

BELFAST-JERUSALEM CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP
Conference Report
20th-22nd April 2005



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Background

The Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership (B-JCSP) was established in December 2004 to enhance the capacity of civil society to contribute to peace in Jerusalem and Northern Ireland. The Partnership developed out of a number of exploratory visits to and from Belfast and Jerusalem during which participants were struck by the similarities between these 'unresolved' and divided cities whose future may be subject to political deadlocks, vacuums and settlements.

BELFAST-JERUSALEM CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP Member Organisations

- **INCORE** is an international Centre of Excellence for Peace and Conflict Studies at University of Ulster
- **Intercomm** is an inter-community organisation based in North Belfast specialising in economic regeneration, social reconstruction and local and international peace-building practices
- **Ir Amim** ("City of Nations" or "City of Peoples") is an NGO founded to engage on those issues impacting on Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem, and on the political future of the city
- **Panorama** is an NGO dedicated to the development of Palestinian society and to promoting the notions of civil society among Palestinians.

The mission of the B-JCSP is to share, develop, research and disseminate skills and practices to help build communities, strengthen civil society and transform conflict in Jerusalem and Northern Ireland. To this end, the Partnership organized a conference, 20th-22nd April 2005, in Jerusalem to discuss the issues of community development, identity and education as they relate to both Northern Ireland and Jerusalem. The conference gathered together more than 50 representatives from non-governmental and community-based organisations (NGOs), academia, government and the media from across Israel, Palestine and Northern Ireland. The main objectives of the conference were to:

1. Establish and sustain working relationships between academics and practitioners in Jerusalem and Northern Ireland;
2. Produce new academic and practice-oriented research in relation to the themes of the conference; and to
3. Develop projects on the ground to enhance the capacity of civil society to contribute to peace in Jerusalem and Northern Ireland.

This report summarizes discussions that took place during the conference and explores some of the broad themes emerging from them - it does not necessarily represent a consensus view.

SESSION ONE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & EMPOWERMENT
20th April 2005, 09:30-13:30

Participants

Yasser Abu Khater, *Al Quds University*
Samit Al-Jundi, *Seeds of Peace*
John Bell, *University of Toronto*
Nora Carmi, *Sabeel Center*
Sammy Douglas, *East Belfast Partnership*
Hassan Dowani, *UN*
Barbara Epstein, *Community Advocacy*
Grace Fraser, *Conflict Researcher*
Tom Fraser, *University of Ulster*
Amos Gil, *Ir Amim*
Ronit Hedy, *SHATIL*
Joanne Hughes, *University of Ulster*
Saman Khoury, *Peace & Democracy Forum*
Sarah Kreimer, *Ir Amim*
Hana Lasman, *JPG*
Helen Lewis, *INCORE*
Liam Maskey, *Intercomm*
Rab McCallum, *North Belfast Interface Network*
Frank Murphy, *Belfast Local Strategy Partnership*
Eetta Prince-Gibson, *Ir Amim*
Benjamin Pogrund, *Yaker Center*
Walid Salem, *PANORAMA*
Adeeb Salim, *Willy Brandt Center*
Danny Savitch, *Jerusalem Open House*
James Sevitt, *Ir Amim*
Fadel Tahboub, *Peace & Democracy Forum*

- 1.1 Eetta Prince-Gibson, Ir Amim, opened the discussion by asking participants how we define the term 'community' and what we mean by it. She invited participants to describe the challenges they face in relation to the development of their respective communities in Belfast and Jerusalem. Can communities be developed despite the lack of political resolution in both of these cities? Eetta also asked the group to consider the opportunities and constraints of single-identity/uni-national and cross/inter-community work.
- 1.2 Barbara Epstein, Director of the social rights organisation Community Advocacy, described the various rights-based strategies they employ to address disempowerment at four different levels – the personal level, bureaucratic level, community level and legal level. Actions taken by Community Advocacy to address disempowerment at these different levels have included: accessing individuals directly through home visits, establishing a storefront advocacy centre, providing support for community organising around communal problems and engaging in community economic development.



- 1.3 Liam Maskey described the development of Intercomm as an inter-community organisation based in North Belfast specialising in economic regeneration, social reconstruction and local and international peace-building practices. Liam noted that North Belfast has experienced some of the worst of the social, economic and political problems arising out of political violence in Northern Ireland – including over 25% of deaths relating to the conflict. North Belfast is therefore something like the Gaza of Palestine or the Kwa-Zulu Natal of South Africa. To facilitate social and economic development within North Belfast, Intercomm sponsors and supports various projects addressing issues such as long-term unemployment, housing, micro-enterprise and interfaces (for further details please visit: <http://www.intercommbelfast.com>). Liam suggested that community development work is about developing leadership. He noted however, that this does not necessarily mean creating new leaders, but rather identifying existing leaders and providing them with the recognition and support they need.

A key challenge for those engaged in community development work on the ground in Northern Ireland is to document and share practice. Through better documentation and sharing of practice, community workers can learn to avoid each other's mistakes, be more strategic and adopt evidence-based approaches. It is also important for community-based projects to become sustainable as quickly as possible. Indeed, Northern Ireland's community and voluntary sector is likely to face a major crisis in the near future due to reduction in European funds.

It is difficult to reconcile the constraints of short-term funding with the long-term project of conflict resolution/conflict transformation/peacebuilding. Liam closed with John Paul Lederach's assertion that it takes a lot more time to get out of conflict than to get into it.

- 1.4 Walid Salem, Panorama, suggested that 'community' can be defined in two different ways – geographically or functionally. He described three different visions of Jerusalem, 1) a Jerusalem in which one side totally dominates the other, 2) a Jerusalem with one municipality that recognises the facts on the ground – that is, the divided nature of the city, involving separate community development etc., and 3) an open and united city involving community co-operation with two states. These contradictory visions can be a challenge to community development, as can the absence of political leadership, the weakness of civil society, the weakness of social/public movements, Israeli sector obstacles and the 'sovereignty problem.'
- 1.5 Helen Lewis, INCORE, University of Ulster, described some recent findings from a 'Tools for Community Development workshop held in Derry/Londonderry (for further details see: <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/policy/lilp/peace.html>). She suggested that a community can be defined as 'a group of people with a common characteristic living together within a larger society.' As such, there can be at least three different types of communities - communities of place, communities of identity and communities of interest. Leading on from this community development is a range of practices dedicated to increasing the strength and effectiveness of community life, improving conditions - especially for people in disadvantaged situations - and enabling people to participate in public decision-making as well as achieve greater long-term control over their circumstances.

Community development can also be thought of as being based on certain principles. In particular, community development is about: a collective focus rather than a response to individual crisis; enabling people to work together to influence, change and exert control over the issues that affect their lives; challenging inequitable power relationships within society and promoting the redistribution of wealth and resources in a more just and equitable fashion; participative processes and structures, which include and empower marginalised and excluded groups within society; solidarity with the interests of those experiencing social exclusion; alternative ways of working – being flexible, dynamic, innovative and creative in approach; challenging the nature of the relationship between the users and providers of services; being a wholly positive endeavour which challenges the prejudice and discrimination faced by its community without being discriminatory to any other community.

- 1.6 Liam Maskey emphasised the importance of identifying and recognising who communities are before engaging in community development work.
- 1.7 Sarah Kreimer described how Ir Amim aims to develop a strong civil society in East Jerusalem with the view that this is something that will be good for Israel in the long-term. Ir Amim currently works in four different neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. The organisation is very much driven by local needs on the ground and therefore plays largely a facilitative or supporting role in helping communities work on the issues that they choose to, for example, the local sewer system. Sarah raised the controversial issue that what is good for a community may not necessarily be good for the national interest.



- 1.8 A member of the group questioned whether an outcome of community development could be to fragment the social network of society, for example, by encouraging people to consider themselves ‘first a Jew,’ ‘first a Palestinian.’ He noted that the goal of one societal network is particularly important for Jerusalem, in a context where nation state projects are, perhaps, now irrelevant. Community development should therefore be about developing understanding of the partitions between people and the limitations these partitions and divisions impose upon them; in order that people will rise above them and redraw society’s borders.
- 1.9 Eetta Prince-Gibson suggested that two key questions had arisen from the discussion so far, 1) does community development/empowerment necessarily lead to moderation, and 2) is there a hierarchy of communities?
- 1.10 Sammy Douglas, East Belfast Partnership introduced himself as a member of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. While this community is associated with historical abuses of power, Sammy questioned whether these abuses are therefore necessarily his responsibility. He noted that he would like to hear from other participants about the economic, social and political problems affecting the Jewish community, in particular, poverty, problems with housing and abuses of human rights. At the outset of the conflict, poverty in Northern Ireland was associated exclusively with Catholics. However, there has been a gradual process of recognition of Protestant poverty, unemployment etc. (Barbara Epstein clarified that her earlier remarks had been about working to address Jewish poverty, Jewish disempowerment etc. see 1.2).

Sammy argued that in Northern Ireland, Protestants have traditionally perceived community development to be an activity that involves challenging the state and therefore 'betraying' their government. He questioned whether community development in its extreme form could therefore mean planting a bomb? Sammy suggested that paramilitaries could also be considered to be 'communities of interest.' Paramilitary groups are generally composed of a small number of people but have major impact as their actions are directed less against individuals than against whole communities. Sammy noted that in the context of a cease fire and a peace process it is critical that paramilitaries move quickly into community development, otherwise they risk moving into organised crime and become 'bandits.'

- 1.11 The group discussed the importance of peace having delivered economic prosperity in Northern Ireland and the incentive of economic development for bringing about change. He noted that the disparity between taxes paid by Palestinians and services received is an important potential source of action.
- 1.12 Sammy Douglas stated that it was important for Catholics in Northern Ireland that community development was not only about economics, but also raising political awareness.
- 1.13 Barbara Epstein suggested that at the national level, individuals do not seem to vote according to who would best serve them in relation to the social issues that affect them. She argued that there is a need for more leaders capable of bridging individual problems to connect with people 'on the other side' with the same problems.
- 1.14 Rab McCallum, North Belfast Interface Network outlined his Republican background and history in Northern Ireland. He described the change in approach away from 'who can inflict the most, not endure the most, will win;' towards achieving the Republican project through political means. Rab argued that community development is about empowerment and therefore planting a bomb cannot qualify as community development in its extreme form. Rather, community development is a vehicle to deliver conflict transformation.
- 1.15 Tom Fraser, University of Ulster suggested that the strength of community development and civil society in Northern Ireland can be attributed to continued existence of a 'democratic deficit,' that is, vacuum of political power.
- 1.16 One member of the group described how her work with people centred around shared interests does not necessarily mean ignoring or giving up the differences between them. Instead, her organisation takes a pragmatic approach exploring differences and areas of disagreement *before* focusing on shared interests and what people can achieve together.
- 1.17 Sammy Douglas described how a pot of funding provided the necessary incentive for different community representatives, business persons and politicians to come together in a Belfast Local Strategy Partnership board to distribute money to various community projects and programmes. This example demonstrates the need for there to be something 'on the table.'
- 1.18 A participant emphasised the importance of participation in achieving successful community development and subsequently the need to reintroduce the idea of participation to Palestinian society in Jerusalem which seems to have been absent since the occupation in 1967. The root causes of such alienation and atomization need to be addressed.

- 1.19 The group discussed the difficulty in bringing different communities together when there is no parity between them. Liam Maskey, Intercomm suggested a way round this is to take simultaneous but separate approaches to each community, before examining commonalities between them. He re-emphasized the importance of community development bringing about mutual understanding - after all it's extremely difficult to kill someone who's nice! Vilification of individuals and communities is a learned behaviour. Language and semantics can be a key issue here in building respect. Understanding the 'other' is an important pre-requisite to participation in cross/inter-community work – both to ensure such work 'does no harm' and that individuals are able to participate with a clear conscience and justify participation to their own communities.
- 1.20 Walid Salem, Panorama described a number of joint Israeli-Palestinian activities including solidarity initiatives and cooperation in areas such as education, health, the environment and even politics (for example, in relation to the Geneva Accord). Where cooperation is *absent* however, is in relation to community-based activity. Walid argued that community-based cooperation should look for understanding rather than agreement and focus on developing tolerance rather than 'moderation.'
- 1.21 Samit Al-Jundi, Seeds of Peace, outlined the achievements of his organisation in relation to community development in people's normal lives, in conflict (on a uni-national and bi-national basis) and in post-conflict situations.
- 1.22 Frank Murphy, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership, expanded on Sammy's earlier comments describing how his organisation brings together a total of twenty-eight board members, with seven members from statutory organisations, seven local councillors/politicians and fourteen representatives from trade unions, the community and voluntary sector and the private sector. Whilst Frank noted that not every project has delivered what it agreed to, there has been a high success rate and all funded projects sign up to a code of conduct. He noted that Belfast Local Strategy Partnership is now seeking to develop an integrated strategy for the development of Belfast.



Emerging Themes

- Definitions of 'community' vary according to how people belonging to different communities relate to one another. For example, people may relate to each other on the basis of geography, origin, common needs or in relation to what they do together, that is, *how* the community functions. Therefore (among others), we can talk about communities of place, communities of interest, communities of identity and communities of practice.
- Much of the discussion centred on whether community development is necessarily a positive activity. While community development may contribute to social change and justice, it is important to note that community development *is not* a substitute for addressing the structural forces and systems that may perpetrate exploitation, exclusion and inequality.

An important concern is also whether community development serves to strengthen one community at the expense of another. This concern can be related to two broader debates. First, to the academic debate over the value of 'bridging social capital' that involves bonds of connectedness formed across diverse social groups, as opposed to 'bonding social capital' that cements only homogenous groups.

Second, this concern relates to the debate about the value of single-identity/uni-national community work. Long experience in Northern Ireland suggests that in order to address fears, suspicions and concerns it may be necessary to first develop single-identity/uni-national projects. However, these projects *must* take place in the context of an approach that recognizes and addresses segregation, division and sectarian/discriminatory behaviour as a problem. They must also identify how they will enable communities to work more effectively together in the long-term. The test is therefore not the structure (whether single-identity/uni-national/cross-community/bi-national) of the project itself, but the quality of the outcomes and whether they do in fact promote good relationship-building work.

- Effective community development relies on leaders from all spheres and levels of the community. First, community leaders often have great scope for innovative and exploratory approaches and are able to work across a range of spheres and organisations to elicit broad community action. Second, community leaders are well placed to identify issues of real public concern and facilitate action to ensure these are placed on the public agenda. Third, civil society provides a place for those least able to access leadership opportunities in the private or government arena to develop their skills and abilities. It is therefore important to identify, recognise and support community leadership within civil society.
- Sharing knowledge, experience, lessons learned, good *and* bad practice' is crucial for effective community development – helping community workers avoid each other's mistakes, be more strategic and apply evidence-based approaches.

SESSION TWO
IDENTITY, DIALOGUE AND AFFINITY GROUPS
21st April, 09:30-11:30

Participants

Yasser Abu Khater - *Al Quds University*
Zvi Beckerman - *Hebrew University*
Nora Carmi - *Sabeel Center*
Sammy Douglas - *East Belfast Partnership*
Grace Fraser - *Conflict Researcher*
Tom Fraser - *University of Ulster*
Amos Gil - *Ir Amim*
Joanne Hughes - *University of Ulster*
Maya Kahanoff - *Truman Institute, Hebrew University*
Kevin LaFleur - *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*
Helen Lewis - *INCORE*
Liam Maskey - *Intercomm*
Rab McCallum - *North Belfast Interface Network*
Frank Murphy - *Belfast Local Strategy Partnership*
Rami Nasrallah - *International Peace & Cooperation Center*
Benjamin Pogrund - *Yakar Center*
Eetta Prince-Gibson - *Ir Amim*
Sara Reeske
Bernard Sabella - *Bethlehem University*
Walid Salem - *PANORAMA*
Fedel Tahboub - *Peace & Democracy Forum*
Emelyne Vernet - *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*

- 2.1 Eetta Prince-Gibson, Ir Amim, introduced the session by asking whether it is possible or feasible to support supra-identities, for example being 'Jerusalemite' or 'pro-peace' in order to support peaceful interactions between communities. She invited the group to discuss the relationship between identity, loyalty and hostility, as well as the value of 'contact groups' and single-identity/uni-national work.
- 2.2 Bernard Sabella, Bethlehem University, discussed how experiences of history have had a strong input into identities whether as Palestinians or as members of particular groups. He suggested we live out historical events as part of our collective identities. We therefore need to use the lessons of history to make for a different future in which our differences turn into perspectives that respect others and their experiences and history. It is important to consider how each culture, religion and people can contribute to this different future. This is difficult at a time when Palestinians are facing challenges that accompany the establishment of their state and the arduous process of institution building, and when deep transformations are taking place in relationships with Israelis. The religious parameters that are used to strengthen the sense of identification are also a reminder of the potential

for separateness and divisiveness, not simply along religious lines but also along national and political lines.

- 2.3 The group was asked whether identities could ever be imposed. Liam Maskey, Intercomm responded that people create their own identity – it is therefore both personal and communal. Furthermore, it is more than political, that is, it is not just about whether people will be run by Ireland or England. It is also clear that people ‘know’ their identity because they know who constitutes ‘them and us.’

Liam described how John Major’s ‘Downing Street Declaration’ stating the British government have no ‘selfish strategic or economic interest’ in Northern Ireland forced the Unionist community to revisit its identity – an identity rooted in allegiance to Great Britain. Any so-called ‘crisis of confidence’ in Unionism has profound implications for the entire peace process. The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement’s ‘creative ambiguity’ has also had implications for identity in Northern Ireland. In 1998, the different sides understood the Agreement differently and had different expectations from it – with Unionists perceiving the Agreement as a final solution and Nationalists perceiving the Agreement as the first step on the road to a united Ireland. As the Agreement has failed to live up to these expectations, the Unionist community in particular has perceived its identity as increasingly under threat.

Identity is a critical issue for conflict resolution because, 1) if the people aren’t ready a political deal is unlikely to hold, and 2) if the people are ready a better political deal is more likely. While there is much cynicism regarding community relations/people-to-people work, Liam suggested that there is little alternative. Moreover, effective community relations/people-to-people work can evolve into Track II (citizen) diplomacy.

- 2.4 Sammy Douglas, East Belfast Partnership, stated that he was interested to note that Professor Sabella’s presentation had emphasized Palestinian identity rather than religious identity. Sammy posed the question, ‘can anyone take Palestinian identity away?’ He went on to describe how Ian Paisley, leader of the DUP in Northern Ireland (and staunchly pro-Union) has stated he could live in a united Ireland because of the strength of his fundamentalist faith.
- 2.5 A participant suggested that Palestinians have at least three identities including a national identity, a local territorial identity and an identity based on their socio-economic status. There is a dynamic between these three identities. The greatest challenge lies in building an identity linked to a Palestinian state.
- 2.6 Yasser described how for him and thousands of others living in Jerusalem, Palestinian identity is about being a ‘guest’ in an occupied land. Amos Gil, Ir Amim, added that Israelis also have many different opposing and conflicting identities and suggested that Israeli society may not be able to sustain all of these different identities internally.
- 2.7 Participants discussed how dialogue groups do not always have to work on what they have in common and should not be afraid to recognise difference. Organisations can encourage people to explore their differences, for example, in relation to politics but always in a personal way. This approach can bring internal and external success. That is, participants learn about others (the external) and also become more critical and questioning of themselves (the internal).
- 2.8 The group examined the difficulties of conducting dialogue groups in situations of asymmetrical power relations. Eetta suggested a manifestation of these difficulties is that there seem to be more Israelis than Palestinians ready to participate in dialogue groups.



Emerging Themes

- Much of the discussion centred around the role of identity in the transformation of conflict. Collective identity was discussed as something shaped by:
 - 1) internal factors within each group;
 - 2) relations with adversary groups; and
 - 3) the social context of the groups' interaction.

The key question raised during the discussion seemed to be whether identities can and do change. Those in the group who felt the answer to this question to be yes, were then interested in how we can create spaces and processes that encourage people to develop a positive sense of identity that will bring about changes in relationships and behaviour and thereby transform the nature of conflict itself. Negotiation and redefinition of identity requires interactions with 'others' as well as inner reflection with the self, and dialogue can therefore be a useful tool. Generally, the group felt it should be acknowledged that conflict resolution and peacebuilding requires processes that more explicitly address issues around identity.

- The group highlighted the importance of being attentive to people's perceptions of how identity is linked to power and the systems and structures that organize and govern their relationships. This is particularly important for people who feel their identity is eroded, marginalized or under deep threat. When addressing identity-based concerns, processes must strive to understand the roots of people's perceptions and address the systemic changes needed to assure access and respectful participation.

SESSION THREE
EDUCATION
21ST April 2005, 11:30-13:30

Participants

Yasser Abu Khater - *Al Quds University*
Zvi Bekerman - *Hebrew University*
Nora Carmi - *Sabeel Center*
Sammy Douglas - *East Belfast Partnership*
Grace Fraser - *Conflict Researcher*
Tom Fraser - *University of Ulster*
Amos Gil - *Ir Amim*
Joanne Hughes - *University of Ulster*
Maya Kahanoff - *Truman Institute, Hebrew University*
Kevin LaFleur - *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*
Helen Lewis - *INCORE*
Liam Maskey - *Intercomm*
Rab McCallum, *North Belfast Interface Network*
Frank Murphy, *Belfast Local Strategy Partnership*
Rami Nasrallah, *International Peace & Cooperation Center*
Benjamin Pogrund - *Yakar Center*
Eetta Prince-Gibson - *Ir Amim*
Sara Reeske
Walid Salem - *PANORAMA*
Bernard Sabella - *Bethlehem University*
Fedel Tahboub - *Peace & Democracy Forum*
Emelyne Vernet - *Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*

- 3.1 Joanne Hughes, University of Ulster, began the discussion by describing the history of segregation in Northern Ireland's educational system. She commented on the development of an 'All Children Together' campaigning parent group that resulted in the establishment of the first integrated school, Lagan College, in Belfast in 1981. Since then Education Reform legislation has made provision for integrated education – both for the establishment of new schools and transformation of existing schools. There are currently 57 integrated schools comprising 19 integrated second level colleges and 38 integrated primary schools. In addition there are 19 integrated nursery schools.

Joanne explored the impact of integrated schools in Northern Ireland. She suggested that past pupils from integrated schools may have an increased respect for diversity and a greater number of mixed friends. Moreover, there is continued support for the concept of integrated education, demonstrated by the increasing number of parents all over Northern Ireland who seek integrated education for their children. A major problem however, is that teachers are still trained in a segregated system. Teachers may therefore not feel comfortable raising sensitive issues around the backgrounds, religion and history of those from 'the other side' in the integrated classroom.

- 3.2 Zvi Beckerman, Hebrew University argued that, in general, most Israelis and Palestinians receive a poor education. However, the first bilingual school, providing education in Arabic and Hebrew, was opened in Jerusalem in 1984. Zvi described the work of the Centre for Jewish-Arab Education in bringing together Jewish and Arab children in a learning environment to encourage the two cultures to live side-by-side in peace, harmony and mutual understanding. Schools opened by the Centre have two teachers – one Jewish and one Arab – in each classroom, and instruct from a bilingual and bicultural curriculum. Classes contain equal numbers of Arab and Jewish children, and teachings include both Jewish and Arab culture and observances. Zvi noted that bilingual schools face problems in relation to their sustainability as it is extremely costly to provide two teachers for each class of 20 students. However, he also described the success of bilingual schools (in contrast to Northern Ireland) in *explicitly* addressing sensitive issues around students' different backgrounds, religion, culture and history. In fact, Zvi felt this approach was essential to the success of the schools as failure to emphasize difference could result in parents of students attending the schools being labelled as 'traitors.'
- 3.3 Yasser Khater suggested that education for human rights must come before education for peace. He described how many Palestinian students' right to education is jeopardized by, for example, students struggling to attend classes because of roadblocks, checkpoints and restrictions on travel. Palestinian universities also suffer from significant lack of funds and resources.
- 3.4 A representative from the Middle East Children's Association (MECA) discussed the work of the Association in implementing programmes in the educational systems of both cultures to explore tolerance, difference, human rights, democracy, and mutual respect. MECA allows Israeli and Palestinian teachers to learn about one another and to work together to influence educational systems. Groups of teachers meet on a regular basis to develop curricula for their students that would promote an understanding of each other's culture and promote pluralism. In the process of creating programmes, the teachers themselves explore these issues, create personal bonds, break down their own stereotypes and positively influence thousands of students. Education can be described as having two main goals, 1) to prepare students to deal with the realities in which they are living, and 2) to equip students to create and change realities. In a conflict situation, it is particularly difficult to strike a balance between these two goals. Peace education is generally perceived as being about infusing values. However, this poses something of a moral dilemma as, 'who are we to indoctrinate our values?' Peace education can still be justified however, not as a tool, but as a specific response to needs on the ground, because both teachers and children must be equipped to cope with living in conflict. There are still tensions around peace education and whether joint/integrated/bilingual education necessarily brings about the outcome we want.
- 3.5 A member of the group noted that the situation in Israel and Palestine differs significantly to that in Northern Ireland because education in the latter has been subject to significant legislative reform and new sources of institutional support.
- 3.6 Joanne noted that at first Catholics in Northern Ireland were relatively uninterested in integrated education due to the perception that to advocate integrated education would be to treat the symptoms rather than the root causes of the conflict. It was therefore crucial that education reform was presented as part of a package of reform including, for example, fair employment legislation.



- 3.7 The group discussed curricula for peace education and were particularly interested in hearing about the development of a new citizenship curriculum for Northern Ireland including modules on topics such as Equality and Justice, Parading, Policing, Democracy and Active Participation and Local Government, Homelessness, Diversity, Resolving Differences, Sport and Diversity, and European Citizenship.
- 3.8 One participant described their experience with children successfully developing their own programmes out of initial contact meetings, leading to friendships between communities. However, practical issues such as restrictions on movement and travel often intervene and hinder progress.
- 3.9 Concern was expressed that students often fail to receive recognition for their studies at Jerusalem University.
- 3.10 Grace Fraser, Conflict Researcher, noted that because it was conflict that produced integrated schools in Northern Ireland, many of these schools are having to adjust to the fact that violent conflict in the province is, by and large, now over. Some are beginning to say 'we're becoming normal' and express concern about what their future role and mandate should be. Grace described the difficulty in measuring the impact of integrated schools as many of their outcomes are long-term and intangible – rather than simply correct or incorrect.

- 3.11 In response to earlier comments that education for human rights needs to come before education for peace, Benjamin Pogrud, Yakar Center, drew parallel to the children's rebellion 'no education before liberation' he witnessed in South Africa during the 1980's. While the rebellion undoubtedly contributed to the fall of apartheid it also had catastrophic consequences for the future of youth in the country.
- 3.12 Zvi suggested that it is possible to over-emphasize the importance of education as the key indicator for future well-being. In fact, research suggests it is the socio-economic status of a child's parents that may be the key determinant.

WRAP-UP/CONCLUDING SESSION
Friday 22nd, 13:30-15:00

Participants

Yasser Abu Khater - *Al Quds University*
Sammy Douglas - *East Belfast Partnership*
Grace Fraser - *Conflict Researcher*
Tom Fraser - *University of Ulster*
Amos Gil - *Ir Amim*
Joanne Hughes - *University of Ulster*
Helen Lewis - *INCORE*
Liam Maskey - *Intercomm*
Rab McCallum, *North Belfast Interface Network*
Frank Murphy, *Belfast Local Strategy Partnership*
Eetta Prince-Gibson - *Ir Amim*
Walid Salem - *PANORAMA*

- 4.1 The group was invited to reflect on its experiences over the past few days. Amos Gil, Ir Amim, noted that the value of comparing Northern Ireland and Jerusalem comes from learning about not only the similarities, but the differences between the two situations. He suggested that discussions, in particular the session on community development, could have benefited from greater focus on specific examples of projects. Amos also recommended that a future area of activity for the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership could be to develop a programme of placements/work-shadowing. This would be aimed at providing practitioners from Jerusalem and Belfast with the experience of spending time and working on the ground in non-governmental/community-based organisations in the two different cities.
- 4.2 Walid Salem, PANORAMA felt that the session comparing community development in Belfast and Jerusalem had been particularly fruitful and held great potential for future comparative research. He also described his interest in further exploring two issues, 1) whether identities are fixed or transformed and therefore whether it may be possible to develop a joint Jerusalem identity, and 2) the development of citizenship education in Northern Ireland.
- 4.3 Eetta Prince-Gibson, Ir Amim noted that frustration with the length of the discussion sessions was a great sign of their richness. Eetta suggested a key question for the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership is 'how can research sit on practical programmes?' She was also struck by a number of themes that emerged over the few days, 1) the issue of change, how it comes about and why, 2) the lesson of inclusion that can be drawn from the Northern Ireland experience, and 3), the role of the media in conflict, and 4) how enriching it is to compare and contrast knowledge and experience.
- 4.4 Yasser Abu Khater, Al Quds University, highlighted the session on education as having been of particular importance.



- 4.5 Liam Maskey, Intercomm, agreed with Amos's suggestion for a programme of placements/work-shadowing to support the work of the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership. He also recommended the group consider a series of videoconferences to explore some of the themes that had come up over the past few days in greater detail, and to facilitate working relationships between academics and practitioners in both cities.
- 4.6 Joanne Hughes, University of Ulster, suggested that academics could work to support practitioners during their various placements in Belfast and Jerusalem, and to develop practice-oriented research material around themes emerging from the videoconferences. Joanne noted that over the coming months she hopes to produce an academic article examining the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership as a case study of academics and practitioners working together. She suggested it might also be interesting to produce a special edition of a social policy journal focusing on, for example, community development in Northern Ireland and Jerusalem.
- 4.7 Rab McCallum, North Belfast Interface Network, described how he felt challenged by his visit to Jerusalem. Whilst the programme had been extremely intensive, Rab felt this level of intensity was necessary to expose him to the full variety of perspectives. His experiences over the few days had encouraged him reflect on the importance of identifying and nurturing future leadership, and the importance of continuing dialogue even when participants feel it is leading nowhere.

- 4.8 Sammy Douglas, East Belfast Partnership, stated that he felt disillusioned in the positive sense of having had his preconceptions about Jerusalem challenged. Sammy said that something that would stay with him was the friendliness of all the people he had met during his visit. He suggested that community policing was an area of potential collaboration between Northern Ireland and Jerusalem and one that could perhaps be further explored through videoconferencing. A Belfast-Jerusalem web site could also be a useful addition to the work of the Partnership – it would facilitate communication between the two cities and provide a useful venue for publication of practice-oriented research. Sammy also echoed Amos’s suggestion for a programme of placements. His only criticism of the conference proceedings was that it did not expose him to an extreme pro-Israeli view.
- 4.9 Tom Fraser, University of Ulster, noted that he felt a positive dynamic had developed between participants that would help sustain the work of the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership in the future. The next big issue to be addressed however, would be that of future funding. Tom emphasised that future outcomes of the Partnership must include both active projects on the ground and strong academic work.
- 4.10 Frank Murphy, Belfast LSP, described how being a funder can make him cynical about community development, however, it also gives him a different insight into its various processes and he was pleased to have been able to share his insights with the rest of the participants over the course of the few days. Frank noted that his experiences in Jerusalem have convinced him that Northern Ireland needs to work towards being ever more outward looking, and stated that he hopes to include this emphasis in the new integrated strategy for Belfast being developed by Belfast LSP.
- 4.11 Helen Lewis, INCORE, University of Ulster, agreed to develop an action plan for the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership to include three main strands of activity:
1. A series of videoconferences to take place between Belfast and Jerusalem, and development of web site for the Belfast-Jerusalem Civil Society Partnership.
 2. Academic support for those participating in placements and development of practice-oriented research around conference themes and the Partnership.
 3. A programme for placements at non-governmental/community-based organisations in Belfast and Jerusalem.

Helen noted that she will also write up a brief report of conference proceedings.

- 4.12 Amos suggested the Partnership consider drawing upon the experiences of the New Israel Fund and Genesis from Montreal because both have successful academic and placement programmes and the B-JCSP may benefit from learning from them.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“It has been a very good learning exercise and I feel I have been challenged on pre-conceived notions of the Israel/Palestine conflict. As a community activist I have appreciated the academic input to the project and the key role universities can play in our own peace process.”

“this trip was not only informative but it gave practitioners here the opportunity to inform others of the pitfalls, benefits and challenges of the peacebuilding work we have all been involved in”

“my participation in the project was hugely beneficial in that it broadened my knowledge of three issues, 1) Palestinian/Israeli project, 2) the need for genuine and directed academic and community partnerships in relation to conflict analysis, recording and evaluation, and 3) the benefits of intergroup learning between the community and voluntary, academic and funder sectors.”

“ I would be keen to involve other people from East Belfast...if anything, the comparison between Belfast and Jerusalem would encourage others and show clearly how our peace process has moved forward.”

“This has been an excellent opportunity to learn more about community capacity building and development in Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine.”

“Seeing other situations of conflict helps one to keep perspective, learn and be positive.”