

Stewarding

Mediation

Monitoring:

**A Community Level Approach
To Public Order**

This report is a result of a series of conferences held between October and December of 1999 on the issues of stewarding, mediation & monitoring. The conferences were organised by: INCORE, Community Development Centre, Democratic Dialogue, INNATE, Mediation Network, Peace & Reconciliation Group, and Youth Action. Funding has been provided by the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation through the Community Relations Council.

Introduction

In many situations throughout the world, **stewarding**, **mediation** and **monitoring** are utilised to maintain public order at the community level and to resolve potential areas of confrontation before they are out of control. A series of conferences were held bringing together members community groups and agencies involved in stewarding, mediation and monitoring in Northern Ireland and from around the world. These meetings were held to raise awareness and strengthen skills in these areas, and this report is a summary of the main points from each conference. For further information or to review any of the information presented at any of these conferences, including a review of relevant literature, please visit INCORE's library (some of it will be available through INCORE's website at www.incore.ulst.ac.uk) Also we are interested in your thoughts on these important subjects; please send them to: INCORE, Aberfoyle House, Northlands Road, Derry/Londonderry BT48 7JA, Northern Ireland.

Stewarding

A conference was held on stewarding on the evening of 4 October 1999 in Cookstown. The conference was attended by approximately 30 people, including representatives from community groups, policing, marching orders, sports groups and education.

What is stewarding and why do we need it?

Stewarding is the involvement of individuals designated by participating groups to maintain order in a public event. Each group names some of its own members to ensure that its own group adheres to prearranged conditions and laws governing the particular event in question. For example, stewards may be utilised in parades by both marchers and protestors to ensure their particular groups maintain their obligations as agreed to in advance of the event.

Stewarding meets two very important and interrelated aspects of any public event: both internal controls and external obligations. Events dealing with a relatively large number of people including pop concerts, sporting events, the safe running of a night club, and public events such as parades, demonstrations or carnivals, religious or historical commemorations, all demand stewarding in order to see them safely to their conclusions. For these events to be successful, one needs to have skills in crowd management, which should take precedence over the use of the term "crowd control". Good crowd management can best be provided through good stewarding, by involving the disputing groups in managing themselves. External obligations met through stewarding include the fulfillment of both health and safety requirements that are required to hold a public event. Event organisers also are accountable under both legal and social responsibilities that differ depending on the particular event in question.

For politically contentious events such as parades or demonstrations, stewarding provides a means of maintaining control without a need to rely on the police to do so. South Africa provides an excellent example of the use of trained stewards, called marshals, during the period of political transition. There is also much to be said for the benefit to stewards themselves as a result of filling the role as a steward. These benefits include improved self-confidence, acknowledgement of voluntary efforts, and perhaps credentials which may lead to further employment as a steward.

What are the options for training stewards?

stewards for the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the Grand Orange Lodge of Londonderry. Over the past four years, Sue Watson has trained these groups in the various skills required of a steward, and is considering the launch of a pilot programme in Northern Ireland. She identifies many skills necessary for a steward including good communication skills and the ability to be self-disciplined, smart, calm, a good team worker and able to calm a contentious situation. Responsibilities include: attending events, smart clean and tidy appearance, and carrying out pre-event checks. Some guides for this training include the Football League Training Package and The Green Guide.

Other speakers offering their experience with stewarding included:

- * Patsy Bradley, from Derry City Football Club, at whose matches police patrol outside the ground but order inside is maintained by stewards
- * Alistair Simpson of the Apprentice Boys, who described the training Sue Watson had provided and the effect on groups and on the tenor of public events
- * Paul Scott, Environmental Health Officer with Belfast City Council, who described the legal and practical need for stewarding
- * Tony Dardas, of East Tyrone College of Further Education, who offered to continue the discussions in the direction of setting up a training programme which would lead to qualifications

The future may hold more options for training of stewards in Northern Ireland, perhaps through the Institutes of Further and Higher Education. The Patten Report has listed as a priority the role of stewards in public events, and only time will tell whether this particular recommendation will be implemented and conditions established for training initiatives to take place. The Parades Commission form now explicitly asks whether stewards will be provided for an event, and whether they are trained.

Mediation

The conference on mediation was held at INCORE on 5 November 1999 with 60 people present. Participants included many from the community groups in both communities, as well as government, police, and community representatives. The conference was divided into a morning introduction session and various workshops throughout the day dealing with aspects of mediation and skills which form part of it.

Speakers:

Patricia Gonsalves of Mediation UK described the development of community mediation services in the UK, and particularly the history of Greenwich Mediation Service. Being funded by the locality has made the mediation centre more sensitive to the needs, preferences, and representation of local people.

Brendan McAllister from Mediation Network Northern Ireland spoke also of the evolution of distinctive local forms of mediation. He sees the network as having evolved from learning from outsiders, to identifying what is important locally, and now to being ready to share internationally.

Len Khalane from UMAC in South Africa described forms of mediation which have evolved to suit a very diverse population at a time of high levels of violence. Key issues were establishing and retaining credibility, and understanding that impartiality rather than neutrality could be expected. In such a contested situation, no one was politically neutral nor perceived to be unaffiliated to a group.

Caroline Keane of Pavee Point in Dublin described the determination of the Traveller community to become involved in resolving conflicts by setting up a mediation service. Training has involved both Travellers and settled people, and disputes dealt with have been

The combined effect of the morning talks was to lay a conceptual framework and broaden people's understanding of the need for a variety of skills, approaches, and models in mediation. An interesting observation from Len Khalane was that mediation work is based on three different theories of practice:

- a) Community Relations Theory – The assumption is that conflict is caused by mistrust, and therefore the desired effect on parties is to build self-esteem and increase decision-making abilities to mutual advantage.
- b) Human Needs Theory – This assumes that deeply rooted conflict is based on unmet needs, therefore the goals are to increase awareness of shared goals, objectives and needs; and to transfer ideas in order to change public perception of what is possible.
- c) Conflict Transformation Theory – This assumes that conflict is caused by structural or systemic problems of injustice, and therefore the desired effect on parties is to transform the relationship of the parties. There is a need to work through culturally appropriate models. This aspect was highlighted by a number of speakers and trainers from different Northern Ireland backgrounds, as well as those from mediation backgrounds in South Africa, London, and Dublin's Travellers' community.

Different theoretical and cultural approaches seem to be present within the community of practitioners in Northern Ireland, which sometimes gives rise to differences of perception and expectation among them. This was one reason for the consultative process which led to these conferences, and there was ample opportunity to explore these issues, recognise the value of the different approaches, and discuss ways to work together.

To enhance the likelihood of people collaborating across different organisations, localities, and theoretical approaches, it was especially useful to have one speaker (Patricia Gonsalves) who referred in some detail to co-working, and one workshop (offered by Michael Doherty) with this focus. In addition, there were workshops to make clearer the distinction between mediation and negotiation, as well as one emphasising the importance of shuttle or pre-mediation work to get people to the table in the first place, a workshop focused on the mediation of communal issues (including parades) in Northern Ireland), and a distillation of ideas from the South African experience.

Monitoring

The final conference in the series was held at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island on 8 December and was on the theme of monitoring of public events. The event was well attended with about 30 people representing all aspects of public and private life, including police, Orange Orders, Authorised Parades Officers, and community monitors.

The event was framed in two parts. The morning session introduced the group to human rights monitoring, both international approaches and how this applies to Northern Ireland. Karen Kenny, of Human Rights Trust, spoke of her experience in El Salvador, Bosnia, and Rwanda, and her conviction that monitoring in order to report violations was not enough – attention also needed to be given to developing cultures which respected human rights. Maggie Beirne of CAJ and Brice Dickson of the Human Rights Commission of Northern Ireland responded by reflecting the local aspects of these issues, including the need to understand and coordinate the roles which different kinds of local monitoring services could perform. There are complex issues concerning who can monitor, on what basis, reporting to whom.

South Africa. Rab McCallum and Michael Atcheson of Community Development Centre in North Belfast described the development of their distinctive approach to monitoring within and between interface flashpoints. Their own analysis had led to the use of mobile phones and mobile monitors to observe events, and eventually to a much more interventionist set of responsibilities. Over time, monitors began to be depended on for information, for liaison, and for advocacy of de-escalation of incidents across the flash-points. This has consequences for the monitors as well as for CDC. Eldred deKlerk reflected a very different, yet somehow comparable, experience of monitoring demonstrations and inter-group disputes in South Africa, including an emphasis on balancing good informal relations with opposing sides.

There was a particularly high level of participant involvement in cross-questioning and open discussion of these issues, and clearly the presentations had stimulated important new ideas and disagreements.

Discussion

Each of the conferences included considerable discussion between participants and speakers. Because of the diversity of participants, including good representation from many groups which might have been expected to be under-represented, comments were often quite forthright and explicit in their disagreement. Each conference had some time for small-group discussion, as well as plenary sessions, and widely divergent ideas were aired in both formats. Since a key objective of the series was to introduce some new possibilities and to air assumptions, this was a welcome result.

Evaluation

Intake and post-event questionnaires at the conferences produced interesting, though not startling, results. As expected, participants were generally aware of both mediation and monitoring; some had acted as mediators. Stewarding was much less well-known, and the objectives of that conference therefore revolved around awareness-raising, which was successful. Participants reported that they were somewhat more likely to suggest all three of these ways of dealing with public order issues, and much more likely to act as mediators, than before attending the conference (though not markedly more likely to act as stewards or monitors.)

The mediation conference aimed both to strengthen skills and to systematise understanding of various broad approaches to mediation. Evaluations revealed that this was successful, reporting both skills and conceptual learning to a very high degree. The workshops covered aspects considered crucial by organisers, including co-working, local models of mediation, and the early stages of intervention, and these were in fact cited as key areas of skills learning.

The monitoring conference had set out to clarify different kinds of monitoring and how they operate here. Although relatively few evaluations were returned, these concluded that a combination of approaches seemed most useful here, including learning from South Africa.

The organising committee also evaluated the conference series favourably. Perhaps the most-cited aspect was the participation of key constituencies. The organising groups had put substantial effort into identifying target groups: community groups from various sides, marching groups, neighbourhood and residents' associations, sporting associations, police

present to an outstanding degree, and that the format encouraged free learning and discussion. The monitoring conference was particularly successful in this regard. Some constituencies were still under-represented, including ethnic minority advocacy groups and the full range of sports groups (although representatives had booked a place but ended up not coming to two of the conferences.) However, the key groupings for these issues were well represented, and fully engaged in discussion.

Consultative groups

The conferences should be seen in the context in which they evolved: as part of a consultative process between local groups concerned with these issues who do not always have opportunities to discuss and collaborate on them. There were three major consultative meetings of the organising groups, in addition to regular planning sessions once the programme of linked conferences was agreed. The last of these consultations agreed that there were needs which still needed to be addressed in future.

Future needs

As identified by the organisations in the consultative group:

STEWARDING:

- Colleges of Further Education are a good way to meet the need for trained stewards. Paul Hamilton of East Tyrone College of Further Education will be running a training programme leading to credentials. It is important to monitor the uptake and see whether it is fundable, or whether the consultative group needs to offer some kind of assistance here.
- This kind of training needs also to be made available in other locations, and, as a priority, in or near Belfast.
- Having stewards is a recommendation of the Patten Commission, but it is not clear how this will be funded for public events. (Presumably, commercial events such as concerts and sporting events can fund their own stewards.)

MEDIATION

- Continue to educate the public in the broad spectrum of mediation activities, including neighbourhood-level services
- Because provision of mediation services does not in itself produce a willingness to achieve a resolution, there is serious work to be done on the surrounding culture and people's perception of their own interests.
- Continue to support community-level capacity-building in this area, especially as this leaves communities better able to take responsibility for it themselves.

MONITORING

- Periodically re-visit groups actively involved in monitoring, assessing and trying to meet needs (e.g., further following up of February 1999 conference.)
- There may be a need for rapid training of monitors for public order events through the middle of this year. The organising group will liaise with the Parades Commission and be prepared to assist with short-term needs.

OVERALL, there is further work needed in this broad area, to influence both government policy and public awareness and perception.