

Promoting Positive Change

Twaddell, Ardoyne, Shankill,
Communities in Transition



Our Mission

Positive transformation and normalisation of interface communities

A big Thank You, Go raibh maith agaibh, to all the forty eight men and women who gave their time to take part in the interviews and workshops. To Philip and Pat for facilitating them and to Colum for bringing it all together.

Our Vision

A city without walls



Throughout 2015 - 2016 a group of community relations practitioners set out to “explore current and future initiatives and outstanding issues affecting community relations and peace building work in Northern Ireland”.¹

After much debate, discussion, 45 workshops and engaging 642 participants, a subsequent report, “Galvanising the Peace”, suggested that as a result of hardening of attitudes and behaviours in some areas much of the goodwill displayed at the signing of the 1998 Agreement had evaporated.

As an organisation that had participated in the Galvanising the Peace Working Group, and had contributed to the discussions, North Belfast Interface Network argued that this was not entirely reflective of its practice nor of the experience of many organisations and residents working and living in many areas of North Belfast.

In 2015 and again in 2016 Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities in Transition (TASCIT) organised a cross community Christmas event in the Hillview Retail Park and as part of the event asked participants to fill out a questionnaire. Two of the questions were, ‘Do you think relationships have improved between local communities?’ , and, ‘Has your interaction with the ‘other’ community been positive or negative? On each occasion, to our surprise, these returned overwhelmingly positive responses. Discussing these findings with a wide range of community groups and residents from across North Belfast further confirmed that despite ongoing difficulties, (Twaddell camp and the parades and protest on the Crumlin Rd) there was a growing sense that things were improving and, as was repeatedly stated, people were doing things they “wouldn’t have done years ago”.

Recent events such as the opening of the award winning Bradley Manor and the collaborations and training that took place to ensure that its workforce was reflective of the local community; the opening of the Houben Centre and the R- City Café; the removal of the interface wall on the Crumlin Rd and other plans to transform segregation structures, and the agreement that brought about the end of the Twaddell Camp reaffirmed our contribution to the Galvanising the Peace discussions that in some communities, “ levels of confidence and collaboration within and between communities are growing at a level in advance of the political process”.²

The positivity of the discussions to formulate a response to Galvanising the Peace and the subsequent events were the basis on which it was decided to initiate the **Promoting Positive Change process.**

¹Galvanising the Peace: The Future of Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland. P.6.

²Galvanising the Peace: The Future of Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland. Executive Summary

Promoting Positive Change

As a result of a number of meetings with Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities in Transition partners, (North Belfast Interface Network, Twaddell Woodvale Residents Association, Concerned Residents Upper Ardoyne and the Lower Shankill Community Association) the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum, Shankill Womens Centre, Ballysillan Community Forum, Families beyond Conflict, Marrowbone Community Association, Ardoyne / Shankill Healthy Living Centre, Grace Women's Development Limited and the Ardoyne Association it was generally agreed that there was a growing positivity and increasing levels of cooperation within and between communities in the area.

Despite the enormous amount of positive work carried out by these groups, a negative narrative of the area continued to exist (as was reflected in recent headlines referring to this area as "Northern Ireland's most notorious interface"). In order to challenge this narrative TASCIT decided to document some of the positive change that was taking place in the community. North Belfast Interface Network, as the lead partner for TASCIT, secured funds from Urban Villages and 'Promoting Positive Change' was the outcome.

'Promoting Positive Change' is not an attempt to minimise the problems that exist in segregated communities. The groups and individuals associated with this document are not naïve optimists but are residents who have witnessed some of the most horrendous aspects of the conflict. Yet these residents are now beginning to embrace the potential for a more inclusive future.

The interviews conducted in Ardoyne consisted of twelve men and eight women. The interviews carried out in the Shankill / Woodvale / Twaddell area were conducted with seven men and twenty one women and it is important to acknowledge this ratio. These sessions were conducted on a one-to-one basis and in focus groups. All interviewees have had varying degrees of participation in group activity and cross community engagement.

This is not an academic document. It is an opportunity to consider some of the thoughts of local residents who have experienced positive change in their communities. Despite the fact that this document is based on the testimonies of people who have experienced positive change in their communities some of the interviewees were hesitant in even having their first name and the community they came from included with their quotes. Therefore we have made no references to the communal background of the contributors, each quote speaks for itself.

The quotes in any given section are from different individuals and we have attempted to ensure that a balance has been struck in choosing them.



A Most Notorious Interface

North Belfast is an area that has been described in many ways ranging from the cockpit of the North to a patchwork quilt of divided loyalties where orange turns to green in a matter of steps.

It is an area that contains what has been referred to as Northern Ireland's most notorious interface. Residents within the community have undoubtedly come through a very traumatic past. It has been estimated that as many as a fifth of all conflict related deaths happened within the area despite the fact that only 5% of the Northern Ireland population lives here.

It is an area that contains more segregation barriers than in any other part of the North. Of the estimated, depending on what publication you read, 116 physical structures that are referred to as peace walls or segregation barriers over a third are in the North of the city.

The level of segregation that we see today with as many as 98% of some communities being categorised as either Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist or Catholic / Nationalist / Republican began from the moment barricades were erected during periods of intense inter communal violence in 1969. Throughout Belfast whole streets were burned to the ground and families were forced to flee from their homes in what was referred to at that time as the biggest forced migration of people since WWII. Of the forty eight people interviewed many of them made references to this period and it was apparent that almost half a century after the events their memories of the period remain vivid and potent.

purse was retrieved with her things inside it – a singed one pound-note and a singed photo of my father that she kept in it. The one thing that seemed to be OK was our family bible. It was sitting there, and you know, it is as if God was saying to us all - 'You still have my Word' in the midst of everything."

"My parents and grandparents came from the country. They were put out of Clifton Park Avenue by people who didn't want Catholics living there, we moved to Crumlin Road"

"My mother and father were burned out at the earlier part of the Troubles. She lived elsewhere for a while, but she always wanted to come back. Almost everyone who was put out wanted to come back. All her memories were in that house and memories of the neighbours too".

"Oakfield Street would have been much further back into Ardoyne, but our windows were still boarded up with corrugated iron because we just didn't know what was coming. We didn't know if our street was next. I remember the 15th of August, my grandparents hiding us under the beds because the B Specials and a mob with them were battering the windows throughout the night, it was frightening, we didn't know if we were getting burned out or shot in our homes."

"Peace came in 1994 and I do regret that my wee mother never got to see it. She was petrol bombed in her own home but I can tell you though that she was never bitter. She wasn't brought up to be and I wasn't either."

"...all her memories were in that house."

"I'll never forget the night we were petrol-bombed and if it weren't for the dog barking, which woke my parents up, everyone would have been burned alive."

They all got out but my brother went out the front while the others tried to go out the back and for a while he thought he was the only one that had got out alive. Even the piano was burned and destroyed and my mother's



“...I suppose some people felt safer with their own.”

With the arrival of the British Army onto the streets community erected barricades became fixed, morphed into peace lines and outlined the communal frontiers.

“Years ago I think Protestants and Catholics did live together more. People mixed and they visited one another. Catholics lived on Twaddell. Almost all of that stopped once the Troubles began”.

“Next door we had a Protestant neighbour who came in every Christmas with wee gifts, she left and I remember Mummy being very upset by that. I wouldn’t have had the same understanding of what was going on – when you’re living beside someone for so long and then they move out”.

“Some families moved away after ‘69, we never made them feel like they had to, but things were different then. I suppose some people felt safer with their own”.

“I had a sister; she was burnt out of Farringdon. That was really the first impact it had... she had just got married, she had all her furniture -and all her stuff, and it all went up in the air. That was my first real experience of things”.

“There was a chippy there called Fusco’s and we would have all like congregated there, but I lost touch with them, even though I know some of them really liked me ... it just wasn’t possible then – to go out on the dark streets, I wasn’t going out there and they weren’t coming in here”.

“So you found you were restricted to where you could go. I can honestly say I hadn’t any Protestant friends, didn’t have any, we stayed in among our own, in our own community”.

“There were no relationships between the communities when I grew up, I’m over 50 and to my shame I’ve never walked the Woodvale Road. I remember my brother wanted to go to the Cabin because they sold toy guns, but no, the roundabout was a cut off for me and I didn’t walk over to the Cabin to get a toy gun with him”.



“...but then it started to get more serious.”

By the mid-1970s the nature of the ‘conflict’ had moved into a new phase, large scale inter communal rioting decreased and was overtaken by a protracted campaign of violence that disproportionately affected North Belfast.

“I mean, we just didn’t like them, we’d have run up the road to shout at them, we were just kids, but then it started to get more serious”.

“When I was growing up, I grew up without a father, as my daddy was a Protestant, he came from across there in Woodvale – but when the troubles started to get really heavy, my mummy and daddy separated - because my mummy wouldn’t go and live over there and I couldn’t even tell you to this day ... I could be walking past my daddy, I know nothing about him, they just separated”.

“It got worse over the next years into the 70s and the gun battles, when you were a kid you always listened for the shout of “Clear the streets” and the gun battles would start, then they would stop and the women ran to get the messages in...that sticks in your head”.

“There were nights when we just sat in the kitchen with the kids at the back of the house. Some of the houses closer up the road took most of the brunt of it, windows smashed and cars wrecked, even petrol poured over doors”.

“One day the teacher told us to get down on the floor and stay away from the windows in case the shooting started. The British Army were everywhere and the IRA were taking them on, the Saracens and the pigs flew through the district. I remember the day one of those armoured vehicles came right through the school yard wall, we were excited but afraid at the same time”.

“We started the 174 youth club on the Woodvale Road. We were petrol bombed from the chapel grounds. We had to take the kids out the back one night because we feared for their lives. There was a pipe bomb thrown at us on one occasion. The club closed”.



“...you just knew that there was this other that you needed to be protected from.”

Throughout the next three decades the nature of the conflict intensified bringing atrocities that drove many residents to seek safety with their own. The peace lines became increasingly fortified and permanent, segregation was not simply a choice made by residents themselves but became institutionalised and a fact of life. Contact, if any, with the other community was perfunctory.

“My past experience with the other community – I hadn’t got any. None whatsoever. My only experience of the other community is that they would come in and kill somebody or blow somewhere up”.

“I was actually shot during the troubles we were walking along and I noticed the men in the white saloon car, and I was very wary about it, and no sooner had I said something, then bang-bang-bang, the three of us got shot. Thankfully nobody died, but it was frightening, it put that fear in you – they’re actually in these streets, when it’s dark and they’re in amongst us”.

“... there was a lot of people murdered in our community, and my opinion of them – I didn’t have any opinion of them, no contact with them...”

“.....there was the big fence in Alliance Avenue – so you never saw them, never knew what they were doing, two separate areas, unless they came into our area. You wouldn’t have walked down the Crumlin Road”.

“I remember the steel door on the Berwick being opened by the Brits for some reason, my mate who was with me couldn’t believe that it just looked the same on the other side, it was just like here only it was Glenbryn”.

“The first thing that struck me was when I did go out was the houses at the top of Alliance with cages on their windows and the big wall coming down the street - I didn’t know what had happened there, being young, I was always wondering - always had it in the back of my head – who’s doing that, and why? So you just knew that there was the other ones that you needed to be protected from – on the other side of the fence”.

“We never saw anyone from the other side of the wall, but they were there, sometimes bricks and bottles would come over when we were playing and when we got a bit older sometimes we threw them back. We never saw who was throwing and we never saw who we were throwing at”.



“...oh aye things are better but it took a long time getting there.”

The ceasefires of 1994 eventually led to the signing in April 1998 of the Good Friday Agreement which heralded a new beginning and gave hope that the ‘dark days of the past’ were gone. The Good Friday Agreement presented the opportunity for collaboration and good will but unfortunately some areas, North Belfast being one of them, experienced an increase in tensions and rioting at what was to become commonly referred to as ‘interfaces’.

The ferocity, intensity and relentlessness of this rioting and the disproportionate impact that it had on ordinary residents from both communities living at the interfaces led to a new level of engagement within and between communities that was a departure from most of the cross community work that had gone before. This contact was based on empowering local residents to resolve local problems by engaging with those with whom they had previously kept at arm’s length.

“Things are better than they were three or four years ago. The republican workers and us, we worked on the same issues. Phone contacts were very good – we alerted each other if trouble looked likely and if need be we contacted the PSNI”.

“It was hard living here at the time because of all the trouble but don’t get me wrong it wasn’t all from their side. There were ones from here going up to and causing trouble - a few drinks on them, thought they were heroes”.

“The police were not interested - and so we became an unofficial neighbourhood watch. It was sometime seven days a week, even Sundays were busy. This was a problem before the camp was ever there. We were working our usual shifts in our jobs and then we were up at night protecting our area”.

“I worked with one of the residents groups but the reason I got involved then was to stop the houses getting attacked and the kids coming up – from our own area, never mind theirs, and kicking things of”.

“It was still pretty bad for a long time after the protest outside the school stopped. Young ones from both sides were still getting stuck into each other every other night, but eventually that got less and less. When interface workers and the political reps were talking it seemed that it was getting better. There’s hardly any trouble up there these days. Definitely the cross community work from the youth workers and the interface workers seems to be paying off”.

“Oh aye things are better but it took a long time getting there - people stood on the streets to stop trouble –at the beginning you did it for your own – then you did it because it was the right thing to do. It wasn’t right that people were getting tortured every night... didn’t matter where they were from”.

“...the more people talking the better.”

With the success of these interventions the scale and frequency of the interface violence decreased and in doing so created an environment that was more conducive to strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for local encounters and dialogue

“The RCity café is another great way we can get people together. Every day you will see people from Ardoyne and the Woodvale sitting having lunch, coffee, just doing whatever and there’s no trouble. Young people from the local schools all in their school uniforms sitting having coffee together. That’s a great starting point, just getting on with things as normal”.

“What’s wrong is we still don’t get to meet our neighbours like we should, I’d love to be able to walk across to Twaddell and speak to the residents there who were affected like we were by the parades and protests and the camp. That would be good to do, maybe someday soon”.

“Getting to meet people from within the PUL and Orange community through the dialogue around the parades, over the years and months we got to see that we don’t have horns on our heads, we can have our own opinions and still talk”.

“When I first went to do a joint event, I was scared to open my mouth and say my name, I was nervous, but in the end I was very happy to speak. A lot of people were in fear of reprisals, you see, down through the years. Safe spaces are needed to do this kind of work”.

“A whole debate developed about how and why that happened. We hadn’t known about their suffering. We were learning about how the two communities suffered together”.

“I went to a few of those weekends away, through the conflict, with members of the Protestant community, and there was no-one who couldn’t see that what it done to A was also done to B, and we sat and talked about it – there were people from the Shankill and that there”.

“I thought the Epilogues course was powerful. I was especially struck by a film clip that showed you a woman talking about how her husband who was in the IRA had been killed by a British soldier. And she was proud of him, she was bursting with pride. I had never thought before of how someone like her might see an IRA man. I wasn’t thinking of the family before”.

“I speak out now more than I did before. At first when I visited the Falls Women’s Centre I thought, ‘We are not going to get out of here, alive.’ I was terrified. but we were all able to speak up in the end and even though there were only a few of us and we were in pretty safe space, at least it was a start”.

“We have learned about the hunger strikes. We’ve heard from older women in the Catholic community who lived in a time when there was no jobs, when there was segregation and the army would come in to their houses some times and beat them”.

“We have to tell our children who we are and what we have suffered. Society says we are bigots and our politicians get the reputation of being bigots. So it’s difficult standing up for your identity. We don’t have to agree with our Catholic neighbours when we meet them but we can agree to disagree”.

“You can wear blinkers and not see things the way they are. Maybe we all need to change our opinions of one another on both sides – and try to find a way to live together. That’s why we are passionate about the work we do, it’s for the future. We really care about our young people for they are the future”.



“...if I’m not there to do anyone any harm, I don’t think any harm will come to me.”



People are also indicating that they are also more comfortable frequenting places where they may not have felt comfortable in the past and are talking with their feet.

“Oh aye, things are better but it took a long time getting better. I go and get my shopping down at Tesco on the Woodvale, I’ve done that for ages, but now you stop and get a yarn with people as you’re going up and down the road, they know I’m from Ardoyne and that doesn’t matter. I even bump into some of the people I used to work with years ago in the stitching factory and it’s nice to see them and catch up for a bit”.

“I’ve started to use the Ardoyne shops during the day but I still wouldn’t really go over there at night”.

“I’ve got to know a wee Catholic lady from the Ardoyne who walks down Twaddell to go to Tesco’s, three times every week. She was on the same cross-community course as me. We’ve struck up a friendship. I have gathered that she was attacked in her own community. Her house was paint-bombed”.

“I’d get a bus which goes down the Shankill and I’d feel secure enough doing that. I’d walk down the Shankill ok – when I’m walking home from uni, I’d walk through Sandy Row”.

“I’d instinctively go to Tesco’s on the Woodvale Road - I feel comfortable doing that – it’s my local supermarket. The only thing I’d notice there is the imagery – the security men – they’d be all wearing their poppies. It wouldn’t put me off going there – but I’d be thinking that people may be looking at me as I wasn’t wearing a poppy”.

“We started to see young people gathering to mix at the interface instead of fighting. You see more and more people walking up and down the Oldpark and Crumlin Road into town, that didn’t happen even ten years ago”.

”See to be honest, I could walk on the Shankill, and it wouldn’t annoy me in the slightest - and the way I see it – see if I’m not there to do any one any harm, I don’t think any harm will come to me”.

“I think this generation is not so bitter. I have a son who had a good business – until recently – he was in that business with two Catholics. When he was younger I worried myself sick if he went anywhere -like the Governor Rd-now he goes everywhere”.

“Things have changed, and I don’t see people wanting to go back to the way things were. I’m not aware of what I wear – at one time I would have been– I’m not aware of that now – if I have

something on me. I can go wherever I want because that’s my choice, and it’s only me that can take that away from me. No-one can take that away from me, only me”.

“The Department of Foreign Affairs have been great. They have invited us to their house on the Malone Avenue and also down to Dublin. We have been to ‘Derry’s walls’ and it was the Irish government that invited us to Croke Park. Twenty years ago, we would have worn blinkers. We have celebrated St Patrick’s Day too, which should not be seen as only for Catholics”.

“I have seen people from the Shankill turn left and walk their dogs up the road towards the Ardoyne shops in recent months - rather than down to the ‘safe’ Loyalist part of the road. I have also seen young lads in GAA tops happily walking down from the Ardoyne shops as far as Hillview. These things would not have happened in the past. It’s a huge thing. The invisible wall has been coming down, though. The gates are open at various places. At least it is a start”.

Although not everyone is of the same mind and there are different perspectives on what may be considered progress

“About a month ago, my son told me he’d walked home from work, walked up the Shankill, but he told me himself he did feel a bit nervous. I was surprisedsurprised at him taking that route - and he did say to me he still felt that element of fear, that bit of uneasiness”.

“There’s less suspicion now, I’ve a 22 year old daughter and I worry when she tells me some of the places she would go with friends, not because of any sectarian feelings, but because I just worry about her safety, not everyone has moved forward”.

“There are people from here walking down to Tesco’s but I don’t – I still got to Yorkgate, or into the town. I still have a fear of walking in places that I’m not familiar with. I would love to say I feel different now but I still have niggling fears. It still sticks in my mind about Catholics walking into areas where they thought they’d be ok and ended up murdered”.

“We couldn’t go over there wearing a poppy, yet in Tesco’s, which is in a Unionist area, they come in wearing Celtic tops and even with ash on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday- or wearing their school uniforms. I certainly wouldn’t let my ones go into the shops in the Ardoyne wearing their school uniform”.

“Ardoyne folk walk up and down here to Tesco’s in Ballygomartin and never a word is said to them. The odd person might shake their head but that’s about it. Wearing GAA tops too”.

“...they didn’t grow up with what we grew up with.”

Many of the contributors spoke of how young people were experiencing a sense of freedom and openness that had not been part of their growing up

“Some older people still see all Catholics as a danger and not to be mixed with at all but our young people mingle with the other side downtown – in the city centre at night and the weekends. A lot of our youth do cross the divide to go to the various local youth clubs”.

“Our young people are not so bitter now. Not so sectarian. They didn’t grow up with what we grew up with. It’s much easier now to go into town and they do mix together. They meet people from different backgrounds.”

“There you have the youth club doing stuff with the Hammer and I’ve gone to matches, and I’ve seen young men interacting - I mean, they are friends now - and if you’d have said that to me

years ago, I’d have said no way, that would never happen. It’s happening on a daily basis across the community”.

“Another positive thing would be the R-City youth – it’s not something I’m involved in but you can see all their stuff on social media, and the fact they have the cafe up in the Houben Centre, that’s great, it’s great progress bringing the two communities together from a younger age. I didn’t grow up with people from the other community but now there’s a generation behind me who will grow up with them”.

“I think those kids who work together in town and places, they seem to have made a decision that they’re not going to live their lives like their Mas and Das did, they want something different for themselves. Their common interests have gone beyond the barriers of PUL and CNR”.



“The more we get to know each other the better things will get”

It is evident that progress is being made and that many people are moving on from the overwhelming negativity of the past. Recent developments referred to by the contributors are evidence of a growing confidence within and between communities and have contributed to that positive change that they believe is taking place

“I think people are still nervous about how public those relationships should be – there’s still a lot of hurt, there’s still a lot of bad feeling – towards specific individuals on the other side, but groups like ours are working with groups from over there now- only for the last few years- but it’s been much more positive and constructive”.

“Definitely, there’s much more cross community work going on, we’re involved in loads of programmes and others are all working at some level with cross community groups and partners. Young people are mixing together much more, even outside of youth work, they’re just getting on with things”.

“There’s more cross community work and there is more of a chance to talk to other people. We got on really well with the women down there in Denmark Street. We met lots of people through the Ambulatorio thing with Draw Down the Walls, the night out on the boat was a great night, people from all over getting to know each other and celebrating a good project”.

“The more we get to know each other the better things will get, most of the problems we face are the same. Taking the wall away was a great start, it shows confidence and everyone can see that. A lot of people just want to move on and get along together. I suppose if we were all working together in a more connected way, we could make things happen better and sooner. The more people talking the better”.

“I live up where the wall was took down – it was great, but there was a real fear factor at the beginning - when it came down, you were still a bit... I was still putting my drop-bars on the front door, because I still had the fear... but as the months went by, you could see the kids out playing outside, you could see traffic going by, people walking up and down with their dogs it’s really brilliant now, really brilliant”.

“I never thought that wall would come away, some of my neighbours didn’t either. Its amazing, day to day life just going on, in the past we were living behind that wall, like our thinking was in the dark ages”.

“We have walls in our own minds, they’re breaking down. That wall coming away on the Crumlin Road was a big start, it makes the place look open, less afraid. And they’re starting to do work on the other side of the Crumlin Road, I took a drive round to see Chief Street and Leopold Street, I had seen old photos of them being open, it was hard to picture”.

“I’ve actually enjoyed seeing the Ardoyne side of the road opposite the chapel looking well, ever since their barriers came down. Nobody wants the way things were”.

“As I said, dialogue has made a difference, the more we talk the more we get to understand how we are all thinking. The more people talking and meeting the better, it shouldn’t be left down to the usual few to do it while others sit back. More opportunities to meet and just talk, not even over specific issues, just to get together and talk about the everyday stuff that is part of being a community, that’s what’s missing”.

“It’s easier at night now. Dialogue helped to change that. Things are better, there’s a better relationship now, it still needs work”.

Most of the contributions recorded here are not startling revelations or new insights. However some of them describe contributors doing things like getting on a bus that took them on a route they would normally have avoided; going for groceries in a shop they would not have previously used or taking the dog for a walk into an area that in the not too distant past they would have considered hostile - **for them these are huge steps.**

For others difficult conversations are being had and are being heard – acknowledging the hurt that we have visited upon each other. These conversations have moved beyond the reiteration of what you did to us and now seriously consider what we can do for each other.

In the context of North Belfast these are significant steps forward given the segregated nature of the area and the levels of violence, distrust and enmity that has been a feature of the area for generations. Relationships between communities are thawing – slowly – but it is happening. Who doesn't shop in, or walk through areas in which they previously felt ill at ease with a lessened sense of the need for caution?

We need to accelerate the thawing process and the only way we can do this is to engage with those with whom we have more in common than what we may have previously perceived. We have been challenged to 'Build United Communities' but unfortunately we are already communities united by the same issues of unemployment, economic deprivation, educational underachievement and a sense of hopelessness amongst many of our young people. These are the regrettable commonalities that unite us in these areas where social and economic deprivation co-exist hand in hand with segregated communities.

There are still problems to overcome and the reality is that many people have not yet embraced the positivity that is out there. We are still trying to manage a conflict that has not yet been resolved, only how the conflict is conducted has changed. Issue of national identity, culture and ethnicity continue to divide our community on many levels but as a community we cannot continue to be defined solely by our differences.

As we seek to find ways to reconcile our differences we need to move forward bringing people along with us and creating new opportunities to work together for a future fit for all our children. Make no mistake we will have a shared future for as long as we live here. The quality of that future will depend on each and every one of us taking responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the community as a whole.

In the truest sense we all have our role to play, parents, teachers, clergy, youth & community workers, residents and our political representatives.

A special thank you to all the groups who arranged interviews, workshops and took part in the conversations which lead to this publication

Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill
Communities in Transition
North Belfast Interface Network
Twaddell Woodvale Residents Association
Concerned Residents Upper Ardoyne
Lower Shankill Community Association)
Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
Shankill Womens Centre
Ballysillan Community Forum
Families beyond Conflict
Marrowbone Community Association
Ardoyne / Shankill Healthy Living Centre
Grace Women's Development Limited
Ardoyne Association
Ardoyne Youth Club
and to The Urban Villages Initiative and
the International Fund for Ireland for their
support , moral, practical and financial.



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