

DIALOGUE FOR DIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT

1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016

Introduction

Dialogue For Diversity run six main projects: Migrants Support, Community Support for ex-prisoners, Dialogue between divided groups, Community Development, Church Reform, and Support for the Irish Language. Steady progress was made in all areas.

1. Community Support

Mission statement

Community Support was set up:

1. To assist a number of newly released prisoners to avoid re-offending
 2. To help mentees to improve their self-image and self-confidence through a befriending service
 3. To encourage mentees to develop their talents and hopes to the full
 4. To help mentees to link with existing statutory and voluntary agencies
 5. To review the pilot project as a means to develop a wider post-release Service.
 6. To work with others engaged in prison work to develop post-release services
- Crucial to our mission is linking newly-released prisoners to existing support services.

Impact

The following figures give an overview of our quantitative impact this year:

<i>Number of individuals visited</i>	<i>Number of visits made</i>	<i>Number of visits inside</i>	<i>Number of individuals seen inside</i>	<i>Number of visits outside</i>	<i>Number of individuals seen outside</i>
149	968	385	124	583	71

Some individuals were seen many times as the following table shows:

<i>50 or more visits to one individual</i>	<i>30 or more visits to one individual</i>	<i>20 or more visits to one individual</i>	<i>10 or more visits to one individual</i>	<i>5 or more visits to one individual</i>
3	6	14	28	46

The following table shows the number of those seen regularly who went back inside:

<i>Number seen regularly</i>	<i>Of regulars: number seen outside</i>	<i>Of regulars: number who have not yet been released</i>	<i>Of regulars: number seen outside who are now back inside</i>	<i>Number deceased</i>
28	20	3	4	1

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The above table shows that there are 28 whom we saw fairly regularly, and were therefore giving them on-going support. Those who received 5 visits may have been seen a number of times inside and have decided not to follow up post-release.

Of the 20 that we saw regularly outside, 4 (20%) went back inside in the current year. This figure is encouraging, as we deliberately try to seek mentees who do NOT have a low risk of re-offending. We continue to visit those who were recalled and most will continue on the path towards being crime-free.

The figure of 71 people seen outside is encouraging: we set it as an aim for this year that we would increase the number of people we saw outside prison, but we are still seeing more inside than outside.

This is a considerable amount of work for an average of four volunteers. The figures give little idea of the stories behind the mentees. Some of this can be seen from the following

Mentees

Some of support involved: working with a prisoner's solicitor to help him get access to a house that was willed to him so that he could avoid homelessness; phoning prisoners to remind them of multiple appointments, including those with Probation – drugs, in this case prescription drugs, made remembering appointments difficult; at other times helping prisoners deal with conflict with the statutory bodies with which they have to engage; working with a prisoner to make contact with Gamblers Anonymous, with whom he is now doing well; getting a prisoner an introduction through a church which led to a job, which in turn led to the expansion of the business; visiting a terminally ill former prisoner; encouraging many to make contact with AA, occasionally writing references for prisoners for court; making contact with paramilitaries through intermediaries to see if it is safe for a prisoner to return to his home area.

Above all, our task is to support and encourage prisoners. Nothing is more important than this. All of them face an uphill battle post-release, with many road blocks. That is why encouragement is so important. Further, those who re-offend also need to be encouraged: the road to being free of crime for many is not a single up hill journey, but rather one of many twists and turns in the cycle of change.

Issues

Housing: this has been an on-going issue, especially for sex offenders. For public safety reasons housing for them needs to be approved by a number of agencies. A consequence is that by the time this has been completed a flat that was on offer has already been let. Our volunteers have spent many hours chasing up possible accommodation, and sometimes we have been successful. We have also worked closed with De Paul Ireland and the Methodist Church on housing.

A second issue was with people with disabilities. Apparently the Prison Service has a statutory obligation to support people as far as the prison gates, and the NIHE has a responsibility from the moment they present themselves in a Housing Executive office, but no body seems to have responsibility between these points. Voluntary groups, like Community Support, and individuals in statutory bodies can and do help out in these situations, but it remains a gap in provision.

Good relations

As a group we welcome prospective mentors from all faiths and none, and work with prisoners from different backgrounds. If prisoners so desire, we help them make links with their own ministers of religion. Many arrive in prison after confrontations at interfaces, or with the police. That is why Good Relations is at least as important with prisoners, inside and outside prison, as it is anywhere else in Northern Ireland.

Cooperation with other agencies

We continue to have excellent relations with prison staff in both Maghaberry and Magilligan, and they have been very helpful to us in making contact with prisoners. We also work closely with Probation: one of our mentees described his Probation officer as the best he has ever had – and he has had many! He had good reason to think this. She goes way beyond the call of duty in working on his behalf to ensure he gets many entitlements which he might not otherwise receive. Probation and the Prison Service both continue to serve on our Advisory Group. We are also very grateful to the Quaker Service, Prison Fellowship, and NIACRO who continue to support us.

Funding

The Stephen's Green Trust has remained our main funder for the past year: we could not have survived without them, and for this we are very grateful. As with all groups our financial position remains somewhat precarious, and we hope that we will be able to find other funders in the year ahead.

Context

Much of our work is taken up with addictions which are a huge problem in themselves both for those who suffer from them, but also for those who suffer as a result of their wrong actions while under the influence of drink and/or drugs. But these addictions are also symptoms of the underlying problems so many prisoners suffer from: problems that sometimes spring from a chaotic family history. Addictions are also greatly influenced by the surrounding culture. It remains something of a mystery that so little seems to be done at a political level to address the culture of drink, given that the annual cost to Northern Ireland from alcohol related injuries exceeds £900 million – just shy of £1 billion. It is important some of those who suffer from addictions come from families who have done everything possible under the sun to help their son or daughter get sorted, and families in these instances can suffer as much as many victims of crime.

A specific factor in the past year has been a slow down in court work because of pay disputes. This has meant many more being kept on remand for much longer periods.

Sadly, this year also saw the deaths of two of our mentees. Both were young and their deaths were tragic. Our deepest sympathy goes to their families.

Comings and Goings

In the past year we have welcomed three new mentors. We said goodbye to two who have moved on: Carmel Flynn and Michael Bingham. We thank Carmel and Michael for all their efforts and wish them well on their new journeys. We also said goodbye to Irene Surgenor from Quaker Service who had served on our Management Committee and we are very grateful for all the help she gave us. We welcomed Fionnuala Watters to the Management Committee.

As well, Willy Gribben retired from the Prison Service and also from our Support Group. Again we thank him for all the support he gave us from his role in Resettlement, and wish him all the best in his retirement.

We would also like to give warm thanks to Sile McClean who left NIACRO during the year. From the very start of the project she has been a great support and we also wish her well in her retirement.

Ideally we would like about seven mentors seeing approximately 35 mentees in total, so we have room for a few new volunteers.

2. Migrant Support Service

The Migrant Support Service (MSS) is a project of Dialogue for Diversity and has been working with local migrants from 2010. It was sustained in 2015-16 by a grant from the Minority Ethnic Development Fund of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First

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Minister. The same grant has been secured for 2016-17. The following activities and outcomes were achieved:

Activity	Outcomes
Advisory Service: Meeting clients re access to services	2150 face to face meetings; 320 cases opened and completed
Legal Service: Meeting clients re racism & hate & legal issues	134 meetings; 106 legal interventions
Campaigning re racism & hate	Campaigns on: unequal treatment with respect to benefits; non-reporting of hate crime; denial of rights in the context of the exploitative zero hour contract arrangements. Dissemination of information, representation of cases, training of 3 assistants
School of language, culture and work	Two sets of 30 hours and one set of 60 hours of English courses delivered. 559 people attended; 147 met certification standard. 5 half day sessions on Job Preparation were carried out by Jobs and Benefits, Portadown.
Consular outreach tours	Four 4-day tours completed. 1022 transactions carried out (issuing of documents, registrations).

Finance and Staffing

Because of the political impasse about welfare cuts at the Stormont Assembly and the consequent delay in issuing departmental budgets our access to funding was not certain in the first quarter of the fiscal year. A precautionary approach to spending was adopted by MSS with a result that by the end of the year all of the grant was not claimed. Income and Expenditure was balanced at the end of the year. A part time post of Receptionist/Secretary was finally implemented in July and two part time bilingual support workers (Romanian and Tetum) were taken on.

Concerns

Migrant Labour Conditions: The zero hour contract of employment used by the recruitment agencies, though legal, is exploitative and creates huge inefficiencies which are outsourced onto the migrant worker. Indigenous UK citizens prefer to live on benefits than work in poor working conditions. Therefore migrant workers with less choice and lower expectations are attracted.

Labour dispute: A lockout by Community Support of one of its volunteers for a record seven months without due process is rendering DFD vulnerable as an organisation. The process urgently needs to be investigated and resolved.

What is the public need for this activity?

The 2011 Census shows that 6,712 (7%) of Craigavon (local government district) residents and 5,998 (10.4%) of Dungannon (l.g.d.) residents were born outside of Ireland and Britain Numbers have increased since 2011, along with inflow and outflow. There is a high concentration of people from ethnic minority groups in Corcrain 1 & 2 and Annagh 1 Super Output Areas of Portadown. These areas in the top 20% rank for multiple deprivation, income and employment. People who benefit from our work are mainly ethnic minority people living in these areas, but also those coming from the wider Portadown, Craigavon and Dugannon areas. We service Portuguese speaking people from Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome, Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique Portugal and Brasil very well because of our Portuguese speaking staff; we also service East Timorese and Romanians through our Tetum and Romanian speaking staff; and other Eastern Europeans through English.

Since MSS opened in 2010 it has received over 7,000 visits from people of ethnic minorities. Their presenting needs were about employment (job applications, CVs, grievance resolution); education (information, seeking school places, liaison); housing

(information on Housing Executive, mediation with landlords, housing benefit); documents (passports, identity cards); language (English classes, translation); welfare credits and benefits; legal issues (immigration, race crime, family matters). Their situations range from the basic needs of new arrivals to those of the more settled people who while dealing with basic need have the capacity to concern themselves with organising for cultural, sporting and social events.

The outcomes which have been reached are the resolution of dilemmas with regard to housing, employment, education, health care and welfare for many hundreds of individuals and their families; new arrivals are helped to find their feet and become more self-reliant; there are increased levels of labour market participation; redress is sought in incidents of racism; a sense of welcome and belonging is conveyed and there is progress on integration into the life of the community. As integration is a two way process there are outcomes for the settled community as they adapt to the presence of new neighbours. The presence and activity of MSS is gaining acceptance for the migrant community.

3. Dialogue Project

The Dialogue Project encourages conversations about difficult political and social issues among divided groups in Northern Ireland. In the past year our focus has been on a pilot project with marginalised working-class Loyalists.

There were thirteen participants. Most of these were new to dialogue. The remainder were experienced leaders, but were needed as participants in order to persuade the others to attend. One third were young Loyalists who are likely to become future community leaders. Some of the older participants were ex-combatants and had served long sentences in prison. Many were either close to, or had taken part in, flags protests. This means that the group we were drawing into the process are precisely the group that needs it.

For about eight of the participants it was a really big move to take part in a project like this at all. Their level of confidence and skills, including literacy, was very low. But they were also beginning to engage in other groups: some in the PUP, some in local community groups.

From the beginning there was diversity in the group because one section was from a UDA background, the other from a UVF background. This was the first time many had engaged with Loyalists from a different background. It was also the first time they took part in a residential with Republicans and people from different ethnic backgrounds.

In terms of patriarchy probably the biggest impact was made by a working-class Loyalist woman who also took part in the residential and another Loyalist woman who works full-time promoting the Irish language and challenged their views on the language.

The group as a whole frequently mentioned in the discussions their lack of confidence, their sense of not being represented politically, their marginalisation, and the need to ask: What does it mean to be a Loyalist? What does it mean to be British? They continually compared themselves to Republicans whom they saw as being accepted by society and being politically successful. In contrast they frequently said Loyalists were seen as 'scum'.

The impact of the process can be seen from:

- a. increased levels of participation in discussion,
- b. the willingness to engage with dissident Republicans.
- c. An initiative after the process in which some participants set up a meeting with politicians standing in Upper Bann in the forthcoming election. They would never have had the confidence to do this at the beginning.
- d. One section of the participants have engaged with Sinn Féin since the end of the process.

- e. The same group have set up a meeting with the loyalist woman that they met at the residential who challenged their views, especially in relation to women.

The project was run in partnership with Community Dialogue and the Jethro Centre in Lurgan.

Because of its success two further projects are planned. One is for the coming year. Already three groups and approximately 20 people have signed up for this. A further project is also being planned. As well as the current partners this will include the International School for Peace Studies in Londonderry and Rural Community Network, and some other community activists. The proposal is to run a number of processes, based on the pilot, in different parts of Northern Ireland.

4. Local community empowerment

We continued to support Drumcree Trust in Portadown and SPRING youth group in Armagh. Both are surviving in a difficult funding context.

5. Church Reform

Brian Lennon continued to serve on the Justice Commission of the Armagh Diocese. It remains a small group with limited resources but during the year it ran a seminar on 'The Church, Women and Authority? Why Not?' Speakers included Gerry O'Hanlon and Nuala O'Loan. 45 people attended and the response was very positive with many appealing for more similar events. At a meeting with the group Archbishop Martin was very supportive of the group's stated aim to give a voice to marginalised people in the church. The Justice Commission takes part in the wider Diocesan Commission meetings which advise the Archbishop on a range of topics, including how best to respond to *Amoris Laetitia*.

Brian completed his book with Tim Kinahan (C of I). It's working title is: *Does Christ Matter? An Anglican and a Jesuit in Dialogue*. The Irish Messenger Office has expressed an interest in publishing it.

Brian also gave a number of sessions in Armagh parish on women in the scriptures, which were well attended. A guided retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises was given to a group of about 11 by the Down and Connor prayer guides over a six-week period. Feedback was very positive.

6. Irish language

Frank Brady continues his work with *An Timire*. The number of subscribers has more than doubled from 400 to 1000. The journal has regularly covered ecology, community building, faith that does justice, and church reform.

FS – the book publishing section is celebrating 60 years in action. All the anniversaries will be celebrated around the country with book launches and concerts, including one on church social teaching and modern economists by Helen O Murchu.

Conclusion

The basic aim of Dialogue For Diversity is to develop more respect and esteem for all groups in society, especially among marginalized people. A large number of people helped to make progress with the above projects. To them our thanks is due.

Appendix 1: Financial summary is presented on next page

Dialogue for Diversity

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Period ended 31/03/16

Income and Exp.

	nr 1a/c		nr 2a/c	nr 3a/c	
	Overall Total	Holding	Community	Dialogue	Migrants
	Totals	6554617	65598418	65598421	45317896
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Bank Transfer	2,000.00			2,000.00	
Grants	34,754.65			1,725.00	33,029.65
St Stephens Green Trust	11,362.02		5,681.01	5,681.01	
Bank Int. Received	5.39		2.34	0.08	2.97
Rental Income	450.00				450.00
Insurance	900.00	900.00			
Reg of companies	26.00	13.00	13.00		
Donations	10,889.03				10,889.03
Membership	75.00		75.00		
Other					150.00
Website Costs	50.05	50.05			
Total Income	60,662.14	963.05	5,771.35	9,406.09	44,521.65
Expenditure					
Chaplain	75.00		75.00		
Residential	1,313.90			1,313.90	
Facilitation Costs	750.00			750.00	
Insurance	1,074.43	600.00			474.43
Rent	8,010.84		1,588.44		6,422.40
St. St Trust	5,681.01			5,681.01	
Website Costs	35.86	35.86			
Office Cost	67.43			13.43	54.00
Travel	5,765.01		5,649.81	115.20	
Subsistence	599.01		599.01		
-	-				
Man Fee	101.00	101.00			
Parking Fees	17.10		17.10		
Bank Charges	90.10				90.10
Cleaning Cost	192.82				192.82
Heat and Light	1,388.70				1,388.70
Salaries	28,214.56				28,214.56
Training	60.00				60.00
Accountancy	300.00				300.00
Telephone	806.63		205.01		601.62
Adjustment	488.62				488.62
Total Expenditure	55,032.02	736.86	8,134.37	7,873.54	38,287.25
Net Surplus(Deficit)	5,630.12	226.19	- 2,363.02	1,532.55	6,234.40
Balance Sheet @31st March 2016					
Fixed Assets	4,030.34				4,030.34
Debtors	9,280.00				9,280.00
Bank Balances	6,807.83	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	757.07
Current Liabilities	243.40				243.40
Net Current Assets	15,844.43	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	9,793.67
Net Assets	19,874.77	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	13,824.01
Represented by					
Surplus(deficit) c/fd 01/04/2015	14,244.65	691.61	5,787.27	176.16	7,589.61
Transfer to fixed assets	-		-		
Net Surplus(Deficit) from trading	5,630.12	226.19	- 2,363.02	1,532.55	6,234.40
Surplus at 31st March 2015	19,874.77	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	13,824.01
Bank Reconciliations					
bank bal 31st March 16	6,980.03	917.80	3,597.05	1,708.71	757.07
less o/st cks@31st March 2016	172.80	-	172.80	-	-
book bal	6,807.83	917.80	3,424.25	1,708.71	757.07

COMMUNITY SUPPORT ANNUAL REPORT 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016**Income and Expenditure Account****For the Year Ended 31st March 2016****Dialogue for Diversity**

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Dialogue for Diversity**Income and Expenditure Account**
For the year ended 31st March 2016

	£	£
Income		
Bank Interest	5	
Loan 2,000		
OFMDFM	33,030	
NICR Council	1,725	
St. Stephens Green Trust		5,681
Donations	10,889	
Other	<u>164</u>	
Total Income		53,494
Less Expenditure		
Chaplaincy	75	
Bank Charges	90	
Conference Costs		2,064
Insurance	174	
Rent 7,561		
Salaries 28,215		
Heat and Light	1,389	
Travel Costs 5,765		
Subsistence	599	
Office Supplies	67	
Accountancy 300		
Telephone 807		
Sundry <u>758</u>		
	<u>47,864</u>	
Total Expenditure		
NET INCOME OVER(EXPENDITURE)		<u>5,630</u>

