

Belfast Interface Project

Annual Report March 2002 – June 2003

Objective 1: To identify the components of a regeneration strategy

BIP has:

- Chaired the review of the operation of the Interagency Working Group on Displaced Families. This has led to statutory support for the formation of new localised interagency groups with which to address the needs of those affected by civil disturbance, and also to the formation of a high-level interagency Oversight Group, with community representation, in order to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of these measures.
- Co-facilitated, with others, a number of strategic planning sessions with groups including the Ardoyne Marrowbone Community Forum and the North Belfast Housing & Environmental subgroup.
- Taken up a proactive role, with Mediation N.I and Tides Training, in working closely with interface community representatives in East Belfast in order to design and implement a conflict transformation project there, following the violence of 2002.
- Participated in a brief study visit to S. Africa alongside a broad range of community activists and others interested/involved in issues relating to parade/protest issues in N.Ireland.

Objective 2: To enhance and develop the knowledge base

BIP has:

- Given a range of talks and presentations to groups, including an inter-isles forum of young politicians, the PSNI, and others.
- Produced an article 'interface areas need long term investment' for CRC news
- Liaised with a number of individuals, agencies and groups in arranging contacts/visits to interface areas of Belfast, including the International Fund for Ireland, the Common Purpose programme, and others.

Objective 3: To influence change that is of practical benefit

BIP has:

- Been represented on a number of funding advisory panels, including the Community Foundation's Peace II measure 'Developing weak community infrastructure' and the 'Communities in Transition' funding programme as well as the Community Relations Council's core funding scheme for Victims and Survivors groups.
- Been represented on the Executive of Community Dialogue.
- Been represented on the Board of the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project, an inter-community social and economic regeneration project in West Belfast.
- At management committee request, successfully applied for membership of the Community Relations Council.
- Continued as chair of the Institute for Conflict Research (standing down this June).

Objective 4: To consult, develop and support the membership of BIP

BIP has:

- With the assistance of other agencies including the Lower North Belfast Community Council, supported the operation of two networks of mobile phones over the summer of 2002, covering a number of areas outside the other existing networks.
- Assisted a range of agencies in targeting resource information towards interface community groups.
- Collated city-wide summer mobile phone network contact information into a single document, for addition to the annually produced interagency Operational Procedures document.
- Prepared a Peace II application, building on feedback received through consultation regarding our draft strategic plan (which was discussed at our last AGM).
- Hosted a short series of 'lobbying for interface areas meetings' attended by a number of interface community activists, leading to our commissioning of a policy briefing paper regarding interface areas which is currently being drawn up, for consultation, by Brendan Murtagh and Pete Shirlow.

- As always, fielded a range of requests and contacts from the media, statutory and voluntary organisations, referring these to appropriate interface area groups and agencies.

Objective 5: To become an independent project:

BIP has:

- Become an organisation legally separate from the Community Relations Council.
- Put in place new administrative, financial and accounting systems.
- Liaised with the Greater Belfast Community Network and the Breaking the Silence project, regarding the possibility of sharing new premises with these agencies in future.