

What good relations means to me

Opening remarks: Jessica Doherty

Some areas to explore:

- Positive and negative experiences
 - What promotes/hinders good relations between communities
 - Opportunities to engage with different communities
- Majority of young people are not sectarian, although they do have that kind of vocabulary, because that is what they know
 - When they visit other communities, against expectations they find that they are just the same as the people they meet
 - It is hard to promote good relations between communities as workers don't know if they will get funding for salaries and programmes
 - Lack of long term funding for projects
 - Poor use of resources
 - There are different organisations but what work is done to assist projects to work together?
 - Cross-community schools work - adults are too stuck in their ways while children are more open-minded
 - BUC – struggling with young people
 - United Youth Program – what is its role?
 - Problems with consultations – there are very few and most of them, if not all, are happening in Belfast – people who are struggling with funding would not travel to Belfast
 - Discussions are often superficial and politicians are divided and do not have a good attitude
 - Need for more integrated schooling from an early age
 - Lack of shared history of the troubles being taught in schools to promote better understanding
 - Opportunities to engage with different communities through regular cross community trips, suitable and welcoming share spaces, more integrated education in interfaces
 - Politicians should support community workers on the ground

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Living beside each other but few opportunities to meet other community. Most leisure centres are single community- Lack of shared space to help in engagement with other communities although young people now using city centre as shared space- Need to look at issues from a younger perspective- People are scared to leave their own areas to get into Belfast - families shouldn't be scared to see each other- You should be able to walk through an area without looking over your shoulder- What is the world's perception of young people?- MPs and MLAs need to make an effort- Better use of education to promote diversity - cross-community trips throughout secondary school- Twaddell camp - how could the money to police Twaddell be used instead?- Residential experiences can be good but what if you meet someone you don't like? You're stuck with them. It's better to meet once a month- In Germany there are 3-week starter initiatives for trades- Invest in the estate - give children today what we didn't have- Invest in the youth club - a drop in centre to keep people off the streets- Sport - play football together; learn about each other's sports- If you don't play sports, use music or drama, hobbies or projects in activity centres- "If you don't do sports around my way, there's nothing to do"- We have a library but no one uses it- Informal educators should come out to youth clubs |
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Experience of living in interfaces

Opening remarks: Kenny Flood

Some areas to explore:

- Experiences - positive and negative
 - Should peace walls be retained?
 - Should peace walls be removed?
 - If peace walls should be removed what work is required to make that happen?
- Can't walk where you want to
 - Negative experiences all the time
 - If there's a band parade in the Short Strand, there'll be a riot
 - The flag: we didn't know it was there until it was taken down, then that starts trouble between Protestants and Catholics
 - Young people are not brought together enough: you have to bring them together earlier. Start in nursery
 - Parents are telling us things about the other side, but teachers would tell us better. All schools should be integrated. Children will educate the parents that the others are ok.
 - "I don't like the peace walls but I see the reason for them"
 - If you take the wall down between the Falls and Shankill there will be mayhem. The same for the bottom of the Newtownards Road
 - There are bitter Catholics and Protestants, but most are OK.
 - Still find living at interface frightening. Promotes bitterness and violence
 - Positive experience of discovering that not all Protestants are the same.
 - Security costs of Twaddell could be better used on promoting good relations
 - Perception that police let Twaddell protest go unchallenged but if nationalists protest they get arrested
 - Centre on Twaddell opposite camp which allows people to drop in and register how they feel that their rights are being eroded
 - If peace walls are to be removed the media must stop presenting only the bad news but also the positive ones. There is so much good happening (mixed community sport activities, community trips...) but media are not interested in publicising this. Maybe politicians can help promote the good work in communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walls are not as important or as big problem as media present it. Yes people may feel insecure once they are gone but maybe it is the time to take a risk. - Clear walls may be the first step towards taking the walls down – as both of the sides of the community will see the other one – important realisation people just living their daily lives on both sides. (No matter the name you bleed the same) But need a recognised process to take this forward. - Do events - maybe open the gates for a couple of days and have a big event to encourage people to come and walk through. If you do open the gates, people need to be encouraged to go through them as they are so used to the gates being closed all day - An area like Ladybrook/Black's Road is a nice area - could maybe try there first - If you don't try you'll never know but it has to be controlled as you don't know how communities will react - Problem in this process is that people don't talk, firstly because they are used to not talking and secondly they don't feel heard - Need for a young person's forum rather than politicians speaking for them all the time - People are afraid to take a lift - Need to change people's mindset - We would not see integrated society any time soon but there needs to be consistency - i.e. consistent funding to ensure that projects are supported - Is it realistic to take down the peace walls in 10 years? Things are getting better - maybe 30 or 40 years - If the peace wall hadn't been up in the first place it would have been OK. But what about safety and security?
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Involvement of young people in decision making

Opening remarks: Kevin Lee

<p>Some areas to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectations of involvement• Experiences - positive and negative• How best to engage young people - social media/organised groups/internet/formal or informal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- “I’m not really interested. I’m not very bright about these things”- Choices are made by MLAs that affect the lives of young people- The government is too greedy, they make false promises- “I’m not really interested. I’m not very bright about these things”.- Choices are made by MLAs that affect young people’s lives.- The government is too greedy, they make false promises.- “We’ve been trying to set up a football pitch for years – we’re only getting one now”. There’s no-one to talk to get a football pitch.- There needs to be investment in schools, youth clubs, community centres.- You’re not old enough to make your own decisions when you are 16 or 17.- They should ask primary schools and secondary schools what is needed in the area.- People who have nothing commit suicide.- “When Welfare Reform comes, we’ll have nothing”.- There are invisible disabilities: alcoholism, mental health.- People from other countries should not get benefits.- You can communicate with young people through schools, in class, or by having a special day or event, for both primary and secondary schools. It’s better with someone from outside coming in.- You can also communicate by a Facebook page – there are a variety of options, online platforms.- Good or bad experiences of government? “Haven’t had the chance to experience government”.- It is hard to be involved as a young person as they feel that government representatives are not listening to them
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should be regular meeting with young people and politicians maybe once or twice a year - Need for a young persons' forum rather than politicians speaking for them all the time - Housing – lack of involvement in decisions around social housing – so many homeless young people who do not have experience to know where to go for help. No fixed abode so cannot get job or involved in many community projects - Often the meetings which are held with young people are targeted at those in grammar schools and not those who have lower education or are coming with problematic background - No say in allocation of benefits - If the meetings tried to target all groups of young people it will be clear that there are problems such as: hard to get job with lower education, hard to pay university fees, maybe look at skill workload which is low paid, brain drain of young people - Young people between age 18-25 face very high level of unemployment - Young people are interested in self-employment, but there is not a lot of support especially for those with a difficult background - Work with organisations that are working with young people in daily situations and they know what young people need. Politicians should support these organisations and listen to them what may help the best. - Bytes is very good in supporting young people and helping them to get qualifications, apply for jobs, write CVs etc. But staff are often going out of their way to give up their own time and resources to help and support the young people - When you are trying to live on £50/week it is hard to think about other things. Looking for housing and looking for jobs takes up too much time - Invest in housing for young people
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Recommendations for building a united community

Opening remarks: Aaron Corbitt

Some areas to explore:

- Should common issues be explored like employment, skills, parenting rather than focusing on sectarianism
- Where should resources be diverted from to facilitate programmes/initiatives?
- How should progress be measured?

- Communities must work together on new opportunities for employment, create more shared spaces and get a clear understanding of sectarianism
- Unfortunately all consultations between community and government are done only by members of local organisations and not with young people
- Often all forms and applications try to fit people into boxes – basically telling people who they are without asking who they think they are –before you can ask for funding
- Communities need to learn to communicate rather than fight over issues – politicians giving a bad example in Stormont
- Consultations with young people must be friendly and short, well organised
- It would be great to see more youth projects – where young people have direct input and involvement, and in which they have ownership
- Try to support existing youth clubs which are running for years – they know the youth in the local area – sadly lately many of them are closing due lack of funding
- Security funding from Twaddell camp should be diverted to other programmes
- Consider opportunities for employment of young people who don't have qualifications – look at their skills and try to give them hope of employment and help them to see some future
- Create space for interaction – each area is unique and local organisations know their specifics and needs
- Learn together – good way to go is integrated schools – with choice celebrate or start day the way each community will do
- Don't forget there are more than Catholic and Protestant - there are other groups
- Politicians bring young people in to engage and make a big fuss and then forget about it
- Need some motivation - external groups like Bytes can help to support engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Just want peace and quiet - to live somewhere where there is no trouble- Shared space in all communities for all people to mix- Cross-community projects- Educate people in youth work- Sport, music and drama- People don't want to go into the other's areas - it has to be in the middle or in a neutral venue.- It's good to have your own beliefs: everyone is different- Learn your own history and the other's history- Trips to learn about each other's history - do a project- Need a way of staying in contact after a trip
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