

**Belfast Interface Project
Annual Report
October 7th 2011 – December 7th 2012**

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 have assisted the development of IPC (Interface Practice Collective) in 2011/2012 by holding a series of citywide meetings ensuring both community and geographical balance, agreeing terms of reference and detailing a programme of work for the next 12 months. The first seminar took place on Tues 18 Oct 2011 in the Wellington Park Hotel 9:30am – 1:00pm entitled 'The Trouble with Interfaces'. Two others were held during 2012 and a fourth is planned for early 2013. This continues to be an important objective for BIP as a means to create a more cohesive, collaborative and structured sector across Belfast.

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 are continuing to attend the Interface Community Partners (ICP) meetings and have also been meeting with BCC Tension Monitoring/Community Safety projects with a view to bringing this forward in a more cohesive way. We have also recently lobbied the IAG on behalf of the ICP for community representation on the Inter Agency Group. (S.D. has been nominated as one of the two comm. reps. on the IAG)

Over the past year, BIP was represented on the board of the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR); 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.

We are currently implementing an enhanced re-run of the Inner East Outer West programme over the period to end of September 2013. The programme will run twice in this timeframe and BIP will be the lead partner. This project is now up and running and we hope to complement this with an Inner South Outer North (ISON) programme if we can source funding.

We have completed a survey within the Polish community entitled 'Polish Residents in Belfast (issues of discrimination, safety and integration)' researched by our Grundtvig placement Iwona Wardach. This was to assess the connection / engagement with statutory / community / Police etc and areas of potential discrimination. This document has just been made available by the design and printing team and will be formally launched in January 2013.

The S/D met recently 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.

We applied to the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) regarding the possibility of carrying out a survey within a number of interface areas in N. Belfast in order to assess levels of interest in integrated or more shared education. This application was successful and we identified 4 schools (Glenwood, Holy Cross, Boys Model and Little Flower) who agreed to participate. This project was carried out in partnership with ICR and an interim report was made available in June 2012, this completed report will be presented to IEF in November/December 2012.

We also successfully 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, Avec solutions are currently designing and implementing this work with the new website under construction and we will keep you informed of progress.

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

Actions:

1.4.1 Commission and disseminate research or surveys as agreed.

Building on our significant experience in terms of research work in interface communities and complementing our recent publications, 'Crossing The Line' and 'Belfast Interfaces'. We have completed a survey within the Polish community in Belfast which is due to be launched early in the new year. This consultation will assess the connection/engagement with statutory/community/Police etc and areas of potential discrimination.

We have donated our BIP library of interface-related literature (inc research reports, etc) to the Linen Hall Library to supplement their collection, so that this can be made accessible to the wider public. As Anne Davies (President of the library) commented in her letter of thanks. 'it is support of this kind that makes the Linen Hall Library the unrivalled resource that it is'.

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. in 2009/2010 and thereafter formally twice per year.

BIP board members met with the Steering Group and Staff of BCRC and held two positive joint meetings which were useful in exchanging perspectives and in identifying areas of potential collaborative work. Regular meetings between BCRC Project Manager and BIP strategic director have also been initiated. Meetings between the strategic director and other key stakeholders such as SLIG, Intercomm, NBIN, LINC and BRN have also taken place, with board to board meetings planned for the near future.

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 complements the work of existing groups including the Rural Community Network. We are also continuing to develop relationships regionally with organisations such as the Tyrone/Donagall Partnership and Consensus (participation and inclusion).

We have also recently been accepted on to Newry and Mourne district council tender list and had a very positive meeting and exchange of views with the International Red Cross in relation to interventions in Ireland.

We have also facilitated a number of visits to interface areas of Belfast for the Tyrone/Donagall partnership wider horizons programme. They have requested that we facilitate other visits and we have come to a more formal arrangement for 10 additional visits in 2013.

In recent weeks we have been contact by interface groups working in Derry/Londonderry with a view to assisting in a project similar to our 'Mapping Defensive Architecture'

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 (building purchase near completion) 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 On a pilot basis, 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.

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 was approved by Pobal and we are currently in the process of setting up the first 4 x interface cluster partnerships. All pre/post contract details have been resolved and the new staff are now in post and we are beginning to role out the program across Belfast.

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 have submitted this as a project to the Social Investment Fund 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 recently interviewed for Spanish tutors for the pre-departure element and will be recruiting soon for this programme after a visit to ensure placements, accommodation and training is of sufficient standard for participants.

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 has been funded.
- Our Peace 3 application on a citywide youth intervention programme will run across 8 X Interface clusters – 32 communities in Belfast and this has been funded.
- We have also 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)
- We have made a number of presentations to various community organisations around the city regarding our collective Youth projects
- We are also currently awaiting a response to our tenders to deliver in partnership all 3 elements of the YEP Phase 2 programme.

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 the second citywide themed workshop took place on Fri 18th May 2012 with others planned in 2013.

3.1.2 Respond to requests and provide independent facilitation, mediation and mentoring support at local interfaces and develop a mentoring programme
SD and PC have met recently with reps from Exit (East Belfast) to explore possibility of us assisting them in their development. Exit have become partners in our Inner East Outer West project.

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 recently been funded under Peace 3. This is likely to begin in early 2013, following appointment of a project manager.

We had a number of meetings with Trevor Ringland to discuss the possibility of the Sport for Change project having an input into interface areas or with our membership organisations. This has some more positive relevance locally with the Olympic Games 2012, World Police and Fire Service Games 2013 and the Commonwealth Games 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 was the recent BIG (Belfast Interface Games) which ran over the summer period and completed on Fri. 10th Aug. with a flagship event at Crusaders Football Club.

At the invitation of UJJ we have begun to develop 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., with first delivery planned for Feb 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.

The first issue of BIP's e-newsletter was distributed on in Feb 2012 but we have once again ran into difficulties due to lack of staff and personnel for this project although we hope to progress this electronically in 2013

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 is being developed currently by Avec Solutions and we intend to launch the new site in early 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

2011 -12 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 (11th) AGM on 7th Oct. 2011

4.3.4 Hold an annual team building and forward planning residential.

BIP's annual team building and forward planning residential was held in the Dunadry Inn Hotel on 26th/27th Jan. 2012.

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 2010.

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 has also completed the CAPT programme and our Grundtvig placement Iwona Wardach completed the Training for Trainers programme. (Iwona was also nominated by her national agency for her placement with BIP as a model of best practice).