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# Racism: Moving Beyond Denial?



*Arun Kundnani, Ligia Parizzi, Dr. Robbie McVeigh, Benedicta Attoh and Cllr. Barry Monteith*

## **Introduction:**

In the context of the duty local government has in tackling racism (promoting good relations) and as part of its Anti-Racism and Racial Equality Action Plan, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council has put together the following conference to engage specialist perspectives and Northern Ireland politicians on the issue of racism and what should be done to tackle it.

## **Background:**

Racism has been experienced by ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland throughout the length of history yet was largely unacknowledged. It

was not until 1997 that government passed legislation outlawing racial discrimination— 30 years after its counterpart in Great Britain. More recently in the 2008-11 Programme for Government recognises the problem of racism and commits to bringing forward a programme of work to achieve measurable reductions.

Until relatively recently there was still a level of popular denial that racism was a problem. The well publicised incidents of racist violence across Northern Ireland in recent years have largely ended this perception. This in itself does not highlight the range of other forms racism can take. There remains considerable discussion



and varied perspectives on what the scope, form and manifestations racism takes are, and crucially what should be done to tackle them.

## Conference Format and Aims:

This conference aims to provide keynote independent perspectives on contemporary racism and engagement with Northern Ireland's main political parties as to strategic direction in addressing racism. Through afternoon workshops further discussion will be facilitated on the topics of: models for the public sector, racism in the workplace,

racism faced by Travellers and on the role of the Assembly.

A spokesperson from OFMDFM will provide government input.

The keynote panel consists of Arun Kundnani of the London-based Institute of Race Relations and two home-grown Co Tyrone specialists, the Independent researcher Dr Robbie McVeigh and Bernadette McAliskey of the community based-NGO S.T.E.P.

The spokespersons on racial equality from the main political parties have been invited to address the conference in the format of a questions and answers panel enabling engagement on political



*David Griffin, Richard Watson, Alex Maskey, Dolores Kelly and Cllr. Barry Monteith*



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leadership against racism and strategic direction on the format of anti-racism work at Assembly and Local Government level. Questions can be submitted through the booking form.

## **Target Audience:**

This conference is specifically targeted all persons with an interest in this area of work in all sectors including local government, community and voluntary sector NGOs, statutory agencies, Trade Unions, government departments, researchers and others with an interest in anti-racism.

***The Borough has been the local government district that has proportionately most benefited from new migration in recent years. Migrant Workers***

## **The Organisers: Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council**

The Borough has been the local government district that has proportionately most benefited from new migration in recent years. Migrant Workers, mostly Portuguese and Tetum speakers, and nationals of Lithuania and Poland have joined the community. This has grown the size of the minority ethnic population of the Borough which includes Travellers, the Chinese community and others. The Council has been active in tackling the issue of racism setting up an Independent Reporting Scheme for Racist Incidents and running anti-racism campaigns and other initiatives. This has been undertaken as part of a broader programme of Anti-Racism and Racial Equality work of which this initiative forms part.

The Council gratefully acknowledges funding support from the Peace II extension programme through the South Tyrone Area Partnership for its anti racism programme and the support of OFMDFM for its racial equality work.



## **Acknowledgments:**

Firstly, I would like to show my appreciation to the Race Relations Project's main funders – SEUPB and STAP – as without their financial support and trust into the Project's initiatives, nothing would have been possible. As well, my sincere thanks to the outstanding input from the main keynote speakers of the Conference: Bernadette McAliskey, Arun Kundhani and Dr. Robbie McVeigh.

I wish to say how grateful I am to the workshops speakers, chairs and reporters and for their efforts and input at the conference: Justyna McCabe, Alfred Abolarin, Leish Cox, Charo Lanao, Aidan McGarry, Raluca Anutuca, Benedicta Attoh, Joe Lenaghan, Philip Clarke, Seamus Donnelly, Kasia Garbal, Mel Corry, Tayra McKee and Agnieszka Martynowicz.

Also to the representatives from the four political parties, who have taken their time and expressed their valuable opinions answering the questions and challenges presented by the audience.

My sincere thanks to all the members of staff and Officers at the Dungannon Council and the South West College team, who have worked extremely hard on the organisation of this Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation to the Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council for providing the opportunity of putting together such an important event and, especially, to Cllr. Barry Monteith (Mayor of Dungannon at the time of the Conference) for all his practical support to the event and encouragement given at all aspects of the Council's Race Relations Project.

Finally, a very special thanks to Daniel Holder for his help structuring the conference contents, expertise and advice provided in order to ensure the event would achieve its outcomes successfully.

Sincerely,

***Ligia Parizzi – Anti-Racism Officer  
/ Dungannon and South Tyrone  
Borough Council***



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## Welcome and Opening



***Cllr. Barry Monteith – Mayor of Dungannon  
and South Tyrone Borough Council***

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great honour and privilege to welcome you to Dungannon and South Tyrone Council and to the “Racism: Moving Beyond Denial?” Conference. This is something we have been working on for a while and we are delighted to have such a large turnout, we are especially delighted at the calibre of speakers that we have for you here today and a special welcome is extended to Arun, Bernadette and Robbie as our keynote speakers, so thank you very much for turning up for a start, hopefully you won’t get much of a drilling and also thanks to the Political representatives that are going to be here later on and to Colin Jack and Benedicta Attoh, who is

going to be taking the Q & A later on. Dungannon is the area which has most benefited from inward migration over the last 5 to 6 years in the North of Ireland and that’s a statement that I use very deliberately. It’s important to all that we start of with a positive message because, too often, and I know myself as a political representative, the question you are asked by the media at local and international level it is always what are the problems with, what are the issues with, the question should be what have been the benefits, what have been the advantages to your community with the migration to the area. All councils have a legal duty to tackle racism within their council area and it is something we take very seriously here is Dungannon and this conference is part of this broader anti-racism and racial equality action plan which we have put together. Racism is a serious problem in Dungannon like anywhere else and we have never tried to portray that we have all the answers or that ours is a model society or anything like that but I do think there are initiatives that we have taken which have lead to a better approach and a more integrated approach by trying to move forward in dealing with the fears within different communities and also to try and allow people to live their lives as they chose themselves and this is a mixture between working on an strategic level and lobbying

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different Central Government Agencies but also at a grass roots level, talking to people in their everyday lives, in their workplace, in their place of recreation and their home and to this Dungannon model, where anti-racism and tackling race inequality is central, the conditions for integration aren't created where migrants and other ethnic groups face inequality and racism, they are created where people feel the freedom to live their lives as they chose, as they see fit. Our work is driven through two members of staff an anti-racism officer Ligia Parizzi, who was speaking earlier, and that is funded through PEACE money and also a Racial Equality Officer which we are currently seeking, with somebody filling the post, but that is funded through OFMDFM and we are hoping for further funding from ICBAN from Irish Centre Border area Councils. Some of the initiatives that we have taken in the area at the moment are the Independent Reporting mechanism from which we've recognise that the only figures really available were Police statistics, which tend to focus around acts of criminal damage and also was reliant on whether or not people were coming forward. There is lots of evidence there to suggest people aren't reporting all those types of incidents but racism is more than that, racism is being treated differently when you go to the shop to buy a loaf

of bread, being treated differently when you turn up to work at 8 o'clock in the morning, so we are trying to expand that and allowing people, if they felt they were being treated differently because of their nationality or of their creed, that they could report it and this gives us or attempted to try and create a better picture for us of how society was and how the real experience on the day-to-day basis on moving forward. Another initiative which we launched as we've recognised as the biggest issue in this is communication, and that very often there is a willingness of people to communicate but language is, very often, the barrier. As one of the things the council has brought forward is the ability for community groups and supporting organisations to access council resources to pay for their literature and promotional material to be translated into the various languages needed, but also if they are holding a meeting or they are going to have people there who don't have English, the council will pay for an interpreter to be present as well so that is where we would be seen moving forward allowing people to try and break down the communication issue. There are different racial backgrounds in our area and the Borough has always had within the population, the Irish travellers who have experienced racism over a number of years, and we have also had a sizeable Chinese community



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but the most recent addition to our population, since around the year 2000/2001, we have had initially a lot of Portuguese speaking people both from Portugal and the former Portuguese colonies such as East Timor, Brazil, Angola and different places and more recently we have had people from Eastern Europe such as Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic and various other areas. The racism experienced by travellers and other ethnic minorities has been a long shameful episode in our past and is something that has been very often forgotten about and hopefully it is something we can touch on in some of the workshops later. In Dungannon, we spent a lot of time tackling, and still spend a lot of time tackling, stereotypes, particularly the ones that are about the recent migration and about “coming to take jobs” and “putting a burden on public services” and that type of thing, and putting out the true message on some of the issues about people paying taxes and very often, because the vast majority of the population get their information from the mass media and, unfortunately, the mass media is obsessed with issues like “invasion”, “influx” and “pressure” or “we can’t cope” and all that sort of thing as it would be the person accessing the services who created the pressure. It is the Government agencies who are supposed to be planning ahead in order to create a service which we

can all avail of. The initial thing on the conference and the picture we have used on the front of your pack was used very deliberately, it was about trying to show people that this is not a new phenomenon and exactly the same tactics were used to portray Irish people all over the world as subhuman or deviant or criminal and as example of the Irish people within the so called “cartoons” where we were even given animal like faces, so that’s not that long ago, that’s just over a century that it was going on. It was only thirty/forty years ago, and many families can still express that, people who have been over in England and the signs on the cafés and the restaurants of “no blacks, no dogs and no Irish”. It is particularly a shameful experience that we are faced with the same issues and that we end up treating people as badly, in many cases worse than we were treated all over the world, so we wanted to bring that forward and that’s part of the key issue when given that example. There is a form of criminality specifically related to migrants which is the thing that’s coming through in that type of cartoon, or that type of image, and it’s about this idea of deviants and about violence and it is very relevant in this area. One example we have had in the media locally, and anybody who has ever worked in a factory or anything like that here will know that it’s particularly monotonous,



particularly hard, particularly mentally stressing job, very often when you have a number of males in one room things can break out and rows develop. We had an example outside one of our meat factories where two individuals decided they would take it out to the car park and sort it out which is something I'm sure every factory in Ireland had experienced at one time or another, but just so

happened that both those individuals were from different countries, they weren't born here so straight away, as it happens, reverts back to school yard mentality and everybody gathers round to watch two boys fighting in the school yard and U.T.V, B.B.C and RTE are

standing at the gates about an "Inter-racial gang warfare going on in Dungannon" as soon as the TV crews find out that there is no gang involved, that there is no criminal activity involved, it was just two guys working beside each other who fell out and decided, for whatever reason, to sort it out with their fists, the media packs up and go home that's the type of thing that media

latch on to this idea of criminality and deviants in the migrant populations. We would say that the way to move forward with racism, just like sectarianism, is not to deny it's existence but to tackle it head on and to demonstrate that whilst there is racism here as much as there is everywhere else, the predominant pattern here and the work on the ground is one of anti-racism and

tolerance that we can be proud of. We have seen a fall, in Dungannon, on reported racist incidents to the Police of 50% at a time where incidents elsewhere are largely increasing and that's something that we are very proud of, we are not saying that we have all the answers or

that we are totally responsible for it but I think that there has been a united approach between the Council, between Community Development Associations, between people on the ground and also between various political parties also there has been a decent enough relationship in dealing with a united front. The title of the Conference is "Moving Beyond Denial?", and we

***We would say that the way to move forward with racism, just like sectarianism, is not to deny it's existence but to tackle it head on***



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hope that we are now at a stage where the number of people who deny racism is a minority, and we hope to ensure that it becomes a decreasing minority and we can collectively look at moving forward and tackling the problem. We still have issues of denial that we will, no doubt, explore as the day goes on particularly as I mentioned earlier, about racism against travellers, and that will be the subject of a workshop later. This is often unacknowledged and we, sometimes, see attempts to deny racists incidents as being racist. We also have a number of examples of that and we have representatives in the area who, no matter what the happens, will come up with something such as, it was a fallout over a domestic issue or anything like that and will not say it was racism, that person needs to step back and see there are racial motives involved in many attacks and you can't sweep it under the carpet all the time and insist that it's two guys falling out over a woman which seemed to be the standard answer that this individuals use at all times. We also need to be careful, as elected representatives, about on how what we say is used and we had an example of an elected representative, again an example of how media made a situation of a family living in an area of the town who had a goat which they decided they would kill to eat, something which is not uncommon in this area,

in many farms, as there are plenty of animals that are killed on a regular basis such as those families in Erin still kill turkeys at Christmas and all that, so that was all the family was doing and straight away our local newspaper had a headline of "voodoo ritual in Dungannon" and, unfortunately, one of elective representatives latched on to this and said that this type of behaviour wasn't acceptable and all this type of jargon and "these people are coming in" and they weren't "god fearing" and that type of thing. That person's goat story is still used by the BMP, on their website, as part of their promotional campaign and they have attempted to use that example to recruit and to increase racial tension in Dungannon, fortunately, they don't seem to have been here in a while but there have been attempts by the BMP to latch on to that type of social responsibility and everybody who is making comments on public life to realise that, while your intention may not have been to create problems, your words can be used, particularly by extremist organisations. We have the opportunity to discuss here today both "what racism is" but more importantly, how to tackle it and how to move forward and we just want to create the opportunity for people from far afield and for the local people to come together here today to discuss those issues, discuss potential solutions, to hear of good practice in



other areas both locally and in England, and also from the different political parties. It is more important to take the opportunity, like all conferences, for people to get to meet each other at the tea breaks and coffee, and the most important bit of any conference is to get chatting to somebody over coffee or a smoke at the door or whatever, is very often more valuable making links and getting to know people so I look forward to meeting all of you during the day and I wish everybody here a successful day of work and I hope this is the beginning of a good relationship with many of the organisations that already exist but, more importantly, we would like to see Dungannon hosting big events like this to try and allow people to come forward, share their experiences and I thank each and every one of you for coming. I hope you all have a very successful day and I look forward to working with you all.



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## Keynote Speakers: Examining Racism

Co-ordinator of South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (S.T.E.P). Since her time as an MP, Bernadette has devoted herself to the building of successful community infrastructure in her local area of South Tyrone. She has been a keen community activist on a number of subjects, as coordinator of STEP she has assumed management of the organisations four distinct but inherently linked departments – Community Development, Tutor Led Training, Online Learning and the Migrant Workers Programme.

### **BERNADETTE MCALISKEY – S.T.E.P**

Good morning everybody, my name is Bernadette McAliskey, I'm shorter than the average person and I need this microphone lowered slightly so I am able to speak. That's not what I said in Irish, as an Irish speaker it is extremely rare for me to adopt the custom used by some others of opening my participation in an English speaking conference by speaking in Irish but I did that for a particular reason. This morning, which will become clear later on, all I would ask you at this point to think about is when I did so what was the immediate internal reaction for each of you? Did some of you look slightly scared and did some of think "oh god, I didn't know she was a sinner", did somebody say "oh no, not again",



so what did you feel, maybe slightly pleased, slightly irritated, slightly bemused or did you not even know what that language was, I just would like to ask you to hold that thought. I'm going to do something else that I'm not usually known for. I'm going to speak to Powerpoint and leave it to Arun to use his voice very effectively in the next presentation. The reason why I'm doing that is for two reasons actually, this presentation is not going to be about the work of STEP its good practice and many people here are aware of that, and there are other opportunities if you are not, this is about racism and denial of racism so I have used this opportunity to raise the issue of understanding racism, so it's a bit different for me to actually put on my old tutor hat, but this first part is on Powerpoint so you can take it away and think about it later. You may find it quite dry but I think it will, and I

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hope it will, set some of the basis for the rest of the day. You may challenge it, you may not like it, you may not agree with it, but you are going to get it anyway. First of all, we ask ourselves the question of “what is race?”, because we use the word a lot when we are talking about the people who come here, the different races, and what is race and I’ve just sort of gleaned from all the definitions I could find a kind of paraphrase as to what the bottom line is when people are talking about race, so you can see there what people think. Race is a concept, it’s a social construction that divides people into categories which we call races and, mostly, we divide people. The Council and ourselves have devised a community education programme around some of this stuff we ask people to count the number of races, define the races, name the races and it is quite interesting because, at the moment, people will generally define race on very visible characteristics. They say race is about skin colour and then they say, “well, no it’s not, because Lithuanians are white” so it’s about identity, self-identification, then if you tell people’s race by their hair colour, the Irish are a race of most red hair people, but then people say “no they’re not”. By in large we use race as a concept and we think we can tell what race people are by looking at them. What we tend to forget is that the use of specific categories have

actually changed over time, so the way we define people by their physical characteristics has actually changed, but we all use this word race as if we all actually know what we are talking about. Where did race come from? Now, I have bad news for some people in the audience, if we try to look historically about where the concept of “what race is” developed, as did not developed in our understanding of the origins of the human race, the concept of race, the terminology of race the dividing on people into races is actually learned behaviour. So these are some of the things that are interesting about race, definitions about race. Classical history going back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, there was a belief, somebody developed the concept, that they could explain how the world worked, there were gods, not one, many gods, all up here and there was a kind of hierarchy of human life right down to the bottom, so there was a continuity, this is only some bored person like me, my equivalent in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, contemplating how to make sense of the world. “I have a bright idea, there is probably a whole lot of gods up there and then there’s the bottom down here, of course, at this time people probably thought the earth was flat, and some people still do...but they devised this notion that it was the way the world worked, there was gods up here then there was half gods/ half people and that’s



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where Cúchulainn comes in for the locals, and then there was people, and there was people half-animal, and then there was animal, and then there was clay and nature, and then, in some cultures like Celtic, there were under worlds to people come up from the under world in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the start of race. Bare in mind there were 7 centuries before that, before somebody possibly as high as a Kite of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, on an equivalent of cannabis, came up with the idea that this is what made the world worked so these were the fixed hierarchy gods at the top, people in the middle, and anything that was rotted in the ground at the bottom, and Boogie men underneath that. Do you no that we haven't shifted very far from that concept in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, still wake up at night fearing the Boogie men, still think, whichever our particularly god, is running the world and still think we are the smartest people on earth. So the human race was actually just part of this big chain and then over time people travelled a bit, people got out, they travelled a bit, they discovered that not everybody in the world looked the same so they had to out them into the same hierarchy and, strangely enough, human nature being what it is, the top of the human chain was always whoever "you" were, "you" were always the best, that's human nature, we are the best and some of the racial construction that came out

of that, from where people actually saw themselves. I thought these were hilarious, Hippocrates, otherwise considered an intelligent human being, believed that fire and soil was what made the Grecians warlike, that there was a correlation between poor soil and strong people. There is a proverb in Ireland that says "the poorer the soil the better the people" and that is about hardship and survival but Hippocrates believed that poor soil made for strong warlike people, and getting it to handy, you know, orange falls from the tree, the things grow anywhere, food is easy got, makes you soft so Hippocrates thought that Greeks were warlike because of the soil and the luscious vegetation was what made Asians and Mediterranean people generally peaceful and civilised. Aristotle, and a man after my own heart, a man for whom I have great respect, Aristotle actually believed that good soil and good conditions made people weak and vulnerable, so he probably believed everybody should be half-starved, but he also believed that the cold climate, the further north you went, accounted for Europeans, which in no sense they believed to be us, people as you moved up, western European, the cold climate up here would had made us incapable of government. You thought it was the sectarianism, it's the weather, not fit to govern ourselves because it's to cold for us to be sensible and this



other guy, Han Dynasty, which was quite funny on the reversals, looking at what Barry had said earlier, Han Dynasty described the barbarians as of the north, that's us, as blond haired and green eyed barbarians which resembled the monkeys from which we were descended. How often have we heard that in relation to people coming from the southern hemisphere? A stereotype, racial prejudice turned on its head over many years. But where did it go to? If you can't blame to

weather blame Darwin, blame the industrial revolution, blame the lot of them, but there was actually a period in our history when all this folklore and all these historical perceptions got formalised, like a whole lot of other things, to science.

Folklore, religion, the development of scientific thinking and organised politics came together to construct a theory of race, and what we call the credibility the moving of racism from folklore to personal perceptions and myth, and legend into some kind of objective knowledge, is actually only as old and the 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now it, could be coincidence, I wouldn't want my

own prejudices to be shown here, that we are talking about the height of the empires when the little English went out on their little boats, Bernadette do not talk like that... , when our neighbours, the British, civilised the rest of the world by going to Africa and our neighbours, the Portuguese, thought they discovered South America and the Dutch and the others thought they had discovered Africa. At that point, just when in fact imperialism was at it's height, so did

this new social political construction came about as we understand today as racial thinking and not surprisingly, therefore, top of the heap was white, European, Christian, as the top of the food chain, at the top of, if you go back, the human

hierarchy. Interestingly enough, right throughout that period, as we look at it, cause we are only left with the relic of it, right throughout that period there was no consensus on how many races there were or what constituted a race, by enlarge coincided with how many continents there were or how many imperialist powers that were conquering them,

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raping them and plundering them, and destroying civilisations within them, and how that needed to be portrayed in some different kind of way that was acceptable to people in their own country and justified what historically was happening to people in other countries. We have seen that in our own country, to actually destroy people and then, to sleep in your bed at night, you have to dehumanise those people. So we had the historical development of racism as a scientific theory, and it kind of took the horror out of what Western Europe did to other civilisations at the height of European imperialism. I said, you might not like it. So by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, of course, all of that is changing and our history has changed, and the world is changing too. By the time we come to the 60's, the revolting 60's, which produced a great many of us, that seed changed in the 60's, there was really no credibility left for racism, racial construction and a racial construction of the world as an intellectually viable concept, it's gone, it's actually intellectually gone, the same as when all right thinking intelligent people, who are scientists and rule the world believed the world was flat, it was still round but the fact that you believed it was flat didn't mean you were an idiot, everybody thought it was flat. Of course, in the movement of time, there came a time when everybody knew it wasn't flat, so we are now

actually at a time when there is nothing left, there is nothing left but our own learned behaviour and social construction and historical perceptions about race, race is in here (head), it has no basis, there are no races, there is no biological difference in people throughout the world in terms of their skin colour, in terms of their country of origin; and the movement of the world is such that if everybody in the room was DNA'ed you'd be surprised, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where, genetically, all of us have come from, there is only one race, the human race. The rest of it is about power, perception, learned behaviour, prejudice and those social things. So all you have left is perception, so we ask ourselves then "what is racism?" if race is now only conceit there is no reality to this, race is only a social construction, so then what do we understand racism to be? Racism is that perception, that ideology, that way of thinking that still hangs on to the concept of race and built into it, the concept of hierarchy or races, and the concept that at the top of the hierarchy is the race to which you belong, predominately white European English speaking, which is why I did that it at the front, and it includes culturally sanctioned beliefs that almost without thinking, because of historical power basis, leaves the power for the people at the top and that us, in terms of race in a

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predominately white Christian society, predominately white Christian people, who hold the balance of power. What I'm trying to say here is that racist behaviour is a tip of an iceberg; it's a working out "in action" of racial thinking so we are not all racists, but unless we are consciously battling the racial constructions, which are our thoughts, we end up thinking and acting in a racial way. Now we define racism as the bad end. We know that racist behaviour is easy to define when it's a brick through somebody's window, when it's physical abuse, when it's verbal abuse but have a look at what actually constitute racist behaviour, prejudice, patronage, stereotyping, bigotry, oppression, discrimination, exclusion, violence, and tolerance, and support for any or all of the above. So you can actually indulge in racist behaviour by doing nothing, you can indulge in racist behaviour by quietly tolerating the racist behaviour around you. That's different and we will be talking later on about how you deal with the racist behaviour of people around you, so by word, by deed or by omission, racist behaviour is the tip of an iceberg. Just in case you thought you weren't racially constructed, bad news time, Christopher Columbus did not discover America, bad news time, we are taught that in history. America was already there, there were people in it already living there and they were doing alright until Christopher

Columbus turned up. Now, did anybody ever say, and I see my good friend here, my good friend Charo from Peru, does anybody in this room actually believe that Charo Lanao discovered Ireland? No, she just turned up here as the rest of us were already here, so she didn't discover Ireland. Christopher Columbus didn't discover America either. Europe brought civilisation to Africa. How much would Africa give for you not to have bothered, really, from an African perspective, was what happened on the continent as a direct consequence of white people turning up there, in the worst stretch of your imagination, classifiable as civilisation? Slavery! Don't go there... Ireland is a really friendly place, never mind, ask some of the local people. Lithuanians are aggressive. Britain invented democracy and science, and industry, and civilisation, and education, and business, and commerce, and monarchy, and money, and good manners, and afternoon tea, and the wee bit at the bottom says "is my prejudice showing?" because, of course, they don't claim they invented all of those things, but part of my construction is that they do. Racial thinking makes us feel better about ourselves. Black people are better athletes. I'm not saying anything bad about them, they run harder than us it might be learned behaviour. Orientals are more reserved, white people understand



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democracy, South Americans are more sexual, gypsies are ignorant and dishonest, Britain's are stoic, and the Irish are friendly. You wouldn't want to be the Lithuanian or Polish population or Portuguese suffering at the minute. So what makes us think and act? History, we are what history makes us, we are a product of historical social construction, the way we think about things, our own personal ideology and fears, the group around us, influences what we think and all of it is nothing more than learned behaviour. So what is anti-racism? Anti-racism is also about beliefs, action, movement, policies, adopted to combat racism and that is why we need to understand what it is. In general it is intended to promote an equitable, egalitarian, fair, non-discriminatory society and end discrimination on the basis of this false concept of race. By its nature, it promotes a view, not simply that racists breaking windows must be dealt with, but it promotes a view that racism in our society is permissive, social pervasive. That specifically changes, politically, economically and in our social life, will be necessary to eliminate it. We need strategy, we need policy, we need buy in and we need belief. In summary, we are all racially constructed only by perception and we need to change that perception, and we need to be, either consciously involved in anti-racism or recognise that, if we are

not, we are unconsciously or consciously part of the continuation of racism. On racism, and I will leave you with that for the rest of the day, there is no middle ground. If you are not an active anti-racist you are, by default, unconsciously part of the problem of racism, thank you.



*Author of 'The End of Tolerance: racism in 21st century Britain' (Pluto Press, 2007) and deputy editor of 'Race & Class', published by the Institute of Race Relations.*

## **ARUN KUNDNANI**

Dry, and I love too see her speak when she's not dry, that was amazing. I'm going to try and give you a perspective from Britain. Well, I got involved in anti-racist politics in the early nineties, when the issues which we were facing at that time were deportations, deaths of black people in the custody of police and the epidemic of racial violence. We had, at that time, in the early nineties, the most famous case around, that was the case of Steven Laurence who was a black teenager who was murdered in south east London in 1993 and what happened around that particular case was that the family, and activists, and supporters came together in an unique way, actually

with organisations like the monitoring group in south board in west London and newer monitoring project in east London could have been dealing with these issues for some years. They all came together and they turned that one case into a national campaign which eventually lead to a public enquiry and for the first time an official recognition from the Government of the existence of something called institutional racism which captures a lot of the things which Bernadette was talking about, and what was important about that development during the nineteen nineties was that, as a result of a campaign that came from the grass roots, a bottom up campaign, we actually changed the discourse of the state, which previously the government had been talking about how to manage cultural diversity, how to integrate the minorities into the mainstream, we changed the discourse, we said this is about civil rights, this is about institutional racism, but racism always changes it's shape not least in response to our struggles against it as anti-racists and what we have seen emerge in this decade is the consolidation of new forms of racism particularly against the Muslim community in Britain and the new migrant communities and if we look back on the history that Bernadette was conveying to us, so incredibly, the point at which scientific racism and biological racism is discredited,



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yet we still live with the legacy of that, the question is how does racism reinvent itself so that it continues to thrive. What we have seen is that racism has ditched the idea of biological racism that can be backed up with sudo science, instead we have the idea of cultural differences, differences in values and the idea of creating a hierarchy on that basis and saying these people, they have different values from us that is why they are they are a threat to us, and that's very much

what we have seen since 9/11 in Britain, when you speak to young Muslims in Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford and in many parts of London they will tell you what it's like to be stopped and searched every time you come out of college, to face

the threat of arbitrary arrest, mass surveillance of your community and then there's the fear generated by things like control orders which is effectively a form of house arrest, imposed without any kind of judicial oversight and if anyone managed to see the article that was on the front page of the Guardian newspaper

yesterday, where what we long suspected to be going on is now confirmed, which is that the intelligence services in Britain have been coordinating the torture of British citizens, in league with the Pakistani military intelligence and in order to justify this, what is effectively a different standard of justice for certain sections of our population in Britain, we have a whole series of prejudice and assumptions that circulated about Muslims in order to

explain why different standards of justice has to be applied in their case and what you see is that those prejudices are not just circulated by the columnists of tabloid newspapers but they actually come from the great and the good of liberal opinion as well people like Martin Avis and Nick

Cohan. Many of the big name liberals in Britain have been putting this across. And so in terms of the way in which the government talks about these issues, in policy terms, the language now is no longer one of institutional racism and human rights but actually the language we have is community cohesion and integration,

***the language now is no longer one of institutional racism and human rights but actually the language we have is community cohesion and integration***

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I will explain what that means, the problem is defined in this discourse as a lack of shared values and so the solution is for the state to promote a shared sense of British values whatever they are meant to be, as I think you will see as you look at this, you will never ever get an answer on what the British values we are all meant to be sharing and signing up to actually are. This is an argument that was first emerged after the riots took place in Olden, Burnley and Bradford in the north of England in the summer of 2001 and it became even more dominant after the terrorist attacks of 7/7 now I actually spent some time in Olden around the time of the riots in 2001 and it's worth actually going back and looking at what happened, what lead up to that violence. The community there is one in which the majority of people are either white English or have backgrounds in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Pakistani and Bangladeshi people came in the seventies to work in what was at that time textile mills and they would work the night shift and the white workers would do the day shift pretty soon after they arrived those textile mills closed down ironically because it was now cheaper to locate that kind of textile production to Asia, so you had these towns in the north of England basically left on the scrape heap, economically, the only jobs that were available were actually in the public

sector, local authority, NHS and because of the institutional racism that existed those jobs mainly went to the white community, so the Asian community took up a very different kind of work, what they would do is they would take up taxi driving, or a few brothers would get together and set up a takeaway business, so you started to get the beginnings of a separation in terms of the kinds of work people did. At the same time you started to get a segregation in where people lived in somewhere like Olden, before they all lived in the same houses that had been built for the mill workers around the mills which by this time they were pretty dilapidated houses. The local authority started to re-house people on the outskirts of town, building new estates but the housing department actually operated a policy where if you applied for that new housing and you had an Asian name they would actually say right that housing isn't really suitable for you, you have probably got a larger family, it's not really going to work for you, so you started to get a discrimination in the allocation of housing which meant that the new estates became predominately white and the central areas of these towns in the old housing was predominately Asian and if you did, as an Asian person, try and live in one of these new estates you'd face racial harassment and because of the segregation residentially you



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also started to get segregation in schooling and especially when you had the idea of parental choice come in the late 1980's it meant that if you decided you didn't want your children to be going to a school in which the majority of other children were Asian and you were white you could take your child out and send them to a school that was predominately white further away. And it added to this picture to a way in which institutionalised the way in which policing operated, so that the racial violence that existed was never tackled by the police, but the police would be disproportionately heavy handed in dealing with young Asians in those towns. So all of this leads up to the violence that broke out in 2001 and the country kind of wakes up to the fact that in these places like Olden you've had a generation growing up who have lived parallel lives who haven't had any interaction over these racial dividing lines, but instead of understanding the social economic history that lies behind that segregation what you get instead is this very simplistic picture of, well it's because the Asians didn't want to mix, the Muslims didn't want to mix, they self segregated themselves, they imposed segregation on themselves and so you get the idea that the solution to this problem is that the state needs to come in and forcibly integrate, impose some sort of cohesion from above by targeting one

community and saying you need to adapt you values to be more British, you need to adapt your culture to fit in more with British society and of course this kind of thinking effects and stigmatises victims of racism, and it does nothing to empower those white working class communities which are also facing poverty and exclusion and it's a similar kind of thinking which applies to the issue of migration in Britain, at the beginning of the decade we saw this intense campaign against asylum seekers from the media and from politicians, asylum seekers were blamed for the spread of T.B. and aids for failing schools and hospitals, fall in house prices and then also the rise in house prices, for crime, prostitution, road accidents there was an article saying the asylum seekers were to blame for the dwindling number of fish in the rivers, for disappearing swans, disappearing donkeys and we sent out a message from Britain that if you want to come to this country to escape persecution then we are going to make that very difficult for you, if on the other hand you are willing to come to Britain to be part of a cheap labour force without any of the most basic workplace rights then we might let you in for a while that was what is called managed migration and in order to ensure that these new migrants workers were properly managed we have created a vast

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apparatus of policing which is targeted at migrants and the essential component of that is the introduction of I.D. cards, but, the attempt to control and to limit migration through these kind of measures ends up being ineffective because what drives this kind of migration is the economics, in two ways, firstly in terms of the economic devastation that is being imposed on the countries from which migrants are coming, as a result of globalisation, and secondly in terms of the changes in our own economising, in Britain over the last two decades we have seen casualisation of the labour market so we only want workers who can be employed on a non-binding, short term, subcontracting basis so that we can hire and fire them at will. If you take one of the major categories of workers who come over to Britain in the last ten years from outside the European union is Filipinos who have come to work in the NHS as nurses and if you look at what has happened to their own country, in terms of health care, you've got a situation where the government is paying 8 times more in debit repayments to western banks than it is spending on its own health care system and so the doctors and nurses that are being trained, who are graduating, aren't getting the jobs they should be getting in their own country and they are going overseas to work, you have situation in which

qualified Filipino doctors in order to work aboard are taking up jobs as nurses and qualified nurses who go to work abroad are taking up jobs cleaning floors and kitchens and what they are doing is the money they are sending back to their home country is effectively keeping the Philippines out of bankruptcy, but no one actually counts the human cost in terms of degrading work and family separation. The alternative, that no mainstream politician currently considers, which would go a long way to dealing with these issues, and would benefit migrants workers and the existing workforce alike, is to return to a properly enforced system of workplace rights, organising such things as health and safety and a living wage but instead what we have is someone like Gordon Brown talking about British jobs for British workers, now a conference like this is about balancing the knowledge of problems that we are up against with the hope that we build for change so I'd like to finish by returning to some of our struggles of anti-racists and what we are increasingly finding is that our response to the government's agenda of community cohesion and managing migration is to build our own genuine cohesion from the bottom up, rather than have it imposed in an artificial way and a counter productive way, from above, and the basis on which we do that is we understand that what the



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government imposes upon migrants and Muslims today, tomorrow will also be imposed on other sections of our society and the clearest example of that is I.D. cards which are now becoming compulsory for foreign nationals in the UK who are effectively being used as a testing ground for this system but in a few years it will become something that everyone who is resident in Britain or the north of Ireland will have to face as a new kind of state power and that is the lesson of the new campaign for a living wage that we've seen in London as well, which has united British and foreign national workers in east London, they have understood the constant drive to bring in cheaper workers from outside ends up in a lose-lose situation for migrants workers and for the existing British workforce and there has been some very good work done in bringing together low paid workers from different communities working with trade unions but also with communities, organisations and religious organisations and having successful campaigns in east London for a living wage. Its also the lesson of the new civil rights campaign that has sprung up in Britain to oppose anti-terrorist legislation were again the understanding is that although these powers are now in place with the classic understanding that they will only be used against Muslims, we can see that shortly, all kinds of other

parts of society will be subjected to the same powers whether your talking about political protesters who get banded from organising in particular places were they are talking about local authorities using anti terrorist legislation to spy on people they think are fiddling benefits and its the same lesson that we've seen in the anti war movement in Britain which brought together, if only for a moment, Islamists with socialists, Muslims with atheists and brought them together for a shared political objective in a shared movement and it's only through bringing people together in this way in and uniting them over shared political issues that we can create a genuinely inspiring and cohesive society, thank you.



*Research director with An Dúchán. He has written extensively on racism and his publications include: **The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland (Belfast: CRD, 1996); The Next Stephen Lawrence? Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland (NICEM, 2006) and Migrant Workers and their Families: A Trade Union Response (ICTU, 2006), Travellers, Refugees and Racism in Tallaght (with Alice Binchy, West Tallaght Resource Center, 1998); he also conducted economic impact research of migration to the Dungannon South Tyrone area.***

## **DR ROBBIE MCVEIGH**

I think that we are waiting on my Powerpoint so I should say it's a great pleasure to be back here, I'm from Tyrone, so it's nice to come back and speak here. I'm glad we were thanked at the start for turning up because as I said when I spoke to the PSNI, on this topic quite often I'm not thanked for anything else I have to

contribute especially when your challenging a source of the state. I think just not because I'm speaking in Dungannon over the last number of years Dungannon really has played an important role at local government level in terms of naming and having a long process of engaging with racism and this conference is obviously part of that, and I suppose I would start by saying the first point about that is that if your serious about not denying racism you have to name racism. It's important and it's in the name of this conference. What you don't do is begin to shift the debate into something else to call it integration or community relations, or good relations, or something else if you're serious about addressing racism and you have to name racism and that is what this conference has done. I suppose it's an opportunity to recognise intellectual debts and in terms of the first two speakers I would want to do that fairly quickly, in terms of Bernadette obviously for years she has seen anti-racism as a core part of what she does as a community activist and a political leader but the thing that struck me when she was speaking. Was that sometimes that there is a cost as well, I think whenever she gave the keys of Chicago to the black panthers that was a incredible important symbolic act but that was something that cost her, her meal ticket to Irish America, she could have been in



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congress today speaking to the joint houses like Bertie Aherne is, rather than here with us today. So anti-racism is something that can cost you a lot but it's still the right thing to be involved in. In terms of the Institute of Race Relations, I think that they have played an incredibly important role in terms of theorising and engaging theatrically with what racism is about, but they've always done it from the lowest, it's about people who struggle against racism and defining what it's about and a whole host of intellectuals coming out of that school particularly of course Steven Andun. Who I think has been the towering intellect of understanding racism not just in Britain but around the world in recent years, and as part of that they've always engaged with what's happening in Ireland. They always saw that as part of what they have to understand so whenever a lot of people were saying there's no connection between Ireland and what's happening in the streets of Britain, International Race Relations, over years have said there is a connection. We need to understand and have played an incredible important role of making sense of that. I want to say that as part of that process has been, us collectively, and more particularly the state giving something back to the British state which Arun had already touched on. It's that notion of integration replacing anti racism, and that very clearly

comes out of a good relations paradigm which was developed here by a state of conflict, not a state of peace but a state of conflict. And it's now a word, a phrase which is increasingly dominating anti racist practice or practice around racism in Britain. So it's something that came out of here but has begun to dominate discourse across the water as well. So in terms of getting us into what I want to say, it seemed to me that there's no more symbolic branding, if you like, of the new post Good Friday Agreement Northern Ireland. In the way that George Best has been moved centre in terms of the way that we represent ourselves to the world. I don't know if you came through George Best Airport or the International Airport, but it's actually the first point of contact that people have with the new Northern Ireland. He's been used to replace symbols of conflict in terms of murals particularly in loyalist working class areas. I would he's been used to brand airports, so symbolically an incredibly important part of the way that we are being represented to ourselves. After he died this is what the secretary of state had to say about him "George Best has unified Northern Ireland in any that no politician has ever done, right across the community, across traditions, across politics, across football allegiances, people on all sides are realising that this was someone very special" So it's not an

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accident that this is happening, it is a state construction of the way that we should understand our selves and his role within that wasn't an accident. This is what George had to say on the issue of race, Pele " wasn't bad for a nigger" Andy Cole "£7,000,000 is a lot to pay for a nigger" Now the point that I'm making about that is, it's not that the celebration of George Best hasn't happened because he was an anti racist but it's happened despite it. Racism doesn't matter enough to stop that other process going on. If you put that in the context and comparing it to what happened to Ron Atkinson after he used that word once, his career was finished he certainly didn't have statues built of him he wasn't put on £5 notes he hasn't had airports named after him. So an incredible contrast between what happened to one football pundit who used this word once and another who used it at least twice. And the point that I'm making about that is not that he's celebrated here because he was associated with pretty crude horrible expressions of racism, but because this is not enough to stop that process. And it doesn't matter enough if there are other agendas going on so to put what I want to say in a more structural context. I suppose I think that there are two big changes that have happened over the last 10 to 20 years that have changed the nature of the state but have also changed the nature of racism. The

first one is obviously the Greek tiger. We've seen a slightly less intense version of that with the peace process, but certainly for me anyway I live in Derry now it's still striking to come to a place like Dungannon where there's effectively full employment, something we didn't have a generation ago and certainly part of the new racialisation of Irishness both north and south of the border has been its connection to completely transform the economic base. And when an economic base which has been transformed in a mostly healthy way, and there's a lot more employment, there's a lot more industry looking for labour and migrant labour and other labour that has come here is response to that. But the economic base for racism here has, undoubtedly, been transformed over the last 20 years and that is key to understanding what's happening in terms of contemporary racism. I suppose the only other thing I want to say and for me it's incredibly symbolic, that the commerce magazine traces that from 1988 when Ireland was still characterised as the poorest of the rich. They used a picture of an Irish traveller to symbolise that, and this point has already been made. But for all the interventions that have been done about racism the position of travellers the racism experience for travellers hasn't really changed that much over that period and for all the



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talk of new racism and what's going on the position of travellers remains effectively the same. But having said that there has been a remarkable economic transformation and we can locate the place of racism in that. The other change more local obviously is the construction of the new state and the peace process I'm not just saying about the chuckle brothers, but this if you like is a symbol of where we've come a huge transformation of the state and politics out of conflict to a new situation of a peace process in Northern Ireland, now the point I'm making about that in terms of its connection with racism is the racism we have now isn't the legacy of something else, it's not a legacy of the past, it's part of what we have now and if we are serious about addressing it we have to understand how it's related to the state that we have created here. It's not something that comes from somewhere else from deep within history although the historical connections that Bernadette made are obviously there if we are serious about addressing racism now in the state now we have to understand why it happens in this context. Bernadette made the point very clearly that racism is not a natural thing, it's not inevitably it's odd when it happens in a society, and if you want to understand what is going on the first question to ask is, what is the connection between that racism and the state within which it occurs.

In terms of addressing this question of denial which is right at the heart of this conference there's really been quite a remarkable, even on a world scale, journey here from the position in 1992. When the state was still denying the existence of racism at all in this report it states here the case for racism, for anti racist legislation is not proven, so effectively the position of the state at that time was that there is no racism at all. Now people who are involved in anti racism a minority I think that are very aware that there was a problem but the official state discourse at that time is that we don't have a problem at all we don't need legislation. Now we have moved from that position very quickly to a position where you get these hyperbolic constructions where the north has been the most racist place in the world now I'm not saying that that's not unproblematic either. But the most striking thing about this is the movement from the common sense notion that there was no racism here at all because we were too busy with sectarianism, and there were no black people and the whole list of reasons of that construction. That was a predominant understanding of what was going on to now it's quite common at least in the media discourse to identify this as the most racist place in the whole world. And that process itself is not an accident again you can begin to untangle what was going on with it even in 1998



after we had anti racist legislation introduced in 1997. The Belfast Telegraph was still able to say that sectarianism is Ulster's racism, and that construction at that time was saying that we don't really have any racism here that sectarianism if you like fills that gap. So we have moved in the last ten years to the position were it was still fairly normal, routine, for common sense to suggest that there was no racism here and you get the increasing hyperbolic notions of levels of racism here and again. I think that's not an accident we're begging to trace what is going on in terms of the changing nature of the state and the political dynamic on the ground. And again we have to understand it if were are serious about addressing racism. This is just an example of the kind of thing I'm talking about. Now some of the media reporting was pretty awful, some of it was very, very good, so it's not just a question here of suggesting that this is all a media construction some of it was very well researched some of it was not researched at all. But you get this increasing hyperbolic construction of the north as being the

***You know every minority that has lived in the North since the foundation of the state had experienced different degrees of racism***

most racist place. First in Europe and then in the rest of the World. I suppose it was important for me and I know this is a very long quote but I will leave it up there but it was important for me to say that for all the untacking of what was happening in terms of what the media was saying, that this did actually reflect reality we have already acknowledge that there was serious problems with racism. You know well before the 1997 Race Relations order came into force. You know every minority that has lived in the North since the foundation of the state had experienced different degrees of racism. But I also think it is true that something has changed there is a new racism and certainly the quality, and experience of racism has changed for a lot of the minority Ethnic groups who were here before 1997. So you see intensification and new forms of racism emerging after the peace process. And I suppose that the key to what this person is saying is that he didn't want to be the next Steven Lawrence that's the defining aspect I think of the experience of racism here



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for a lot of minority ethnic people the threat of death. So it's not about relations and it's not about celebrating culture, it's about living in a context where you are genuinely frightened of being killed and having to make very difficult decisions about whether you leave or fight and live constantly in that level of fear, or you just get out. That's the thing that racism is about in terms of the reality of it for people is very different, this is obviously the most recent local thing it's important to remind people that it's on going and again it's the defining bit of that experience of racism is racist violence, and fairly organised racist violence. That planned to bomb people's houses that's the first aspect of racism that needs to be addressed not some of the other softer relationship type issues that tend to absorb all the funding and all the focus.

Interventions now. How do we begin to explain that, well at least part of that dynamic is explaining this which I think is kind of a really bizarre phenomenon. Where the Independent monitoring commission only two years ago acknowledged that there was involvement of loyalist paramilitaries in racist violence. Now the twist in that was that this has been going on all the time, in that this has been going on a long time but this is a not a new thing that had never been addressed publically, or

acknowledge before not with journalism and the media reporting a lot of what had been said on the ground of what was a serious problem in terms of loyalist paramilitaries and racist violence. But this was the first time that the state actually acknowledge that there was a problem here. But it says to stop targeting nationalists and ethnic minorities the implicit thing is not that we acknowledge for the first time that there is a terrible new front opened up here were black people, and minority ethnic people are being targeted by this group. It's just this kind of seamless transition from what used to happen, to what's happened now the point I'm making, about this, is that I would have expected this to be world news under the notion that not only with the peace process in jeopardy because one party to that process is now targeting a completely different section of the population but because it suggested that we are quite profoundly not at peace in a new way and certainly that reflects the experience of minority ethnic people that didn't happen at all. The media had been interested in other dementions in this new racism to me anyway that was quite shocking, and if you wanted an example of normalisation in terms of security surely one of the key things you could use to measure that was that one group was not targeting minority ethnic groups and yet that hasn't

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been at the top of the political agenda. Again it goes back to what I was saying about the metaphor of George Best it's not that racism doesn't matter it's just that it doesn't matter enough other things are more important, keeping the process on track is more important than acknowledging there's a more serious problem here. Now I want to put that into the wider structural context that people have talked about a wee bit but it's to make that point I was making at the start if you want to understand racism the first place you go is to understand its relationship to the state. It's a hard thing to do here because we have so many layers and we are working in a local state context here were people are doing good active work on the ground and that's great to see but you also have to work in terms of the Northern Ireland state, you have to work in terms of the UK state, and the European union as well. So at every one of those levels there are different things going on in terms of racism and I think that the most striking thing here is that there is no mention here, in terms of what people were saying about lets keep black people or people of colour out of the UK or the European Union. But this fairly bland policy statement which now defines migration policy in terms of the UK and ipso facto Northern Ireland, has the consequence of doing precisely that. New measures aimed at ending

of employment routes to the UK for low skilled workers from outside the EU except in cases of short term shortages. It's about the whitening of the UK and that's a state decision made in the context of the European Union policy, which is precisely the same, states that the migrant workers should come from within the EU, and not from outside of it, so it doesn't look racist at all in terms of the traditional ideas of racism that Bernadette was talking about earlier. There's no mention that we don't want these people or that they are inferior to is at all, but the consequence is a whitening of the UK. And we seen it on the ground here in a very explicit way that the kind of minority ethnic groups. I first did anti racist work with 20 years ago were people of colour and travellers mostly Chinese and South Asian now complete reconstitution of the migrant working population here has been quite remarkable, where the majority of people are white from Eastern Europe now that's not to say that those populations don't experience racism of course they do. But there's been quite a profound reconstitution of that population which happens because of state policy it doesn't happen because of what employers around Dungannon do, it doesn't happen because of what the council do here, it happens because of the context of European Union and UK policy and whatever we do on the



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ground we have to be always conscious of the fact that that's the state context were we work. Now to begin to address the issue of the specific nature of the Northern Ireland state of what it's done in terms of racism I just want to remind you that the state 20 years ago was saying there's no problem at all and that is really important there's been no acknowledgement that we got it wrong for many years it been a kind of seamless transition by the state against racism.

And I think the main problem for me was this that anti racism as we understood it both in a British context and an International context, has been consumed within a very traditional paradigm here, the community relation paradigm. The big problem with that the two core

problems if you like, traditional communities couldn't address the state at all it was the state intervention they couldn't problematise what the state did it was about community and here you needed that. And secondly one side is as bad as the other, it had no acknowledgment of the power differential that exist within

communities and more importantly that exist between communities and the state, so almost by accident or certainly in a way that is very rarely challenged you've seen a centring of anti racism as we have understood in a new form that's been absorbed by this good relations paradigm, that's why I said it was so important that this conference actually names racism in this way. We begin to see good relations becoming the objective, not opposing racism in the sub of a really

dangerous way.

Now what's wrong with good relations, it's very hard to kind of, be seen as an advocate of bad relations as that's the alternative it's not what's wrong is not so much that it's wrong, but it doesn't construct the problem in the right way it doesn't address

the facts that I was talking about earlier. Now the reality of racism for people if they are living in fear of their lives it's not that people are nasty to them in the street or unfriendly or they don't understand their culture enough. You have to get the priorities right in terms of state intervention. The first priority is to protect people

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dangerous way***

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you know if there are organised racist gangs carrying out bomb attacks against ethnic people, you need to police that, that need to be an issue for the criminal justice system not for good relations but for the criminal justice system. And again as I said the connection between racism and power is denied most particularly here. I think all the lessons all the victories if you like that Arun was talking about in terms of the recognition by the British state of institutional racism after the Steven Laurence Campaign, McPherson. That had been completely ignored here we're still in a pre McPherson situation in terms of the non-recognition of institutional racism, and what it means in terms of what the state does is quite shocking. The way that, that's image was if you like a new labour project and it hasn't had any effect on the ground here primarily people do not address racism. Starting with the question what about institutional racism? What about what the state does? And that's the logical extension of that is that the state itself has been removed from the equation, so when you talk about racism your not talking about citizenship or migration or criminal justice the relations become the be all and end all of what your doing. And there's a good side and a bad side to the public face if you like of this new situation. Now the good side is that you have a human

connection across government, now and I'm not dismissing this or saying that is not important you know Margaret Thatcher would not have sat in solidarity in the way that both First Minister, and Deputy First Minister do in terms of these refugee families. And the other point about it is that they don't have the capacity to stop these people being removed so that there solidarity is completely symbolic it may be the safe looking good in terms of what it does, but it doesn't actually effect what happens to those families and until we engage with the reality of what's happening there you don't really move beyond the symbolic into the actual reality of how you stop people who shouldn't be deported from being deported. So just to bring that to a conclusion, my first point is that I think is an increasingly difficult place for people or colour and migrant workers to appear, racism particularly racist violence is increasing and still largely unaddressed that's the reality that we are living in here, that racist violence defines the lives of minority ethnic people and that's quite shocking 10 years into a process that was supposed to deliver normalisation and peace it's really, really, shocking in that context. And the second point which I'm making which again Arun said, is the racism on the streets has a lack of infinitely with the constitution institutional racism of British Government policy what I mean by



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that is if the government is saying we don't want any poor black Minority Ethnic people from outside the EU to come here then you know why does it seem strange or abnormal that noble communities say exactly the same thing and very often get branded as racist but there institutional policy is exactly the same as so its the connection between them that we need to understand and address but Irishness and Northern Irishness has been reconstituted in the context of the Good Friday agreement and the Celtic Tiger and racism is a function of the post Good Friday Agreement State. I'm really making that point that the racism that we're addressing now is part of what we have become not were we where 10 or 20 or 30 years ago. And if we're serious about addressing it we have to see it in those terms it is a function of the state, this state of peace that we've created and not a legacy of the past. And then finally the good relations paradigm is completely inappropriate to addressing racism that's not to suggest it's inappropriate to do other things, its fine but it's not the paradigm that you use to address racism particularly racist violence in this society at this time. And what we have to do I think is to move beyond that paradigm back to the thing, the quotes, that I started with if you want to understand and act against racism you do it like the Institute of Race Relations did. You start on the streets

in terms of campaigning you listen to what minority Ethnic people do and you look at how they are organising that's how you build the kind of anti racism that will seriously, seriously, address the racism that I'm talking about here, Thank you.



## Political Parties Q & A Panel

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

What can the OFMDFM do about negative press reporting from local councillors on Travellers for example recent Mayors claim that Craigavon is a dumping ground for travellers? That's the first question.

### **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

I have to confess that being a Councillor in Craigavon as well, and it's a headline that we are not to proud of and I think it was actually the MP for the area who made the comment not indeed the Mayor of the day, whilst OFMDFM have a duty to actually make much more

positive statements, negative press is something that very few of us can control, however, I think it's actually up to individual parties to actually ensure the standards of behaviour and conduct of their members and in particular elected representatives and that's something which my party, the SDLP, takes very seriously and prior even to selection for any election whether that is Council, MLA or Westminster each councillor or would be councillor or MLA has to actually sign a pledge in relation to anti racism and the party does have disciplinary procedures which can lead up to exclusion, and standing down of an elected representative if indeed they



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are found to be guilty, in terms of any racist comment whether that's again anti traveller or any other section of our community.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Thank you very much

### **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

Well, I think for me that the use of that type of a language doesn't just apply in a racist sense because you often hear people talking about, you know, one area would be a dumping ground for problem families or anti-social element or whatever, so I think it's a kind of... represents a very negative approach or popular approach, maybe for some elected representatives. So I think it's very unfortunate, I do think we can have an impact on negative reporting, first of all, I don't think that we should deny the problems are happening. This conference is talking about Moving Beyond Denial so I think that I get a little bit worried when I hear about people saying let's counteract negative publicity if there is something negative happening it needs to be spelled out and identified but I do think what there are ways of properly getting that. Is what can people do about the attitudes which would allow people to express language in the way that they do, and I do think the

OFMDFM have a responsibility they have an over all, if you like, agenda equality fairness and inclusion and cohesion. I think that certainly from where I stand working within the overview of Public Administration we have worked with the other parties to ensure that it will be an absolute legal requirement on local Government in the future not only to talk about good relations but to actually work actively in delivering in a way that makes sense, so I think we all can do a lot. Yes, the parties have a big responsibility to ensure that their representatives are much more correct in the language that they use but more importantly their attitude is improved, so we shouldn't see an area as a dumping ground for anybody we need to make sure that we are providing the appropriate public services that people require no matter who that may be.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Ok Thank you

### **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

Whilst I agree with our other speakers that our public representatives should be more careful in what they say, I also suspect that comments like that perhaps expose the depth of racism which riddles our society, indeed the whole problem with the



traveller community and it's handling throughout the island of Ireland is a disgrace and it's an area where we often tokenism and in fact, we the politicians, have done little or nothing to resolve the problem over the last over my lifetime at least.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Thank you David

## **RICHARD WATSON (UUP)**

The travelling community has always got bad press from day one, what the assembly and local Government have to do about it is basically address it, educate the local public, to find a right home, a right site, a place where travellers can be part of the community.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Well thank you, well I will read out the question it's: Services which deliver all of section 75 equality requirements, must be monitored in terms and take up an outcome of services, there is no agreed ethnic monitoring centrally which reflects the Northern Ireland population, when will they assembly implement ethnic monitoring?

## **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

Well, the simple answer is I don't know what the timeframe or if any

exists actually, but what I do know is that we have just in the last month formally reconstituted an all party working group on minority ethnic communities and we had that group going for full time and was only reconstituted a couple of weeks back, in fact Dolores has now just become a member of that herself and the purpose of this group is, in a sense, twofold. It is, first of all, to ensure that all government departments pursue appropriate racial equality strategies and the other side of the coin for the room is that the political parties who are members of this all party working group which involves a whole range of minority and ethnic community representatives the second purpose of it is for the parties themselves to look at what we as parties are doing and elective representatives are doing also both in terms of our own parties and within a much wider public discourse, so we had one of the junior ministers come in a meeting just to say "Hello" a few weeks ago with a formal commitment to come back to that committee to the working group and to start with the proper formal engagement with the minority ethnic community all party working group so it's at that part, as far as I would be concerned, that we start to tie down in a very focused way what the executive and all the ministries are actually doing in terms of all of the requirements necessary to follow appropriate, as I said, racially



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equality strategies and that's the best answer I can give on that one.

### **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

Can I just say that, unfortunately, the assembly has not yet delivered on single equality legislation which once understood should have been completed it's some seven years in the making and it should have been completed by the end of December last year and I think that there is some disagreement as to whether or not the first and deputy first minister are actually going to progressively realise the legislation upwards rather than the now entering a debate about policies and principles which I think is entirely wrong Ann Godfrey, I used to work in the health service so I now Ann so I think that some of the issue around her question in terms of the monitoring of take up is actually to help and assist trusts in terms of over planning of services and to ensure they target their resources of those most in need, I'm sure that many of you know that we have the equality commission who's responsibility it is also to ensure Section 75 duties are properly regulated and adhered to. So there is a great deal, I think, of responsibility also falls on the equality commission on seeking out and ensuring that Section 75 is monitored and adhered to the issue of forward planning and of services is something and sharing out of resources is

something which the assembly, in all departments across the assembly, must take greater conscience of because I don't think we've actually got to grips with our new diverse community and insuring that when we look at schools when we look at our hospital services and, Tyrone here for example, the midwifery services were closed down and moved across to Craigavon now because both Craigavon and Dungannon have an increase in population, services are no longer able to meet the need of community they are supposed to serve.

### **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

I wish I could be certain of the commitment of all our political parties to a commitment to equality and fighting racism in whatever shape or form it takes, I'm not convinced that all our political parties are equally committed and where that division of commitment exists, I wonder how much will be done.

### **AUDIENCE - Kieran Shields / SELB**

The panel might be aware that there's research from Queens University and the Early Years organisations to suggest that children as young as pre-school can exhibit racism and I'm just wondering what we talked



*Kieran Shields / SELB*

about earlier about the need to get politician's to change their racist views how can government intervene to change the beliefs of parents who pass on racism to their children?

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Thank you very much for you question, would anybody like to go first?

## **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

With great difficulty, to me so much must be addressed to the schools to young people to where

they experience mixing with one another, at least in our schools and in our pre-schools situations, young people of a different race and a different background meet and mix. Unfortunately, the parents don't, or seldom do, and how we address? I think the future lies with young people I think the changing of attitudes of the elderly is not a task that we can easily address or of course we should attempt to change attitudes but how we do so... Our politicians must be braver they must be more honest, too often we are saying what is popular rather than what needs to be said and I think, certainly, that the dishonesty of some of our politicians should be exposed and challenged and I would like to think that everyone who is, and I'm sorry to say that we are not all sitting round the table at the moment, I wish we were. And my feeling is that we must all be honest and give our commitment and I'm not sure that we can be.

## **RICHARD WATSON (UUP)**

To address that point it's the role of local government the local government is closer to the community basically they have a whole in it, they need to do more, they need to be more direct with the community, organise different events share different communities cultures. Openness, as my colleague said, basically you have to start



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from the younger age, it's what you teach your kids, that's what they are going to learn. For them to believe for them to be racist, they don't know, and you as a parent has to teach your kids, but you have to get help from your local government, your local constituency and your local councillors - they are not doing enough as far as I'm concerned but give them time, the pressure is mounted and soon we will see a change.

### **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

Thanks Richard, I suppose a lot of stuff actually starts in the home and how much we tolerate it, just a couple of observations perhaps, it's about stereotyping our way as a community and individuals to accept the stereotyping that we see on our televisions and our newspapers and in our communities, what opportunities are we providing for people to integrate and to get to know each other and it should not just apply to racism. I mean we haven't actually got a good track record on tackling sectarianism yet, so it should come as no surprise that we haven't been able to touch the surface of racism, and you know for some whilst there's the long awaited OFM new strategy in terms of replacing the shared future document, and the anti racial strategy document, the new cohesion, integration

and sharing it is delayed in being produced. It has been promised for some months and I'm told it's almost on the horizon but we should actually condemn all forms of hate crime and in a way we have to challenge the mobile phones, they are a great way of passing on jokes and comments. I think there has to be greater parental control around a wide number of issues and it's not always easy and, yes, the government has a role to legislate for, but we cannot abdicate parent's responsibility as individuals to how they bring up their children.

### **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

First of all, I think it's very unfair just to generalise which I think is at the bottom of the question to be truthful, and every politician isn't racist and every parent isn't racist and every child is not a racist at 3,4 year old and they are not a bully at 3 or 4 year old and they are not anti-social when they are 10 year old automatically. There are circumstances that create that, and environments that create that, so I think that there's an ongoing requirement for education and awareness, certainly from government departments, politicians, and so on. In my view there has to be very clear governmental strategies and obligations but, whether it's monitoring to get whatever outcomes are being delivered and

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then strategies to tackle deficiencies and shortcomings that are there. Politicians who say the wrong thing or make racist remarks should be penalised, should be enforcement of anti racist activities or racist activities, so I think that all that should be a given, I do think that there are a lot of very good examples of whether its schools, communities, some local councils (not all of them) completely ignore and abdicate these issues, some parties, some politicians, would do likewise and not even practice some of their attitudes but there are a lot of good examples as well, and I think that it's important to recognise that those good examples do exist, I have been at quite a number of schools, youth groups where people have been very committed to working together and I'm very encouraged because, nearly every time, I've been at a conference with people speaking on those issues, always referring to the point that the Travelling community has always been, by far, statistically at the very least, the most discrimated against community here, over and above anybody, if you look at all the statistics, the last policing board report we got all the human rights violations the travelling community comes of worst so on every barometer. I think for me what's important is that we do have to continue updating our awareness, and Benedicta said earlier on about her surprise to people referring to

Barack Obama being a black person, how many people in this audience have heard people or even said themselves wouldn't it be great to see a black man elected as the president of America, now they don't mean that as a racist remark they don't mean that as an ignorant or offensive remark but they are actually saying wouldn't it be great sign of diversity in a country like the US if a person who we define as a black man, and I understand exactly the point that Benedicta is making, so at the minute people are referring to Barack Obama as a black person. Most of us actually think that's a good thing we are not aware that somehow or another we're not supposed to say that so that's why there's always a need to continue reappraising our language and the use of language. I didn't know that black person was an insult, we call people coloured people. I remember having this discussion years ago with my parents, they were talking about people as coloured, because to name a person a black person was an insult so you know things change and we need to change with it. So I just think that we don't just generalise everybody and every child as racist, because they are not.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

We are going to move onto our next question. Which is from Mark Donahue & Catrina Connors, are they



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here? How is your party dealing with on-going anti-traveller sentiment/prejudice among your voters/supporters?

## AUDIENCE

Martin O'Neil from Onward Travellers Centre in West Belfast: I have seen an awful amount of racism brought up within communities, from both sides, catholic and protestant areas. What are the politicians or political parties doing to tackle racism within their own communities, from grassroots supporters? Are there any initiatives going on within the parties?

## ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)

Well, I have represented West Belfast for twenty years, and I can assure you that there are no votes in travellers, but that's neither here or there. That's been the colony of conventional wisdom for political parties, and many of them have kind of lived by that. Of which I certainly don't, and the political party I represent certainly wouldn't, so I have been physically on the line with particularly the Glen Road area for example, making sure that the travellers are allowed and able to bring in their vans on to the site, while local residents were actually trying to block the entrance. So for people like myself, and other party colleagues who have stood

with the travellers against, sometimes very stiff local opposition, and some of that local opposition is based on a direct negative experience. I have to say, to be truthful about it, also part of it was involved the old traditional "oh there is more travellers moving in" and "more travellers moved in" because West Belfast was an area where, as the only one of few areas in Northern Ireland, where travellers would have been allowed to settle. So people like myself, and other party colleagues would have actively and proactively standing with the travellers on every occasion when they are trying to better their circumstances institutionally within the likes of the Belfast City Council, a long, long hard serious battle as your probably aware, trying to get the travellers a module of services which would allow them to have some level of equality of life, particularly for their young people, which was never very easy to do because, obviously, Belfast City Council was never a vast scene of liberalism, so we had to face institutional racism in there as well. So I think on one level we, we have been working proactively with the travellers and their organisations and their representatives in particular with their families over the years over with some practical day to day things plus a number of initiatives and, either for that, a whole range of events over the years whether that's award ceremonies or achievements awards



or so on. So you have to try and make sure that you identify with that community, with their achievements as well with their difficulties.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

David

## **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

I wouldn't wish to boost about the Alliance party but at least we're a party with a public representative at Stormont who is drawn from an ethnic minority. In the area of doing something about things, in local areas, obviously we play our part in relating to and communicating with ethnic minorities. Our biggest strength is that we are the party which, in a sense, represents integrated education, a party that stands for a shared future, a party that stands for us all being educated and growing up together, the party that stands for knowing each other, living with each other and working with each other.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

What would you like to say Richard?

## **RICHARD WATSON (ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY)**

The Ulster Unionist Party stance on racism, ethnic minorities and travellers is all new. The party, over the last nine

months, has decided to help local communities by offering courses, we have also changed our website to seven different languages. So anyone who needs advice and help can log onto the site more easily. Each local branch offers advice in housing, addressing issues of racist attack etc. In my area, of East Belfast, we haven't had many travellers come in, or very little. So in terms of actually what we do it's the same as West Belfast in that we try and help as many people as possible.

## **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

I will start off by saying that equality and human rights is central to the ethos of the SDLP. The SDLP in terms of negotiating the terms of the Good Friday Agreement fought hard to secure the bill of rights for Northern Ireland, which is the topic of some debate, and also protection under section 75. On an individual basis, Craigavon is one of the areas, I'm sure you know that occupies a high level of travellers. A number of years ago, I think I was the only public representative who actually made a submission to the planning appeals commission on behalf of the travellers to secure them a permanent site in Craigavon. Part of that is about educating myself and educating anyone around me in terms of common humanity and compassion around travellers and health



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inequalities that they suffer on a daily basis. Looking back, particularly because I was in the health service, what struck me most was the fact that many people within the traveller community, their experience was that of many people across the North in terms of their experience in health, in the beginning of the twentieth century, in terms of life expectancy etc. So there is an individual role in leadership, and then there is the party policies on how we put that into whatever negotiations we have, both at and leading up to the restoration of the institutions, and now working the institutions to secure whatever specific policies and strategies are produced by these institutions actually meet the needs of travellers and other communities.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Now the next question. Which is going to be presented by Daniel Holder?

### **AUDIENCE – Daniel Holder / Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**

Maybe relating to some of the more positive actions that some of the politicians made us aware. I think everyone in this room would welcome this very strong commitment to the programme for government to see meaningful reductions in racism and

to challenge racism. My question is part of that strategy, which Dolores alluded to earlier on, I do have the full title which indeed is very long. It's the programme for "cohesion, sharing and integration for a shared and better future" I suppose my question around that one is:

Would the panel members agree with the following things, firstly the core element of any such strategy is to be tackling manifestations of racism, which includes racial discrimination, with the core element of the strategy to be around anti racism. Secondly, would you agree that there is a danger that the term "cohesion", this term could be misunderstood of being the issue of just two (or more) communities who somehow 'just can't get on with each other' and, by framing that, within this parallel there is a danger that the issues and causes of the problem of racism, that was outlined over and over again this



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morning by the expert panel, could overlook racism and inequality and barriers to integration because of this term “cohesion”?

## **RICHARD WATSON (ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY)**

Danny, integration and cohesion is vital, that as well as “good reason” and community relations. It’s not about segregation, it is about respect and culture diversity within a shared value in society. That’s my views on it.

## **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

All I can say is that we would have to look at some detail of the strategy because we have not seen it yet, and I’m very struck on Arun’s comments earlier in terms of cohesion and how it is defined, and its about getting round a common purpose and working together as John Hume always said “There is much more that unites us rather than divides us” and that perhaps is not a bad maxi-meter for dealing with racism as well as sectarianism. I was struck by Arun’s earlier comments and would like to know more about that in terms of that definition of cohesion, It’s not about what the government says, how people define themselves and think it has to be very much grassroots led and that’s probably why events like today are very important.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH**

Thank you Dolores.

## **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

Well, in the spirit of brighten things up, we had a debate at the Assembly yesterday which has debated a number of amendments from a number of parties and it was about establishing the boundary commissioner, the new boundaries for the new district councils. From the Alliance party, one of the amendments was about drawing the boundaries to make sure socially coherent areas are included in the boundaries, now, how do you define what is a socially coherent area? Is it a nice settled middle class district, it was this question, I don’t know what it is or not, because you can just achieve that, you cant start off by saying “we will draw a boundary around this settled communities”. That’s what it was really, in my opinion, middle class attempting to say in one hand “here is what we want and here is what we stand for”, but in reality, what it really means...it’s a proof that, in my view, was always needed. You will listen to politicians, and you will listen to parties all the time, you have to draw your own conclusions if they are given you bullshit or not, and make your own mind your way. What I am saying is, Daniel has brought a very important



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point here because cohesion in my view is not something you have to start, it's an objective and it is a necessary outcome so, the reason why the government programme is written the way it is, is precisely to try to make the thing joined up, because you can't just point one thing and say "we are going to deliver that", you need to have an integrated strategy. I know the last executive, for example, established a racial equality strategy and also appointed race champions in every Department, does anyone know what they do? No. So therefore, the previous experiment failed and ethnic minorities and community representatives will tell you that and I have worked with them in the last number of years, every month, month in month out, and it was about 30-40 representatives in the party group and they will all tell you that the racial champions failed, that they are gate keepers within Departments. What we are saying as a party, within the executive, is that their failure could well have been a well intended experiment but didn't work. So we have to go through a rotten branch with getting cohesion, with getting people sharing, with getting people all on a basis of equality that we will then be able to deliver proper anti-racism challenges what is, in my view, ranges everything from government departments having to pull their weight, educate on the day-to-day of living throughout schools and all that

and penalties, at the end of the day, for people who transgress the law in terms of good practice, either through racist remarks or racist behaviour. So this, for me, has to be an integrated strategy, therefore, that's why the words may be lengthy but they encapsulate all the necessary ingredients which can actually deliver at the anti-racism level.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Thank you. And the next question is coming from Gerry McDonald. Is Gerry here?



### **AUDIENCE – Gerry McDonald / Sure Start Dungannon**

Thank you, now is my turn eventually. This morning we've talked about institutional racism and Arun talked about in terms of Bradford, the foundations where some of the difficulties were decision made by officials in housing, health, education etc. In Northern Ireland we've had



the 50-50 recruitment to address one aspect of our difficulties. Should we see a similar initiative in terms of all the public services that reflect the diversity in our community, and that is from service delivery right up to department level, managers, senior managers, directors at a department level? So decisions in terms of planning and service delivery reflect the diversity in our community.

## **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

An interesting question...the recruitment practice for PSNI has been, at least, in progress of bringing change and important change was a step, in a sense, that had to be taken. I know there are all sorts of reservations and concerns and there have been costs as well but, at the end of the day, in that particular area it did work. Now, whether or not something of a similar nature across all the other agencies is necessary I don't honestly know and I don't feel that I can comment effectively.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Thank you David.

## **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

Well, certainly from my perspective, there is an absolute requirement for proportionality because our society is

totally unrepresented across so many aspects of our society and I, certainly, very much stand for measures that would actually address that and if that requires quotas, then that's what you need. My own party, to try to tackle the gender unbalance, we've imposed quotas. Sometimes it's not a problem, sometimes we need more but what we have been doing, we are setting ourselves benchmarks, strategies, practices in place to say "there is a problem, we've named it, we are going to shame it and we are going to try to tackle it" and I strongly believe that there has to be quotas. Now, some people don't like the idea of quotas and it's not just one thing on its own, because that could be even something on its own by lip service, ultimately, but in my view, you do need to have quotas and you do need to have proportionality. If don't move to a much more representative society we are not really tackling the problem, we are not dealing with everyone in the room. I would like to make a final point, I've heard a lot and, in fact, at the last meeting I had with at the Community Relations Council, is much easier for some of the people to talk about racism and, you know, cultural lack of diversity but they can't deal with the issue of sectarianism because it, more often means, it matter is with the one sitting beside you, and sometimes you may have to say nice things on people who are not represented. I am very



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conscious of who I'm representing, dealing with civil servants every day of the week, dealing with police officers everyday of the week. Now, I'm saying there are not enough representatives from the communities, and you know people are saying to themselves "does that mean you want me out of my job", this is not what I want and it's not what I mean but we have to deal with the need for quotas because if you don't get a representative society we are going to roll into problems that we have before in the past.

### **RICHARD WATSON (ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY)**

That one to me is a very known subject to speak about but to summarise my own personal view on the 50-50, I personally don't agree with on a catholic persons recruitment basis, yes, possibly, but on a growing economy, on a growing sector of migrant people coming to Northern Ireland, you don't know if they're catholic, protestant, atheist...whatever. For example, a while back, they said there were 10.000 poles coming to Northern Ireland and so many were going to be recruited into the Police Service, I mean that on itself alone doesn't work. The government need to review this business, this process, it's a process, the recruitment process has to be reviewed. For example, I'm a

doctor and I want to go to a particular hospital, I might don't even get the job because of the quotas system. You know, 5 Chinese, 4 Asians, 2 Africans, 1 Irish...it doesn't work, to me personally, it's a wrong system and it needs to be re-addressed.

### **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

Can I just say, I think in relation to the 50-50 recruitment on Policing, I mean, the Policing issue was, we all know, was identified as one of the problems of our conflict, identified as an issue and therefore, 50-50 is a very blunt instrument in order to try to put policing in a much better footing over a short period of time and, you know, that is due to end at 2010 – 2011, we are going to see the end of 50-50 recruitment. I think is defined, and it should be defined as an affirmative action, I think there are a number of affirmative actions that we take across all the Departments and Councils which are appropriate to take and I don't necessarily believe that 50-50 is the right in terms, of across all of the government departments. It was a very specific tool or remedy to a very identified problem.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

And we are going now to the next question and Maria Noble has the next question. Maria, are you here?



## **AUDIENCE – Maria Noble**

I am, thank you. Benedicta, we are after having a discussion on what people are allowed to call themselves. When I was a kid I had two choices, nigger or half-cast (which was even more...) I prefer Maria, but there you go. Right, my question is: In order to tackle racism it is necessary to understand how it is operating, can you give us an example of the impact of racism in the community that you serve?

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Thank you very much Maria. Dolores?

## **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

I think is the very individual impact of racism where an individual or a family, as we seen in the recent weeks, are attacked and their home destroyed. So it's that very real, can't think of the word, that very real measure of what

racism does to a particular individual or a family but, it demines us all as humans and as a community, I think it does, where some people moved in are chosen to target an individual or a family as in a way of speaking, we seen posters go up in different constituencies, particularly targeting migrant communities. You are aware that my own constituency is Banbridge, and also form a sinister or perverted way of educating get to blame for all ills in society, you know "we've no houses here because all these people have come to move in", it actually instigates hatred against other individuals that's what that features. That is actually, I think a keynote speaker spoke earlier, I think it was Robbie, has spoken about the institutionalisation of racism, it is nothing that we wouldn't know, especially in Northern Ireland in terms of sectarianism, there is not a big difference on how they are manifested, they are all a form of hatred and prejudice.

## **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

I come from Banbridge where the offence of the posters appeared, pictures of the Ulster Regiment going over the top of the Somme, with the sub-heading – "they didn't go over the top to provide jobs and homes to foreigners", horrible. Posted in telephone boxes and different



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places in the area, sending out sinister messages and catching the eye of that sort of demoted picture that means so much to so many people in Northern Ireland, really poisonous and harming, and matter of...just horrifying in a community, Banbridge will probably be described as a middle class community and moderate community, a community where people share values, it isn't true.

### **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

Well, they did put Neil, what do you call him? Neil Lenham at the top of a bonfire one year. Banbridge, I have to say so, is not that tolerant.

### **RICHARD WATSON (ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY)**

Fortunately, in my constituency, have to say, there is no or very little racism but mostly sectarianism, but I wouldn't touch on that now. I also believe that should be a responsibility shared by all society elected representatives, statutory bodies, community and voluntary representatives setting a good faith, promoting culture and respect in the society. Representatives from these communities should be under an obligation to lead by example. Certainly, I believe community groups, ministers, MPs, all should lead by example to stop all racism.

### **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Thank you. Alex?

### **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

Well, I can give a number of examples. On Christmas eve there was a man from Nigeria standing at his own front door as normal, one man walked up and gave him a dig in the nose, broke his nose. I had to get the Police next morning for the guy to give his statement, but the neighbours all came around and went to every door in the street, talked to the mother of the lad involved and told her what they thought of him, wrote to the family in their own local newspaper to give support to the family, so that's the negative and the positive. Another example where the Chinese community were at the point of almost getting the keys for a new centre at a part of the constituency but were basically told out of it and handed out. But, a fortnight ago we turned the sod for a Chinese new resource centre at Stranmillis at the gateway of the city centre, so great people stand by them, despite the racist attacks that have been run against them. So, what I am seeing in my constituency which is South Belfast, there are many of us, people from every religious background and class, who are working and giving powerful support to people who are seeking asylum, people who are



fighting cases and all the rest, so there is a lot of discouragement but there is a lot of encouragement.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Thank you. We have one final question and then we see if we can, we will try to go to the audience. This question is: Would members of the panel feel that racism has grown in the recent years more so than in the South? If so, what are the reasons for this?

## **DAVID GRIFFIN (ALLIANCE PARTY)**

I would say that are virtually no differences. It is growing in the south and demonstrated daily in the news through one form or another, it's growing here. The reason for it? I suppose, greed, ignorance and selfishness. The other night on "Let's talk" we had a young lad talking about "charity begins at home, we shouldn't contribute to third world poverty and we should look after ourselves" and that is selfishness and greed. I think, unfortunately, it epitomises the Celtic Tiger.

## **BENEDICTA ATTOH:**

Ok, please very briefly Richard.

## **RICHARD WATSON (ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY)**

Very shortly, I don't believe...basically what is happening is that back in the 70's , 80's racist crime, racist attacks haven't been reported as much as they have been now and, basically, as we all learn, education, community groups have been working on this, it's being heard now and reported to the Police and has become a fact and a figure and I believe that increased.

## **DOLORES KELLY MLA (SDLP)**

I think the ...didn't existed prior to 1992 in terms of what the government was saying, that is not true, during the years of conflict, I think, people who were outside from that sort of traditional 2 communities – Catholic/Protestant – kept their head down. People like the Chinese community I know, it's not a new phenomenon, people coming out of pubs and clubs would poured into a Chinese after they would come out and started abusing the staff, that just didn't start happening post the 90's, that has been happening for years and David is right in saying that people now have the right of reporting it. And also the Asian community, it is something about people being more vocal, perhaps more empowered and perhaps as we have now identified racism and have started to call it for what it is.



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### **ALEX MASKEY MLA (SEIN FEIN)**

I think is very difficult to quantify because we are told every day that there is a lack of reporting and you can understand that, people will tell you why they don't report because their experience has been, collectively, perhaps as a community, that there isn't a response when things are actually reported. So, we will probably never going to be getting an accurate figure of the number of racist incidents because there is racism and there are actual racist attacks and racial incidents. I am not actually quite sure, you would imagine and presume that, the more people have come in here and the more interaction and interfacing happens there would be more opportunity for a negative reaction but, in the same time, I see that communities, even now 5

years on, would have a much greater acceptance of diversity in different communities. So, I think there is a mixed picture in the community. What I would be concerned is that with the number of incidents that actually have been reported, there is actually a decrease on the number of people who are charged or even convicted for that is a concern.



## Closing Remarks

### COLIN JACK, OFMDFM

Hello, I'm Colin Jack and I'm slightly hesitant now, after this morning's proceedings. I'm head of Good Relations and Reconciliation Division in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, I'm only new to my job, I took it up at the beginning of this year so, really today is very much a learning experience for me personally in terms of getting to grips with some of the issues surrounding racism, and race equality in Northern Ireland. I think that all the speakers this morning put quite a lot of challenges and food for thought, I suppose, both for those of us here who are working in the whole field of race equality, but also, I suppose, to all of us as individuals, people in terms of how we think about these issues and I think that's been very

valuable. I'm not sure that I would want to come back with any kind of, I'm just not ready yet, to come back with fully thought through responses to all of that but it has certainly given me a lot of food for thought over the time ahead. The conference today is to be roundly welcomed for the focus that it's provided on the issue of racism in our society, and it's hugely important that people who deal with racism on the ground, as many of you do, have the opportunity to share their experiences of best practice and also to engage directly with political representatives as you have the opportunity to do this morning. The conference today, I think, illustrates quite clearly that if we needed further evidence we have indeed moved beyond denial of racism, I think we have further to go, but I think we have moved beyond denial. I want to tell you a bit about the work of my division concentrating, mainly, on the aspects concerning racial equality and some work on migration and, on the wider perspective, I want to just slightly place those comments in the context of wider debates on these issues both here and across Europe. I will mention in particular that this is the European year of Intercultural Dialogue, and I'm glad to see that the symbol for that is on the backdrops today, I suppose if I take quote from the European context there's the Max Frisch's, Swiss novelist and playwright, captured something and I



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think it gives us some food for thought in terms of what we are talking about today, he said “we asked for workers and we got human beings”. I think that captures both the economic aspect to migration and also the key social dimension that we neglect at our peril. So while we appreciate the economic benefits brought by migrants we also must be aware of the human aspects of their experience and also of how, we all live together here. New arrivals are to be valued not just for their economic contribution but also for fresh perspectives, aspirations and energy that they bring to life, the arrival of people from all over the globe can, and must give, a new dynamic to society here and how we relate to each other, at a time when our society is being transformed, although there is still along way to go, sectarianism, racism and intolerance are still too evident and I think, as was quite clearly illustrated to us this morning, they do mar our reputation and they have the potential to blight our economic prospects and have a corrosive effect on our society, so we must and the devolved administration is committed to combating these issues while, at the same time, recognising that we can't take the people who have arrived here in Northern Ireland, to live, for granted. We are competing for scarce skills and labour and it is an economic necessity for us to build a society

which will attract people and foreign direct investment, and it's a central message in the programme for Government which was published by the Executive in January. The development of a shared and better future for all people should be central to all Government policies and programmes. The programme for Government commits Governments, specifically to take forward, coordinate the strategic action to promote social inclusion for new and established minority ethnic communities. Our work on this is ongoing and we are currently at an advance stage for developing the new programme for cohesion sharing and integration, this programme will build on some of the excellent work, particularly by District Council's and Community Organisations, to address the challenges which local communities are facing and actions to tackle both racism and sectarianism will be at the core of these proposals. The central focus of the programme will be local people dealing with local issues through local solutions. Much has already been achieved as work towards developing this sharing a better future, one example, we in the OFMDFM have just completed the application process for this years funding under the funding scheme for minority ethnic communities. That scheme supports work which contributes to the promotion of good relations and

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good race relations between people with different ethnic backgrounds, we had over a hundred applications for that funding, unfortunately, not all of them could be successful but the number and scope of applications received reflects the growing diversity and geographical spread of new arrivals and the challenges that we all face, and I'm pleased to say that we've allocated almost £1,000,000 for this programme over the next 12 months which represents an increase of a third on previous years and that's clear evidence of the Executives commitment to good race relations, in the past this scheme has supported organisations such as Ballymena Interethnic Forum and South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) to provide vital local services and advice to a range of ethnic groups and individuals. Both these groups and many others worked with a whole range of people, travellers and others are to be commended for their work. The letters will be going out to the organisations which have applied under that scheme within the next couple of days. As most of you will know, this year has been designated the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue by the European Union, the Northern Ireland Executive wholly supports this initiative and believes it is particularly relevant to our local situation, and I think it's significant that this community relations week is sponsored by the Community

Relations Council and has been very much presented as part of Northern Ireland's effort for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Intercultural dialogue is about moving beyond mere tolerance of difference towards a transformed society where cultures can exchange and interact constructively, and with mutual respect. We believe that the functioning of the executive can be seen as an example in itself of what can be achieved through intercultural dialogue, but the shared and better future, that Ministers are committed to building here for all people, must be founded on intercultural dialogue at every level of society so a range of events, such as today's, are taking place this year to highlight the need for and benefits of intercultural dialogue. My division of OFMDFM is examining possibilities for further events and we hope to be able to host a significant centrepiece event of the theme towards the end of the year. It would showcase what we have achieved, in particular how local communities are transforming, but also making the link back to resolving former conflicts here through dialogue. It is a reality that intercultural interaction is already a common daily feature of European life according to a recent euro "barometer of public opinion survey", two thirds of Europeans interact with at least one person of a different religious, ethnic or national background everyday. And I'm sure



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people in this room do a lot more than that. Many of you are very much on the front line in helping people, those you deal with, daily to understand each other and in developing practical integration the devolved administration here is very keen to listen to your experience. We often rely on you to convey to us what is that new members of our society want and need, and what is needed to make sure there is a successful integration and I suppose that everyone lives peacefully and in the spirit of, I suppose, fellow citizenship and humanity here, so please continue fulfilling this crucial role, communication's role. What you do is very important and we value it highly, as Gandhi said "the true test of a society is how it treats its minorities". So in closing, I'd just like to reiterate the Executives commitment to creating a peaceful prosperous fair and healthy society for all people, many of you are on the migrant worker's forum and the racial equality forum and I hope that, in this year of Intercultural Dialogue, we can keep taking opportunities such as those forums present, to share our experiences. Thanks very much, I've certainly found today very informative and stimulating and I hope the rest of you have as well. I look forward to hearing about, not just the group I took part in today previously and that will be the end of the day. Thanks very much.



## Workshops Information

### Workshop 1:

#### **The Anti-Racism Officer: a model for local government and public services?**

Chair: Justyna McCabe, Newry and Mourne District Council

Inputs: Ligia Parizzi, Anti Racism Officer, Dungannon Council

Alfred Abolarin, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Reporter: Leish Cox, Good Relations Officer, Belfast City Council

### Workshop 2:

#### **What should the Northern Ireland Assembly do about racism?**

Chair: Charo Lanao, Rural Communities Network

Inputs: Aidan McGarry, University of Ulster

Benedicta Attah, Independent Practitioner

Reporter: Agnieszka Martynowicz, Institute of Conflict Research



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### **Workshop 3:** **Racism and Travellers**

Chair: Philip Clarke, Dungannon  
South Tyrone Borough Council

Input: Seamus Donnelly, An Tearmann  
Coalisland Traveller Support  
Group

Reporter: Joe Lenaghan, NCCRI

### **Workshop 4:** **Racism in the Workplace**

Chair: Kasia Garbal, Irish Congress of  
Trade Unions

Inputs: Mel Corry, Trademark  
Raluca Anutuca, Migrant Rights  
Centre Ireland

Reporter: Tayra McKee, Unite – the  
Union



***\*Please note that the outcome of the workshops and further information can be found into the Conference DVD. If you will not find a DVD enclosed within this publication, please contact Ligia Parizzi – Anti-Racism Officer at [ligia.parizzi@dungannon.gov.uk](mailto:ligia.parizzi@dungannon.gov.uk) or call 028 87728603 and request a copy to be sent to you by post.***



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## Delegates List

Abed Alhamis Natur	Committee of the Administration of Justice (CAJ)
Agnieszka Martynowicz	Institute for Conflict and Research
Aidan McGarry	University of Ulster
Aiden McCullagh	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Alex Maskey	MLA
Alexandra De La Torre	MCRC
Alfred Abolarin	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Alison Annett	Northern Ireland & Social Care Trust
Anca Adams	MCRC
Ann Godfrey	SHSSB
Ann O'niell	Tar Isteach North
Annie McGuigan	Whiterock Childrens Centre
AnnMarie McStocker	RCN
Arfawn Yasin	Organisation Advice N.I
Arun Kundnani	Institute of Race Relations
Atinuke Achioya	NCCRI
Benedicta Attoh	Independent Practitioner
Bernadette McAliskey	S.T.E.P. (South Tyrone Empowerment Programme)
Bernie O'Rourke	Monaghan County Council

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Bill Rolston	University of Ulster
Bill Sinnerton	Hon. Consul for Lithuania in N.I
Brenda Hughes	Gold Community Partnership
Bronagh Mcgahen	University of Ulster (PhD Student)
Caroline Cullen	Southern Area & Social Services Board
Catherine Mallon	Newry City Council
Catrina Connors	An Munia Tober
Charo Lanao	Rural Community Network
Ciaran Eastwood	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Claire Tracey	South West College, Dungannon Campus
Cllr. Barry Monteith	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Cllr. Michelle O'Neil	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Cllr. Pat Daly	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Colin Jack	OFMDFM
Colm Walsh	Project Manager, Working in a divided Society
Damian Mckevitt	Department of the environment, Local Government policy
Damien Doherty	South Tyrone Area Partnership Ltd
Daniel Holder	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
David Griffin	Alliance Party
Deirdre McKillen	Southern Health and Social Care Trust



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Denise Wright	South Belfast Roundtable
Dolores Kelly	MLA
Doreen Lappin	Southern Regional College
Dr. Robbie McVeigh	Independent Researcher
Eddie Kerr	SEEDS
Eimear Rushe	South West College
Emily Quinn	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Fenella McGee	SWC
Fiona Dunning	PhD research student University of Ulster
Fiona Magee	Organisation Advice N.I
Frank Fleming	Equality commission
Gerry McDonald	Dungannon Sure Start.
Graeme Belshaw	Department of Employment and Learning
Henri Mohammed	Belfast City Council
Hlaina Zerro-Porter	Independent
Iain Frazer	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Ilona Bliavaite	Interpreter
Jane Brodison	PSNI Magherafelt
Janice Venard	Integrated College Dungannon -Head of RE
Jim Deery	Ashton Community Trust

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Joe Lenaghan	NCCRI
John Kilpatrick	St. John's Primary School Moy
John McCartan	NIHE
John McGoran	Department of Education
John McGuinness	Department of Employment and learning
Justyna McCabe	Newry and Mourne Council
Kasia Garbal	ICTU
Kathy Donnelly	Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Katy Radford	Institute for Conflict Research
Keith Preston	Dungannon Presbyterian Church
Ken Montgomery	South West College
Kevin Glackin	Irish Trade Union Trust / SIPTU
Kieran Shields	SELB
Kirsten Mullen	Belfast District Policing Partnership
Laura McAlesse	Dept. of Environment
Laura Salamanca	Independent Human Resources Consultant
Leish Cox	Belfast City Council
Lesley Hamilton	Southern Regional College
Lhintz Oliden	Whiterock Childrens Centre
Ligia Parizzi	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council



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Liliya Ilieva	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Linda McAllister	North Down Bourugh Council
Lisa Moore	Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
Loredana Salis	Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages
Luanne Martin	Multi – Cultural Resource Centre NI
Lucille Lennon	Armagh & Dungannon Health Action Zone
Lynda Gordon	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Lynne McElmurry	S.H.S.C.T
Maeves Rolston	Mother's Union
Maggie Bryson	Cookstown District Council
Marcela Kyptova	Interpreter
Margaret McNulty	Embraceni
Maria Noble	
Marian Cully	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Marie Austin	Southern Area Health and Social Care Trust
Marie Gavin	SELB
Mark Donhahue	An Munia Tober
Martina Marshall	Health Visiting Team
Mary Hampsey	St Patrick's Primary School
Mel Corry	Trademark

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Natalya Irvine	Interpreter
Nathalie Donnelly	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Nazia Latif	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Nelson McCausland	MLA
Nicola Bowerman	Quarker House Belfast
Ola Sobieray	CWSAN Migrant Workers Project
Olive Hobson	Quarker House Belfast
Oliver Morgan	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Orla Hughes	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Pamela Cooper	SEELB Library Services
Pamela Wilson	PSNI Dungannon / Cookstown
Patricia Murray	Staff Commission For Education & Library Boards
Patricia McCann	Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Patsy Slater	EGSA
Paul Morgan	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Paul O'Neill	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Paul O'Neill	Greater New Lodge
Peter McKee	Organisation Dara Training Consultancy
Philip Clarke	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Priscilla McKnight	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre



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Rev Kenneth Hall	Church Of Ireland
Richard Watson	UUP
Robert Sye	Department of Education
Roisin O'Hagan	INWRE
Ronald Vellem	NICRAS
Ruth Northey	Department of Education
Seamus Donnelly	An Tearmann
Sean Gallagher	WH & SCT
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Shauna Page	University of Ulster
Sinead Mulhern	Childrens Law Centre
Siobhan Oittare	Health Visiting
Sonya McAnulla	Omagh District Council
Sonya Slevin	Armagh & Dungannon Health Section
Stephen McCloskey	Centre for Global Education
Student	Integrated College Dungannon
Student	South West College
Student	South West College
Student	South West College
Student	South West College

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Student	South West College
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Taucher McDonald	Louth County Council
Teresa Hewitt	NIPS
Teresa Moley	Equality Commission for N.I
Vera Winters	Health Visiting C Floor, South Tyrone Hospital
Victoria Goodfellow	HET and Policy Branch
Yuko Chiba	University of Ulster
Raluca Anutuca	MRCI
Grainne Boyle	Cavan County Council



## Evaluations

***“One of the most interesting conferences I have been at in a long time”***

***“Thank you so much to everyone who must have put huge efforts into making today such a success”***

***“A word of thanks for the conference, it was excellent and I enjoyed all keynote speakers throughout the whole day”***

***“Congratulations on the conference, it was a very interesting and informative day”***

***“May I congratulate you on your splendid organisation on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. It was a most worthwhile event and I found it very helpful”***

***“Well done. The event was a huge success”***

***“I would now like to see commitment from politicians taking seriously all these racism issues to their parties so it would help tackling racism in Northern Ireland”***



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## Notes