look towards developing a formal partnership with BIP and consider this in future funding bids;
- S.D. and P.C. will work with Bel Met on the development of a Level 1 Youth and Community programme (pre university) to complement our existing programme;
- Belfast Met will use BIP networks to communicate the range of services they provide and promotional opportunities;
- BIP will consider some project based work in Belfast Met e3/Community based learning site on the Springfield Road;
- BIP will provide research on Shared Space/Blighted Spaces (Belfast Interfaces) to help inform Belfast Met's new developments and how they can be made more accessible to all communities;

1.3. Develop an evidence base to influence Policy.

Actions:

1.3.1 Commission and disseminate relevant research on identified issues.

Due to the extensive interest in our recent publication 'Belfast Interfaces' we successfully applied to CRC small grants programme to reprint this document.

Dr Jonny Byrne UUU and BIP are attempting to source grant funding to deliver a research project into compiling detailed statistical information potentially providing mitigating factors at interface areas. This will be a joint project between BIP/UUU both in accreditation and publication.

We applied to Lloyds TSB for a grant (£4,000) to integrate our interactive map on to our website and establish a content management system. This will also allow us to revamp our website include a Peace 3 page and interact with our social media network.

1.4. Develop knowledge base, aid reflection and influence action.

Actions:

1.4.1 Commission and disseminate research or surveys as agreed.

We continue to meet with key stakeholders on a regular basis and

have had a number of meetings with Tides Training to explore the possibility of partnership and collaboration in the future. We discussed several ideas and agreed to submitted (successfully) a joint tender application to deliver a mediation and facilitation project for BCC. This will be jointly delivered by Tides and BIP and completed by the end of March 2014. (application extension to OFMDFM good relations fund 2013/2014 has also been successful). We have based on these projects submitted a further application to the good relations programme for 2014/2015

1.5 Build on linkages with interface networks.

Actions:

1.5.1 Develop relationships with non-member interface networks: meet Management Committees of BCRC, NBIN, LINC etc and meet formally twice per year.

BIP meets regularly both formally at ICP meetings i.e. and informally in one on one meetings with a wide range of groups representing non-member networks. However it is difficult to arrange board on board meetings due to board members outside commitments. Therefore we do this on a request basis or when required due to joint partnerships etc.

1.6. Development of BIP and relevance of learning beyond Belfast.

Actions:

1.6.1 Formally explore the interface-related issues and needs being identified at specific locations outside of Belfast; enter into exploratory discussions about the relevance of expertise and information which could be shared.

BIP continues to be represented on the Beyond Belfast steering group which has overseen production of the CRC/RCN report 'Beyond Belfast: Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings'. We have attended follow-up meetings of a small planning group to agree how best to build on the findings of the report; we retain an interest in securing a niche in this area of work outside the city, which will complement the work of existing groups including the Rural Community Network. We have held a few meetings recently with groups from across the region including Derry/Londonderry with a view to assisting in a project similar to our 'Mapping Defensive Architecture' We are also continuing to develop relationships regionally with organisations such as the Tyrone/Donegal Partnership for who, among many others we have facilitated a number of visits to interface areas of Belfast.

We have been accepted on to Belfast City Council & Newry and Mourne district council tender list and had a very positive meeting and exchange of views with a number of national and internationally based groups including the International Red Cross in relation to interventions in Ireland.

Advocacy: Culture & Identity

Aim 2: To support interface communities and to advocate with agencies and others in order to address issues of safety in interface communities and safe access to work and services, through improved relationships between communities, increased labour mobility and the development of shared services.

Objectives:

2.1. Advocate the advantages of sharing taking into account the realities and difficulties which may apply.

Actions:

2.1.1 Promote sharing through large and small group discussions and the dissemination of successful models of practice in the creation of shared space.

BIP continues to assist CRI (Cromac Regeneration Initiative) to establish a local shared facility and to maintain board membership and support, We are also represented on the board of Skainos, TAS Trust and SRRP who are all working in the areas of social economy or shared space. Skainos is now completed and was formally launched recently and is already being heralded as a major social economy/regeneration success.

2.2. Promote accessibility of local services and facilities.

Actions:

2.2.1 We would like on a pilot basis to proactively identify a number of clearly defined statutory services or facilities which are associated with access difficulties and, working inclusively with the relevant agencies, community and youth groups and residents, promote greater access to these. (sharing, accessibility and mobility)

2.3. Support member groups with practical support and involve in each others learning.

Actions:

2.3.1 Provide information and assistance on obtaining youth resources and crisis intervention.

Our Peace III citywide Youth Intervention Project funded by Pobal is currently in the process of setting up the second set of 4 x interface cluster partnership. This now provides a template of 8 x interface cluster partnerships across Belfast which we hope will provide the model for wrap-around support in these communities.

2.3.2 Build on labour mobility training project education.

We have been unable as yet to secure funding for a labour mobility programme although we did submit this as a project to the Social Investment Fund (without any response) and we will continue to try and attract the necessary resources as we have had numerous requests to re-run this project across the city.

Our recent 'Leonardo' European funding application in partnership with BURC as the lead partner to provide training and employment opportunities for young people from interface areas has also been successful. We have completed the first 2 overseas elements and the 3 overseas program will be linked to our Urban Sports Initiative

2.3.3 Roll out youth mediation project - strategic planning for adults and young people in interface areas.

- Our application to BCC Peace 3 programme to re-run the Inner East Outer West project model to young people and adults from IEOW was funded and completed in December 2013.

- Our Peace 3 application on a citywide youth intervention programme will run across 8 X Interface clusters – 32 communities in Belfast and was funded with completion planned for November 2014

- We have successfully tendered to BCC (Belfast City Council) to deliver 2 X YEP diversionary programmes - in North Belfast (Ardoyne / Woodvale) and East Belfast, (Short Strand/Inner East) and a Phase 2 YEP also due for completion in March 2014. We will be bidding for the final tender to extend this project and hope that it may be mainstreamed
- We have made a number of presentations to various community organisations around the city regarding our collective Youth projects and our cluster template approach.

Conflict Transformation: Society & Structure

Aim 3: To support interface communities to develop positive relationships by encouraging and enabling co-operation, promoting articulation and understanding of key issues involved in sharing and division, and providing support through change.

Objectives:

3.1. Support conflict transformation, reconciliation and conflict management in communities.

Actions:

3.1.1 Advocate the development of a city-wide dialogue initiative complementary to the Inter Agency Group/ Interface Community Partners group.

This is currently being progressed through the Interface Practice Collective (IPC) meetings. BIP is currently providing support to IPC and we are in discussion with a number of organisations as to the best way to progress this particular project.

3.1.2 Respond to requests and provide independent facilitation, mediation and mentoring support at local interfaces and develop a mentoring programme

Through our successful tender and partnership with BCC and Tides Training we have been able to deliver an excellent programme of work across a number of key areas in Belfast. We hope we are able to continue this programme through 2014/2015

3.1.3 Actively develop strategic partnerships with facilitation / mediation / dialogue and training organisations to support activist and residents to encourage dialogue and grow facilitation skills.

The Mediation NI-led Mediation Capacity Building Project, of which we were a member, has come to an end and we have worked with MNI and other partners to draw up a Phase II project which has also recently been completed. Funded by the Dept. of Foreign Affairs, we will engage with a number of interface communities across the city to reflect on the journey they have travelled since the signing of the GFA.

We had a number of meetings to discuss the possibility of the Sporting Chance project having an input into interface areas or with our membership organisations. This has some more positive relevance locally with the Olympic Games 2012, the Commonwealth Games taking place 2014. We have recently held a meeting with interested partners and communities and intend to progress this in tandem with our

Youth Intervention Project. The first part of this initiative is our Urban Sports and Youth Work training programme 'Leading the Way'.

At the invitation of UUU we have developed in partnership with SLIG a new UUU 'Community Youth Work in an Interface Context' training module and this is being progressed by our P.C., with two programmes of training delivered during 2013. We are also hoping to develop in partnership with Bel Met a level II/III programme based on our intervention projects.

Governance: Management & Administration

Aim 4: To ensure that membership remains reflective of interface communities as changes occur and that the organisation is managed efficiently and effectively.

Objectives

4.1. Ensure that membership remains reflective of interface communities.

Actions:

4.1.1 Consult, support and continually develop BIP membership to reflect the changing interface communities

We have been actively addressing our membership accessibility and are currently updating our application form and online application process. We are also looking to update our database but both areas of work are time consuming.

4.2. Increase the visibility of interface communities in promoting positive change and cohesion; increase visibility of BIP.

Actions:

4.2.1 Produce and distribute the Interface news-sheet.

This continues to be a difficult problem for BIP and many other groups as social media becomes the vehicle for information dissemination. Perhaps a sector newsheet through ICP is a more realistic option because of the manpower and time consuming nature of this project

4.2.2 Develop the website as an interactive tool.

We have secured funding to develop a new website and to include our mapping of Belfast interfaces as an interactive programme, this has been developed by Avec Solutions and was launched in 2013. BIP has also increased its public and media profile significantly in recent times and we have set up a social media network including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

BIP has facilitated a number of media interests in interface areas over the past year at both a local, regional and international level and we will endeavour to progress interface issues in a positive manner.

4.3. Organisational effectiveness: Accountability and Strategy.

Actions:

4.3.1 Independent monitoring and evaluation

We are currently looking at costing in relation to monitoring and evaluation and we will need to source funding to facilitate this project.

4.3.2 Commission an annual audit

2012 -13 accounts have been prepared by auditor JL Grant. These were signed and returned to auditor for final signatures, printing and availability at AGM.

4.3.3 Hold an annual AGM

BIP held its (12th) AGM on 7th Dec. 2012

4.3.4 Hold an annual team building and forward planning residential.

BIP's annual team building and forward planning residential will be held in conjunction with our development of a new strategic plan

4.4. Organisational effectiveness: Human Resources and Finance.

Actions:

4.4.1 Update policies and procedures as required.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, updated and amended.

4.4.2 Maintain an effective staff team

Regular staff meetings are held and staffing requirements are continually reviewed. However while Belfast Interface Project has made significant progress in the last few years in a very difficult funding and economic climate it is essential that we maintain an effective staff team. Like many other organisations it seems that every year significant time is taken up trying to secure funding for salaries and continuous short term contracts impact on the effectiveness of our delivery. If we are to professionally and efficiently deliver quality of service in response to need in interface communities then this is a serious issue the sector, funders and government need to resolve.

4.4.3 Produce and review 5 year rolling budget annual budget and projected cash flows.

a) Budget to March 31, 2014 drafted to accompany new Strategic Plan. Reviewed by board of directors and finalised in February 2014.

b) Cash flow reports reviewed monthly by board.

4.5. Organisational effectiveness: Board development.

Actions:

4.5.1 Establish an annual board and Staff development programme

Strategic Director has completed CAPT and CO3 training programmes. Practice Coordinator and Development Staff (John McQuillan) have also completed the CAPT programme. Our Grundtvig placement Luciana Oliveira along with the Practice Coordinator and Development Staff (Claire Harris) completed Tides' Training for Trainers programme.