

INCORE MEETING WITH BELFAST INTERFACE GROUPS
Thursday 20th May 2004

Attendees

Billy Mitchell - LINC Resource Centre
John Loughran - Intercomm
Rab McCallum - North Belfast Interface Network
Tommy Gorman - Interaction
Roisin O'Hagan - INCORE
Helen Lewis - INCORE
Kelly Haggarty - Monkstown Community Resource Centre
Danny Lavery - LINC Resource Centre
Joe Marley - Ardoyne Focus Group
Malachy Mulgrew - North Belfast Interface Network
Kate Clarke - North Belfast Interface Network
Margaret Smith - An-Eochair
Sean O'Hare - An-Eochair

Project overviews from:

Billy Mitchell - on behalf of LINC Resource Centre, EPIC, North Belfast Alternatives, Good Morning Ballysillan, Monkstown Community Resource Centre, The Mediation Resource Centre
- paper attached

Intercomm

- paper attached

North Belfast Interface Network

- paper attached + additional points
- Conflict management & fire-fighting - via mobile phone network
- Developing dialogue and partnerships beyond usual issues re: parades e.g. about women's groups, anti-racist network established
- Importance of developing a strategic approach that empowers people - examining work that is already ongoing, what skills already exist, who needs what kind of training etc.
- CRJ (Brendan Clarke) and Joe Marley (from North Belfast Interface Network) set up committee to control the availability of alcohol to the under-aged. Regular meetings take place and mechanisms have been put in place to make off-licences more accountable.

An-Eochair

- paper attached

Interaction

The Springfield Inter Community Forum was set up based on a community development model but has evolved into more complex role. Recognises that conflict is a complex phenomenon about more than any one problem, current focus on relationships & is not afraid to challenge perceptions. Continues to:

- catalogue incidents in interface areas

- operate mobile phone network
- monitor documentation - cataloguing good and bad practice
- Cross Border project - provides exchanges for young people, deals with racism, drug/alcohol abuse

Groundwork

- paper attached

General points that arose during discussion:

- Most of the major interface problems stem from socio-economic deprivation - manifests itself through sectarianism, racism etc.
- Need to debunk sense of hopelessness. Interface communities often feel they are being bulldozed out by planners and gentrification of areas.
- Almost like 'ground-hog day' - constant repetition - continual hopelessness and anger
- Lack of political leadership, however, are politicians just saying what communities want to hear?
- Importance of co-ordination of interface work, avoid feeding frenzies re: funding, community groups often end up competing with one another.
- Statutory agencies need to acknowledge that they rely on community groups
- Lack of mutual confidence and respect between communities
- Civic Forum - the next Civic Forum needs to include representatives from the community - those involved in grass-roots/on the ground work

Ideas for the future 'relationship' with INCORE

- Suggestion made to invite Paul Murphy to one of our meetings to make him aware of the realities on the ground
- There was debate around the issue of producing a paper/document - how useful/worthwhile this would be
- Agreed that **practical** outcomes were paramount