

Institutions

- their role in peace
building in rural
communities

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Rural Enabler Programme
Building Peace Locally

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	A definition of 'Rural Institutions'	2
3	The role of organisations in peace building	3
4	Institutional change at regional level	4
5	Organisational change and influences	6
6	The change process in Rural Enabler Programme participating projects	7
7	Commonalities and differences in approach between GAA and GOL I	10
8	The Rural Enabler Programme and process	11
9	Factors that hindered the change process	13
10	Factors that supported the work	15
11	Future challenges	17
12	Recommendations around the role of Institutions in the future	20
13	Conclusion	23
	Appendix 1	24
	Appendix 2	25

1

Introduction

Rural Community Network's Rural Enabler Programme (REP) has worked, over the past three years, with a number of regionally based cultural, religious and sporting institutions to learn about the level of influence these rural institutions have over their patrons in relation to building peace and reconciliation. In addition, the project has sought to positively influence the work of the institutions in helping regional and local communities to address issues which have prevented peace building from being effectively addressed.

Institutions involved have included the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland (GOLI), the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) and the four main Christian Churches. Good Relations Associates was asked to produce a research paper which can be used by the Institutions, regional and local policy makers, statutory agencies and community/voluntary organisations to assist the development and enhancement of work done to date.

This paper has also addressed the barriers to peace building, successful outcomes from interventions used and the complexities of working at both a regional and local level with three of the agencies identified - the GAA, YFCU and GOLI. A separate paper is being produced on the work of the main Christian Churches. Proposed work with Macra na Feirme, the ROI equivalent of the YFCU, did not develop due to the compressed timescale of the Institutions work. The two organisations which most feature in this paper are the GOLI and the GAA.

Objective of the Rural Enabler Programme

A key objective and proposed approach of REP was *'To explore what responsibility rural Institutions have to the local minority community and their role in developing a Shared Future. In so doing, the project will work with the following key rural Institutions: GAA, Orange Order, Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster and Macra na Feirme, to challenge historical factors in institutional development and operations which, to the local minority, are viewed as exclusionary at best and discriminatory at worst.'*

RCN identifies, whilst recognising that many of the solutions to sectarianism and racism will lie within local communities themselves, there is clearly a challenge to those that are in a position to give leadership within those communities. In rural communities on both sides of the border, key leadership roles are held within a few locally influential Institutions. The project was intended to engage with these Institutions, supporting them to examine their perceived/actual role in addressing sectarianism and racism and, therefore, their role in making a difference. This is particularly important where the key Institution at a local level represents the majority of that community and is perceived by the minority as at best, unwelcoming and at worst, a threat to their existence.

2

A definition of 'Rural Institutions'

The Oxford Dictionary definitions of 'Institution' are as follows.

‘An organisation founded on a religious, educational, professional or social purpose’

‘An established official organisation having an important role in society, such as the church or parliament’

Institutions that impact on rural areas tend to have other overarching characteristics - a regional emphasis, close link to government apparatus or a distinctly rural focus. Within the context of NI, there is no generally agreed definition of what a 'rural Institution' is so, for the purpose of this work, we will define rural Institutions as those organisations that *'in general, create, develop and maintain the social, economic and cultural infrastructure of rural life'* (Murphy 2008).

RCN has identified a number of 'Institutions' that it feels fit within this framework.

These are

- the GAA
- the Loyal Orders
- Churches
- Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster
- Macra na Feirme

3

The role of organisations in peace building

To date, much of the work on peace building within the social sector has been done with small groups, communities and regional voluntary organisations. The REP focus on influential institutions is innovative and the work is just at a preliminary stage. It was a powerful and challenging focus for RCN to take, particularly within the context of short term funding.

As stated by INCORE in the 2012 'Progressing Good Relations and Reconciliation in Post Agreement Northern Ireland' document:

'The recent history of conflict in Northern Ireland has left its mark on the whole society and few would argue that quick fix solutions can be found to address its multiple legacies. Significant political progress has been achieved. Violence and the threat of violence have greatly reduced and there are indications that people are increasingly willing to break down the long held barriers of mistrust and fear between, and within, communities. Yet much work remains to be done. Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society, polarised along some of the most institutionalised and embedded of structures - housing, education, social and religious life, sporting and cultural activities - while the evidence points to the expressed desire of many that this were not the case.'

Organisations change and evolve within the context of a changing society. Many commentators have talked at length about institutional change processes, the period of organisational adaptation which is necessary and the management of such transitions (Bennis 1966; Bloodgood and Morrow 2000; Pettigrew 2000; Dawson 2003). Significant organisational change in the non statutory sector has been extremely limited.

The organisational transformation involved in the transition of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the Police Service of Northern Ireland was organised, facilitated and planned at the highest political and strategic levels and involved a massive input of additional funding. This was necessary because of the pivotal role of the Institution and the need for it to respond to a post conflict landscape.

4.1 Irish Football Association

Within the non statutory sector, no similar examples of this magnitude can be found but reference might be made to the development of the Irish Football Association's Good Relations Strategy. The organisation, a regional body with strong cross border links, became aware over the years of the need to examine symbols and emblems that excluded differing sections of the population and made the football stadium, Windsor Park, inaccessible to the Nationalist community. Sectarian events that took place on and off the pitch also brought a negative and prevailing stereotype that proved a major 'turn-

off' to family attendance. With support from the Community Relations Council and government bodies, the IFA employed Good Relations staff and developed good relations policies for implementation at both a local and regional level. They worked with the GAA to foster good relations between the sports and ensured that their work was developed at all levels within the organisation, both at regional and local level.

4.2 Managing the change

Helen Matthews, a consultant who evaluated the IFA CR project says: *In addition to the positive change at international games, the project has played a leadership role in transforming the organisational culture of the Irish Football Association helping to embed the Football For All Good Relations ethos at the heart of the IFA's new strategic framework and long term strategic objectives. The Community Relations Department has worked with the clubs on an individual basis to develop Community Relations audits, strategies and action plans which are owned by the club. At the grass roots level, the Football For All Project works in partnership with key stakeholders using football to develop innovative projects which promote interculturalism, tackle sectarianism, deal with the past, prevent crime, empower women, support homeless people and invest in volunteers.*

The process of change in any Institution needs to be managed and sensitively led and the IFA model might be one example of how this could happen. IFA emphasises that change is a constant and never ending process, that no matter how far an organisation travels at the regional level, there will always be problems, both long standing and new, that will arise in local clubs. Thus the organisation needs to have a learning culture and one that is able to deal with both the knocks and the plaudits, in recognition of the fact that the change process is fraught with difficulties at both practical and emotional level.

4.3 Example of Institutional change at local level in rural Fermanagh

An example of change in a local rural area is from Co Fermanagh where the Grand Orange Lodge has just begun a new project, supported by Fermanagh District Council, and where the first ever community audit, consultation and action plan for a County Grand Lodge is being undertaken.

Fermanagh District Council's (FDC) Good Relations Officer, Tommy McLaughlin, explained "The Council has been undertaking good relations activities for many years and this project will essentially look at how the Orange Order in Fermanagh engages with its local communities. The main activities will include mapping existing community activities of the Orange Order in the county, consulting with both its own membership and other relevant stakeholders, and producing an action plan. The project is being funded by FDC as part of its ongoing commitment to good relations and in keeping with the Council's vision of a shared future".

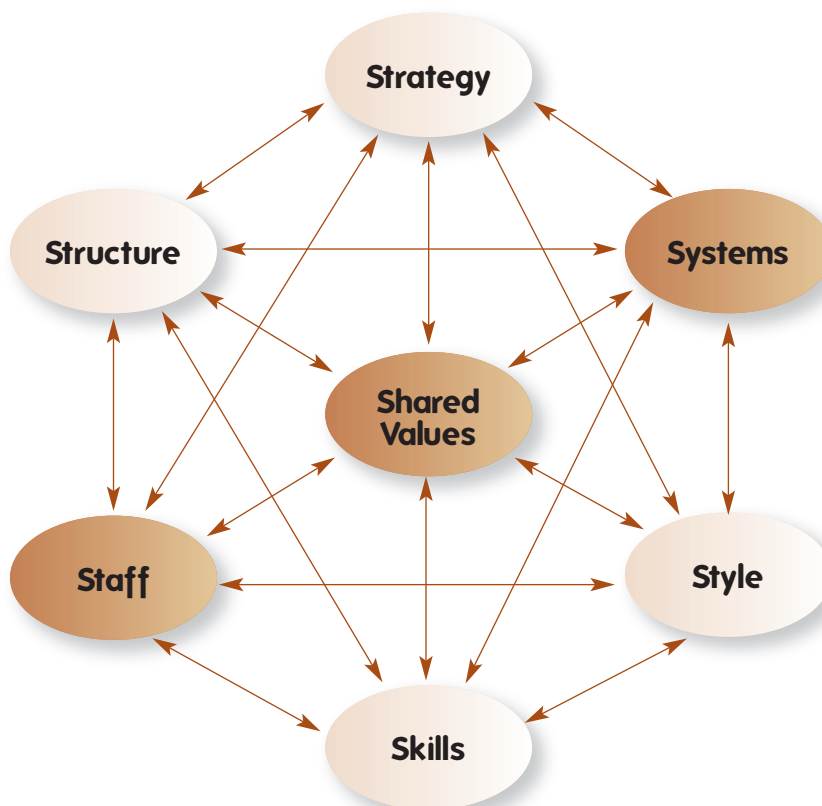
County Grand Master, Norman Johnston, said, in a press release "This project will allow us to demonstrate our commitment to good relations in Fermanagh by engaging with a wider section of the general community than ever before. We want to continue to play an active role in our local communities and raise awareness of our community work. We are aware that some people have misconceptions about the Orange Order and we want to use this project to address this. We are looking forward to working with Green Hat Consultancy and the Council on this piece of work, which is the first of its kind ever undertaken. We are absolutely delighted to be undertaking this innovative and exciting project."

Fermanagh Rural Enabler staff and the Council Good Relations Officer have found major benefits in working together on peace building projects over a protracted period, but Tommy McLaughlin, GR Officer, adds *'It is a real shame that projects such as REP are time bound, there is a danger of losing all the benefits achieved. Peace building work is long term; we have achieved results because we have had a Good Relations programme since 1989.'*

5

Organisational change and influences

Pettigrew (2000) states 'it is not possible to understand the process of change without a thorough understanding of the context in which change occurs'. The 7S model highlights elements that need to be factored in to the change process.



The model is a management tool designed to analyse and understand the key organisational structures within a company in order to assess its potential for effective change. The model examines seven key areas of the company and the relationships of each of these elements to each other. The elements are grouped into two sub-categories of 'hard elements' and 'soft elements'. The hard elements represent unshifting company traits - those which are relatively stable and simple to define such as company strategy, structure and systems. The

soft elements, on the other hand, represent more complex traits of the company which are influenced by culture, environment and individuals. These could be shared values, skills, style and staff.

Though this is a business change model, it has general applicability as Institutions are active and evolving organisations that adapt within a volatile environment and like all organisations, it is acknowledged that change within these Institutions is the only constant.

6

The change process in Rural Enabler Programme participating projects

6.1 Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

The GAA has one million members throughout Ireland with intergenerational membership and the provision of cradle to grave services to local communities. The organisation has two Outreach Officers self funded by the GAA, the Department for Social Development (DSD) funds the Community Development Officer who has a good relations remit and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) funds a Cultural Development Officer. All officers view their roles as extending understanding of culture and identity but also have a clear commitment to developing peace building. Partnerships have been developed with a variety of other sporting agencies including the IFA and the Orange Order through the Diversity Challenges programme.

The GAA is traditionally based in the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community but has always had a degree of representation from Protestant and other communities. It has good relations strategies that reinforce its aims to increasingly open out to all communities and it has managed an extensive degree of change management having carried out the following actions.

- Changes to the constitution to enable membership from the PSNI after widespread consultation with all County Boards
- Change of rules to move the organisation from a stance of being non sectarian to becoming actively anti sectarian
- Inviting Queen Elizabeth II to Croke Park
- Opening out Croke Park to other sports such as soccer and rugby
- Partnership working with the IFA

The organisation is a democratic one with members having large input at all levels. The change process, whilst extremely successful at the strategic level, has not been without opposition as would be the case in any such large organisation. The GAA at regional level has made the firm decision to go in a particular direction even though the challenge remains with some local clubs who are opposed in particular to the acceptance of the PSNI into their club.

The GAA is fully supportive of the Good Friday Agreement and believes that cultural diversity will be achieved, with flags and emblems of all communities being flown and shown equal respect. The organisation gives the example of Cookstown – the main street is a sea of red and white flags when the Tyrone GAA team wins a match and then a sea of Union flags and those associated with the Twelfth of July celebrations. The organisation also indicated that it would be very willing to co-operate in all centenary celebrations of events that would normally be considered ‘Unionist’. It believes that organisations from the border counties are willing to participate in peace building as they recognise that a peaceful society facilitates inward investment.

6.2 Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland (GOLI)

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland has approximately 50,000 members throughout the island of Ireland. People identify with a sense of place through the traditions of the Orange Order and it is often the only social outlet in every aspect of community life in rural areas. The Order has one Outreach Officer funded by DCAL and his role is to promote understanding of Orange culture and identity. The Order also

recently received PEACE III funding to support an initiative called STRIPE (Striving Towards Reconciliation in Positive Engagement). The funding has helped to employ seven staff to deliver a programme to address aspects of community confidence and engagement within Protestant communities, to include the delivery of training in community development practice and civic leadership.

The Orange Order is a single identity organisation with a constitution dating back to 1834. Its constitution and general ethos of protection of the Protestant faith is not amenable to any change. However, it has engaged in many initiatives that promote a culture of myth busting through developing wider public understanding of its aims and objectives. The organisation is a formal and hierarchical one with consultation developed as a two way process and regional and local bodies having constant interaction.

Given that the Order is representative of all classes, it does not move ahead of its membership but aims to fully represent them. This can mean that the leadership can only move ahead when they are satisfied that their decisions reflect the majority of those at the grass roots level, where there is often a lack of capacity. The Order acknowledges that there can be poor leadership at this local level and welcomed the development of community training for local members.

The Order has worked with the Tourist Board and other interests in order to open out its events to whole communities and change the public perception of its activities. Its cultural outreach is perceived as extremely important in terms of ensuring societal understanding of what the Order is about. The organisation's key focus therefore is about understanding rather than peace building.

The Order is cautious about the language of peace building, viewing the jargon as a 'red flag' to many Protestant communities who feel they have lost out to the nationalist population in the Good Friday Agreement process. The Order accepts that flags, emblems and marches are at the heart of what the organisation is about. They believe that the Union flag is unquestionably the only symbol to be promoted and that the tradition of marching needs to be upheld. The Order also believes that working on a cross border basis is very difficult as Protestants in these areas still feel very defensive and have long memories of 'ethnic cleansing' in the border counties. They are clear, as is the GAA, that the legacy issues in rural communities are still apparent and that there is no overall policy framework in place to deal with these difficult issues.

6.3 Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) was founded in 1929 by W S Larmour in Limavady. Since its creation, YFCU has grown into an association of 60 local self governing and youth led clubs, with a headquarters based in Belfast. The association is strategically managed by a peer elected Board of Directors who serve as the Executive Committee. YFCU is for young people aged 12 to 25 years and there are currently approximately 2,600 members. The association is non political and non sectarian and the only requirement for membership is an interest in rural life. Their representation extends only to Northern Ireland and it is our understanding that there is currently no cross border activity taking place with Macra na Feirme. YFCU participated in the REP programme and has indicated willingness to further engage. However, there has been no organisational change, specific funding or adoption of good relations policies that would indicate an active peace building role.

6.4 Macra na Feirme

Macra na Feirme is the equivalent to the YFCU within the Republic of Ireland. Founded in 1944, it has a network of clubs for people aged 17 to 35, with a focus on social and personal development activities. The organisation's founders were a group of agricultural advisers, rural science teachers and others with a focus on rural life and the organisation remains primarily interested in this aspect of rural life.

To date, Macra na Feirme has no developed connections with YFCU, has had no specific involvement with the project and struggles to find relevance for doing such partnership work with groups from Northern Ireland. YFCU and Macra na Feirme, though representative of an important element of rural life, view themselves as more involved in social and recreational activities specifically for young people rather than the development of specific peace building initiatives.

7

Commonalities and differences in approach between GAA and the GOLI

There are commonalities and differences between the two organisations in the change process both in organisational scale and political approach.

- GAA and GOLI share a common and deep commitment to the 'sense of place' most prevalent in rural communities. Both are committed to outreach and to the development of a greater understanding of their ethos and aims within all communities. Both have strong representation in the border counties through their remit within Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland jurisdictions. Both express commitment to a process of transformation to reflect the new realities of post conflict Northern Ireland though they have differing perspectives on this and are at different stages of peace building.
- The GAA and the Orange Order are entirely different organisations with the GAA representing a sports and cultural tradition that is increasingly opening out to all sections of the community and to all genders and age ranges. This is structurally embedded in their organisation through good relations policies and staff training.
- The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland is proudly pro Protestant, but not, in their own words, 'anti Catholic'. Their approach is to promote their own ethos and develop outreach to all sections of the community so as to 'myth bust' and thus contribute to better relationships with all sections of the community.
- Recent localised incidents in terms of the Union flag protests in PUL areas present challenges for the Orange Order. Likewise a lack of participation by local GAA clubs in PSNI led initiatives coupled with evidence of racism within the sport represent challenges for the GAA. These examples confirm that although both organisations are beginning to address good relations issues at a regional level, there remains much work to be done to assimilate these values at a local level.

What is very evident is that both organisations, though at different stages in their peace building journey, acknowledge their role as change agents with particularly important and sensitive roles in rural communities. This is the reason why they actively engaged with the Rural Enabler Programme and why they are keen for continued participation in spite of the many challenges they will face.

8

The Rural Enabler Programme and process

8.1 The process of development

The Programme has proven that community development processes, if aligned to values and principles, have a valuable role in addressing peace building issues. Throughout the Programme, the Rural Enabler for Institutions, Kate Clifford, developed a flexible approach to inclusion that involved following up on recommended contacts. This assisted in the development of 'depth' dialogue and the discovery of hard issues arising from every part of local communities. This was ongoing and an important element of learning that can be difficult to quantify, particularly in terms of the requirements imposed by funding bodies that are outcome and results orientated.

8.2 Service delivery

The process itself ensured that the empathetic approach and intensive community awareness continued to develop and was complemented by formal training programmes to include community development and awareness training and 'Getting to Know Your Institutions' training.

8.3 OCN Level 1 Community Development Accreditation

This generic course developed to include a rural focus by RCN was further tailored to influence Orange Order participants to use community development principles to explore internal and external barriers and solutions to peace building. These principles and values can be difficult for single identity Institutions to comprehend. The first OCN Level 1 Community Development Accreditation for Orange Order participants was held in North Down in March 2012.

Participants were encouraged to:

- explore community values of the culture/ community that they represent
- explore other cultures/communities within their local area and barriers to engagement
- use a community development approach to discuss ways to encourage greater engagement with other cultures/communities to include techniques in networking, decision making and influencing change.

8.4 'Getting to Know Your Institutions' Course

The first 'Getting to Know your Institutions Course' was developed as a pilot in the rural Derry City Council area in March 2012 and the completion of the first OCN Level 2 accreditation for this course was held in December 2012. The course invites participants to partake in a six week course that involves a mystery tour to Institutions within their local area to include the Orange Order, GAA, the four main traditional Christian churches, Ancient Order of Hibernians and Band Forums. Participants are given the opportunity to gain awareness of the history and culture of each Institution and its importance to their members.

Participant feedback has revealed that:

- the course was successful in introducing a better understanding of rural Institutions in terms of history, organisational structure and cultural values and providing greater awareness of the influence of rural Institutions in peace building.

- the course provided an excellent basis for future exploration and engagement between local Institutions in terms of peace building.

8.5 YFCU and the GAA Engagement

A two day workshop was developed between Young Farmers and GAA. This had been a two stage process over two years and did not involve YFCU at a strategic level. REP staff had taken the decision to develop the process along recreational issues without moving immediately to the discussion of difficult issues. REP staff were extremely pleased with the project, as was the YFCU, as not only did the young people from YFCU and GAA show a desire to participate together in fun activities, it was clear from feedback that they would like to address identity issues through dialogue.

Both groups felt that the meetings had dispelled myths about each other's organisations and provided an opportunity to meet young people that they would never have previously met. The groups gelled really well with each other with the stereotype of GAA as 'Republican terrorists' and the YFCU as 'Get yourself a woman' dispelled quite rapidly. All feedback identified that another phase of the project would have been welcomed by YFCU but this was not possible with the REP due to end in March 2013.

8.6 Strategic support

It is clear that the buy in from GAA and GOLI has been accentuated by their involvement in the project at both service delivery level (talks, courses etc) and also by their inclusion in the Shared Future Sub Committee which provided support to the Institution's work at a strategic level. Though both organisations are involved with each other in differing projects, they view the REP approach, with its opportunity to engage at this strategic level, as a powerful incentive to communicate with each other in an intensive and meaningful way.

9

Factors that hindered the change process

Participation in the REP has enabled the GAA and the GOLi to discuss sensitive and challenging issues and to open out new areas of understanding about the purpose of each organisation, however, there are also contentious issues that the organisations have named.

9.1 Government Intervention and Support

In July 2012, DARD launched the Rural White Paper Action Plan for Northern Ireland. The document has been described by the First Minister and deputy First Minister as an important building block in the Executive's Programme for Government and in ensuring that key programme priorities are delivered in respect of rural areas. The challenge will now be to ensure that the Executive is held to task in terms of delivery of the action plan to include, in particular, OFMdFM's commitment within the plan to publish the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy.

The CSI strategy, with a focus on building a united community and improving community relations, was consulted on as far back as October 2010 but has yet to be published. There is undoubtedly a role for the GAA and the Orange Order in addressing the three core issues of division that are impeding the release of the document, ie flags and emblems, parades and the legacy of the past.

In the Republic of Ireland, rural development functions can be found within the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht, the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government. There is therefore a dialogue required as to which Department takes the lead on rural community development and peace building.

9.2 Flags and Emblems

There is no meeting of minds between the GAA and GOLi on public displays of flags and emblems. The GAA holds the multi cultural view that all flags should be respected whilst GOLi firmly believes that only the Union Flag can be flown in Northern Ireland. This aspect is an outstanding and unresolved issue from the Good Friday Agreement and highlights the continuing absence of a policy document at regional level that will facilitate the development of shared future initiatives within pivotal Institutions such as the GAA and GOLi.

9.3 Cross Border aspect

The GAA and the GOLi both have members in the border counties and the REP has staff based in these counties. There was, however, limited use of these existing structures and the cross border element was introduced through an unsuccessful attempt to include Macra na Feirme.

RCN points to the work of STRIPE in trying to engage with Protestants living in border communities and it highlights the involvement of RCN staff in an advisory capacity. RCN further informs of cross border work completed by the wider Rural Enabler Programme to include work with the Orange Order in Cavan and Monaghan in relation to the centenary of the Ulster covenant and with Apprentice Boys project involving groups from Cavan and Armagh.

However, whilst the Orange Order acknowledges the effort of these local initiatives to encourage initial engagement, they point to the need to devise initiatives that will provide greater focus in engaging with a disaffected and isolated Protestant rural community that is fearful of participating with others and still dealing with the legacy of the past. GOL I points to the time limited nature of such short term initiatives and believes that they mainly work with the 'already willing' rather than 'hard to reach' Protestant community who have still not dealt with the legacy of the Conflict.

Seamus Boland of Irish Rural Link says *'There is nowhere more rural than the border counties and there is nowhere more sensitised to the past and unresolved hurts and the maintenance of a very fragile peace made up of avoidance, denial and maintenance of 'good neighbourliness' within this format.'*

9.4 Views on Leadership

Leadership is a central feature of organisational performance. According to Useem¹, leadership is best when the vision is strategic, the voice persuasive and the results tangible. There are differing interpretations of leadership within both GAA and GOL I with variations on understanding as to when to lead and when to follow the membership and what needs to be done at regional and local level and this is an issue that could usefully be addressed in any future working.

Respondents from GAA and GOL I would stress that their influence is particularly important in rural areas. In spite of changes such as urbanisation, the effects of economic recession and ongoing political instability, all of our respondents identify that rural Institutions hold a particular place in people's hearts and minds. Many suggest that cutbacks in statutory services make the work of rural Institutions even more necessary. In addition, the political uncertainty and instability experienced in post conflict Ireland often encourages people to cling more tightly to organisations that reflect their cultural identity.

The GAA tends to lead from the front which can lead to some resentment at local level. The GOL I tends to reflect the needs of those at the most local level which can lead to accusations of lack of regional strategic leadership at the higher level. In terms of the Seven S model, both organisations demonstrate a continuing need to develop the holistic approach needed to align Strategy, Systems, Structure, Style, Staff, Skills and Shared Values at both regional and local level - a continuing challenge to all organisations in the change process but particularly those in a contested society such as Northern Ireland.

¹ CRC NI Research Journal: Issue 7: January 2009

10

Factors that supported the work

10.1 Trust building, empathy and knowledge of rural issues

Feedback from all interviewees highlighted the unique aspect of the REP approach with participants responding that they found empathy, understanding and a real interest from staff. The approach was flexible and fully took into account all aspects of the rural experience. This is in contrast to what is viewed as the more bureaucratic, formal approach of EU funding requirements as experienced by many organisations.

One respondent said 'We have got to know REP staff over the years and from different projects. Therefore we had a trust relationship with them that made it easy for us, as a small group, to chat away about our needs rather than listen to a whole lot of big words!!'

The building up of trust and personal empathy is a very important aspect of the Institutions work and forms an underpinning principle to the successes of the project as identified throughout this report. The empathetic and community development approach, based on an in depth understanding of rural issues and development, was enhanced by the support and assistance given within the Rural Enabler Programme. It is particularly marked in the responses from the GAA and GOL who both articulated that they had felt their organisations had been given space to dispel myths about themselves within a safe environment.

10.2 Small Grants Support

The inclusion of a facilitatory grants scheme as part of the Programme proved to be a key enabling resource to allow for the development of training, events and action research initiatives that facilitated the exploration of peace building within and between the Institutions involved. This scheme was built on the success of the small grant approach that worked extremely well in previous RCN pilot programmes such as the Rural Community Estates Programme in that it was able to support unconstituted groups and even individuals as all costs were paid directly by RCN.

In the document 'Sharing Over Separation, a rural perspective, RCN 2008', Joanne Murphy says 'In terms of rural based institutional frameworks in Northern Ireland, initial good relations work was developed in a single identity context and often with a cultural traditions methodology. Small grants have often been used as a way to engage Institutions in processes of reflection and capacity building. While such work has at times been controversial, it has had a degree of impact within some communities and organisations.'

One respondent said 'We just had a small project, we only needed a few bob to help us get it going, the REP worker fully took on board where we were at as a group and what we wanted to do. Previous staff from other agencies have had us filling out endless forms and putting in a lot of effort for grant aid that didn't really fit our needs. We were able to access support and funding from the REP that actually met our needs!! That, to me, is what community development is about.'

This approach, whilst an administration burden to RCN in terms of procurement and financial processing, enabled participating communities to pursue their project ideas without related audit concerns that can have a stifling impact on community action.

10.3 RCN as an independent and objective facilitator

It is clear that the role of RCN as 'critical friend' is a crucial one that is valued by all Institutions. Good relations support from local councils is viewed by some as open to political influence and manipulation. Direct funding by PEACE III programmes is viewed as often bureaucratic and skewed by targets, outputs and the need to fit projects into neat categories regardless of their developmental need. The REP was viewed as having an objective approach that worked with groups at the level they needed and treated them as equals in a learning process between project staff and beneficiaries. Consultation with participating groups revealed that the '*critical resource was the Rural Enabler staff member and the connections, commitment and insights they brought*' (RCN, 2012).

10.4 Shared Future Sub Committee

In addition to the activities promoted on the ground, the REP involved major players such as GAA and GOL I on the Shared Future sub committee, which oversees several good relations programmes including the REP. This enabled the Institutions to interface and dialogue at both a personal and strategic level and was greatly valued by both organisations. The GAA rated levels of dialogue on this committee and in the other activities on a scale of 8/10 whilst GOL I rated it at around 4/10, so there is a difference in how each organisation views the depth of its participation. However, both greatly value the support of the project and the opportunities the Shared Future sub committee has presented for face to face dialogue and sharing of ideas.

A GOL I respondent said 'We need to make Orange Order people and Protestants feel valued and included, they are uncertain and angry at the minute. Programmes like the REP have just started to deal with this issue and they must continue, with decent and significant investment in organisations such as our own. The peace process is faltering at the moment, things are slipping back and this is a threat. Increasingly, Catholics are more confident about progress and this makes the GAA more powerful, but PUL communities are going backwards rather than forwards so things are not quite so straightforward there.'

The GAA said 'The key positive element has been that the REP has given the GAA a chance to network with others who beforehand might have 'demonised' the organisation based on ignorance and stereotypes. High levels of networking and dialoguing have helped to dispel many myths and helped organisations gain greater insights into what their own and other Institutions are about. This can only be of great assistance to further peace building. Negatives would come from the fact that sometimes events were developed or made public at short notice, creating capacity issues for attendance for the GAA. More forward planning would be useful in future work scheduling, though we do realise that there were funding and continuity issues within RCN that impacted on the Institutions work.'

The Institutions work is so valuable, it cannot be lost, RCN is the first organisation to take the innovative step of bringing organisations like ourselves and the Orange Order in from the cold, mainly because of our pivotal role in rural societies that make our presence indispensable to peace building.'

11

Future challenges

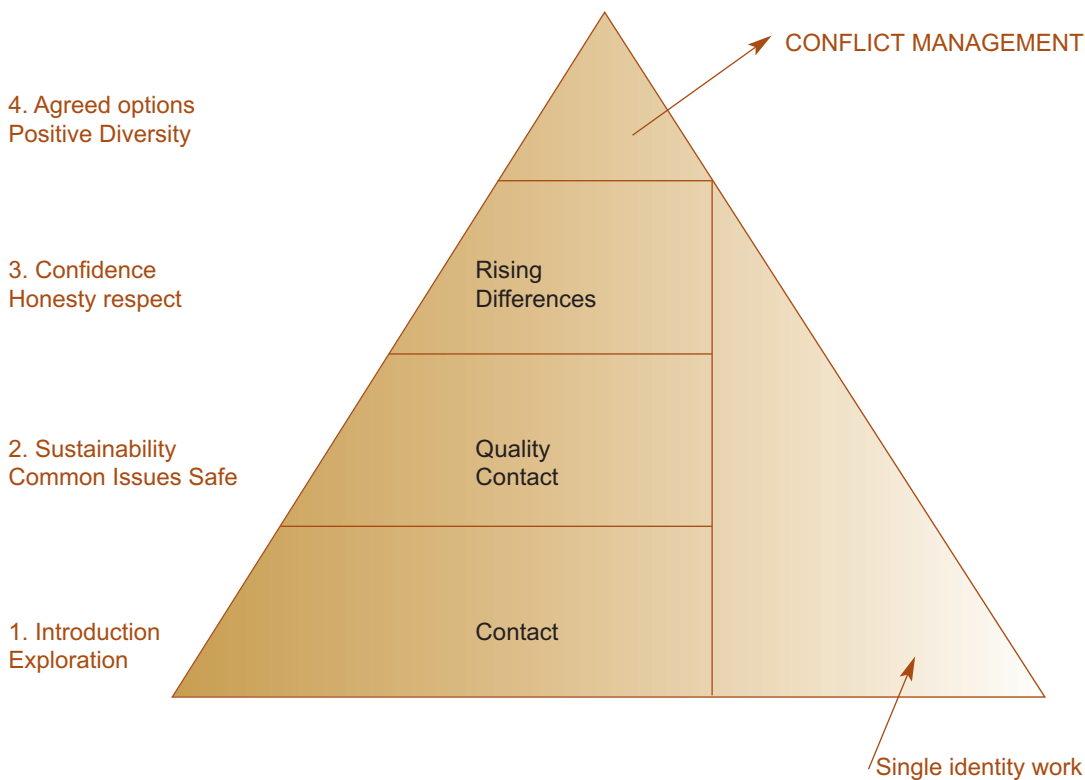
11.1 Differing organisational stages of development

The REP has been extremely successful in its innovative approach. It has built up trusted relationships with organisations such as the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and the GAA over a long period of time. Clearly, however, there are issues around both the readiness and the appropriateness of involvement of differing Institutions.

There were initially four organisations involved in the 'Institutions' work - GAA, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster and Macra na Feirme. When we refer

to the model of community engagement identified below, it is clear that the two youth organisations, MnF and YFCU, are, at best, at the contact stage. The GAA, confident in its approach and with maximum leadership and organisational consent, could be said to be at level 3 and the GOLLI, with its focus still not mainly on peace building, could be viewed as placed at level 2. These are of course, very broad parameters and are given here as tools for guidance rather than definitive judgements. It is clear that there is a lot of work to be done and much future learning to benefit from, yet the project is now at an end, which is a major challenge to future progress.

Fig.1 McCartney, C., 'Contact Triangle Model'



Taken from Belfast City Council Community Engagement report

11.2 Diverse funding arrangements

The GAA, with its funding mix, strong organisational commitment and self funding of some staff roles, may be in a better position to carry on its peace building work. When the REP ends in March 2013, the GOLI, with its main outreach as the cultural role funded by DCAL, may find it difficult to continue to the next stage of engagement unless it is more clearly identified as part of its organisational role and funded appropriately. In addition, GOLI HQ is moving to a new social economy phase and the Order will need to extend energy in developing this aspect of the new project, thus impinging on the time and energy they will have for peace building work.

11.3 Ending of Rural Enabler Programme in March 2013

Without the external impetus of skilled and experienced staff (as in the REP), the impetus for joint working could well diminish. Without the overall organisational structure of the Shared Future committee, in particular, both groups might find it difficult to find a common shared space to further develop engagement.

11.4 Unstable political environment

The current political instability created by disputes around the display of the Union Flag, might present further obstacles to engagement, particularly in the absence of an external structure to provide a focus for the agencies to continue joint working in the face of challenging external threats.

11.5 Lack of full engagement of border counties agencies

Inclusion of the border counties has been under developed in this project, in spite of the fact that both GAA and GOLI are based in both jurisdictions. This has led to the misconception by some respondents that the project terms of reference were for the North only. External cross border agencies with limited experience of peace building work have been included in the project, and there has been under utilisation of existing cross border linkages that the GAA and GOLI both have. In addition, there has been a lack of cross border involvement by statutory agencies in both jurisdictions, which is a problem, particularly because of the resource gap that is to occur between PEACE III and PEACE IV funding. Current LEADER/LAG groups tasked with rolling out the Rural Development Programme in both jurisdictions also do not fully acknowledge wider peace building considerations and impacts when determining funding allocations.

11.6 Lack of Good Relations principles for future training

Though community development training has been successful, there is a further need for training at leadership level to develop a clear understanding of the need for development within a change context and with the guidance of specific good relations principles applicable to institutional transformation. This will prove challenging in the absence of a strategic policy for good relations at regional level, in view of the innovative nature of Institutions' work and in recognition of the differing stages of organisational development in the GAA and GOLI.

11.7 Impact of Key Commemorative Events 2013 to 2016

Preparing for key commemorative events is a challenge for the next period. Respondents to INCORE research acknowledged both the opportunities and challenges of marking and commemorating events which have significance for particular, and often distinct, communities. They spoke of the opportunities to acknowledge and revisit events of the past within a contemporary context and the possibility that it will open new spaces for engagement and dialogue between communities. They expressed concerns regarding the perceived lack of preparedness of society to manage the practical, financial and emotional issues which these anniversary events will raise and called for a strategic and inclusive approach to plan for the celebration and commemoration and for a mature and non-confrontational approach to be taken by political and community leaders. Rural Institutions may find it particularly challenging to develop and maintain cross community/cross border consensus on such commemorative events.

11.8 Changed focus within future peace programmes

Funding issues present many challenges with the perception that there is a greater focus from SEUPB on maximising funding delivery rather than the delivery of peace building outcomes, and that PEACE IV delivery by Local Government might further dilute community development approaches in terms of grant resource allocation and delivery. There is therefore a need for further exploration of this issue for any future development of the project.

12

Recommendations around the role of Institutions in the future

12.1 Continue working with relevant key Institutions

The REP has demonstrated that the adoption of community development values, principles and processes has a valuable role in addressing community and sectoral division, particularly in terms of the work with rural Institutions that has proved to be the most challenging part of the programme. Evidence has shown that whilst peace building and anti sectarian work are not key themes associated with rural Institutions, it is accepted that rural Institutions by their action or inaction will make an important contribution to peace building and reconciliation in rural communities. The particular end focus of the REP on both the GAA and the Orange Order was a correct one, as they remain powerful influencers for change in rural communities. It is evident that the involvement of both organisations in a co-ordinated change process should be a dedicated theme within any new PEACE IV programme.

A key focus of future work will be to challenge the ethos of the GAA and GOL I that is portrayed at a regional level against what is portrayed at a local level. Currently, there is a distinct paradox of relationships in terms of the regional and local linkages in both organisations. Within the GAA, there is a more progressive view towards peace building at a regional level compared to that at a local level whereas within GOL I, it appears distinctly more progressive at a local level than at a regional level. Support needs to continue, working alongside the GAA and the GOL I in their various stages of transformation.

12.2 Clarify diverse funding arrangements

There are varied funding arrangements for Institutions, with different focus and timelines. This can frustrate development and hinder in depth long term engagement. The Rural Enabler Programme facilitatory development grant has been successful in engaging with groups previously apathetic to the PEACE Programme and related audit processes. There is also a need, however, for long term sustainable funding to build on the work that is just starting with major Institutions such as GAA and GOL I. RCN's approach to negate administration concerns and to encourage groups to focus on the key objectives of peace building should be continued in any future delivery mechanism and should be used as an example to encourage change in current funding practice and the development of long term mainstream funding.

12.3 Maintain external change agents in future work with Institutions

There is an ongoing need for external change agents similar to the Rural Enablers who have both an empathetic and objective approach and knowledge of rural areas that enable them to relate more fully to work with Institutions such as the GAA and the GOL I. We do not believe the process will continue organically so there is a continued need to provide skilled external enablers to move to the next stage. Such external change agents could be positioned within potential delivery agents that are independent to Council led Peace Partnerships in Northern Ireland and the County

Development Boards in the Republic of Ireland. Evidence has informed that both structures may not be resourced to undertake the requirements of such a labour intensive process. There is also some feedback that ability to take risks in decision making, characteristic with REP, would not develop fully within structures that reflect significant political influence.

Case studies from areas such as Fermanagh District Council, however, highlight the positive outcomes from statutory partnership working with the RCN Rural Enabler to good effect. The consideration of a 'mix and match' approach could work if underpinned by Good Relations principles and a formal strategy from OFMdFM.

12.4 Recognise the need for Institutions to deal with conflict and change

There is a need to acknowledge that the only constant is change and that Institutions need support to deal with the inevitable conflicts that this will present. There is a need for organisational development along the holistic 7S structure highlighted in this report and an acknowledgement of the need for ongoing and sustained work to deal with challenge issues. The issues of flags and emblems, alongside marching and legacy issues, have proven unsettling to the current peace process as they are ongoing and unresolved issues. There are many more legacy issues that will arise and it is important to acknowledge and develop capacity to deal with these within the Institutions rather than allow them to derail sensitive and important co working.

12.5 Further develop the cross border remit

Any future programme needs to further encompass the border counties remit. This will require improving on and building relationships with existing institutional contacts in border areas and also to consider partnership with relevant strategic organisations such as Irish Rural Link. Engagement must also be built with key government departments tasked with rural development and community development and should include greater partnership working with the North South Ministerial Council and associated secretariats.

12.6 Develop training for 'leadership' as well as 'followership' within a context of developed good relations principles

The 'Getting to know your Institutions' has proven to be a popular and key catalyst for future work. This training could also benefit from development of actual case studies of organisational change from organisations such as the IFA and initial documented peace building steps undertaken by the GAA. This would give a practical focus for Institutions to develop within a changing environment. Training in this arena is transformational and whilst community development training is appropriate at entry level, there is also a need for leadership training to ensure that organisations effectively meet the challenge of change.

Consideration should be given to cross sectoral provision, joint sessions and recognition of the differing stages of commitment and/or development of each of the Institutions involved. Institutions work is innovative and at this stage it is important to develop a value base on good relations principles, similar to those highlighted in 12.7 to enable ongoing development. There is also a need to develop joint OCN/FETEC accreditation so that training benefits apply in both jurisdictions, acting as a catalyst for peace building, but also attracting those interested in portfolio building as a route to future employment. The provision of comprehensive,

multi level training for organisational change, properly accredited and underpinned by agreed principles, is an important aspect of developing institutional change.

12.7 Celebration of key commemorative events

Preparation for key commemorative events represents a challenge for both the GAA and GOLI and there is a real opportunity for rural Institutions to build on the current strategic relationships that have developed through this project to continue opening spaces for engagement and dialogue and further build capacity for Institutions to engage in joint preparation for commemorative events. CRC has identified principles for marking anniversaries as follows:

- 1 Start from the historical facts
- 2 Recognise the implications and consequences of what happened
- 3 Understand that different perceptions and interpretations exist
- 4 Show how events and activities can deepen understanding of the period

All to be seen in the context of an 'inclusive and accepting society'.

Support to both organisations from both CRC and RCN, and within the stated principles, could be considered pivotal in enhancing and deepening the preliminary contact developed between the GAA and GOLI.

12.8 Opportunities still within PEACE III

A key objective of the current PEACE III programme is to develop the capacity and engagement of key Institutions to partake in peace building initiatives to include the GAA, Orange Order and Bands Forum. Research has found that there are still funds available within PEACE III clusters to encourage this work. It is therefore recommended that a scoping study is undertaken to explore such opportunities within identified PEACE III clusters and explore opportunities for engagement and participation in such programmes even before PEACE IV is initiated.

13

Conclusion

We believe that the REP process of working intensively with GOLi, GAA and the Churches, which became the ultimate focus of this work, is the right one and it is extremely important that it continues in the longer term and within a more sustainable funding structure. Lessons from this report should be disseminated to the Department for Social Development (DSD) in NI and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government in ROI which are the respective lead Departments for community development.

We suggest that they consider key learning points and further funding opportunities for community development and peace building within the next three years so as to assist the process of change in key Institutions and enable them to withstand inevitable internal and external challenges. It is clear that, as the Rural Enabler programme comes to an end, there is an urgent need for short term mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that the legacy of the Programme continues until a more coherent mechanism arises. It is, therefore, important that links are made and exit strategies formulated with local Rural Support Networks and/or other community support agencies before the Programme ends.

Finally, it is clear that this work with major Institutions has been innovative, challenging and carried out within a restricted timeframe and in a context of organisational uncertainty for RCN and the ending of the Rural Enablers Programme. Given this, and the sensitive nature of the work itself, this project has quite literally only begun to open out the issues involved and is thus at a very preliminary stage. Participating Institutions have expressed surprise and concern that the project is coming to an end at this point, and we, through this process of analysis and examination of success to date, would entirely concur with these views.

Appendix 1

Interviewees:

David Scott, GOLI

Ryan Feeney, GAA

Amy McGuckian, YFCU

Seamus Boland, Irish Rural Link

Olive Hannigan, Macra na Feirme

Tony Macaulay, Consultant

Helen Matthews, Consultant (for IFA)

Joanne Murphy, University Lecturer (author of Sharing Over Separation articles)

David Mitchell, Community Relations Officer, Lisburn City Council

Tommy McLaughlin, Good Relations Officer, Fermanagh District Council

Alistair Charles, Programme Manager, Lisburn/Castlereagh PEACE III Partnership

Lesley Macaulay, Rural Enabler Programme

Fintan McCabe, Rural Enabler Programme

Ali McAllister, Rural Enabler Programme

Aidan Campbell, Policy & Research Officer, Rural Community Network

Charmain Jones, CSI Officer, Rural Community Network

Kate Clifford, Rural Enabler Programme

Michael Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, Rural Community Network

Gemma Attwood, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

Deirdre MacBride, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

Appendix 2

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Press Release on Orange Order local audit, Fermanagh District council, December 2012

This is the second of a series of four research reports. The others are:

Churches and faith based organisations

Community development – a role in rural peace building?

Rural communities – polite avoidance and denial – rhetoric or reality?

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