CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY vi

LAYOUT OF THE REPORT xvii

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION 1

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Intentions of the Re-imaging Communities Programme 2
1.3 The wider background to the Re-imaging Communities Programme 4
1.4 Aims and objectives of the evaluation 5

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY 7

2.1 Introduction to methodology 7
2.2 Literature review 7
2.3 Sampling of projects 8
2.3.1 Choosing the samples 8
2.4 Observations, interviews and focus groups 10
2.5 Monitoring information 11
2.6 Survey data 11
2.7 Outputs and meetings 12

CHAPTER 3: THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES 13

3.1 Policies, Initiatives and Programmes 13
3.2 Re-imaging Communities 14
3.3 The Executive’s Programme for Government (PfG) 16
3.4 A Shared Future (OFMDFM) 16
3.5 Neighbourhood Renewal 20
3.6 The Art of Regeneration 21
3.6.1 Background literature and ideas 21
3.6.2 The Art of Regeneration in Northern Ireland 22
3.7 Renewing Communities 24
3.8 Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) 27
3.9 The Department for Social Development (DSD) 29
3.10 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) 31
3.11 International Fund for Ireland (IFI) 33

CHAPTER 4: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON SYMBOLISM 35

4.1 Purpose of the study 35
4.2 Role of the arts in economic and social regeneration 35
4.3 The political background 37
4.4 The meaning and role of symbols 40
4.5 Symbols in Northern Ireland 42
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Literature and research on symbols in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>The general picture</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>Parades</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>Murals</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>Flags</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>Bonfires</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Introduction to quantitative results</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>General background on all projects funded to date</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Quantitative data on successful awards</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Quantitative data derived from monitoring forms to date</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Some findings from the survey</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Summary material on a sample of completed projects</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 6: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Themes from interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Shared Future</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Community relations</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Community cohesion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Regeneration through the arts</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Neighbourhood renewal</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Management matters</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7.1</td>
<td>Views on management of the programme</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7.2</td>
<td>Support from outside the Arts Council</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7.3</td>
<td>Publicity, pre and post completion</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>The views of the artists</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Challenges faced by projects</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>Suspension of the programme</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>The re-opening of the programme</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>The future of Re-imaging Communities?</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Some comments on symbolism in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Summary of funded projects</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>The creation of shared spaces</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>The correct timing of a programme of this nature</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>The usefulness of art as a medium</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>The building and/or strengthening of community/good relations</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Cohesion, empowerment and ownership</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>The projects as catalysts for further improvement</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Partnership/relationship development</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>Inclusion of those not normally involved in community matters</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>Challenges to the programme</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>How Re-imaging Communities impacts on wider policy</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>What does the future hold?</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY

REFERENCES
Bibliography 126
Legislation 136
Websites 137

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Performance areas and indicators 138
Appendix 2: Demographic data on the sample projects 139
Appendix 3: Monitoring form 141
Appendix 4: Progress report & end of project report forms 142
Appendix 5: Survey questionnaire 153
Appendix 6: Survey data carried out in 10 project areas 158
Appendix 7: Before and after photographs of some projects 174

TABLES AND DIAGRAMS
Table 1. Variables and categories for sampling 10
Table 2. Award rounds and size of awards 62
Table 3. Council areas where projects are based 65
Table 4. Types of projects and council or community led 66
Table 5. Nature and type of existing displays 68
Table 6. Types of artwork by types of project 70
Table 7. Years established and experience 70
Table 8. Types of projects (monitoring data) 71
Table 9. Age and gender of survey participants 74
Table 10. Outputs in relation to completed feasibility projects 77
Table 11. Outputs in relation to completed ‘shared space’ projects 78
Table 12. Outputs in relation to completed ‘shared space plus’ projects 79

Diagram 1 Background to Re-imaging Communities programme 5
Diagram 2. Number of workshops by type of project 72
Diagram 3. Age participation in workshops 72
Diagram 4. Religious background of workshop participation 73
Diagram 5. Gender composition of participation 73
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the help and assistance of many people and organisations to which we are very thankful. Firstly we are grateful to the many community groups and local Councils who were responsible for managing the projects for all the assistance they provided. They not only agreed to speak with us openly, but they arranged focus groups and interviews, allowed us to come along to their workshops and meetings, kept us updated on developments and much more.

We would also like to thank the Arts Council and the Re-imaging Communities staff who provided assistance and guidance throughout the course of the research. Particular thanks go to Joan, Paul, Jackie, Amanda, Damien, Ann, Sara and Ciara for all their assistance and helpfulness with queries. Thanks also go to the Shared Communities Consortium who provided clarification on matters, assistance with sourcing material and also their views on the programme.

Special thanks go to Peter Ward and Customer and Marketing Surveys (CMS) for carrying out the survey included in this study.

Finally we would like to thank all those who agreed to speak with us over the two and a half year period when the research was carried out. The list is too long to detail but included artists, workshop participants, local Council staff and councillors, representatives from various statutory bodies, facilitators and mediators, arts groups, schools, youth organisations and community representatives.
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is based on the findings of an evaluation of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s pilot Re-imaging Communities programme. The evaluation was carried out over the first two and a half years of the programme, and it involved collecting and analysing a range of material and data, observing practice within the programme, and carrying out interviews, discussions and focus groups with a wide range of constituents. The conclusion of the study, based on the evidence of this extensive collection of data, is that the Re-imaging Communities programme has been a considerable success, both in relation to its own aims and objectives, but also in relation to the wider world of inter-group relationships across Northern Ireland.

It is possible to identify a range of reasons as to why the programme was successful. To begin with the timing of its activities and opportunities was important, as it appeared to coincide with the emergence across the population of a general and more optimistic sense of community confidence and hope. The apparent ending of the violence, or most of it; the political agreements; the perceptible and newly generous spirit of change at a political level; all of these seemed to contribute to a new degree of confidence and optimism at community level and to suggest that people were ready for change. In addition the programme was managed by a Consortium of influential and experienced representatives from a wide range of statutory organisations; a group that recognised the importance of giving real responsibility to local communities and their leaders. The result was that some inclusive and original contributions emerged pointing towards a belief in the community’s potential to effect change and promote openness.

**What the Re-imaging Communities programme set out to achieve**

Northern Ireland is emerging from a conflict that has lasted over 30 years and in recent times the Government has recognised the importance of examining ways of addressing the consequences of this long conflict and its associated problems. Initiatives have included the development of programmes and interventions aimed at tackling deprivation, improving community relations, encouraging regeneration and creating a safer and more equitable society. In particular the public representation of the community separation has taken the form of a widespread and often remarkable
incidence of public symbolic displays, including marches, banners, flags, wall paintings, bunting, and painted kerb-stones. These displays are normally sectarian, antagonistic, and offensive, and are intended as visible and unambiguous statements of opposition and aggression. Not surprisingly, initiatives in relation to these matters have formed part of the new social and political agenda, leading to the idea of making use of artistic expression in addressing the physical manifestations of sectarianism and racism.

There exists considerable evidence of the economic and social benefits that can be achieved through the medium of art-related projects. Urban regeneration initiatives generally began to include cultural dimensions, including arts-based elements, during the 1980s, and more recently the benefits of involving communities in social renewal initiatives have also been highlighted. The Re-imaging Communities programme in Northern Ireland was designed as a way of addressing the problems of sectarian symbolism across Northern Ireland, by combining a community-based approach with supporting and promoting the creativity demanded of art-based developments.

The Re-imaging Communities programme was established in 2006 as an important element in the process of converting and transforming these visible signs of sectarianism and inter-community separation. The intention has been to encourage communities to reflect on and plan for ways of replacing divisive imagery with imagery that reflects communities in a more positive manner. A consortium approach was adopted which included the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), the Department of Social Development (DSD), the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Community Relations Council (CRC), The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The Arts Council was given the responsibility of managing and taking the programme forward. The first pilot was intended to run for three years with an investment of £3.3 million from a range of different departments. It was anticipated that funding would be awarded to allow approximately 60-80 community-based projects to carry out work in their areas, with the focus specifically on addressing the visible signs of division. In
the event, the number of projects successful in their applications exceeded expectations, and 108 projects were awarded funding up to the time of the suspension of the programme in the summer of 2008. Additional funding of £500,000 was secured in December 2008 which allowed a further 15 projects - to date - to receive awards under the programme.

**What the Re-imaging Communities programme has achieved to date**

In this section of the executive summary we will try to identify and examine what appear to be the beneficial outcomes of the programme at this time of writing. The executive summary will also, in a later section, explore the possible difficulties and drawbacks identified, as well as making an attempt to understand how the programme might be encouraged to evolve and change so as to enhance and emphasise its socially beneficial dimensions.

It is also important to realise that the programme is still at a relatively early stage, and also that it is potentially radical in terms of its social and political ambitions. So the full impact of the current range of projects might not be completely realised at this stage. Some of the projects currently funded have not yet been completed, and some are only just complete, which means that their impact and importance cannot be fully evaluated as yet. Also, the current perception and understanding of the impact of projects depends to a large degree on interviews and discussions with many constituents, and there may therefore be aspects of the effects of the programmes that are not as yet clear or visible. Finally some of the projects are located within communities where other programmes and activities are also ongoing, so that it is difficult to separate out and disentangle the causes, effects and consequences of the various projects.

This evaluation has been aware of, and has tried to take into account, these complications, by focusing directly on judgements about the specific and evident impacts of the Re-imaging Communities projects. What appear to be the main benefits are listed in the sub headings below, with further detail on each contained in the main body of the report.
1. Shared spaces

Many symbols of sectarian aggression and racism in the form of murals, paramilitary memorials, emblems, flags and territorial colours have been removed and/or replaced with imagery that reflects the aspirations of the communities in a more positive manner. (Some before and after pictures are contained in Appendix 7). The result has been the creation of spaces that are less intimidating and therefore more welcoming to all sections of the community. The results of a survey of almost 2000 people in 10 projects areas support this view, with the majority of respondents indicating that the projects have improved the appearance of their areas and made them more welcoming to people from outside the areas.

2. Addressing community relations

All of the projects have addressed the issue of community relations at some level. At a basic level being involved in the projects has encouraged discussion of what symbolism/imagery might mean to people both inside and outside the community/area. At another level projects were carried out on a cross community or a multi-cultural basis, and this resulted in relationships being built and developed with, in many cases, further collaborative work planned or hoped for. In some projects, workshops were carried out addressing good relations or diversity training which helped to promote an improved understanding of these issues.

3. Strengthening of communities

All the evidence supports the view that community cohesion was improved in almost all of the projects; although it was not always easy to be clear about the views of all groups within the communities. In many projects extensive consultants were carried out, so that all members within these communities had the opportunity to express a view about was being proposed. The effect of this, as expressed by members of the community - and sometimes unexpected, was that there was a sense of ownership created. In the process new relationships were formed within communities between different groups and individuals. To be given the opportunity to contribute verbally, or through physical activities, to the development of change in their local
environment was described by some as a process of empowerment. In addition, the symbols that were being changed or removed had not always been there with the permission of the communities themselves, and the project’s activities helped to encourage many to get involved in other initiatives or to consider what further might be done to improve their area.

4. Building capacity

Although some of the Re-imaging Communities projects have been managed by Councils, the majority (63 per cent) have been managed by community groups, each with their own level of skills and experience in the role of management. Although all of the groups had some previous experience of running programmes and activities, this particular programme was, for most, a quite different experience. Therefore some appeared to be more competent than others in managing their project. However, very good examples were witnessed of those less confident groups learning to adapt to the challenges presented to them, as they manoeuvred their way through the process of completing a project. They were encouraged by this and as a result they had grown in confidence and felt capable of taking on further projects.

5. Catalyst for further improvement

Some interviewees believed that, as a result of their involvement in the Re-imaging Communities project, their areas had received further funding from other sources for other activities, such as a regeneration or development project. This follow-on effect in general added to support and enthusiasm for the notion of re-imaging as a way forward, that is as a catalyst, or a way of opening the door to further community developments.

More directly, the experience of involvement in re-imaging was in many cases their first such local involvement, with the consequence that they had later become involved in activities, such as general environmental tidy-ups and the planting of trees and scrubs. There was also early evidence of some economic benefits with new businesses being located in completed project areas, or plans to do so. There was also a high level of publicity and ‘good new stories’ generated by the programme, and this seemed to create a
snowball effect, both in encouraging continuing developments within the community, as well as encouraging other communities to become involved.

It was suggested by some that the programme itself, along with the attendant publicity, promoted a public sense that Northern Ireland was changing and moving forward, and that this contributed to an important message to the outside world in relation to the generation of investment and tourism.

6. Building external relationships
As a result of the projects many relationships between communities and the statutory sector were established or built upon. Examples included links between the communities and local Councils, the Housing Executive, the ACNI, and the PSNI. In a few cases this had lead on to other collaborative work: for example it helped develop discussions between the police and the community on the issue of bonfires – with some bonfires being relocated or agreements reached on the materials to be used; and, in relation to parades, agreements about relocation and restructuring to deter antisocial behaviour and littering. Links have also been developed between communities and other voluntary and community groups, and in some cases with the private sector, and it was anticipated that these would be developed.

7. Inclusion of the marginalised
People or groups who might not normally have a say in community matters such as children, minority ethnic communities, learning disabled, disaffected youth, the elderly, and those living in disadvantaged areas have all been consulted and in some cases targeted for participation across the Re-imaging Communities projects. This has allowed the different constituents to have a voice in how their community is represented and helped to make them feel a part of the community in which they live. In addition the participation of children in many of the projects appears to have encouraged parents, grandparents and schools to become involved. In some projects those responsible for creating the negative imagery that was being replaced, were targeted for inclusion and the result has been that the new art has not been vandalised since.
8. Opening up the arts
The participation rate for 51 of the projects completed to date gives figures of 6,893 people having been involved in the workshops. In addition, across the some 61 projects, reports have suggested that almost 2000 other people were involved including artists, consultants, administration staff, group members, volunteers and others. This has meant that the importance and worth of artistic experience and activity has been encouraged and developed, with an appreciation of the potential power of art to unite people, and to represent their various identities in non contentious ways. The more general outcome has been that the projects have contributed to the successful development of a wider audience for, and increased participation in, the arts.

9. Raising the profile of artists
Not only has the Re-imaging Communities programme been beneficial in terms of employment for many artists - 152 have been reported as being involved in 51 of the projects - it has also given them a link to communities and raised their profile in art circles. The communities expressed their satisfaction with how the artists engaged within them in discussing and planning the imagery, and with the creation of the final art work. In addition some communities have retained a degree of contact with the artists involved, with the intention of carrying out further work. The artists have had a pivotal role in helping communities in their design of the new imagery; and the particular skill and insights of the artists has helped all involved to generate a more complex awareness and perception of the role of art within societies.

The challenges facing the Re-imaging Programme
As the evaluation progressed, and a wider range of interviews and discussions were carried out, it was possible to begin to identify challenges and possible obstacles, and a discussion of these follows.
10. Loss of momentum

During the first period of the programme, community involvement and interest had been gaining momentum as projects were accepted and initiated across the province, and as the social and community benefits of the work began to be appreciated. Unfortunately the programme was then suspended, for financial reasons, and this had the inevitable effect of bringing to a halt those projects that had already begun negotiations and discussions, and also those preparing an application for submission. As a result, in some cases projects dropped out of the process completely. Although additional funding was secured to enable the programme to re-open some months later, the amount was only sufficient to ensure that the programme continued for a short time. Discussions with those active within the projects made it clear that they were disappointed by these events, and that they considered the programme to be original, successful and of great value, and that some effort was needed to ensure that it was allowed to continue and grow.

11. Flexibility

Not everyone was immediately persuaded of the value of the projects or of the need to remove or replace locally symbolic art works, especially murals. It was therefore in some cases difficult to develop momentum, or to keep everyone on board. It was believed to be important to allow the projects to move at their own pace, so that where there were differences of opinion the work was often brought to a temporary halt while lengthy discussions and negotiations took place. Those opposed were often seen as ‘gatekeepers’ who were anxious about what they perceived to be an abandoning of the symbols of their community. There was often the possibility that they would disengage, and they required constant re-assurance concerning the implications of the projects. The result was that the work often took longer than expected with many stops and starts throughout.

The same flexibility was considered to be vital when it came to the content of art work. A few projects had stalled, with the possibility of being unable to complete, because of disagreements about the use certain forms of imagery. This tended to occur in areas where some of the most divisive imagery was
being considered for removal. Although there was general agreement that the new imagery should not include any reference to paramilitary groups or their symbolism, there was a view that if the new art work did not contain intimidatory or threatening imagery then it should be seen as a step forward for these communities.

12. Impediments to the programme

The evaluation of the Re-imaging Communities programme has looked at how the programme has progressed over the last two and a half years. During that time it has become evident that the political situation and individual events have had the potential to impact on the programme to a degree, in other words it has not taken place in a political vacuum. A few of the projects have stalled because of the political situation or even because of statements made by political representatives and others. The removal of paramilitary symbolism is an emotive subject for some communities and for that reason needs to be handled sensitively. It is difficult for those involved in managing the programme and the projects funded under it, to do very much by way of counteracting the impact of outside events other than to work closely with the communities to try and progress the projects and it is only mentioned here as a way of explaining how difficult the environment is in which the programme is operating.

Some of the projects have been delayed by circumstances largely out of their control, most of which have concerned planning permission or technical approval on certain aspects of the projects. For example the installation of the various art works may have involved negotiation with a range of different agencies and bodies including the local Councils, the Housing Executive, DSD, Road Service, the planning authorities, and Northern Ireland Electricity. In many cases this has not presented any unnecessary concerns or delays, but there have been some delays and in some cases this has involved the need to secure additional funding for technical assistance.
13. Sustainability

Most of those interviewed, and those in group discussions, believed that the Re-imaging Programme had made an important contribution towards bringing about a new sense of ownership and cohesion within communities and, in many cases, a better understanding of the importance of change and the need for both social and economic redevelopment within their areas. The evolution of the programme had involve people in a range of activities, including community meetings, discussions, writing applications, trying to find consensus about contentious issues, finding agreement with the funders, employing artists and designers, working together to clear up and improve their own physical space, and so on. For some the programme epitomised real community engagement and increased community capacity and that, as a result, expectations had been raised in relation to the possibility of a better future.

In particular those who had experienced this process believed that this kind of experience was important within a community – and particularly within disadvantaged communities - and that there was therefore a definite need for the programme to continue, and that more funding should be secured as soon as possible to allow it to continue.

There was also a belief that, whether the programme continued or not, there was still a need to build on what has been achieved so far. Without encouraging communities to make use of outputs of the programme, including shared spaces, there was the possibility that they would fall into disrepair. This meant that continuing support would be needed to assist communities in developing or linking activities and programmes as ongoing contributions to community development, and as possible contributions to economic renewal. Some also argued that members of the community, especially young people, needed to have the opportunity to get involved in community work of this kind and to experience the learning and social processes involved.
Final thoughts

The evidence from this evaluation suggests that the Re-imaging Communities programme has been a very positive programme. Many displays of a sectarian and racist nature have been removed, and a considerable number of community areas have been transformed visually through the installation of positive and aesthetically pleasing art work, and through the process of planting trees and shrubs, and of the associated tidying, cleaning and painting that has often gone along with the new installation. The opinion has been expressed that the processes involved in transforming these areas had been just as important as the removal of divisive imagery.

Members of communities have been brought together and have grown in capacity through their involvement in the programme, so much so that many want to continue with this regeneration of their areas. Relationships between groups with different community backgrounds have been improved, and links have been developed for potential further collaborative work. In addition new and better working relationships have developed between communities and those in the statutory sector. There has also been some evidence, although it is still too early to provide details, of some economic benefits in the form of new investment in some of the re-imaged areas. Many of these areas are located in regions known to be among the most deprived in Northern Ireland, so that even small developments of this sort are of great interest. The programme could also be said to be contributing to the policies of many government departments and agencies in terms of community relations, regeneration and capacity building.

The work of the programme was generally praised and believed to be successful. However, there was also agreement that problems of sectarian and racist imagery still existed across Northern Ireland and needed to be addressed. The projects had been initially directed at this visible problem of imagery; but the experience of becoming involved in the process often led to a commitment to other social and community activities, including discussions, planning proposed changes, and producing detailed proposals for the Arts Council. The decision to take the important first steps usually meant an acceptance of the need for change, and this made it possible to think about the questions and issues in more general ways.
For obvious reasons there are still individuals who are fearful about, and resistant to change: but when communities become more confident, and realise that they have nothing to fear in moving forward, they are willing – and often able - to challenge fears in others and to convince even the most intransigent to change their views. In the important task of replacing sectarian imagery, the programme has been able at times to empower communities to approach change and given them hope for a better future and for just that reason it is believed that it should continue.

**LAYOUT OF REPORT**

Chapter 1 contains information on the background to the study; how and why the Re-imaging Communities Programme came about and what it was intended to achieve.

Chapter 2 details the methodology used to carry out the study.

Chapter 3 contains details on the wider government and government departments’ and agencies’ policies and initiatives which have direct relevance to the Re-imaging Communities Programme.

Chapter 4 is a review of the literature on symbolism; the meaning and role of symbols, with particular reference to Northern Ireland. It includes reference to the role of the arts in social and economic regeneration.

Chapter 5 details the quantitative findings from the study; statistics on projects funded under the programme, on the level and nature of participation in workshops; on the outputs of completed projects; and survey findings concerning the impact of 10 completed projects.

Chapter 6 deals with qualitative findings based on observations and interviews and focus groups with a wide range of stakeholders. This chapter considers: the impact of projects in terms of the aims and objectives of the programme; views on management, support and publicity; the challenges facing the programme; and what the future might hold.

Chapter 7 summarises the main findings which includes the impact of the programme to date and considers what the future of the programme might be.

These chapters are followed by the glossary, references and appendices.
CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY
AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

1.1 Introduction

This report is a response to the tender document from the Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI) on ‘the Development and Implementation of an Evaluation Strategy to Measure the Impact of Projects under the Re-imaging Programme.’ The Re-imaging Communities Programme of arts-related activities represents the most recent in a sequence of initiatives and policy documents, mainly from government, which are a consequence of the ending of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Some of these are discussed later in this report.

Most aspects of life in Northern Ireland have been touched and shaped by the prolonged conflict and violence that began in the late 1960s. Not surprisingly much of the energy and resources involved in responding to the ending of the conflict have been directed – at least initially - towards repairing and rebuilding the physical and institutional damage and destruction that resulted. More recently however there have been a number of movements and initiatives arising from the recognition that much more than bricks and mortar were harmed and diminished by the violence.

In particular there has been an increasing public awareness and emphasis on the less tangible, and - to a degree – concealed, individual and social consequences of enduring conflict and violence. The result has been the beginnings of a more complex and considered public discussion and debate about the long term effects of the conflict on both individuals and specific groups. Among the problems identified within this public discussion and within particular communities have been the continuing existence of active and influential paramilitary groups; the disproportionate levels of social, educational and community disadvantage; the comparative absence of a culture of engagement or of active citizenship; the significant numbers of young people who commit suicide; the high levels of drug and alcohol abuse; and the difficulties experienced by particular population groups such as women, minorities, the elderly, children and children in care. The growing social recognition of the needs of people
within communities experiencing some or all of these problems, has led to the introduction by government of a number of new programmes - such as the one under consideration here - whose central resolve is to take the initiative in attempting to deal with or respond to these problems.

1.2 Intentions of the Re-Imaging Communities Programme

Re-Imaging Communities is a three year programme with a £3.3 million investment, funded through the Shared Communities Consortium (SCC), which is made up of representatives of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), the Department of Social Development (DSD), the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Community Relations Council (CRC), The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The project was announced in July 2006 and was aimed at tackling the visible signs of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland communities, with a particular emphasis on the replacement of existing paramilitary murals and other items with new and more positive imagery. A total of 60 - 80 community-based projects were planned, to be located in specific identified areas.

The intention was to begin the process of removing or replacing public displays – in whatever form – that used public spaces to promote or represent sectarian or racist ideas and views. The project would therefore test the view that the current existence of community art and iconic displays, supporting and celebrating community separation and paramilitary influence, can be transformed in artistic ways that are positive, inclusive and non-threatening, and that contribute to making people feel involved in a single wider community. The purpose of the programme was to assist and encourage communities in Northern Ireland to plan and develop public projects of an artistic and creative nature, with the overt intention of making a contribution to an understanding and a re-interpretation by communities of “who they are and what culture means to them”. The activities of the project would utilise the power of the

---

1 www.arts council-ni.org/news/2006/new07062006c.htm
2 Arts Council Northern Ireland 2004
arts to identify and promote new creative media, and approaches suggested included the creation, by working with artists, of ‘positive mural art, three-dimensional sculpture, artistic light installation or the production of crafted street furniture.’

The programme therefore encouraged and provisioned community groups to design and create, through a shared use of public space, an artistic symbol or touchstone through which the community could feel part of, and responsible for, the place where they live. There was an additional - implicit - aspiration that the opportunity provided for all elements within the community to take part in these projects, would present an opportunity to be part of the building of “a shared future for Northern Ireland, which was peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair, founded on partnership, equality and mutual respect as a basis of good relationships.”

The importance placed on working together in this manner also served to promote the need “to free the public realm from threat, displays of sectarian and racial aggression and intimidation while allowing for legitimate expression of cultural celebration.”

The Arts Council also prepared a guidelines pamphlet for those wishing to be involved with the programme, which is available on the Internet. The range of project types eligible for support under The Re-Imaging Communities Programme included the following:

- Support for cultural awareness and development of community based arts projects focussed on the public realm
- Commissioning of public art for shared spaces
- The removal of redundant symbols and emblems
- Support for locally based charters which outline how communities plan to tackle negative perceptions of their areas in an integrated manner
- The removal of aggressive sectarian/racist murals and graffiti

Finally the guidance document illustrated some of the broad approaches and subjects, within which projects might be designed, as follows:

---

3 Ibid
4 Ibid
5 Arts Council Northern Ireland 2006
1.3 The wider background to the Re-imaging Communities Programme

Discussion of the Re-Imaging Communities programme must, however, be located in a much wider context within Northern Ireland, a context made up of a large and distinctive programme of related ideas and projects that, taken together, represent a determined agenda of social, economic and cultural modification across the area. The central intention of this programme relates to regeneration, renewal, and inter-group relations and arises in good part from evidence of the existence of acute deprivation and disadvantage in many parts of the province. The wider political and historical context that has made it possible to place regeneration at the centre of government plans and initiatives, includes the emergent peace, the energy released by the ending of violence, and the prospect of establishing some sense of a collective community identity, that might reflect and transform the historically implacable ambiguity and intricacy of the divided world of Northern Ireland.

Most of these initiatives relate in some way to an agreed need to renew or regenerate aspects of Northern Ireland community life. The malign effects of the long conflict are clearly a central influence on and motivation for many of these programmes and initiatives, and their intentions and proposed activities form an antecedent background to the Re-imaging Communities programme, which has been designed specifically as a contribution to the creation of a new image for Northern Ireland by means of many new individual images. These programmes are identified here in Figure 1 on Page 5, which attempts to indicate the inter-relationships between the programmes, their order of appearance, and the sense in which they can all be interpreted as feeding into the Re-Imaging Communities programme. Each of these programmes will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 2.
Diagram 1. Background to the Re-imaging Communities programme

1. Programme for Government
   OFMDFM (2001)

2. Community Relations
   OFMDFM (2002)

3. Urban Regeneration
   DSD (2002)

4. Art of Regeneration
   ACNI / DCAL (2004)

5. A Shared Future
   OFMDFM (2005)

6. Neighbourhood Renewal
   DSD (2003)

5. Renewing Communities
   DSD (2006)

6. Re-imaging Communities Programme (2006)

1.4 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The aim of this evaluation was to “develop and implement an appropriate evaluation strategy to measure the impact of projects under the Re-imaging Communities programme. Given the very disparate nature of the projects concerned, the geographic spread and the range of timescales involved, the successful service provider must adopt a flexible approach using a mix of instruments to yield both qualitative and quantitative data.”

The detailed requirements and objectives of the study were developed further in the commissioning documents which indicated that the research was expected to:
• undertake a review of the role symbolism has played in the conflict;
• gather project specific baseline data; (the Shared Communities Consortium will provide data and reports to assist in this process).
• evaluate all aspects of the projects against the programmes broad aims objectives; (Appendix 1 includes performance areas and indicative indicators of the programme identified by the Shared Communities Consortium as a framework though which to organise the material).
• evaluate the performance of the Shared Communities Consortium in the delivery of the Re-Imaging Programme.
CHAPTER 2
METHODODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction to methodology

The research methods used in this study included both quantitative and qualitative approaches: a complete list is set out below, and each element of this is then developed in greater detail in the following sections.

- literature review and desk research;
- project visits and observation;
- interviews;
- development of indicators;
- post implementation surveys; and
- focus groups and interviews with participants and public.

Each of these methods is now described in detail, including indications of the types of information gathered in each case.

2.2 Literature review

A literature review was carried out which examined two broad themes:

- the wider policy background; and
- the role symbolism has played in the Northern Ireland conflict.

The wider policy background considers the policies, strategies and programmes of Government and other agencies that may be relevant to the Re-imaging Communities programme or that the programme may contribute to, particularly in terms of a shared future, community relations, community cohesion, regeneration through arts and neighbourhood renewal. This wider policy background is contained in Chapter 3 of this report.

The review of the literature on the role of symbolism in the Northern Ireland conflict includes an examination of the range of social and historical meanings and understandings attached to symbols, how these have changed and adapted over the years, and a consideration of some of the methods and approaches developed by
various departments and agencies to address these issues. The review of the literature on symbolism is contained in Chapter 4 of this report.

2.3 Sampling of projects

The Re-imaging Communities programme is a rolling programme with awards generally made on a bimonthly basis. A large number of applications were received (161), and 109 awards were made, in the first nine rounds of funding up to the suspension of the programme in the summer of 2008. In addition a further 16 applications were submitted following the re-opening of the programme in December 2008; 15 of which were successful. The approach of this evaluation involved not only the collection of quantitative data on all funded projects, but also the selection of two samples of projects to be examined in close detail, with the emphasis on establishing a record of the progress of each member of the chosen samples from start to finish. To this end two samples, each involving ten projects, were chosen to be studied in depth.

The first sample of ten was chosen from the 28 awards made by the Consortium during the first and second granting rounds, that is in January 2007 and March 2007. In order to choose which ten to concentrate on, all 28 successful projects were categorised and entered into a sampling framework. This led to the division of the 28 projects into two groups, that is a group made up of those engaged in ‘feasibility studies’, and a group made up of those intending to move at once to the production, changing or creation of something within their area. These two will be referred to as ‘feasibility studies’ and ‘production studies’.

In the next sections details are provided on how the samples were chosen using a typology developed between the researchers and staff at the ACNI. Given the small size of the samples, and the closely focused nature of the intended activities, it would obviously be difficult for the sample to mirror exactly the total population of projects: however the tables in appendix 2 indicate that the sample does reflect quite closely the total population, at that time, for many of the variables.

2.3.1 Choosing the samples

After the first round of awards was agreed by the Consortium a typology was developed by the research team in co-ordination with the ACNI. This typology took
into account a range of variables present in the successful projects such as geographical considerations, management types, size of award, religious and cultural backgrounds of project areas, art work and types of projects (see table 1). This typology was then agreed with the Consortium and applied to successful projects so that sampling could be carried out. In the first round of sampling 10 projects were chosen from the total of 28 projects that had been successful in the first and second rounds of funding. The 28 projects divided into ten feasibility studies (one of which can be thought of as combining feasibility and production) and 18 production projects. First of all, the ten feasibility projects were broken down by grant size (that is small, large or multiple) and by location. For the location variable, because there are many council areas three categories were used: that is east of the Bann; west of the Bann; and Belfast.

The 18 ‘production’ projects were divided into smaller groups as follows:

1) *Shared space:* this group contained those projects involved in creating a shared space: this might include the removal of graffiti (sectarian and/or racist), or the engagement of both sections of community.

2) *Shared space plus:* this contained those projects involved in creating a shared space in a more challenging manner; for example where it involved replacing or removing displays of paramilitary symbolism.

The projects were then broken down further by size of grant and location as before. After consultation with the Consortium it was decided to focus on two ‘feasibility’ projects and eight ‘production’ projects for the initial sample of ten projects. A method of purposive sampling was then used to choose the ten projects. It was decided to use this method because a good deal of information was already available on each project, and since it was desirable to collect the most valuable data possible, it was decided to choose the projects where a wide range of categories under each of the variables was available. The types of variables along with the related categories are shown in the table below. Two feasibility, three ‘shared space’ and five ‘shared space plus’ projects were eventually chosen for the first sample.
Table 1. Variables and categories for sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Categories under each variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF ART</strong></td>
<td>Mural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sculpture/public art inc. mosaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crafted functional street furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lighting/other, i.e. banners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE</strong></td>
<td>Re-imaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regeneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comm. development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF AREA</strong></td>
<td>Housing estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arterial route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village/small town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interface(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main thoroughfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF DISPLAY</strong></td>
<td>Graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flags &amp; colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURE OF DISPLAY</strong></td>
<td>Sectarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY BACKGROUND/ AFFILIATION</strong></td>
<td>Catholic/Nationalist (over 60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protestant/Loyalist (over 60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-single identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIMEFRAME</strong></td>
<td>Short (1-5 mths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium (6-10 mths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long (11-15 mths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN/RURAL</strong></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEPRIVATION(^7)</strong></td>
<td>High deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not high Deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td>All ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE OF GROUP</strong></td>
<td>Community-led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council-led</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second sample of ten projects was also chosen using this template. In this case there were a total of 25 successful applications by the Consortium from award rounds four and five made in September and December 2007. Using the same typology, taking into account all the range of variables and using a method of purposive sampling as before, four ‘shared space’ and six ‘shared space plus’ projects were chosen.

2.4 Observations, interviews and focus groups

Each of the total sample of 20 projects were visited a number of times, at the start of the project, during the process and after the project was finished. Observations, interviews and focus groups took place with a range of people including those

---

\(^6\) For the purposes of this study an interface area is one where there has been friction between two or more groups. This can be the consequence of change in an area that was once single-identity, but due to an influx of people of different religious/political persuasion/racial background, there now exists tension between the host population and newcomers. Alternatively it may be an area where two groups of differing religious/political persuasion live in close proximity and where tensions emerge at various times

\(^7\) In this study we will use the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 Super Output Area which ranks areas from 1 (most deprived) to 890 (least deprived) and use 267 and below as areas of high multiple deprivation
involved with and those participating in the various projects. In addition regular contact was kept with each project in order to ascertain that things were progressing to plan and to keep track of any emergent difficulties faced by projects. Some projects also forwarded informal progress reports and minutes of meetings held.

Interviews also took place with a number of projects outside of the sample of 20 to determine the processes involved and the impact each had, especially in relation to the aims and objectives of the Re-imaging Communities Programme. The Arts Council also provided the research team with formal progress and end of projects reports for all projects as and when these were received. In addition, interviews were carried out with ACNI Re-imaging Communities staff, Re-imaging Communities Consortium members, statutory bodies working in the areas where projects were based, elected representatives, community representatives and with people living in the community.

2.5 Monitoring information

The ACNI and IRS worked closely to develop monitoring forms to be completed by each project funded under the Re-imaging Communities Programme. The monitoring forms collected details in relation to workshops or focus groups carried out by each project in order to deliver their project. (A copy of a monitoring form is included in Appendix 3). This allowed for an analysis of the participation of the community\(^8\) in each project and to determine whether target participation and purpose were being achieved. In addition the ACNI required that projects complete progress reports throughout, including on completion of the project (copies of these reports are included in Appendix 4). The research team contributed to the development of these forms and completed reports were forwarded to the research team for analysis. At the time of writing, monitoring forms had been collected for 51 completed projects and data entered into a database for analysis.

2.6 Survey data

Post implementation surveys were carried out in ten project areas with on average 200 residents and/or the general public to gauge their views on the area and on the project. (a copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 5) The survey was carried out

\(^8\) There were also many other meetings carried out by projects with individuals and smaller groups that would not be recorded on these forms.
face to face and quotas were set to ensure representation in terms of age and gender.
In the end 1991 participants took part across the ten project areas and the results can be viewed in section 5.4, page 74. and in Appendix 6.

2.7 Outputs and meetings
Regular meetings were held between the researchers and the Re-imaging Communities team and contact by email and phone was also carried out on an informal but regular basis. The research team attended a number of Consortium meetings and presented findings to members of the Consortium. A number of reports were generated by the research team throughout the course of the evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative. These included a literature review in January 2008, a briefing paper in June 2008 and a substantial interim report in October 2008, along with progress reports, survey presentations and quantitative reports at various intervals.
CHAPTER 3

THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

3.1 Policies, Initiatives and Programmes

A central aim shared by all Government departments, and also by a wide range of non-government agencies, is the realisation of ‘A Shared Future’ for all groups, communities and regions in Northern Ireland. It is therefore important that this evaluation of the Re-imaging Communities programme takes cognisance of the wide reach of policies and strategies that could be said to be influencing the emergence and growth of re-imaging across the province.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide further detail about some of these relevant – and significant – policies and programmes that can be thought to be in some way related to the Re-imaging Communities programme. The chapter looks therefore at the wider policy area, specifically in relation to those departments and agencies involved in contributing to the fulfilment of the strategy ‘A Shared Future’.

The most obvious common characteristic of many of these programmes is the intention to generate a social and economic response to the malign effects of the long conflict, and this is reflected in the ubiquity of the notion of regeneration and renewal. The evidence that grave deprivation and disadvantage exists in some communities in Northern Ireland, and in Belfast in particular, along with the current sense of a real peace and a desire to overcome the endemic separations and suspicions of the past, both contribute to a determination to establish programmes and strategies that will make it possible to make renewal a reality.

A selection of some of these policies and programmes is now discussed, with a particular emphasis on those with a more or less direct relationship with the Re-imaging Communities programme, or those that are likely to have influenced its establishment. Diagram 1 (on page 5) is an attempt to indicate the relationships between various policies and programmes particularly in terms of time and precedence, and the sense in
which they can all be interpreted as feeding into the Re-imaging Communities programme. To begin with there is a short summary of the background to the Re-imaging Communities Programme.

3.2 Re-imaging Communities

All of the contributory documents, activities and detailed proposals from OFMDFM, and from a wide range of other governmental, non-governmental and community organisations, have made it clear that the promotion of ‘a shared future’ would not simply be a theoretical or paper-based undertaking. There was a clear commitment and determination to support its development as a dynamic, vigorous and entirely practical programme, properly resourced and energetically supported by all responsible agencies. In particular there was an initial ambition to begin to tackle the visible manifestations of division and sectarianism such as flags, paramilitary murals and kerb-paintings.

To this end the Re-imaging Communities pilot was launched in July 2006. The project arose directly from the priorities identified in the action plan outlined in ‘A Shared Future’, which placed an emphasis on the commitment to tackling the ‘Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism’. 9 The programme therefore set out to promote and support the replacement of existing paramilitary murals, and similar divisive symbols and images, with new, positive and forward looking presentations. A total of 60 - 80 community-based projects were planned in the first place, with a total initial funding of £3.3m over three years.

The day-to-day administration of the project was to be managed by the Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI), and this would include the provision of support for local communities in the initiation, planning and implementation of individual projects. 10 In addition, a committee of representatives of bodies with a specific interest in re-imaging, the ‘Shared Communities Consortium’ (SCC), was created to oversee the general development and funding of the programme. The SCC included representatives of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), the Department of Social Development (DSD), the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Northern

---

9 OFMDFM 2006, op cit
Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Community Relations Council (CRC), The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The intention of the programme was to transform existing iconic displays that supported and celebrated community separation and paramilitary influence, and to replace them with new positive, inclusive and non-threatening displays that could contribute to making people feel involved in a single wider community. Possible examples included positive mural art, three-dimensional sculpture, artistic light installation or the production of crafted street furniture. The emphasis was to be on the affirmative potential of the arts in identifying and promoting new creative media, and on communities working directly with artists in the planning, designing and production process.

An important consequence of these developments involved using, and often reclaiming, public space, and making it safe. The many years of the conflict had led to a considerable increase in the number of murals and other forms of sectional and opposing imagery, frequently representing and celebrating acts of violence and terror. These murals were often located in public spaces chosen for their visibility, with the result that other sections of the local and wider communities were reluctant to go near them. The Re-imaging Communities programme focused on the importance of reclaiming and regenerating these public spaces, and on emphasising the importance of having available neutral territory, where members of all sections of the communities could meet, work, live and play.

This process also made it possible to focus on town and city centres and on opening these up to everyone as neutral civic venues. But it also allowed for some reconsideration of the difficulties and needs of interface areas, often the location of violence and sectarian confrontations in the past. There was also to be a concentration on promoting and providing support for integrated residential areas, with related housing policy and planning.
3.3  The Executive’s Programme for Government (PfG)

In the Executive’s first Programme for Government 2008-2011 the over-arching aim is to:

‘...build a peaceful, fair, prosperous society in Northern Ireland, with respect for the rule of law and where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life now and in years to come’.

In order to achieve this, the Executive has developed a number of priority areas and key goals which are developed into Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for all Government departments, many of which are interdependent and therefore require departments to work together and to co-ordinate their approach. One of the two cross-cutting key themes which underpins the PfG is ‘a shared and better future for all’ with the suggestion that ‘equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations will be watchwords for all of our policies and programmes across Government’. Some of the PSAs are more relevant than others when considering the Re-imaging Communities programme. For example under PSA 9 one of the targets for DCAL is to increase the proportion of the Northern Ireland population that participates in arts events. Similarly under PSA 12, targets specifically aimed at DSD - but also at other departments - include the regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas, the creation of shared spaces and to promote community development.

3.4  A Shared Future (OFMDFM)

The programme A Shared Future had its origins in an earlier report commissioned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)\textsuperscript{11} in 2001, to review ‘Community Relations Policy’, as a contribution to the development of the 2001 Programme for Government\textsuperscript{12}. In relation to this the executive set out a vision that:

Northern Ireland should become a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, with the protection and vindication of human rights for all.

The actions needed to begin to achieve this included reviewing and putting in place a cross-departmental strategy for the promotion of community relations in Northern Ireland.

\textsuperscript{11} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2001a
\textsuperscript{12} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2001b
Ireland. The review was published in January 2002, along with a very extensive second volume of Annexes.\textsuperscript{13}

In January 2003 OFMDFM published a consultation paper\textsuperscript{14} called \textit{A Shared Future: on Improving Relations in Northern Ireland}, arising from the 2002 review. This was intended “as a broadly based and inclusive consultation process involving key stakeholders … and people throughout Northern Ireland … on the practical steps that need to be taken … to improve relations.”

Any analysis of the causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland would inevitably refer to the absence, across the wider population, of a set of shared views about future or common political and social structures that all communities could subscribe to. The prolonged peace process, and the accompanying discussions about future governmental arrangements, have inevitably been influenced by this central difficulty, as have the set of statements and aspirations that finally emerged as an agreement about the content and form of any future government in Northern Ireland.

The Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) indicated its understanding of the centrality of this difficulty in the key policy document ‘\textit{A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland}’, published in March 2005.\textsuperscript{15} This document presented the Government’s vision for the future of Northern Ireland, and in his foreword the Minister describes the intentions of the document as follows:

\begin{quote}
... to establish over time a shared society defined by a culture of tolerance: a normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where violence is an illegitimate means to resolve differences, but where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere and where all people are treated impartially.
\end{quote}

An important section within the document refers to the ‘Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism’ and speaks of the importance of ‘Freeing the public realm (including public property) from displays of sectarian aggression’ through:

\textsuperscript{13} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2002
\textsuperscript{14} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2003
\textsuperscript{15} OFMDFM (2005) \textit{A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland}, 21 March.
• active promotion of local dialogue involving elected representatives, community leaders, police and other stakeholders to reduce and eliminate displays of sectarian and racial aggression; and
• the police, in conjunction with other agencies, acting to remove such displays where no accommodation can be reached.’ (p. 19).

The document goes on to identify the most obvious examples as ‘inappropriate and aggressive displays of flags (specifically paramilitary flags and any other displays which have the effect of intimidating or harassing), murals and painted kerbstones.’ It also makes clear that the process of implementing this ambition ‘is best undertaken as a common project with agencies working collaboratively with the police, elected representatives and local communities as part of environmental improvements with a view to enhancing the areas economically and building trust.’ (p. 19). The outworking of this key vision, therefore, involves the policies, plans and activities of all government departments, local government, and both statutory and voluntary agencies. In the divided and often physically segregated world of Northern Ireland it also leads directly to consideration of the question of ‘shared space’.

In addition a ‘Racial Equality Strategy’ was published in July 2005, which supported the emergence in Northern Ireland of:

a society in which racial diversity is supported, understood, valued and respected, where racism in any of its forms is not tolerated and where we live together as a society and enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection.

The two strategy documents taken together were intended to act to promote both good relations and good race relations in Northern Ireland.

In April 2006 an action plan for 2006-2009\textsuperscript{16} was published, with the sub-title: Making it happen – Implementing the policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland. This plan included a draft set of indicators as a guide to subsequent action plans, and in January 2007 a report was published, based on these indicators.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2006
\textsuperscript{17} Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2007
The question of sectarian and paramilitary public imagery across Northern Ireland is raised formally in this paper in the section *Priority Area 1* with the words ‘Tackling the Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism’. The priority involved a commitment “In collaboration with the community and other agencies” to “establish a programme of work to remove kerbstone painting, murals, flags and graffiti in public housing estates” and to try to ensure that the physical environment was accessible to all citizens as shared space. In addition there was a commitment to develop and implement a Re-imaging Communities Programme through the Shared Communities Consortium, which includes the ACNI, DCAL, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). The intention was to focus on community re-imaging, by providing an integrated approach to the issues of flags, emblems and sectarian symbols, including murals.

In addition a monitoring process was established that collected data from surveys and research studies relating to the views of the community, as indicators of the state of good relations in Northern Ireland. These figures are collated and published in the document ‘*A Shared Future and Racial Equality Strategy*’, with the more revealing subtitle ‘*Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*’.18 A Shared Future emphasises that community divisions and tensions are significant barriers to social and economic progress especially in communities that already suffer from social exclusion and poverty, in other words in many of the already deprived areas of Northern Ireland.

OFMDFM are shortly due to publish a new strategy to address cohesion, sharing and integration. This will build on the strengths of A Shared Future and address the issues of equality and good relations. This strategy is expected to include priorities such as addressing the physical manifestations of sectarianism, racism and intolerance, the dismantling of peace walls and the provision and expansion of safe and shared spaces. It is suggested that somewhere in the region of £29 million will be available over the next three years to roll out the strategy and associated action plan. There is also to be a new Minister-led good relations panel to drive and to oversee the work of the Government, local government and other key stakeholders.

---

3.5 Neighbourhood Renewal

In April 2000 the Westminster Government announced a 10-year strategy to provide respite for some of England's 3,000 poorest communities, by making available funding to allow them to modernise homes, improve health, create jobs and fight crime.\(^{19}\) This strategy for neighbourhood renewal followed from an earlier 1998 preliminary report, *Bringing Britain Together\(^ {20}\)*, from the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), which revealed that the gap between the poorest communities and the rest of the country had grown dramatically over the previous two decades.

Following the publication of *Bringing Britain Together*, 18 Policy Action Teams (PAT) were established under the aegis of the British Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), to examine the range of problems and difficulties facing poor neighbourhoods. This National Strategy applies to England only, but it was accepted that it would be drawn upon by the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in compiling their distinctive strategies.

In 2002 the Department of Social Development (DSD) in Northern Ireland initiated a consultation on *Urban Regeneration in Northern Ireland*.\(^ {21}\) Based on the results of this consultation, what was described as a ‘new strategy for the renewal of the most deprived neighbourhoods in urban areas of Northern Ireland’ was launched in June 2003.\(^ {22}\) This has been described as the Northern Ireland version of the 2001 SEU English report, and, although not a DSD policy or programme, it involved a cross-departmental action plan co-ordinated by DSD.\(^ {23}\) The focus of the project was to be on those neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland characterised by an array of forms of continuous and unremitting deprivation and decline, and on identifying approaches that might interrupt and alleviate this experience. Many of the subsequent initiatives, some of which are described below, arose from this initial consultation and the related reports.

\(^{19}\) Social Exclusion Unit 2001
\(^{20}\) Social Exclusion Unit 1998
\(^{21}\) Department of Social Development 2002
\(^{22}\) Department of Social Development 2003a
\(^{23}\) Previous policies and programmes attempting to contribute to the need for regeneration had included ‘Targeting Social Need’ and ‘New Targeting Social Need’
The programme made use of the *Multiple Deprivation Measure* (Noble Index\textsuperscript{24}) to select and target neighbourhoods within the worst ten *per cent* of urban wards, and to establish these as Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, along with a representative Neighbourhood Partnership Boards for each chosen area. The programme focused on four interlinking strategic renewal objectives, using the headings Community, Economic, Social and Physical Renewal. It also initiated a consultation on ‘Policy Measurement’ to examine existing approaches to the measurement and evaluation of urban regeneration policy in Northern Ireland and make recommendations for a performance measurement framework for the new urban regeneration strategy.\textsuperscript{25}

The responsibility for taking forward the regeneration project in Northern Ireland is co-ordinated by the DSD and in particular by the Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group (URCDG). It has responsibility for the Government's strategy for tackling the social, economic and physical regeneration of cities, towns and urban areas, including Neighbourhood Renewal. The Group is also responsible for voluntary sector and community development policy across all Northern Ireland Departments.

### 3.6. The Art of Regeneration

#### 3.6.1 Background literature and ideas

The Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI) includes within its range of preoccupations the responsibility to ensure that the unique insights, challenges and affirmations of the arts can contribute to the transformation of Northern Ireland into a stable and vital society.

The establishing and funding of arts programmes designed to contribute to the regeneration of communities, is a consequence of the (comparatively recent) emergence of a belief that the arts have a significant role in, and impact on, social and economic concerns such as social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal and economic productivity. Currently this view has strong support, not only in the related academic and analytical literature, but also in the mind of government.

---

\textsuperscript{24} Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2005

\textsuperscript{25} Department of Social Development 2003b
A paper by Reeves in 2002 provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of this view of the social impact of the arts, and of related matters such as the findings of relevant research studies, the validity of their findings, and approaches to measuring arts-related impacts on society. Reeves set out to “collate and review existing research on the economic and social impact of the arts” and to examine what is meant by terms such as ‘economic impact’ and ‘social impact’, in relation to the arts.

The contribution of the arts in this way began to be referred to late in the 20th century. Initially the emphasis was on the economic contribution of what was becoming referred to as ‘the creative industries’, but this focus began to widen to include social benefits and effects (such as regeneration, education, health and criminal justice) on various groups and communities. Later contributions began to provide statistical data on the benefits to urban regeneration accruing from arts and cultural activity in Britain and its cities, as well as on the often hidden financial and job-related benefits. Among the benefits suggested were:

… enhancing social cohesion; improving local image; reducing offending behaviour; promoting interest in the local environment; developing self-confidence; building private and public sector partnerships; exploring identities; enhancing organisational capacity; supporting independence; and exploring visions of the future.

One consequence was that government policymakers became more aware of the contribution of the creative industries to wealth creation and employment, and these ideas began to be included in the evolution of social policy documents and proposals.

3.6.2 The Art of Regeneration in Northern Ireland

Many of the more general arguments and research findings about the regeneration of communities have a particular significance for Northern Ireland. The physical and social deterioration in many areas, as a result of violence, explosions and inter-group conflict over long periods has left a legacy characterised by broken buildings, underprivileged and disaffected communities and young people who feel excluded - with no optimism or vision of a worthwhile future.

26 Reeves 2002.
28 Reeves 2002.
In February 2004 the ACNI launched a new lottery-funded project called the Art of Regeneration in partnership with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). A total of £2.4 million, available through the Arts Council, was allocated to local authorities to begin to target arts projects in areas perceived to be in need of social and economic regeneration. The project was intended to assist local authorities in the development, design and delivery of arts projects aimed at tackling issues of concern to local communities, such as good relations, the environment and anti-social behaviour. The objective was to create a culture-led social and economic regeneration project that would contribute to the genesis of creative ideas and divergent approaches, by placing the arts and artists at its heart. The programme supports arts projects that normally run over a four-year period, and which forge new partnerships between a wide range of public bodies and community groups. The programme was also understood as a principal driver for the later Re-imaging Communities programme.

The regeneration programme signalled the emergence of a serious and sustained attempt to establish a process of urban and rural change across Northern Ireland, by taking advantage of the unique contribution that the arts can make to dealing with social and economic questions, such as social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal and economic productivity. Given the recent history of Northern Ireland, the programme is a mark of recognition of the contribution that local people can make in the process of renewal and development.

The initial analysis and understanding of the programme included the conviction and the insight that successful regeneration projects were likely to have a number of important characteristics: first they could not be achieved or realised overnight, that is they needed time and sustained effort to learn how to be effective; second that they remained aware in their planning of the profound levels of social and economic difficulties faced by many communities; third that in the process of engaging communities through public art they needed to involve a range of groups, organisations and perspectives that could bring together different experiences and skills; and fourth that the planning and structuring of the project’s activities requires a sustained, joined-up approach to delivery.

29 Arts Council Northern Ireland 2004
Some examples of local projects that have been funded include: locating ‘functional public art’ in children’s play areas using recycled materials; helping to promote a community interest in traditional music as an element in cross-community activity; finding ways of improving the general environment in relation to graffiti and other forms of defacement; urban renewal; improving run-down central districts in towns and cities, for example as ‘cultural quarters’; and finding ways to promote public safety through the medium of art.

Council areas all over Northern Ireland benefited from Art of Regeneration funding, including Craigavon, Derry City, Moyle, Ballymoney, Antrim, North Down, Strabane, Fermanagh and Newtownabbey. The experience of promoting this programme, and the range of contacts and inputs involved across Northern Ireland, represent an important contribution to the Re-imaging Communities programme.

3.7 Renewing Communities

Since Northern Ireland was established as a separate jurisdiction in 1920, the stresses and oppositions within the population have tended to ensure that the Catholic and Protestant communities live together separately. The extent to which this has been true at any given time has varied and changed, depending on the level of political calmness and absence of violence. The current position, resulting from the long years of conflict, is that community separation is widespread in most parts of Northern Ireland, and almost total in Belfast.\(^{30}\)

Partly resulting from this widespread separation, the word alienation is much used in Northern Ireland, although it is not always clear to what exactly it refers. Currently the word is mainly used in association with the Protestant community, where it appears to refer to feelings of estrangement, disaffection, separation, withdrawal, powerlessness, discrimination, and so on. There is also a view that a sense of alienation can be aggravated when there is (or appears to be) an absence of policies and structures within government that work to promote equality of opportunity and properly proportionate allocation of resources and finance in the form of initiatives, resources and financial incentives.

\(^{30}\) Poole and Doherty 1995 and 1996.
In particular the view has been expressed that somehow Catholic communities are more adept or more skilled, at making their case for community investment, and that social structures in nationalist areas are better adapted to the processes and strategies needed in seeking funding. These perceptions were supported to some degree by a report in July 2003 on EU funding under the European Union’s Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE 1), which indicated an allocation around 56 per cent to the Catholic community compared to 44 per cent to Protestants areas. The report also suggested two reasons for this difference: first that the difference was due to relatively higher levels of disadvantage in Catholic areas, and second that people in predominantly Catholic areas were more likely to apply for Programme funding.

Educational disparity is also much referred to, especially at primary level in some Protestant areas in Belfast, but also with reference to GCSE and other examination results. At third level there is research indicating a continuing trend for many Protestant teenagers to go to universities in England and Scotland and find jobs there instead of returning home.

Overall the proportion of Protestants who leave to study in Britain is twice as high as for Catholic … only about 25 per cent of those who graduate in Britain come back to Northern Ireland, partly due to this exodus.

A number of initiatives and conferences have been established to consider this problem. In January 2005 the DSD agreed to fund an initiative called the Community Convention and Development Company (CCDC). CCDC was established to promote and support the creation of ‘community conventions’ in Protestant working class areas. This approach was intended as part of a process of community transformation, through the development at local level of the skills and leadership needed to help the communities grow and become more confident. The DSD funding is intended to make it possible to organise such community conventions, which are

---

31 Shannon 2006
32 Haase and Pratschke 2003
33 McKittrick 2007
34 Osborne 2007
35 http://archive.nics.gov.uk/sd/050131g-sd.htm (January 2005)
designed to meet the needs of the local community, and normally involve an all-day meeting of local people and statutory agencies. A total of four conventions have been held so far with a total attendance of over 1,000 representatives from a wide cross-section of the Protestant (or PUL\textsuperscript{36}) community.

These and other perceptions about working-class Protestant communities led to the establishment, in April 2004, of a taskforce - with membership made up of senior civil servants from all government departments - to tackle disadvantage in all its forms, but with particular emphasis on the needs of Protestant working class communities. The work of the Taskforce included ‘a comprehensive review of existing research; the commissioning of two new pieces of research into the Sandy Row and Greater Village areas; and extensive engagement and consultation with civil and elected representatives of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland.’

The taskforce report was published in April 2006\textsuperscript{37} and, arising from it, a ‘high level Delivery Team’ was established to take forward the findings of the report and produce an Action Plan. This resulted in a second document called ‘Renewing Communities’ in June 2006.\textsuperscript{38} The Action Plan identified five key areas along with a total of 62 proposed actions, and the five areas are as follows:

1. Improving Life Prospects, for example by means of tackling poor levels of educational attainment and raising educational and vocational attainment and employability;
2. Building Communities and Social Cohesion, for example by focussing on physical and social regeneration;
3. Growing Civic and Community Leadership and Active Citizenship, for example by encouraging stronger leadership;
4. Improving Public Service Delivery, for example by focusing service to meet the needs of particular communities;
5. Freeing Communities from Paramilitary and Criminal Influence. Will address offending behaviour, reduce the fear of crime, work to put an end to violence and to reduce, and eventually remove, the presence and influence of paramilitary organisations in all communities.

\textsuperscript{36} The acronym PUL is now sometimes used to represent the ‘Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist’ community.
\textsuperscript{37} Department of Social Development 2006a
\textsuperscript{38} Department of Social Development 2006b
A Re-imaging Communities project is proposed as one of the 62 listed actions, with the lead department specified as DCAL. It is categorised under heading five, that is: ‘Freeing Communities from Paramilitary and Criminal Influence’, is the second of the actions proposed there (5.2), and is described in the document as follows:

The aim of the programme is to anchor local projects through local councils’ ‘good relations’ plans and to grant fund the development of community based projects with particular emphasis on the replacement of existing paramilitary murals and other offensive items with new and more positive imagery.

A total of £33 million, over a 3-year period, was made available to implement the commitments, and this was to be further complemented by the £100 million Children and Young People Fund and the £35 million Skills and Science Fund. It was also intended that the Action plan would complement the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy, launched in June 2003.39

3.8 Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has recognised the wider importance of the Shared Future Strategy across Northern Ireland, and of the need to take this into account in planning and development within the police service. An internal Board (The Strategic Diversity Management Board) has been established to oversee the management of the Shared Future Strategy, along with other related matters such as Section 75 responsibilities, and equal opportunity issues. The Board met for the first time in June 2006, and membership included the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Senior Police Staff, Assistant Chief Constables and representatives from the Policing Board.

Prior to this the PSNI had been much involved in initiating a consideration of how best to deal with the continuing problem of the flying of flags in Northern Ireland. In April 2005 a multi-agency partnership to tackle this issue was launched, with membership that included the PSNI, OFMDFM, the Department for Regional Development, the Department of the Environment, the Department for Social Development and the Housing Executive. All agreed to join forces to sign a protocol

39 Department of Social Development 2003a
to address the flying of flags, particularly those representing or indicating support for proscribed organisations. The main aim of the protocol is described as:

to work proactively, with communities, to address the removal of flags and emblems from arterial routes and town centres and the removal of all paramilitary flags and displays. It also seeks to control displays of flags and emblems in particular areas - for example, interfaces, places of worship, schools and hospitals. The protocol also states that a popular flag flying should also be limited to particular times and dates and flags displayed for cultural festivals should be time bounded.

In addition a joint statement made it clear that:

"The issue of the display of flags here is an emotive one. The use of flags in instances such as the celebration of festivity is normally not an issue; however the display of flags to mark out geographical areas or promote sectarianism or intimidation is wholly unacceptable in a peaceful and tolerant society.

The emphasis during this period was on ‘consultation, negotiation and enforcement’ through a process of encouragement and community discussion, and the reported result has been a considerable reduction in the number of flags flown.

The PSNI has also placed some emphasis on the view that “the flying of flags is not a policing issue alone.’ That is that a range of public bodies and departments are, and need to be, involved in addressing this issue.

During 2006-2007 a wider ‘Shared Future Strategy’ was developed around the fundamental assumption that all PSNI activities would be underpinned by fairness and respect. The implications of this were described as follows:

we will: ensure equality; promote diversity; develop an understanding of the different perspectives of our past; and contribute to bettering relations between different groups in our society.

There was an emphasis on the importance of being aware that the activities and responses of an effective Police Service should take account of the needs and understandings of the wide range of different groups represented within the society.

Face-to-face and written consultations and interviews were also achieved with a range of involved organisations and stakeholders in the community/voluntary sector as well
as written consultation, and the Deputy Chief Constable was appointed to ‘lead on the delivery of the Shared Future Strategy by attributing the necessary resources, human, physical and financial and holding everyone to account for performance in this area.’

Examples of activities resulting included the long-term commitment of the PSNI to the management of the cross Departmental Flags Protocol, and making financial and other contributions towards graffiti projects, involving children and young people getting together to remove graffiti and produce new murals with the consent of the local communities.

3.9 The Department for Social Development (DSD)

DSD has strategic responsibility for a number of areas including urban regeneration, community and voluntary sector development, housing and social legislation. Its mission statement includes the words ‘together, tackling disadvantage, building communities’. Social, community and economic regeneration of areas are central to the aims of the Department and they have been responsible for a number of regeneration policies and programmes throughout Northern Ireland.

In 2003 the strategy for neighbourhood renewal, ‘People and Place – A strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal’ was launched by the Government. It was a 7-10 year strategy specifically aimed at areas that suffered greatly from high levels of deprivation. At the time it was reported that one in seven of the population live in highly deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The strategy took a long term, integrated approach to tackling deprivation across Northern Ireland, and although it was a cross departmental strategy in that all Government bodies had a commitment to neighbourhood renewal, DSD had the central responsibility for driving the strategy forward. It was aimed at working in partnerships in some of the most deprived areas as identified by the Nobel indicators. In the end 36 areas were identified: 15 in the Belfast area, 6 in the Derry/Londonderry area and 15 in other regions. Neighbourhood Partnerships were established in these neighbourhood renewal areas with representation from key political, statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors. Many of these partnerships have since developed action plans for their areas. A Neighbourhood Renewal Unit was also established to help implement the strategy and to monitor its progress. The intention of the strategy was to close the gap of inequality
between those living in these areas and the rest of society. The four strategic objectives were:

- Community Renewal - to develop confident communities that are able and committed to improving the quality of life in their areas.
- Economic Renewal - to develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider urban economy.
- Social Renewal - to improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods through better co-ordinated public services and the creation of safer environments.
- Physical Renewal - to help create attractive, safe and sustainable environments in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

Some of the targets contained in the objectives of ‘community renewal’ and ‘physical renewal’ were to increase the numbers in deprived areas getting involved in their community, to address derelict sites and to increase the satisfaction levels of residents with their area.

Certain themes underline the strategy: that effective regeneration requires an integrated, partnership approach; that schemes are more successful if they actively involve communities; and that deprivation is exaggerated by religious and cultural division and therefore integration of communities needs to be encouraged and segregation discouraged.

In February 2008 DSD unveiled a new Housing Agenda which detailed a number of measures intended to address the current housing crisis in Northern Ireland. A central theme in the agenda was the development and encouragement of housing areas with a greater religious mix in its population. This was a response to the fact that the 30-plus years of conflict has produced predominantly segregated housing, especially in regard to social housing. In August 2008 a joint venture involving the International Fund for Ireland and DSD, and managed by the NIHE, was launched to support and encourage shared housing in Northern Ireland. The intention of the Shared Neighbourhood Programme is to provide assistance and support to those wishing to develop their areas into shared neighbourhoods. It is hoped that, in bringing people from different backgrounds together, this will contribute to the existence and celebration of diversity. The types of support available under the programme include grants to run cultural awareness and community events, community relations training, help to develop
Neighbourhood Charters and to deliver Good Relations programmes and community consultations. There are plans over the next three years to develop at least 30 of these shared future housing schemes and five housing areas have already committed themselves to the programme. In general the programme is aimed at contributing to the vision of a Shared Future in that it is directly addressing issues concerned with reconciliation. In addition DSD is represented on the Shared Communities Consortium which manages and supervises the day-to-day activities of the Re-imaging Communities programme.

3.10 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

The central responsibility of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (referred to as ‘The Regional Strategic Housing Authority’) is the provision of an adequate supply of acceptable housing across Northern Ireland, taking particular account of the needs of those areas where housing is in poor condition or inadequate in numbers, and offering help to those who are most vulnerable.

However, the separations and divisions within the wider community, and the impact of the long conflict, have inevitably added to these primary responsibilities. Clearly the provision and management of a general housing sector across Northern Ireland remains for the NIHE the central or general responsibility. However, over the years it has also found itself at the forefront in dealing with problems resulting from social upheaval involving sectarianism, violence, inter-group conflict and community segregation.

In the early days of the conflict the most serious social problems for the NIHE resulted from intimidation, widespread community movement especially in Belfast, and the consequent and urgent need in many cases for re-housing. Later government interventions, such as the 1998 Northern Ireland Act (and in particular Section 75 (2), which dealt with specific subsections of the population) added to the community responsibilities of the NIHE, leading in time to the publication of a ‘community relations strategy’ in March 2004. Recent changes such as the political agreements, the return of a devolved Assembly, and the creation of the ‘Shared Future’ policy, have all added new responsibilities.
The consequence of these developments has been that the NIHE has had a continuing and expanding role in the promotion and encouragement of good community relations and community cohesion within and between communities. Factors contributing to this have included the continuing presence of the NIHE within communities, and good positive and productive relationships with community groups through the Housing Community Network.

The publication of the Shared Future agenda has been supported by NIHE in a number of ways, including a commitment to promote mixed housing where it is practicable, desirable and safe; the introduction of a ‘Shared Future Neighbourhood Programme’, that provides support for people who live in a shared neighbourhood; and the development of ‘Shared Future housing schemes’, with three of these currently at different levels of development, and other sites being examined as possible future additional schemes.

The notion of community cohesion has also been emphasised, and this is thought to include the encouragement of a sense of belonging, of being prepared to accept and appreciate people from different backgrounds and circumstances, of providing equitable opportunities for all, and of promoting good relations through education, the workplace and within neighbourhoods.

NIHE has also encouraged, supported and shown local initiative in connection with the ‘Re-imaging Communities Programme': this support has been of particular assistance because of NIHE’s close and often long-term relationships with housing estates, local communities, local councils and individual community groups. As a result a number of feasibility studies and individual projects have emerged and continue to emerge.

It can also be argued that the role of NIHE, in association with the PSNI and other groups, has been crucial in the development of the flag protocol, in persuading local groups to agree about when and where flags can be flown, in a widespread shift away from paramilitary displays, and in the reduction in the numbers of illegal and paramilitary flags on display.
3.11 **International Fund for Ireland (IFI)**

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) is an independent international organisation established by the British and Irish Governments in 1986, and supported by financial contributions from the United States of America, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It aims “to promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland.”

The Fund launched a new five year strategy in January 2006 called 'Sharing This Space', which is aimed at promoting reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties. The strategy marked a significant change of direction for the IFI, in that it was a movement away from an emphasis on economic regeneration towards identifying and supporting more direct ways of promoting reconciliation. ‘Sharing This Space’ therefore focuses on ways of encouraging people in Northern Ireland to begin to break down and remove the many forms of division and separation that characterise the two communities. Approaches supported include the encouragement of intergroup contact and dialogue between the two communities and the development of joint or shared projects and initiatives.

This approach by IFI paralleled the Executive’s commitment to ‘a shared future’, and recognised the many challenges that remain throughout Northern Ireland, not only as a result of general social and community deprivation and high levels of criminality, but also the mutual long-term antagonisms and prejudice that serve to keep the two communities apart, and to sustain low levels of trust and confidence. The recent political developments of a more positive nature, along with concomitant government initiatives, have also helped to create an atmosphere of support for the development of peace and tolerance on the ground.

The new IFI strategy is also intended to make its work ‘more flexible and responsive to the evolving and complex environment in which it works, while retaining its strong focus on reconciliation.’ In particular the Fund is providing financial support for the Re-imaging Communities Programme, and is a member of the Shared Communities

---

40 www.internationalfundforireland.com
41 ibid

THE RE-IMAGING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME 33
Consortium which manages and supervises the day-to-day activities of the programme, with an emphasis on ensuring an integrated and co-ordinated approach to addressing the issue of flags, emblems and sectarian symbols, and in particular the removal and replacement of murals with a paramilitary or sectarian character.
CHAPTER 4
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON SYMBOLISM

4.1 Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the Re-Imaging Programme established by the ACNI in July 2006. An important part of the study, specified in the terms of reference, involves undertaking a review of the role that symbolism has played in the Northern Ireland conflict. Insights concerning symbolism are therefore intended to illuminate and authenticate the discussions and analyses that follow in the rest of this report.

There are also a number of wider contexts to be considered, within which symbolism in Northern Ireland exists and changes. First, studies concerning the role of the Arts – including symbolism - in the promotion of economic and social change have made substantial progress in recent years, and some appreciation of the experiences of other countries and regions in this regard is a critical element in the wider understanding of the Re-imaging Programme; second, it is important to take account of the influence and impact of recent political developments in Northern Ireland on all aspects of social and cultural change, and to test the view that the Re-imaging Communities programme will be an important component in the achievements and degrees of success of these developments.

4.2 Role of the arts in economic and social regeneration
A wide international background of research, documentation and development relating to the role of the Arts in the creation and promotion of a healthy and economically productive society has emerged comparatively recently. In addition, a substantial number of documents, reports, proposals and initiatives referring to community innovation and re-creation have been generated within Northern Ireland in recent years. These have come from government sources as well as civil society generally, and are concerned with identifying and examining ways in which difficulties, blockages and barriers within the society can be ameliorated or removed.
The notion that the arts can make a significant contribution to the promotion of a healthy and economically productive society is obviously not new. In the past, however, the economic contribution was often thought of as incidental, relatively insignificant, or even as an accidental by-product. More recently this view has received a much more thorough and analytical scrutiny, which has concluded that the positive impact of art can be much more effective and wide-ranging when it is planned for and not simply left to chance and optimism. This view began to be taken seriously in America in the 1960s as various cities started to develop what were termed ‘cultural quarters’ in run down districts. Similar developments began to be established in parts of Europe and by the 1980s ‘cultural regeneration projects’ had emerged in some cities in Britain.

A paper in 2002 by Reeves for the Arts Council of England provides a good summary of the historical background in the UK. She points out that “The social benefits of the arts on individual and community development had been argued by the Community Arts Movement since the 1960s” and goes on to describe how urban regeneration programmes in Britain (especially in cities including Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool) from the early 1980s onwards began to include arts and cultural activity as a feature. The publication of an important and influential paper from the Policy Study Institute argued that the arts sector was a significant economic player in its own right, with a turnover of £10 billion and employing some 500,000 people. This was succeeded by other similar studies in specific regions, which have added to this wider perspective, and an overview of the general picture was published by the Policy Studies Institute in 1996. More recently what is now referred to as the ‘creative industries sector’ is recognised as part of the global economy, and is referred to by international organisations such as the European Commission, the World Bank, and by both national and local governments.

Succeeding studies (including one on the Arts and the Northern Ireland Economy) began to chart the benefits of involving communities in social renewal programmes: for example Landry and others charted the success of the arts and urban regeneration in

---

42 Reeves 2002  
43 Myerscough 1988  
44 Casey et al. 1996  
45 Myerscough 1996  
46 Landry et al. 1996
many countries and argued that benefits included enhancing social cohesion, improving local image, and reducing offending behaviour.

4.3 The political background

The wider context of the review includes in particular the 1998 Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which remains the central political contribution to the slow evolution of a power-sharing political settlement in Northern Ireland. The Agreement set out the arrangements and organisational forms for a new devolved government, as well as structures relating to a new political relationship between the UK and Ireland. An immediate outcome of this agreement, therefore, was the establishment of a devolved legislative assembly at Stormont in 1998. Opposition to the Agreement, especially on the unionist side, increased steadily during the lifetime of this devolution, leading to a sequence of short suspensions: a final suspension in October 2002 lasted until May 2007. Talks held in St Andrews in Scotland in November 2006 allowed new elections to take place in March 2007, and these were followed by the restoration of the Assembly on 8th May 2007.

The 1998 Agreement reflected an acknowledgement - however grudging or reluctant or long-delayed - that the two political and social groupings had to find a shared model of accommodation if the conflict and violence were to end. In addition, developments in European and international conventions and legislation relating to minorities and to human rights, combined with the experience of living through the conflict, had created a keen awareness of the difficulties faced by minorities and the need to include systems designed to protect them from discrimination, threats and hostility.

Not surprisingly the Agreement document is mainly concerned with constitutional issues such as the status of Northern Ireland, and the problems of specifying as clearly as possible the structures, procedures and institutions of the proposed new administration. The question of symbolism is, therefore, for the most part embedded in the document in that direct references to symbols are uncommon and relatively understated or implicit, with no developed ideas about how the difficulties that they represent can be dealt with.
The main reference appears in the section on Economic, Social and Cultural Issues, and there is a further reference in the section on the Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland:

All participants acknowledge the sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes, and the need in particular in creating new institutions to ensure that such symbols and emblems are used in a manner which promotes mutual respect rather than division. Arrangements will be made to monitor this issue and consider what action might be required (page 20).

Its proposals on policing should be designed to ensure that policing arrangements, including composition, recruitment, training, culture, ethos and symbols, are such that in a new approach Northern Ireland has a police service that can enjoy widespread support from, and is seen as an integral part of, the community as a whole (page 23). 47

Political and social developments since the Agreement have included a number of policies and programmes of significance for community evolution and progress that have implications at one level or another for the role of symbolism in the public life of the new Northern Ireland. The initial or central focus of these developments, however, has reflected a concern with economic regeneration and renewal within Northern Ireland as a whole: there has also been an intention, sometimes implicit, to provide support and assistance to those communities and neighbourhoods identified as deprived and most in need, on the grounds that such deprivation is often associated with support for violence and conflict. The previous chapter (Chapter 3) of this report contains a detailed analysis of some of these programmes, and of their intentions and developments.

The Re-imaging Communities Programme was announced in July 2006 as one of this series of initiatives and documents resulting from the ending of the conflict. The intention behind the programme is to tackle ‘the visible signs of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland communities, with a particular emphasis on the replacement of existing paramilitary murals and other items with new and more

47 The Agreement 1998
positive imagery." The documentation from the Arts Council describes the programme as follows:

The programme encourages the creation of vibrant and attractive shared public space through the use of the creative arts in the public realm, which will celebrate life, enhance the physical and natural environment and help people feel part of the community in which they live. Re-imaging Communities is rooted in the building of a shared future for Northern Ireland, which is peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair, founded on partnership, equality and mutual respect as a basis of good relationships. In order to help achieve such a society, communities and agencies need to work together to free the public realm from threat, displays of sectarian and racial aggression and intimidation while allowing for legitimate expression of cultural celebration. This could be achieved, by working with artists, in a range of ways, from the creation of positive mural art to applied art (such as ceramics, decorative brickwork or mosaic) to three-dimensional sculpture, artistic light installation or the production of crafted street furniture.

The programme will therefore relate, often quite directly, to the symbolic forms used by both communities as ways of identifying their allegiances, imagined histories, and beliefs. This approach recognises, at least implicitly, that for the great majority of people, the outward expression of conflict has not been through direct physical violence, but through rituals and icons that assert and reassert identity, and that are invested with an emotional resonance arising from past events such as the Twelfth of July or the Easter Rising. It is therefore likely to be a complicated and long-term project to find suitable or acceptable ways of replacing such symbols, although there is some evidence of change, for example a recently reported reduction in the incidence of certain aggressive forms of flags and other emblems.

It is too soon to speculate about the impact of the new assembly and executive on the continuing separations, mutual antagonisms and general faultlines within Northern Ireland, and in particular on the evolving role and development of the separate symbolic traditions. It is probably safe to assume however that the new context of shared government and power will have some influence on how these matters change and develop.

48 Arts Council Northern Ireland 2006
49 Ibid
50 Irish Times, January 27, 2007, Byran and Stevenson 2006
4.4 The meaning and role of symbols

A symbol is defined in dictionaries as something which, by convention, stands for something else. The use of symbols therefore makes it possible to represent the world to ourselves and others, often by means of abstract - rather than literal - connections between, on the one hand, an icon or action of some kind, and beliefs or feelings on the other. The choice of symbol is often arbitrary, but can be so well established as to appear to be inevitable: for example, the colour black is associated with death or mourning, while the colour red is associated with danger.

Meanings are therefore ascribed to symbols in ways that are understood and shared within groups, allowing for quick and easy modes of communication, a sense of collective identity and a degree of cultural homogeneity. All aspects of human behaviour, and especially the use of language to communicate or express ideas, involve symbols. When we talk we use one sort of thing (that is a word) to represent another, that is the thing itself. All human cultures therefore have developed complex symbolic systems as ways of referencing the world, so that by means of symbols they make sense of and relate to activities and experiences such as joining in group activities, interacting with others, playing games, practising religion and so on.

Among human beings, though not confined to them, the need for symbolic systems appears to be universal: for example a spoken language, or some form of musical activity, or playing games, or the use of colour, are common to most if not all societies. The forms that these common symbols take are different, however, in that distinct cultures or nations or communities develop their own symbolic forms, and these become ways of identifying membership, of providing coherence and boundaries, and of recognising and accepting cultural norms.

Symbols are therefore necessary in obvious ways such as the need for language. They are also functional and even inevitable as ways of dealing with happenings such as historical events, environmental experiences, forms of belief, and cultural expressions. Since they also have the capacity to represent beliefs and experiences, they can engender emotional responses in particular contexts.
Not all symbolic forms are simple or unthreatening, even when at some level we know they cannot harm us, and this capacity to startle or alarm is particularly evident with iconic or pictorial images, and is much used in drama and films - often for that purpose. The emotional impact of this kind of symbol is not limited to any particular group in society, and meanings can be both widespread and explicit.

Other symbols however can have very specific meanings for particular groups or communities, while having little and sometimes no significance for others. This is particularly true of countries and nations, where historical happenings (and wars in particular), or religious beliefs, or myths of origin, often imbue particular symbols with great importance and emotional power. There are many examples: in America the *Star-Spangled Banner* and the *Liberty Bell* represent compelling historical and national meanings for many Americans, but not usually for non-Americans; and, in England the *Union Flag*, or Blake’s *Jerusalem*, are potent symbols of a long history and culture.

Most if not all societies, therefore, will have available a number of recognised symbolic forms, perhaps a flag or a sporting event or a form of dance. Where there is a degree of coherence and unanimity within the society about fundamental matters such as culture, nationality or religion, and where there is no perceived threat or danger to the community, these symbols are likely to be displayed publicly, only on particular days or at specified events. The importance of such symbols is obvious and unambiguous, even if understated or unemphasised: but they are unlikely to be harmful in the sense that they are rarely opposed with any strength of feeling.

Symbols in themselves therefore are not necessarily controversial or divisive. Problems can and do arise when two (or more) groups within a community are unable to agree about central matters such as nationality or identity, or when there exists a sense of insecurity, discord or division. In these situations different sets of symbols will emerge and these are likely to be displayed more often, with more prominence and in greater numbers, and can be invested with a secondary role that can be a threat, a deterrent or as a territorial marker. In these situations symbolic displays usually have political and historical resonances, intended to remind communities of ancient
battles won or lost, of defeats of the other side, of the continuing threat of danger, and of ownership or control of particular territories or neighborhoods or towns.

The existence of such inter-group rivalries and conflicts generates a constant need to invoke memories of former triumphs and victories (whether real or imagined) by means of symbolic displays and rituals. The consequences can range from the trivial, to serious inter-group conflict. In the past in Northern Ireland the two main groups have not trusted each other, believe that historically they have been wronged, cannot agree about forms of governance or national identity, and have become involved in conflict and violence. In these circumstances they have looked to differing symbols to represent their own particular position, boundary, belief or historical memory.

4.5 Symbols in Northern Ireland
Symbols in Northern Ireland take many forms and serve many purposes, are present in both communities, and usually represent contested rather than shared views. Some are cultural in nature, some religious and some political, although these categorisations often overlap and become confused. The resilience and range of forms of symbols, the frequency of their use and appearance, and the places where they are likely to be found, are measures of their importance as indicators of group membership, and of collective memory.

A great many of the symbols are visual and iconic such as murals, flags, painted kerbstones, as well as a variety of forms of dress such as sashes, football shirts or Scottish kilts. There is also a range of possible attachment to dress, such as poppies, Easter lilies, or badges, worn as memorials at times when past events or anniversaries are being remembered. There are also examples of singular or ‘small-scale’ forms of imagery, sometimes relating to a particular location, or event or memory. Examples include signs such as ‘sniper at work’, and ‘Brits out’; the crests of local marching bands on lamp posts; badges depicting specific local people – often local people killed in the conflict, hunger strikers, football teams, and so on. Songs and tunes are also used to symbolise differences, although sometimes the tune will be common to both sides but with different words. The songs are often referred to as ‘party songs’, some of which have lyrics that neither flatter the ‘other side’ nor indicate a desire to love their neighbour.
There are also symbolic activities such as: marches and marching bands, often accompanied by the building and burning of bonfires; various forms of dancing usually with distinctive dress codes; and, playing particular games. Sporting occasions in particular constitute a valuable platform or stage for exhibiting often colourful and remarkable displays of symbols, usually in great numbers so that they become a surrogate statement about power and strength. Specific events of this kind are conscripted as a way of making a public statement about allegiances. Sometimes individual players are targeted as the enemy, often on the assumption that their name or background identifies their political views or religion; but the main focus is usually on soccer teams and occasionally Gaelic football teams. In particular some teams, usually for historical reasons, are closely associated with one or other community: this association has not always been acceptable to the clubs themselves even when they appear to be helpless to do much about it. Finally particular organisations have clear community (and sometimes religious and political) associations such as the Loyal Orders\textsuperscript{51}, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), and these inevitably necessitate a range of symbolic associations.\textsuperscript{52}

Displays of symbols and public imagery are particularly germane in divided societies. In Northern Ireland, especially in working-class Protestant and Catholic communities, and at particular times of the year, many streets and housing estates can be blanketed with a colourful - almost visually incoherent - range of flags, bunting, pictures, murals painted on gable walls, and kerbstones painted with territorial colours.

There is also an increasingly extensive literature that describes, categorises and contextualises these symbols, for example:

There have always been a great many symbols, and also kinds of symbols, used by both sides in Northern Ireland … Some are seasonal and reappear each year at the appointed time, such as Orange gates, arches, bunting and regalia. Some, like flags or murals, or even painted kerbstones, are public statements of loyalty to a particular tradition or are an indication of the political sympathies within a particular region or housing estate or even street. Others relate to versions of patriotism and past political struggles, such as the poppy, or symbols of royalty,

\textsuperscript{51} The main bodies included in the Loyal Orders are the Orange Order, the Royal Black Institution, and the Apprentice Boys of Derry.
\textsuperscript{52} Bryan, Dunn and Fraser 1995
the national anthem(s), oaths of allegiance or the loyal toast.\textsuperscript{53}

The range of forms that symbols can assume varies across countries and nations, and local symbols often only have significance for local people who have the knowledge to ‘read’ the symbols accurately.

Many states and provinces have national flowers, trees, animals and so on, but they are usually less important symbols of identity. Portraits of religious leaders, the founders of the present regime or the present leader can have a symbolic importance. In many states an official portrait is displayed in public offices.\textsuperscript{54}

There is little difficulty involved in interpreting the meaning and significance of most of the larger symbols in Northern Ireland, such as murals or flags or parades: however, many of the smaller items can be puzzling, especially when in some cases the events that prompted them have been largely forgotten. Examples might include the slogan ‘Ulster Says No’, painted on some walls in loyalist areas, which originated as a response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985; the Star of David appears on some icons, and refers to a view held by some that the Ulster Protestant people are the lost tribe of Israel; and, the slogan ‘Tiócfáidh ár Lá’, which appears in nationalist areas and means in Irish ‘our day will come’.

4.6 Literature and research on symbols in Northern Ireland

4.61 The general picture

Research and related literature on the overall landscape of symbols and rituals in Northern Ireland has grown considerably in recent times. A complete and detailed discussion of the literature on all of these would be impossible here: but it is possible to illustrate the ideas and questions that arise by looking in some detail at a number of the most obvious and prominent examples of symbols.

An attempt to do this now follows by focussing on murals, parades, flags and bonfires. In addition a general impression of the range and variety of the material available can also be achieved by including some selective references to other forms

\textsuperscript{53} Dunn and Dawson 2000
\textsuperscript{54} Bryson and McCartney 1994
of symbols. This includes for example: material on symbols generally,\textsuperscript{55} on languages - including Irish and Ulster Scots\textsuperscript{56}, and on soccer football.\textsuperscript{57} Full listings on all of these can be found in the references section to this report on page 126.

4.62 Parades

Since the formation of Northern Ireland in 1920, parades and marches have traditionally been used by both sides as a fundamental means of asserting or denying the Britishness of the territory and the land. For loyalists the determination to assert the right to parade anywhere in Northern Ireland is never a trivial matter, but is always a symbolic affirmation of essential rights, and one that must be repeated over and over again. This view is summed up by The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, as follows.

In the interests of clarity in relation to our stance on Parades the following Policy Statement was agreed. The basic controlling principle is that together with all law-abiding citizens Orangemen possess certain inalienable rights. Among these is the right of free assembly, and that necessitates the right to proceed in a peaceable and orderly manner to and from the place of assembly, whether it be a church or other venue. We hold that these rights are non-negotiable. There can be no question of one group of free citizens having to ask permission from any other self-appointed authority to walk the public highways of our land. No one community owns the roads of Ulster.\textsuperscript{58}

Over the years there have been many confrontations and outbreaks of violence associated with parades, very often caused by decisions to march through towns and areas where nationalists are in the majority. For some loyalists, to allow nationalists to succeed in stopping a parade through any area is not just to be deprived of an inalienable right, but also to accept the implication that the area is in some sense no longer part of Britain. Finding agreements about parades is therefore the most obdurate and provocative of all problems precisely because the right of access is such a direct symbol of the central disagreement that separates the two communities, that is the partition of the island.

\textsuperscript{55} Buckley 1994, Buckley and Paisley 1998, Bryson and McCartney 1994
\textsuperscript{57} Sugden and Bairner 1993, Bairner 1997.
\textsuperscript{58} A Policy Statement agreed by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at its Meeting in June 1997 when it discussed the Parades issue in detail.
This interpretation was exemplified by events in the mid 1990s surrounding a demand that the Orange Order should be allowed to walk down the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road near Portadown. The Order claimed that this was a traditional march, held every year on the Sunday before the ‘Twelfth’ of July. The quarrel that resulted has still not been fully resolved but the parade has passed off peacefully in recent years. During a sequence of annual confrontations in the 1990s, between the loyalists on the one hand, and the army and police on the other, the violence became more and more serious and uncompromising, and in a sense turned into a surrogate for the wider conflict: the question of having a right to march or to prevent a march became the central barrier to the stability and governance of Northern Ireland.

The first modern analysis of parades was carried out in the Centre for the Study of Conflict (CSC) at the University of Ulster and published in 1995. This report dealt with the particular issue of loyalist parades in Portadown, their history, the opposition and protests that they generated, and referred in particular to the first disputed Drumcree parade in July 1995. In the following year (1996) a second report was published setting out in great detail information about Northern Ireland parades generally, their numbers, those involved, historical matters, and statistics and so on. This report also included a proposal that a ‘Parades Commission’ be established to regulate parades generally and to deal with disputes. Following this a ‘Parades Commission’ was established under the Public Processions (NI) Act 1998.

Among other responsibilities the Commission is legally obliged to issue a Code of Conduct providing guidance to, and regulating the conduct of, people organising a parade or protest meeting. It is also required to issue procedural rules that regulate and prescribe how it conducts its mediation and determination functions, along with guidelines governing its powers to impose conditions on parades.

A number of other publications on parades from the CSC followed in 1997, 1998 and 2000. Since then the amount of material has continued to grow, partly because of publicity surrounding a number of hotly contested decisions by the Parades

59 Bryan, Fraser and Dunn 1995
60 Jarman and Bryan 1996
Commission, and partly because the process of establishing generally acceptable regulations for parades continues to be politically controversial.

As a result of incidents and difficulties during 2001, the Secretary of State appointed Sir George Quigley (in November) to conduct a review of the Parades Commission and the legislation under which it was established. The subsequent report was submitted and circulated in November 2002. However in February 2005 it was decided that there would not be any fundamental changes to parading arrangements in Northern Ireland as recommended in the review. However, as a result of new difficulties relating to the problem of controlling supporters of parades, new legislation in 2005 gave the Parades Commission the power to make determinations in relation to supporters of parades. Following this the Parades Commission during 2006-2007 decided to review its procedures through a process of public consultation.

More recently a number of other developments have emerged that could be interpreted as positive steps in the direction of presenting parades in a more positive and community-related light, and of helping to ameliorate parades disputes. The first of these is a movement among some senior elements within the Loyal Orders to re-brand the traditional parades or demonstrations on the Twelfth of July as ‘Orangefest’, that is as a festival where the emphasis would be placed on the enjoyment and carnival side of the event, with a range of additional activities and presentations. For example a float representing the 1798 rising, with appropriately dressed participants, was included in 2007. The Orangefest initiative has attracted funding of £100,000.

A second development has been the creation of an ‘Ulster Bands Association’. This was formed in 1998 as a voluntary association consisting of marching (flute and accordion) bands from across Northern Ireland. The Association is described as
totally controlled, organised and run by representatives from member-bands of the Association. It does not have direct links to any of the Loyal Orders or any political party or movement. Nor does it subscribe to any political party or policy.
This can also be interpreted as a positive step in that in the past bands were not perceived as independent, and the new association may have some influence on difficulties associated with what have become known as ‘blood and thunder’ bands.

4.63 Murals

There is evidence that the practice of ‘painting on walls’ - or murals – is of very ancient origin, often dating back to prehistoric times, and examples can be found in many parts of the world, often in caves or on rocks. The practice has continued in many cultures and contexts over the centuries, so that in this Northern Ireland is not unique or exceptional.

It is claimed that there are over 2,000 murals in Northern Ireland although the actual number probably changes daily. Almost all of these are partisan in that they represent one of two political points of view, that is they embody support for either nationalism or unionism. Many of the murals glorify paramilitary groups such as the republican Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) or the loyalist Ulster Defence Association (UDA), although there is a wide range of other possibilities including historical events and commemorations of people who have lost their lives in the conflict. Perhaps the most famous mural is Free Derry Corner, where the slogan ‘You Are Now Entering Free Derry’ was painted in 1969, shortly after the Battle of the Bogside.

The range of written material on murals continues to expand, and to develop often quite sophisticated analyses of their history and development, the meanings both direct and symbolic associated with them, and the often parallel connections between political and social change, on the one hand, and the distinctive contents and form of the images, on the other. The endurance of tradition is also counter-pointed by the challenge of moving from a singular emphasis on conflict towards a new and complex response to political ambitions. The literature examines such matters as the relationship between the conflict, which lasted over thirty years, and the consequential – and inevitable - evolution in both the content and form of murals, including adaptations of culturally accepted norms, and the emergence of an emphasis on images reflecting political change.
Many of the publications include photographs of murals and the CAIN website includes a variety of examples of these, including a comprehensive ‘Directory of Murals in Northern Ireland’. This Mural Directory contains details of almost 3000 wall murals across Northern Ireland with photographs of a sample of the murals, a brief description of each and information on its location.

Murals on both sides inevitably reflect in some manner two opposing perspectives on the origins, histories and beliefs of the Northern Ireland people. The two groups cherish their separate histories, and related explanations and justifications of the long-standing oppositions and conflicts, going back to the creation of Northern Ireland and before. In particular the most recent long struggle, with its record of unremitting acts of terror and carnage on both sides, can be seen as a culmination of the longer conflict and a determination on both sides to find a conclusive ending.

In addition the availability of modern forms of weaponry, including automatic guns and modern forms of explosives, not only increased the capacity on both sides to bomb and kill, but made it possible to understand or interpret events as part of a ‘war’, and to represent those involved symbolically on murals with the language, icons and paraphernalia of combat, including soldiers, officers, battalions, heroes, patriots, Armalite rifles, and so on.

Not surprisingly there has been a continuing public debate in Northern Ireland about murals for a long time, and this is underlined by the very considerable literature that they have attracted, very often in book form, over the past 30 or so years. Many of these books contain not just descriptive and analytical material, but also illustrative colour photographs. Two contrasting viewpoints about murals can be identified in this literature, in news and other media, and more widely, and each viewpoint has a range of supporting arguments and analyses.

The disagreements refer to such matters as how murals are to be interpreted and understood, their worth or validity as works of art, and their purpose or function within the society. It is also the case that the levels of opposition or support are

---

62 http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ (This is an excellent repository of material on the conflict.)
63 McCormick 1999
impossible to quantify, since many murals have a paramilitary connection, and this tends to ensure that public comment is muted. More generally there are likely to be class and political dimensions to both opposing and supporting points of view.

Both supporters and detractors can therefore find different forms of value, or absence of value, in murals. As works of art they are thought by some to be significant in that they bring art into the public sphere, and are therefore seen by many people who would not normally enter an art gallery. Other interest groups include activists and their supporters, in the context of conflict and political struggle, who see murals as essential propaganda weapons; social campaigners, who argue that they are an important means of communication and of attracting attention to a problem or a social issue; and others who refer to the valuable social and community process involved in creating and maintaining murals.

In general the book literature appears to favour or support the existence of murals, and some authors ascribe considerable significance to them, arguing that they represent an important means of making political sense of Northern Ireland’s ideologies and cultures.\textsuperscript{64} There is an implication, not always directly expressed, that, by their very nature murals supplement or add to written analyses and descriptions of the conflict in ways that are distinctive and different: iconic presentations, it is argued, provide unique perspectives and subtleties in any attempt to understand what nationalist or loyalists believe in and stand for. They are also interpreted as providing a direct engagement with the community, presenting a representation of identity, history and culture that is not being distilled or interpreted through intermediaries. In addition many murals are changed and adapted over time and this process provides a visual commentary on political changes, suggesting new and evolving interpretations and responses.

In contrast those opposed to murals are sceptical about their value as art, and argue that they are temporary, unstable physically and usually painted by amateurs. The relationship with paramilitary groups on both sides also acts as a negative attribute, making it possible to interpret some murals as public statements in favour of guns and unelected power and as outside the democratic process. Community developers also

\textsuperscript{64} Rolston 1991
believe that the existence of murals, especially those supporting violence, reduces the likelihood of attracting resources for either social or economic regeneration.

Loyalist murals have existed since the foundation of Northern Ireland while those presenting a nationalist perspective were less in evidence until much later. The first loyalist mural in Belfast is believed to have been painted in 1908 and a tradition of painting murals seems to have existed by the 1920s when the Northern Ireland state was created. Early subjects in both Belfast and Derry illustrated classical loyalist motifs such as the lifting of the Siege of Derry in 1689 and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, occasionally interspersed with wider themes such as the Battle of the Somme or the sinking of the Titanic.

Murals were closely associated with the annual celebrations of the Battle of the Boyne on the Twelfth of July when a range of other symbols was much in display, including painted kerbstones, colourful arches, bunting hung from lampposts and buildings, and bonfires. There has also been an emphasis by unionists across Northern Ireland on the central importance of Derry’s long and colourful past, perhaps beginning with the Catholic uprising of 1641, the subsequent ‘Great Siege’ and the victories of King William of Orange. The unique role of Derry is exemplified to an extent by the continuing and widespread existence of branches of the Apprentice Boys of Derry all over Northern Ireland. The memory of past events therefore serves as a source of pride, a confirmation of religious, cultural and national difference and separateness, sometimes as a sense of superiority and arrogance, but also as a continuing awareness of danger and threat. For the painters of murals the memories provide compelling symbols, including the walls of Derry, the annual burning of an effigy of the traitor Lundy, the bravery of the Apprentice Boys, and the privations of the siege. The emotions generated in this way on more recent history and conflict is continually reflected in marches, bonfires, street decorations and murals. At their root they reinforce the metaphor of boundaries, and the implicit corollaries of walls, separation and ownership of territory.

As the violence and savagery of the modern conflict developed and became more intense, the levels of separation between the two communities also increased.

65 Rolston 1991
especially in Belfast and Derry. Areas became more and more segregated with newly constructed ‘peace’ walls acting as physical barriers between the communities. The result was that areas became ‘Protestant’ areas and ‘Catholic’ areas, and flags, murals and other emblems became marks of separation, of boundaries and of local cultural hegemony.

At the beginning of the conflict nationalist murals tended to refer less to past or historical events and more to comparatively recent happenings, such as the ‘Blanket Protest’ in the 1970s, the hunger strikes in the early 1980s, the Bloody Sunday deaths, and so on: that is to dramatic events, represented and made heroic or memorable by means of colourful wall paintings. Events in Derry added other symbolic themes that focussed on both recent historical events since 1968 such as the ‘Free Derry’ barricades, the Battle of the Bogside, and Bloody Sunday, as well as on continuing moments of violence and drama within the city itself.

Later still the emergent political dimension of the conflict became central to much of the imagery. In particular the election of Bobby Sands to Westminster initiated a change in the general approach to the conflict among republicans, especially in Belfast. There was the beginning of a move towards politics and away from violence, replacing the ‘Armalite rifle’ with ‘the ballot box’, and inevitably this substantive change of approach and intention had an impact on the subjects portrayed in murals.

More generally members of Sinn Féin began to stand for election – and to succeed in being elected - at local, national and UK level: to support this change the republican community was encouraged to develop a new social and political infrastructure, that included at various times, community networking, festivals, newspapers, radio stations, films, theatre, and so on. Alongside this it was thought important to generate a stronger public emphasis on the symbols and imagery of political and cultural nationalism, rather than on the ‘armed struggle’. This change of emphasis was reflected in the wider range of republican symbols and rituals in use, and in the approaches used to encourage their development. New strategies emerged, for example in relation to murals, that included using competitions and commissions to promote higher technical and artistic standards, with the emphasis on positive imagery to do with Sinn Féin, a United Ireland, and Irish culture, language and history.
The IRA ceasefire in August 1994 marked the beginning of movement away from and even the removal of some of the more extreme paramilitary pictures depicting hooded gunmen and paramilitary imagery. This was true on both sides, although probably more in evidence in republican murals as a result of the increasing involvement in politics: new themes included Irish history and mythology, as well as current matters such as elections and republican politicians. Similarly on the Loyalist side there has been some movement towards historical themes such as World War 1, images associated with the Ulster Scots language, matters related to culture and history and representations of modern heroes such as George Best. The strength of such change is difficult to measure, and it is important to make clear that there continued to be a great many murals referring in some way to the conflict and to the political and cultural division within the community.

There has also been an increased degree of anxiety among both communities about the emergence of a number of more general and relatively new social problems such as drug-taking, increased levels of suicide among young people, and crime associated with cars such as joyriding and deaths on the road. General disquiet and fears on both sides about negative community change of this kind is reflected in the increased use of murals as warnings, as memorials, and as ways of promoting change and public awareness of the dangers, especially in relation to young people,

A great many people on both sides died in the conflict and it is therefore not surprising that murals and memorials, and other forms of street symbolism are used to commemorate these. One publication describes this practice as follows:

The working-class areas contain many small memorials which record the names of local individuals who have been killed during the Troubles. Although some will include the name of relevant paramilitary organisations many commemorate those not killed by chance or misfortune. A diverse array of small plaques, formal marble memorials, murals and free-standing Celtic crosses is scattered across the city, and permanent reminders to the price of the cause.66

66 Jarman 1998
Many of the young people who died have been characterised within their own communities as soldiers fighting in battles for a cause. The power and weight of this perception has led inevitably to the need to construct ‘war memorials’ within local communities, as a way of honouring and remembering these young people. These memorials have a number of forms, some more permanent than others, but all clearly serving an important function in the continuing process of persuasion and recruitment. Their existence also provides a location and an iconic memorial where formal annual bereavement services, and renewal of political beliefs, can be held.

The changed atmosphere brought about by ceasefires and the peace process might seem like an encouragement to reduce the display of symbols of difference and separation, and images of conflict and war. However the evidence in some publications suggest that in the period since the cease-fires many new murals have been painted, some on new sites where they had not previously existed. This new growth seems, in a way, to oppose a range of current government policies promoting ideas to do with economic and social regeneration, and involving the identification of new sources of investment and support often from other countries. One consequence has been the beginning of a debate about the impact of murals, and in particular the more warlike examples, on economic change and the extent to which they can be a disincentive to new investment, and therefore to new levels of employment.

In contrast to this there is also some evidence that street art in some areas has become an important tourist attraction. A BBC news item recently referred to this question of changing and removing murals, and used local interviews to explain why in parts of east Belfast decisions have been made “to transform some of East Belfast’s hard-edged militaristic murals into softer canvasses.”\(^\text{67}\) The new emphasis, it is claimed, is on “celebrating the achievements in sport, literature or music … rather than the dogs of war.” One interviewee explains the reasoning as follows: “If there is somebody coming to invest in east Belfast and there's a militaristic mural on a wall near where they are thinking of opening a business, it will put them off.”

Despite these trends, there is as yet not much literature or views about the removal of murals, and what there is usually takes the form of newspaper articles or letters to the

\(^{67}\) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4562793.stm
editor. There is also an implication that people are intimidated from speaking out about murals because they are closely identified with paramilitary organisations. This close association with paramilitaries is both a reason for many to oppose them, and also for a reluctance to oppose them publicly. It is likely therefore that, within the areas where murals are most prominent, there are views both in support of and opposing murals. There is reference in the literature to the existence of opposition from both ‘within and from without’ communities including attempts to harm or even destroy murals, as well as opposition from local newspapers. One author however refers to what he calls ‘negative reaction’ from some people in relation to ‘political paintings in their neighbourhoods’, and characterises this as a ‘bourgeois’ view! There is also evidence that some paramilitary leaders are beginning to accept the argument about economic change, can see the advantages for themselves and their communities, and are moving towards agreement about the need for change.

A number of official organisations within Northern Ireland have a degree of legal or managerial responsibility concerning murals and other public symbols. These include the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which in many cases owns the walls on which paintings appear. In practice the NIHE adopts a conciliatory approach, in that while it would prefer that there were no sectarian images, it accepts that the community must decide, and emphasises the importance of close consultation and of ensuring local co-operation before any action is taken. Even when many residents support the removal of paintings, the NIHE will act only when they are convinced that this can be done without violence, after consultation with the police, and that their staff will not be endangered. In a newspaper report in 1996 a spokesperson for the Housing Executive is quoted as saying that if the ‘overwhelming majority’ of residents in the area wanted the painting removed, they might then move, but adds that: “It is a delicate issue. There is considerable artistic merit in some of the murals and it is not a case of removing unwanted graffiti”.

NIHE has also produced a ‘Good Relations Strategy’, which agrees to foster good relations through its ‘Community Cohesion Unit, CCU’ with quarterly progress

---

68 Jarman 1998
69 Sluka 1996
70 Belfast News Letter 23 April 1996
reports on five themes, one of which refers to a ‘flags, emblems and sectional symbols action plan’. The Department of Environment (DOE) is also thought to have a responsibility in relation to wall painting, pavement painting, graffiti, and so on. Its policy however is not much different from that of the NIHE, in that the removal of paintings only takes place where the public have requested it or agreed to it.

4.64 Flags

Flags have a long and complex history. To begin with it is very likely that they originated in wars and battles, and were closely associated with a leader, later perhaps a ruler or a king. Over time flags evolved to become central – almost religious – symbols, available to represent the country or the state in a quite real and profound way, and surrounded by rules of precedence and etiquette: for example it is expected that the flag will be given the respect due to the king or leader; it is flown to indicate that the monarch is present in a building; it is important that it never touches the ground; it is lowered at sunset and not flown during the night; and so on. This centrality can be exemplified by the role ascribed to the flag in war or conflict, when ‘the flag’ epitomises the state, and this is marked by phrases within the language such as: the fight is ‘for the flag’; to ‘lower the flag’ symbolises loss or surrender; the need to ‘rally round the flag’, and to ‘raise the flag’ signifies victory and control of territory.

To begin with, flags were very general symbolic objects, only later made of cloth, and were intended as recognisable symbols, usually distinguished by the use of colour and design. They were therefore easy to identify and locate, making it possible for an individual to find the particular group to which he or she belonged or was prepared to fight for.

The kind of separation or division between groups symbolised by flags is of the most basic ‘them and us’ kind: flying a flag signals membership of and loyalty to a group and then to what the group stands for. It provides a comforting sense of belonging to a community, and also a sense of symbolic ownership (at least) of territory and property. It signifies the view that ‘this is my land’, and includes an implication that at

---

71 Northern Ireland Housing Executive 2006
72 Much of the detail here is taken from the study by Bryson and McCartney 1994
some basic level the boundaries and rules of membership are known and accepted. Choosing the flag therefore means choosing many other things as well, such as the state or country you belong to, the values that are associated with it, its history and culture, and so on. Flags are also closely associated with the use of ceremony as remembrance or as celebration, again often associated with war and leaders, soldiers as heroes or defenders, victories and defeats.

In Ireland the long history of its relationships with the other island, including the continuing question of union or separation, has unsurprisingly generated parallel sets of opposing symbols and signals of identity and loyalty. The partition of the island in the 1920s added further complexities and cultural nuances, and the long conflict of most of the second half of the twentieth century did nothing to simplify or regulate relationships and loyalties. The continuing existence of two clearly distinct central emblems is reinforced daily, and makes the creation of any form of common or jointly acceptable flag - such as a proposal for a third common or Northern Ireland flag - most unlikely.

Flags have therefore been important elements in the store of symbols available as ways of expressing separate and opposing identities, political allegiances and even religious differences. The result is that the world of flags in Northern Ireland is neither simple nor straightforward, at least in practice. The range of possible flags is often confusing, even to locals, although this has become less difficult since some of the paramilitary flags have been banned. There have also been some changes in recent years. In the past flags were flown with most zeal at certain times of the year - usually in the summer during the ‘marching season’, and usually as a political statement. However recent evidence suggests that the time-period involved has been increasing, and also that flags are being used to reflect a wider range of interests and organisations, such as displaying support for football teams or similar representative events.

The British Union Flag (that is the Union Jack) and the Irish National Flag (the Tricolour) are the most commonly displayed examples, but other flags that can be seen include the Ulster Flag, the Orange Order Flag, the Crimson Flag of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Ulster Independence Flag, the Four Provinces Flag, the
Location is also of central importance, and it is usually not difficult to identify the political character of an area or town from looking at its flags.

The Good Friday Agreement acknowledged the need for sensitivity in the use of symbols and emblems, but was not clear or detailed about the protocols to be used in relation to the flying of flags, in particular their use over government and publicly owned buildings. The result was that, during the life of the first local assembly, some politicians on both sides very quickly disagreed publicly and vociferously about the matter. When it seemed unlikely that there would be agreement, the then Secretary of State introduced the ‘Flags Regulation (NI) 2000’: this legislation had a very restricted application in that it defined in detail the use of the Union Flag for designated government buildings on designated days. It did not apply, for example, to District Council buildings more generally, and did not provide regulations or protocols in relation to any other aspect of the flying of flags.

The 2005 ‘A Shared Future’ policy document (followed immediately by a Strategic Framework document) identified those customs and practices in Northern Ireland society that served to separate, exclude and antagonise communities, and to contribute to and sustain the identification of areas in sectarian terms. The document aims at creating within Northern Ireland a normal civic society, where diversity is respected, and violence rejected. Shared Future therefore promoted the idea of a shared society, with an emphasis on removing or ameliorating behaviours and practices that celebrated one community and disconcerted or rejected the other. This approach involved examining and identifying negative aspects of community practices such as the use of flags and emblems, and traditional activities such as parades and bonfires.

A Shared Future sets out the aim of ‘establishing over time a shared society, defined by a culture of tolerance.’ The framework emphasises the importance of flags and public emblems, and distinguishes in particular the ‘inappropriate and aggressive’

---

73 A detailed description of all possible flags to be seen in Northern Ireland, with coloured examples, can be found on the CAIN website at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/
74 Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister 2005
displays of flags (specifically paramilitary flags and displays that intimidate and harass), murals and painted kerbstones.

A common multi-agency approach to the alleviation of these difficulties, and to both physical and economic renewal and development, was considered to be the most productive tactic, with agencies working collaboratively with the police, with elected representatives and with local communities. The development of local protocols or charters was also to be encouraged as a way of giving guidance to district councils and other relevant organisations, in dealing with bonfires and with flags. These protocols would include, to begin with, reference to a range of common or general issues such as the removal of paramilitary flags, of flags and emblems from arterial routes and town centres, from mixed and interface areas, and from public buildings such as schools, hospitals and churches.

Protocols would also encourage recognition of the importance of reducing or limiting the periods of time, and the number of specific dates, when flags would be flown, and of acknowledging the negative social and economic impact of exclusive flags in town and city centres. A distinction was also made between the use of flags and emblems as legitimate expression of cultural celebration, as opposed to being intimidatory, aggressive and threatening.

In April 2005 a cross-departmental Joint Protocol in relation to the Display of Flags in Public Areas was initiated by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Protocol sets out an agreed multi-agency partnership\(^5\) approach to deal with flags issues.

The initiatives promoted by the Shared Future policy have prompted academic research, including in particular a study funded by The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The intention of the study is to examine the relationship, if any, between political change in Northern Ireland and ‘the existence, creation and use of symbols.’\(^6\) The hypothesis being tested is that ‘ethnic, national and cultural identity is in a constant state of being constructed and reconstructed in an instrumental,

---

\(^5\) The parties included in the protocol were the PSNI, OFMDFM, DRD, DOE, the DSD, and NIHE.
\(^6\) Bryan, McIntosh and Walker 2005
pragmatic way to achieve group allegiance and solidarity’. The study is called ‘Transforming Conflict: Flags and Emblems’, and is based in the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen’s University Belfast.

The intention is to look closely at matters such as the flying of official flags, and changing perceptions, especially within the nationalist Catholic community, of the Parliament Buildings at Stormont. It will also examine what is described as the ‘relatively new practice of flying flags for much longer periods of the year, and also distinguishes between those displays – including flags, bunting and painted kerbstones - that have general public support and those that do not.’

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey from 2003 suggest that a large proportion of the population (66 per cent) supported the removal of paramilitary flags, that many felt intimidated by them.

4.65 Bonfires

The annual celebration of the twelfth of July, which commemorates the victory of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, is customarily prefaced on the previous night, the eleventh of July, by the burning of bonfires in many parts of Northern Ireland.

Although this form of celebration appears to be widely supported within the PUL community, anxieties about some negative aspects of bonfires have increased in recent years. These have been caused by disquiet about pollution and environmental damage, with particular reference to the apparently widespread incidence of motor tyres being burnt in the fires. There are also views about the general impact of the event – and some of the accompanying practices - on good relations across the community. Finally the overall public cost of bonfires is sometimes referred to, although the figures quoted are a source of disagreement.

No one agency has overall responsibility for the control or management of bonfires: the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) is described as having limited powers and in 2004 EHS led an inter-agency working group in the production of a report on

Ibid
bonfires, which included an advisory leaflet that was distributed across Northern Ireland. In addition local authorities have a great deal of responsibility for dealing with some aspects of bonfires, although the level of activity appears to vary considerably.

There is also some evidence from a range of sources of attempts to improve the situation. Examples include the Belfast City Council’s ‘Bonfire Pilot Project’ in 2005 which aimed at improving the management of bonfires and reducing the environmental and health impact of such fires on the City. The project was influenced by evidence of changes, including an increase in the number of bonfires and in the length of the collection periods (of materials for bonfires). There were also reports of increasing concerns about health and environmental impacts, and about some evidence of the presence of paramilitary and sectarian trappings. In another example the annual bonfire in Stoneyford was recently replaced by a medieval-style beacon, described as a "genuine attempt to move away from the traditional bonfire".

78 Environment and Heritage Service 2004
CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

5.1 Introduction to quantitative results

This chapter presents the quantitative findings of the Re-imaging Communities Programme evaluation at this point in time.

This section is organised into sections and subsections largely based on the different methods of data collection used during the evaluation: Section 5.2 is based on quantitative data gathered from application forms and Consortium documents; Section 5.3 on monitoring and evaluation forms completed by finished projects; and Section 5.4 on survey material carried out with almost 2000 people in 10 completed project areas.

5.2 General background on all projects funded to date

5.2.1 Quantitative data on successful awards

In total there have been 177 project applications to the Re-imaging Communities Programme in the eleven rounds up to April 2009; of these, 123 have been successful with grants awarded and conditions accepted. A breakdown showing dates, rounds and sizes of the awards is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Award rounds and size of awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Rounds</th>
<th>Number of awards</th>
<th>Total awards</th>
<th>Total number of applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st round- January 2007</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd round- March 2007</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd round- June 2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th round- September 2007</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th round- November 2007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th round- January 2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th round- April 2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th round- May 2008</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th round- July 2008</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th round- January 2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th round- April 2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The programme was suspended in the summer of 2008 - due to the majority of the original funding being allocated - and did not re-open until December 2008 when additional resources were secured. This explains the time gap between the ninth and tenth rounds. It also goes towards explaining why there were only three applications in the tenth round, as the programme had only re-opened the previous month. By the 11th round the momentum/demand had grown with 13 applications being put forward, 12 of which were awarded funding.

In some cases decisions about whether to award or reject specific applications were, for a number of reasons, deferred from one round to the next: for example, in the fourth round one organisation made a multiple application for eight projects, with the result that one of its projects was funded immediately and decisions about the other seven were deferred until the findings of an ongoing Arts Strategy in the area were known. Two of the seven were then funded in the eighth round of awards, and three others were deferred in the July 2008 round as funding for the programme had been suspended at that time.

On a few occasions, awards have been declined for a number of reasons (such as applicants not meeting the criteria for the Programme), or acceptance has been withdrawn by the applicant. Examples given for withdrawal have included: a perceived lack of support from external sources; the belief that the community as a whole was not yet ready to accept that the symbolism might be removed; the appearance of a conflict of interest between groups within the community; and occasional disagreements with provisions of the award.

The category of award labelled as ‘small’ represented a grant of £15,000 or less, and there were 39 of these altogether; the middle category labelled as ‘large’ represented a grant of £15,000 to £50,000, and resulted in 38 awards. The final category under ‘multiple’ included the remaining 46 awards. 30 of these involved multiple applications from six Councils, and the remaining 16 involved multiple applications from six community groups.

It is possible to categorise further the complete set of awards (123), as follows:
the majority (106) were production projects: that is projects where the intention was to produce, change or create an object or community-related artefact, often a sculpture or a mural;
- 14 were feasibility projects;
- 2 were to do with project management; and
- 1 was a combined feasibility and production project.

In many cases a feasibility study was perceived as the first of two stages, with the intention of making a further application for a second stage, when the study would be converted into a practical application or production project. The largest feasibility study was carried out by Belfast City Council, and information to date suggests that 12 projects were funded as a result of this study. This is followed closely by Derry City Council which has had nine successful awards to date arising from their feasibility study.

The 106 production projects can be further divided into two groups, described as ‘shared space’ or ‘shared space plus’, and these can be described as follows:

- 42 of the 106 projects involved the development or creation of ‘a shared space’. This normally involves the engagement of all sections of the community, in cleaning or tidying up a neglected or derelict piece of ground, removing graffiti (often of a sectarian or racist character), and making the space available for recreational or reflection purposes;
- while the other 64 of the 106 projects also involved the development or creation of ‘a shared space plus’, they went further by including a more challenging objective such as replacing or removing from the proposed shared space, displays of an oppositional or offensive nature, often including paramilitary symbolism in the form of murals, flags, emblems and painted kerb-stones. In some cases the negotiations also involved reclaiming for the whole community a space normally or previously used for the display of such paramilitary symbolism. The overall process of consultation and discussion in many cases involved lengthy and delicate negotiations with community gatekeepers or activists.
The majority of the 106 projects are each based in a specific location, while the remainder usually involve more than one location or, in two cases, are about project management. Of those based in specific sites, 73 per cent are within areas categorised as being among the most deprived super output areas (SAOs) in Northern Ireland. Some others, however, are in deprived pockets of quite affluent wards. The locations of those based in specific areas can be further categorised as follows:

- 54 are in estates
- 15 are on arterial routes
- 12 are in small towns or villages
- 16 are in interface areas
- 9 are on main thoroughfares

Table 3. Council areas where projects are based

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Area</th>
<th>Number of projects (of which are feasibility)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armagh</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymena</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymoney</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbridge</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>44 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrickfergus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlereagh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookstown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigavon</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>15 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larne</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limavady</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisburn</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magherafelt</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry &amp; Mourne</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtownabbey</td>
<td>10 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtownards</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Down</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omagh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>123 (14)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

79 According to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Super Output Areas 2005 NISRA
Table 3 lists the Council areas where projects that have received funding under the Programme are based: the largest number (44) are in the Belfast area. The numbers in brackets refer to those awards that were solely feasibility studies, and these are usually an indication of the numbers and locations of projects that are likely to – or have already made – further applications.

Using this table it is possible to identify the three council areas that have not as yet made any application for an award, although there has been some recent interest from these quarters. These councils are Coleraine, Fermanagh and Strabane. All of them are located to the west and north of Northern Ireland, and the Arts Council has taken steps to promote the programme in these regions. Support activities have included organising a seminar in June 2007 for Good Relations Officers (GRO) and Arts Officers from local Councils, and holding a road show in October 2007 which targeted those areas where there has been a low uptake. In recent times officers from the Re-imaging Communities Programme have directly targeted Councils from where there has been little or no uptake by visiting and talking to various Council representatives. The intention has been to encourage councils that have not yet made an application to consider doing so.

Table 4 separates funded projects into those from councils and those from the community/voluntary sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of project</th>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Community/voluntary</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space plus</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility and shared space</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of awards (77 or 63 per cent) have been from community/voluntary organisations, while the remaining 46 (or 37 per cent) are from Councils (or in one case from a Local Strategy Partnership). These figures are also grouped with respect to the various categories of projects described earlier, that is ‘feasibility’, ‘shared space’, and so on.
In general feasibility studies tend to be established by local councils (11 of the 14), where the intention was to identify possible projects within their boundaries that might be suitable or relevant, and therefore could be put forward to the Re-imaging Communities programme. One of these feasibility projects is slightly different in that it is being led by the ‘North Down Local Strategy Partnership’, which has representation from the Council as well as from the private and business sector, community and voluntary organisations, elected representatives and statutory bodies.

The remaining three community-led feasibility studies are similar to the local council studies in their intentions, which is to determine the kind of projects that could be established in their areas, although carried out on a smaller geographical area.

The 64 ‘shared space plus’ projects are likely in most cases to be the more challenging tasks. It is perhaps not surprising that the majority of these (44 of the 64) are being delivered by community organisations, since these groups are usually in a position to negotiate with local paramilitary groups about the issue of symbolism in their area, and therefore able to broach the question of removing or replacing controversial images.

The remaining 20 ‘shared space plus’ projects are Council-led: four are based in Ards area and are being managed by the GRO of Newtownards Borough Council, who has the support of the local Council in his continuing attempts to find ways of dealing with paramilitary symbolism. A further five of the ‘shared space plus’ projects are being managed by Newtownabbey Borough Council, another four by Belfast City Council, two by Armagh City & District Council, two by Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council and one each by Craigavon Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Carrickfergus Borough Council.

The community background of the majority of residents in those areas where projects have been established is of interest. There are 61 projects in predominately Protestant areas, 23 in predominately Catholic areas, and 39 in areas that are not considered to be ‘single-identity’. In this last category, eight of the projects are feasibility studies, and the remainder (with the exception of two which are project management) are projects that include both communities and/or minority ethnic communities. The prevalence of
projects based in Protestant areas is perhaps not surprising as it might be argued that the incidence of flags, murals and colours is often greater in these areas.

A total of 121 projects (the two missing being project management) can be broken down geographically as follows. 90 projects are in urban areas, 26 in rural areas and 5 are in areas urban and rural\(^8^0\) (the latter being feasibility studies). 104 of the projects involve all ages of participants, 17 are focused on young people, and two are project management.

Descriptions of the existing displays – that is before changes are made - in the project areas are known for 95 of the projects as follows:

**Table 5. Nature and type of existing displays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Display type</th>
<th>Sectarian</th>
<th>Racist</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>22 (15)*</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>28 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murals</td>
<td>21 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flags and colours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of displays</td>
<td>37 (7)**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>86 (23)</strong></td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>8 (3)</td>
<td><strong>95 (27)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* two of which are feasibility studies
** one of which is a feasibility and the other is a feasibility and shared space combined project

The numbers in brackets (which in each case are subsets of the first figure, and which total 27) represent ‘shared space’ projects. In some cases, even though there is evidence of sectarian or racist symbolism within the area, the funded projects are not necessarily tackling this directly. However it is sometimes possible to place the new artwork over the sectarian display (for example if graffiti), or it may simply be situated in the area in the hope that it might discourage the negative imagery adjacent to the site.

There are also four feasibility or feasibility combined projects indicated in each case by asterix. The remaining 64 projects in the table are ‘shared space plus’ projects and

\(^8^0\) These are usually feasibility studies carried out by Councils across the city/town and rural areas
so are tackling these negative displays of symbolism directly. The table makes it clear
that the majority of displays found in project areas are sectarian in nature, with
graffiti, murals or a combination of display types (that is a combination of murals,
graffiti, flags, emblems and colours) being the most noted display types. It is unusual
for only one type of imagery to be found in an area, so that if there is a mural, then it
is also likely that the kerbs are painted and that there are also flags. However, on
occasions a shared space plus project will only be addressing one element of the
symbolism in a particular area- for example replacing a mural but perhaps not
addressing the flags in the area. Nevertheless, in tackling one or more aspect of
symbolism often leads on to other aspects being discussed.

The missing 28 projects from the table include 12 feasibility projects (being carried
out city-wide or across boroughs), 14 ‘shared space’ projects in areas where negative
imagery may be present but is not the immediate focus of the project and 2 which are
project management. In many cases the aims of these ‘shared space’ projects include:
to improve relationships between communities; to build on previous work of this
nature; to move areas on from being viewed negatively; or to act as a catalyst for
further perhaps more challenging work. Similarly the feasibility studies may address
some of the above because in the process of determining what might be carried out in
particular areas, the work brings communities together and encourages dialogue in the
hope of addressing any divisions that might be present.

The final artwork has not been decided for all projects at this stage as some are still in
consultation about the final piece. Obviously the feasibility studies have been
established to determine what might be done in an area, or to consider what
applications could be put forward to the Re-imaging Communities programme. In
many of these cases the projects are not yet at the stage of deciding on the final
artwork. However 102 of the projects are either completed or have determined what
the outcome of the project will be in terms of artwork and these are detailed in the
table below.
Table 6. Types of artwork by types of project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of artwork</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Shared space</th>
<th>Shared space plus</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mural</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street furniture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting/banner</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined art forms</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* one is a feasibility plus shared space project

The most popular forms of artwork for the projects chosen so far are murals and sculptures (which include mosaics), and these taken together account for 69 per cent of the total. There are also a large number (26) of projects which are combining a number of different art forms. The single project with a mobile form of artwork refers to a board game exploring different cultures, which was developed by four youth groups coming from different racial backgrounds.

Table 7. Years established and experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience in</th>
<th>How long groups have been established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 years or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Imaging</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art of regeneration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood renewal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross community</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 above shows the years of establishment and the relevant experience gained by those managing the projects. Only the most relevant experience is detailed, and since
the information has been derived mainly from the information provided in the grant applications\(^{81}\), it is probable that not all relevant information is included.

A large number of the groups/bodies (45 per cent) have been established for thirty years or more, and many of these are Local Councils. Only 20 groups have been established in the last five years. The groups/bodies have a range of experience with 45 per cent claiming to have been involved in re-imaging type activity previously. 36 per cent have been involved in regeneration, neighbourhood renewal or community development work in their areas with only 14 per cent involved in arts-related work previously.

5.3. *Quantitative data derived from monitoring forms to date*

Monitoring information has been received from 51 projects in relation to the number of workshops and details of participation levels. Table 8 below indicates the types of projects for which monitoring forms have been received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Project</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility + shared space</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space plus</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 475 workshops carried out across the 51 projects, 67 per cent of which were carried out in deprived areas\(^{82}\) and the workshops averaged over 2 hours per workshop. Diagram 2 below shows the number of workshops by each type of project with ‘shared space’ and ‘shared space plus’ projects averaging almost 10 workshops compared to, on average 7 workshops for feasibility projects.

---

\(^{81}\) In some cases this was supplemented by information held by DSD
\(^{82}\) according to Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005
The participation rate across the 475 workshops was 6,893 participants, and Diagram 3 indicates the age distributions: 76 per cent were 25 years or younger; 16 per cent were between 26 and 55 years; and 8 per cent were 56 or over (with 0.3 per cent not recorded). The target participation, that is the numbers each project set out to achieve in each of their workshops, averaged at 91 per cent with some exceeding their targets and others having slightly less participation than expected or hoped for.
Diagram 4 records the religious makeup of the workshops. In 244 workshops participation was ‘mostly’ or ‘all’ Protestant and in 149 workshops participation was ‘mostly’ or ‘all’ Catholic. 72 workshops were considered to involve participation from both sections of the community, that is Catholic and Protestant. In addition 137 of the 475 workshops have included people from minority ethnic communities.

Diagram 4

Male-female numerical differences are shown in Diagram 5 below. Overall female participation was slightly greater than male with 118 workshops being either ‘all female’ or ‘mostly female’, while 77 being ‘mostly male’ or ‘all male’. However 274 of the workshops were described as mixed gender.

Diagram 5
Representatives of the local Councils were present in only 59 of the 475 workshops. This translates to 18 different projects, eleven of which were Council-led so there were only seven community-led projects which had a representative of the local Council present in either all or some of the workshops.

Finally, from information derived from progress reports and end of project reports in relation to 61 projects it was discovered that 152 artists, 66 administrative staff, 28 consultants, 1172 volunteers and 481 members had also taken part in these 61 projects. In addition others who helped with projects were also mentioned such as parents of some of the children involved, groups affiliated to the community groups managing the projects, representatives from the Housing Executive, individuals and organisations with an interest in historical matters, museums, contractors, mediators and those capturing audio and visual progress throughout the course of projects.

5.4 Some findings from the survey

A sample of almost 2000 people were interviewed in a door-to-door survey across 10 completed project areas, to determine their views on the projects. All of the statistics and tables, including breakdowns of the data for each project area, are included in Appendix 6: in addition, some of the main findings are included below. The age and gender details of the survey participants are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9. Age and gender of survey participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey participants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 years and under</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-55 years</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 years and over</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>1989*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2 missing

92.8 per cent (or 1848) of the survey participants were brought up in Northern Ireland and when asked which community they belonged to the responses were as follows:

- 71.3 per cent indicated they were part of the Protestant community;
- 26.5 per cent indicated they were part of the Catholic community;
- 2.2 per cent indicated ‘other’.
A total of 85.6 per cent of those surveyed believe that graffiti, murals and kerb painting are either a major or a minor problem in Northern Ireland generally. However when asked about their own particular areas the proportion viewing these symbols as a problem fell to 66.3 per cent. Most (78.1 per cent) were either fully or vaguely aware of the existence of the re-imaging project in their own area, and 90.5 per cent thought that it was definitely or possibly a good idea. A relatively small proportion of 36.6 per cent thought that the plans for the project had been very or fairly well publicised, along with 20.5 per cent who were not sure and 21.7 per cent who didn’t answer. Despite the fact that a total of 29 per cent felt that the plans for the project had been fairly poorly or very poorly publicised, a considerable majority (86.3 per cent) agreed that the project was of high quality, that it improved the appearance of their area (90.7 per cent), that it had been beneficial to the area (84.9 per cent), and 77.8 per cent supported the creation of projects of a similar nature in the future.

There was strong agreement (89.5 per cent) with the view that it was very important or important that people who did not live in a specific area should feel welcome and secure within it, and 85.6 per cent thought that the new unthreatening imagery produced by the project had made this considerably more likely. It was also believed (by 57.6 per cent) that the project had helped to bring members of the community closer together. A minority (34.9) per cent expressed uncertainty about the reality of this kind of impact, while a small group (7.5 per cent) disagreed completely.

It is important to be aware that, while figures of this kind are helpful in producing a broad or general sense of the perceived value and impact of the projects as a whole, each specific area has its own particular character, history and community makeup. There was therefore a good deal of variation in responses across the areas. Using both local information and anecdotal evidence therefore, and without identifying specific places, some of these differences are described, sometimes with some general background descriptions.

For example, in some areas consultation within the community had taken place prior to the initiation of the project, and then the actual practice of producing the art work involved only small sections of the community, such as school children. For practical
reasons of this sort, there was evidence in some areas that the involvement of the community had not been considered to be very extensive.

It was also a fairly common experience that, even when developments and proposals were well advertised, and sincere attempts had been made to keep the whole community informed, there were nonetheless those who had not heard about or understood what was being planned.

A further kind of problem can arise when the unionist (or nationalist) people within a community are themselves divided, so that the plans and decisions of one group are opposed, or at least not supported, by the other. The level and strength of this sort of separation varies, and, in relation to the re-imaging projects, normally did not lead to public disagreements or actions. However it could be offered as a possible explanation as to why on occasions some communities were not as supportive of a Re-imaging Communities project as others.

5.5 Summary material on a sample of completed projects

A total of 31 completed projects were examined in detail, 11 of which were feasibility studies (one combining feasibility and production). The remaining 20 were ‘production’ projects; with ten being ‘shared space’ and ten ‘shared space plus.’ It should be noted that whilst the ‘shared space plus’ projects may be tackling the more challenging visual symbolism in communities, many of the ‘shared space’ projects are intended as starting points for communities in the hope that more challenging work can be carried out in the future. The 31 projects had been awarded a total of £439,255, although in the end £425,860 had been claimed; a difference of £13,395.

Ten of the 11 feasibility projects were essentially audits carried out to determine what might be done in certain areas in order to create shared spaces. All but two of these 10 feasibility studies resulted in one of more successful applications to the Re-imaging Communities programme in further rounds as shown in Table 10 below.

The project in the second row (Council/Statutory body) was a feasibility study which included the removal of three paramilitary murals and associated symbolism as a goodwill gesture. Funding was granted in round 9 to assist in deciding on the art work
to be placed in the area. The two last rows in the table require some further
clarification. The main reason why one project (2\textsuperscript{nd} row from bottom) did not apply to
the programme following a successful feasibility was that they were not quite at the
stage of submitting an application when the programme was suspended.

### Table 10. Outputs in relation to completed feasibility projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council or Community led</th>
<th>Size of award*</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Total resulting awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>1 award in round 6</td>
<td>£50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council/statutory body</td>
<td>£10,639</td>
<td>3 paramilitary murals painted out</td>
<td>£48,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 award in round 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£14,580</td>
<td>2 awards in round 9</td>
<td>£47,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>3 awards in round 6</td>
<td>£68,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£44,000</td>
<td>3 awards (in rounds 7 &amp; 8)</td>
<td>£162,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£10,990</td>
<td>4 awards in round 6</td>
<td>£81,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£18,300</td>
<td>9 awards (across rounds 4,5,6,8 &amp;9)*</td>
<td>£357,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£24,000</td>
<td>13 awards (across rounds 5,6 &amp;7)</td>
<td>£269,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£9,500</td>
<td>Didn’t apply as programme suspended</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£5,500</td>
<td>Unsuccessful application in round 9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*in some cases the amount claimed was lower than the award

The other feasibility study (last row) did submit an application in the last round before
suspension but unfortunately the proposal required further development before it
could fully meet the criteria for funding.

The 11\textsuperscript{th} feasibility was feasibility combined with production, that is an audit was
carried out and then art work was produced. The community group who managed this
project saw it as a first step for their community to move forward and had already
started negotiations and secured agreement with community gatekeepers on a more
challenging second project. Unfortunately they were not in time to submit an
application before the programme was suspended in July 2008 but they did get their
application submitted and awarded in the 10\textsuperscript{th} round of funding (January 2009) after
the programme had been re-opened. They were awarded over £44,000 towards the
project, which included the removal of a memorial mural, all territorial markings in
the estate, and the installation of an artistic focal point.
Table 11 gives a brief synopsis of the ‘shared space’ projects; that is those that created a shared space in consultation with the community. Table 12 does the same for the ‘shared space plus’ projects; these being the more challenging creation of shared space largely due to removal of displays of paramilitary and/or sectarian symbolism. All projects in both tables have had a cross community dimension unless otherwise stated. It is impossible to provide all the positive impacts of the projects in these two tables but these are dealt with in later sections of this report.

Table 11. Outputs in relation to completed ‘shared space’ projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council or Community led</th>
<th>Size of award*</th>
<th>Outputs/outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>3 sculptures on theme of sea created in consultation between artist and community. Space being used by locals and visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£49,820</td>
<td>Art work based on history of area created on 17 ten foot square boards and installed on wall at derelict site highly visible from main route through city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£18,266</td>
<td>3 art murals based on themes of cultural features of local environment placed over contentious graffiti. Brought together previously independent groups in area in creation of a shared space. Improved community cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£5,550</td>
<td>Board game designed by young people based on cultural identity and diversity. Brought together youth from indigenous, Indian and Chinese communities. Education resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£3,950</td>
<td>Creation of a silhouette sculpture of 2 children holding hands to complete a Somme garden. Improved community cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£7,010</td>
<td>Large scale photos of travellers’ children and indigenous children. Children from both communities worked together and addressed diversity. Improved cross community relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£9,800</td>
<td>7 paintings on boards based on cultural history of village and painted by the community and placed on wall through village. Brought community together in creation of shared space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>1 mosaic based on cultural history of area created by artist and community. Improved community cohesion and capacity in creation of shared space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>£9,180</td>
<td>1 mosaic based on historical landmarks of area created by artist and school children on a cross community basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£12,901</td>
<td>1 mosaic based on cultural history of area created by two cross community groups with guidance from artists. Creation of cross community links</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*in some cases the amount claimed was lower than the award
## Table 12. Outputs in relation to completed ‘shared space plus’ projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council or Community led</th>
<th>Size of award*</th>
<th>Outputs/outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£22,690</td>
<td>Creation of sculpture using painted butterflies to represent themes of change &amp; freedom and children as the heart of the village. Claiming area as shared space for community as was to be used by one section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£12,482</td>
<td>Removal of paramilitary mural and repainting of Somme mural in single identity area. Increased community cohesion and neutralisation of space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£9,910</td>
<td>Removal of murals, flags and territorial colours and creation of 2 welcome features. Children involved in design giving ownership Reduced tension in area and neutralisation of single identity estate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£5,900</td>
<td>Removal of sectarian imagery, replaced with cultural history and images created by children and young people. Creation of shared spaces in single identity estate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£14,200</td>
<td>Removal of paramilitary memorial and mural, replaced with sculpture and mural depicting cultural history. Creating shared space in single identity area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£18,100</td>
<td>Removal of intimidatory paramilitary mural and writing. Creation of mural based on cultural history in single identity area. Four 2-D sculptures also created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£13,620</td>
<td>Removal of paramilitary memorial, replaced by sculpture depicting a nurse and child from WW1 in single identity area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£6,610</td>
<td>Removal of paramilitary murals &amp; emblems. Creation of murals by young people depicting stance against drugs. Creation of shared space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>£5,267</td>
<td>Removal of paramilitary mural from interface and many paramilitary emblems. Creation of murals depicting cultural history and sporting club. Neutralisation of single identity area and at interface area, creating shared spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some before and after photographs of the projects detailed above are shown in Appendix 7 of this report.
CHAPTER 6
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

6.1 Themes from interviews and focus groups

Below are themes from interviews and focus groups carried out with the sample of 20 projects chosen to be followed in depth in the evaluation, in addition to interviews with completed projects outside this sample. Interviews, focus groups and discussions were carried out with project staff and participants, ACNI staff and Shared Communities Consortium members, representatives of various statutory bodies involved in projects, artists, local Council representatives, project facilitators, technical support staff and community representatives. The themes are structured into sub-headings beginning with those that relate to the aims and objectives of the Re-imaging Communities programme (6.2 to 6.6) and followed by other issues which arose during the study.

6.2 Shared Future

The contribution of the Re-imaging Communities programme to the more general aim of a ‘shared future’ includes increasing the number of existing examples and levels of usage of shared space, usually by negotiating the removal of displays of a sectarian and divisive nature or by changing the contents of displays and symbols. All of the production projects to date have been aimed at creating shared spaces, whether this is interpreted as members of their own community in a single identity area, or as relating to all sections of the community in more mixed areas. Certainly the results of the projects have produced much evidence of divisive imagery being removed and/or replaced with something that all can appreciate and not feel threatened by. Examples have included some of the most high profile, negative and intimidatory images in Northern Ireland, and it is important to be aware of the often lengthy processes and difficult negotiations that have gone into making this a reality in many areas. Whether this will encourage those of a different political persuasion or religious background to consider entering areas formerly closed to them is difficult to determine, but it certainly the case that they are unlikely to experience the same level of anxiety and threat as previously.
Table 12 above gives a brief account of the types of paramilitary symbolism that has been removed and some of the before and after photographs for these and for ‘shared space’ projects are shown in Appendix 7.

Some of the projects have taken a more cautious route, involving tentative initial steps as part of an evolving process towards more challenging projects. For example, in some cases this has involved the beginning of consultations with the community about what might be done; in others artwork has been created and placed beside, or in the same area as, existing paramilitary symbolism in the hope that this will initiate or make possible discussions on the negative imagery at a further stage. Approaches of this kind have been successful, in some cases leading to agreement on the removal or replacement of negative imagery, and in others making it possible to submit a second successful application to Re-imaging Communities programme. In addition others have expressed the intention of making an application, or are already involved in related negotiations.

Discussions with many of those involved have stressed the importance and significance of the process of dialogue, debate and negotiation that has been an important element in the evolution of the projects. The removal or replacement of paramilitary symbolism is obviously one of the central aims of the programme, but the success in getting different groups, and sometimes deeply sceptical individuals, to the table and involved in discussions about what might be done to create a shared space, often represents a quite significant step forward. This was interpreted by some as an indication that the climate within areas was now more positive and less pessimistic, and that many individuals within the communities wanted change. Being involved in the projects also had the effect of opening up discussions on other sensitive issues such as flags, bonfires and even parades. There were examples given of: bonfires being relocated; agreement about the materials that could or could not be used in bonfires; protocols for flag flying; a parade was relocated away from the town centre and combined with fun day activities to make it more family orientated.

In addition the opportunity created by the projects for people to become involved, and to have an input into developments, was described by some as making a valuable contribution to the re-emergence of community cohesion, to the realisation and
strengthening of community capacity, and to possibilities relating to wider notions of inter-community relations. Examples have been cited of – often tentative - cross community events resulting from discussions about murals and their purpose, and about their potential impact on relationships across communities.

More generally it is believed that the new artworks have attracted visits from outside the community, that people have come to see the work for themselves and to take photographs, or have their photo taken along with the mural or sculpture.

6.3 Community relations

In general feasibility studies have been inclusive, that is they have been aimed at all sections of the community: a great many of the successful applications arising from these feasibility studies are intended as projects that address community relations at some level.

It is argued however that, in many cases projects at the beginning have, of necessity, been carried out in single identity communities. It was believed to be essential to ensure that work was done to build up confidence, and to improve intra-community relationships in these areas, before any consideration was given to reaching out to other communities. In some areas the community leaders were of the view that the stage had not yet been reached when working with ‘the other side’ on a project of this kind was possible. However, the removal of divisive imagery at interfaces and on arterial routes was possible as a first step, and as an early contribution not only to the creation of a degree of neutrality, at least on the edges of the area, but also to the notion that they were moving forward. Projects of this kind therefore were expected, and in some cases intended, to help to reduce tension especially at interface areas.

The notion of development and of moving forward carefully and often incrementally, has been justified in a number of cases, where, on completion of a first Re-imaging Communities project, the communities had already embarked on, or were about to embark on, a cross community project. This was a significant step forward for some communities that had never been involved in anything with the ‘other side’ prior to this. The removal of divisive imagery was thought by many to help present an ‘open
door” message and therefore contribute to better relations between all sections of the community.

There were some communities, perhaps more secure in themselves and with more confidence, who made direct contact with different communities (Catholic, Protestant and/or minority ethnic) during the course of their project. The level and complexity of this sort of contact varied in a number of ways: for some it involved consulting with and including or taking account of the views of people from other religious or cultural backgrounds, especially if they lived in or close to the project area; for others it involved choosing to involve or work with particular groups, such as community groups from other backgrounds; for yet others it entailed bringing school children from different religious backgrounds together to contribute to the development and creation of the project art work; and, finally, there were projects where issues to do with diversity and separated communities were addressed directly in workshops with participants. Examples of these different levels of engagement are elaborated on below.

A number of projects carried out consultations and discussions across their community to help come to a conclusion about the content and format of the artwork to be produced. There was an emphasis on trying to choose a subject that was likely to be acceptable in wide general terms to the overall community, and this meant that the views of minority groups ought to be included. Sometimes the organisation or group running the project would already have cross community representation, but, where it did not, approaches were made to individuals from minority communities or communities with different backgrounds living in the area, to get their views.

There were also projects based in areas where, although religious and other forms of division existed, there was little or no history of inter-group violence. However, in such situations, there was often relatively little social mixing, so that the various groups did not normally work together or cooperate on projects. In addition there were other groups with distinctive forms of difference, such as for example special needs, or recent immigrant groups living in project areas. In some cases the Re-imaging Communities projects with their emphasis on art made it possible to begin to bring members of such groups together, and persuade them to engage with the project.
As a result there were examples of projects where styles of artistic presentation from other lands were successfully included within the artwork produced.

It is not being suggested that this was a common experience, and it is obvious that it may take time, for example, for immigrant population to feel confident enough to engage with the indigenous population in such community activities. However, it is important to be aware that the encouragement and involvement of a wider community engagement can be a perhaps unintended consequence of the overall programme.

Sometimes projects deliberately set out to target a group on a cross community basis. For example one project brought a group of Protestant women together with a women’s group from a Catholic community to work on a mosaic to be placed in the latter group’s area. As a result both groups felt they had learned a lot from each other and were very enthusiastic to do similar work of this nature together again. In interviews it was agreed that there had been some initial trepidation about entering an area perceived to be hostile, but that the hospitality experienced and the growing awareness of similarities and commonalities experienced in the production process, had made a significant impression. There was also evidence that some such groups are now planning further cooperative work, and are exploring links with another group on a cross border basis. So even when diversity is not being addressed specifically through sessions, bringing together people from different community backgrounds to work on a common theme seems to alleviate fears and suspicions of the ‘other side’.

Other projects went further and included workshops incorporating good relations and diversity training that addressed directly religious or cultural divisions. For example, one project addressed diversity in group work with children from the travelling community together with settled children from a Catholic background. This was said to have been so successful that it was to be replicated, funded by the Re-imaging Communities programme, between children from the travelling community and settled children from a Protestant background. Another project brought together young people from the Indian, Chinese and indigenous populations, and this was thought by all concerned to have been most successful as a way of helping disparate groups to develop an understanding of differing cultures and identities. The finished art work in this case was a board game developed with the young people under the
artist’s guidance, which was based on various aspects of their different cultures. It was anticipated that the game will be useful as an educational resource for schools and other groups carrying out community relations work.

On occasions unanticipated events with a strong community relations impact, arose in relation to projects. As an example, in one area with an almost wholly single-identity association, a local councillor from the other community gave the opening address. It was argued that no politician from the other community had ever before visited the area in an official capacity, and the event made a big impression on some of those involved who described it as unique.

In general it was believed that Re-imaging Communities projects were by their nature difficult, if not impossible, to separate from community relations questions: discussion and debate about how to proceed with changing the public image of an area, involved thinking about the relationships between different communities and about the role and impact of murals and other pictorial imagery on how one community is viewed by another.

6.4 Community cohesion
In the past, the process of making decisions within a community about murals and other imagery was not always a democratic one, at least to begin with. The years of violence meant that many communities had a sense of being under siege and in danger, with a related sense of community coherence and single-mindedness. It seems clear that as the re-imaging process went on it was perceived by some as a signal – among others - that it was time for change, and that debate and discussion about the future was important. This enabled people who would not normally have a say in their area to begin to do so, and in this way to contribute to the development of a more coherent view of themselves and of their wishes for the future of the community.

The majority of projects have gone far beyond this basic level of consultation, and have included many of the people who have a stake in the community at all stages, from planning and initiation through to the design and to the actual production of the art work. The result has been that, within project areas, links have been developed or strengthened between churches, schools and other community groups. In a number of
projects this has crossed cultural boundaries and brought different religions and minority ethnic communities together. In addition people from all ages, from pre-school children up to senior citizens, have been involved in some manner. It has also brought together around the same table representatives of groups previously opposed to each other, either politically or with respect to the use of violence.

This has included in some cases the groups and individuals responsible for the production and up-keeping of paramilitary symbolism in these areas. The local context is always significant in this regard: in many parts of Northern Ireland groups within communities (often with a paramilitary association) have taken over public sites such as gables, prominent walls, railings, electricity sub stations or other public spaces to display their historical, political, and often sectarian, ideologies usually in the form of murals. When the violence was continuing it would have been difficult and often impossible to tamper or interfere with these symbols. The Re-imaging Communities programme has made a contribution to allowing negotiations about these matters to be initiated. The result has been an increase of confidence within communities about the possibility of change and of becoming involved in this process without a sense of danger.

The projects have also made it easier for robust relationships to be developed between the statutory sector and the voluntary or community sectors. Councils have carried out feasibility studies within their areas and this has meant becoming involved in direct negotiations and planning with communities, and in providing support for the development of applications to the Re-imaging Communities programme. In some cases this cooperation has continued throughout the project including the actual production process. Some projects have been Council-led while others have been supported and encouraged by councils in different ways. In a few areas where Council-community relationships have in the past been strained, these have improved so much so that communities have been buying into Council initiatives. In a minority of cases, even where there has been little involvement by Councils in projects, there have been examples of Councillors attending launches.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has also been very involved in a number of the Re-imaging Communities projects with advice and practical assistance.
This has in cases made it possible for communities to develop useful links and networks that have added to their understanding and expertise especially in relation to decisions about artwork and development. Other examples have included: entering into additional re-imaging activities with their Local Strategic Partnership; linking with Groundwork in further re-imaging developments; in a few cases, developing cross community (religious and ethnic) links; and, in one case assisting children with arts classes in the local arts centre. There were also examples of community groups involved in the programme providing advice and assistance to other community groups who were perhaps not as developed as a group. This was particularly evident in a cross community project where one group helped another with advice on funding initiatives that they might be able to access, as a result the other group completed the requirements to enable them to be constituted and were planning to put together funding applications to programmes outside of Re-imaging Communities.

Many of the projects can also be considered as contributing in various and important ways to helping with the problems and difficulties of various minority groups and interests. For example a number of projects have been established in areas characterised by various forms of disadvantage, where the work involved in establishing and carrying out a Re-imaging Communities project, along with the experience and encouragement given to local people, has been very important. Similarly the inclusion in some cases of disaffected young people has, in a positive way, involved those thought to be responsible for some of the vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the area.

More generally the very nature of the projects has made it possible to involve almost every constituency in the community, including young and old, minority ethnic groups, cross community groups, and those with special needs or disabilities. This has had the effect of including those in society who often don’t have a stake in their community and giving them a sense of belonging and ownership.

Many people in the community therefore have a sense of pride and achievement, as one interviewee stated, ‘it just shows what can be achieved when the community comes together with a relatively small amount of money’. They also have a degree of ownership of the new art work along with a sense of identification with it, ‘it brings
back the spirit of the area’. Even some who initially were resistant to change admit that the new art work reflects the culture and history of their area, ‘the new murals are the very backbone of the estate’. Evidence in support of this includes the fact that there has been little to no vandalism in relation to the new art work, but it also includes the contribution of volunteers to minor maintenance activity, especially around the area where the art work was installed. This has included tasks such as clearing, tidying up and painting sites, donating materials, planting flowers and shrubs and maintaining these.

In some areas there have also been examples of activities involving education or local history, with participants helping to assemble information and stories about past events and about people who came from the area. This interest has encouraged members of the community to join in collecting information on matters such as particular local landmarks or buildings, cultural history or mythology, or background on individuals who were known for contributions to literature, music or sport, or who were involved in battles or wars. Subject matter of this kind, with a local context, has helped to generate wide community interest and enthusiasm, for example with both children and teachers in local schools, and among older people who are often able to make a personal contribution about people and events they remember. There have also been examples of children and adults extending their involvement and interest to learning about such matters as other cultures, and the environment. Some projects have gone further and have produced leaflets and booklets on some of the subject matters collected in this way, as a result of their involvement in the Re-imaging Communities Programme.

The importance and significance of the role of children in the projects was often referred to. It was generally agreed that when children were involved the levels of adult and general community enthusiasm and support increased: the children’s parents, relatives, friends and even their schools would all show an increased interest in the project. It was also felt that replacing a threatening or aggressive mural with artwork designed and painted by children somehow softened any opposition to the replacement. In addition the active involvement of older youth also increased local support and enthusiasm, and seemed incidentally to reduce the amount of local anti-social behaviour.
In some cases the effect of the re-imaging has been to change the character of an area, which formerly presented prominent and intimidatory displays of a sectarian and divisive nature, to one where the emphasis is on the artistic achievement and quality of the display, and which is unrelated to the divisions within Northern Ireland. This neutral quality (in social and political terms) has the additional attributes that it does not actively exclude anyone, and it makes cross community events on the site possible. Participants also commented on the numbers of people who have come into their area to see for themselves the art work, and this was clearly a source of delight and pride, as well as a confirmation of the importance of continuing with this sort of activity.

It was also felt that being involved in one of the projects appeared to raise the profile of the group delivering the project. The positive and even optimistic nature of the work, and the fact that the output was visible every day as people went about their business, suggested that the community was taking some responsibility for their own environment. It also acted as an encouragement to carry out further similar work, and raised expectations for a better future.

It is also important to be aware that some of the areas in which the re-imaging took place had been areas of high community tension, and often the sites of serious incidents during the Troubles: for this reason the names of the areas were usually known to the wider community, and forever ingrained in people’s minds in relation to violence and sectarian incidents. The Re-imaging Communities projects were therefore a way in which these areas could begin to send a message out to others that they had moved on from those darker days. The communities could begin to feel that their areas might begin to be known for more positive reasons, and that there was hope for the future.

6.5 Regeneration through the arts
All of those interviewed felt that the production of a work of art was a very positive and engaging way of attracting people to become involved in a community project. It was agreed that art was a medium that could be adopted for use with people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds, including those not normally involved in the
community. The evidence for these projects has been that in practice it was also an excellent way of bringing groups together. The fairly common perception that only the middle and upper classes would be interested was in general not sustained. In addition the use of the word ‘Re-imaging’ was felt to have a positive influence on people. There was some evidence that in the beginning there was a little reluctance to engage, because of a belief that special artistic skills were needed. However this did not continue and in the end there was little or no difficulty in getting people of all sorts involved.

Many of the participants directly involved with creating the art work in these projects (with the exception of the artists), had not been involved in organised arts activities before. Under the direction and guidance of the various professionals working within the projects, the participants gained confidence in what they were doing to the extent that they were eager to carry out further arts activities in the future. This was evidenced by the number of groups that did re-apply to the Re-imaging Communities programme on further occasions or were planning to apply when the programme was suspended. In one area where a number of paramilitary symbols were being replaced by art under the Re-imaging Communities programme they considered their project to be a pilot which could be rolled out across the district to other areas but this would be dependent on further funding of Re-imaging Communities.

In a number of projects it was members of the community who were responsible for creating the art with the help of an artist. The artists themselves were very much praised by the communities in which they worked for helping the participants feel at ease and supporting them throughout the process. Some participants were delighted at being able to achieve something they thought they were incapable of and for some, that they has developed skills that they might build on in the future. In some projects, the artists involved designed and made the finished pieces based on the views and ideas that arose from the community although sometimes members of the community were involved with designing some aspects of the finished art. In others, members of the community helped by providing ideas for themes for the final art work, or carried out research into the history of the area, of the people who came from the area or into the theme of the art work itself. In other words even where artists were responsible for the design and creation of the final piece/s the community had a large input.
One consequence of the projects was the apparent emergence of an awareness within other communities of the importance and attractiveness of using art as a medium for re-imaging their area. Other communities (it was claimed) were, as a result, preparing to apply to the Re-imaging Communities programme, and some groups and project participants had become involved in other arts activities outside of the Re-imaging Communities programme. There was also involvement in accessing funding from elsewhere to engage in arts activities and even in further re-imaging. Some were providing assistance to other groups wishing to apply to Re-imaging Communities, and some individuals involved in projects were said to be considering enrolling on arts courses.

There was fairly general agreement in interviews and in focus groups that the completed art works were of a high quality and had improved the physical look of the areas in which they were installed. In addition members of the involved communities expressed some pride in the finished pieces. These views were supported by the results of the survey carried out in 10 project areas (involving almost 2000 people) in which 86.3 per cent of those interviewed felt that the projects were of high quality.

In those areas where divisive or paramilitary imagery had been removed and replaced, many of those interviewed said they were pleased with the new art work and believed it to be a considerable improvement on what had been there previously. Most also wanted this sort of change and conversion to continue and would welcome in particular further removal of paramilitary and sectarian imagery from within the area. Some expressed the view that their community had moved on and that these divisive symbols no longer represented what their community was about.

A small number in focus groups however felt that the previous symbolism should not be forgotten, that it represented their history and should be preserved in some way. However others felt that they were still being judged on the basis of the message of these negative displays and they would welcome the appearance of a more positive image of their community. Some were also critical of the fact that their children had to pass these intimidatory images of gunmen, graves and sectarianism every day.
There was a strongly held view that the content of the new art work represented their history and culture in an open and non-contentious manner, and their community as positive and optimistic. In addition it was their own creation, had not been prescribed by others for whom they had no responsibility, and was therefore something they could buy into and feel proud of. Whether the art was considered to be of high quality by art critics or others was not felt to be important: they themselves were pleased with it and they might be the only people looking at it on a day-to-day basis. Its presence somehow changed in a positive way how their area was viewed both by themselves and by others.

There was much praise for the artists and there was agreement that, without their central contribution the final piece would not have been achievable nor have been of such a high standard. People were particularly praising of the artists' willingness to engage with the communities, and for their rapport with various groups, especially children. Many also found them to be very dedicated, knowledgeable in relation to local history and meticulous when it came to the fine detail of the finished art work.

There was also some discussion of tourism and the attraction created by murals and other imagery: although it was accepted that attracting tourists was a positive development in economic terms, it was also felt that the focus on conflict and paramilitary imagery was likely to have a negative impact in the long run and should not be encouraged. Some complained that the tourist buses did not stop to look at the new murals and developments, which they felt could be a way of projecting a more positive message of hope, and as a way of showing people from outside Northern Ireland that the conflict was over.

The views of some of the artists involved with the new imagery suggested that they were encouraged at the level of untapped creativity they had encountered in the work. Examples included the work at all age levels, but especially the work created by some of the children and young people involved in projects. It was hoped that their involvement in the projects would encourage some of them to become more involved with art in the future. Some involved adults also felt that they had gained skills which they would like to develop, if the opportunities arose in the future.
6.6 Neighbourhood Renewal

The output from the programme is all comparatively recent, so it is difficult at this stage to determine what the long term effects will be in terms of the physical and social renewal of areas. However, many of the projects were carried out in very deprived areas of Northern Ireland and the involvement of these communities in re-imaging has been encouraging. The perhaps unexpected side-effects of the projects included very good examples of general environmental tidying and cleaning of areas. Other consequences included some agreements about the materials to be used in bonfires and about the locations of bonfire sites: in one area this had the result that only one complaint was received from residents compared to 75 the previous year.

It would be possible to list a number of consequences and follow-ups in relation to new imagery, and what follows are a few examples. In some cases the existence of a new mural, and to some extent its contents, have led to the planting of trees and bushes as a way of presenting and framing the art pieces. People have also used recycled materials as elements within some of the art pieces. Because one project involved children and the painting of butterflies, some butterflies were grown from larvae and released ceremoniously.

More generally the programme has been praised by some local Councils and by the NIHE because of the element of neighbourhood renewal involved, such as reinvigorating disadvantaged areas, promoting community development, giving encouragement to rural development, and contributing generally to good community relations.

In some areas there was anecdotal evidence that the removal of intimidatory images was contributing to economic growth, for example by encouraging new people to live and work there. In one project the re-imaging was carried out alongside the renovation of an old derelict building which was converted into a new childcare centre. The art work created by the Re-imaging Communities programme included interactive pieces within the centre’s new playground, based on the ‘wonders of Northern Ireland’ with pieces representing the Titanic, Marble Arch caves, the Harland and Wolff cranes and the Giant’s Causeway. The re-imaging was said to have helped the social and economic development of the area which is situated in the most deprived ward in
Northern Ireland. There were also some indications that proposals for new developments were being successful, and some believed that this was a result of changes in the local physical environment. One man claimed that, after considerable previous failure, he had recently been able to sell his house, and he thought this was also because of these changes.

Another example referred to a rural village which had, over the years, lost its one and only local shop. The impact of the project was described by some residents as very significant, in that, for example, the removal of paramilitary imagery and the installation of aesthetically pleasing art work had encouraged new business to come to the area. A new petrol station and accompanying shop had been opened and there was also the possibility of a take away food outlet. These changes, it was believed, were a direct result of the Re-imaging Communities programme and that there was now a good chance that there would be further development in their village.

6.7 Management matters
6.7.1 Views on management of the programme
The comments that follow are derived from interviews with participants in projects awarded funding under the Re-imaging Communities programme and others involved in the programme. For most the procedures set in place in relation to grants was satisfactory, easy to understand and worked smoothly and quickly. There was particular praise for the ACNI staff involved, who were described as helpful, always at the end of the phone and very ‘hands-on’. They were also thought to be forthright and open about what was or was not permitted under the conditions of the awards, although this sort of response was not always universally popular.

Many examples were given of staff being accessible and quick to respond to queries from the groups, and of making themselves available should any problems arise. There were some references to teething problems at the start of the programme, in particular concerning the manner in which the programme was initially promoted, and also in relation to the sensitivities of a programme of this nature: however, these appeared to have been resolved quickly. One specific issue, mentioned on a number of occasions, was the perceived high turnover of Re-imaging Communities staff. For some, who had developed a relationship with an Arts Council officer who then moved
on, this was unsettling. On a few occasions finding a replacement officer took some time, which could be frustrating if a quick response to a query was required. In addition the new officer usually needed some time to become familiar with the project and, on occasions, there were said to be differences between officers on what was deemed acceptable under the programme.

There had also been a small number of difficulties or disagreements, usually temporary, concerning policy matters about what was acceptable as content in some of the proposed new artworks. At times this raised concerns about the completion of some projects, especially those of a more challenging nature. Further negotiations with the community gatekeepers were sometimes necessary, and these at times reached stalemate and produced temporary disengagement. Because of this some interviewees argued that it was important to allow local people some time to come to terms with the proposed changes and to recognise the importance of beginning with small steps in the desired direction. Therefore being too intransigent about the content of imagery at the beginning was thought to be sometimes counter-productive.

The content raising difficulties usually referred to imagery depicting weaponry, which the Re-imaging Communities programme was unwilling to allow. Agreement about what exactly to allow inevitably evolved to some degree during the roll out of the programme, and this led to a view from a small minority of groups that projects were not being treated equally with some being allowed a certain content and others not. Difficulties of this sort were few and some sort of compromise was achieved in almost all cases. In one case, to date, activists have installed (or re-installed) their own symbolism on the site where the Re-imaging Communities art has been placed. This has been explained as a response to disagreement about what sort of imagery was permitted under the funding. Negotiations have already begun to try and address this development.

There was concern from a few people that perhaps there should have been less funding of feasibility studies and more on production projects, that is that the value of the funding was not being properly realised in physical terms at this stage because of this. One view was that where feasibility was necessary it should have been combined with funding for production so that the money was there to assist in re-imaging
swiftly. However others argued that this would have been difficult to cost in areas which had little to no idea what they would want in terms of art- and indeed if they even did want - to re-image in their area.

Despite these concerns, in general people were happy with the management of the programme and, in the case of those already awarded funding under the programme, there was a willingness and a desire to submit further applications to Re-imaging Communities: indeed many of them had.

6.7.2 Support from outside the Arts Council

The involvement of local councils in promoting and supporting the programme varied to some extent. In some cases the projects have been directly managed by the local Council, very often through a GRO, and therefore have had the full support of the Council. In other cases, where projects were initiated and managed by local community organisations, they have also received much support, help and encouragement from their local Council. Finally there have been a number of projects, also initiated and managed by local community organisations, but where help from the local council has not been much in evidence.

It is not possible here to describe in detail the work and contribution of all the councils that have been helpful and supportive to the Re-imaging Communities Programme. However, as a way of describing examples of good practice, the involvement of a few Councils will be identified and described in what follows.

Firstly, Newtownards Council has been working hard to make their area free from paramilitary murals, and it has been successful in receiving funding for four projects to date while at the same time providing assistance to two others. The GRO is the driving force behind this involvement, and he has the full support of the local Council in his efforts. Four of the six projects have been successfully completed, three of these resulting in the removal of paramilitary murals. The fourth completed project involved the community in coming together to agree on the creation of a sculpture to be placed within a community garden. The complete involvement of the community in this case represented progress, as previously it was thought necessary to access the skills of intermediaries. The final two projects are working towards the removal from
the area of a further four paramilitary murals. On completion this will mean that the Council has successfully achieved its ambition of creating a borough that is completely free from paramilitary murals.

These ambitious and successful projects have obviously taken much time and energy, and have necessitated a great deal of careful and patient negotiation between the GRO, the community in general and the gatekeepers. In addition, where necessary it has not hesitated to make use of mediators to assist with negotiations.

Belfast City Council has been very involved in the Re-imaging Communities Programme. The Council appointed an external consultant to carry out an extensive feasibility study and as a result 12 projects were developed and funded under the programme; one of which was funding for project management which allowed for the appointment of two facilitators to take the other 11 projects forward. The appointment of these facilitators is proving to be successful in assisting the projects through the process to completion. Some of the community groups involved have commented on the benefits of having a facilitator which include: providing a link between them and the City Council and also with the Arts Council; taking the stress out of acquiring permission or approval for aspects of the project; working on their behalf with various statutory bodies and agencies; and keeping them informed of developments through constant contact.

Derry City Council has also been very involved in the process and has had nine successful projects to date arising from a feasibility study carried out in the Council area. The Council is providing assistance and support to these projects throughout their lifetime by attending meetings and workshops, providing technical assistance and advice and liaising with different agencies and departments on behalf of the communities. This assistance and support has been greatly appreciated by the communities involved and what makes this more commendable is that this has all been carried out ‘in kind’ by the Council.

Antrim Borough Council has been supporting the Re-imaging Communities programme and, although not directly managing a project, is providing support

---

83 There have been 10 successful awards but one project withdrew
through their GRO to projects in the borough. Previously the Council was involved in a pilot scheme which resulted in the removal of 80 flags and painted kerbstones, and the success of this initiative was thought to have encouraged others to consider moving forward when the Re-imaging Communities programme was launched. As a result at least four projects supported by the Council have been awarded funding from the Re-imaging Communities programme.

Seven other Councils have carried out feasibility studies that have resulted in 18 successful applications to Re-imaging Communities, and one Council which applied for funding for three projects following a feasibility study, had all three rejected in the last round of funding before suspension because they didn’t quite meet the criteria for the Re-imaging Communities programme.

A number of Councils have integrated the ideology of Re-imaging Communities into their standards and practices, especially in terms of their good relations policies and strategies and they are to be commended for the work they have carried out in this area. However in some Council areas there is little or no evidence of involvement in the Re-imaging Communities programme. A number of community-led projects reported that they had little or no support from their local Council, although some argued that they did not need support. There was also evidence that Councillors including Mayors and Council representatives attended launches of some of the projects, regardless of the level of support provided during projects. In addition in a few instances it has been reported that relationships have improved between community groups and Councils as a result of their involvement in the Re-imaging Communities programme.

A few interviewees suggested that it was regretful that some of the Councils did not appear to buy into the Re-imaging Communities programme, particularly when the programme’s ethos was consistent with what local authorities were trying to achieve in terms of community development, good relations, neighbourhood renewal and flags and emblems strategies. It was believed that the Arts Council had encouraged buy-in from local Councils and therefore it was unclear why some Councils did not take up the challenge. Perhaps further targeting of areas where applications have been sparse should be considered if the programme continues.
There was also reference in some cases to the support and assistance of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) with projects. Often permission was required from the NIHE as they owned property or sites where the proposed art work was to be installed. However, examples were given of the NIHE going beyond this by working closely with groups in their applications and throughout the course of the projects. There was also a sense that, because relationships tended to be quite strong between communities and the Housing Executive in some areas, this has helped pave the way for engagement between staff from Re-imaging Communities and the communities.

Other organisations and groups have provided assistance and support to projects and some of these are listed below:

- Groundwork Northern Ireland
- Mediation Northern Ireland
- Belfast Exposed
- New Belfast Community Arts
- Wheelworks
- Various local community networks
- Museums
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Schools
- Churches
- Local businesses
- Other community groups (special needs groups, minority ethnic groups, women’s groups, mother and toddlers groups, senior citizens)

Groundwork Northern Ireland provided technical assistance both to groups working towards submitting an application, and also to successful applicants with the working through of the design and content of the proposed art work. The programme was described as unique as it provided groups with a safety net, in that if applications did not quite meet the criteria they might be deferred and asked to strengthen aspects before re-submitting. In these cases if they were considered to have potential they could avail of technical assistance in order to bring them up to the standard required of the programme for funding.

For some organisations and groups the process of working with other groups became something of a learning experience. Perceptions and common understandings of what
was being attempted by Re-imaging Communities, along with a degree of sensitivity
and patience about how to proceed, and about roles and responsibilities, had to be
discussed and agreed, along with a level of understanding of the needs and anxieties
of the particular groups of people participating in the projects. Examples were given,
such as specific problems involved in working with young people. In general
difficulties of this sort were invariably ironed out quite quickly and were often
described as lessons learned for carrying out future projects.

6.7.3 Publicity, pre and post completion

Many projects carried out extensive consultations in their area prior to any decisions
being taken on what could be done to re-image and improve the area. The consultation
methods varied across projects, with different projects using one or more of the
following: door-to-door surveys; mailed questionnaires; open meetings; newspaper
advertisements; mailshots; discussions with gatekeepers; and website information
pages concerning the proposed project. Inevitably the level of consultation varied,
with some of the projects consulting more widely within their communities than
others. However, there does appear to have been a common response supporting the
need for change, especially in relation to the existence of paramilitary symbolism and
imagery.

A number of completed projects received significant media attention as a result of the
work carried out, most notably those involving the removal of overt sectarian or
paramilitary images, especially those that were generally well-known and familiar to
many. Local newspapers almost always covered or referred to these developments, as
did the various provincial papers and local radio and television news programmes.
They were invariably referred to as ‘good news’ stories, and some even reached
former residents of project areas living abroad. In particular one project was involved
in winning the ‘Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions’ as a result of their
artwork, and was featured on national television. Some projects also received email
communications from other parts of the world asking to be kept informed of
developments in the areas.

Some of the local Councils such as Belfast City Council and Derry City Councils
produce press releases on completion of projects and feature details of projects on
their websites. In addition, the Arts Council has produced regular media releases about the programme, in particular relating to its official launch, and this received extensive media coverage on the two main television networks.

6.8 The views of the artists

A number of artists involved in the programme gave their views on the projects and on Re-imaging Communities in general. Not surprisingly all wished to talk about their own experiences with a specific project (or projects) within the programme; but in addition most were also concerned to discuss the more general issues that arise in relation to public art - such as murals and sculptures. In particular they were interested in the notion of community re-imaging, in the context of other social and political developments (and in a shared future) in a divided community like Northern Ireland.

Most believed that being involved in the Re-imaging Communities programme had been very worthwhile and enjoyable. Many of them had been involved in community arts before, and most were enthusiastic about remaining in contact with this particular programme, because of its wider significance. Those artists who had not been involved in community-based arts before were encouraged by their involvement in the programme and were keen to do more in this area. There was specific reference to the unusual phenomenon that, unlike other projects where as time went on the numbers involved slowly decreased, here the numbers had increased as the projects progressed.

For whatever reason those involved in these projects were described as exceptionally enthusiastic, committed, and quite clear about what they were trying to achieve and easy to work with. There was some specific reference to the Arts Council and especially the Re-imaging Communities programme staff. They were described as approachable, supportive and helpful. One artist said that he had previously developed a negative view of the Arts Council, but this experience had changed his mind: he said ‘they have their finger on the pulse, they are flexible and aware of the difficulties involved’.

Some of the artists voiced their concerns about the suspension of the programme at the time. A few had been involved in working with communities and were in the process of bringing those within these communities to agreement on the need to
address negative displays in the areas. For these artists there was a concern that they would be viewed negatively by some in these communities for raising their expectations, and also by gatekeepers for bringing them on board to no avail. Some of them had hoped for further employment as a result of their involvement in the Re-imaging Communities programme and were disappointed at the suspension for that reason.

Another issue raised by a few artists concerned where an artist had been brought in at a late stage, due to another artist for whatever reason pulling out, or because there had been some delay in the project. This often resulted in work being rushed, and in some cases put them under pressure at the time. However, despite this most were convinced that it did not in any way take away from end result.

There was also some discussion from artists about the process of persuading local people to agree to ideas that were in any way radical or unusual. It was sometimes difficult, as one put it, to get people to ‘think outside the box’. In other words there were sometimes fairly fixed views about the sort of imagery that was suitable as representing ‘their community, their culture and/or their heritage’. It was accepted that initial ideas were normally a step forward for some individuals and communities, and away from the notion that murals ought to include paramilitary symbolism. Further movement takes time and discussion and at times the slowness of the process was frustrating for artists with new and original ideas. There was however agreement that the artists had a responsibility to try to challenge communities to think more creatively. One method used by a number of artists was to produce a presentation of their ideas or of their previous work, as a way of helping to generate ideas. There was also support for the view that it would be useful to have a central resource of re-imaged material that could be used to show communities what is possible and achievable.

For many artists being involved with the Re-imaging Communities programme had raised their profile, developed links and in some cases secured further work especially in relation to creating public art pieces. Some were involved with a second Re-imaging Communities project or were in the selection process for one of the proposed projects. It was also felt that in many cases the projects had been instrumental in the
development of arts in these particular areas. The artists recounted the positive feedback that they, themselves had encountered, both from those who had participated in the project and from the wider community. In some cases they described the final art as landmark pieces which have in many cases given the communities an identity and something to feel proud of. They themselves were very proud of the finished art work and were including pictures of it in their portfolios. There was a strongly held view that it was a privilege to have been involved in a programme of such social significance, and many described their involvement as a rewarding experience. ‘This has been the biggest public art piece I’ve ever been involved in and although it’s been hard work I’ve enjoyed every minute of it’.

6.9 Challenges faced by projects

Most of the projects experienced a range of both expected and unexpected hold-ups and difficulties. Some of these were unsurprising given the need in most areas to discuss what was being planned, to invite suggestions, deal with opposing ideas, seek help, and so on. There was therefore a fairly common experience of extensive meetings with long discussions about how to make progress. Community leaders in general agreed that it was important to develop some consensus across the community about what was being planned, and about what was agreed to be acceptable and what was not, in the context of community divisions and in particular the recent conflict.

There were also relatively commonplace and logistical difficulties arising from problems such as absences due to sick leave, staff decisions to leave the project, or in one case when the appointed artist left to take a post elsewhere. In a few cases the artist originally appointed was not able to undertake the work and so another had to be found quickly. There were also occasional uncertainties over ownership of land or sites, with delays while ownership was clarified and leases arranged. Difficulties with coordination and timetables could also arise if a number of statutory bodies or agencies were involved, and/or if Re-imaging Communities projects were being carried out alongside other projects. Usually this worked very well but in a few cases the Re-imaging Communities project was delayed because of a hold-up with a project funded under another programme.
There were also some delays in securing agreement on some planning/technical issues such as getting approval from the Roads Service if the art work was to be positioned near a public road, or negotiating with Northern Ireland Electricity to have lighting to the art work. In addition sometimes technical approval was required which involved extra costs that had not been anticipated and therefore not originally included in the application. There was a view that approval for planning and technical aspects of the projects should be established prior to submission of an application to the programme although it was agreed that this was not always feasible.

Logistical problems, along with interruptions and delays of any kind, always caused difficulties in maintaining momentum, especially in relation to keeping the community activists on board.

A quite recent development has been the appearance of occasional difficulties between members of the local community and ACNI staff, usually to do with some particular content or aspect of the art work or of the artists to be employed to carry out the work. This also caused problems for the managers of the projects who had to try and reach some sort of agreement between the two disparate views. One summed it up by saying that it was at times ‘stressful walking the line between the community activists and the Arts Council’. Although there was often, to begin with, a willingness and agreement on the part of the gatekeepers to remove some paramilitary symbolism, it was not always clear if they fully understood what imagery would or would not be consistent with the ethos of the programme. There was a view, sometimes expressed by community representatives, that on occasions the goalposts were moved, or that certain kind of content was permitted in one project and then disallowed in another. Disagreements of this sort, on occasions led to some activists leaving the project: finding an agreement, and getting everyone back on board, then involved great effort and protracted discussions (sometimes involving the help of mediators). Another view was that each project had to be judged on an individual basis as communities varied in relation to where they sat at the time, how long it had taken them to get there and how far they were willing to move forward. This, and the fact that the programme was evolving perhaps explained why decisions on content may have differed.
In one particular project involving the removal of paramilitary symbolism, local activists waited until the Re-imaging Communities project was completed, and then installed their own imagery. This example, and many other experiences of continuing and often long-drawn-out negotiation, along with a good deal of stop-go, made it obvious that movement forward had to be a slow incremental process. The paramilitary gatekeepers very often expressed their suspicion and uncertainty about developments, and especially about the removal of symbols to do with their history and involvement in the conflict. The importance and significance of these symbols, especially for paramilitary activists, is central and any developments – especially developments within what they deem to be their own areas – seem to demand constant re-assurance.

Some were prepared to argue that the criteria for funding had not been clearly established at the start of the programme, and that this then lead to inconsistency in what was allowed. Others asked for caution about being too intransigent with communities about what they could or could not have in terms of the content of the art work. There was a strongly held view in some quarters that even very small steps taken by communities should be acknowledged, as it had to be remembered that many were coming out of over 30 years of conflict.

There was a view that communities needed assistance in determining what art work might replace any paramilitary symbolism that was being considered for removal. It was accepted that that it was not always easy to satisfy the expectations of all in communities, but it was believed that if they were shown what could be achieved - perhaps through a catalogue of the work carried out by completed projects - they might discover a better way of creating an identity for their areas. It was acknowledged that it would take the skills of all involved - and perhaps in particular the artists - to help move communities forward in this way.

In addition the programme was not taking place in a political vacuum, and this meant that any political developments or disagreements, or when a politician or a public representative made a controversial speech or comment, had the potential to destabilise the process, at least temporarily. This was particularly true if the controversy referred in any way to public symbols such as murals or flags.
There was also some sensitivity at a local level concerning the speed at which projects proceeded. Careful judgement about this was thought to be important and appropriate, because it was not only important that members of the community were involved, but that they were seen to be involved. So, if a project was completed very quickly, there was the danger that it was perceived to be of little importance or relevance for local people, or for their opinions, and encouraged the view that the community was unlikely to have had any real input to it. Some community leaders and activists expressed the view that this subtlety was not always well understood, and that putting too much pressure on communities to complete quickly was not always the best strategy.

There were also other minor difficulties faced by a few projects over management issues. For example some groups had not realised the difficulties involved in learning to work with another group or organisation. How best to divide up the tasks and works was not always easy to decide, and there was agreement that more thought would be put into this element of the planning in any future partnership.

The involvement of older children and youth in working on the projects sometimes raised issues about how best to take account of their youth, their lack of experience and their ranges of ability. It was felt that not all the adults brought in by communities to work on aspects of the project had enough background and experience with young people and that this on occasions produced difficulties rising from misunderstandings, learning difficulties and even ethnic differences. These problems were raised in some projects and there was general satisfaction with how they were dealt with and how seriously they were taken.

Some projects acknowledged that, on reflection, they had shown some inexperience when planning their application especially with regard to staff and general budget needs and that they would consider more carefully their costs and staff requirements if they were to carry out such a project again. Implicit in this was an acknowledgement that they had enjoyed the project and were willing to engage in this process again.

A number of other general concerns were voiced. First, in relation to the launch of the Re-imaging Communities programme, some thought that it was presented as if it was
a project aimed specifically at Protestant communities, and that this was implicit – at least to begin with – in the media reporting. As a result it was thought to be difficult to attract nationalist or Catholic communities to buy into the programme. It was argued that a stronger attempt ought to have been made to change this perception at the start.

There was also some concern about how artists were appointed, and the question of copyright. For example it was the case that the artist brought in to draw up a brief for a project might not be the one appointed to carry out the work. This was caused by procurement procedures that had to be adhered to, but it led to problems with one artist working to another’s brief. This issue has not in fact led to any specific disagreement, but it might be necessary to have a procedure in place to deal with it in the future.

6.10 Suspension of the programme

The suspension of the Re-imaging Communities programme, which lasted from the summer of 2008 until the programme was re-opened in December 2008, had a quite negative impact which should not be underestimated. It created concerns at that time, and for some a dilemma, especially for those groups that had reached the stage of being ready to complete a further application for funding. A further application usually resulted from a completed feasibility study, which had produced a plan for the creation of an art work, and the suspension of funding left them unable to continue. Alternatively there was the situation where a community group had completed a ‘shared space’ project with the intention of bringing people on board to generate a more challenging ‘shared space plus’ project. Similarly some of the ‘shared space plus’ projects had addressed a number of sectarian images in their first project, and this had helped them to approach the gatekeepers about other imagery they would wish removed in a further Re-imaging Communities project. There were others who had a proposal deferred or rejected, and were in the process of rewriting and developing the idea further with assistance from Re-imaging Communities staff and with technical assistance.

Some groups had carried out months of consultation in order to put together an application, and in some cases they had finally achieved agreement from the community activists that paramilitary symbolism could be removed. This had left
them in the difficult position of having to tell the community, and in particular those
from whom consent had been gained for the removal of symbolism, that the project
might not now be funded. It was also a concern for some groups that the community
might well lose faith in them as a result. In all of the above the dilemma was that
expectations had been raised within the communities, that in some cases groups had
managed to persuade community activists of their good intentions, that they had
involved people in work and planning, and they were now uncertain as to whether or
not they could proceed.

It is difficult to estimate how many applications there would have been to the Re-
imaging Communities programme had there not been a suspension. Many examples
were given of groups beginning planning with the intention of putting together an
application, but because of the amount of work involved were reluctant to continue
when there was uncertainty as to whether the programme would continue. In addition,
in almost all interviews with those in projects completed or close to completed at that
time, there was enthusiasm and an intention to carry out further re-imaging type work.
In a few projects there was even a concern about the large numbers of the community
who would want to be involved should they begin another project, as they wouldn’t
have the resources to manage so many.

A few thought of their initial project as a first phase or pilot, which could be extended
or rolled out to other areas. Many were very disappointed and in some cases shocked
that the programme had been suspended and were hopeful it would re-open in the near
future. A few indicated that they might explore other sources of funding in order to
continue with the re-imaging of their area. The view was that the ball had started to
roll and they didn’t want to lose the momentum, although they were at this stage
uncertain as to what other avenues of funding would be open to them.

It was also brought to the attention of the researchers during the time of suspension
that other groups had been encouraged by what they had seen happen in another
project area, and who had then begun discussions and planning on their own, with the
intention of applying to the programme. All this suggested that there was a definite
need for this programme and the worry was that, left as it was in this vacuum, groups
who contributed to the preparation would lose credibility within their communities.
At this time all of those interviewed felt that there was still a great need to continue with the Re-imaging Communities programme. Many felt that the pilot had not been long enough and, in hindsight should have had more funding and it was believed that this was evidenced by how interest had grown throughout the course of the programme for this type of change. It was frequently mentioned that, as the programme developed so too did the interest from communities, so that a form of snowball effect developed. It was thought that the pilot had only ‘scraped the surface’ and that there was plenty of scope for further developments with this type of work for at least another three years.

It was also the belief of some interviewees that the programme has been slow to realise the benefits achieved and the popularity of the programme, and that this was possibly for two reasons. One of these was that the feasibility projects had no visible end results, although it was acknowledged that feasibility projects were necessary in order to determine the level of interest in communities and to decide on what might be achieved. In addition the feasibility projects had value, which although not visible, were nevertheless just as important in terms of the objectives of the programme. Secondly that it took time for communities to become fully aware of the programme and to consider if it was something they could buy into and benefit from. At this stage in the programme, however, it was strongly felt that there had been a significant impact in many areas for a relatively modest investment.

It was felt, at this time, that if the programme was to re-open, a consortium approach was the best way forward: in this way departments and agencies are fully involved in relation to funding and management, and this indicates a clear commitment that all concerned were signed up to a shared future, which the Re-imaging Communities programme appeared to be delivering. A few thought that the benefits would be experienced most by particular departments and agencies, but others believed that almost all Government departments and agencies would benefit from a more stable society (achieved by removing symbolism, diffusing tensions, building good relations, improving the physical environment, creating shared spaces, and so on). A number of interviewees argued that the programme should be mainstreamed, although some believed that it was too soon for this. The overall view in relation to the future of the
Re-imaging Communities programme, at this time of suspension, was that it should continue in some form and with a suitable management structure.

6.11 The re-opening of the programme

An additional tranche of funding was secured to allow the programme to re-open in December 2008, with the intention of continuing the programme until March 2009. Those communities that had been working towards an application (following a feasibility being completed prior to suspension), and other areas from where no applications had yet been received, were to be given priority in relation to this additional injection of funding.

In January 2009 the first round of awards following suspension was held with only three applications being received, all of which were successful. Two of these three projects were second applications to the programme following successful feasibility studies, and one was from a Council area where no previous applications had been received. These three projects had all been in the process of making an application when the programme was suspended, and had therefore a wait of some six months before finding out whether there would be new funding, and then whether they would be successful in their application. However it seemed that other projects were not in a position to wait for the programme to re-open and funding to become available. Some projects which had either already applied prior to suspension and had been deferred, or had been in the process of making an application, dropped out of the process probably as a direct result of the suspension and the uncertainty of further funding. The programme as a result had lost some of the momentum that had been created during its first two and a half years of operation.

Nevertheless by the second round of funding following suspension (in April 2009) interest in the programme had again been generated as there were 13 applications received; 12 of which were successful with the last one deferred for further consideration. Five of the successful 12 applications had arisen from a feasibility study carried out by a local Council and funded in the 4th round of the programme. It was unclear at the time of writing how long the programme would continue with this additional funding and whether further funding would be secured to run the programme.
6.12 The future of Re-imaging Communities?

The evidence suggests that there is still a need for a programme of this nature, and this view was supported in interviews, and also by the growth in the number of applications made during the first funding phase and again following the re-opening of the programme in December 2008.

There is also evidence of a snowball effect, in that work carried out in some project areas has encouraged other surrounding communities to create and enter an application to the programme. It was reported that a number of communities that had completed projects had assisted new entrant communities in their applications. In addition the publicity surrounding completed projects seemed to have had a knock on effect in encouraging communities to consider what they might do for their areas.

There have been many benefits arising from this programme, in addition to the obvious removal or replacement of displays of a sectarian and/or racist nature. Involved communities have been energised, have been given responsibility for and ownership of their areas, and have been given hope for a better future. The level of involvement and commitment within communities has of course varied, with results and outputs at different degrees of success and originality: but all have experienced a general benefit of involvement and progress and a sense of purpose. Phrases and words used about the impact of the projects have included capacity building, cohesion, regeneration, relationship building (both within and between communities and with statutory agencies) and confidence and pride.

One view was that the ACNI Art of Regeneration programme was the first step in engaging communities in dialogue and new thinking about what their environment might look like, and this naturally led into the Re-imaging Communities programme which provided encouragement to go that bit further.

For some the Re-imaging Communities programme has been the most effective promotional tool that the ACNI has ever had and there is a view that this should be built on in some manner. The belief is that this programme has been very important from an arts point of view as it has been about engaging with communities and facilitating audience development. ‘Communities are beginning to make the
connection between identity and public art...they’re beginning to think more creatively’. Many believed that expectations have been raised in communities and that this should be developed and not allowed to dissipate. As one interviewee stated, ‘if the Arts Council walks away from this now it could have a huge negative impact ... the programme will be viewed as piecemeal’. For some this meant securing funding to continue with the programme, and/or giving consideration to the development of new approaches whereby the shared spaces created by projects could contribute to further ways of bringing communities together. Suggestions included linking the areas through activities and programmes, for example through carnivals, festivals and creative play. The impetus would be on persuading communities to use these new environments so that they do not fall into disrepair or into the hands of a small section of the community to once again display derogatory imagery. ‘Re-imaging Communities has begun the debate on ownership and responsibility’ and ‘the potential is there to create a better future for these disadvantaged areas’.

Already Re-imaging projects have been incorporated or established alongside other urban regeneration or rural development projects; they have been part of an overall regeneration of areas such as parks, childcare centres or community gardens. Sometimes they have been described as the impetus for other projects or the reason why other projects were funded.

One suggestion that came across quite strongly in interviews was the need for a way to join up what has been learnt to date and to link together communities that have been involved in the programme so that they can share experiences and learning. Some sort of repository of collective learning which can be disseminated to others.

Many felt that the structure is already in place through the inter-departmental and inter-agency Shared Communities Consortium to take this programme further and to ensure that what has been achieved to date is not lost. On a cautionary note if the programme is to continue it would be important to ensure that decisions on what artwork was acceptable or unacceptable would need to be strengthened so as to avoid misunderstandings that have the potential to derail projects.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Some comments on symbolism in Northern Ireland

Symbols can be useful and indeed are often necessary in societies, but there is a general recognition that the use of certain symbols in Northern Ireland tends to represent and promote divisions in society. Where beliefs or disagreements exist on such central issues as national identity or historical events, it usually follows that symbols will emerge to mark territories and act as threats to other communities. Symbols in the form of flags, murals and painted kerbs can be seen in many areas in Northern Ireland and tend to signify identification with one religious or political opinion or another. In Northern Ireland there is a tradition of painting wall murals in parts of the cities and towns where one or other of the two communities predominate, and which are intended to reflect the cultural, religious or political views of those communities. They are often, as a result, both intimidatory and threatening. In recent times some of these murals have been softened, particularly in nationalist areas, to reflect cultural themes.

Steps have been taken by different government departments and agencies over the years to try to address some of the divisions and separations in Northern Ireland society by trying to establish ways of limiting and ameliorating the impact of these symbols. The results have included agreed protocols concerning the flying of flags, the practice of celebratory bonfires, the monitoring of parades, all accompanied by a range of community relations initiatives. The underlying premise has been that communities should try to understand the malign social effects of aggressive displays of symbols, and accept that progress towards peace and the removal of violence can be made through such processes of change and care.

In addition the continuing problems within Northern Ireland of promoting economic regeneration and renewal, and of beginning to deal seriously with poverty and unemployment, are seriously hampered by the continuation of these oppositional displays.
The Re-imaging Communities programme was intended to make a serious contribution to the resolving of some of these problems. The intention was to use arts-related initiatives as a contribution to the physical and visible transformation of conflict-torn communities. It is accepted that the arts can make a powerful contribution to the promotion of a healthy and economically productive society, and many urban regeneration programmes in other countries have shown that the inclusion of arts and cultural activity has contributed strongly to economic success. The benefits described have included contributions to a decrease in unemployment, the enhancement of social cohesion, the design of arts-related programmes intended to re-image the public face of the area, and a reduction in the incidence of vandalism and offending behaviour.

The Re-imaging Communities Programme in Northern Ireland was launched in July 2006 with a commitment to tackling the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland, including murals, and similar divisive symbols and images, by replacing them with new, positive and forward looking presentations. Its first target was the existence of a great number of paramilitary and similar murals.

7.2 Summary of funded projects
To date 123 projects have been funded under the Re-imaging Communities programme with 73 per cent of these based in areas categorised as being located in some of the most deprived super output areas in Northern Ireland. Many of the projects are based in predominately Protestant and loyalist areas, which is perhaps not surprising as it could be argued that the incidence of symbolism is often greater in these areas. Monitoring data in relation to 51 projects indicated that 6,893 people have participated in workshops and focus groups in these projects; over three quarters of them being 25 years or younger. In addition many others have been involved in some form in projects, including management staff, administrative staff, artists, consultants and volunteers and many others. A detailed examination of 31 completed projects indicated that total funding of £425,860 was utilised, resulting in substantial changes to the incidence of public imagery in these areas.
7.3 The creation of shared spaces

As a result of the Re-imaging Communities programme some of the more notorious displays of paramilitary symbolism have been removed and/or replaced with new imagery that reflects the aspirations of the communities in a more positive manner. In particular, some areas, known for particular sectarian incidents in Northern Ireland’s troubled past, have used the opportunity provided by the project to begin to create a more positive identity for their area and community. Through interviews and focus groups the consensus was that areas had been transformed into places that would not be intimidating to any sections of the community: in other words they were shared spaces. In addition the results of a survey in 10 completed project areas, which included the views of nearly 2000 participants, indicated that the majority of respondents believed that the projects had been of high quality, had improved the appearance of their areas and that people from outside the area were more likely to feel welcome as a result. Indeed it was reported that many more visitors were coming into areas to view the new art works.

Agreement to remove or adapt questionable imagery was not always easy to reach, and could involve a relatively slow and careful process. In some situations, for example, there had already been some tentative first steps towards the removal of displays of a sectarian or racist nature. An early stage was to seek an agreement to remove a part or section of the imagery that was agreed to be particularly unacceptable. This careful step-by-step approach could also include an agreement to create new unthreatening art work adjacent to divisive imagery. The aspiration was that, in time, and following continuing discussion and debate, it might be possible to replace or remove the offending images altogether. There have been some successful examples of these carefully modulated approaches, where agreement was reached and the imagery was replaced.

7.4 The correct timing of a programme of this nature

The widespread acceptance of this programme in most parts of Northern Ireland (with some exceptions), and the general view that it has been both a remarkably successful and generally beneficial exercise, suggest that the timing of its introduction was appropriate and well-chosen. The explicit and optimistic assumption of the programme was that communities would agree to look critically at the symbolism and
imagery within their own areas, and move to replace the more inappropriate and violence-related of these. Perhaps surprisingly this turned out to be a fairly accurate prognosis, although obviously there is still much work to be done if the iconic and symbolic presentation of Northern Ireland is to reflect the new world of peace and concord promised by the political agreement and the new power sharing assembly. Indeed some have argued that what has been witnessed to date is only the tip of the iceberg and much more needs to be done both in urban and in rural areas.

The evidence from this programme suggests that many communities were ready for change, and although the planning of projects involved many months of negotiations in certain areas, it was significant that from the beginning people were prepared to discuss these difficult questions. Not surprisingly there was (and remains) some resistance, almost always expressed as a defence of a threatened culture and way of life. These objections were most evident in discussions and in the surveys, but what was perhaps surprising was how rarely opposition was evident in the planning and activities.

Discussions with local groups about these difficulties almost always referred to their awareness of the problems faced by the programme, but there was also a determination to become involved in discussions and activities designed to deal with community differences and separations. Most of the people who became involved were aware of the significance of the programme and were therefore prepared to give it a chance, and this included many – but not all - of those in different paramilitary factions. There was also an awareness of the need to move relatively slowly, and that the programme did not mean that all community symbolism had to be removed. But it was generally accepted that the removal of the very warlike and often notorious displays of paramilitary symbolism and offensive wordings, along with overt sectarian graffiti, was necessary as a reflection of the emergence of peace and the absence of struggle and violence.

7.5 The usefulness of art as a medium

The programme had as its basic premise the importance of public art as a component in the emergence of a more positive community and shared future. Recognition of the ameliorative potential of art, and its contribution to new thinking about existing social
The process of creating new images to replace those no longer considered acceptable meant that art was the medium through which the projects and activities developed. Those involved learned or improved their social and community skills through a process of working together, reconciling differences, and planning and constructing an art form. Some have indicated that they discovered an inherent skill and potential previously unknown to them, and that they will continue to study and practice in this area. In addition, however, some wished to emphasise that art had turned out to be the central focus that allowed the work to develop. It was clear then that the programme has had success in terms of widening access to the arts.

The artists involved in the projects were praised by the communities involved for their extensive engagement within communities and for their dedication and professionalism throughout. There was also considerable agreement that the artists employed to help develop the new imagery had been very successful: for example over 90 per cent of people in the survey of ten project areas felt that the new art works improved the appearance of their area. The community dimension to the design and creation of the art works was also significant in that people perceived the works as something they were personally responsible for and indeed proud of. Many also felt that the new imagery represented their culture and heritage in a more open and non-contentious manner. It is also possible to argue that the programme was successful in developing a wider audience for, and increasing participation in the arts, and for raising the profile of some of the individual artists involved.

7.6 The building and/or strengthening of community/good relations
An important dimension of the work of the programme was the promotion of good inter-community relations. One consequence of this was that those involved in the design and production of new imagery had to take this question of community relations into account. This might for example include taking into serious separations and community difficulties, represented an important advance. Much of the discussion and reflection, during this evaluation of the impact and success of the Re-imaging Communities programme, included references to the importance and centrality of the art works, and to their visibility as indicators of the emergence of a new legacy.
consideration how the imagery might be perceived by others, and, not only the importance of seeing the work through the eyes of those from other areas, but of the extent to which the imagery represented their own area in a positive light.

An awareness of the importance of this perception did exist in some cases, as exemplified by examples of cross-community or multi-cultural activity. In these cases links were developed between groups from different cultural backgrounds leading to meetings, joint discussions and so on. Workshops were established on subjects such as good relations and diversity training, with some emphasis on developing a greater understanding of the cultures and beliefs other communities.

7.7 Cohesion, empowerment and ownership

An important side-effect of the projects was that, in some cases involvement in the Re-imaging Communities programme meant that active groups in ‘opposing’ communities were able to come together to carry out joint work or activities. Examples were cited of groups with diverse interests, including different religious, cultural or political persuasions, and a range of ages, coming together to work on these projects.

The involvement in some cases of children and young people in the work of designing the artwork, was also effective, in two ways. First it had the effect of involving parents, schools and others; and second it helped to ensure that the art would not be vandalised. In addition by involving young people to help in the design of the art work, perhaps sometimes including some of those responsible for the previous negative imagery, helped them to share the sense of community-belonging that was generated.

It was also felt that the projects had empowered people by giving them the opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to contribute to changing the image of their locality. This success gave some a confidence in their capacity to contribute to positive change, so that other activities were being proposed that could help to improve their area. Evidence for this could be seen in the numbers who have submitted, or were considering submitting, a further application to the Re-imaging Communities programme.
Extensive consultations were carried out in many projects areas and this and the active participation of many in the projects helped to give communities a sense of ownership of their area, so that they were also willing to look after and maintain the changes. In some cases the projects also served to provide an identity to the area, for example by depicting some aspect of local cultural history. This also served in some cases to remove images that presented a negative portrayal of the past associated with the Troubles.

7.8 The projects as catalysts for further improvement
The activities of the projects appeared to have some indirect impacts, as well as more obvious effects such as in neighbourhood renewal, capacity building and improved community cohesion. These less obvious influences led one person to describe the projects as ‘catalysts for change’. Examples referred to included TSN (Targeting Social Need), identifying and helping to address marginalisation in communities, and increasing the level of involvement of minority groups often left out, such as the elderly, single parents and so on.

The creation of new pieces of public art also generated a focus on the immediate surroundings of the work, and to a realisation of the need to improve these surroundings by tidying and cleaning, making use of recycled materials, and the planting of trees and scrubs. It was then believed that this very public improvement in the presentation of the area also improved the local economic climate in that property was easier to sell and new businesses were started or mooted.

There was widespread publicity for the programme through its promotion by the ACNI, and through local authorities and agencies. Media coverage frequently covered the launches of Re-imaging projects in a positive manner with ‘good news’ stories reaching a wide audience. This was thought to have encouraged a more positive view of these communities, especially in those cases where their names was associated with some atrocity committed during the conflict.

7.9 Partnership/relationship development
Many local Councils have fully embraced the Re-imaging Communities programme and have given support and assistance to communities throughout the process. This
has involved assistance in relation to planning, insurance and technical aspects of the projects. It has also involved liaising on projects’ behalf with different statutory bodies, local authorities and agencies. This has helped develop relationships between the Councils and the communities, sometimes where no such relationship existed before. In addition the very nature of the programme makes it necessary for communities to work with different departments and agencies, and this has helped to develop links and build working relationships: in some cases this has led on to further collaborative work and discussion on possible further developments.

The bodies and organisations that communities have worked with in re-imaging include local Councils, the NIHE, the ACNI, and the PSNI. In some cases the resulting relationships have been developed further, for example in making it possible or easier to liaise with the PSNI about bonfires and parades.

7.10 Inclusion of those not normally involved in community matters
The Re-imaging Communities projects have included the views and the participation of different groups and individuals in the project areas, many of whom have not been engaged in community matters previously. Consultations were carried out in many project areas with a wide range of constituents including the young and the old, minority ethnic communities, different interest groups, and those responsible for or defending the use of negative imagery. In other words everyone has been given the opportunity to make an input as to how their community was to be represented through the proposed art work.

In addition many have also had a chance to participate in the projects, to contribute to the designs and to help in the actual production of the new art work. In some projects this has included those responsible for the existing divisive imagery. There was also much involvement of young people in the design and production of the new art: the workshop participation figures for 51 projects show that 76 per cent of those who took part were 25 years and under. This was considered to be important as it encouraged interest from these young people’s relatives, friends and schools thereby creating a wider audience for the project.
7.11 Challenges to the programme

In general people were very satisfied with the management of the programme; there was praise in relation to the speed and efficiency of the application process and the approachability and helpfulness of staff. This is supported by the fact that the majority of those interviewed said that they would have no hesitation in applying to the programme on a further occasion; indeed many had submitted further applications and been successful. However not all projects progressed smoothly or without difficulties: there were hold-ups caused by logistical problems, and by disagreements about content (described below).

There was also some variation in the pace at which different communities worked, in that some needed more time than others. These variations were often the result of difficulties arising from the range views of those involved in the work. Negotiations and discussion were sometimes needed to reach agreements about going forward, so that all were kept on board and informed, in order to complete the project. In discussions emphasis was placed on the need at times to be patient and to be sensitive to local difficulties, and to allow projects extra time.

There were some more recent issues raised by a small number of interviewees concerning the turnover of staff at the ACNI and of difficulties of reaching agreement between projects and the ACNI over aspects of the artwork.

The nature of the programme inevitably means that there will be a few unsolved problems about the content of the final artwork, with some desiring the continuing inclusion of imagery not considered to be consistent with the aims of the programme. Mainly as a result of the long conflict, the perceived role of murals - in some cases - has been to provide communities with a justification and defence of their own position. The process of removing or transforming them will, for some, seem like a betrayal. In a number of cases this problem appears to have been solved to the satisfaction of all concerned, and it seems likely that these difficulties will not prevent the few contested projects from being completed.

However, for some this question of acceptable and unacceptable imagery remains unresolved, and so may have the potential to cause problems in the future. This
question may therefore need to be addressed by the ACNI and the Shared Communities Consortium should the Re-imaging Communities programme continue for some time.

7.12 How Re-imaging Communities impacts on wider policy

All government departments share the responsibility of working towards and supporting the ‘shared future’ strategy: in addition the new strategy of cohesion, sharing and integration (due to be launched) is expected to endorse the importance of a commitment to addressing sectarianism, racism and division. Sectarianism has been a permanent aspect of life in Northern Ireland, and in addition there is current evidence of a considerable growth in the incidence of racism as migrant workers have begun to settle here. It is accepted therefore that both sectarianism and racism are problems that need to be addressed if Northern Ireland is to move forward as a coherent community, and if its economic and political potential is to be realised.

All citizens have a responsibility to support and further this vision of a shared future, and all Government bodies are expected to produce policies and programmes designed to address the many social and community issues implied by the strategy. Clearly a re-imaging programme could play an important role in helping with these problems, and some examples of recent developments might provide insights into how this could contribute.

The quite concentrated level of housing segregation (and therefore community segregation) that currently exists in Northern Ireland, and especially in urban communities, has led to the emergence and promotion from DSD and the NIHE of ‘Shared Housing’. Implicit in this is the notion of a new style of ‘mixed’ community, with a need for some form of social activity such as re-imaging – or simply imaging - that would help to promote a shared community spirit.

Flags in Northern Ireland have always been a way of signalling territorial power and control, often against the wishes of many residents, especially when the flags are associated with paramilitary group. A significant, carefully planned, and generally successful approach to the amelioration of this problem has been developed, involving a considerable range of government departments and other bodies. At the heart of this
approach has been the creation of a Flags Protocol which local representatives and community spokespersons have been encouraged to agree to and sign. Again there is the possibility of a contribution towards finding a shared or agreed form of community imagery that would contribute to social cohesion and togetherness.

All Local Councils have developed ‘Good Relations’ strategies, and with support from the OFMDFM, are working on the ground, especially at interface areas, to promote good relations and to be available to negotiate, provide counselling and mediate in the case of disagreements. There is a general understanding that resolution of intergroup difficulties within or between communities is difficult to impose, and generally must involve discussions and developments, and – where possible – a shared activity or a shared development of neutral imagery.

7.13 What does the future hold?

It is difficult to determine how many potential customers there would be if the Re-imaging Communities programme was extended further, but all the evidence collected in this evaluation suggests that there remains a considerable market for such activities. The suspension of the programme in the summer of 2008 had for a time a negative impact on the programme, slowing down momentum with the result that when it reopened there were only three applications received from communities.

However, prior to suspension, the evidence is that a considerable head of steam in relation to submissions was building up. Since then this trend has continued and there can be little doubt that there is some consensus among the people with whom this evaluation interacted that there exists a definite need for a programme of this nature. In addition to the removal of displays of a sectarian or racist nature - the central focus of the programme - there had been a great many other benefits including increased capacity building, community cohesion, regeneration of areas and building relations both within and between communities. Communities themselves had been energised; the process had given them a sense of ownership of the area, instilled pride and increased their confidence to consider improving their area further.

One interviewee seemed to capture the views of many others that the Programme had been the most effective promotional tool that the ACNI had ever had and that this
should be supported. The fear was that unless the programme continued in its current format and/or that support was provided to encourage these shared spaces to be utilised by communities then what had been achieved might be lost.

The evidence from this evaluation of the Re-imaging Communities programme suggests that the procedures and approaches used in the initiation and development of particular projects have been successful. The results have, in many cases, given hope and pride to people living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. Methods used have taken account of what is known about the conditions for success, with the result that some very good examples have been witnessed of community capacity building, community cohesion, the building and strengthening of group relations between different religious and racial groups, and the regeneration of areas. In particular it is also possible to suggest that some of the reasons for success is that the timing has been right for an initiative of this sort, that the projects have been cross departmental involving a range of bodies with what are often different forms and levels of contact and influence within the community; and that the programme has taken a bottom-up approach allowing communities to take ownership of their areas.

A programme such as Re-imaging Communities that tackles community divisions in a very concrete, productive and fulfilling way, that adds to community capacity and that visually regenerates areas, is bound to be contributing to the policies and programmes of many Government bodies, such as Neighbourhood Renewal and a Shared Future. It is also delivering positive benefits in many of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland.
GLOSSARY

ACNI   Arts Council of Northern Ireland
APNI   Alliance Party Northern Ireland
BBC    British Broadcasting Corporation
CCDC   Community Convention and Development Company
CCU    Community Cohesion Unit (of NIHE)
CRC    Community Relations Council
CSC    Centre for the Study of Conflict
DCAL   Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DCMS   Department of Culture, Media and Sport (England)
DFP    Department of Finance and Personnel
DOE    Department of Environment
DRD    Department for Regional Development
DSD    Department for Social Development
DUP    Democratic Unionist Party
EHS    Environmental and Heritage Services
ESRC   Economic and Social Research Council
GCSE   General Certificate of Secondary Education
IFI    International Fund for Ireland
IRS    Independent Research Solutions
NICEM  Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
NICVA  Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIHE   Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NILT   Northern Ireland Life and Times (survey)
NIO    Northern Ireland Office
NIPB   Northern Ireland Policing Board
NISRA  Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NRF    Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NRU    Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
NTSN   New Targeting Social Need
OFMDFM Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PfG    Programme for Government
PSA    Public Service Agreement
PSNI   Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUL    Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist
SCC    Shared Communities Consortium
SEU    Social Exclusion Unit
SF     Sinn Fein
SOLACE Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers
TSN    Targeting Social Need
UDA    Ulster Defence Association
UVF    Ulster Volunteer Force
URCDG  Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Belfast: ACNI


Belfast APNI


Belfast City Council (2003) *Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee B1481-1547 April. An examination of the issue of the display of flags.* (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/minutes.)


Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies Queen’s University.


Belfast: Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister.


Department of Social Development (2003a) *People and Place – A strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Working Paper 1, June. DSD.


Department of Social Development (2006b) *Renewing Communities: the government’s response to the report of the taskforce on Protestant working class communities*. June. Belfast: DSD.


   http://cain.ulst.ac.uk


Noble Index – see Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2001). *An examination of attitudes towards political symbols in Northern Ireland*. www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/


Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister (2001b) *Northern Ireland Executive: Programme for Government: Making a Difference*. Belfast: OFMDFM.


**LEGISLATION**

Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

Flags (Northern Ireland) Order 2000.

Flags and Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

Flags and Emblems (Display) Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.


Northern Ireland Assembly. Ad Hoc Committee on Flags. Report on Draft
Parades Commission and Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, Volume II.
Protection of the Person and Property (Northern Ireland) Act 1969.
Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987
Public Processions (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005
Terrorism Act 2000.

WEBSITES
archive.nics.gov.uk/sd/050131g-sd.htm (January 2005)
cain.ulst.ac.uk
www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/
www.artscouncil-ni.org/award/forms/re-image_guide.doc
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/minutes.
www.jrf.org.uk
## APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE AREAS AND INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shared future</td>
<td>Equitable society with respect for diversity</td>
<td>• Increased use of shared space&lt;br&gt;• Implementation of joint flag protocol&lt;br&gt;• Freeing public realm from displays of sectarian aggression&lt;br&gt;• Changing the content of displays of symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community relations</td>
<td>Eliminating exclusion and aggression through interventions to promote inclusion, free movement and sharing</td>
<td>• An increased number of protected and shared public spaces&lt;br&gt;• Increased awareness of diversity&lt;br&gt;• Increased opportunity to address division&lt;br&gt;• Measurable improvement in community involvement in identified contested public spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community cohesion</td>
<td>Creation of safer, stable neighbourhoods</td>
<td>• Greater participation of marginalized groups&lt;br&gt;• Increased community capacity/leadership&lt;br&gt;• Increased respect for others-increase cultural awareness/diversity&lt;br&gt;• Greater stability and sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regeneration through the arts</td>
<td>Improved physical appearance of areas through high quality public art work</td>
<td>• Increase focus on art to improve physical environment&lt;br&gt;• Increase neutralization of communities&lt;br&gt;• Increase in high quality public art to reflect broader civic and cultural identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Neighbourhood renewal</td>
<td>Confident communities committed to improving the quality of life in most deprived areas</td>
<td>• Contribution to the physical and social renewal of neighbourhoods in the most deprived areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE SAMPLE PROJECTS

The full sampling frame included 20 projects chosen by the methods detailed in Chapter 2 of the report. This allowed a representative sample of the 59 projects which were successful in receiving awards in the first five rounds of the first year of the Re-imaging Communities Programme. The statistics for the sample of 20 in relation to some variables are shown below with the statistics for the population awarded at this time (59 projects) shown in the third column and the full population (109 projects) awarded at the time of writing shown in the fourth column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award size</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of project</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space plus</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-single identity</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban/rural</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of group</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-led</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council-led</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area type</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estate</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village/small town</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interface</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one area</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of deprivation</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High deprivation</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of art</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mural</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample (20 projects)</td>
<td>Population (59 projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting/banner</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two project management not included

The Council areas where the sample projects are based are shown in the next table, again in the third column the full population is shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council area</th>
<th>Sample (20 projects)</th>
<th>Population (59 projects)</th>
<th>Population (109 projects)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armagh</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymena</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limavady</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyle</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry &amp; Mourne</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtownabbey</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Down</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%*</td>
<td>80%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other Council areas included one project each in Craigavon, Down, Dungannon, Larne, Lisburn and Magherafelt
** Other Council areas included five each in Craigavon and Dungannon, three in Lisburn, two each in Castlereagh and Magherafelt, one each in Banbridge, Carrickfergus, Cookstown, Down and Larne
**APPENDIX 3: MONITORING FORM**

**WORKSHOPS/FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION PLEASE COMPLETE ONE REPORT FOR EACH WORKSHOP/FOCUS GROUP FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name of organisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Name of Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Application Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please give details of workshops/focus groups below

**Workshop/focus group Number _____**

- Where was it held (include postcode)
- How long did it last
- Number of participants
- Target | Actual
- Age of participants
  - Numbers below 25
  - Numbers between 26-55
  - Numbers 56 and over
- Religious denomination
  - All Catholic
  - All Protestant
  - Mostly Catholic
  - Mostly Protestant
  - Cross community
  - Other (please specify)
- Persons from a minority ethnic community
- Gender of participants
  - All female
  - All male
  - Mostly female
  - Mostly male
  - Mixed
- Where any members of the local council present (if so what was their role)
- Job title | Role/input
- Please state if the workshop/focus group was targeted at a specific clientele and if the target was achieved
- Target | Target achieved
- Please state the purpose of workshop/focus group
- Please state the outcome of workshop/focus group
APPENDIX 4. PROGRESS REPORT & END OF PROJECT REPORT FORMS

RE-IMAGING COMMUNITIES

PROGRESS REPORT

Application Reference No:
Organisation name:

Report Period   Date From:   To:

SECTION 1: PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Details of project activity since the last report.
1.2 Is the project on target to meet the project’s aims and objectives, including the projected budget, as envisaged in the application? Yes/No

If no, please provide details.

1.3 Are there any problem areas or other information which we should be made aware of e.g. financial, administrative, artistic, personnel, marketing etc? Yes/No

If yes, please explain

1.4 Have there been any measures taken to support access for participants, for example transport or consideration to venue suitability? Yes/No

If yes, please explain
1.5 Have there been any (unanticipated) positive outputs/impacts? For example has there been links developed with the community/voluntary, private or statutory sectors; has the work led to consideration of other projects of this nature, etc.  Yes/No
If yes, please describe below:

1.6 Has any marketing/publicity been undertaken?  Yes/No
If yes, please describe below and attach any press releases, promotional material etc.

1.7 Please comment on the performance of the artist/arts organisation or consultant you used or are using for your project.
1.8 Project Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Nos. involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artists/Tutors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Declaration

Please note that a random sample of Re-imaging Communities projects are selected each year for in depth monitoring and on site visits. You will be contacted in advance if your project is selected.

The most senior person in the organisation must sign this declaration.

I certify that all of the above information is true and accurate and that all documentation relating to this grant is clearly identifiable and available for inspection by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland or its agents.

Signed:

Name: (in block capitals)

Position within the organisation:

Date:

On behalf of (Organisation)
RE-IMAGING COMMUNITIES
END OF PROJECT REPORT

Application Reference No:
Organisation name:

Report Period Date From: To:

SECTION 1: PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Details of project activity since the last report.
1.2 Did you deliver the project as envisaged in the application form? Yes/No
If no, please provide details.

1.3 Does your organisation feel that it fully met the aims and objectives of your project, including the projected budget, as described in the application? Yes/No
If no, please provide details.

1.4 Tell us how you feel your project met the aims and objectives of the Re-imaging Communities Programme i.e. contribution to a Shared Future, reducing tension at interface areas, creating shared spaces, improved community relations, community cohesion, etc.
1.5 Project Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Numbers involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artists/Tutors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SECTION 2: FINANCE

2.1 Income. Please confirm the final sources and levels of partnership funding for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Heading</th>
<th>Name of Funder</th>
<th>Amount £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-imaging Communities Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Expenditure. Please confirm the final details of total project expenditure against the agreed Budget. *Please remember to submit your final income and expenditure report.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Heading</th>
<th>Agreed Budget £</th>
<th>Actual Spend £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Artist Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Equipment/Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Publicity/Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Commissioning Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Installation Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Equipment Hire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Technical Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Venue Hire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Feasibility Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Publicity/Distribution Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Volunteer Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you encounter any difficulties/exceptional circumstances, in terms of the project, of which you wish to make us aware? E.g. Financial, administrative, artistic, personnel, marketing, timetable, etc.

Yes/No

If yes please explain

Please tell us about the successes of your project and summarise your experience of the Re-imaging Communities programme.

Have you any further Re-imaging plans and if so would you consider re-applying the Re-imaging Communities Programme?
Declaration

Please note that a random sample of Re-imaging Communities projects are selected each year for in depth monitoring and on site visits. You will be contacted in advance if your project is selected.

The most senior person in the organisation must sign this declaration.

I certify that all of the above information is true and accurate and that all documentation relating to this grant is clearly identifiable and available for inspection by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland or its agents.

Signed:

Name: (in block capitals)

Position within the organisation:

Date:

On behalf of (Organisation)
APPENDIX 5. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Good morning/evening. My name is ____________________ from Customer & Marketing Surveys Ltd. We are conducting some research into community relations in the Broughshane area. Would you have about 5 minutes to answer some questions?

Can I firstly ask,

1. What is your age?

2. Are you?

   Male

   Female

3. And were you brought up in Northern Ireland?

   Yes

   No

4. If yes, would you regard yourself as being?

   Part of the protestant community

   Part of the catholic community

   Neither
5. Generally speaking would you say that sectarian graffiti and other sectarian symbols such as murals and kerb painting in Northern Ireland generally is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A major problem</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A minor problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. And in this town specifically would you say sectarian graffiti and other symbols such as murals and kerb painting is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A major problem</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A minor problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Recently there has been a project here in ...... (describe project). How aware are you of this project?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fully aware</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaguely aware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not aware at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. And how did you first become aware of this project?

Tick all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through consultation between the project team and local community organisations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through consultation between the project team and local people directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles in the media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Politicians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. When you first became aware of the project did you think it was?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely a good idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly a good idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly a bad idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely a bad idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How satisfied were you with the amount of consultation with each of the following regarding the project?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local community organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local people directly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local political leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local church organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. If dissatisfied or very dissatisfied please give reasons why

12. I am now going to read out some statements about the project now that it is complete. For each please way whether you agree or disagree?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project is high quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. How important do you think it is that people from outside this area feel welcome and secure in it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neither important or unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. Do you think that as a result of the project people from outside this area are more likely to feel welcome and secure in it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. How strongly would you support more projects of a similar type in this town/area?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very strongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How strongly would you support more projects of a similar type in other parts of Northern Ireland?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very strongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6: SURVEY DATA CARRIED OUT IN 10 PROJECT AREAS

Figure 1. Age groups

Figure 2. Gender distribution of survey areas
Figure 3. Whether brought up in Northern Ireland

Figure 4. Community background
Figure 5. Views on graffiti and other symbols generally

Figure 6. Views on graffiti and other symbols in this area
Figure 7. Awareness of project

Figure 8. How they became aware of project
This next graph relates to the question contained in Figure 12 and it should be noted that from Figure 13 to Figure 18 inclusive the respondents were much lower as it was only if the respondents answered ‘yes’ to the question above (Figure 12) that they answered questions in relation to the Figures 13-18. In the case of Portavogie only two people answered ‘yes’ to this question, therefore the results in Figures 13 to 18
for Portavogie only relate to two respondents. The total number of respondents for Figures 13-18 is 426.

**Figure 13. Was this an effective way of ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to have an input?**

**Figure 14. Satisfaction with level of consultation with community organisations**
Figure 19. Who was responsible for deciding the content?

Figure 20. Importance of obtaining widespread community support before changing appearance of area
Figure 21. The project is high quality

Figure 22. The project improves the appearance of the area
Figure 23. Most people in the area are pleased with the project

Figure 24. More people from outside of the area seem to be visiting
Figure 25. I have more pride in this area now

Figure 26. The project has helped to bring the community together more
**Figure 27. Overall what impact has the project had for the area?**

- **Missing**
- **Unsure**
- **Of no benefit**
- **Of little benefit**
- **Fairly beneficial**
- **Very beneficial**

**Figure 28. How important is it that people outside the area feel welcome and secure in it?**

- **Unsure**
- **Very unimportant**
- **Unimportant**
- **Neither**
- **Important**
- **Very important**
Figure 29. As a result of the project people from outside the area are more likely to feel welcome and secure in it

Figure 30. How strongly would you support more projects of a similar type in this town/area
Figure 31. How strongly would you support more projects of a similar type in other parts of Northern Ireland
APPENDIX 7. BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME PROJECTS

GVRT Reflect: paramilitary memorial and mural re-imaged with art on theme of poppies

GVRT streetscapes: paramilitary murals in village area of Belfast re-imaged with King Billy mural
Scrabo, Ards: one paramilitary mural painted out with assistance of young people. Another Somme mural was repainted and memorial garden created.

Portavogie, Ards: loyalist mural replaced by mural depicting fishing history of area. Children were involved in the painting of designs incorporated into mural.
NDLSP, Bangor: Feasibility study which involved the removal of 3 paramilitary murals and associated symbolism as goodwill gesture. Here are 2 of the murals which were painted out.

Inter-Estate Partnership, Ballycraigy: 2 paramilitary murals and related symbolism removed and 2 welcome signs installed.
Lower Shankill: 11 paramilitary murals were replaced with murals depicting the social and cultural history of the area. Before and after photos are shown below.

Lower Shankill: Another of the murals replaced (left) by an A-Z of the history of the area (right).
Ards, Glen Estate: Paramilitary mural replaced with murals depicting community groups and history of area

Ards: Paramilitary memorial mural replaced with a mural depicting soldiers training around Helen’s Tower before departing for World War 1
Shankill: Shared space plus project which replaced a paramilitary mural and created an interactive play area

Mosside: Paramilitary murals, flags and territorial markings removed and a range of art work installed
EBCHCA, East Belfast: this is just one of a number of paramilitary symbols painted out in this area

Cloughey: installation of sculpture to complete Somme garden in area previously displaying sectarian imagery
Ballymagroarty, Derry: removal of sectarian imagery and involvement of disaffected youth and mothers and toddlers in design of art work at two sites

An Munia Tober, Belfast: project bringing together children from the settled and travelling communities. Installation of large scale photographs of children involved in project
Lincoln Court, Derry: intended to be first phase, this created a shared space in order to open discussion for a second more challenging project in the area

Magherafelt: sectarian graffiti was covered with historical and cultural murals designed in consultation with community
Monkstown: Loyalist symbolism was replaced with art depicting social message on drugs and was carried out by youth from two groups.

Newry: Derelict site re-imaged with art work depicting history of local area. Site highly visible from main road through city.
Broughshane: Site claimed by community by installation of sculpture carried out by children and artist to present themes of change, freedom and children at the heart of the community.

Darkley: wall re-imaged with cultural themed paintings carried out by community with guidance from artist. Intergenerational project.
Harryville: mosaic depicting history of local mill. Children involved in making some of art pieces, whilst others donated old photographs of mill workers for the mosaic.

St Lukes, Twinbrook: Cross community groups came together to make the art work under guidance of artists. The theme is based on the cultural history of area.
Short Strand: Art work designed by, and in consultation with, the community installed on one of the first peace walls in Belfast

Belfast: Multicultural project which produced a board game exploring the culture and traditions of three different cultural groups