

A Shared Future Consultation: BITC, at 12 noon in The Junction, Derry on Thursday 3rd July. Report

Participants:

Declan McClafferty – Adria Limited

Eamon Crossan – First Trust Bank

Brian McGrath – Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners

Stanley Page – McCormick Properties Ltd Tracy Hegarty

Women into Enterprise

Facilitator: Roz Goldie

Recorder: Janine McCann

The group discussion began 35 minutes late, and was influenced by the first two lengthy presentations, neither of which engaged the audience. A renowned local businesswoman had too little time to address the 'constituency' (Businessmen and women) about the business case for Good Relations.

The introduction and Good Relations talks were so directive that discussion seemed to be an attempt to remember the 'answers' – much like the items on a game show conveyor belt. I had to tell the group on two occasions that I was there to find out what they thought rather than a retake on the presentations.

In the time left for discussion some headway was made. Disappointing as the results were comments made informally afterwards would suggest that there is an understanding of the business case for promoting Good Relations – and a few even understood that Good Relations goes beyond an SDLP perspective on sectarianism.

What is your vision for NI in 25 years?

- No intimidation
- Non-sectarian society
- Challenged sectarian politicians
- A mixed society where diversity is positively accepted and celebrated
- Prosperous
 - Inward/indigenous investment
 - Investment and jobs
 - A self sustaining economy
 - Beyond the dependency culture
- Civic pride
- Friendly to outsiders
- Forward looking
- Responsible at an individual level
- Pensions for all – a notional social justice
- Get rid of politicians – Vs – “yet we vote for them.”

What do we need to do to get there?

- Educate everybody about the importance and working of politics (voting, politicians etc)
- Make politicians accountable
- Have a decent standard of living
- Economic realism
 - Be competitive – with other regions and countries
 - Address racketeering by "the mob"
- Realistic audit of what works/ doesn't (not specific about Good Relations)
- Respect for "otherness" for the diversity of people and property
 - Identify the benefits of respect – which is the opposite of insecurity
 - Build confidence
- Responsibility
 - Personal responsibility for actions needs to increase
 - Work ethic
- Ownership and personal pride
- Use successful businessmen/women as role models (like USA – though this last was much debated)
- Look forward, not over one's shoulder like a victim
- Downsize public sector

Who should deliver it?

- Business/the Private Sector
- Those creating a Social Economy
- Everyone – with civic ownership
- A More accountable local government
- Risk takers for enterprise
- The process must have '**drivers**'

It should be noted that there was fairly consistent comment, though not a consensus that government – local and central were not achieving much and were open to criticism.

Q1 Do you agree that the overall aim for policy must be for a more shared and pluralist society?

- Yes the group was unanimous on this.
- However there must be choice, and
- There must be incentives (example of post War Liverpool Housing policy that tackled sectarianism and successfully shared public housing areas)
- Young people must be involved in the decisions and policies that affect them

Q2 What do you think should be the main policy aims and outcomes which should drive the new approach to promoting good relations in society?

This question (understandably in the context of the day) made no apparent relevant sense to the group. Discussion passed on to Q3.

Q3 What do you think ought to be the principles upon which a new approach to promoting good relations in NI should be based?

Discussion began on the principles thought to be characteristic of any good social relationship, and proceeded to examine Good Relations (old fashioned CR).

- Respect
- Equal treatment – mutual
- Tolerance and acceptance
- Openness to learning others' cultures
- Trust (it was noted by a participant that this was the first time the word had been used – at around 1.55pm!)
- Leadership (political, business and churches)
- Challenge divisive activities/projects (UVF Museum and Nationalist equivalents funded by CR/public monies)
- Recognised common experiences (with each other as well as our differences)
- Pride in our identity (as NI people)

Q4 What action needs to be taken at local government and community level to underpin the development of good relations between and within communities?

- Get rid of local Councils
- More outgoing Councils
- More autonomous Councils

Q5 What functions do you think should be carried out at regional level? Should these functions be delivered within Government or by an independent body, such as the CRC or a new statutory authority?

- A NI body to address bad relations which:
 - Is independent (presumably of Government)
 - Involves the people
 - Involves young people
 - Is responsible to the people of NI

Q6 What action do you think Government Departments should take to improve relations?

- Decentralise and give jobs elsewhere in NI
- Be honest and don't pander to politicians

Q7 How do you think that a new strategy for improving relations ought to be monitored?

- NI being less "colour coded" (territory marked) and thus less intimidating
- Flag-free Government
- Jobs (as 'diversion' from sectarian/anti-social behaviour)
- Fewer complaints (to police, ECNI etc)
- Multicultural tourist attractions (like Mardi Gras)