



MEASURING UP?

A challenge to government and the voluntary and community sector to better reflect the society in which we live.

A report by Droichead, an initiative within Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin.
Compiled by Rubicon Consulting

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Introduction

Background

Droichead is a community based project that originated in 2012 when Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin was the lead partner in delivering Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013. The strategic objective adopted by the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Executive Committee in May 2102 was to make the 2013 Fleadh “inclusive of the entire community in the city”. This was achieved successfully and sparked a relationship with the Londonderry Bands Forum (LBF) that grew into a formal working relationship with the North West Cultural Partnership that includes the LBF. Despite perceived differences, these groups were publicly seen to celebrate their cultural identity during the 2013 Fleadh in Derry and at subsequent events and celebrations.

Droichead has proved its commitment to diversity, inclusion and promoting a sense of belonging in the city and district over many years.

Droichead continues to deliver programmes that deepen our understanding of cultural traditions and promote good relations, continually attempting to normalise relationships between disparate groups. In so doing, it has encountered many difficulties with the monitoring methods employed by statutory organisations and funders. By using an open ended question on Droichead data capture forms with regard to the question of Cultural Identity, Droichead discovered that those with whom it engages, including those perceived to be from a single identity group, when given the option, may define themselves in ways that do not fit the traditional cultural boxes that are used by statutory organisations to describe the community make up of society in which we live.

Droichead chose to address these monitoring issues at statutory level by exploring the current monitoring practices used in the good relations sector and the impact on grass roots delivery right through to policy influence.

This project is funded by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

Aims of the Project

The Droichead monitoring and evaluation project aims to evaluate the current monitoring practices in Northern Ireland relating to good relations to:

- Identify the positive and negative aspects;
- Establish recommendations and possible alternatives that could improve the current system, and;
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation processes are, as far as a project like this can, fit for purpose, and;
- Make recommendations for future consideration and exploration.

Process

This report into good relations monitoring and evaluation is intended to stimulate discussion within funders, government and the voluntary and community sector. The process for producing the report therefore was intended to include:

- The establishment of a relevant steering group;
- Discussion with key stakeholders;
- Survey of those who work with good relations indicators;
- Agreement on a final report with recommendations;
- An event in Spring 2020 including discussion on the findings and recommendations from the report.

However, at the start of the project it became clear that The Executive Office (TEO) was producing a revamped good relations monitoring and evaluation indicator template. As a result, in addition, the steering group met twice to consider their response to the TEO template and submitted a six page response.

In addition, the response to the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent government plans for isolation delayed the publication of the report and planned event in early 2020.

Steering Group

Droichead established a steering group to help develop thinking and provide feedback during the project. The steering group included individuals that work in funding organisations, local authorities, the voluntary and community sector, and academia. Membership of the steering group is included as an appendix.

During the project the steering group met three times in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

The steering group:

- Helped develop the survey that was issued to funding organisations, good relations officers and the community sector;
- Agreed a response to The Executive Office initial thinking on a review of good relations indicators for 2020-2021;
- Inputted to the final report.

Droichead are seeking to extend the remit of the steering group beyond the Community Relations Council-funded research to provide ongoing advice to The Executive Office as their monitoring and evaluation framework rolls out.

Why Monitor?

There are several main purposes for collecting monitoring information including to:

1. Ensure that public money is being spent working to meet policy objectives;
2. Ensure the categories of people that the funder and government policy is targeting are being included;
3. Identify ways in which promotion, delivery or outcomes can be improved for any of the participants, groupings or sub-groups;
4. Measure change over time;
5. Influence policy and practice going forward.

Ultimately, monitoring should help policy makers and projects to better deliver activities and better align project outcomes and delivery to the overall policy and aims of government or/and funders.

Monitoring and evaluation do not facilitate attitudinal change – that is for those delivering activities and projects. Monitoring provides a snapshot which can be used then and there or be part of a wider analysis of trends over a long period of time.

The report and its recommendations keep these reasons for monitoring and evaluating as important backdrops to the conclusions and recommendations. Droichead and the steering group understand and acknowledge why monitoring needs to happen.

The recommendations included in this report are intended to support better outcomes, more effective methods of information collection, and processes where the information gathered can better impact projects and influence policy.

Policy Context

The Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy was agreed in 2013 by local political parties and has been the overarching good relations and reconciliation strategy for government since then.

It includes provision for young peoples' summer camps and the removal of interface barriers by 2023, amongst many other things.

The vision of the T:BUC strategy is to seek a united community based on equality of opportunity with a desire for good relations and reconciliation. It believes this is strengthened by diversity, when cultural expression is celebrated and where people can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

The four themes of T:BUC are:

- Our children and young people;
- Our shared community;
- Our safe community, and;
- Our cultural expression.

To date, through delivery with Councils and other strategic partners T:BUC by 2019 has throughout Northern Ireland facilitated the delivery of:

- 442 camps involving 16,000 young people;
- 35 capital projects;
- Continued development of five shared education campuses;
- 2,200 young people involved in good relations through sport and creative contact.

The Urban Villages initiative is also a key aspect of the T:BUC strategy. Each Urban Village seeks to facilitate capital investment and community-led projects as well as schools of sanctuary accreditation.¹

Of five Urban Villages, four are in Belfast, in the north, south, east and west, and one is in Derry/Londonderry. They are in:

- Bogside, Fountain, Bishop Street, Derry/Londonderry;
- Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan (North Belfast);
- Colin (West Belfast);
- East Side (East Belfast);
- Sandy Row Donegall Pass and the Markets areas (South Belfast).

¹ The Executive Office, T:BUC Annual Update November 2019, pp4-5

There are nine shared housing areas developed to date but several more are due for completion. Recently TEO announced the initial 487 units would be supplemented over the next ten years by approximately 1,400 more.

The T:BUC strategy also includes a commitment to remove all interface barriers or “peace walls” by 2023. Peace Walls are currently located in Belfast, Craigavon and Derry/Londonderry.

Therefore, T:BUC covers a wide range of policy priorities, out of which various departments and funding bodies draw a framework for their priorities and monitoring and evaluation models.

The Executive Office

The Executive Office (TEO) is one of those departments and has principal responsibility for T:BUC. It works within the framework of T:BUC and co-ordinate a significant range of funding and support interventions, beyond the remit of this report and the Droichead steering group.

Within the framework of T:BUC, the department delivers a range of key indicators and outcomes including:

Theme	Outcome	Indicator
Our children and young people	Improved attitudes between young people from different backgrounds	% who think that relations between Protestants (P) and Catholics (C) are better than they were five years ago
	Young people engaged in bringing the community together	% who think that relations between Protestants (P) and Catholics (C) will be better in five years’ time
		% who feel favourable towards people from: Catholic (C) communities, Protestant (P) communities, Minority Ethnic (ME) communities
		% of young people who regularly socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community

Theme	Outcome	Indicator
		<p>% of young people who have: shared sports facilities or equipment, shared classes, done projects with young people from a different religious background</p>
<p>Our shared community</p>	<p>Increased use of shared space and services</p> <p>Shared space is accessible to all</p>	<p>% who think P and C tend to go to different shops or use different GPs and other services</p> <p>% who think leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are shared and open to Protestants and Catholics</p> <p>% of those with children at school who think their child's school is somewhere they can be open about their cultural identity</p> <p>% of those with children whose school has been involved in shared education with another school</p> <p>% who see the area they live in as P, C or mixed</p> <p>% who see their neighbourhood as somewhere they can be open about their cultural identity</p> <p>% who would prefer mixed religion neighbourhoods, workplaces and schools</p>

Theme	Outcome	Indicator
		% of first preference applications to post-primary integrated schools that do not result in admissions
Our safe community	<p>Reduction in the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation</p> <p>A community where places and spaces are safe for all</p>	<p>No. of hate crimes</p> <p>% annoyed by republican or loyalist murals</p> <p>% who see town centres as safe and welcoming for people of all walks of life</p> <p>% who feel safe going to events in: a GAA club, Orange Hall, Protestant or Catholic secondary school</p> <p>% who would like to see peace walls come down now or in the near future.</p>
Our cultural expression	<p>Increased sense of community belonging</p> <p>Cultural diversity is celebrated</p>	<p>% with a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood or to NI</p> <p>% who feel they have an influence on decisions made in their neighbourhood or NI</p> <p>% who think the culture and traditions of C communities, P communities, ME communities, add to the richness and diversity of NI</p> <p>% who feel their own culturally identity is respected by society</p>

T:BUC and TEO Arms-Length Body

The Community Relations Council (CRC) is the arms-length body of The Executive Office.

The aim of the Community Relations Council (CRC) is to promote a peaceful and shared society based on reconciliation and mutual trust.

The Community Relations Council was established in 1990 to lead and support change towards reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust. The Community Relations Council is a catalyst for good inter-community and inter-cultural community relations work in the region.

CRC is funded by The Executive Office and the organisation assists in the implementation of the Executives Good Relations Strategy – Together: Building a United Community.

The Community Relations Council works to identify and develop effective approaches to peace-building and reconciliation in partnership with local people and organisations, and with central and local government.

Amongst other organisations the Community Relations Council – funding this monitoring and evaluation process – has adopted the T:BUC themes, indicators and outcomes with some additions and nuances that benefit the organisations that are core-funded.

For example, CRC includes faith-supported work as a core theme which mentions relationship-building between churches; or addressing the legacy of the past which looks at learning from the past; and, separately, (Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist) PUL and (Catholic, Nationalist, Republican) CNR preparatory work to encourage engagement work leading to community relations work; and work with statutory bodies.

PEACE IV

The Peace programme has supported peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties since 1995. The Peace programme has ensured it is aligned to some of the Northern Ireland Life and Times indicators to help with consistency. It also includes youth as a priority and includes cross-border allocations. Peace Plus is likely to merge Interreg and the Peace Programme with an even stronger cross border element.

The €270m PEACE IV Programme is the fourth unique iteration of the Peace Programme. The PEACE Programme was initially created in 1995 as a direct result of the EU's desire to make a positive response to the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994. Whilst significant progress has been made since then, there remains a need to improve

cross-community relations and where possible further integrate divided communities. The new programming period for 2014-2020 provides opportunity for continued EU assistance to help address the peace and reconciliation needs of the region.

In total 85% of the Programme, representing €229m is provided through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The remaining €41m, representing 15%, is match-funded by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The eligible area for the PEACE IV Programme for 2014-2020 is Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland (including Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo).

The content of the new PEACE IV Programme has been agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and the European Commission. It has four core objectives where it will make real and lasting change in terms of **Shared Education** initiatives, support for marginalised **Children and Young People**, the provision of new **Shared Spaces and Services**, and projects that will **Build Positive Relations** with people from different communities and backgrounds.

The themes of the Peace programme therefore clearly match the themes of the T:BUC strategy.

The outcomes and indicators for the Peace programme include:

Objective	Results Indicator	Output Indicator
Shared education – direct, sustained, curriculum-based contact between pupils and teachers from all backgrounds through collaboration between schools from different sectors to promote good relations and enhance children’s skills and attitudes to contribute to a cohesive society	% schools involved in shared education with another school	No. of schools involved in shared education No. of trained teachers with the capacity to facilitate shared education No. of participants in shared education classrooms
Children and Young People – enhancing the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive	% 16 year olds who socialise or play sport with people from a different religious background % 16 year olds who think relations between Protestants and Catholics	No. of participants aged 0-24 completing approved programmes that develop soft skills and respect for diversity No. of young people (aged 14-24) who are most

Objective	Results Indicator	Output Indicator
contribution to building a cohesive society	are better now than five years ago % 16 year olds who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years' time	marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes that develop soft skills and respect for diversity
Shared Spaces and Services – creation of a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services	% people defining their neighbourhood as neutral % people preferring to live in a mixed religion environment % people preferring to live in a neighbourhood with people only of their own religion	Capital development to create new shared spaces Local initiatives that facilitate the sustained usage on a shared basis of public facilities
Building Positive Relations – promotion of positive relations characterised by respect, and where cultural diversity is celebrated and where people can live, learn and socialise together free from prejudice, hate and intolerance	% people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago % people think that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years % people who know quite a bit about the culture of some minority ethnic communities	Local action plans that result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between people from different communities Regional level projects that result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between people from different communities

The report concentrates on three providers of good relations funding, partly to provide focus to a topic that has wider resonance, because they have all been engaged with the project, and because they all operate within the context of one over-arching government policy. These are:

- The Executive Office with a focus on central good relations and minority ethnic development fund, but also with other funding streams;

- The Community Relations Council, the arms-length body of the TEO, providing core funding, small grant funding and administering the North Belfast special intervention fund;
- The PEACE IV programme.

All three bodies work within the framework of the T:BUC strategy. As indicated issues that are highly relevant to T:BUC and highlighted above include:

- The importance of developing positive relations;
- Inclusion of all communities including those perceived to be from minority community backgrounds and those that are relatively new to Northern Ireland;
- Advancing understanding of, and commitment to, interdependence;
- Building a shared and cohesive society.

Consultation and Survey

A survey, agreed by the steering group, was circulated to good relations practitioners, community organisations, local government and central government. The survey was issued toward the end of February and was completed by mid-March 2020.

A total of 74 project deliverers and funders responded by returning surveys. There was a slight bias toward completion west of the Bann (54% of all respondents), perhaps reflecting the fact that Droichead as promoter of the project is based in Derry/Londonderry and the steering group includes several representatives from the north west; but there was a good spread otherwise across Northern Ireland.

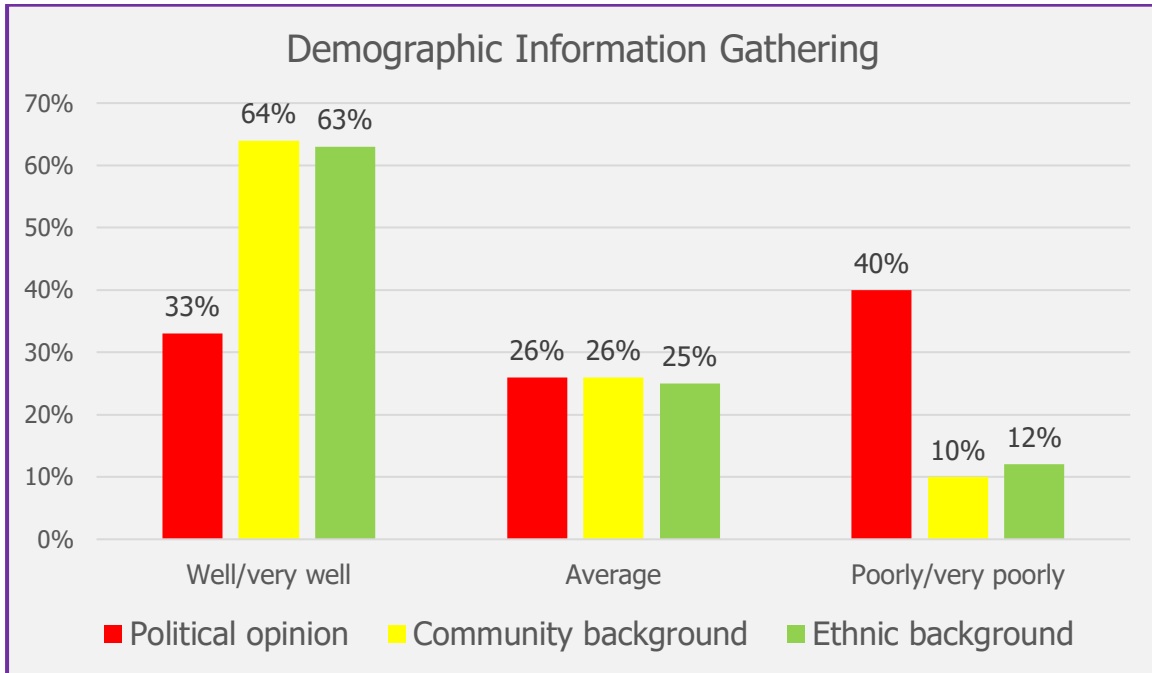
Key findings from the survey are that:

- There is considerable positivity about the work being undertaken by local communities through the T:BUC policy and support for monitoring and evaluation processes;
- However, there is overwhelming demand for good relations indicators, and how they are used for monitoring and evaluation, to be reviewed;
- Monitoring and evaluation are used by a minority of projects and funders to improve and refine projects and project delivery;
- Projects and participants are unclear about the purpose for monitoring and evaluation; and there is insufficient communication to them about why monitoring is taking place and how evaluation can be used to benefit projects and thereby benefit participants;
- A re-think about how to acquire important demographic information would be timely;
- Use of new technologies may assist in the process, accessibility and learning gathered from monitoring and evaluation.

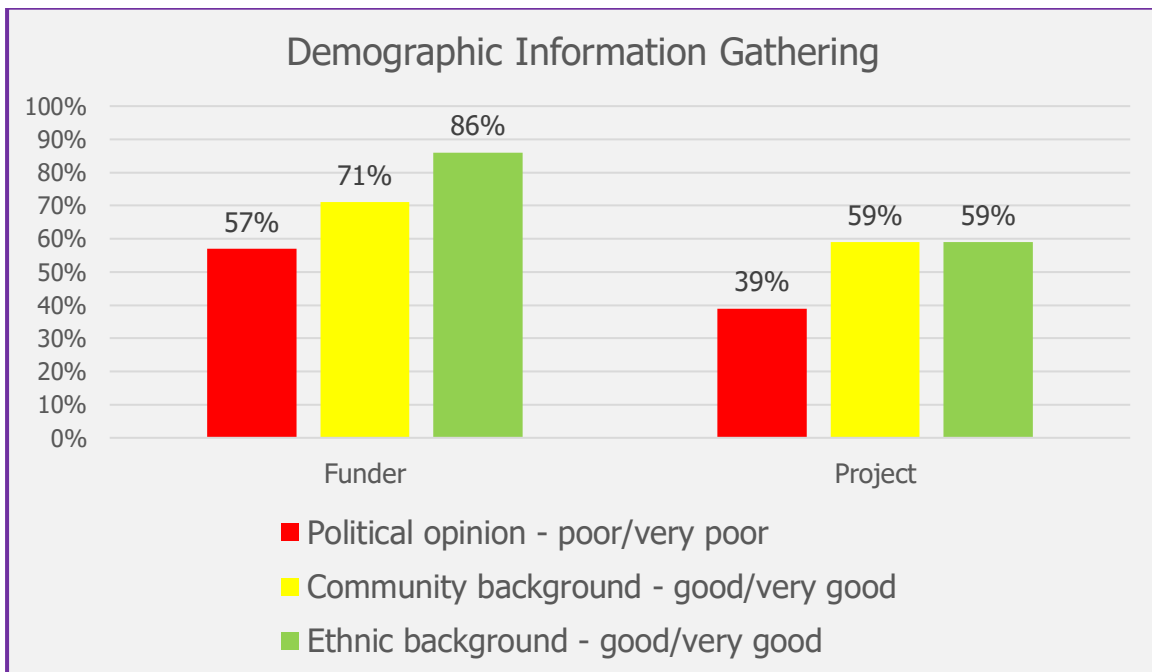
Those responding tended to be over 45 years of age (69%) and had been active in good relations work for more than ten years (67%). The good relations "sector" may wish to further consider this, especially if it indicates anything about accentuated need for succession planning, freshness and new ideas, reflection of new attitudes within a younger generation, reflection of new communities and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

There is a considerable divergence about how well demographic information is captured in monitoring activities, as demonstrated below. The gathering of data on political opinion is regarded much more negatively than other types of demographic information – 40% believe it is done poorly or very poorly.

The gathering of demographic information on community background and ethnic background is considered much more positively – nearly two thirds in each (64% for community background and 63% for ethnic background) considering they were done well or very well.



Those respondents from a funder background are more negative about the gathering of information about political opinion than those respondents from a project background; while funders are more positive about data gathering about community background and ethnic background than those from a project background.



When asked if there were other demographic information that needed collected the most numerous responses by far was "No", mentioned by 26 respondents – six respondents answered just "Yes". Some respondents worried that more focus on section 75 categories would be intrusive.

Other suggestions for additional demographic information gathering, mentioned by three respondents or more, was information on sexual orientation and information on socio-economic background. Two people thought political opinion should be gathered, one in the context of the participant’s age.

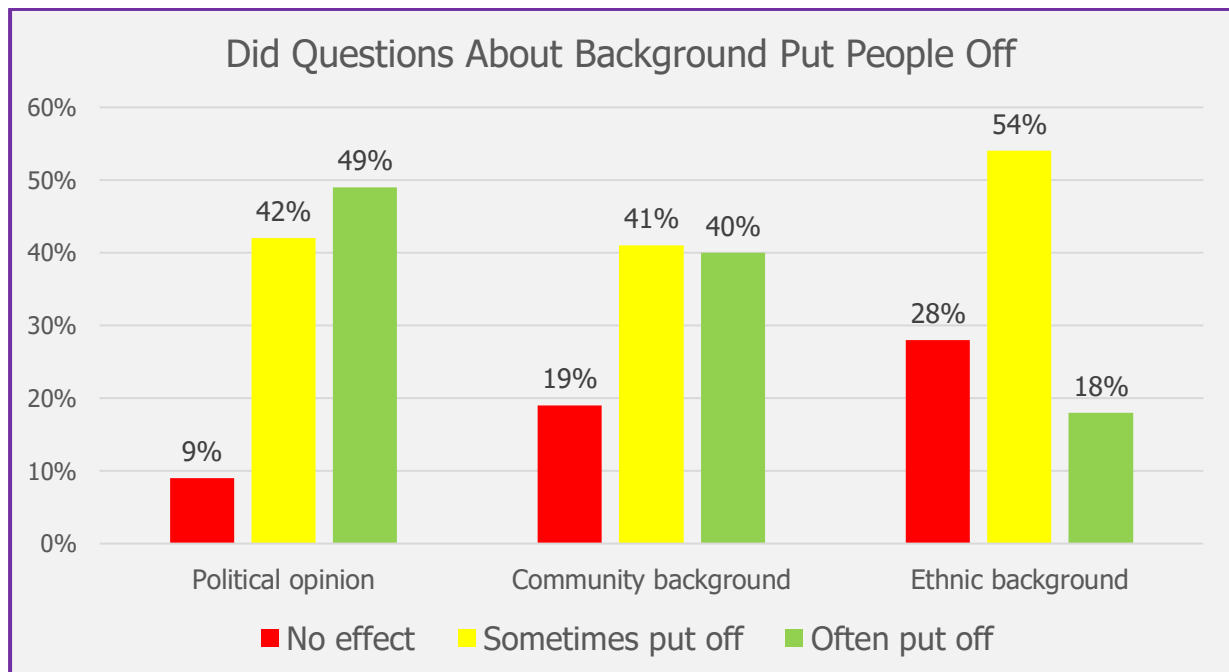
Other thoughts mentioned by just one respondent each were:

- Range of ethnic and racial backgrounds;
- Other religions beyond Christian;
- Newcomer data;
- Qualifications;
- Cultural background.

In addition, suggestions were made by one person each to explore the use of postcodes, to include scales, and allow people to give the information openly without tick-boxes.

While 77% believed the same demographic questions were asked – and just 13% said they received different demographic questions – these demographic questions were thought to put people off more than not put people off.

As the table below shows nearly half of respondents thought people were *often* put off by being asked about their community background and political opinion.

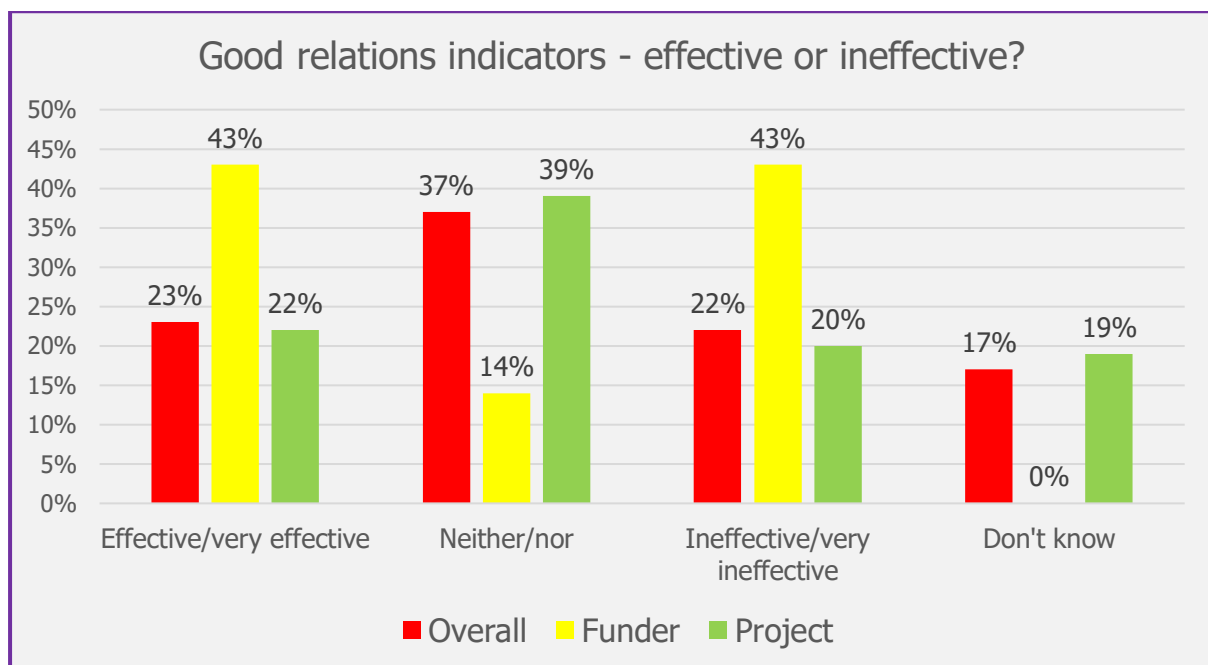


Questions relating to ethnic background had less negative perception about putting people off, but that may also be because of the majority ethnic background of respondents or project participants.

Respondents provided strong views about negative aspects of demographic questions being asked. Those issues mentioned in an open question by two or more respondents included:

- Negative labels/perpetuates division/backward step – mentioned by ten respondents;
- Younger people were more reluctant to answer or did not associate with such questions – four people;
- The purpose for asking the questions needed to be clear – three people;
- Stereotypical profiling or labelling – two people;
- People were just fed up filling in forms – two people.

Respondents were evenly divided about whether the good relations indicators used were effective or ineffective, as the table below highlights.



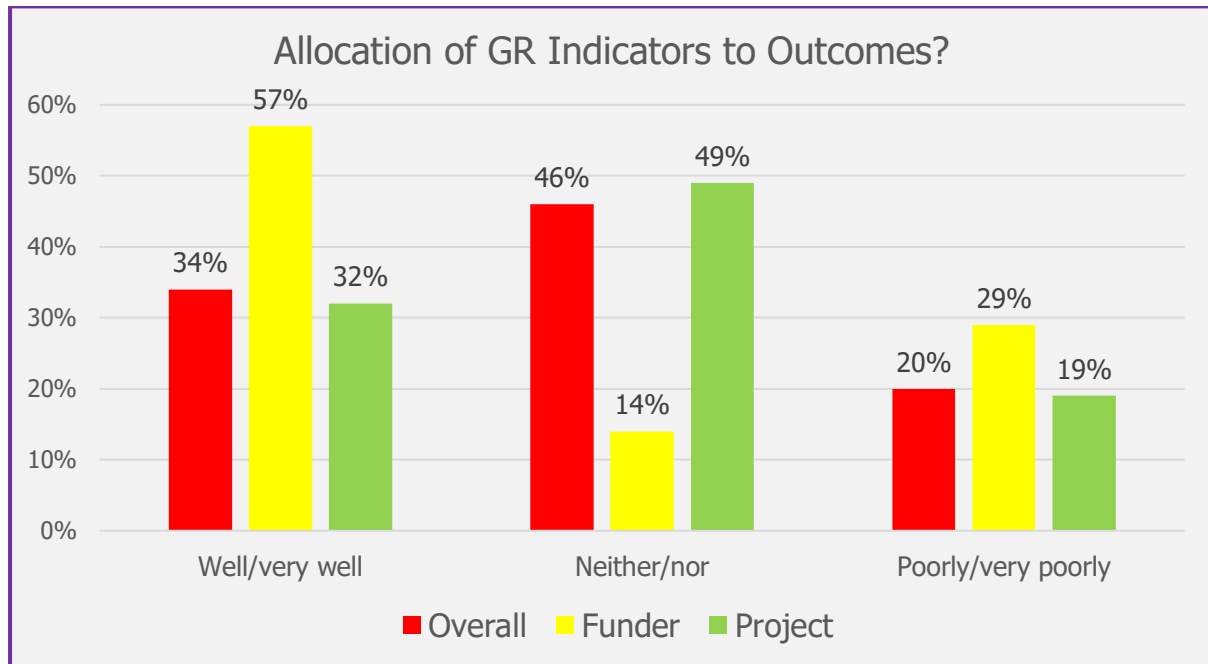
Funders had more definite views about the effectiveness of good relations indicators than project deliverers – but they were as divided about their efficacy. Funders were much more likely than project deliverers to believe the good relations indicators were effective/very effective (43% compared to 22%). However, funders were also more likely to believe they were ineffective/very ineffective (also 43% compared to 20%).

Most people replying were clear about good relations outcomes – 50% said they were very clear and 43% thought that while they were clear the indicators could be clearer, while just 7% said they were not at all clear. This was broadly similar for funder respondents as well as project deliverer respondents.

In addition, responses were more positive than negative about respondent’s ability to allocate good relations indicators to programmes or programme outcomes.

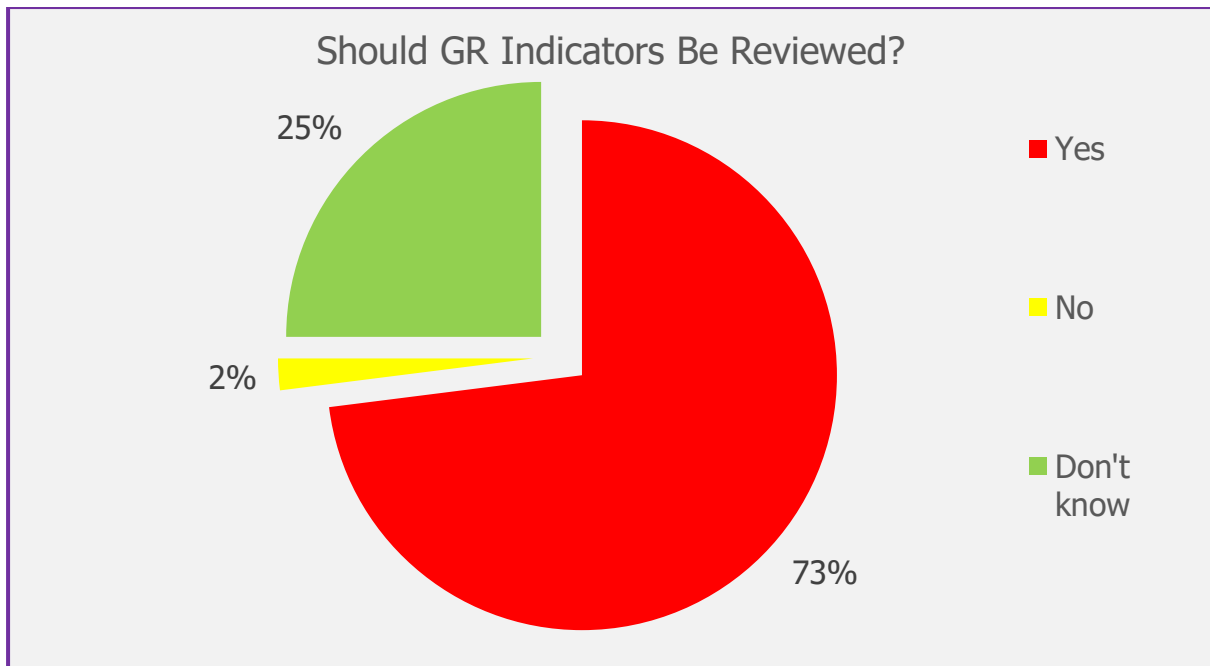
Those responding from a funder perspective were more definite than from a project deliverer – with 57% of funders saying they could be allocated well or very well.

Less than a third, and sometimes less than a fifth, of respondents in any category thought the good relations indicators were only able to be allocated to outcomes poorly or very poorly.



However, most people still believed the good relations indicators should be reviewed. This crossed all respondents by category.

Nearly three quarters (73%) believed they should be reviewed, rising to 97% when excluding those who answered, “don’t know”.

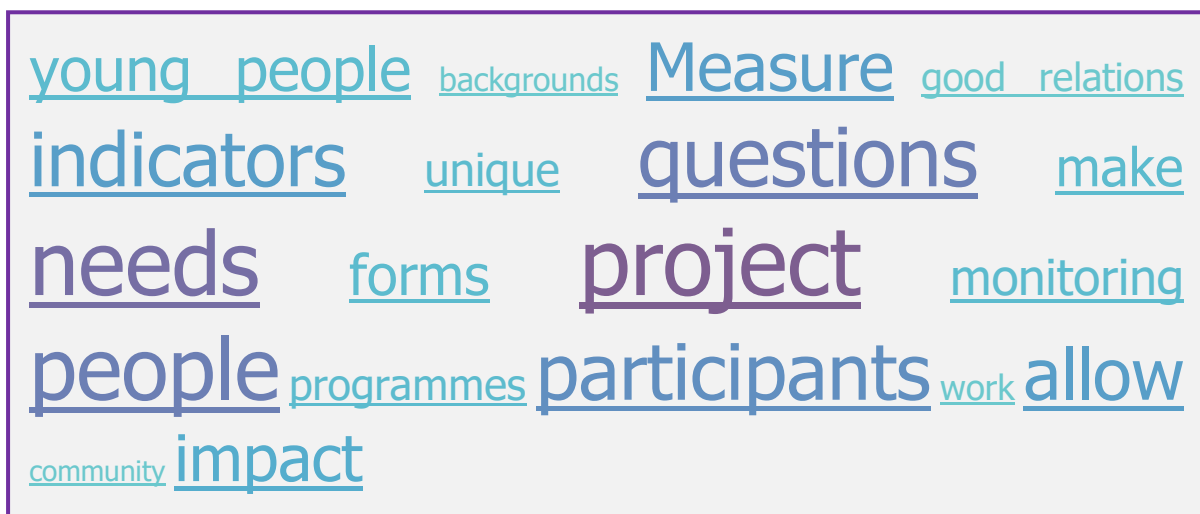


However, monitoring and evaluation is used not just by funders to make judgements on value for money and participant numbers. It should be a useful and important tool to improve all aspects of how a project is managed and delivered.

When asked what improvements or changes they would make respondents suggested:

- Ask questions that are relevant to the project;
- Take out religious determiners;
- Include testimonials or qualitative information.

A word cloud of those responses is provided below highlighting words such as project, indicators, needs, questions, unique, and young people:



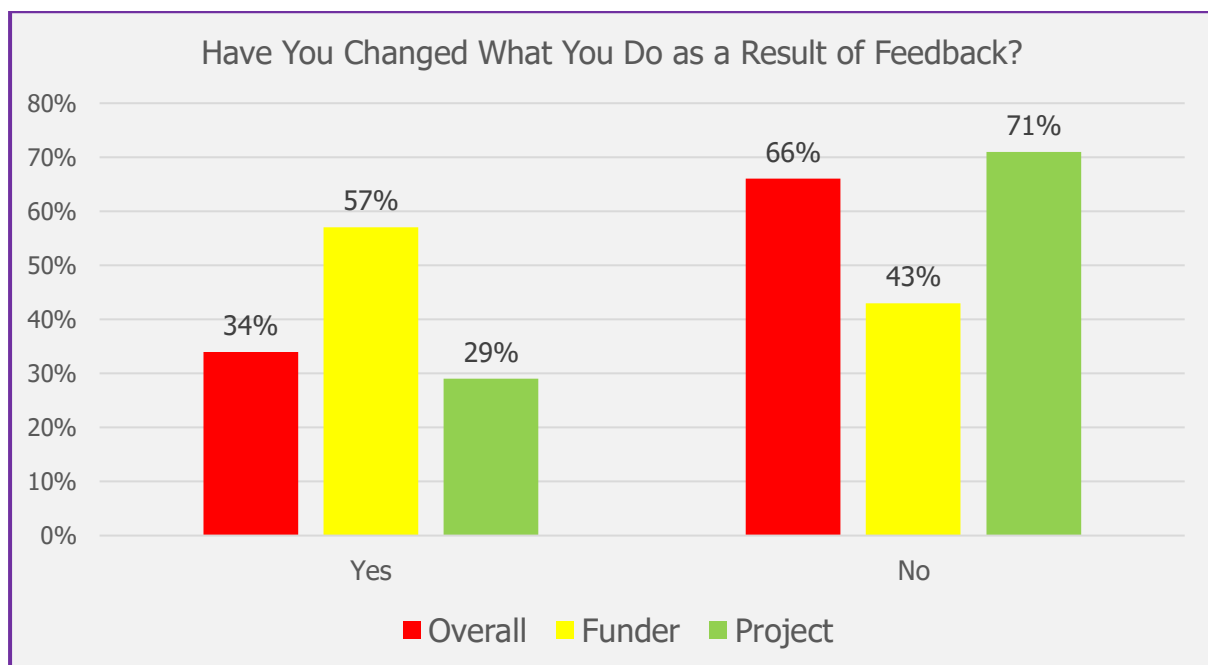
A similar feedback was provided by respondents when asked to identify how good relations outcomes could be measured – these were a focus on the project and qualitative feedback.

In addition, several respondents suggested:

- Sustained long-term engagement with participants, including post-project;
- Development of an App or software that would help.

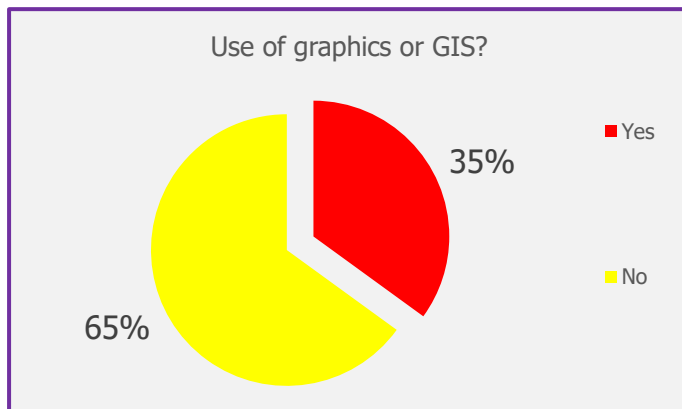
Yet, according to responses received 66% of those replying say they have never changed aspects of a project as a result of feedback about good relations indicators or from the monitoring and evaluation.

As can be seen from the table below this applies to those responding as project deliverers as well as funders.



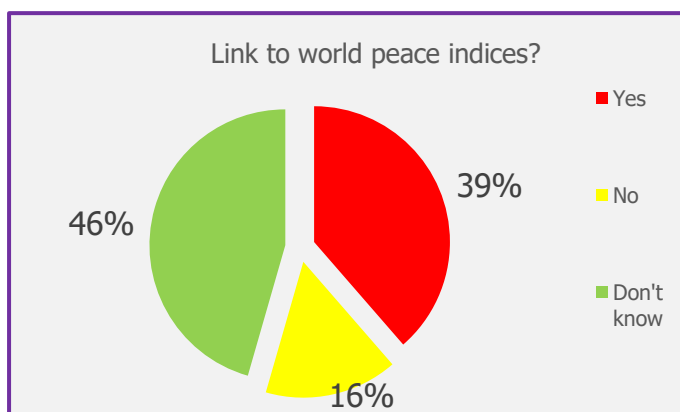
While a majority of funders (57%) do report some change as a result of feedback just 29% of project deliverers report change as a result of feedback.

While most respondents have not made changes to what they do as a result of monitoring and evaluation feedback, most also do not use graphics or GIS, regardless of their background as funder, project deliverer or within the sector.



As the chart shows nearly two thirds (65%) of respondents, both funder and project deliverer, say they do not use GIS or graphics in understanding or sharing the monitoring and evaluation information they receive.

When asked whether the monitoring and evaluation information used in Northern Ireland for good relations should be more closely linked to a world peace index of some sort, many respondents did not know, but of those who did express a view many thought they should.



While nearly half of people were unable to express a view (46%), there was significant support for the concept of developing a more international understanding of the status of good relations and reconciliation measurement in Northern Ireland (39%).

When asked to identify the mostly important aspects of monitoring and evaluation that were positive, respondents identified:

- Evidences and measures change;
- Helps a project focus on attitudes;
- Helps the project focus on key issues;
- Makes managers and participants think about inclusion;
- Develops greater understanding of diversity;
- Helps ensure public money is spent appropriately.

Other feedback included the provision of baselines, identification of priorities, reaching different sections of the community, and promotion of sharing.

A word cloud for the positive aspects is provided below, including those words mentioned most often. It highlights measuring change in people and being able to show that change – measuring, changes, people:



A word cloud within a purple-bordered box. The words are: 'measuring' (blue), 'show' (small, light blue), 'changes' (purple), and 'people' (blue).

When asked to identify the most important aspects of monitoring and evaluation that were negative, respondents identified:

- They are outdated and need to move away from Protestant/Catholic terminology;
- They can be divisive;
- Difficult to measure;
- People do not want to answer the questions;
- Box ticking;
- Not relevant for young people.

A word cloud for the negative aspects is provided below including those words mentioned most often highlighting words such as good relations, relevant and religious – good, relations, relevant, questions:



A word cloud within a purple-bordered box. The words are: 'religious' (blue), 'indicators' (small, light blue), 'questions' (blue), 'work' (small, light blue), 'people' (blue), 'now' (small, light blue), 'good' (purple), 'often' (small, light blue), 'relations' (blue), and 'relevant' (blue).

Interviews were conducted with several key funding organisations and projects as well as several discussions within the steering group to identify issues on a more qualitative basis. Not all the points raised below were agreed by all or achieved consensus. However, where mentioned there was more than one person or organisation making the point.

Projects or Project Deliverers

General points from projects or/and project deliverers were that asking some of the demographic questions could be a barrier to honest participation. Participants often did not like answering questions relating to their background and, indeed, often did not relate to the categories they were asked to choose from. It was suggested that the focus of good relations on the section 75(2) categories (religious/ethnic/political) was becoming outdated.

The changing nature of Northern Ireland society may also not be reflected in the concentration on section 75(2) groupings, or that how the questions were asked did not reflect the greater diversity in the region. Some suggested that the focus of the questions reinforced separation or hindered a sense of belonging especially within those participants who did not regard themselves as being in the traditional Northern Ireland community background spectrum.

Many people thought the main interest of funders was to assure themselves that there was a reasonable spread of people from traditional or minority faith community backgrounds. The suggestion was that the ticking of boxes was a priority to justify proportions of different groupings being worked with or the community being worked with, rather than an effort to make genuine measurement of the success or otherwise of a project; nor provide feedback on how to improve a project.

Many believed the priority should be to ask questions that were relevant to the project rather than try to “shoe-horn” broader T:BUC and/or life and times related questions into a process for assessing the efficacy of projects on the ground.

Many people did not believe funders and those working to acquire statistics from projects understood the nature of projects, the relationship with participants, the fragility of some participants, or the difficulty in getting people to genuinely engage in a monitoring and evaluation process.

Funders

Funding bodies often related the pressures and expectations placed on them by government or other oversight organisations and bodies.

Generally, funders thought the need for acquiring demographic information, on a statistically usable basis, on community and ethnic background, was a fundamental requirement of the use of public money on good relations work. While there may be some awkwardness about asking certain questions, funders thought it not significant but necessary. Some suggested exploring postcodes as a proxy for a question on community background, but all funders believed it was important to still gather that information.

Funders often thought it necessary for them to take advice from government or government advisory bodies (or the level of accountability above them) on the nature of questions and information sought.

However, many funders also identified insufficient feedback and the clumsiness of monitoring and evaluation processes as a drawback; and they expressed openness to conversations about how to make the monitoring and evaluation processes better, more accessible, and more engaging for participants.

Generally, funders believed there was a responsibility on projects funded to help gather the information required to justify adequately the public money that they were benefiting from, though the dialogue between funders and projects was important in identifying how best to gather the information.

Key Issues:

Arising from the interviews, and survey of people from all sectors associated with good relations, key issues included:

- The process of monitoring and evaluation needs reviewed;
- While many believe the monitoring and evaluation process and the questions asked works well and are appropriate, many also believe it is not working well and that questions can be divisive and reinforce divisions; many believed that the reference to religion may be outdated;
- Few respondents wanted to ask more demographic profiling questions – most wanted fewer or simplified processes on demographic profiling;
- Questions should provide more of a focus on the projects rather than, or as well as, the overarching good relations indicators;
- There was a significant degree of realism and positivity about the need to gather information and about the potential focus on diversity, measuring change and improving projects or providing evidence about the appropriate use of public money;
- Information is poorly used to inform and improve projects as they are ongoing or as they enter a new iteration. This includes poor use of graphs or charts that may be easier to understand and helpful for a project manager of the board/management committee of an organisation;
- Monitoring and evaluation questions were considered especially problematic for young people who did not associate with the questions or why they were being asked;
- A significant number of respondents indicated that the demographic questions were sometimes or often off-putting for participants;
- Respondents were clear about good relations indicators and their application to good relations outcomes;
- Respondents believed that the gathering of data on newcomers and minority ethnic groups, while less off-putting for participants (according to the majority

community gathering the information), was not well developed and might, real or perceived, lack genuine effort to gather it accurately;

- The open-ended question asked on community background in the survey provided many differing responses allowing respondents greater opportunity to indicate their own perception of background. The identities provided were interesting and relevant though they often referred to those indicators already associated with community background or included multiple and cross-factorial identities. Several could not be used and provided a greater difficulty in facilitating cross-tabulation;
- Respondents demonstrated a profile of being older and working on good relations for many years;
- Ideas for future development including use of technology or an App to make gathering information easier and its analysis more accessible;
- Linking good relations monitoring and evaluation to wider global world peace indexes may be useful but more information and understanding was required;
- Statisticians were regarded as being out of touch with the monitoring and evaluation conditions on the ground, and should become knowledgeable about the context for carrying out monitoring and evaluation in projects through visits and participation themselves;
- The spending of public money requires oversight and an evidence base that it is achieving the purposes for which it is intended.

Good Practice

To understand what progress is being made toward peace and reconciliation it is important to agree what peace and reconciliation is and, therefore, what to measure.

The feedback from respondents to the survey was not clear-cut about the desirability of linking measurement in Northern Ireland to more global measurement indicators. However, the need to be clear about what is being measured goes beyond linking to a global index.

We explore here the criteria established by the Peace programme during the tranche of EU Peace funding known as Peace II Extension, the T:BUC indicators by TEO, and a global peace index. We also include a summary of potential key measurement criteria using all three.

The Peace programme has made a significant contribution to the development of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland since 1995. In the early 2000s the programme felt it, and projects it funded, had insufficient focus on the peace and reconciliation outcomes and produced a significant set of criteria by which future projects could be assessed. This set of criteria is provided below and became known as the Hamber and Kelly criteria, named after the two academics, asked by the Community Relations Council and the EU Peace Programme to produce the criteria.

The criteria are drawn from research from different parts of the world and adjusted to suit the conflict and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland and the border counties.

Hamber and Kelly criteria for peace and reconciliation are:

1. *Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society:* The development of a vision of a shared future requiring the involvement of the whole society, at all levels. Although individuals may have different opinions or political beliefs, the articulation of a common vision of an interdependent, just, equitable, open and diverse society is a critical part of any reconciliation process.
2. *Acknowledging and dealing with the past:* Acknowledging the hurt, losses, truths and suffering of the past. Providing the mechanisms for justice, healing, restitution or reparation, and restoration (including apologies if necessary and steps aimed at redress). To build reconciliation, individuals and institutions need to acknowledge their own role in the conflicts of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way to guarantee non-repetition.
3. *Building positive relationships:* Relationship building or renewal following violent conflict addressing issues of trust, prejudice, intolerance in this process, resulting in accepting commonalities and differences, and embracing and engaging with those who are different to us.

4. *Significant cultural and attitudinal change:* Changes in how people relate to, and their attitudes towards, one another. The culture of suspicion, fear, mistrust and violence is broken down and opportunities and space opened in which people can hear and be heard. A culture of respect for human rights and human difference is developed creating a context where each citizen becomes an active participant in society and feels a sense of belonging.
5. *Substantial social, economic and political change:* The social, economic and political structures which gave rise to the conflict and estrangement are identified, reconstructed or addressed, and transformed. ²

The values and indicators included in this set of criteria include those such as:

- Equality and equity;
- Openness;
- Diversity;
- Interdependence;
- Acknowledgment;
- Positive relationships;
- Trust;
- Respect for human rights;
- Active participation;
- Structures giving rise to conflict and estrangement being reconstructed or transformed.

All these values and indicators are measurable, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and many are mirrored in the policy priorities already e.g. positive relations and human rights.

Many of the indicators are issues such as active participation and diversity that can also be measured to a degree by participation or output questions. Therefore, while outcome based assessment is important and a progression on output-based assessment only, it is always important to acknowledge that outputs such as increased participation are change-making both for individuals as well as the communities within which they live and work.

All the values, including values such as interdependence, trust, openness, diversity, positive relations, and participation are reflected in most definitions of building community cohesion.

The world peace index is a global effort to measure peace country by country and compare each country giving them rankings that may change year on year.

² Brandon Hamber and Grainne Kelly, A Working Definition of Reconciliation, 2004

The notion of a positive or negative peace, developed by Johan Galtung³, is included in the world peace index but is also referenced extensively in other criteria and peace measurement – peace is not just the absence of violence (negative peace) but the transformation of violence to reconciliation (positive peace).

The methodology and measurement for the world peace index includes issues such as:

- Number of deaths from internal conflict;
- Number of deaths from externalised conflicts;
- Level of perceived criminality;
- Numbers of displaced persons;
- Political instability;
- Likelihood of violent demonstrations;
- Numbers of jailed persons;
- Numbers of policy per 100,000;
- Ease of access to firearms.

When assessing and measuring each country some surprising conclusions are then drawn based on the criteria used. For example, while Iceland is ranked first (most peaceful), Ireland is ranked 12th and the United Kingdom 45th – below Kuwait, Latvia, Costa Rica, Malaysia and many others. The USA is ranked 128th below countries such as South Africa, Niger and Tajikistan.

While the criteria may not be as relevant to a localised conflict such as that which existed in Northern Ireland, and the criteria used may be contested and create surprising results, it does indicate an ability to measure peace in quantitative terms.

Other than the country-country measurement of violence and militarisation, criteria from the world peace index that may be more useful in an environment like Northern Ireland may be things such as levels of domestic violence, hate crimes and hate violence, gang-related violence, and deadly and other attacks on people with a motivation that could be attributed to gangland or paramilitary control.

In Northern Ireland the good relations indicators used to measure the progress of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC), the government strategy for promoting good relations and reconciliation, are highlighted earlier. The various strands and priorities within T:BUC are a focus for a significant aspect of the work of many funders and departments.

These themes, and various indicators related to them, are also used by SEUPB for the Peace programme though with variations and differences, other resourcing allocated by departments, and in information gathering for initiatives such as the Life and Times Surveys and by NISRA.

³ Johan Galtung in Editorial Journal of Peace Research, 1964, but utilised extensively since.

The Executive Office (TEO) are reviewing their monitoring and evaluation (M+E) framework for 2020-2021. That the TEO was consulting on their framework was welcomed by the Droichead steering group who also appreciated the time and effort by TEO to engage with them and others. The steering group believes that their more transparent approach to reviewing and amending the monitoring and evaluation framework could only lead to a better framework for 2020 and to further improvements beyond its initial year.

There is a continuing focus on outcomes-based assessment in T:BUC and government policy which aims to measure change and impact rather than things such as numbers of participants and sessions attended. Therefore, there is greater attention to the effectiveness of interventions. It does raise interesting questions, however, about the accuracy of monitoring questions that are self-completed and the overall measurement of attitudes and behavioural change. Methods of completion could be manipulated. Although, this is also a factor for most methods of monitoring and evaluation across all programmes, all departments, and any relevant funding intervention, the process of trying to minimise false or misleading monitoring and evaluation returns is an important part of a review process.

Outputs, while easier to measure, also may include important behavioural information – a participant continuing to attend, for example, may be an indicator of attitudinal change. Accurate baselines are important.

Projects are often involved in administering the surveys and have an interest in achieving positive results. However, they also know participants best and can add value to the monitoring processes.

Changing good relations skills and behaviour may be long-term rather than short-term and may also be influenced by the background of participants, the home or community life, educational or employment status; and good relations gains in the short-term may be undone by influences in a participant home or circle of friends, or in wider society after a project.

Sustainability of outcomes may be both difficult to measure over the long-term and difficult to achieve as good relations behaviour is influenced by context and environment.

Currently what is measured is determined by:

- Policy and aims identified through policy such as T:BUC and the Peace programme;
- A focus on outcome based accountability trying to move toward change and impact rather than outputs and activities;
- Adherence to section 75(2) of the NI Act on political, religious and ethnic groups as the priority for good relations.

Learning from good practice here or elsewhere therefore needs to be able to perform within these parameters set by policy in Northern Ireland.

Values and goals for monitoring and evaluation, and indeed progressing good relations policy further, could include:

- Consistency with outcomes based measurement which includes both qualitative and quantitative measurement;
- Exploration of not just good relations issues but broader peace and reconciliation measurement such as structural, social and political change;
- Changes to the policy or/and institutions that gave rise to segregation and conflict itself;
- Ability to measure and draw from participant attendance as part of sustainable change within an individual as evidence of behavioural change;
- Recognition of the importance of cementing cohesion, trust in institutions and a sense of belonging as key elements to reconciliation;
- Measurement of relational change and strengthening between previously irreconciled groupings.

It may be that the accepted norm of measuring a positive as opposed to a negative peace should be embraced more firmly. The good relations programmes supported by T:BUC and the PEACE Programme, while hoping to ensure no return to violence, are primarily focused on building the attributes of a positive peace.

As can be seen from the summary above these are the attributes of a cohesive society:

- Interdependence;
- Better and positive relationships;
- Trust in institutions;
- A sense of belonging;
- Active participation;
- Openness and diversity;
- Equality and respect for human rights.

All of these are measurable and consistent with T:BUC and the Peace programme.

Challenges

When exploring some of the main funding programmes – such as through TEO funding or the Peace programme – the rationale for the funding is about relationship-building between people from different political, religious or ethnic backgrounds (the section 75(2) categories from the Northern Ireland Act 1998).

However, the funding programmes focus on other aspects of peace-building including social issues. This includes work around the inclusion of women in peace-building (an ongoing issue of inclusion recognised from the United Nations to regional commitments), developing skills, behaviour and attitudes of young people, and other equality-related issues such as for and with LGBT communities.

The main purpose, according to funders, for asking questions about these categories is to:

- Ensure there is enough take-up of places by various groupings;
- Monitor projects to prove they are not avoiding working just with one side of a community or another, or that enough effort has been made to include other groupings;
- Identify learning that may be applicable for one grouping or another e.g. if one grouping is less responsive to recruitment or one grouping drops out of a project more than another, then why is that?
- Measure progress for all, and for each grouping.

Some recent existing research through NISRA, NILT and the PEACE Programme includes pointers for how demographics are asked and what is the focus for attitudinal questions.

The NISRA census rehearsal recently carried out for the full census due in 2021, including questions asking people to describe their nationality (British, Irish, Northern Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, Other to write in as an open-ended question).

It also asks for people to identify their ethnic group (White, Irish Traveller, Indian, Black African, Black Other, Chinese, Roma, Filipino, mixed ethnic group to write in and other to write in as an open-ended question).

It references religion or what religion people were brought up in (Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Methodist, Other to write in as an open-ended question).

The census and SEUPB are influenced in their categorisation by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) which produces harmonised concepts and questions of social data sources and provides advice on national identity and religion questions for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. Its latest guidance was published in

2015. It makes it clear to departments and agencies that a national identity question should be asked alongside but separate to an ethnicity question.

For Northern Ireland it advises all government surveys to include as ethnic group or background (White, Irish Traveller, Mixed and multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, Black/African, Caribbean/Black British, Chinese, Arab and Other; and for each category it has possible sub-categories such as the sub-categories for Asian/Asian British includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, other Asian background).

For Northern Ireland on national identity its guidance for government departments is (British, Irish, Northern Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, Other).

For religion its guidance is (No religion, Catholic, Protestant, Church of Ireland, Methodist, Baptist, Free Presbyterian, Brethren, Protestant Other, Christian Other, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Other).

Some of the key challenges this approach may present as one that is coordinating throughout the United Kingdom ensuring some consistency for the UK and its constituent parts are:

- The potential for inappropriate cross-over from a generic whole UK approach that codifies Northern Ireland with too much or an imbalanced similarity to England;
- Missing some interesting and important Northern Ireland only groupings that are important to the region but less so for the UK as a whole;
- Missing important linkage with the rest of the island which is important but less appreciated in a cohesive UK-wide approach.

Therefore, while different Protestant denominations are interesting from an English perspective, they are really of little significance in faith contrasts for good relations in Northern Ireland – the essential measurement is between Protestant and Catholic when comparing attitudes between people of different religious or community backgrounds.

Or, for example, it may be that an interesting category of identity is less appreciated and therefore missed – whether people can be both British and Irish equally for example.

In addition, while Northern Ireland has acquired an increasingly diverse community through many new faith and ethnic backgrounds making their home in the region in the last 30 years, and especially the last ten years, the ethnic diversity in Northern Ireland is different to that in England, Scotland or Wales. The main minority ethnic faiths may, and are, different in Northern Ireland and should be reflected in the questions that are asked.

Therefore, in identifying key demographic questions to be asked, funders will often be under pressure to follow the advice from overarching departments and advisory bodies that have a UK or EU perspective, and this can cause tensions when questions are asked at sub-regional or local level.

Providing workable flexibility while ensuring consistency of approach is therefore a major challenge.

An additional challenge is for funders to demonstrate to government that they are continuing to prioritise the achievement of goals and aims in the government policy documents – such as Together: Building a United Community – and being able to measure progress towards outcomes identified in that document. While supporting strong, locally-grounded projects that may not necessarily use the same language as the over-arching policy goals, they are often seeking to achieve similar ends through their activities and actions within a community.

Funders need to both support innovation and pragmatic delivery on-the-ground while demonstrating that it meets the goals and aims of TBUC. That challenge requires mutual understanding between funders and project deliverers; and flexibility and pragmatism in delivery.

It may be that good relations indicators at a policy level in government are difficult to align to projects that operate in practical ways on-the-ground. This is an ongoing and not unique challenge for policy-makers and deliverers of actions. It may require greater imagination and flexibility from both funding bodies and local organisations.

What accentuates some of the practical difficulties is when priorities, indicators or process requirements change in the middle of a funding period or mid-term for a project. This can be frustrating for the projects and for any intermediate sub-regional funders such as local authorities or district partnerships. The tensions created are then often manifested between the sub-regional funder and the project concerned, made more so when the project believes the local funder should be more alive to, or tuned in to, local needs.

The lack of adequate explanation about why monitoring and evaluation is being carried out may add to the frustration of projects, especially when they have little project feedback that may lead to practical improvements to their delivery.

Finally, a challenge is to achieve quality and impactful projects delivering for and with people. Projects improve when monitoring and evaluation is used properly and embraced by funder and deliverer. This not just includes identifying who is taking part and whether there is adequate inclusion of people from all backgrounds, but includes ongoing feedback about what works well and less well, what has had most impact and why, and whether a project is delivering equally for all, and if not why not.

There is, therefore, a requirement for maturity and confidence especially on the part of a project deliverer to embrace constructively critical feedback as an opportunity to learn. It requires maturity on the part of a funder to allow projects to grow and improve.

However, more than anything it requires both funder and project deliverer to be able to access information in an accurate, honest, timely, comprehensive, robust and accessible way. That process of feedback, learning and growth is important in the ambition to support organic, successful and impactful projects.

Feedback to The Executive Office

The Executive Office (TEO) undertook to update its monitoring and evaluation processes in 2019/2020 with a view to introducing new processes, questions and support for use in the financial year 2020/2021. The Droichead steering group has fed in to the TEO review and believes it has had a positive influence on the drafts that have emerged.

The steering group has welcomed significant aspects of the TEO review and its conclusions but reiterates that it disagrees with some aspects and wishes to see further change for 2021-2022 financial year.

The recommendations made to TEO are provided below – some of them were adopted and others have not been - to date.

However, this is an ongoing process and the steering group believes that TEO embracing, for example, new technologies to make the process more accessible, is as significant as the detail of the questions. This is one, amongst others, of key recommendations made by the steering group.

General

The steering group welcomed aspects of the approach by TEO. The steering group would urge TEO to further explore how to utilise new technology to make M+E easier, more accessible for participants and project deliverers given the administrative burden, and more effective. Some programmes have already adopted technology such as tablets but TEO should, over the next year, explore and develop assistance, for example through apps and use of mobile phones.

While a consistent and one-size-fits all approach to the questions asked was broadly welcomed, the steering group believe the projects and the project deliverer should be core to the M+E process which impacts both the questions asked and how they are asked. Aspects of copying NILT or self-efficacy should not be the focus for M+E processes focusing on sometimes relatively small amounts of funding – the difference the project made should be the focus.

It might, however, be useful for TEO to liaise with NILT at a regional, sub-regional and local government level, to align their tracking with NILT tracking and provide feedback to projects about the trends in their areas especially as they relate to both the TEO M+E and project outcomes. In other words, focus TEO M+E on project evaluation while NILT looks at policy impact.

The steering group and TEO agree that M+E within good relations is measuring issues, behaviours and attitudes that are not the norm and where the norm needs recalibrated. The promotion of cohesion and social harmony, therefore, is the target

for people involved in good relations work. While M+E is essential, it also needs to be careful that it does not help to reinforce stereotypes.

Participant Information

The steering group welcomed reassurances that the use of a unique reference number (URN) was not an indication that participants could be excluded from participating in more than one project. It also welcomed that each URN would be different. The steering group welcomed that projects would be involved in that process.

The TEO will also need to explore the legal basis of asking questions and requiring answers and explore use of privacy notices. They may need to make clear the legal gateway for collecting information, make clear why they are collecting information and how it will be used, and have a contact point for an information or data protection officer.

Specific recommendations in this section included:

- Make the questions relating to what GR programme/project people are participating in easier to answer, while also giving some thought about who completes that section.
- Participants may simply not know whether they have participated in a good relations programme before, just as many participants in a Peace programme do not know if they have previously participated in a Peace programme. They may know what they did but not whether it was a GR, Peace, community development, community safety or other programme. Is this question necessary?
- These demographic questions should be placed at the end of the M+E forms.
- Given its complexity the question on ethnicity should be open-ended like the youth Life and Times Survey.
- TEO should explore whether it could use the postcode as a proxy for religious background, if not in 2020-2021 then for the 2021-2022 financial year especially if it takes advantage of the use of new technology.
- The gender question may benefit from a male, female and non-binary category.
- The religious background question would be better to focus on religion or faith *brought up in*. It should also respect the faiths of those from a non-Christian background by adding in some of the more numerous non-Christian faiths in Northern Ireland rather than define other faiths as just "Other". However, this should not take the UK or English model but be bespoke to Northern Ireland given the principal non-Christian faiths resident here.

Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour (KAB)

Many members of the steering group liked the concept of Knowledge/Attitudes/Behaviour as a focus of these universal questions, but several also thought they were too general, vague and inappropriate for use at grass roots level.

Different steering group members had different perceptions of how the form, as it stands, should be completed. This was particularly so for the boxes under Attitude and Behaviour and how they relate to each other – if they do – and to the first question in each section. Either the form needs written with greater clarity or some of the questions dropped.

These two pages are perhaps the most important of the whole form but are “busy” and confusing. Given the different types of participants taking part in projects, and when and where during a project a participant may complete this form, it should be made as easy to follow and as understandable as possible.

Specific recommendations for this section included:

- The questions to be completed after the project has finished should be even more specific still and say at the start of each question something like: “After taking part in this project how knowledgeable....”
- There needs to be much greater clarity for both the “*I would willingly accept*” and the “*I would be comfortable*” boxes – do all boxes get completed?, do they get completed with ticks or a scale score?, why does one have “or” after each box but the other box does not?

Self-Efficacy

The steering group did not understand why these questions were part of a M+E questionnaire for good relations projects. They raised questions about whether they would be completed, the legality of asking them and sharing such information within government for use beyond the direct purpose of GR evaluation. The steering group believed there was little logic to their inclusion.

The steering group believed these questions would give at best a false feedback by participants who would not want to be honest while completing them when in proximity to friends or neighbours; and at worse have a negative impact on participants willingness to continue participation and understand the good relations nature of the project they were engaged in.

The steering group believed that when dealing with some sensitive good relations issues, and with prominent or locally well-known people including those at the coalface

of community and political life (including people that had previously been involved in the conflict or/and conflict resolution), it would be counter-productive to introduce self-efficacy questions.

Specific recommendations for this section included:

- Self-efficacy questions should not be part of the M+E survey and would do damage to projects and good relations work if they were.

Programme

The steering group thought these were perhaps some of the most important questions and were almost hidden at the end of the survey.

Specific recommendations for this section included:

- These questions relating to the project or programme should be brought toward the front of the M+E survey.
- After the first question an open-ended box may be useful to ask the participant to self-identify how they have benefited.

Other

Communication and understanding why M+E is taking place was considered important by the steering group. Indeed, part of the rationale for feeding into a better way of collecting information would be to increase the proportion of valid and usable returns from the current 3%.

Going forward it believed TEO should engage significantly with projects about why M+E was being carried out, beyond what may be included in the guidance notes. That should include explaining the benefit to the organisations carrying out the M+E not just for TEO in explaining its funding to those that hold TEO to account.

In effect, additionally the TEO should embrace the concept of co-design with those individuals and groups delivering for and with them on-the-ground. Just as policy cannot be developed in a vacuum from those impacted by it, the delivery, evaluation and improvement of projects cannot be done in a vacuum. Co-design of policy, project funding and project evaluation is an important process that will benefit funder and deliverer alike.

Feedback should include clearly understandable graphics that delve into statistics for the project including the important results that are accessible through cross-tabulations and comparisons.

When projects believe M+E is genuinely helping them to understand their project or help it work better; and also is indicating improvements or gaps or challenges, then those carrying out M+E are much more likely to value it and commit to the processes involved.

Using technology well should make M+E easier, more accessible and sensitive to the needs of projects. The steering group also urges TEO to make this the start of a journey toward better use of the technology available.

Finally, what TEO does may have significant impact on other funders, support organisations and arms-length bodies. It is important TEO understands the importance of making outcome-based monitoring and evaluation more efficient and effective; but that it also does not further confuse or complicate an area of work that many of those on-the-ground already do not sufficiently value because they believe it hampers more than helps.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The steering group has agreed six principal conclusions as a result of the discussions and gathering opinion and evidence as a result of this project.

Conclusions

The six principal conclusions are:

1. There is considerable positive and ground-breaking work taking place on-the-ground in Northern Ireland, supported by important, committed and professional funding organisations including government;
2. The process of how funders ask and support projects to gather information as part of the monitoring and evaluation process needs improved, made more accessible and more responsive to the needs of projects on-the-ground when engaging with participants.
3. The questions associated with gathering demographic information are perceived to not necessarily reflect Northern Ireland in 2020; and concerns exist that they may both put off participants and further accidentally encourage mindsets of segregation, difference or exclusion.
4. Key questions in the monitoring and evaluation process are not focused on the project and its delivery, nor treat projects as unique and locally relevant, tailored to the participants needs.
5. There is a significant perception that funders are more interested in counting heads and participation rather than gaining good quality information to be used to improve projects, achieve better delivery for participants, and improve measurement of the success of government policy.
6. Technology may provide important options for addressing some of the issues around process, privacy and progression. However, it will best evolve during a process of co-design between TEO as the sponsoring department, projects and deliverers, and data management agencies such as NISRA.

Frequently funders and departments make additional requests to local funding organisation and public bodies whether local government or through the Peace programme. These can be last-minute and unscheduled monitoring requirements that may make sense to the over-arching body and respond to pressures that they find themselves dealing with. But the burden then rests with projects and local funders, straining relationships between the local funder and the projects they fund.

Such an approach may provide limited information especially if done in the middle of funding periods and may then be superseded by further requests later. As a result, it

may do more damage than good to relationships between projects and local funders. If projects are expected to carefully plan their programmes, and may be penalised if they do not, then the same expectation should be placed and applied to over-arching funding bodies.

In addition, the act of monitoring by collecting data itself impacts on a project and, possibly, the participants; how, when and what data is collected may influence the responses provided by participants; and impact on the accuracy, truthfulness and quality of information provided. The process of collecting data, therefore, is as critical as the questions being asked. Any funder needs to be mindful that the questions being asked are relevant and at least not unhelpful to the delivery of the project, and that how they are asked is as unobtrusive as possible. This reinforces the importance of co-designing not just the questions but the process of data collection and management.

Recommendations

Principal recommendations are:

1. Monitoring and evaluation should increasingly utilise new technology to facilitate privacy and ease of completion as well as provide more opportunity to feedback key findings for progress improvement in project delivery. Process, privacy and progression should be the watchwords for exploring the use of Apps and other new technology by projects supported by funders.
2. There should be both consistency in approach (especially for funders to identify key questions to address whether they are making progress on policy goals) and local emphasis in the monitoring and evaluation process (especially for bespoke projects that are founded on local knowledge), addressing unique issues, with distinctive participants. As such, monitoring and evaluation should incorporate consistent questions agreed by funders along with local questions agreed by projects. We recommend a *Five-5 model* – five questions on every survey addressing wider policy issues with five questions developed by a local project.
3. There should be better communication about the reasons why monitoring and evaluation is undertaken in the first place, so that projects and participants understand why the sometimes personal demographic questions are being asked.
4. Significant investment in thinking is needed about how this information is used, what information is then presented to whom, and what potential areas of learning exist for projects and project managers. Feedback to projects should include analysis of the data and data slicing to explore issues by the demographics identified. This should also be done to analyse why participants drop out of projects. Graphs and simple but effective diagrams should be used

as part of this process. This should be a process that involves project boards, management committees and steering groups, as well as staff.

5. When asking for personal and background information of participants political opinion should not be a category. Funders should explore asking an open-ended question on ethnic background similar to the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. However, community background, or religion brought up in, is a key good relations determinant. New ways of accessing this information should be explored such as postcode usage. However, enhanced privacy facilitated by use of new technology may make this a less off-putting question for participants especially if there is full and proper explanation of why it is asked. Asking faith-based questions should include reference to those from minority faiths with significant numbers in Northern Ireland, not just categorise those who have faith but not from a Christian background as "Other".
6. There should be major effort to re-design the monitoring and evaluation process for children and young people. As a key policy target group there are significant issues around their knowledge and willingness to be defined in terms that they associate more with older generations.

In addition, there should be exploration of linkage to world indices especially those that incorporate community cohesion, trust in institutions and a sense of belonging to the society and community within which people live and work.

Statisticians and those working within funding bodies on devising and analysing monitoring and evaluation questions should spend regular time within the community, with projects, to be clear about the challenges and difficulties of conducting the fieldwork before, during and after a project.

Those working within good relations should reflect further on the age of those responding and the length of time they have worked in that sector – in terms of a) cynicism to the questions being asked and monitoring and evaluation in general, b) the potential for people working in the same sector in the same way for a long time being reluctant to change and explore fresh ideas including technology, and c) not being open to learning from monitoring and evaluation-driven feedback, and possible warnings about lack of diversity or inclusion within their project. That does not mean good outcomes are not being achieved from positive projects. But like any sector or initiative, good relations need to project and postulate on how it can further evolve and improve in the next ten years.

The Northern Ireland Life and Times surveys are a valuable tool for measuring the progress of over-arching government policy on peace and reconciliation. The NILT surveys are applicable at regional and sub-regional levels – e.g. for Northern Ireland as a whole and at every local government level. TEO may wish to explore how the NILT surveys can help them further monitor progress toward policy, provide feedback to projects at a Council level, but accept the limitations of funded projects in feeding

in to that regional and sub-regional monitoring. Questions asked at project-level do not necessarily have to mirror NILT questions and may not add constructive and useful data given other pressures in projects, with participants and, indeed, given the proportion of people within a local community not engaging in good relations activities.

These conclusions and recommendations are, at this stage, an outline and will be discussed further by the steering group and by a special event organised by Droichead.

It is expected that as practitioners and funders respond to the recommendations they will be refined, amended and improved. However, the report is as much a thought-piece and provocation, and in that sense, a means to stimulate discussion and further thinking.

Droichead welcomes further feedback and more ideas about how to make both the process of monitoring and evaluation and the questions asked easier, better and more effective. It sees this report as the start of a discussion on the findings and ideas that it contains.

Process, privacy and progression should be watchwords not just for monitoring and evaluation but for project delivery and funding to ensure everyone involved continues to measure up better to meet policy objectives, improve project delivery and further build peace and reconciliation in this region.

APPENDIX A

Steering Group Membership

Name	Organisation
Bebhinn McKinley	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Carol Stewart	Derry City and Strabane District Council
Catherine Pollock	Droichead, An Gaeláras Ltd.
Damien McNally	Community Relations Council
Dr Dirk Schubotz	Queens University
Hugh McNickle	Derry City and Strabane District Council
Kate Clifford	Rural Community network
Lisa Anderson	Droichead, An Gaeláras Ltd.
Michael Power	SEUPB
Sue Divin	PEACE IV Derry City and Strabane District Council

Gavin King from The Executive Office was not formally a member of the steering group but attended several meetings.

APPENDIX B

Purpose of the Survey?

Dear Colleague

We all work to good relations indicators developed to measure progress of the Together: Building a United Community Strategy (T:BUC). The T:BUC strategy identifies four strategic priorities and then a number of aims and indicators to measure whether or not those aims are being achieved.

These priorities and indicators are referenced further in the survey.

We want to find out how well these indicators help us all make the difference that we all are working toward, whether there are improvements or changes that can be made, and whether there are new ideas that can make things even better.

We would appreciate you answering the questions openly and honestly - the survey is entirely in confidence.

It is really important to measure and assess the work that we do, so that we can improve the services offered, assess whether or not we are making a difference, and review and refine what we are doing.

The results of this survey and other aspects of the work we are doing will be shared at a conference in Spring 2020 to stimulate debate and reflect on indicators and outcomes.

Thanks in anticipation of your help.

if you want to contact us to discuss please do so - the number and email addresses are provided below.

Yours sincerely

**Lisa Anderson
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**Droichead
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This research project is funded by the Community Relations Council and hopes to stimulate discussion about the importance of measuring activities and their impact, and how best we can do it moving forward.

Demographics - including the background of participants and maybe the groups you are targeting

1. How well or otherwise is the following demographic background information captured in your monitoring activities?

	Very well	Well	Average	Poorly	very poorly
Political opinion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious or community background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Racial or ethnic background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why did you answer as you did?

2. Is there demographic information you believe should be captured that is not being captured at the moment?

3. Have you ever benefited from feedback from your demographic profiling that helps deliver better activities e.g. helped to promote in a more targeted way, helped deliver services to some people, identified after-care needs for some people?

Yes

No

Please explain:

4. Are you asked broadly the same monitoring questions on good relations by different funders?

- Yes, they are broadly the same monitoring questions
- No, they are different monitoring questions
- Don't know/Can't say

5. When asking questions about a participants political, ethnic, community or religious background, what effect, if any, does it have on the participants?

	Has no effect - people don't mind	Sometimes puts people off	Often puts people off
When asking about political opinion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When asking about religious or community background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When asking about ethnic background	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Do you have any other comments regarding asking people about their political, ethnic, community or religious background?

Outcomes

T:BUC has a number of anticipated Outcomes that it hopes will be achieved through Good Relations work, such as improving the attitudes between young people from different backgrounds and increasing the use of shared space.

7. Please rate how effective you find the GR indicators you use for T:BUC?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- Don't know

Why?

8. Can you indicate up to three things that are good about the GR indicators?

One	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>
Two	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>
Three	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>

9. Can you indicate up to three things that are not good about the GR indicators?

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Two	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>
Three	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>

Indicators

Indicators - now we want to ask about indicators to achieve the outcomes. There are too many to list but you will know your own indicators.

10. Are you clear about peace and reconciliation outcomes expected by funders for a project?

- Yes, very clear
- Yes, but could be more clear
- No, not at all clear

11. Do you think the GR indicators should be reviewed and amended?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Not sure

12. In general, how well or otherwise can the GR Indicators be allocated to the projects or programmes you support?

- Very well
- Well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Poorly
- Very poorly

13. How well do you believe the GR Indicators are used afterwards to show progress or how to improve activities?

- Very well
- Well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Poorly
- Very poorly

14. Have you ever changed what you do after feedback using the GR Indicators?

Yes

No

If Yes, could you explain what change?

15. Do you use graphics or GIS systems to demonstrate the learning from your monitoring questions and process?

Yes

No

Ideas

What ideas or improvements would you make?

16. What changes would you make to measuring good relations outcomes and activities?

17. Should our indicators be linked to a more international index that measures peace and cohesion?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Do you have a particular suggestion?

18. Please give us some ideas for improving how GR outcomes are monitored and measured including any good practice you are aware of?

Something About You

We want to understand whether or not the current Good Relations indicators and background data collection affects different people disproportionately depending on how they are involved in programmes. So we need to collect some background data from you. All of this information will be treated in confidence.

19. Please self describe your own community background:

20. In what capacity were you involved in using GR Indicators?

- Community worker
- Local Council public servant
- Public agency civil servant
- Central government civil servant
- Peace Programme staff
- Other

If Other please state?

21. What is your role?

- Funder
- Project manager/deliverer
- Other

Other (please specify)

22. In which part of Northern Ireland or Ireland do you work?

- East of the Bann
- West of the Bann
- All over NI
- Republic of Ireland

23. How long have you been involved in good relations or reconciliation work?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years
- I'm not involved in good relations or reconciliation work

24. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other

25. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+