

## **Dunadry Hotel, Tuesday 8 September 03**

### **Antrim Consultation**

Over 60 people attended the seminar, but disappointment was expressed that no church leaders or ministers were present.

There were three groups and this is a report from Group 3

Four questions were addressed:

1. What is your Vision
2. What actions are needed to get us there
3. Who should implement any policy
4. How would you know if the policy was working (evaluation)

#### **1. Vision**

The group felt that the main ingredient for peace was the development of trust between everyone.

This would require developing individual awareness of diversity and creating good channels of communication to develop understanding.

The vision would thus be:

**A society which has developed good communication and trust, and through this has come to an understanding of diversity and celebration of difference.**

#### **2. What actions are needed to develop this vision:**

- Acknowledge that closure is necessary for all of us, as we have all been affected by conflict in different ways. The ways in which we reach closure will also be different and this needs to be given serious attention.
- Make youth a priority group for future peace building
- There needs to be a guarantee of community safety through more adequate policing which is accountable to the local community
- There needs to be a Community/Youth club in every estate as local services are the only way to reach inclusion of everyone
- These facilities need fully trained staff and long term resourcing
- Taster sessions of all activities must be provided so as to give young people the chance to make informed choices

- Flags and emblems must be removed from all areas
- Already existing mixed areas must be protected
- New housing areas must be developed as mixed areas with a choice of integrated schools at every one
- Politicians must show political leadership and be assisted to do so
- De segregate housing and infrastructure through taking a positive decision to close down bad areas and build new integrated areas which will be protected and developed
- Plan for physical integration of all future facilities
- Promote integrated education for all
- Make politicians accountable
- Consider the development of some sort of Truth Commission

### **3. Who should deliver?**

- Community organisations should be acknowledged for the work they have done and should be funded adequately on a long term basis to continue and develop their peace building and anti sectarian work
- Government, politicians and statutory agencies have not contributed half as much to the effort
- Therefore the new agency should be independent but accountable and should be community led
- It should be based on the lived experience of those people it is answerable to, so it must be closely in touch with grass roots
- Objectives should be set and there should be strict monitoring of outcomes
- Councils should fund locally based CR work. Antrim Council is not doing enough at the present time
- Any new policy must be accompanied by resources

*Long term funding is required for a long term solution*

### **4. How would you know policy was working?**

- There would be an all round better atmosphere
- A decrease in anti social behaviour
- More mixed housing
- More integrated schools
- A booming economy
- More jobs
- Better mental health

- People would be as friendly as they were before the Troubles
- There would be increased community safety
- There would be good political leadership
- There would be no more need for discussions like tonight's!