

Submission to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

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Background

This submission to the OFMDFM Inquiry into *Building a United Community* (T:BUC) outlines the evidence accrued from the *Contested Space/Interface Programme* as a way of learning from pre-existing initiatives which could help with the implementation of T:BUC. The premise of the submission is that there are projects which have been pilot tested and evidence gathered on a number of the core themes associated with T:BUC. So, rather than starting from scratch, the argument in this submission is to learn from existing work which has proved its effectiveness. We therefore outline the details of the *Contested Space/Interface Programme*, the findings from the evaluations of this programme, and how it can directly align with several of T:BUC's core themes. The authors of this submission are the evaluators of the *Contested Space/Interface Programme*.

Origins

The *Contested Space/Interface Programme* 2011-15 was launched by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in March 2011. Its **key aim** is to promote and improve relations between and across disadvantaged contested space/interface communities. The programme provides these communities with opportunities to shape and influence how children and youth services are provided in a way that encourages reconciliation, increases participation of communities in policy making, and contributes to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

Funding and Eligibility

The programme has an original design in that it is **jointly funded** by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Atlantic Philanthropies (an external American based charitable foundation). It is a **£4 million four-year programme** in which **each funder makes a 50% contribution**.

To be eligible to participate in the programme, **groups had to form a consortium** which included at least one community organisation from each side of the contested space/ interface. Groups also had to be engaged in activities within the **top 20% of the most deprived wards** as measured by the 2010 multiple deprivation measures.

Focus

The programme focuses on four areas of support:

1. **Early years and parenting programmes** which concentrate on young people, children and parents living in contested space/interface communities.
2. **Shared space programmes targeted and delivered through schools** operating in contested space/interface communities.
3. **Interface youth engagement programmes aimed at young adults** including those not currently engaging with youth providers.
4. **Shared neighbourhood programmes targeted at families** living in contested space/interface communities.

Projects Funded

The Contested Space/Interface programme comprises **nine projects delivered in two phases**. The project budgets range from **£250,000, to £820,000**.

Phase 1 (March 2011 – June 2014)

1. **Achieving Personal Potential (APP):** Led by Shankill Women's Centre with partner organisations which work in *Shankill/Carrickhill, Ballysillan/Ligoneil, Skegoneill/Glandore; and Whitewell/Whitecity*. The aim of the project is to provide opportunities for young people to build relationships through: team building activities, drama, music, personal development, arts and crafts, and educational homework and revision workshops.
2. **Active Respectful Communities (ARC):** Led by Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), the project works with children and parents from six schools in *Ardoyne and Shankill* communities (Holy Cross Nursery School, Edenderry Nursery School, Glenwood Primary School, Wheatfield Primary School, Holy Cross Boys Primary School and Holy Cross Girls Primary School). The key focus areas for the programme are: early years and parenting, community relations education linked into the curriculum, and focused residential programmes for families.
3. **Aspire:** A partnership between Currie Primary School and Holy Family Primary School (inner *North Belfast*) which provides shared services that: increase parental engagement and skills supporting their children's learning; improves educational outcomes for children engaged in the programme; and raises expectations of parents and children. This is done through partner organisations such as Barnardo's, PIPS and Parenting NI.
4. **Faces and Spaces:** Project is based on *Early Years* approach to good relations and operates through community-led and shared partnerships in five interface areas (*Falls Road/Shankill Road; Castlederg/Newtownstewart; Waterside/Cityside; Ballymena; Short Strand/East Belfast*). The project is based around the well-established and highly successful *Media Initiative for Children, Respecting Difference Programme*.
5. **Foyle Contested Space:** A partnership of three post primary and five primary schools in *Derry/Londonderry* to widen the scope of shared education. This includes the shared delivery of curriculum activities at KS2 & KS3 (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding [PDMU] and Learning for Life and Work [LLW]), provision of shared teacher training, and issues of common concern in sexual health, internet/mobile phone safety and alcohol awareness.

Phase 2 (November 2012 – March 2015)

6. **Communities Unite in Reconciling and Building Societies (CURBS):** The CURBS programme, based in *Craigavon*, is managed by Craigavon Intercultural Partnership (CIP) which delivers the programme in conjunction with local partners. The programme is based around five key phases: Step Up, Step In, Step Forward, Step Beyond and Step Out. *Step Up* involves collaborative partner engagement and *Step In* involves a range of cross-community and cross-cultural activities based around sport, art and media.
7. **South Armagh Childcare Consortium (SACC):** Led by the South Armagh Childcare Consortium (a multi-agency partnership made up of a range of statutory and community agencies) the focus is on young families and children living in rural *South Armagh* – Bessbrook, Derrymore, Crossmaglen and Creggan. The programme delivers a cross community after-school project, the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme, Incredible Years Parenting Programme and a summer scheme.

8. **Spaces to Be: Playboard NI:** Spaces to Be is an outcomes focused diversity in play project targeted at children in middle childhood. The project is led and delivered by Playboard NI. It operates within four primary schools located in *East Belfast* (St Matthews and Nettlefield Primary Schools) and *Newtownstewart* (St Patricks and the Model Primary Schools).
9. **Waterside Partnership – Parents and Communities Together (PACT)** - This project is led by Action for Children in partnership with a range of community associations/groups in the Waterside area of *Derry/Londonderry*. The project is being delivered in three areas: Caw/Nelson Drive and the Triangle; Irish Street/Gobnascale; and Clooney Estate. PACT provides support to very young children and their parents. Its main elements are an eight week group work programme and individual support to parents/families at home.

Evaluation Findings

Participants

As of August 2014, across the two phases of the programme, there were **almost 13,800 distinct participants** (as opposed to repeat users). They are involved in a wide range of activities which straddle a number of target groups: nursery, pre-school, primary and post primary children; young adults; parents; and teachers/staff. Examples of activities included play based sessions (for nursery and pre-school children); shared curriculum activities, homework support/after-schools and social/creative/sporting activities for school age children; youth mentoring; and parenting and personal development programmes. Teachers and school staff participate in activities or are involved in delivering training sessions and workshops.

Programme Outcomes

Evidence collected by the ongoing programme evaluation is suggesting **positive outcomes for participants and communities** including:

Phase 1

- Increased self-esteem, confidence and empowerment
- Improved educational outcomes and parenting skills
- Strengthened relationships (personal, professional and cross-community)
- Greater movement across/through contested spaces
- Collective cross-community learning and capacity building amongst community organisations
- Development of networks between organisations

Phase 2

- Collaboration between youth providers
- The use of media projects to successfully engage participants
- The success of early years interventions
- Intensive support to target vulnerable parents as a way of tackling social isolation on a cross-community basis

Value for Money

It is clear from the ongoing evaluation findings that the Contested Space/Interface Programme is **delivering both significant outcomes and value for money** for funders. Based on phase one costings, which had 12,490 participants and £2.58m million of funding (allocated at August 2014) this equates to an average cost per participant of around £206 or **approximately £70 per participant per year**.

Learning and Collaboration

In developing the Contested Space/Interface Programme the funders aimed to test out a variety of approaches to supporting communities to work together in contested space/ interface areas. It was also planned that the **learning from these pilots would have an influence on future developments in this area of work**.

To facilitate this, a **Shared Learning Forum** (consisting of all members of the projects) was established to capture learning, identify effective practice and make recommendations on ways to better improve delivery of shared services to interface communities. The first Shared Learning Forum took place in May 2012 and meetings are held every few months.

In December 2013 the '**Shaping a Generation**' seminar was organised to showcase the work of the nine projects. The event was held at the Stormont Hotel and was **attended by over 100 delegates** from government departments, public bodies, councils and voluntary and community organisations. The seminar provided an insight into how the projects are *successfully improving relations* between and across disadvantaged contested space/interface communities, and how they are *collaborating to support each other*, sharing the learning and building their capacity and experience. The seminar also focused on and *how projects can help to contribute to policy agendas* such as *Together: Building a United Community* and *Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities*.

In addition projects have also developed their own **range of resources** to promote and share the learning from the programme. These include DVDs, websites, toolkits and resource packs.

The common thread running through all of these projects is that they are working with a range of participants, from nursery school children, through young adults, to parents in interface areas blighted by poverty and sectarianism. The participants in the projects are those for whom the peace process has offered a limited legacy, not least in the poor level of public services available to them. What is obvious from the work of the overall programme is that participants have built strong relationships around common issues which impact on them collectively. They have established a level of interdependence in tackling problems which straddle interface areas and found a combined voice. **The key questions are: how are the lessons from this programme used to inform wider policy developments; and, where do the individual projects go from here?**

The most obvious read-across from the experience and learning gained in this programme is to the Government's strategic policy *Together: Building a United Community*. There are clear linkages to several of the headline actions identified in T:BUC: establishing 10 shared education campuses; the United Youth Programme; a programme of cross-community sporting events; removing interface barriers; rollout out of a 'buddy scheme' in nursery and primary schools; and shared summer schools. Yet, there could well be a lost opportunity in learning from the pilot work already completed through the Contested Space/Interface Programme. One simple example illustrates this. The United Youth Programme is currently consulting on a 'co-design' approach which builds a programme targeting 10,000 young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment. They will spend some £1.5m to pilot projects which will 'make a difference in terms of personal

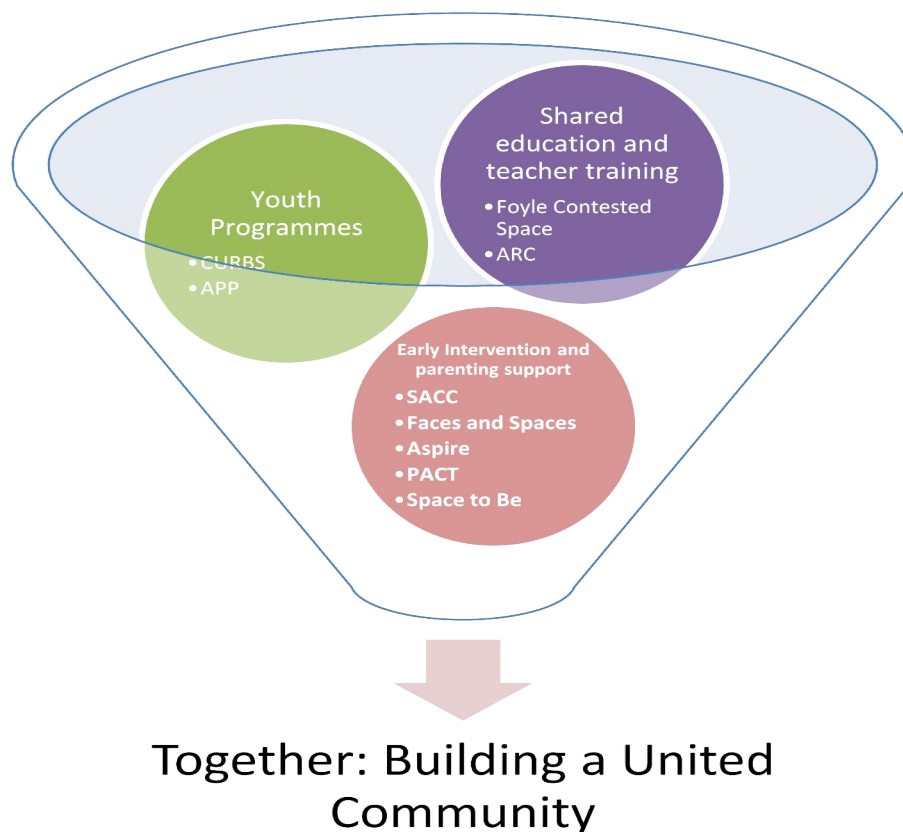
development, good relations, citizenship, employability, and benefit to communities and society'. But where is the learning from the Contested Space/Interface Programme which addresses a number of these themes? Why is there a need to pilot ideas for the United Youth Programme without first considering successful work from the Contested Space Programme? Other initiatives are also emerging such as Peace IV and the Shared Education Signature Project. There needs to be a way to connect the learning from Contested Space directly into these initiatives rather than starting from scratch.

Together: Building a United Community

The Director of the Good Relations Division in OFMDFM, Fergus McDevitt, has commented that: "There has been significant learning from the Contested Space/Interface Programme which helped in the design of the *Together: Building a United Community Strategy*. There is **real potential to scale-up some of the models which the programme pilot tested in difficult interface areas.**"

Together: Building a United Community's main commitments, how they align with ongoing work in the Contested Space/Interface Programme, and the experience and learning on offer are summarised in the diagram and table below.

'A very helpful model of change has emerged (from the Contested Space Programme) that could potentially inform future interventions involving interface areas and areas where there are contested spaces'
T:BUC (2013): 61



WHAT IS THE LEARNING FOR TOGETHER: BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY?

T:BUC Commitments	Where Contested Space fits	What we can offer?
Roll out a <i>'buddy scheme'</i> in publicly run nursery and primary schools	ARC	The experience of Holy Cross and Edenderry Nursery Schools in <i>operating a buddy scheme</i> and associated resources.
Primary and post-primary <i>anti-sectarianism resources</i> and ensure that <i>teachers are trained, equipped and supported</i> to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module	ARC Foyle Contested Space	ARC involvement in training on the <i>CREDIT programme</i> . <i>ARC training resources pack</i> Foyle Contested Space on <i>primary and post-primary teachers experience</i> in tackling both sensitive and politically contentious issues
Enhance the quality and extent of <i>shared education provision</i> , thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience Create 10 <i>Shared Educational Campuses</i>	Foyle Contested Space	Foyle Contested Space expertise in providing 'normalised' <i>shared education delivery</i> across 8 primary and post-primary schools. Foyle Contested Space's wider network of experience in <i>Shared Education Programme</i> experience
<i>Improve attitudes amongst our young people</i> and build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations	Faces and Spaces SACC Spaces to Be	<i>Pre-school education</i> which explores diversity and work with parents on interdependence and inclusion <i>Early intervention, parenting skills and negotiation</i> of shared space in a polarised community <i>Alternative (complementary) model of cross-community work with children</i> through the informal medium of play
Develop an <i>inter-community youth programme</i> to tackle sectarianism Develop <i>a summer camps/summer schools</i> with a focus on sport and developmental activities Develop significant programmes of <i>cross-community sporting events</i> which will focus in reconciliation through sport and be based at community level	CURBS APP	<i>Collaborative network building between youth providers and statutory organisations</i> . Effective use of sports, arts and the media in cross-community work APP's <i>partnering with Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN)</i> to deliver <i>multi-sports</i> as one of the options for structured activities. Also partnering with the 174Trust on their Game of 3 Halves event which promoted <i>cross-community relationship building through football/rugby/Gaelic</i> tournaments.
Focus on a more <i>inter-generational approach</i> to building good relations	Aspire PACT	<i>Targeted interventions to help parents and children</i> by external agencies with a focus on common needs <i>Intensive work with parents</i> who are highly vulnerable