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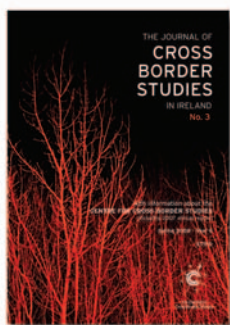
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The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

THE JOURNAL OF CROSS BORDER STUDIES IN IRELAND



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for Peace and Reconciliation**
in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland

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The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, launches the 2007 'Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland'. From left to right: Mr Andy Pollak, CCBS Director; Ms Mary Bunting, North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretary; Dr Chris Gibson, CCBS Chairman; Mr Hain; Professor Ferdinand Von Prondzynski, President, Dublin City University.

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A Word from the Chairman – Chris Gibson OBE

March 2008



Some 35 years ago I went to work in Dublin for a large British company and over the next two decades witnessed the remarkable changes which the Republic of Ireland

underwent during that period. Returning to work in Northern Ireland for an Irish company in 1993, I have been privileged once again to participate in and witness the extraordinary changes of a society learning to live with itself and in the changing world around it.

The past year has seen a great leap forward in that ongoing change. Even 12 short months ago, who would have believed that in that period Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness would sit down in government together and within a few months would be getting on so famously that they would be dubbed the 'chuckle brothers'? Or that First Minister Ian Paisley would greet Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in Dublin, and then at the Battle of the Boyne site, with a warm handshake? Or that the North/South Ministerial Council would have resumed with 11 out of the 12 sectoral meetings planned since last

July having taken place in an atmosphere of cordiality and pragmatism?

The Centre for Cross Border Studies has and is continuing to play its part in these moves towards good neighbourliness and cooperation for mutual benefit. Whether it is training civil servants in cross-border cooperation, creating a website with information for cross-border commuters, joining with the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council to provide cross-border scholarships, or bringing the universities on the island together to work on development cooperation in Africa, the Centre is at the forefront of new ideas and innovative ways of doing things on a North-South basis. The plaudits for its work have continued to flow from the British and Irish Governments, and from Ministers of the new Executive. Its appropriately-named *A Note from the Next Door Neighbours* monthly e-bulletin is now received by over 6,000 subscribers.

For in many ways the neighbourly and businesslike ethos of the past 10 months had been anticipated by the Centre. In the words emblazoned across its www.crossborder.ie website (one of three major websites it now runs), it is about 'generating real benefits through practical cross-border cooperation in Ireland.' In October 2007, launching a

book of essays from the North/South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme – which the Centre organises along with Cooperation Ireland and the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy – the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern, said: “Practical North-South cooperation for mutual benefit is one of the cornerstones of both the Belfast and St Andrews Agreements. In this context, what these young public servants are doing is truly pioneering. Here is the pith and substance of what good government is meant to be about. These essays all outline fresh new ideas, clearly laid out, about how practical cross-border and all-island cooperation can make a real difference to improving the lives of the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland.”

The Centre has broken new ground in several areas over the past year. It was commissioned by the North/South Ministerial Council to create – with technical assistance from the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel’s web design team – a new website (www.crossbordermobility.info) to help people who want to cross the border to live, work, study or retire with everyday information about taxation, social benefits, housing, education, qualifications and other useful areas. This was launched in October by the Northern Ireland First and Deputy First Ministers, Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness, and Irish Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern.

Wearing its Universities Ireland hat, the

Centre joined with the Joint Business Council of IBEC and CBI to launch an expanded North-South scholarship scheme to support eight undergraduates to do postgraduate study at a university in the other jurisdiction.

Again under the auspices of Universities Ireland, it led a consortium of all nine Irish universities and four universities in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique in a successful application to the Irish Higher Education Authority and the Irish Government’s Irish Aid development cooperation agency to work with the African universities to help build their research capacity in health, education, ICT and gender. This is being launched by President Mary McAleese at the start of a high-level workshop – bringing together presidents, vice-chancellors, heads of research and other senior officials from all these universities – in Dublin City University on 8 April.

In its Immigration Emigration Racism and Sectarianism Schools Project, the Centre has touched on one of the burning issues of this and every other European country: migration. Children aged 9-14 in primary and lower secondary schools in the border region have been brought together (with EU Peace funding) to learn that since every family on the island has a migrant somewhere in their past or present, racism and prejudice against the ‘newcomers’ who have come to enrich our economies and societies in recent years are a form of self-hatred and self-harm.

The Centre's other associated organisations – the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) – have also gone from strength to strength, organising three international conferences and supporting 15 research projects between them.

Members of the Centre's staff have been commissioned to do research in areas as different as cross-border GP out of hours services, trade unions' involvement in North-South cooperation, the cross-border exchange of student teachers and cross-border postgraduate flows. On 21 February the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, launched a new book on cross border cooperation in the past decade – *Crossing the Border: New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland* – three of whose 13 chapters had been contributed by CCBS or former CCBS staff members. Truly it can be said that the Centre for Cross Border Studies has never been busier.

In addition, the Centre has started to develop a wider, European dimension. Visits were made to two of the most important cross-border organisations in the EU, the French government's cross-border co-operation agency Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) and the continent's longest-established and exemplary cross-border regional network, the Gronau-based Dutch-German EUREGIO. Director Andy Pollak spoke alongside former French Prime

Minister, Pierre Mauroy (now chairman of MOT) at an 850-delegate conference in Lille in November 2007 to launch EUROMOT, an ambitious pan-European network of local authorities stretching from Portugal to Russia. The Centre has been included as a technical expert in MOT's application for EU INTERREG IV funding to develop this network.



A leading official from EUREGIO (along with the Spanish Secretary-General of the Association of European Border Regions) will speak at a conference being organised by the Centre (along with Cooperation Ireland) in Dundalk on 12-13 June on lessons other European border regions can learn from the North-South 'Strand Two' of the Northern Irish peace process.

There is a new Scottish dimension as well. On 15 May the Centre will join with the University of Stirling to organise a conference in Belfast (to be opened by Minister of Finance and Personnel, Peter Robinson) for senior politicians, bankers, investment specialists, economists and others on financial services in the 'Celtic Rim' countries: Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. This is a development of a highly-regarded series that the University of Stirling has been running for over 40 years in Scotland.

There are many people, including those

in the Centre, who work diligently to improve relations between people on this island. The Centre must thank those EU programmes, government agencies and other organisations which have funded its activities in the past year. Once again the Special EU Programmes Body and its Peace Two (Extension) programme and the Irish Department of Education and Science have been its major funders. Financial support has also been forthcoming from the EU INTERREG programme and the Nuffield Foundation. In addition, the Centre has once again been active bidding competitively (and usually successfully) for research projects advertised on the open market. Financial support for the Centre's associated organisations – Universities Ireland, the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCOTENS) and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) – has come from the Northern Ireland Departments of Education and Employment and Learning, the Irish Department of Education and Science, the Irish Higher Education Authority, *InterTradelreland*, the Northern Ireland Department for Regional Development,

the Irish Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the International Fund for Ireland.

We are also grateful for the various other organisations which have partnered the Centre over the past 12 months: notably the North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Cooperation Ireland, Mission Opérationelle Transfrontalière, Armagh Observatory, the nine universities, the nine colleges of education and thirty other institutional subscribers to SCOTENS, and the institutions which make up the International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

We must also thank our advertisers in this Journal: Tourism Ireland, National Irish Bank, Weber Shandwick, *Safefood*, *InterTradelreland*, Cooperation Ireland, the Loughs Agency, FPM Chartered Accountants, the Special EU Programmes Body and the Institute for Public Health in Ireland.



Queen's University
Belfast



THE TRADE UNIONS AND NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: TIME FOR A RETHINK?

Andy Pollak



Andy Pollak

The trade union movement has a proud history of working for peace, social justice and against violence and sectarianism in extremely difficult circumstances during more than 30 years of civil conflict in Northern Ireland. Throughout the civil disturbances, terrorist attacks and sectarian assassinations of the 1970s and 1980s the unions played a crucial role as one of the elements in Northern Irish society that prevented it slipping into outright civil war. Workplaces were largely free from sectarian strife even in the worst of these years. Union leaders and activists worked tirelessly to keep workplaces open

during politically-motivated work stoppages, to prevent intimidation of workers by paramilitaries and to minimise the effect of polarising flags and emblems.

During the 1974 Ulster Workers Strike, the unions bravely if unsuccessfully attempted to lead a return to work march to the Harland and Wolff shipyard. There were numerous trade union-led campaigns for peace and social stability: A Better Life for All; Peace Train; Women Together; the Counteract and Trademark workplace anti-sectarianism initiatives. As late as autumn 1993 a leading trade unionist, Joe Bowers, led a protest march by shipyard workers following the IRA's Shankill Road fish shop bombing which served to defuse a very dangerous situation, and the Irish Congress of

Trade Unions' Northern Ireland Committee brought together 10,000 people in a peace demonstration in the centre of Belfast.

However, during the 'peace process' period of the nineties – culminating in the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998 – there was little recognition of this key role by the British or Irish governments or the political parties. Successive Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland paid fulsome but tokenistic compliments to the work of the trade unions for peace. However they were rarely, if ever, consulted about

key political or economic decisions affecting Northern Ireland. This was a legacy of the years when Margaret Thatcher was in power (1979-1990), when the unions in Britain were treated as 'the enemy within' by successive Conservative governments, and this ideological stance inevitably spilled over into the Northern Ireland Office.

This changed somewhat with the arrival of a Labour Government in 1997. However the influential Northern Ireland Secretary up to the 2007 return of devolution, Peter Hain, while paying the usual lip service to the vital role of the unions, was actually more business-oriented. Groups like the Confederation of British Industry and the NI Business Alliance found an open door at Stormont Castle, while trade union leaders found it took them many months to obtain an audience.

Union involvement in North-South cooperation

It is not a cliché to say that the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement changed everything in Northern Ireland: it led to old enemies sitting down in government together and eventually to those bitterest of antagonists, Sinn Féin and the DUP, agreeing to share power. Some might say it was the ultimate experiment in partnership. However its impact on the trade union movement appears to have been relatively minimal.

The unions have certainly played little role in the implementation of the North-South 'Strand Two' of that Agreement.

Despite more than 10 years of close collaboration between the unions and the Irish Government as part of an extraordinarily successful experiment in social partnership, the ICTU was unable to secure representation as of right on the boards and other governing instruments of the six North/South Implementation Bodies, even though many of these were in economic and related areas (trade and business development, tourism, inland waterways, food safety).

The only two trade unionists appointed were the then president of the ICTU, Inez McCormack, who was invited by the Irish Government to sit on the board of the Trade and Business Development Board (later to become *InterTradelreland*); and Anne Speed, an official of SIPTU and a Sinn Féin member, who was asked by Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams to be that party's nominee on the Food Safety Promotion Board (later *Safefood*). They were not appointed as ICTU or trade union representatives, so there was no formal requirement for them to report back to Congress or to their unions.

Union leaders – with some justification – say that this is because the British and Irish governments saw these bodies as largely political when they emerged from the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, with their boards made up of government and party political nominees. However one senior trade unionist says the unions were also partly to blame: 'Unions had full access to the Taoiseach, Irish government ministers

and heads of government departments in negotiating partnership agreements, which were a social partnership model for the rest of the world – and yet when it came to setting up all-island structures with important economic and social consequences, the same Irish government, with the right to nominate people to North/South bodies, ignored the unions.’ The suspicion is that a trade union movement dominated by Southern leaders simply did not understand the importance of the Good Friday Agreement and its implementation, and missed their chance to become involved.

ICTU involvement in North-South cooperation has hardly increased since 1998. Neither the ICTU nor its Northern Ireland Committee has ever met the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), which oversees the six North/South Bodies and the six areas for North-South Ministerial co-operation on behalf of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland devolved administration.

The ICTU does have its own North/South Committee, set up during the presidency of the Northern regional secretary of UNISON, Inez McCormack, in 1999, to respond to initiatives under the North-South ‘Strand Two’ of the Belfast Agreement. In 2001 its membership was a high-powered one, including, along with Inez McCormack, vice-president Joe O’Toole, general secretary Peter Cassells, future presidents Peter McLoone, Brendan Mackin and Patricia McKeown, and three more Executive Council members.

The Committee was relatively active in the two years (1999-2001) of Inez McCormack’s presidency. June 2001 seems to have been a particularly busy time: in that month it organised an anti-racism conference in Armagh; the first of a series of conferences under the banner of the Participation and Practice of Rights project (see p. 19) in Louth, and a North-South Health Services Conference in Dublin. Its Action Plan of that year outlined a number of priority issues: workplace related rights, economic and social rights and broader human rights.

The North-South Health Services Conference was a major event. It outlined an ambitious and wide-ranging North-South health programme, including ‘mapping’ research, the construction of a ‘what needs to be done’ model, and building a partnership model. The N-S Health Services Partnership which came out of this conference organised three more conferences in 2004: on Ethnic Catering in Hospitals; Employing People with Disabilities in the Health Services in Ireland North and South, and Reducing Health Inequalities. The Irish Minister for Health, Mary Harney, has recently pledged three years funding worth €187,000 to the Partnership.

This N-S Health Services Partnership and the Participation and Practice of Rights project have proved to be the most successful and durable of the initiatives undertaken by the ICTU’s North/South Committee in its early years. In the absence of any evaluation documents it

is difficult to know if any of the other issues outlined in the Action Plan were ever acted upon.

What is apparent is that with the suspension of the Northern Ireland and North/South institutions in 2002, the N/S Committee appeared to 'fall into abeyance' (in the words of one of its members). Northern union leaders blame a lack of interest by their Southern counterparts for this. 'There's a different mindset among general secretaries in Dublin – they would wonder what Northern Ireland or North-South cooperation had to do with their partnership negotiations,' says one Northerner. A Southerner said the general secretaries of the big unions were far too busy to take on North-South activities as well.

A leading Northerner said that, unlike community and voluntary organisations, which used EU funding to continue and even sometimes to expand their cross-border activities, the trade union movement did not have a thought-out strategy for sustaining their work in this new era.

Under the next Northern ICTU president, Brendan Mackin of the Belfast Trades Council (2003-2005), the North/South Committee was resurrected briefly. However by 2007 it was generally considered by trade unionists interviewed by this writer to be an inactive body, with no strategic agenda and no thought-out demands on government and the employers in both jurisdictions.

An example of its lack of involvement with a key issue was the absence of trade union speakers at major annual conferences on all-island infrastructural investment (estimated to be worth €100 billion over the next decade) in the past three years, although ICTU requested to be heard on several occasions. This is despite the motion passed at the summer 2007 ICTU annual conference committing the organisation to the development of an all-island economy in general and an all-island infrastructure in particular. Clearly neither government nor business consider the unions a key player in this vital North-South area.

Trade unionism appears to be one of the few areas for cooperation where the East-West dimension is as advanced – or even more advanced – than the North-South dimension. The ICTU along with the TUC, the Scottish TUC and the Welsh TUC set up a Council of the Isles in 2001. This last met in Dublin in November 2007, was attended by senior officials from all four confederations (including the President and General Secretary of the TUC), and its agenda could have provided a model for an equivalent North/South body. Agenda items included: mechanisms for working with government; social partnership agreements and experiences; the EU Treaty and Charter of Fundamental Rights; union-led learning; migrant workers and agency workers; proposed border controls between Britain and Ireland; the trafficking of women and exploitation of children.

The contrasting record of business

This low level of North-South activity and representation on North/South bodies is in striking contrast to business. The Joint Business Council of the Irish Confederation of Irish Industry (CII) – later the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) – and the Northern Ireland branch of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) was formed in 1991. It was given a boost by a speech from Sir George Quigley of the CBI in February 1992 in which he proposed the mould-breaking development of a Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor. A follow-up consultants study made a number of recommendations, including improving transport infrastructure and telecommunications, enhancing university-business linkages, assisting food and drink companies, and attracting key sub-supply firms to the economic corridor.

Since then the Joint Business Council has done considerable work, funded largely by the International Fund for Ireland and the EU's INTERREG cross-border cooperation programme. In the 1990s, this allowed the Council to bring together 6,000 company representatives from both jurisdictions in a series of more than 300 meetings. This led to significant new SME and multinational corporation links being formed, new products being introduced and new business developed. Most importantly, it helped to lead to the doubling of North-South trade between 1993 and 2000, which was one of the original objectives

of George Quigley's Belfast-Dublin Corridor project.

With the birth of the inter-governmental trade and business development body, *InterTradeIreland*, in 1999, the Joint Business Council changed tack. It concentrated more on six North-South sectors central to the international competitiveness of the island: transport, energy, waste management, telecoms, business-education linkages and labour mobility. Again, the Council's lobbying and campaigning has had clear results. Among these are the upgrading of the Belfast-Dublin road, the Irish Government's decision to spend £400 million on infrastructure within Northern Ireland, and the opening of an all-island wholesale electricity market.

The contrast between the levels of activity of the Joint Business Council and the ICTU in the field of North-South cooperation can be illustrated most starkly by comparing how much EU funding they have each received for this work: the bulk of North-South cooperation work has been funded through the EU's Peace and INTERREG programmes, plus the International Fund for Ireland (part-funded by the EU). The authoritative source for North-South and cross-border funding information is the Centre for Cross Border Studies website www.borderireland.info. According to this, the Joint Business Council has administered 12 EU grants amounting to €5.14 million since 1991.

In contrast the ICTU has administered three grants – on literacy training, a

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border area youth network study and training for engineering and maintenance workers – worth €400,000.¹ SIPTU's Irish Trade Union Trust was granted another €640,000 in the same period. €582,000 of this went to the Belfast-based City Bridges project, whose work in training trade unionists in peace and reconciliation, equality, disability, anti-bullying and 'good relations' is a rare example of cross-border trade union-led good practice in these areas.

Some structural and ideological issues

At this point, it might be instructive to digress from North-South cooperation itself to ask how the structures and cultures of the trade union movement in the two Irish jurisdictions affect their attitudes to this issue. The ICTU is a body with an all-island identity and structure on the surface which is in fact made up of three distinct elements. Two of these organise in one jurisdiction only and the third is all-island only in a very limited way.

The first element – representing over 70% of unionised workers on the island – are Southern-based unions with no Northern membership. The second – a mixture of indigenous Northern Ireland unions and British-based unions – organise in the North only. The third and smallest element are the all-island unions: British-based unions like UNITE (incorporating the former ATGWU) which organise in both jurisdictions, and a few genuinely all-island Irish unions

like the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) and the Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA) (and SIPTU, whose Northern membership has declined dramatically in recent years).

However leading members of these all-island unions accept that they have moved apart in recent decades as the trade union cultures of the two Irish jurisdictions – based around social partnership in the South and around the more adversarial ethos of British unions in the North – have diverged. In the words of one leading Northern activist: 'Unions see themselves psychologically as Irish or Northern Irish – the border is invisible because they don't want to know about the jurisdiction on the other side of it. On the other hand employers don't recognise the border because they want to grow in an all-island fashion and see the border as a barrier to this. It's a very different way of looking at the world.'

This divergence was symbolised at the 1989 Special Delegate Conference on whether the unions should withdraw from the first National Agreement in the South, the Programme for National Recovery. The motion to withdraw was narrowly defeated, with Northern delegates voting overwhelmingly to withdraw from a National Agreement that did not affect them. As Tim Hastings, Brian Sheehan and Padraig Yeates write in their recent study of the Irish social partnership process:

The debate exposed a growing divergence in outlook and strategies



Current ICTU president Ms Patricia McKeown addresses the 2005 ICTU conference, with seated, from left to right, Mr Paul Sweeney, Mr Liam Berney, Ms Paula Carey, Mr Peter McLoone, Mr Brendan Mackin, Mr David Beggs, Mr Joel Flynn.

between North and South. When Goretta Horgan of the Derry Trades Council denounced the PNR and said 'the Irish working class haven't created the economic crisis. We should not pay for it', she was heckled by Southern delegates. The debate showed that differences between unions North and South were, in some ways, bigger than between unions and employers in the Republic.²

This was the last Special Delegate Conference on a National Agreement where delegates from Northern Ireland were allowed to vote on social partnership agreements in the Republic.

Lip service continues to be paid to the ICTU being an all-island body, but in fact unions are very protective of their own Northern and Southern 'patches': there is an understanding that Southern unions won't organise in the North and Northern unions – many of them British-based – won't organise in the South.

In practice, even the few genuinely all-island unions such as IBOA and INTO have to treat the two jurisdictions differently. Despite its 5,400 members in Northern Ireland, the IBOA is still seen as an 'an elite, Southern union – the difficulty is feeling part and parcel of the Northern Ireland trade union movement', says one Southern IBOA official. An INTO Northern official cites mobility of teachers' pensions as an example of different jurisdictional attitudes: 'There is an over-supply of teachers in the North and some would like to go South. The INTO could use its clout to get something done on transferability of superannuation benefits and pensions. But few Southern teachers go north, so it's not an issue there, with the result that the union wouldn't focus on such a North-South issue.'

At the same time the minimal role of Irish trade unionism in North-South co-operation cannot be considered in

isolation from a wider ideological debate in the international trade union movement. This is a time of globalisation when unions everywhere are on the defensive, as anti-union US multinationals drive economic growth in successful economies like the Republic of Ireland, and those same multinationals move to Eastern Europe and Asia in search of cheap labour. Trade unions in Ireland – as elsewhere – are losing their ‘density’, meaning that their members make up a smaller proportion of the workforce both in individual firms and in national economies. In the Republic of Ireland the workforce has doubled over the past decade, but trade union membership has only risen slightly in a situation where there is no legal recognition of the right to join a union.

There are two main responses to this international situation. The first, which has been adopted in the Republic, is to work with the Government, the employers and other social partners to build Scandinavian-style partnership structures, in the first place through multi-annual National Agreements to guarantee industrial peace and wage moderation in the expectation of increased investment and thus employment. This structure has been extended since it was initiated 20 years ago to include partnership discussions on a wide range of issues affecting working people – from taxation to health services, childcare and public transport – and to bring in other partners such as the farmers and the community and voluntary sectors.

The second has been followed in the North, based on the British experience. This has been influenced notably by the legacy of Margaret Thatcher’s strongly anti-union policies in the 1980s and early 1990s, marked by disputes like the miners strikes which were ruinous to the unions involved. This has left an adversarial ‘class war’ ethos which has meant that unions in Northern Ireland – already on the defensive because of the rapid decline of heavily unionised industries like shipbuilding, engineering and textiles – have steered clear of any close relationship with government or employers. They have denounced the Strategic Investment Board (and refused to sit on its advisory board), despite the fact that it will play a key role in the infrastructural planning of Northern Ireland (and with the National Development Finance Agency in the South, the island as a whole) over the coming decades, because it is based on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). To the Northern unions that means one thing: the privatisation of jobs and services. The UNISON leadership, for example, is proud of its successful campaign to reverse the outsourcing of catering and cleaning in public health and education services.

The contrast to the Republic is striking. In the words of one leading Southern trade unionist: ‘Unions here were involved with PPPs from the start through National Agreements. We got unions recognised in outsourced companies, we got people the right to be redeployed. There is no point in standing on principle or having Saturday

marches. Unions need to talk to government and business to find out where PPPs are going and how we can best maximise our influence over this process. We have to put aside the 'isms' and be pragmatic.' However in the South PPPs have been largely used to design, finance and build major infrastructural projects – there has not yet been the threat to jobs caused by the outsourcing of elements in the public health and education services which has taken place in the North.

Union leaders have so far been largely ignored by the new Northern Ireland Executive, which took a notably pro-business line in its October 2007 Programme for Government and draft budget, following successful lobbying by the Northern Ireland Business Alliance and the Confederation of British Industry. Similarly, with the changes in semi-state agency board membership rules in recent years, the unions are almost completely unrepresented on public bodies, unlike business (and in striking contrast to the unions in the Republic).

Some union leaders are critical of the way Northern Ireland unions do their business in this regard. Tribute is paid to the way they led the successful campaign against water charges. However it appears that since the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive in May 2007, there has been no exploration of any formal mechanism for the ICTU's Northern Ireland Committee to have discussions with the Executive. The continuation of a bilateral

agreement for regular meetings reached during Paul Murphy's period as Northern Ireland Secretary (2002-2005) has been discussed with the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, but as yet there is no agreement to continue this arrangement with the Executive.

It will be a considerable challenge for the Northern Ireland Committee to build bridges to the largest party in the Executive, the DUP, which has a traditional suspicion of bodies with the word 'Irish' in their title, but which nevertheless receives a large working class vote. However it has to be done. This task is not helped by a relative lack of resources and staff for research, preparing position papers and lobbying. EU funding opportunities which might assist here do not appear to have been explored in any comprehensive way.

The trade union movement in Northern Ireland is overwhelmingly dominated by public sector unions, due to the dramatic decline in manufacturing over the past 30 years and the equally dramatic rise in public sector employment. This has led to a 'profit is evil' attitude among some union leaders which does not make collaboration with the Executive's strategy to grow the private sector to counter N.Ireland's excessive reliance on the public sector an easy one. This again is in stark contrast to the Republic, where even the large public sector unions realise the importance of private business as the driver of a successful, export-driven economy in a globalised world.

A number of trade union leaders point to the ease with which business in the North (traditionally largely unionist) espoused the concept of an all-island economy as long ago as the early 1990s as an example of the kind of pragmatism often lacking from union discussions on the economy. Business realises that Northern Ireland is now merely one more region in a globalised economy – and the Republic of Ireland is its closest and most accessible foreign market in that world economy.

A good example of pragmatism by both business and unions in a cross-border context was the award last year of an €11.5 million contract to Wright Brothers of Ballymena, a firm with an overwhelmingly unionist workforce, to supply buses to Bus Éireann, following strong lobbying by the ICTU.

Some cross-border issues facing the trade unions

Island of Ireland economy issues

Several senior officials in both Belfast and Dublin consulted by this researcher were optimistic that the motion passed at the summer 2007 ICTU biennial conference in Bundoran on the all-island economy³ would herald a new seriousness among the trade union leadership on this issue. 'They've realised that if IBEC and the CBI are involved – if capitalism thinks it's a good idea – then we'd better be in there too,' said one union leader.

However belated, there is evidence that the trade union leadership has now woken up to the importance of the North-South dimension to the island's economies and the people who work in them. Factors cited for this include: the realisation that all-island infrastructure will be a key element in the next phase of Ireland's economic development; concerns expressed that with no common rules on union recognition or collective bargaining, moves towards an all-island economy could result in the undermining of workers rights, wages and conditions; the appointment of an energetic assistant general secretary with responsibility for the North, Peter Bunting, who has the rare distinction of having been a leading trade unionist in both Irish jurisdictions; and the renewed interest of key figures in the movement such as Jack O'Connor, president of SIPTU, who will be the next ICTU president in 2009.

Of particular interest to the unions should be Brian Cowen's 2005 announcement that, when taken together, government spending on infrastructure in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland could amount to €100 billion over the next 10 years. *The Comprehensive Study on the All-Island Economy*, commissioned by the British and Irish governments and published by InterTradelreland in October 2006, outlined the benefits all-island co-operation on infrastructure would bring: more efficient planning; more efficient, joined-up delivery of services; better value for money; more balanced regional development; addressing

border effects; economies of scale in public investments, and better deals from financial markets. From a union standpoint, such massive investments would also create many thousands of new jobs.

One area of obvious interest to trade unions in this context is the importance of public procurement policy as a mechanism for maintaining employment rights and standards, including wage levels. Last year the then ICTU president, Peter McLoone, followed SIPTU president Jack O'Connor and ICTU assistant general secretary Peter Bunting in calling for the establishment of an all-island Public Procurement Task Force, which would tackle public spending on social exclusion alongside economic development. The two Departments of Finance in Dublin and Belfast organised the first North-South Public Procurement Conference last year, and these are expected to become a biennial event.

There is a downside to this. Wages and conditions are different on both sides of the border. Aer Lingus's controversial announcement in June 2007 that it was moving part of its operation from Shannon to Belfast's International Airport, and would be recruiting pilots with less favourable wages and conditions to their Republic of Ireland colleagues, seems to have concentrated many minds – in the trade union movement as well as outside – about what an all-island economy might actually mean in future.

The exploitation of foreign migrant

workers has been a feature of the Celtic Tiger economy, with examples ranging from the under-payment of Turkish workers by the Gama construction company to Irish Ferries laying off its whole workforce and outsourcing their jobs to Eastern European agency workers. Several trade unionists have suggested that a joint TUC-ICTU campaign to protect the rights of migrant and other agency workers would be a perfect vehicle for North-South-East-West collaborative action.

Human rights and equality issues

A number of trade unions, notably UNISON, have played a prominent role in keeping equality and human rights high up the political agenda in Northern Ireland. However the considerable work in this vital area on a North-South basis is much less well-known. The main example is the Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) Project. This started in 2001 when a group – including the Combat Poverty Agency, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Community Foundation of Northern Ireland and the ICTU – came together at the instigation of ICTU president Inez McCormack to organise a North-South conference entitled 'Participation and the Practice of Rights: Insider/Outsider – Changing Relationships.' The conference was attended by local community, human rights and equality activists from across the island, and was followed by regional follow-up meetings in Galway, Dublin, Derry and Belfast and a number of other all-island and international seminars.

The PPR project was then funded by the US-based charity, the Atlantic Philanthropies, to conduct a feasibility study into ways of developing a rights-based approach to a range of issues at local community level, in this case in areas of north inner-city Dublin and Belfast (published in 2004). The project aimed to bring academics, lawyers and international experts together with activists and 'ordinary' people from local communities in a process of shared learning – local communities learned what the international rights standards are that governments are supposed to implement, and academics and lawyers learned the reality of the absence of this implementation at local level. The 2004 study showed that local people are often unable to access the services they have a right to because they have been denied access to participation in decision-making, and outlined a model of how to build local capacity so that access to services could be monitored and denial of such access could be challenged.

This led to the building of a coalition of groups working on social justice issues with a particular focus on North Inner City Dublin and North Belfast. It uses a human rights based approach, turning needs into rights; demanding accountability from government; empowering and ensuring the participation of local people; and focussing on the inclusion and involvement of particularly vulnerable groups. As part of this, the PPR project has organised a range of cross-border hearings, seminars, reports and DVDs,

ranging from the right to health and housing, to suicide, mental health, disadvantage in North Belfast and 'making rights work.'

Northern Ireland is well ahead of the Republic in the area of equality legislation. Section 75 of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act is one of the first examples internationally of legislating for 'positive duties' by public bodies to promote equality of opportunity across nine equality standards (including gender, race, religion, political opinion, disability, age and sexual orientation) and 'good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group'. It has been said that the Northern Ireland equality duty is 'unique and pioneering' and that in the future 'the unified yet multi-faceted approach to mainstreaming equality that is underpinned by Section 75 will prove to have greater effectiveness than many contemporary approaches operating around the globe.'⁴ There is no equivalent of Section 75 in the Republic's law. Several trade unionists suggested that the ICTU should mount a campaign for a common Section 75 for the island.

Sometimes the obvious needs to be re-stated: trade union recognition is another area where Northern Ireland is far ahead of the Republic. Despite 20 years of partnership in the Republic of Ireland, there is still no statutory obligation on firms to recognise the right of trade unions to organise workers, although union leaders understand that any change in the law

here would have to conform with the Irish Constitution. That right has existed in Northern Ireland for many years under United Kingdom law. This is a basic human right for working people that could be the subject of an all-island campaign by the ICTU as part of moves towards an 'island of Ireland' economy.

Training and skills issues

Training is another area cited by several trade unionists as suitable for cross-border co-operation and mutual learning, and where unions could play a leading role. The vital role of training for a future knowledge economy is highlighted in the Fifth Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2007) in the Republic, which forecasts that by 2020 an additional 500,000 people will need to be upskilled by at least one level in that jurisdiction's National Framework of Qualifications, and nearly 50% of the workforce will have to have qualifications of at least degree or Higher Certificate (Higher National Diploma in NI) level. The upskilling and reskilling challenge in Northern Ireland will be equal to, if not greater, than this.

In line with the social partnership ethos in the Republic, the unions play a prominent role in the Republic's state training authority FÁS – from representation on the board (this is currently chaired by a trade unionist), through membership of national advisory committees (e.g. on apprenticeship) and monitoring the One Step Up programme (upskilling people

already in work), to receiving FÁS funding for the ICTU's Centres for the Unemployed.

In contrast, while in Northern Ireland there is an ICTU representative on the overall Skills Expert Group (although, this group is still in pilot form and does not do any forecasting work), there are no union representatives on the 25 Sector Skills Councils which cover the skills and productivity needs of their individual sectors. Similarly there are no official union representatives on the province's six Workplace Development Forums (one of which, in the North West, is cross-border) which, according to Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) officials, are 'employer led' and are 'about meeting the training and development needs of local employers.' DEL has recommended that they should include union representatives but has no power to enforce this recommendation.

On the other hand union involvement in workplace learning – particularly in essential literacy and numeracy skills and ICT skills – is more advanced in Northern Ireland. The statutory Union Learning scheme, funded by DEL, has paid for 200 union activists to train as Union Learning Representatives throughout the public and private sector so as to help their fellow workers become involved in lifelong learning, and to run classes in the workplace for workers who attend them on a paid release basis.

The partnership process

The great success of the social partnership process in fuelling the Celtic Tiger economy in the Republic is well-known at home and internationally. As the former ICTU General Secretary Peter Cassells has said: 'It [i.e. the Celtic Tiger economy] is hard to explain to outsiders. If you try to explain it as just social partnership, it doesn't add up. If you look at all the ingredients – the tax changes, Europe, inward investment, public service change, and the young, educated population – they were there before and it didn't work. What social partnership did was make all those ingredients work by bringing them all together.'⁵

Social partnership in the South was born out of a deep economic and fiscal crisis in the late 1980s which brought the Irish state to the brink of bankruptcy. It brought out the most pragmatic tendencies in the Irish trade union movement, which realised that National Agreements were the only way to move towards the economic prosperity that would bring down a crippling unemployment rate and avoid the kind of anti-union and anti-worker policies being espoused by Margaret Thatcher's government in Britain.

The strength of partnership, says one Southern writer on trade union affairs, was that it 'allowed the partners to work out where the economy is going. It's a system of constant discussion, analysis, negotiation and prioritising solutions'.⁶

Clearly, 20 years on, the lessons Northern Ireland can learn from social partnership in the South – which is now starting to look frail in the face of worsening economic conditions (despite the current long-term National Agreement *Towards 2016*) – are relatively limited. But are there some lessons nevertheless?

A number of Southern trade unionists interested in North-South cooperation who were interviewed by this writer thought there were. One of the leading trade union architects of the Southern partnership process said the trade union movement in the North had 'huge integrity and credibility' based on its work for peace and against sectarianism, but this had not been capitalised on in its dealings with government. He stressed that having all-Ireland unions wasn't important: 'What matters is that trade unions in the North should have a forum that they can buy into to allow them to make an economic contribution to Northern Ireland and to an all-island economy – a kind of partnership approach.' This man suggests that the ICTU's Northern Ireland Committee should approach the Northern Ireland Executive with the 'concept' of a social partnership mechanism for Northern Ireland (to parallel the political partnership mechanism that is the Executive), and an eminent person or group of people (à la Patten or Hayes) should then be asked to further develop it.

A second noted that talks would be starting on the post-2010 phase of

Towards 2016 in early 2008. This would be an opportunity for the ICTU to put one or two North-South demands on the table, with the assurance that the Irish Government would be favourable to such an intervention. This trade unionist suggested that the ICTU's North/South Committee could serve as a forum – through cross-border seminars and meetings – to allow Southern trade unionists to speak to Northern trade unionists about their experience of partnership in terms of the future economic and social development of the island.

A number of interviewees said there was a role for an National Economic and Social Council (NESC)-type body in Northern Ireland, to allow the unions, employers and government to engage in discussions about the future economic and social shape of N. Ireland without committing their organisations to formal agreements; to provide a source of unimpeachable research and expertise in the matters being discussed; and to build trust between the social partners. Southern trade unionists were unanimous in their praise for the role of the NESC in laying the groundwork for 20 years of successful social partnership in the Republic. As a focussed and non-adversarial 'think tank' – backed by hugely supportive senior civil servants and highly-skilled researchers – it had been able to raise potential problems for constructive discussion between the social partners, and often to resolve them before the partners got into formal negotiations. It was also able to widen those discussions to include

issues such as housing, health services, childcare, transport, and skills training alongside the traditional IR issues of wages and conditions.

It was suggested that the North's Economic Development Forum – envisaged when it was set up in the 1990s as an equivalent mechanism for bringing the social partners together to plan the economy – could still become a similar vehicle for kick-starting the process of economic and social transformation in Northern Ireland.

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This Conference considers that circumstances on the island are appropriate for the establishment of

an economic strategy which can guarantee high levels of prosperity, quality of life and equality of opportunity for all the island of Ireland. Conference calls on the Executive Council to campaign for the following:

- Implementing the planned €100 billion investment strategy for the whole island in the coming decade with the twin aims of creating one of the most modern and high productivity economic zones in the world today and eradicating absolute and relative poverty in both jurisdictions;
- Implementing the all-Ireland energy strategy agreed between the two Governments with the emphasis on serving the needs of the people rather than some unreal model of private competition;
- Co-ordination of industrial policy between the two jurisdictions, especially attracting and optimally distributing high-value Foreign Direct Investment and promoting high levels of R & D investment by both domestic and foreign investors. This co-ordination should be aimed at maximising employment in manufacturing industry and continuously raising the skill levels of the workforce;
- Negotiating a common level of corporation profits tax for the whole island and examining convergence issues in relation to revenue;
- The sharing of resources, planning and expertise to ensure the best quality public services given the resources available.

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TOWARDS A NEW TOURISM BRAND FOR THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

Maureen Gaffney and Trevor Ringland

The island of Ireland faces enormous competition in its efforts to attract tourists to its shores. It is competing against 200 other country or island destinations, each with something to sell to potential visitors. Tourism Ireland, the body charged with promoting Ireland on an all-island basis to customers abroad¹, has to ensure that it too can stand out from the crowd. For

that reason, in June 2007 it began a comprehensive review of its Ireland tourism brand². The brand was created in 1996, with reviews in 2001 and 2004 to reflect the changing nature of the island, and for the past decade has been used in all overseas marketing communications. What Tourism Ireland hoped to discover from its most recent comprehensive review in conjunction with key stakeholders was whether there needed to be adjustments or changes to the brand in light of the changing dynamics within Ireland, both North and South.



Maureen Gaffney



Trevor Ringland

We were appointed to an eight-person Expert Group which was asked to assist in the brand re-evaluation. The group consisted of local and international business people as well as marketing and brand professionals not involved in the tourism industry. The authors of this article are respectively a clinical psychologist and a lawyer by profession. The creation of the Expert Group, with no vested interest in tourism, was an innovative step by Tourism Ireland. The organisation was

holding up its brand and marketing strategy to acute examination by professionals who had no reason to be less than brutally honest in their assessment. The outcome, we hope, is a fresh perspective on how the brand was performing.

It also meant that the tourism professionals had to explain the implicit assumptions which feature in their daily lives. That can be a very creative process and can give a fresh input into how the

world outside tourism operates and views the work of organisations like Tourism Ireland. We certainly found it an engaging and interesting process, in which we learned much about the industry from marketing to delivery of product.

The other members of the Expert Group covered a range of disciplines. It was chaired by David Nichols, a man with international experience in marketing and brand consultancy who has written widely and authoritatively on the subject. Professor David Carson from the University of Ulster is president of the Academy of Marketing UK, the foremost representative body of marketing academics in the UK and Ireland, and has wide experience of middle and senior management training in the service industry. Mark Thompson is a member of the Chartered Society of Designers and has worked with some of Northern Ireland's biggest advertising and communications groups; he is also chair of the Ulster-Scots Agency. John Fanning worked in market research in London for seven years before returning to Ireland to join McConnell Advertising and was subsequently appointed its managing director and chairman. Ciaran O Gaora is managing director of a Dublin-based brand consultancy and has worked across a wide range of sectors including culture, tourism, science, retail, health and government. Regine Reinhardt is a Berlin-born journalist and art historian, educated in Germany, the US and Ireland, who has worked in the Irish tourism industry. She is a frequent visitor to the island.

We must stress that our input was only one part of a review which was comprehensive and ground-breaking. The review involved Tourism Ireland at board, management and overseas office levels, the Northern Ireland Tourism Board, Fáilte Ireland, the Tourism Marketing Partnership, other 'island of Ireland' agencies, industry groups in Dublin, Galway and Belfast, hospitality industry workers, and opinion formers in the media, commerce and arts and culture sectors.

'People, Place and Culture'

In the original branding exercise, promotional campaigns were built around the three pillars of 'people, place and culture'. These were recognised as the factors which differentiated Ireland from other tourism destinations. And they were factors which had served the island well. In 2006 some 8.7m tourists visited Ireland, contributing £2.9bn (€3.9bn) to the economy of the island³. It might seem strange in such circumstances to start tinkering with a brand that obviously works. However Tourism Ireland felt that a decade after the original concept was agreed, a review was timely and that it would be easier to conduct at a time when tourism was on the increase. This is in contrast to most strategic reviews, which are undertaken at times of crisis when a sharp change of direction is a necessity rather than an option.

In its research and discussions with stakeholders Tourism Ireland found a variety of responses to the current

brand. Hospitality industry workers⁴ – those delivering services on the front line – found the brand served the industry well. That was a view shared by Irish people as well as immigrants working in the industry. However those charged with taking a more strategic view of tourism found that the brand, while providing a sound base for Tourism Ireland's promotion activities, was missing opportunities to further enhance the appeal of Ireland as a tourism destination. The professional tourism bodies as well as the Expert Group and opinion formers were roughly of one mind on this.

They reasoned that the current brand and its associated promotional campaigns did not offer compelling enough reasons to visit the island of Ireland. There was a feeling that the image of the island being portrayed was too traditional, even a little twee. The dynamism of Ireland of today was somehow missing. Not enough was made of the urban environments on the island and the element of 'place' was too dominant as compared to 'people' and 'culture'. The recommendation was for a refreshing of the brand to enhance its vibrancy and to more accurately reflect modern Ireland.

But while it is always easy to pick fault with existing strategies, finding ways of enhancing them is more difficult. Tourism Ireland did not rely on purely subjective feelings in its review of the brand. It also conducted research⁵ to see whether the subjective views expressed would be validated by the people who

mattered most – the people who visited Ireland. People in four markets – Great Britain, USA, France and Germany – were questioned about their expectations of Ireland both before and after visiting the island. In areas like beautiful scenery, friendly welcoming people, exploration of history and culture, relaxed pace of life, lively cities and range of activities, more than 90% of those questioned felt that Ireland lived up to or exceeded their expectations. As an audit of how the brand has performed this research was encouraging. Yet it still showed the validity of the expert view that we need to tighten our focus and sharpen up our tourism offering. This was ground-breaking research by Tourism Ireland, which had never previously questioned holidaymakers in this precise manner before and after their trips to Ireland on their expectations and how those expectations were met or not.

Other research, drilling down to the core image of Ireland as a holiday destination, involved workshops with industry professionals in Galway, Dublin and Belfast⁶; interviews with opinion formers in the travel industry, social commentators, and those who influence Irish public life and culture; and research in key target markets.

The diversity message

Our Expert Group consisted of individuals from both parts of the island, the Republic and Northern Ireland. One of the key themes to emerge from our discussions and engagement was the



Bloody Foreland, Co Donegal – an example of the superb landscape of the Irish border region

diversity that exists in Ireland. This is a key offering which it was felt was perhaps overlooked somewhat in the past. Part of the reason for that is obvious given the troubled recent history of Northern Ireland. Some people, indeed, might argue that it was the inability of people in Northern Ireland to cope with their diversity which lay at the root of decades of violence. The net result was that the true diversity of Ireland, especially in its people and culture, was not a key message in the promotion of the island. We felt this was a missed opportunity.

During the Group's deliberations, the pride of Northerners in their part of the island was very apparent. It is easy, given the sensitivities around so many issues in Northern Ireland, to attempt to tip-toe around these issues and to present a rather bland picture of that

part of the island. That is a mistake and is, in effect, airbrushing out an integral part of the island. With the resurrection of a power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland, and with political relationships throughout the island and between Ireland and the UK at an unprecedented level of harmony, the strong message to emerge from the Expert Group was that we need to take a realistic look at the Northern Ireland tourism offering.

Culturally it is the most diverse region of the island, with its flourishing Irish, Scots-Irish and British traditions and allegiances. Making those traditions and allegiances more visible in the promotion of the island of Ireland overseas lays down a challenge to those involved in the various cultures to make them more attractive to visitors. An example quoted by Northern members

of the Expert Group was the transformation in attitudes to the Apprentice Boys parades in Londonderry. Once these parades had a negative image but now, through hard work on the ground in the city, they hold potential as a tourist attraction and an income generator for the area.

While the changed political climate and the absence of violence now makes it easier to promote Northern Ireland as a tourism destination within an all-island context, it is not just sentiment which demands it but practical, hard-nosed economics. In the last four years taken together (2002-2006), Northern Ireland earned £1.45bn (€1.95bn) from overseas visitors⁷, an impressive enough figure, but it can do much, much better. Consider that tourism generated almost £2.9bn (€3.9bn) throughout Ireland in 2006 alone, and it is obvious that Northern Ireland is not achieving its full potential. That is not a criticism of the industry, but an indication of the potential that is untapped north of the border. Some of that potential is already being realised as the growth in visitor numbers to the North is well in excess of the European average. Growth has come from all of the main markets.

'Positive Patriotism'

For some Group members, the discussions on improving the Northern Ireland tourism offering and assimilating its diversity into the overall promotion of the island was one of the most fascinating parts of their deliberations. The depth of emotional attachment to

that part of the island by those who live there took some of their colleagues by surprise. In the words of one member, it was 'positive patriotism'.

One of the exercises undertaken by the Expert Group was for each individual to write a postcard on their holiday in Ireland. This proved to be a very creative and revealing exercise. Traditionally tourists have thought only of the products or services they were offered on holiday, but now the emphasis is more on experience, a much more emotional reaction. Single attractions such as scenery, activities or meeting new people are no longer a sufficient lure to sophisticated visitors. They demand an integrated experience from their destination. It is as much an emotional trip as a physical one. That obviously impacts on the way Tourism Ireland has to market the island. It also challenges a much wider community than just the hospitality and tourism industry. Tourists' experience is formed not just from their sampling of traditional tourism products, but also in how they are treated by the wider community. Staying in a five-star spa may be an invigorating experience, but it loses some of its appeal if the taxi driver taking the person to the spa is rude or overcharges, or if they get bad service in the local shops. The brand is not just a marketing tool; it is a concept which should be bought into by everyone who is likely to interact with visitors. Attracting more tourists is of benefit to the entire economy.

The intensive investigations into the

current brand produced a broad consensus on the way forward. While there was agreement that much of what was being done at present in promoting the island is valid and effective, it was also accepted that the brand needed to be repositioned to take account of the evolving dynamics of modern Ireland. There was a feeling that current promotion, and perhaps the brand itself, misses out on the young, the dynamic and the passionate elements which distinguish modern Ireland. Musically and artistically Ireland is a distinctive destination, a point which is possibly not widely enough recognised or acknowledged.

The changing political atmosphere in Northern Ireland is of vital importance to the brand and the promotion of the island as a whole. While the island consists of two jurisdictions and two currencies, as a tourism offering it makes sense – indeed is an imperative, according to the Expert Group – to market it as one island. The differences between the two parts of the island can then be sold as positive diversity rather than glossed over.

There was a feeling, for example, that there are huge opportunities to promote Northern Ireland more positively, and particularly Belfast and Londonderry as

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thriving, modern cities in the way that Dublin has become a European 'party capital'. One suggestion to emerge was twinning towns, cities and other destinations in the two parts of Ireland, offering visitors similar type experiences on both sides of the border.

Handling modern history

History in Ireland is a contentious subject, at least politically, and often the safe option is taken when discussing the subject by concentrating on ancient history, rather than on more recent events that have shaped the island of today. There was broad recognition that the issue of modern history needs to be handled sensitively, but nevertheless it is an issue which should be addressed. Again taking Northern Ireland as an example, it was pointed out that a destination which has recently emerged from conflict can be attractive to visitors for that very reason. Perhaps one of the most potent examples is Berlin, where the dreadful icons of the past are part of the experience which attracts millions of visitors annually to that city.

In summary, the Group's deliberations on the current brand position produced a largely positive feedback, with some reservations:

- The brand was felt to be credible and attractive for all audiences and largely over-delivers against expectations.
- It has delivered consistent communications, and therefore consistent views about the island.
- However, it was felt that it did not fully reflect some of the changes on the island, such as the changed political situation in Northern Ireland, the dynamism of the urban environment and the changing nature of Irish society influenced, in part, by the large number of immigrants in recent years.
- The weakest point was the brand's inability to make Ireland stand out in the crowded, mature, competitive international market place. Competitors had noted Ireland's marketing strategy based on the themes of 'people, place and culture' and had, with varying degrees of success, attempted to replicate it. The consensus among those examining the current brand was that it, like Ireland, needed to evolve.

Having reached that point in the deliberations, the next stage of the process involved identifying the way forward and the challenges ahead. It was agreed that the brand must be sufficiently robust to attract first time visitors. Repeat visitor ratios are good⁸, but there is evidence to show that many potential visitors filter Ireland out of their plans after good initial consideration⁹. The research with visitors shows that their expectations of what a holiday in Ireland will deliver are too low. One-third to one-half reported that their expectations were exceeded when they actually came to Ireland, which suggests that branding and promotion should portray the island as a premium destination¹⁰.

Visitors too often have a stereotypical image of the island and have yet to discover the depth and breadth of what it has to offer.

'An Island of Unique Character and Characters'

So how could the brand evolve to differentiate Ireland as a tourism destination? Research and discussion among the stakeholders, including the Expert Group, determined that two of the three original pillars, people and place, remain the primary ways of making the island stand out from the competition. The consensus was that these two features must be at the heart of the experience being sold to visitors. Cultural breadth and diversity are important motivators for sightseers and culture seekers, but culture itself is not a unifying element of the brand.

The challenge posed by the research was how to redefine the Irish character in a way which would appeal to those who know little of the country. Building on the agreement that people and place must be at the heart of the new brand, the idea of 'Ireland – An Island of Unique Character and Characters' evolved. The feeling was that this branding would enable the island to be promoted and portrayed in a much more specific manner.

The character of the island could be described in terms such as dissonant, diverse, surprising, dramatic, involving, inviting, accessible, concentrated,

vibrant and deep-rooted. Its people can be portrayed as authentic, curious, knowledgeable, inquiring, engaging, spontaneous, witty, articulate, lyrical and having pride in place. Both elements have to be engaged to make the experience of holidaying in Ireland unique. The beauty, accessibility and diversity of the place has a very strong appeal to visitors, but it is the people who raise the experience to the higher level demanded by visitors. The 'characters' of Ireland can be a unique selling point and central to the promotion of the island.

With the evolution of the brand will come a change of focus in the communication with the target markets. The emphasis will be on a more positive image. The consensus was that more should be made of contemporary people and places, with iconic images of the island to the fore. The image of Irish people abroad is a largely positive one. The Irish as tourists are generally welcomed in their holiday destinations and that is a strength that has to be incorporated when promoting Ireland to potential overseas visitors. The message is that interaction with Irish people in Ireland will make the holiday an unforgettable experience. Ireland's people are a selling point that cannot be cloned by competitors.

Having agreed the concept, the challenge is now to bring it to life. It must be validated in further discussions within the industry and then shared with the stakeholders, and ultimately the consumers. The evolution of a new

brand is not an end in itself, but simply the arrival at a critical juncture for the tourism industry.

Tourism Ireland has set itself a challenging, but attainable, target of increasing tourism income from €12.8bn (£9.52bn) to €16bn (£11.9bn) in the next three years¹¹. That, inevitably, will require further investment in the product, from further training for those who work in the hospitality sector to new infrastructure, especially at the luxury end of the market. There was consensus among the Expert Group that Northern Ireland, for perfectly understandable reasons, has lagged behind in the creation of tourism infrastructure. One suggestion to emerge was the creation of a think-tank among all the stakeholders in the industry to plot the way forward and create a better experience for visitors to the North.

Northern Ireland, as already stated, has the greatest potential for development, starting, as it does, from a relatively low base. While both parts of the island are in competition for tourists, it is a collaborative competition that can produce a win-win situation for the entire island. There are a number of encouraging factors at play. The Lonely Planet travel guide designated Northern Ireland as a 'must see' destination for 2007, a huge encouragement to overseas visitors. The Blue List 2008, also published by Lonely Planet, ranked Ireland as the friendliest destination in the world¹². The Antrim Coast road was ranked in a survey by wine-makers

Jacob's Creek as one of the most spectacular views in the world alongside the Grand Canyon and Sydney Harbour Bridge. Those are testaments which can easily be built upon.

However, to achieve the step change required to see tourism increase in Northern part of the island will require a comprehensive private sector-driven investment programme, supported by the public sector as appropriate. While the job of Tourism Ireland is to promote the entire island to its key overseas markets, working with the Northern Ireland Tourism Board, the Regional Tourism Partnerships and other stakeholders, it also campaigns on behalf of Northern Ireland in particular: for example as a short break destination for visitors from Scotland and northern England.

The work undertaken in reassessing the Tourism Ireland brand has laid vital groundwork in providing a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the consumer in a highly competitive industry. Now we have to begin to bring to life the expression of what Ireland has to offer through advertising and promotional activity, and ultimately the persuasion of more and more overseas visitors to come to these shores. What is evident from what they have told us is that they demand a memorable product when they arrive. In that we all have a part to play.

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2. Tourism Brand Ireland was a brand developed first in 1996 by Bord Fáilte in cooperation with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, using international branding techniques to market Ireland as a tourist destination.
3. Overseas tourist figures are compiled from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)'s Country of Residence Survey, Fáilte Ireland (FI)'s Survey of Overseas Travellers and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)'s Passenger Survey. They are consolidated by FI, NITB and Tourism Ireland in order to avoid duplication in all island figures. The CSO survey comprises questionnaires from approximately 500,000-600,000 people annually who have visited Ireland. The NITB survey questions approximately 5,000-6,000 people annually who have visited Northern Ireland. The FI survey comprises questionnaires completed by approximately 10,000 people annually who have visited Ireland.
4. Hospitality Industry Research was conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes Limited on behalf of Tourism Ireland in Dublin, Belfast and Killarney. Qualitative research comprised seven focus groups held in July 2007 involving Irish nationals and non-Irish newcomers working in the hospitality industry.
5. Tourism Ireland commissioned P. Robert & Partners International Marketing Research to conduct 'Promise versus Experience' research with first time holidaymakers to the island of Ireland in summer 2007. 600 self-completion surveys were carried out at ports of departure (air and ferry) in each of Great Britain, USA and Germany, with a smaller sample in France. The survey asked respondents to rate their expectations of different aspects of their future holiday. Following their holiday, the same holidaymakers were contacted with an online questionnaire, asking them to rate


the actual holiday experience. Pre and post ratings were then compared and analysed to uncover any areas that were under- or over-promising.

6. In September 2007 industry workshops were held in Dublin, Galway and Belfast with representatives from a broad cross section of the industry, government departments and other stakeholders. In addition, 12 statutory 'island of Ireland' organisations participated in the Brand Review.
7. Overseas tourist figures are compiled from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)'s Country of Residence Survey, Fáilte Ireland (FI)'s Survey of Overseas Travellers and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)'s Passenger Survey (*See Reference 3*).
8. Repeat visitor ratio figures are compiled from the Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Country of Residence Survey, Fáilte Ireland's (FI) Survey of Overseas Travellers and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) Passenger Survey (*See Reference 3*).
9. Tourism Ireland's Brand and Advertising Tracking research has been conducted by Lansdowne Market Research annually in between eight and twelve overseas markets since 2002. The research has traditionally been run as a telephone survey among 1,000 ABC1 overseas holidaymakers in each market each year, but has moved to an online survey since 2007. The research is an integral tool in market planning and strategy development, exploring consumers' image of Ireland and barriers to visiting, as well as interest in holidays on the island of Ireland, planning behaviour and key segments to target.
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LESSONS FROM AN INSTITUTE FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE FRANCO-GERMAN BORDER



Joachim Beck

Joachim Beck

Border regions play an important role in the context of European integration: 40% of the EU territory is covered by such regions and approximately 30% of the EU's population lives in them. Of the 362 regions registered by the Council of Europe and its 47 member states, more than 140 are cross-border regions. Both the effects of movement towards European integration – as well as the remaining obstacles – can be best studied here, whether it is in the form of the mobility of goods, services, capital or people. This is why the border regions have often been described as the laboratories of European integration.

Border regions everywhere have specific characteristics. A wide range of social and economic phenomena have a 'border crossing' dimension in areas as different as transport, labour markets, service delivery, consumption patterns, migration, criminality, pollution, commuter movements, tourism and leisure time activities. All of these require close cross-border cooperation between neighbouring states. However unlike in the national context, where regional cooperation takes place within a uniform legal, institutional and financial framework, cross-border cooperation faces the challenge of managing different politico-administrative systems which have a distinctive legal basis and are

characterised by varying degrees of vertical differentiation in terms of structures, resources and autonomy of action.

The Upper Rhine is a border region that lies at the heart of Europe. It is composed of the French region of Alsace, the north-western part of Switzerland and subregions of the German *länder* Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz. This cross-border region covers a surface of around 21,500 square kilometres with approximately six million people living there (30% in France, 23% in Switzerland and 47% in Germany). During the last 15 years its transnational socio-economic dynamics have increased significantly. Here are a

few examples: more than 90.000 (mostly French) people cross the border each day to work in one of the neighbouring states. 80% of the overall turnover of the property market in the German town of Kehl involves clients coming from across the Rhine in Strasbourg. Nearly 50% of the craft enterprises in the Upper Rhine region are engaged in activities in a neighbouring state. The trilateral BioValley Initiative brings together 300 life sciences companies, three internationally-active pharmaceutical companies (Novartis, Roche and Aventis), four universities (Basle, Freiburg, Mulhouse and Strasbourg), approximately 30 private and public research institutes and a constantly-growing number of biotech start-up companies.

With a gross annual domestic product of 165 billion euro, the Upper Rhine is economically nearly as important as Ireland (173.8 billion euro), and the number of employed persons (three million) is larger than in Denmark (2.7 million). While the socio-economic importance and dynamism of this region is comparable with some entire member states, its governance structure remains divided by national borders, creating numerous obstacles to an even greater exploitation of its socio-economic potential.

On the other hand, cross-border cooperation has a relatively long tradition in this region, going back to the 1960s, when the first transnational institutions were created both at local

and decentralised state level, leading to early common approaches in regional planning, coordination of infrastructure and exchange of information. With the coming of the Single Market and the EU's cross-border INTERREG programmes in the nineties (with the implementation in the region of more than 300 cross-border projects in the first three INTERREG phases), it became more and more obvious that one of the key bottlenecks preventing deepening cooperation was the lack of knowledge and understanding of the political and administrative systems of the neighbouring countries.

Based on the practical experience of Dr Ewald Eisenberg, then Professor in charge of French-German relations at the University of Applied Sciences in Kehl, and following a feasibility study which was validated by a conference of public training institutions in the two countries, the Euro Institute was founded in 1993 as the first specialised binational institution for cross-border training in Europe. Its initial funding came from the INTERREG I programme.

The Euro Institute's objectives, as defined by its founding agreement, have not changed in the 15 years of its existence. The Institute contributes to the improvement of cross-border cooperation by continuing education and training, and provides practical advice and coaching to practitioners in the cross-border field. While in the early years it also provided basic research, a new convention in 2004 concentrated its objectives more closely on training and

advice, in order to better clarify its relationship with its academic partners. In this way, the Institute has become a facilitator for successful cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine region with regard to public policies, and contributes actively to the resolution of problems resulting from different legal and administrative systems.

Institutional structures

The Institute's internal structures reflect a number of common principles initially agreed between the partners, which continue to contribute to its good functioning. Firstly there was a consensus that the governmental authorities on both sides of the border who were involved in cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine should also be the main partners in the Institute. This was in order to ensure the necessary interlinking between the different levels of regional and local administration and the services responsible for the management of public training. On the French side these were the French state (represented by the Préfecture de Région), the Conseil Régional d'Alsace, the Département du Bas-Rhin and the Strasbourg Agglomeration Council, and on the German side they were the government of Baden-Württemberg (represented by the regional governor of Freiburg), the county of Ortenau and the municipal government of Kehl, where the Institute was located. In order to ensure the necessary links and synergies with the academic world, the University of Strasbourg and the University of Applied

Sciences of Kehl also became active partners.

The second principle the partners agreed on was the decision to create a legally and organisationally independent entity. Unlike other institutions of cross-border cooperation, which work with personnel who are seconded from the national partners, the Euro Institute has from the beginning employed its own personnel, namely a French and/or German director, a corresponding vice-director, and a team of bilingual and bi-national training managers.

After a short period in which the Institute was located in premises belonging to Kehl University, it moved to the prestigious Rehfusvilla, a former hat factory, which had been renovated to become a modern centre of European and cross-border cooperation also hosting two other institutions: INFOBEST, an agency providing cross-border citizens information, and the Secretariat of the Trilateral Conference of the Upper Rhine, the official government body for cross-border cooperation in the region. It was the ambition of all the partners also to set up a legal structure in order to symbolise both the integrity and durability of the new body. At that time German public law did not yet provide an adequate legal form, so it was decided to use the only European instrument available, the EIEG (Economic Interest European Group) – although the objectives of the Euro Institute have never been to work economically on a profit basis. Later, in 2004, with the



The Rehfusvilla in Kehl on the German-French Border, which houses the Euro Institute

emergence of new transnational legal forms, the Institute became the first GLCT (Local Cross-Border Cooperation Grouping) in Germany.

The third principle was the introduction of a dual financing mechanism based on subventions from the partners and on securing external contracts; the establishment of a bi-national board with a rotating national presidency between France and Germany; and the appointment of a scientific board, representing important personalities willing to support and to contribute to the work of the institute. At the end of the EU co-financing period in 1999, the national partners decided not to cover the resulting budget deficit completely themselves. Instead the Euro Institute was asked to raise some of its revenues by working as a service provider in the public sector training market. In parallel, a new internal accounting system was set up to improve the cost-effectiveness of its training product. With a base of solid financing by its public partners, which covers 90% of the annual

budget, the Institute has in recent years greatly improved its performance in winning external contracts. More demand-oriented and specialised training products have been developed without changing the original objectives or the main target groups significantly.

In terms of internal governance, the partners have delegated most of the everyday management to the director, who now acts both as the institute's CEO and its 'Chief Strategic Officer' in terms of product and programme design, marketing and acquisitions. The board – representing the governmental and academic partners - meets twice a year: to approve the annual activity report and the externally audited financial report in March and to approve the budget and the following year's work programme in November. The delegation of other competences to the director and the fact of having its own legal structure, combined with a high degree of autonomy in staffing and budgetary matters, has allowed it to develop a strong integrated working

culture. The Institute has thus over time become a living example of transnational institutional integration, as had been intended by its founders.

How the Institute works

The Euro Institute's training product is structured according to the needs identified by the actors involved in cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine. The main characteristic of this product is its bi-national and bi-cultural orientation, and the main target groups are the employees of the state and local administrations in Germany, France and increasingly Switzerland. Its training courses are also open to participants from the private sector, and from research institutions, universities, civil society associations and other groups.

The Institute's training work can be classified according to the following three pillars:

Pillar 1: Basic training on cross-sectoral competences

The basic component of the Institute's activity is the development of the cross-sectoral skills and competences necessary for any cross-border and/or inter-regional cooperation. The main objective here is to provide those involved with the necessary institutional and legal knowledge about the politico-administrative system of the neighbouring states and about the system of cross-border cooperation itself. In addition, the relevant instrumental, methodological and

linguistic skills are learned in order to prepare and structure the proposed cross-border activity in advance. It is very important to sensitise the future actors about the importance of the intercultural dimension and to provide them with the necessary tools and methods of intercultural management. The courses also provide participants with the specifics of managing cross-border projects in terms of planning, financing, organisation of meetings, and monitoring and evaluation.

Participants take a minimum of four training modules: for instance (for Germans), an introductory seminar on the politico-administrative system of France, two courses on intercultural training and project management, and one language course. If they complete the course, they can obtain the professional auxiliary qualification of 'cross-border project manager'.

The course and qualification provided under the first pillar meets an increasing demand. The more cross-border cooperation becomes an everyday reality, the more new actors face the challenge of becoming better trained and qualified in terms of the skills the course covers. Nearly all public institutions in the Upper Rhine valley are now seeking well qualified people who can represent them in both formal and informal cross-border cooperation situations.

Pillar 2: Specialised training

The Institute also provides specialised

training courses which are oriented towards representatives from specific administrative sectors in the neighbouring states. The content of these courses consists of selected policy-oriented topics within cross-border cooperation. The aim is to provide a neutral platform for exchanges between specialists from the different countries so that they can better understand the sectoral competences and organisational structures in the other countries, and identify differences from and similarities with their own - or just allow them to get current information and analysis on policy developments and good practice in the neighbouring states. This training mainly consists of

two day seminars, including informal exchanges during an evening event on the first day. As most cross-border problems have a sectoral or thematic component, and thus require cooperation between the relevant sectoral services, these specialist seminars are very often the starting point for future joint projects, and sometimes even lead to the establishment of bilateral or trilateral standing working groups.

Another form of training under the second pillar is bigger conferences of 200 or more participants. In 2007, for example, the Euro Institute organised two major conferences: one on the



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implementation of the French-German framework treaty on health cooperation, and the second on the reintegration of older French and German people into the workforce at a time when there are fewer young people on the labour market and the official pension age is rising (it is now 67 in Germany).

Another programme deals with cooperation between the French and German police, justice and gendarmerie services in the context of the Schengen Treaty. This programme, which consists of five annual seminars, was established in 2004. It is overseen by a steering committee of high-level representatives from the participating administrations which select the topics and annually evaluate the course, which has been developed by the Euro Institute.

Pillar 3: Developing national competences for EU affairs

Under the third pillar, the Institute tries to enhance the competences of national public administrations with regard to European integration. Most local and regional administrations take a very pragmatic view and see Europe mainly as an opportunity to access EU financial support programmes like INTERREG. This is a legitimate position which raises numerous practical questions: how to find the right partner across the border; how to fill in the application form; how to set up a project's organisation; how to manage a cross-border budget; how to justify expenses; how to define good progress and impact indicators, and

how to make a project-oriented monitoring and evaluation system work. Although the INTERREG secretariat of the relevant Operational Programme usually does a very good job, practical experience shows that local and regional partners are very often overloaded by the complexity of the reporting and accounting demands on them by the funder.

In addition, German, French and Swiss project partners often have different perceptions of these demands, and have to deal with the day-to-day running of a cross-border project involving national administrations with quite different administrative cultures. This is why the Euro Institute, using its own extensive experience of such projects, provides adaptable practical coaching to both the individual project leader and the bi- or tri-national project teams as an intercultural group. This contributes to the smooth functioning of the project teams, helps to avoid blockages, and thus facilitates both project and programme implementation

In addition, more and more local and regional authorities want to participate in inter-regional or even transnational INTERREG projects, and are developing partnerships with Eastern European regions. In this context the question of good practice in international network management arises: how to build and maintain a solid international partnership; what is the relative position of the actors in the network; how to prepare and manage international meetings and so on. Here the Euro

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Institute also provides practical assistance.

Last but not least, the local and regional authorities are increasingly realising to what extent they are affected by European legislation. The fact that in Germany, for example, 80% of all local administrative action is more or less determined by EU law, raises the question of how to become more actively involved in the preparation of this legislation and how to better represent local and regional interests in its formulation. Based on the wide practical experience of its director, who has since 2004 been an accredited trainer on Impact Assessment for the European Commission's Secretariat General, the Institute helps the actors in the Upper Rhine to become more familiar with the relevant procedures at EU-level and teaches them how to contribute actively to stakeholder consultations and ex ante impact assessments, which increasingly have to consider regional and/or trans-regional dimensions.

In terms of the development, design and marketing of its training product, the Euro Institute takes two main approaches. On the one hand, an annual catalogue is published, which describes and schedules around ten training courses for each pillar. The catalogue lists those training courses which can be signed up to by any interested person. It is published in January each year and is widely distributed in a print and electronic version. The courses in the catalogue,

however, represent only 30% of the Institute's training activities. Most training courses are developed in response to external demand. These tailor-made courses have become more and more important during recent years, and are often organised as bi-national seminars on specific public administration themes, e.g. on public health, occupational medicine, regional planning and urban policy. On the other hand, they do require the adaptation of training methods to fit the specific topics and/or the expectations of the external clients, and they often take place 'in house' at the client's place of business.

The success of these external courses is proof that the Institute has found its niche in the relatively difficult public sector training market. This recognition has also led to partnership agreements with the regional branches of some of the most important national training institutions in France, such as the Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFPT). However with a more decentralised system of continuing education in Germany, the formalisation of standard contracts is more difficult. Also the training budgets available to German local and regional authorities are smaller compared to the French side. To maintain the necessary balance, both in terms of individual participants and external clients, is the everyday challenge of this kind of bi-national training institution.

Publications on cross-border cooperation are very important. The Euro Institute

has therefore established its own series of publications with the well-known German publishing house NOMOS. 22 books have been published by the Institute so far. Recent titles include a practical guide on the intercultural management of meetings, and a volume on the European dimension of administrative culture, taken from the proceedings of an international conference in 2007 co-organised with the Council of Europe.

How to make cross-border partnerships work

A thorough knowledge of the politico-administrative system of the neighbouring country is a prerequisite for any efficient cross-border cooperation. The main difference between the Euro Institute's training courses and those of a national training organisation is therefore the concentration on themes arising out of the needs of cross-border professionals within the various sectors. Also the fact that the training courses are always inter-service, bi-national and bilingual in nature has contributed to their high acceptance among participants. We have found that partnerships between the relevant administrations are best developed when the courses are prepared by an ad hoc group of different national specialists. Such preparation requires a lot of time and investment by the partners – but it is a necessary precondition for any effective bi-national training product, which not only considers the intercultural dimension but actively uses it in terms

of content, methodology and participation. For successful cooperation with no 'mental frontier', trainers must reconsider their whole way of thinking, recognising that constructive cooperation is not possible without knowing and respecting the structures, working methods and ethos of the neighbouring country's system – as well as fully understanding one's own!

The contribution of the Euro Institute in making this partnership principle work is twofold: providing a neutral platform, and facilitating intercultural and inter-service exchange. Most important in this respect is a strategic positioning which is able to respond quickly to the real needs of the participants. Sometimes this means to be modest in one's aims and to provide only technical and logistical support. However, the provision of methodological and linguistic competence along with solid experience of good practice in intercultural management are the hallmarks of the Euro Institute. We believe that to share this experience and to cooperate with similar institutions from other border regions in Europe is very important. We look forward to the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Ireland joining us to become a partner in the EU-wide network of local authorities and training institutes which is being planned by Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, the French Government's cross-border cooperation agency, as part of a current application to the INTERREG IVC programme.

Dr Joachim Beck has been Director of the Franco-German Euro Institute since 2006. Before that he was Head of Public Management at the Swiss-based consultancy firm PROGNOSE AG and, in the 1990s, Managing Director of INFOBEST Strasbourg/Kehl, an agency providing cross-border citizens information. He has written several books on public management and cross-border cooperation and administrative culture in Europe.

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SCoTENS: HOW TEACHER EDUCATORS TOOK THE LEAD IN NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION



John Coolahan

John Coolahan

2008 marks the tenth anniversary of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement. It also marks the tenth anniversary of the discussions which led to the formation of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS), a unique organisation which brings together all the key agencies involved in the formation of teachers on the island of Ireland. This may be an appropriate time to trace the origins of SCoTENS, to examine its development, and to evaluate and contextualise its achievements. The move towards establishing such a standing conference was prompted by the text and spirit of Strand Two of the Belfast Agreement, which sought 'to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland – including through implementation on an all-island and cross-border basis – on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the administrations, North and South'. The second area listed for North-South cooperation and implementation was 'Education – teacher qualifications and exchanges'.

In the summer of 1998, Professor Harry McMahon of the University of Ulster and Professor John Coolahan of National University of Ireland Maynooth began discussions on the desirability of teacher educators taking a pro-active stance to promote cooperation on teacher education issues throughout the island. Consultations were held with other colleagues and strong support emerged for taking such an initiative. In the first instance, it was considered that a major conference should be held to

bring interested people together to focus on teacher education policy and practice in both jurisdictions on the island. This would provide an opportunity for viewpoints to emerge on the best way forward for sustaining dialogue and cooperation. A nine-person working group representative of teacher education institutions North and South was convened to plan this conference. Initial financial support was sought and received from the Department of Education in Northern

Ireland and the Department of Education and Science in the Republic.

The Invitational Conference for Teacher Education Professionals in Ireland, North and South, took place in the Hilton Hotel in Belfast on 18-20 May 2000. It was addressed by the Minister in charge of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, George Howarth MP, and the Minister of State for Children in the Republic of Ireland, Mary Hanafin TD. The conference was attended by representatives of 31 interested agencies: colleges of education, university education departments, curriculum councils and regional education bodies, along with officials from the sponsoring Departments. This was the first time that representatives from all the institutions with responsibility for teacher education on the island of Ireland had come together to discuss a range of issues of common concern.

One can view the 2000 Belfast conference as an attempt to re-engage teacher educators on the island in a process of reflection and collaboration after 80 years of the two education systems turning their backs on each other. Among the conference's objectives were:

- To allow teacher education professionals to develop a greater understanding of teacher education in both jurisdictions, and to consider current practice and concerns, and emerging futures;
- To identify possible shared initiatives and cross-border collaborations,

including coordinated research and development;

- To stimulate the creation of a framework for promoting continuing collaboration between teacher educators North and South, e.g. in the form of a standing conference.²

The three day event was a major success with a remarkable spirit of engagement and enthusiasm for collaboration in evidence. It benefited from the input of two major figures in international teacher education, Professor Malcolm Skilbeck from Australia and Professor David Imig from the USA. Following plenary papers by Professor McMahon and Professor Áine Hyland of University College Cork on teacher education, North and South, most of the work took place in work groups, which proposed a range of areas that would benefit from cross-border research and collaboration. A framework for action was agreed by the conference organising committee, which was constituted as an interim executive committee for the proposed standing conference.

The interim executive committee prepared an organisational framework, a work programme and a three year financial plan and submitted these to the Departments in both jurisdictions in December 2000.³ While it was intended that a scheme of institutional membership fees would eventually become operative, the hope was that contributions from the Departments over a three year period would be

obtained as initial core funding. However while there were expressions of goodwill, the required resources were not immediately forthcoming, particularly from the Northern administration. The offer of a small, once-off, start-up grant was deemed by the committee to be insufficient as a base to move forward. Eventually a scaled-down re-submission was made in February 2002, seeking £40,000 per annum from each administration over a two year pilot phase, and representations were made in support of it. In July 2002 Martin McGuinness, Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, wrote to Professor Coolahan to say that both he and his Northern colleague Carmel Hanna, Minister for Employment and Learning, were prepared to back this submission.⁴ With a parallel commitment from the Department of Education and Science in the Republic, this provided a budget of £160,000 for the 2003-2005 two-year pilot phase.⁵ Even before this funding was forthcoming, the interim executive committee had kept interest alive in the initiative by supporting cross-border networks on early childhood education and initial teacher education.

In autumn 2002 the committee held several meetings to plan its work programme and *modus operandi*. A work programme was submitted to the two Departments in December.⁶ The aim was to deploy the resources available as seed funding to support North-South networks and research projects during the two year pilot phase. The committee was pleased that it was able to devolve

its administration to the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh. Since that time the Centre has continued to be an effective and efficient support base for the work of SCOTENS, whose objectives are cognate to the purposes of the Centre. SCOTENS immediately gave its support to two EU-funded projects which the Centre for Cross Border Studies was getting under way: the North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project, which brought students from seven colleges of education – two in the North and five in the South – across the border to do part of their assessed teaching practice in schools in the other jurisdiction; and the North-South Diversity in Early Years Education research project, which aimed to identify difficulties facing young children and teachers in areas of inter-community conflict and tension on both sides of the border.

A SCOTENS website (<http://scotens.org>) was set up, initially under the direction of Dr Roger Austin in the University of Ulster, and later in the Centre for Cross Border Studies. In the first instance, it concentrated on material for special needs education, and material on citizenship education was later added. A group under Dr Austin was particularly active in forming a nucleus to develop initiatives involving teachers and student teachers, North and South, to engage cooperatively in areas of mutual professional interest in the application of ICT to education.

SCOTENS was also in a position to re-activate the network focussing on initial

teacher education issues, North and South. The Standing Conference also supported a network considering policy and practice on the in-career development of teachers, and the recently-formed Irish Association for Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE), which brought together history, geography and science teachers from the two jurisdictions. It also planned a series of annual conferences with prestigious international speakers. The Departments in both jurisdictions responded favourably to the work plan and indicated that they were 'firmly committed to the development of the cross-border dimension of teacher education.'

Thus when the Standing Committee of SCoTENS came together in Stranmillis University College Belfast on 31 January 2003 for its first formal meeting, it was in a good position to re-formulate its objectives and put in place structures and procedures to achieve them. Its objectives were agreed to be as follows:

- Provide a supportive framework for collaboration and professional activities on teacher education, North and South;
- Hold invitational conferences of mutual interest to teacher educators, North and South;
- Provide seed funding for North-South research projects on teacher education issues;
- Promote position papers on issues of mutual concern to teacher educators, North and South;
- Use its good offices to assist in

obtaining funding for approved research activities;

- Support exchange arrangements between teacher educators for approved purposes, as part of its concern to strengthen existing inter-professional and inter-institutional linkages;
- Maintain a website which will incorporate several forms of computer-mediated communication in relation to educational developments in research, North and South;
- Act as an agency for advice and consultation by policy makers in the Department of Education and Department for Employment and Learning (NI) and the Department of Education and Science (RoI).⁷

Over the five years since this ambitious declaration of intent SCOTENS has successfully delivered on all these objectives, although there has been limited direct engagement in the pursuit of the last objective of being an agency for advice and consultation to the Departments.

The pilot phase

The 2003-2005 pilot phase was to be of crucial importance in laying the foundations for this unusual form of cross-border academic collaboration, focussing on mutual educational concerns in two states which had been cut off from each other for over 80 years. One of the key mechanisms was to convene annual all-island conferences of teacher educators on common

themes, somewhat on the lines of the original Belfast conference in 2000. The first such a conference took place in Malahide, Co Dublin in October 2003 under the title 'Challenges to Teacher Education and Research, North and South'. It was opened by the Secretary General of the Irish Department of Education and Science, John Dennehy, and the Assistant Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department of Education, Christine Jendoubi.

While SCoTENS has focussed on the analysis and research of teacher education issues on the island of Ireland, it has never taken an insular approach. From the beginning it accepted that in modern circumstances teacher education in Ireland needed to be alert to international trends, particularly within the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the EU. The 2003 conference was addressed by David Istance, leader of the 'Schools for the Future' project in the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, and the 2004 conference by Sean Feerick, chairman of the EU Commission's working group on improving the education of teachers and trainers. This broad international input has continued to be a feature of all SCOTENS conferences. The organisation has also taken care to foster an East-West, as well as a North-South dimension, inviting distinguished figures in teacher education from Scotland and England as conference speakers. These have included the Registrar of the General Teaching

Council for Scotland, Matthew McIver; the Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for England, Keith Bartley, and the Chairman and Academic Secretary of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), Professors Michael Totterdell and Gordon Kirk.

As well as plenary sessions at the annual conferences, much of the activity occurred through cross-border work groups on specialist themes. The lists of workshops at the 2003 and 2007 conferences illustrate this well. In 2003 they were on: attracting, selecting and integrating student teachers; integrating ICT into teacher education; teacher education for diversity and citizenship; teacher education and the integration of special needs; school placements in initial teacher education; training for school leadership; best practice in teacher induction; and policy approaches to continuing professional development. In contrast, the 2007 conference workshops were on: digital video as a tool for changing ICT learning; moving towards creativity in arts and science education; exploring the CPD needs of heads of year; developing reflective skills in student teachers; bringing school communities together to promote education for diversity; and building effective science outreach strategies. These lists clearly demonstrate the centrality of what was being discussed to contemporary teacher education in both parts of the island.

The 2004 annual conference was held in



Irish Minister for Education and Science Ms Mary Hanafin TD with the joint chairpersons of SCOTENS, Professor Richard McMinn (left) and Dr Paucic Travers.

Armagh under the title 'The Changing Contexts of Teacher Education, North and South'. It included a very relevant and informative symposium on the Teaching Councils in Ireland and Scotland, with speeches from the directors of the Irish, Northern Irish and Scottish teaching councils: Áine Lawlor, Eddie McArdle and Matthew McIver. There was the usual range of reporting back on the research projects which SCOTENS had been supporting, from initial teacher education to teaching children with profound learning disabilities, and from an all-island survey of student perceptions of history, geography and science to a 'toolkit' for teachers working in intercultural education.

During this pilot phase, in line with its objective of providing a supportive framework for professional activities, SCOTENS also supported a range of sectoral conferences. These included

conferences organised by sub-groups such as the Irish Association for Social Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE) and the SCOTENS network on initial teacher education; and North-South conferences on special educational needs in initial teacher education, citizenship education, and building educational research capacity. Between 2003 and 2007, 12 such conferences were supported by SCOTENS.

A key objective of SCOTENS has been to provide relatively small amounts of seed funding for research projects conducted jointly by researchers North and South. The list of research projects which have been nurtured and supported in this way has been extraordinarily impressive. In the five years up to January 2008 no fewer than 27 research and conference projects were supported (**see Table on pages 56-59**).

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SCoTENS RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS

Project Name

Lead Participants

2003-2004

Special Education Needs and Initial Teacher Education in Ireland

Mr Hugh Kearns, Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Dr Michael Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin

A preliminary evaluation of a Teaching Package for Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Dr Jean Ware, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and Dr Colette Gray, Stranmillis University College, Belfast

North-South conference on Education for Diversity and Citizenship (1)

Ms Una O'Connor, University of Ulster and Mr Gerry Jeffers, NUI Maynooth

Universities and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Teachers North and South

Dr Paul Conway, University College Cork; Mr Hugh Kearns, Stranmillis University College, Belfast; Dr Mary McAteer, University of Ulster; Ms Regina Murphy, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

Irish Association for Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE) annual conference 2004

Dr Janet Varley, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and Dr Catherine Quinn, St Mary's University College, Belfast

2004-2005

An all-Ireland longitudinal study of Student Perceptions of History, Geography & Science (IASSEE)(3 phases, 2004-2008)

Dr Colette Murphy, Queen's University Belfast and Ms Fionnuala Waldron, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) and British Education Research Association (BERA) joint conference on research (1)

Dr Denis Bates, University of Limerick and Dr John Gardner, Queen's University, Belfast

SCoTENS RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS

Project Name

Lead Participants

2005-2006

Together towards Inclusion: A Toolkit for Trainers

Ms Mary Yarr, Southern Education and Library Board, Armagh; Dr Barbara Simpson, Trinity College Dublin; Professor David Little, Trinity College Dublin

IASSEE annual conference 2005

Ms Fionnuala Waldron, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra; Dr Janet Varley, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra; Dr Colette Murphy, Queen's University Belfast

North-South conference: The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development

Dr Andy Burke, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra; Mr Barry Burgess, University of Ulster; Ms Rose Dolan, NUI Maynooth; Ms Clare Connolly, St Mary's University College, Belfast

North-South Teaching Practice Study Group

Dr Paraig Cannon, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin; Ms Margaret Farrar, Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin; Ms Sandra McWilliams, Stranmillis University College, Belfast

North-South Citizenship Website

Dr Ron Smith. University of Ulster

2006-2007

North-South Conference on Education for Diversity and Citizenship (2)

Ms Una O'Connor, University of Ulster and Mr Gerry Jeffers. NUI Maynooth

ESAI and BERA joint conference on research (2)

Dr Denis Bates, University of Limerick; Dr John Gardner, Queen's University, Belfast; Dr Anne Lodge, NUI Maynooth

continued on next page >

SCoTENS RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS

Project Name

Lead Participants

2006-2007 cont.

Current Practice in ICT within Teacher Education

Dr Roger Austin, University of Ulster; Ms Deirdre Graffin, University of Ulster; Dr Paul Conway, University College Cork; Dr Joe O'Hara, Dublin City University

Teacher Education for Special Educational Needs in the North and South of Ireland: Sharing Cases of Practice

Mr Hugh Kearns, Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Dr Michael Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin

The Social/National Identity of Young Children North-South research project

Dr Barbara McConnell and Ms Louise Quinn, Stranmillis University College, Belfast; Dr Philomena Donnelly, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

2007-2008

Digital Video as a tool for changing ICT learning in Schools and Teacher Education

Dr Roger Austin, University of Ulster; Ms Deirdre Graffin, University of Ulster; Dr Paul Conway, University College Cork; Dr Joe O'Hara, Dublin City University; Mrs Linda Clarke, University of Ulster

Social Justice Education in Initial Teacher Education: a Cross Border Perspective

Dr Marie Clarke and Dr Audrey Bryan, University College Dublin; Professor Tony Gallagher, Queen's University Belfast; Dr Margaret Reynolds, St Mary's University College, Belfast; Dr Ken Wylie, Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Developing Reflective Skills in Student Teachers

Dr Gerry MacRuairc and Dr Judith Harford, University College Dublin; Mr Dermot MacCartan, St Mary's University College, Belfast

SCoTENS RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS

Project Name

Lead Participants

2007-2008

Bringing School Communities Together to Promote Education for Diversity

Professor Keith Sullivan, NUI Galway; Dr Ron Smith, Queen's University Belfast

Art and Science in Education: Moving Towards Creativity

Mr Ivor Hickey and Ms Deirdre Robson, St Mary's University College, Belfast; Mr Donal O'Donoghue, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

School-based work in the North and South of Ireland: Exploring the Role of the HEI Tutor

Dr Brian Cummins, Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Ms Bernadette Ni Aingleis, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

Building Effective Science Outreach Strategies North and South

Dr Kevin Davison, Dr Veronica McCauley and Dr C Domegan, NUI Galway; Ms Eileen Martin, Ms Emma McKenna, Dr Billy McClure and Dr Ruth Jarman, Queen's University Belfast

Cross Border Exploration of CPD needs of Heads of Year in a sample of Comprehensive and Integrated Schools

Ms Patricia Mannix McNamara and Dr Tom Geary, University of Limerick; Dr Caryl Sibbett, Queen's University Belfast

The Professional Development Needs of Teachers working in the area of Special Educational Needs

Ms Elizabeth O'Gorman, Ms Mairin Barry and Mr Bernard McGettrick, University College Dublin; Dr Eileen Winter, Queen's University Belfast

Examining Assessment procedures for Trainee Teachers: a comparison

Mr Justin Rami, Dublin City University and Dr Margaret Reynolds, St. Mary's University College, Belfast

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SCOTENS also began publishing or supporting the publication of reports or books which came out of these conferences and research projects. Among the early publications were: *Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect* (2004); *Diversity in Early Years Education North and South – Implications for Teacher Education* (2004); *Together Towards Inclusion – A North South Project* (2005). The organisation also publishes a book-length annual report containing papers from the annual conferences, reports from sectoral conferences and research projects, reports of the working groups, a website report and a financial statement.⁸ This is compiled by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, and it is distributed widely to all agencies with an involvement in teacher education throughout the island.

In the summer and autumn of 2004 the Standing Committee, conscious that the pilot phase was reaching its conclusion, sought to explore if the Department of Education and Science in the Republic and the Departments of Education and Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland were prepared to continue their financial support in the years ahead. The Irish Department of Education and Science appeared to be favourably disposed. However a letter in November 2004 from the Secretary of the NI Department for Employment and Learning in Belfast stated that if further funding was to be considered, evidence of future self-sustainability was required.⁹ Professor Anne Moran and Professor John Coolahan, joint

chairpersons of SCoTENS, replied to this letter, setting out the scale of the direct and indirect contributions which the teacher education institutions were making to facilitate their staffs' engagement in SCoTENS.¹⁰ Following some telephone communication, the chairpersons wrote again to the Permanent Secretary of the NI Department of Education in February 2005, stating that if departmental funding were renewed for 2005-2006, SCOTENS would commit to raising resources from other agencies, including the teacher education institutions themselves, for the following years.¹¹ A reply in April said the issue would be considered further in the light of the submission of 'a fully costed work programme against which the year's activities can be evaluated'.¹²

This costed work programme was submitted to the Departments before the end of May 2005. On this occasion the full costs of the various projects, including the contributions from the institutions and academics to the projects, were included. This was to demonstrate clearly that the financial support being sought from the Departments was only a portion of SCoTENS' total costs. Eventually, in September 2005, it was agreed that the two Northern Ireland Departments would each contribute £25,000 each for the year 2005-2006, and this would be matched by £50,000 from the Department of Education and Science.¹³ This provided an important breathing space for SCOTENS to enable it to sustain the momentum of its activities

while preparing to diversify its funding base.

A new phase

At the November 2005 annual conference, the financial situation of SCOTENS was discussed with participants, and it was agreed that teacher education and other relevant agencies should be approached to take out institutional membership for a three-year period starting with the academic year 2006-2007. There followed a very positive response from all the relevant institutions on the island, with the result that 39 institutional members – colleges of education, universities, curriculum councils, teaching councils, education trade unions and education centres – registered as paid-up institutional members. This was a powerful endorsement of the work of SCOTENS by its user constituency, and gave the member institutions a greater sense of ownership of the organisation.

Furthermore, when the chairpersons – Professor Richard McMinn, Principal of Stranmillis University College, was now the Northern joint chair – sought continuing support from the Departments, North and South, for the years 2007-2009, this was forthcoming, albeit on a smaller scale. Senior departmental officials also expressed their high regard for SCOTENS' work. One Dublin official said it had provided a much needed boost to networking between the colleges of education in the Republic, let alone across the island. There was more good news in the

summer of 2006 when a two-year grant of £40,000 was obtained from the Nuffield Foundation.

Thus by mid-2006 SCOTENS was well positioned to maintain and develop its work into the future. In line with the changed financial situation, at the October 2006 annual conference in Belfast the membership of the Standing Committee was broadened (to 17 members) to be more representative of the participating institutions.

The annual conferences had continued with various themes. The 2005 conference had been on 'Teaching Education for Citizenship in Diverse Societies', with keynote speakers from England and Norway. The 2006 conference took the theme 'Teacher Education and Schools: Together Towards Improvement' and had a strong East-West flavour, with two of the keynote speakers from the UK Universities Council for the Education of Teachers. The theme for the 2007 conference was 'Teaching in the Knowledge Society', with a strongly supportive opening address by the Irish Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin (who had spoken at the inaugural Belfast conference in 2000) and a keynote by Professor John Furlong of Oxford University's Department of Education.

SCOTENS publications continued to appear, among them *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects* in November 2007. In

December 2007 came the launch of *Together towards Inclusion – Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School*, which was the culmination of three years of collaboration between the Southern Education and Library Board in Armagh and Integrate Ireland Language and Training in Dublin (a government-supported agency providing English language support for refugees and asylum seekers, and support to teachers teaching English to non-English speaking immigrant pupils). It was launched in Dundalk by the Northern Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane, and the Southern Minister with responsibility for Integration, Conor Lenihan. This 'toolkit' for teachers came out of a SCoTENS-funded research project. It was unprecedented in that the two Departments of Education, North and South, pledged that it would be distributed to every primary school on the island of Ireland – the first time any curricular material had been distributed in this way for over 80 years.

While its resources do not permit the financing of large scale research projects, it is clear that through seed funding 27 research and conference projects in five years, SCoTENS has had a huge impact on both the level of research activity and on inter-college networking in the field of teacher education. It is little wonder that the first Joint Secretary of the North/South Ministerial Council, Tim O'Connor, speaking at the 2004 conference, singled out SCoTENS as a superb example of what professional associations could achieve if they

set their minds to working on North-South basis.

Overview

SCoTENS emerged from the changing political circumstances of the peace process, which saw new relationships being forged between unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and the Republic and Britain. Education is the crucial process through which society nurtures knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills among the younger generations. For historical reasons the educational systems in both parts of the small island had grown very much apart, although they shared deep common roots. In the first instance, SCoTENS aimed to promote greater mutual understanding of the contemporary policies, practices and problems of both systems among teacher educators. It also wanted to discuss on an all-island basis international issues of vital importance to education such as the so-called 'knowledge society' and the role of teaching councils.

In 2005 the OECD published the most comprehensive, comparative review ever on the teaching career around the world: *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Retaining and Developing Effective Teachers*.¹⁴ Measuring the teaching career in both parts of Ireland against this benchmark, there are many positive dimensions to be recorded. Teaching as a career has deep historical roots within the island, and it is recognised that the

Irish people have been well served by the teaching force through many generations, leading to it enjoying high social status and regard. This is an asset of inestimable value, which should not be taken for granted, and which many countries would wish to have today. The image of the teacher continues to attract a strong supply of highly qualified and committed applicants, which is in strong contrast to trends in some other countries. Both systems in Ireland are fortunate that retention rates within the profession remain high, in contrast to the attrition rates occurring in other systems. Both governments have emphasised education for human resource development as a central dimension of economic and social policy. They are also concerned that education should promote greater mutual understanding and cooperation on the island, regarding this as integral to improved quality of life for the whole populace.

Teacher education is strategically placed to play a catalytic role in promoting such objectives. Teacher education professionals work with teachers within a lifelong learning framework. They exercise considerable influence on the understanding, attitudes and skills of teachers during the formative periods of pre-service training and early professional development. Furthermore, as numerous SCoTENS projects have demonstrated, they are in a position to encourage cooperative activity of mutual benefit to trainee students in both parts of Ireland during their pre-service education. This process also

involves engagement by teachers and pupils in schools.

In these ways SCoTENS provides a valuable forum for supporting teacher educators throughout the island to help them fulfil their demanding roles at this period of great change in education. Arising from SCoTENS-sponsored activities, teacher educators are now involved in numerous linkages and exchanges between the two jurisdictions. Its annual and sectoral conferences have been valuable staff development occasions, as well as fostering personal relationships between fellow professionals throughout the island. Its 27 seed funded projects have led to significant added value to existing knowledge and practice, to the benefit of all concerned. Its publications, books and reports have disseminated much valuable material to all those with an interest in education, along with its award-winning website (the latter particularly in the demanding areas of special education and education for citizenship). In all these ways SCoTENS – which may be unique in the world, in that it operates as a fully functioning network of teacher educators across a traditionally contested border – has made a major contribution to teacher education policy and practice in Ireland.

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Republic of Ireland. He has led a number of OECD education review teams to countries in Eastern Europe, the Far East and South America.

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SURVEYING THE SICKBEDS: INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS MODELLING ALL-ISLAND HOSPITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Ronan Foley, Martin Charlton and Patricia Clarke



Ronan Foley



Martin Charlton



Patricia Clarke

There has been increasing interest in recent years by both civil servants and academics in both Irish jurisdictions in modelling economic and social structures across the whole island, with health services one of the key areas explored¹. There has been some limited cross-border movement in the utilisation of health care, and a recently published preliminary study by Jamison and Butler (2007)² examined the existing configuration of acute hospital services, identifying considerable potential for cross-border collaboration in these services, particularly in the border region.

Hospital rationalisation remains somewhat further advanced in Northern Ireland than in the South, which may present some issues around reciprocal service provision.³ However, strategic reorganisation plans in the health sector have been drawn up since 2000 in both jurisdictions, as represented by the Hayes Report in the North⁴, and the Hanly Report⁵, the Developing Better Services Report⁶ and the Teamwork

Report⁷ in the Republic. However all these reports contain practically nothing with a cross-border dimension. Recent developments in cancer services – with patients from Donegal going to Belfast for radiotherapy – show that it is possible to begin to envisage the future pattern of acute hospital services on a cross-border basis. This initiative is the first indication that the Irish Government is prepared systematically to access

services in the North which benefit citizens of the Republic⁸.

This article, based on work the National Centre for GeoComputation at NUI Maynooth is doing for the Centre for Cross Border Studies, is a development of Jamison and Butler's work in that it takes a geographical or spatial approach to measuring accessibility to acute hospitals and examines how the current configurations in both jurisdictions can be expressed in terms of an 'accessibility score'. It also investigates quantitatively another of these authors' themes, namely the relative accessibility of hospitals both North and South as expressed by beds per patient.

The role of spatial planning

Jamison and Butler note the role of history in explaining the current distribution of hospitals North and South. For a health geographer this is a crucial aspect in modelling health care provision.⁹ The distribution of the current hospital network in Ireland reflects the previous organisation of hospital services, developed from the 18th century onwards and reflected in the pre-partition model, which covered the whole island. In this model the general hospital provision was broadly based on two elements: voluntary hospitals, mostly located in the cities, and the general county hospitals, typically associated with local authorities.¹⁰ The pattern of provision after partition initially maintained these structures. In the latter half of the 20th century, the introduction in Northern

Ireland of the National Health Service model created one structure, while a notional national public hospital system, but one characterised by a more complex public-private mix with a stronger role for private health insurance, emerged in the South.

Similarly, the organisation of hospitals in both jurisdictions differed. In the North, they were organised under a Trust model with multiple sites within each Trust area. For the purposes of this article we have based our assumptions on a Trust model with nine acute hospitals and a simple bed count with no differentiation by specialism. In the South, the 40 hospitals providing acute care are a mix of voluntary hospitals and Health Board/Health Service Executive funded units. Within both jurisdictions there is a range of hospital sizes, expressed in both the number of specialisms and the total bed count, although the latter was the sole measure which was used in the model for this study.

There has been a concerted effort in both jurisdictions in recent years to look seriously at the organisation of hospital services. In addition to the reports listed above, the 2005 Appleby Review¹¹ is crucial because it looked at the performance and efficiency of the wider health and social services in Northern Ireland and identified particular weaknesses and inefficiencies. All these reports are informed by the twin aims of providing both a more equitable and a more efficient health service. In this paper it is the spatial element whose

exploration could help in improving that service which concerns us. Clearly geographical tensions always exist in any decision on where to locate health services. These will reflect tensions between urban and rural areas, between densely and lightly populated areas, and between local, regional and national imperatives. Few decisions made around either additions to, or cuts in, service provision escape the contentious question of exactly where these adjustments should take place. Both Jamison and Butler and Murphy and Killen¹² stress the importance of spatially-informed decision-making when choosing the location of new hospitals (both regional and service-specific).

One area where policy is arguably lacking is evidence bases with spatial dimensions. It is possible to access information on an annual basis on the nature and level of hospital service provision in terms of bed counts, occupancy rates, specialisms and day patient activity. These statistics are associated with individual hospitals but can also be aggregated up to regional or national level. It is also possible to get information on utilisation of services though spatially-tagged data, although this is better in the North due to the existence of UK postcodes and the very limited spatial coding contained in the South's Hospital Inpatient Enquiry System. Both these data sets have been studied and analysed but rarely have their locational and spatial aspects been put together in a holistic way. Additionally, geographical aspects such

as density of population and the impact of distance have rarely been factored into strategic planning.¹²

Yet the fact is that all policy requires better evidence bases. The existence of data sets which can be spatially referenced and fed into analytical tools such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS) means that there is now considerable potential for a spatially informed modelling approach which can provide valuable evidence bases for making decisions about locating hospital services. This article begins in a small way to identify how those spatial data sets can be put together to help inform such planning. Perhaps the primary value of a GIS based approach is its ability to collate large volumes of information and to produce not one answer but several answers to inform a number of different planning scenarios.

The aim of the work the National Centre for GeoComputation is currently doing for CCBS is to start using a spatial approach to examine specific aspects of accessibility associated with existing and potential future hospital provision on an island basis. It is by definition a pilot study and the aim is relatively broad for this reason. The specific objectives of the study are: to use GIS to model spatial accessibility to acute hospitals in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; to model for two different time periods to see how changes in bed provision and local populations have an impact on accessibility; to provide a spatial measure of supply equity in the form of beds per patient; and to explore

how changes, even over a very short time period, impact spatially on improvements or reductions in bed supply.

The arrival of GIS and digital spatial data

Modelling accessibility is a subject that has engaged the minds of medical and health geographers from an early stage. One of the original core texts in the subject was by Joseph and Phillips¹³, which explicitly studied the twin terms accessibility and utilisation. While the two themes can be and often are discussed separately, it is important to acknowledge the utilisation dimension up front, although this study will focus primarily on accessibility. Clearly any study of access to and utilisation of health care needs to be aware also of core concepts such as need, equity, supply and demand – it is important to recognise that all these elements play a role in a full exploration of accessibility.

We have incorporated some of these elements into our spatial modelling, though others would require additional data and research. For example supply is expressed through the number of hospitals but also the relative size of those hospitals and the level of services provided. Demand is often measured through utilisation, but there are issues here in terms of how fully demand identifies need in a setting of waiting lists and staffing shortages, and where the structure of the system itself informs utilisation rates. This is a particular issue in a study like this one, which looks at

two quite different health care systems, North and South. Need is also a complex term with a number of different definitions relating to expressed need in the form of patients and unexpressed need within the wider population¹³. Finally, equity can be expressed in a number of ways, depending on whether one uses a vertical or horizontal definition,¹⁴ or even whether one takes a measure based on population or catchment area¹⁵.

The work of Khan and Bhardwaj¹⁶ is particularly useful in developing a fuller understanding of what they refer to as spatial and aspatial aspects of accessibility. The aspatial aspects they refer to include a wide and complex set of variables including income, education, social class, insurance and other social and economic factors which affect how people access and utilise health care. They identify these as being separate but linked elements to the more purely spatial aspects of location, distance, time and supply which provide the other part of the equation. Together these provide a completely integrated model, but it is the spatial side of the equation that this article will focus on, while understanding that a fuller development incorporating the aspatial would be needed to develop the work in the future.

The traditional approach used by medical and health geographers has been to focus on a number of core datasets and use these in the modelling of accessibility. Some of these approaches were used before the

widespread use of GIS and digital spatial data.¹⁷ The arrival of the latter has, however, allowed for more efficient and effective modelling using a number of new spatial analytical techniques. The location and distribution of health care facilities form the first layer of information. While much of this work has focussed on secondary and tertiary care, other services associated with primary care, community care and even voluntary services have also been modelled in this way.^{1,19}

The second core element is a layer that incorporates demographic data and the distribution of different populations. These function as proxies for demand and need and can be broken down into sub-populations depending on the services being modelled⁸. The final layer of information needed is on the transportation network used to model the spatial linkages between patients or potential patients and services. This was traditionally modelled as Euclidian or straight-line distance, which often enabled planners to quickly see buffers or catchments zones around hospitals and to visualise quickly those areas or groups which fell outside those zones.²

With the advent of GIS, the ability to overlay and merge these three different layers within a single automated information system provided an important new evidence base for health care planning²¹. Brabyn and Skelly²² took these core elements and combined them in a vector (linear) GIS to model access to public hospitals by travel time across New Zealand. They identified an

effective accessibility score by area, weighted by population, and which also incorporated a locally relevant remoteness factor. Other studies have used the power of the GIS to produce more robust forms of spatial modelling by including consideration of distance along road networks and travel time.^{23, 24} Other researchers^{25, 26} have used additional spatial modelling techniques to measure the effect of clustering of services and its impact on access.

Within the Republic of Ireland, the first work that looked at the geography of hospitals and the ways in which geography could be used to model proposed changes was carried out in 1979¹⁷. This looked at the impacts of the 1968 Fitzgerald Report and modelled a proposed re-organisation of hospitals into a set of regional networks, a proposal surprisingly similar to proposals in 2007. More directly relevant were a number of recent studies which were informed by policy decisions and aimed at modelling the implications of those decisions. Teljeur et al²⁷ carried out the first GIS-informed study of the potential impact of the Hanly report by producing tabulated outputs by health board area for the effect of Hanly on travel times for two specific acute interventions, heart attacks and road traffic accidents. Essentially they modelled a pre and post Hanly model for these interventions and concluded that access to services for them had deteriorated. Kalogirou and Foley²⁸ also modelled the impact of Hanly more widely in terms of general hospital provision. They identified three

different models: one current, one based on a partial roll-out of Hanly and one based on a full roll-out. Two further recent studies have focused on the optimal location of a new national children's hospital^{29, 12}. What has been useful in all these studies is the development of GIS-based models to provide the beginnings of an evidence base which informs policy by identifying the importance of geography in the decision-making process. The current work begins to extend the above analysis by applying it on an all-island basis. While there are clearly structural and system-based complications in modelling two hospital networks simultaneously, we hope that the spatial outcomes from the modelling will interest policy makers in the role of geography on both sides of the border.

Data and method

With governments in both Irish jurisdictions engaged in the restructuring of health services, the Centre for Cross Border Studies approached the National Centre for GeoComputation to critically explore the potential for developing a GIS-based spatial model of access to hospitals on an all-island basis. The initial pilot study has a single research aim: to develop a robust model of spatial accessibility which would be realistic enough to satisfy health care planners while also being technically sound enough to satisfy GIS modellers. It was driven by the three core geographical considerations mentioned previously: the distribution of potential patients

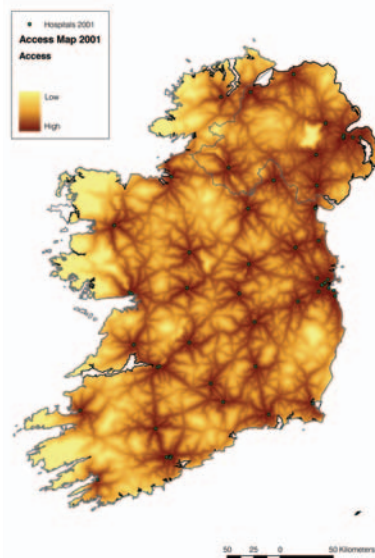


Figure 1

(potential need and demand), the configuration of hospitals North and South (potential supply) and the transport network (accessibility based on travel time).

Based on the literature on spatial accessibility, three core datasets were identified as being essential. These were:

- a) demographic data at electoral division (ED) and output area (OA) levels (drawn from the Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency and the Central Statistics Office in the South);
- b) point datasets for individual hospitals with associated data on size, status and levels of provision (data was gathered directly from the Department of Health,

Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and the Irish Department of Health and Children); c) data related to the road networks in both countries (commercially purchased NAVTEQ data).

A number of issues arose in relation to spatial scale, compatibilities of classifications and the timing of data collection, but a robust initial model was still produced^{30, 31}. This will be more fully detailed in a final report later in 2008.

Given that the aims were to produce a working accessibility 'score' as well as to define nominal catchments, the model started by assuming nominal non-overlapping catchments for each hospital. Once these catchments were defined and mapped, it was possible to use the background demographic data to compute the number of residents in each catchment. Given that we also knew how many beds were available in all the hospitals, we could compute the ratio of beds per head of population in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. We were then able to compute the expected number of beds if local supply followed the national rate, and calculate the ratio of the actual number of beds relative to the expected number of beds – this gave us the local bed rate as a 'location quotient'. This approach will be more fully described in the final project report.

The second piece of modelling was more complex: it was carried out within the GIS to combine the road network, travel speeds and the specific locations

of the hospitals with small area population counts to produce an effective 'cost-distance' surface which provided us with an accessibility score. The final technical stage was to remodel the accessibility scores with the border both included and excluded in order to examine its spatial effect on hospital activity in both jurisdictions.

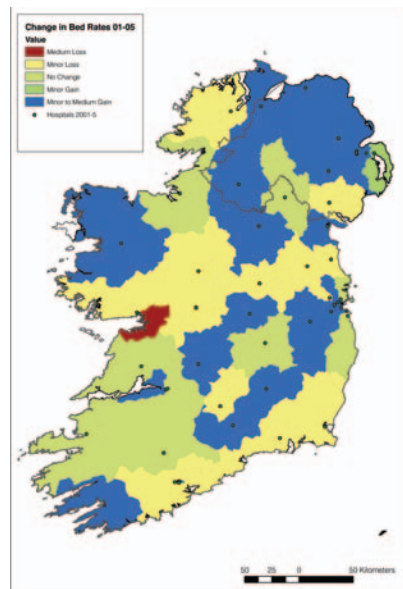


Figure 2

Some initial results

The initial modelling focused on the years 2001-2002 as this was the best fit in terms of demographic data North and South. There was an estimated combined island population of 5.59 million in this period. The total number of beds modelled into the system at this

time was 14,129, and taking the two jurisdictional datasets together an all-island rate of 0.00257 beds per person was calculated. Multiplying each modelled catchment's population by this rate would yield the expected number of beds in a particular area, which could be compared with the actual number. Not unexpectedly, the initial map (**Figure 1**) identified a strong clustering of high accessibility around urban centres. Obviously this was affected by the location of most hospitals in high density population areas. Equally it was not surprising that there were low levels of accessibility in much of the western seaboard and in upland areas of Northern Ireland. These 'common sense' conclusions indicated that the modelling was working satisfactorily.

The second phase of the modelling looked at the period 2005-2006 using updated hospital, road and demographic data. There were strong caveats on the demographic data due to the lack of up-to-date small area data for Northern Ireland, and as a result this data was modelled from district level estimates. The accessibility modelling identified for 2005-2006 provided results very similar to the earlier 2001-2002 period. It was difficult to get a strong sense of change from the spatial accessibility maps as the two periods were only five years apart and the increases in bed provision were matched by increases in population across both jurisdictions. However it was interesting – and encouraging for policy makers – that the provision of beds in this period (15,008 in 2005-06 as opposed to

14,129 in 2001-02) kept up almost exactly with a 6.2% increase in the island's population.

It was also interesting to look at change in a more disaggregated way by examining 'modelled' bed rate provision at regional and local levels. As noted in the methodology section, for each hospital catchment a form of location quotient was calculated which compared actual local provision to the expected provision if all-island averages were applied. When the two time periods were compared (**Figure 2**), it was possible to tease out more fully changes at a local level. A number of areas showed a reduction in their location quotients, most definitively in Galway but also in the Midlands, along the south coast, in Donegal and in south Down. Much of Northern Ireland saw slight increases in their location quotients as did parts of central and mid-Leinster, and – perhaps surprisingly – even some more remote parts of Mayo and west Cork. Policy makers could find this data, even with the caveats mentioned, useful in a number of ways. Spatial approaches such as this identify more exactly where change is taking place. However it should be noted that a reduction in the location quotient for an area like Galway, while it might suggest a diminution of service provision, could also indicate an over-supply in the first period which was brought back in line with the national average in the second period.

The most interesting part of the modelling was when the impact of the

border was modelled as two scenarios, one with and one without the border. This allowed the impact of a 'non-border' scenario to be modelled and compared with provision in the present separate systems. This identified the location of areas close to the border which were disadvantaged in terms of accessibility, as well as the extent, expressed in excess travel time zones, of that disadvantage (**Figure 3**). This was done by using the GIS to calculate a time disadvantage grid. This grid was then classified into time bands, and vectorised and intersected with the population data to obtain the proportions of accessibility and inaccessibility in each band.

The most significant finding was that

while 52% of the population in border areas were disadvantaged by the presence of the border by less than five minutes, a full 26% of the residents were disadvantaged by fifteen minutes or more. Put bluntly, for someone suffering a heart attack or a serious road traffic accident, this 'border factor' could make the difference between life and death³². As Figure 3 demonstrates, the GIS was able not only to calculate these inequities but also to identify exactly where these zones were. Thus, for example, people living in north Donegal in the Inishowen peninsula and in south Donegal near Lough Derg could travel to hospitals in Northern Ireland faster in an emergency. Likewise people living in west Tyrone would get faster access to emergency care in the

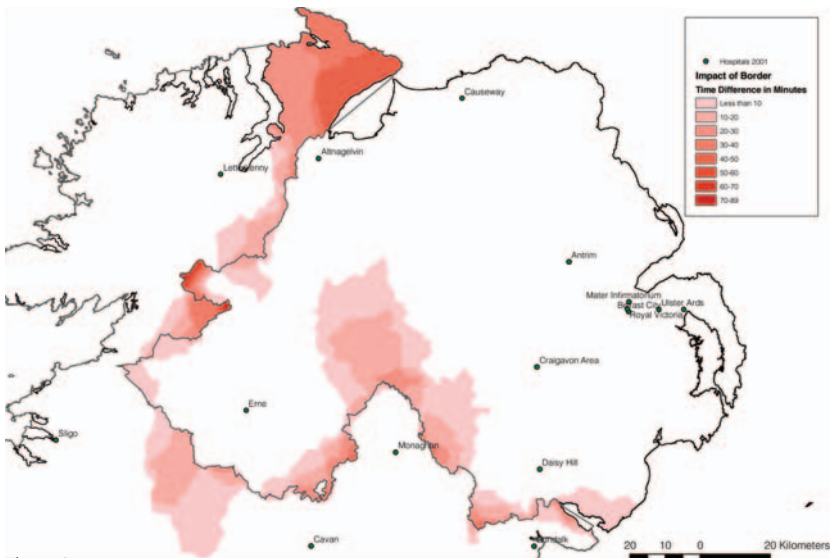


Figure 3

Republic of Ireland. Other areas where travel to hospital distances would be decreased by allowing cross-border access include north-west Cavan along the N87, in the Cooley Peninsula and along the Northern Ireland border with Monaghan in areas such as Aughnacloy, Roslea, Keady and Crossmaglen. This exercise thus identified another very useful policy function for a spatial modelling approach in a cross-border context.

Conclusions

A developed version of this model would incorporate analysis of population data at small area level along with health service data by specialism (utilisation rates, staffing numbers, hospital throughput etc), but this was beyond the scope of this initial research. In addition, a number of caveats exist in relation to accurate bed counts (most are averaged across the year) and the extent to which certain hospitals might be slotted in or out of the model. However the primary aim of the research was to identify the potential of GIS for 'scenario modelling' involving both a spatial and a numerical analysis of the impact of the border. Tracking the spatial impact of future policy developments using this method should be very feasible. It should have particular applications in the south-west of Northern Ireland, where a new hospital is being planned for Enniskillen, and in the north-east of the Republic where a new regional hospital has been proposed, both serving border region populations.

Additionally a predictive version of the model for 2011 or even 2015, which included planned hospital capacity changes, would also be relatively easy to do once the respective datasets in the two jurisdictions are in place. Such modelling could also feature a set of scenarios based on minimal, partial and full achievement of those plans. A third, quantitative approach would be to model individual services according to accessibility, perhaps also weighted by utilisation data. Finally, detailed qualitative research would be required to put flesh on the bones of such spatial modelling by using new data on utilisation, patterns of referral, links with primary care, and local evidence on both public feeling and patterns of *ad hoc* use. The role of private insurance and private hospital care would also have to be factored into such a study.

Communities on both sides of the border are reluctant to embrace government policy of centralising hospital services, believing that the majority of time critical emergencies can be treated locally. An illuminating study by Nicoll et. al. (2007)³³, a leading UK researcher, concluded that for every extra 10 kilometres you travel when you are seriously ill, your risk of dying rises by one per cent. There is good evidence for some groups of emergency patients, for example major trauma patients with multiple injuries, that travelling longer distances to specialist care centres improves outcomes. Anecdotally these groups of people are already bypassing local care and being taken directly to the nearest appropriate care irrespective

on which side of the border it is delivered. However Nicoll suggests that for patients in anaphylactic shock, choking, drowning, or having acute asthma attacks who need urgent care, having to travel increased distances for care that could be delivered locally is detrimental. Applying this principle to the border region, optimal patient care could be delivered within an integrated border zone, similar to the Thierache region on the French-Belgian border, where people are allowed to access their nearest hospital service irrespective on which side of the border they live.

Understanding the connections and impacts of health services across the Irish border is crucial for meeting the complex and diverse needs of the border population. The experience of Co-operation and Working Together in developing the Cross-Border GP Out-Of-Hours service³⁴, which integrates legislation and professional issues, financial systems, information exchange, and pharmaceutical issues across the border, should be applied to improve access to hospital care. This spatial modelling tool offers a real opportunity to investigate the benefits of such an all-island configuration of health systems.

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TOUGH LOVE: LOCAL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FACES THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Caroline Creamer, Neale Blair, Brendan O'Keeffe, Chris Van Egeraat and John Driscoll



Neale Blair



Caroline Creamer



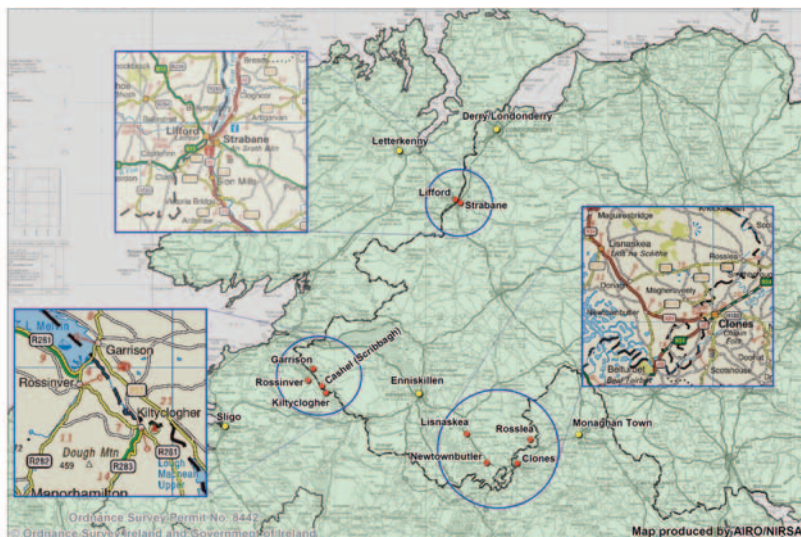
Brendan O'Keeffe

Local area-based cross-border cooperation has been ongoing in Ireland since before the 'Troubles', albeit much of this on an informal basis – a case of neighbour helping neighbour. Since the mid-1990s much of this community-led cooperation has been formalised in the context of EU funding programmes to support the Northern Irish peace process and emerging national and regional spatial strategies. Under such programmes and strategies, its focus has been on economic and social development goals, rather than on social objectives only. Today local cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland, and particularly in the border region, finds itself at a crossroads. For projects and partnerships that wish to remain in existence, and continue to receive funding, the emphasis now is on demonstrating their long-term sustainable nature.

This 'tough love' approach to cross-border cooperation is increasingly being adopted by both government and EU funding agencies. Furthermore, these agencies' emphasis is leaning more

towards large-scale, partnership-led projects, and there is a danger that this will potentially exclude the community sector. As a result, many cross-border groups find themselves entering their

Small Cross-Border Towns and Villages Case Studies



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final phase of operation – that is, unless they can widen their stakeholder base, build on their areas' strengths and potentiality, engage in spatial planning processes, and ensure that real partnership, dialogue and communication takes place between all stakeholders.

The cross-border fit of national and regional policy is becoming of increasing importance in both jurisdictions in Ireland. This is particularly evident through the close relationship of public policy with spatial planning, and is encouraged in the context of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) in the Republic of Ireland and Regional Development Strategy (RDS) in Northern Ireland, along with associated planning guidelines.

In the Irish border region there is the challenge both of a border separating the two jurisdictions, and of securing positive growth in frontier villages and towns affected by depressed economic conditions. In this article, we outline the work of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) in considering the current connectivity and future potentiality that exists in a number of small cross-border towns and villages located in close proximity to each other. The three case study areas highlighted here are¹:

- Lifford-Strabane (Donegal-Tyrone border)
- Killyclogher-Cashel (Scribbagh)-Garrison-Rossinver (Leitrim-Fermanagh border)
- Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea (Monaghan-Fermanagh border)

This research project commenced in the summer of 2007 and will conclude in mid-2008. While a number of cross-border initiatives and linkages are in place in each of the three case study areas, the article focusses on the work of one key stakeholder body established in each of these cross-border communities with the specific remit of redressing the socio-economic and cultural disconnect that has resulted from partition and the 'Troubles'. It discusses the rationale behind cross-border cooperation in such areas, reviews cooperation in each of them and concludes with some actions necessary for sustaining such cooperation.

Why cooperate?

Each border area faces unique challenges, including retardation of trade, disruption of natural hinterlands and back-to-back policy development. For more than eight decades, the 'border corridor' has been hampered in its development by back-to-back policies in each jurisdiction, with the result that no policy assessment or coordination took place on an inter-jurisdictional basis.

Often the best way to address border region issues is through inter-jurisdictional cooperation that results in a mix of 'hard' and 'soft' mutual benefits:

- Economic: the pooling of resources and developing of economies of scale;
- Social: capacity building within communities, training and mentoring;
- Physical: enhancing the physical environment.

For the island as a whole, the significant benefits which can accrue from engagement in cross-border cooperation include the enhancement of community cohesion, improved marketing of the border region, support for the Northern Ireland peace process, opportunities for economic development and the development of the physical environment.

There are three distinct phases to the development of the Irish border region: pre-1970s; 1970s to mid-1990s; and mid-1990s to the present day.

Partition in 1921 had varying impacts on communities and towns along the border. In many areas, citizens continued to cross the border to shop, to socialise, to farm and to work, and the pattern of daily life was often not greatly affected. However the negative impacts of partition were clearly manifest at many levels. Harvey et al (2005) regard Clones as the Southern town that was most adversely affected by the border²: customs barriers and price differentials from 1924 onwards saw Clones lose much of its trade to towns in the North. Ireland's entry into the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979 ended the link between the punt and sterling, leading to constant fluctuations between the two



'Let the Dance Begin' statues near the border outside Strabane

currencies. These factors, together with the severing of cross-border rail connections in the late 1950s, adversely affected cross-border interaction in economic, political and social terms. The onset of the 'Troubles' and ensuing road closures in the early 1970s further inhibited the development of the region, and has left sizeable challenges for those seeking to promote cross-border collaboration.

During the 'Troubles' era – the early seventies to the mid-nineties – the border as a barrier to socio-economic development became even more difficult to surmount. During this period the region was characterised by continuing peripherality from Dublin and Belfast; a lack of joined-up action on spatial planning; an infrastructure deficit; the decline of traditional economic activities such as farming and clothing and textiles; high unemployment and under-employment;

and low educational attainment. Border towns and villages were cut off from their natural trading and retailing hinterlands. The region was also characterised by increased sectarian tensions caused by the Northern Ireland conflict. To address this, the 1990s witnessed a mushrooming in the number of both formal and informal cross-border networks as part of the emerging peace process. This was assisted by generous EU and other largely overseas funding through organisations like the International Fund for Ireland and the EU Peace and INTERREG programmes.

Since the mid-nineties, local border communities have striven to build on existing cross-border linkages – and forge new ones – with varying degrees of success. Now local stakeholders face the additional challenges of competing within a changing political landscape brought about by devolution in

Northern Ireland; the cessation or reduction of funding, and securing buy-in from a wider range of stakeholders, such as local government and the business community. A key question now facing border towns and villages is: should they rely on past economic success as an inspiration for future economic development, or should they seek to construct a new future for themselves based on other potential growth areas such as sustainable tourism?

Three faces of cooperation

While it is believed that much of the cross-border cooperation and collaboration taking place in the border region is community-led, this is not always the case. A review of the Border Ireland website³, for example, clearly highlights that cooperation takes many forms, involves partnerships of various sizes and make-up, has various objectives, covers different timeframes, and uses a variety of delivery methods. Increasingly, the private sector and local government are engaging in the process of cross-border cooperation as key stakeholders – and in some instances are actually the instigators of, or key drivers behind, a particular project or partnership. In the section below these different forms of cooperation are explored through evidence from the three case study areas.

Lifford-Strabane

Prior to partition, both Lifford and Strabane were considered a single

entity⁴, a single community. Strabane was a significant market town and one of the main shopping and industrial employment centres in the region. However, a combination of the railway closing in 1954, the impact of the Northern Ireland conflict, and the effects of general economic decline and globalisation had a devastating effect on these co-located towns. For example, Strabane town centre was hit hard by 'Troubles'-related bombings and other violence, and major industries, notably textiles and food processing, experienced a steep decline. By the late 1970s the town's male unemployment rate exceeded 35%⁵. In Lifford the situation was similar, with the conflict next door bringing about economic decline and employment loss in this Donegal county town. Interestingly, Lifford was unable to take advantage of the decline of Strabane as a retail centre as customers turned to other towns in both Donegal and Northern Ireland.

Both towns are now experiencing a change in their fortunes. The population level is growing steadily and both towns have benefitted from major regeneration and economic development initiatives, with the employment base shifting more towards professional services. Both towns are also located in close proximity to the proposed 'gateway' of Letterkenny-Derry/Londonderry and, if capitalised on correctly, this could create growth opportunities for both of them. In effect, this border area is once again being considered a single entity.

A key constituent in this success has been the commitment of a group of local businesspeople who came together in 1993 and, with the encouragement of John Hume (then the local MP and MEP), established the **Strabane-Lifford Development Commission (SLDC)** with the overall objective of improving the towns and their surrounds through tourism, quality product development and physical renewal. The Commission was established as an European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG)⁶, a strategic decision to ensure it was in a position to apply for EU regional funding. The SLDC is, in effect, the marriage of two bodies established with the specific purpose of availing of EEIG status: the Lifford Commission and the Strabane Commission. By establishing themselves in this way, both towns were able to address their own priorities until such time as it was possible for them to undertake joint initiatives.

In 1993, when the SLDC was being established, the local border crossing was still heavily fortified. Despite the strategic position of the two towns – a good location for distribution companies and businesses serving the north-west – economic prospects were bleak. There was no inward investment taking place. Both towns were characterised by a lot of dereliction and were, in development terms, ‘sleep-walking’. Intimidation and extortion were widescale and a dissident republican movement was active, particularly in Strabane. The negative experiences of one area inevitably impacted on the other. In Donegal, Lifford was considered a ‘dark place’

where nothing was happening socially or economically. This image persisted to the point that Donegal County Council was rumoured to be considering moving its headquarters out of the town.

At the same time as the SLDC was established, the regeneration of the towns of Lifford and Strabane was adopted as a flagship project by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) when it was established in the late 1980s. It is now widely acknowledged that the IFI took a risk in adopting Lifford-Strabane as a flagship, but that it was the right organisation for the SLDC to enter into partnership with at that time. The IFI became fully committed to the success of the Commission, adopting a very flexible approach to the initiatives it supported on the ground.

From 1993 to 2006, the SLDC generated funding of €25m for both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ projects. Examples of the types of initiatives the Commission has involved itself with include:

Lifford

- the development of the Finn Valley Enterprise Park;
- the development of social housing (with Habinteg Housing Association);

Strabane

- the restoration of part of the Strabane Canal;
- a series of environmental improvements;

Both

- the Wider Horizons Programme

(with IFI) which aimed to improve the employability of young people from disadvantaged areas between the ages of 16-28 years through training and work experience;

- the Centre without Walls Programme, the objective of which was to re-engage women in the workforce through IT training and upskilling;
- Border Reach, a community arts initiative including 'Let the Dance Begin', a grouping of 30ft high statues near the border crossing symbolising music and dance;
- Outward Bound Programme with a focus on addressing tensions between youth in the area through photography and music; and
- Mind your Tongue, which explored ethnic diversity in the area.

People interviewed by the ICLRD researchers were generally of the opinion that the regeneration of both Lifford and Strabane would have taken much longer if the SLDC had not been established. It has been able to engage in initiatives that Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council would never have been able to get off the ground. The Commission's non-political status has been a key factor in this, as has been its ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. The Councils have, however, been very supportive of the work of the Commission through cash contributions and providing office space. Their commitment, in turn, has been crucial in leveraging further support and buy-in,

particularly from the business community.

More recently, the SLDC has begun getting involved in initiatives outside Strabane and Lifford⁷: for example, the restoration of an old Church of Ireland hall in Convoiy in County Donegal using an international labour force, and the refurbishment of the old mill in Convoiy as a craft centre. With its current funding running out, the SLDC is considering its future and investigating whether it can unlock further funding. Given that it was initially established for a two year period¹⁵ years ago, one might be right in thinking that we haven't heard the last from this grouping just yet.

Kiltyclogher-Cashel(Scribbagh)-Garrison-Rossinver

This grouping of small rural villages and townlands, each with a population of 250-400 people, is situated in North Leitrim-West Fermanagh, with their natural hinterlands stretching across the Border. These remote and peripheral settlements have experienced mixed fortunes over the past 40 years. The road closures of the 'Troubles' resulted in their economic decline and physical separation, the end result being that this area now lags seriously behind other rural communities that were not divided in such a manner. For example, the village of Kiltyclogher in County Leitrim would have been a thriving village prior to the conflict, with eight shops and seven public houses. However, during the 'Troubles' all roads leading into

Kiltyclogher from the North were closed and this resulted in the disruption of natural trading patterns as well as social disconnects. The population of the region is ageing and unemployment remains high. Agriculture is the dominant activity but its development is constrained by poor land quality and the age profile of farmers.

There is little local industrial employment, with many residents working in manufacturing and commerce in the larger neighbouring towns, such as Manorhamilton and Enniskillen. Access to the area is poor, given that it is served solely by secondary roads. Public transport is limited and dependent upon an irregular Rural Lift⁸ service.

The viability of rural communities like these along the Irish border has become precarious. This is the result of many factors: out-migration, depletion of human resources, persistent structural weaknesses in the rural economy, and the severance of economic, social and cultural connections by nearly 30 years of conflict. Even the coming of relative peace and the growing EU funds being made available for cross-border cooperation had, by the end of the 1990s, done little to improve the fortunes of this cluster of rural communities. In response, the **KiltyCashel Project** was established in 2001 when representatives from two local groups – the Kiltyclogher Community Council and the Cashel Community Association in County Fermanagh – came together to form a

cross-border committee. Now this once natural hinterland is slowly beginning to put the 'Troubles' behind it and focus on its future. There has been little open discussion between both communities on the impact of the conflict on their communities⁹ - instead the emphasis has been on new opportunities and moving forward.

Funded under the EU Peace II programme, the KiltyCashel Project is a cross-border, cross-community initiative that is entirely community-led. While the funding has been important in helping both communities re-establish old linkages and develop new ones, the collaborative process is largely driven by the strong community spirit that exists in both Kiltyclogher and Cashel. The community representatives are passionate about their work and are committed to reinvigorating both villages and their surrounding communities. But where such passion exists, there is also the risk of burn-out. This is particularly an issue for these small border villages, which have a small population base and a very small number of players involved in cross-border collaboration.

A key focus of the KiltyCashel Project's work is the socio-economic revitalisation of the cross-border area. This includes:

- increasing the employability of the people in the area through the provision of training programmes such as ECDL;
- providing capacity-building training and rolling out courses on starting small businesses (sometimes in

- association with Leitrim Partnership);
- establishing a jobs club for local men and women to assist them in returning to the workforce;
- bringing together and supporting local clubs (such as Active Age);
- developing a womens network and associated activities; and
- building bridges between the 'lost generation', that is those who have missed out on not knowing each other on a cross-border basis because of the 'Troubles'.

Both community associations are also involved in their own particular activities, but given the communities' close proximity to each other, these invariably result in cross-border benefits. For example, the Kiltyclogher Community Council, with the assistance of the Leitrim County Council-led Taskforce, secured monies from the UK-based environmental organisation, Groundwork, under its 'Changing Places, Transforming Communities'¹⁰ initiative, to develop a children's educational allotment and playground on county council-owned land. This space is not only used by children from the Kiltyclogher area but also by those from neighbouring areas across the border.

The success of the KiltyCashel Project to date has largely been attributed to its emphasis on complementarity rather than duplication. Each community provides, or takes responsibility for, different services and activities. The project has also identified with the emerging sustainable communities agenda by considering the potential of a

number of long-term initiatives focussing on local employment, work-life balance and quality of life issues. However, despite these successes, significant social and economic challenges remain in this area, the response to which may be hampered by a new, more limited funding environment which jeopardises the survival and sustainability of small community-based organisations. Given the much more restrictive guidelines for funding programmes such as EU Peace III (2007-2013), this looks like being the KiltyCashel Project's toughest trial yet.

Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea

Historically strong economically, this grouping of small towns and established rural settlements has suffered greatly as a result of the 'Troubles' and nearly 30 years of cross-border road closures. During the 1980s and 1990s both Clones and Lisnaskea experienced significant factory closures, high unemployment, and a general economic decline. With populations of approximately 300 and 950 persons respectively, Rosslea and Newtownbutler are small, well-established rural settlements in south Fermanagh located close to Clones across the border. Around Rosslea, agriculture is the dominant economic activity, with the village facing considerable difficulties in adjusting to the decline in traditional farming.

Attempts have been made locally to promote economic diversification, as

evidenced by the establishment of Enterprise Centres in Rosslea, Clones and Lisnaskea. Manufacturing, construction and retail are the main employers in Newtownbutler. However, these are particularly vulnerable to economic restructuring and global downturn. Lisnaskea functions as a retail, health, education, employment and service centre for its rural hinterland, and contains some significant manufacturing enterprises such as Lisnaskea Stainless Steel Fabrication. Clones has a similar profile, with manufacturing and commerce as the main sectors of employment.

The coming of peace and the re-opening of border roads has paid some dividends, with both Clones and Lisnaskea now beginning to attract back customers from their natural cross-border hinterlands. However, both towns remain economically depressed, with an unemployment rate well above the respective regional and national averages. Given this area's proximity to the larger urban centres of Enniskillen and Monaghan, which draw in trade and population, cross-border connectivity is recognised as an important issue in building critical mass and generating economies of scale.

Cross-border local government links do exist in the border region (e.g. in tourism and the arts), but the degree of cooperation varies. This is largely attributed to the lack of formal, matching local government structures that can engage in dialogue. However in recent years local government

councillors and officials in the Clones-Lisnaskea area have invested time and resources in promoting cross-border cooperation, an initiative that culminated in the establishment of the **Clones-Erne East Partnership** in 2002. Established as a collaboration between Fermanagh District Council, Monaghan County Council and Clones Town Council, the Partnership's primary objective has been 'to provide a mechanism to work together on issues of commonality to achieve more effective solutions on a cross-border basis'¹¹.

As a legal entity, the Partnership has been able to apply for funding and to act as an intermediary for projects promoted by other organisations which fit within the Partnership's overall strategy. In 2004 the Partnership published a strategic plan for the economic, social, cultural and environmental regeneration of its catchment area. The plan was formulated through an extensive consultation process, which engaged community and voluntary groups, local businesses, state bodies and various interest groups on both sides of the border. The plan is underpinned by agreed targets, and it identifies key strategic partners, such as Chambers of Commerce, local business associations and community groups, for the implementation of specific actions and projects (such as a recently delivered IT support programme for small businesses). The Partnership maintains strong linkages with bottom-up organisations, particularly the Clones

Community Forum, thereby ensuring that it is process-oriented as well as task-orientated.

The Clones-Erne East Partnership has already been successful in delivering and coordinating a number of projects, including:

- The establishment of a Shadow Youth Partnership to engage second-level students in community development projects;
- The development of a local website and the publication of a newsletter, highlighting and showcasing the strengths and potentiality of the area, the work of community groups, innovations in business, and progress on cross-border cooperation;
- The provision of technical support to local groups, community associations and leaders in brokering resources, enhancing public service provision and improving local infrastructure and amenities.

One of the Partnership's most striking initiatives is known locally as the 'Chairs Project'. This has involved placing sandstone chairs in prominent locations in each of the towns and villages in the Clones-Erne East area. Each chair contains a time capsule, with essays written by local schoolchildren. The Partnership has thus engaged children from both traditions and from both sides of the border in compiling material for this innovative project. Moreover, the unveiling of the various chairs has provided occasions for cross-community and cross-border interaction and

celebration. The Partnership has also been active in the promotion of rural tourism, as evidenced by the development of a walkway and fishing stands at Aghdrumsee, Co. Fermanagh, and its members share the sense of local optimism that has emerged from the recent Irish government pledge to re-open the Ulster Canal as far as Clones – a development for which the Partnership has lobbied.

The Clones-Erne East Partnership represents a very important step forward for this area, not just in terms of cross-border cooperation, but also as an example of collaborative cross-border governance by local authorities. In this way, the Partnership represents an innovative approach to territorial planning and local decision-making. Its initiation by the local government sector represents a shift away from exclusively hierarchical approaches, with agencies acting in isolation, to a new more collaborative system of local governance, which is based on inter-agency information-sharing, networking and collaboration. However, as with the other models presented, the Partnership's future is uncertain. But unlike the other stakeholder bodies profiled, this is not due to the changing funding environment; rather it is due to the time-break that is occurring between the conclusion of one EU funding programme and the start of the next.

Sustaining the cooperation

Cross-border linkages between

community and voluntary groups and between local government agencies have gained considerable momentum over recent years, and are increasingly based on agreed and strategic multi-annual work plans, and a high degree of local ownership. The stakeholder base is also being widened to include local government agencies, elected representatives, local development partnerships, tourism bodies and community groups. This greater collaboration has been largely attributed to the three EU-funded cross-border networks of local authorities and social partners: the East Border Region Committee¹², the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) and the North West Region Cross Border Group.

In addition, the Monaghan-based Border Action – as a so-called EU ‘intermediary funding body’ – plays a valuable role in enabling and facilitating bottom-up development and partnership building. Where partnerships include such a wide range of local stakeholders, the potential exists for them to increase regional and national linkages to promote the territorial competitiveness of their catchment areas. However inter-business networking between small border towns such as Clones and Lisnaskea, and Lifford and Strabane, has not emerged to any considerable extent. Variations in prices, the operation of two currencies and perceived competition between small towns and their traders and business interests have



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tended to promote the interests of individual towns rather than the potential collective commercial strengths of the towns and villages working together on a cross-border basis. Addressing these economic and business cooperation issues remains a challenge.

While the time is right for many local areas in Ireland, North and South, to move away from funding programmes and demonstrate self-sustainability, this is not yet the case for the border region. While EU funding programmes in particular have assisted border communities to develop economically and socially, neighbouring areas, especially in Northern Ireland, have also moved forward through equivalent funding supports. The result is that these small border towns and villages, relative to other locations, remain in a disadvantaged position. Sustained government financial and policy support is thus an essential factor in their long-term viability, although how likely this is to happen remains an open question.

As these case study insights reveal, current collaborative structures in the border region involve local community leaders, volunteers and some entrepreneurs emerging as the main protagonists. Partnership processes are leading to increased inter-community and cross-community contacts and networking, and these processes have brought about increased levels of social capital in border communities. In planning for future cross-border collaboration, it is important to sustain and build on the levels of social capital

that have been fostered in this way, and to complement them by greater institutional and financial support from central government. While increased investment in large-scale infrastructural projects is always important to promote economic competitiveness, it is equally crucial to support small-scale and area-based collaborative approaches.

A recurring theme of interviews in these towns and villages is the need to develop the natural and cultural locale through, for example, sustainable tourism product development. But in order to capitalise on this potential, three further areas which need investment are road and infrastructure improvements, ICT connectivity and cross-border and cross-community collaborative governance along the lines of the Clones-Erne East Partnership.

Conclusion

Each of these case study areas faces unique challenges: for example, the economic and skills base in Kiltyclogher-Garrison is very different to that of Lifford-Strabane. However common issues exist, ranging from the immigration of workers from Eastern Europe and their associated impact on an area's social structure, to the pressures of residential development and the potential for smaller settlements to become dormitory towns for larger urban centres.

These three studies demonstrate how different organisations and players will become involved in leading cross-border

cooperation based on local circumstances: in Lifford-Strabane it was the business-led Strabane-Lifford Development Commission; in Kiltyclogher-Cashel it was the community-led KiltyCashel Project; and in Clones-Lisnaskea it was the local authority-led Clones-Erne East Partnership.

In his excellent 2007 *Audit of Community Development in the Cross Border Region*¹³, Brian Harvey notes that community development has generally followed a path of 'contact-coordination-cooperation.' The support of cross-border funding programmes has encouraged creative institutional structures between cross-border groups that Harvey characterises into three types with deepening levels of engagement: twin pairs, twin pairs with a coordinating committee, and 'transboundary'. The Strabane-Lifford Development Commission and the KiltyCashel project fall into Harvey's first two categories respectively. The Clones-Erne East Partnership takes on a rather different structure in that it is a network among three local authorities with linkages to local and cross-border community and business groups.

The context for future cross-border programmes is changing. With the Northern Ireland peace process moving forward, cross-border projects will increasingly reflect the normal challenges of inter-jurisdictional planning and coordination that can be found in other EU border regions and

elsewhere. These include overcoming a lack of coherent and consistent government policies across different sectors on each side of the border. The new INTERREG IV programme will require increased cross-border cooperation among local authorities in the areas of enterprise, tourism, infrastructure and services, and it is hoped that this will also bring about greater coherence across the sectors in each jurisdiction.

Another driving force for cooperation will be the emerging fiscal constraints on both sides of the border, with the South facing into serious funding shortfalls as the economic boom conditions of recent years come to an end. Central and local funding authorities will need to find creative ways to finance and maintain local services, thus strengthening the case for inter-jurisdictional cooperation in order to provide these services in areas with a potential cross-border catchment.

Together the three case studies offer some key lessons for future cross-border programmes:

- The quality and impact of local development programmes, and particularly cross-border projects, are directly linked to the level of engagement between local authorities and local business and community networks. This means that as local government takes on a larger role in cross-border cooperation, it will have to develop structures that involve and leverage

the social and financial capital of these networks.

- Introducing area-based planning on a cross-border basis, including 'visioning' tools and non-statutory spatial planning processes, can help to link sectoral programmes and services that have a spatial impact. This will also help cross-border small towns and villages to position themselves within the larger cross-border economic and infrastructural networks without compromising their jurisdictional competencies.
- Cross-border small towns and villages increasingly recognise the need to work in partnership to deliver integrated solutions so as to ensure their economic and social viability. This necessitates moving from focussing on the immediate to adopting a longer-term developmental approach to cooperation.

While these three models of local cross-border cooperation do not prescribe how cross-border alliances should be rolled out, who should be involved or what areas they should cover, they do highlight that there are many reasons to engage in cross-border cooperation and many ways of doing it. The most important conclusion is that these examples demonstrate the necessity of building on an identified local need and having that need at the core of the collaborative process.

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1. This paper reports on the research findings from the Lifford-Strabane; Kiltyclogher-Cashel(Scribbagh)-Garrison-Rossinver; and Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea case studies, which are part of a wider ICLR research project that also includes Blacklion-Belcoo-Glenfarne and Castleblayney-Crossmaglen. This research project is being jointly funded by the International Fund for Ireland and the Irish Government.

2. Harvey B, Kelly A, McGearty S, Murray S (2005): *The Emerald Curtain: The Social Impact of the Irish Border*. Carrickmacross: Triskele Community Training and Development
3. See <http://www.borderireland.info/>
4. There are old records in the Lifford Courthouse which refer to Strabane District Number 1 (i.e. Strabane town) and Strabane District Number 2 (i.e. Lifford).
5. See 'Strabane to receive further State aid' in *Irish Times*, 4 April 1978
6. As outlined in Council Regulation (EEC) No 2137/85 of 25 July 1985, a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) must have at least two members from different member states, its activities must be related to the economic activities of its members, and it must result in better outcomes than if the members were acting alone (see <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/126015.htm>).
7. The terms of reference of the Strabane-Lifford Development Commission have been rewritten to facilitate this widening of its catchment area. The directors were of the opinion that the catchment of Lifford and Strabane had become too small so it was increased to include 'near-about's' such as Convoy.
8. Rural Lift is a demand-responsive community transport project serving West Cavan and North Leitrim. While it can carry passengers across the border, it cannot *stop and collect* people once it has crossed into Northern Ireland.
9. One possible reason for why these conversations are not thought necessary is that there was still movement between both villages during the Troubles.
10. A £60million programme supported by the Millennium Commission.
11. See p.13 of the Clones Erne East Area Strategy, a document produced by Daly & Associates on behalf of the Partnership and published in May 2004.
12. While the East Border Region Committee does not cover any of the three case study areas highlighted in this paper, it does encompass the Castblayney-Crossmaglen area which is part of ICLRD's wider study.
13. Harvey, B (2007): *Audit of Community Development in the Cross Border Region* (unpublished), Cross Border Centre for Community Development, Dundalk Institute of Technology.



Staff of the Centre for Cross Border Studies with the city of Armagh in the background. From left to right: Patricia McAllister, Andy Pollak, Patricia Clarke, Mairead Hughes, Joe Shiels.

THE CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES

March 2008

The Centre for Cross Border Studies, founded in September 1999 and based in Armagh and Dublin, researches and develops cooperation across the Irish border in education, training, health, ICT, business, public administration, agriculture, planning, the environment and a range of other practical areas.

The Centre is an independent company limited by guarantee (UK charity no. XR 31047) and is owned jointly by Queen's University Belfast, Dublin City University and the Workers' Educational Association (Northern Ireland). Its principal financial contributors in the past year have been the EU Peace Two programme and the Irish Department of Education and Science. The Centre has also raised a large proportion of its income through sponsorship and selling its research and consultancy services to government and other agencies.

Controversy about relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the constitutional field now obscures less than ever before the broad consensus that exists in both jurisdictions about the value of cross-border cooperation on practical issues. This holds that a low level of contact and communication across the Irish border damages the well-being of both parts of the island, and there is a clear need to identify and overcome the present barriers to cooperation and mutual understanding.

PURPOSE

The pragmatic view, that cooperation should take place where it brings real benefits to both parts of the island, is weakened by an additional factor: there has been too little research to date on how this practical cooperation is to be achieved, and how the outcomes of such research should be developed. The Centre for Cross Border Studies – itself a unique expression of cross-border cooperation – provides an objective, university-based setting for policy research into and development of such cooperation.

The Centre is a policy research and development institute, whose purpose is to:

- Identify gaps in cross-border information, research and mutual learning in Ireland;
- Commission and publish research on issues related to opportunities for and obstacles to cross border cooperation in all fields of society and the economy;
- Host events at which research findings can be discussed and disseminated, and at which policy formation in the area of cross border cooperation can be developed;
- Present the findings of such research and development projects to the EU, the two governments, the Northern Ireland Executive, employer, trade union and social partnership bodies, and the wider public;
- Manage and provide administrative support for cross-border

programmes and organisations which have a strong education, research and development dimension;

- Provide training programmes for public officials and others in North-South cooperation in Ireland;
- Provide sources of comprehensive and accurate information about North-South and cross-border cooperation in Ireland.

WEBSITES

CCBS HOUSE WEBSITE

www.crossborder.ie

Usage of the Centre's website has increased greatly since 2003, the first year for which statistics are available. Since 2004 the number of unique visitors and the number of visits have each increased by over 270%. The number of page views, while a little more erratic, continues to show an upward trend, while the average number of hits more than doubled in the five year period up to the end of 2007. Visitors came predominantly from the United States, followed by the Republic of Ireland, Britain, and the rest of the EU.



Year (Monthly average)	Unique Visitors	Visits	Page views	Hits
2003	1619	2161	4802	14373
2004	1453	2084	9178	18981
2005	2566	3603	8127	24747
2006	3481	4915	10149	30534
2007	3969	5432	12041	32207

BORDER IRELAND

www.borderireland.info



Border Ireland is the first ever online searchable database to provide access to the full range of information on North-South and cross-border issues in Ireland, covering education, health, agriculture, transport, the environment, tourism, culture, mobility issues, business and community development.

Formally launching it in March 2006, the Irish Minister for Finance, Mr Brian Cowen TD, said: "This website will be

the keystone for information provision that will enable us all to meet future challenges, be they economic, social or educational. I would encourage everyone who wishes to benefit from a cross-border approach to their activities to make use of this invaluable website."

At the beginning of February 2007, Border Ireland had documented (online) the details of 3,255 North-South and cross-border activities, 1,566 organisations, 1,370 publications, and 2,067 individual contacts (people).

With funding from the EU Peace II programme, the Centre initiated Border Ireland to centralise the very large amount of uncoordinated and fragmented information about North-South cooperation and the Irish border region. This has involved the creation of an information capture strategy and strong working relationships with a network of over 200 information providers from all government departments, North and South; the managing authorities for all EU programmes; relevant charitable foundations on the island; research coordinators in all higher education



The launch of www.crossbordermobility.info in Ballymascanlon, Co Louth, by (from left to right) Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA, First Minister Rev Dr Ian Paisley MP MLA, and Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern TD

institutions, and key community and voluntary, and business leaders.

Border Ireland is available online at www.borderireland.info where people can register free and search through the information by year, sector and location, and view an organisation's history of involvement in cross-border cooperation.

The independent evaluation of Border Ireland Phase 1 (May 2003-June 2006: David Clarke Consulting) highlights its work as the 'product of the highest standards in information sourcing and IT management expertise on the island'. It calls the website 'one of the most important projects supported under the Peace II Programme in terms of its potential long-term impact beyond the period of the Programme's support, as an increasingly significant and valuable online resource tool for the collation and sharing of information and good practice relating to cross-border development and cooperation'.

A second 2006-2008 phase of the project is currently being implemented through support provided under the Peace II Extension Programme. The key objective for this second phase is to develop Border Ireland as the recognised portal for information on and communication about cross-border co-operation on the island of Ireland. By December 2007 Border Ireland had recorded nearly 25,000 visitors with over 800 organisations registered as users of the system.

Border Ireland is also developing a range of interactive facilities. These include an RSS-fed cross-border media centre, an online moderated discussion forum, an email alert system and a range of materials to support cross-border decision-making. For instance, Border Ireland now provides a regularly updated e-zine which highlights recent additions to the system, media reports on cross-border issues and short sectoral briefing papers which summarise cooperation in key areas such as

transport, economic development, agriculture, culture, environment, health and education.

The Centre has also used the Border Ireland database in partnership with the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at NUI Maynooth to develop *Mapping Programmes*, an online spatial mapping initiative to show the locations of cross-border infrastructure funded through the EU's INTERREG and other programmes.

MOBILITY WEBSITE

www.crossbordermobility.info



In early 2007 the Centre for Cross Border Studies was commissioned by the North/South Ministerial Council to develop a new online information portal to provide useful citizens information for people crossing the border to live, work, study or retire. This new cross border mobility website was created with technical assistance from DID, the web and design team of the Northern

Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel, and funded by the EU Peace Two programme.

The website was officially launched on 30 October 2007 at a meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council in Ballymascanlon, Co. Louth by the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Rev Dr Ian Paisley MP MLA, the Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness MP MLA and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern TD.

The new public information website – the first of its kind on the island of Ireland – is structured around the four themes of Commute, Work, Live, Study. It includes in-depth information on a range of areas in both Irish jurisdictions, including taxation, social security, job seeking, qualifications, health, education, housing, banking and telecommunications. The website content is continuously being updated in consultation with Borderwise, the cross-border advice and information service provided by Citizens Advice Northern Ireland and the Citizens Information Board in the Republic of Ireland.

There will be a public launch of this new website in Dublin and Belfast in spring 2008, followed by a marketing campaign to raise its profile among the general public in both jurisdictions, to be undertaken by a major PR and marketing company.

A NOTE FROM THE NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOURS

Since September 2006 the Centre has been sending an opinionated monthly e-column, *A Note from the Next Door Neighbours*, to a growing audience of subscribers: over 6,000 at the last count. These *Notes* have provoked enthusiastic feedback and debate.

The *Notes* so far have covered the following issues: whether North-South cooperation actually works to bring about reconciliation between people in the two jurisdictions; the inaccurate reporting of North-South cooperation in the media; the possible re-opening of the Ulster Canal; the importance of EU funding to cross-border cooperation in Ireland; the need for Northern Ireland to attract back its highly educated and skilled emigrants; how Ireland, North and South, could play a distinctive role in combating world hunger; hopes after the March 2007 Northern Ireland election; Rev Ian Paisley as a champion of North-South cooperation; the contribution of Norwegian human rights lawyer, Torkel Opsahl, to the peace process; the need for civil society groups in both Irish jurisdictions to talk to one another; a possible high-speed rail bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland; the row over families across the Donegal border sending their children to Derry schools; why higher education students don't cross the border to study any more; the resurrection of Clones; and whether the Irish border region could become the best border region in Europe.

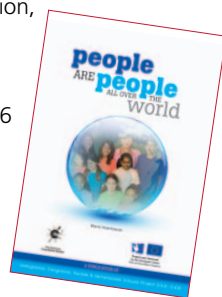
These columns have been reported in the *Irish Times*, *Irish News*, *Derry Journal*, *Northern Standard* (Monaghan), *Scotsman*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Sunday Post* (Scotland) and on RTE, BBC Scotland, Border Television and local radio stations in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. They also appear on the celebrated website Slugger O'Toole (<http://sluggerotoole.com>)

The columns can also be accessed at www.crossborder.ie/home/index/ndn/index.php

CURRENT RESEARCH AND EXCHANGE PROJECTS

Immigration Emigration Racism and Sectarianism Schools Project

The Immigration, Emigration, Racism and Sectarianism (IERS) Schools Project is a two year project which started in September 2006 and is managed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies and funded by the EU Peace II Extension Programme. It has brought together 300 children aged 9-14 from 12 schools – six Protestant and Catholic schools (upper primary and lower secondary) in County Antrim and six Catholic and Protestant schools (upper primary and lower secondary) in Louth and Monaghan – to learn about the cultures associated with Protestantism and Catholicism and with the new immigrant communities who are becoming numerous in both regions.



The Irish children are also learning that they have something important in common with each other and with the new ethnic community children: they are all from societies which have seen large-scale emigration. This project has produced a set of high-class teaching materials for the 9-14 age group in both jurisdictions entitled 'People are People all over the World.' The project coordinator is Marie Hoeritzauer.

North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project (Phase 2)

The immediate aim of this EU-funded project (2006-2008) is to build on the experience of the successful first phase of the North-South Student Teacher Exchange project (2002-2005) in order to provide evidence, through a fourth year of exchanges feeding into a longitudinal research study, of the need to mainstream a system of trainee teachers doing a key part of their teaching practice in schools in the other Irish jurisdiction. The external evaluator called the first phase 'a courageous, inclusive and groundbreaking exchange' and 'an experience that has been transformational' for the student teachers involved. The second phase's research study is being carried out by Dr Maeve Martin of National University of Ireland Maynooth and will report by June 2008. She is exploring the impact of the whole project (phases one and two) on the more than 100 young participating teachers. She is examining whether the exchange has impacted in a lasting way on the personal and

professional attitudes of the teachers, and seeking evidence of the incorporation of peace and reconciliation elements into their teaching practices as a result of the exchange.

Pride of our Place

The final report of Pride of our Place, a cross-border local environmental studies project for primary schools – which is the last of the Centre's 2002-2006 EU funded schools action research projects – was published in April 2007. The report was compiled

by project researcher Mary Burke of St Patrick's College Drumcondra. The Chief Inspector for Northern Ireland, Ms Marion Matchett, described the project's final showcase event as "a wonderful event, made all the more so by the children's enthusiasm, interest and expertise." The Deputy Chief Inspector for the Republic of Ireland, Mr Gearóid O Conluain, said he had been 'very impressed with the high standard of the presentations and the enthusiasm that pupils and teachers brought to the project. I am confident that projects of this nature play an important role in increasing mutual understanding North and South, which will lead to greater harmony and cooperation in the future.'



Crossing the Border: New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

In 2004-2006 the Centre was involved in a large-scale collaborative research project ('Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways') commissioned by the Higher Education Authority and funded by the EU Peace Two programme, between University College Dublin (Institute for British-Irish Studies and Institute for the Study of Social Change), Queen's

University Belfast (Institute of Governance and Centre for International Borders Research), the Centre for Cross Border Studies and Democratic Dialogue. This project focussed on three main themes: a comparative study of borders with an emphasis on the creation and consolidation of the Irish border; the Irish border as a social, economic and cultural divide; and pathways for promoting cross-border contact, co-operation and mutual understanding.

On 21 February 2008 the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, launched a book of essays out of this project entitled *Crossing the Border: New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*, edited by Professor John Coakley of University College Dublin and Professor Liam O'Dowd of Queen's University Belfast, and published by Irish Academic Press. Three of the 13 essays in this book are by staff members or

former staff members of the Centre: Andy Pollak on North-South educational co-operation; Dr Patricia Clarke on North-South health co-operation; and Dr Eoin Magennis on the working of the 'Common Chapter' of the two jurisdictions' development plans.

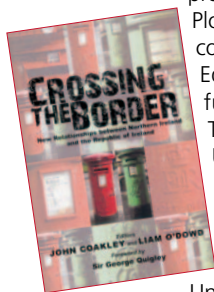
CURRENT TRAINING PROJECTS

North-South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme

Between April and June 2007 the Centre – together with its partners, Co-operation Ireland and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Northern Ireland's leading provider of training to the public sector – organised a fourth training course for civil and public servants working on North-South and cross-border issues in North-South bodies, government departments and other public agencies in the two Irish jurisdictions. This brought to 100 the number of officials who have taken these courses since they were started in January 2005. A fifth course will take place from May to September 2008.

There are currently over 700 officials working directly in North-South and cross-border co-operation on the island of Ireland. There are few opportunities for such people to undertake induction or training courses to work in this new, complex and sensitive area.

The courses, which take place over five-six days during a four month period, feature four modules: North-South co-





President Mary McAleese, Dr Martin McAleese, Belfast Lord Mayor Councillor Pat McCarthy, Belfast City Council Chief Executive Peter McNaney, and Special EU Programmes Body Chief Executive Pat Colgan with organisers and participants at the third North-South public sector training course awards ceremony in Belfast City Hall, 22 February 2007.

operation in the public and NGO sectors; North-South public finance and governance issues; North-South economic and business co-operation; and cross-border co-operation at local authority and community level. President Mary McAleese presented the graduates of the third course with their certificates at a ceremony in Belfast City Hall on 22 February 2007, and the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning, Dr Aideen McGinley, did the same at the end of the fourth course on 21 June (standing in for the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Mr Nigel Hamilton).

The programme features prestigious guest lecturers including Sir George Quigley, chairman of Short Brothers (Bombardier Aerospace Group);

North/South Ministerial Council joint secretaries, Mary Bunting and Tom Hanney; head of the Northern Ireland Review of Public Administration, Greg McConnell; director of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland, Dr Jane Wilde; Fermanagh businessman and former GAA president, Peter Quinn; chief executive of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, Dr Duncan Morrow; director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Avila Kilmurray; Professor John Bradley, formerly of the Economic and Social Research Institute; and the chief executives of four North-South bodies – Liam Nellis from InterTradelreland, Pat Colgan from the Special EU Programmes Body, Martin Higgins from the Food Safety Promotion Board and Derick Anderson from the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission.

On 25 October 2007 nearly 40 graduates of the course came together at a hotel in County Louth to launch *The Wind across the Border*, a handsomely produced compilation of the six best written assignments carried out by teams of trainees (paired on a North-South basis) from the four courses to date. In his foreword to the book, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern TD, said: 'What these young public servants are doing is truly pioneering. Here is the pith and substance of what good government is meant to be about. These essays all outline fresh new ideas, clearly laid out, about how practical cross-border and all-island cooperation can make a real difference to improving the lives of the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland.'

CURRENT ADMINISTRATION PROJECTS

The Centre has filled an important niche by providing administrative support to North-South and cross-border initiatives, particularly in the field of education. Many cross-border projects are sustained largely through EU funding and the commitment of enthusiastic individuals, and when the money and enthusiasm runs out their absence of a proper administrative structure often dooms them to early closure. The Centre offers this cross-border administrative structure, and a detailed knowledge of support mechanisms in both Irish jurisdictions, which can ensure such projects' longer-term sustainability.



One of the winners of the 2007-2008 Universities Ireland-IBEC-CBI North-South Masters bursaries, Ashlyn Kessopersadh from Templeogue, Dublin, pictured at the awards ceremony in Dublin Castle with the Chairman of CBI Northern Ireland, Mr Brian Ambrose.

UNIVERSITIES IRELAND

universities ireland

Promoting Irish Universities

The Centre acts as the secretariat for Universities Ireland (UI), set up in 2003 to promote cooperation and collaboration between the nine universities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Its chairman for the 2008-2010 period is Professor Richard Barnett, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ulster.

In the past year the two main initiatives taken under the auspices of Universities Ireland have been the formation of the Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building and the successful two-phase bid to the Irish Government's development cooperation agency, Irish Aid, and the Higher Education Authority, for €1.5 million to fund its first three years of work; and the expansion of the annual North-South Masters bursary

scheme from two to eight bursaries in collaboration with the Joint Business Council of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and the annual Confederation of British Industry (Northern Ireland).

• **THE IRISH-AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING (IAPRCB)**

The Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building brings together all nine universities on the island of Ireland and four African universities – Makerere in Uganda, Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique and University of Malawi – in a unique, high-level partnership to develop a coordinated approach to Research Capacity Building (RCB) in higher education institutions in order to make an effective contribution to the reduction of poverty in those countries.

**THE IRISH-AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP
FOR RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING**



The IAPRCB aims:

- to build the capacity for development research in Irish and Northern Irish universities;
- to build the capacity for research in the four African universities in

health and education, and the cross-cutting themes of ICT and gender.

The Partnership is funded as a pilot project under the Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes (2007-2011). It is organised under the umbrella of Universities Ireland, which also provides some matching funding.

The Partnership will be launched by President Mary McAleese on the opening day of its first four day workshop at Dublin City University on 8-11 April 2008.

The co-chairs of the IAPRCB's Steering Committee are Professor Jane Grimson of Trinity College Dublin and Professor Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya of Makerere University; the chair of its Executive Committee is Professor Ronnie Munk of Dublin City University, and its administrative leader is the Centre for Cross Border Studies. The project manager, Dr Niamh Gaynor, is based at Dublin City University. IAPRCB staff starting work in February-March 2008 are Dr Eimear Barrett, a postdoctoral fellow in health based at Queen's University Belfast; Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo, a postdoctoral fellow in education based at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick; Yoaxue Lin, a web portal manager based at TCD; and Caitriona Fitzgerald, a part-time administrative officer based at DCU. CCBS events organiser Patricia McAllister has been seconded to work

part-time for the Partnership to organise its six workshops.

The project's methodology centres around:

- *A pilot foresight exercise* to establish research needs in the four African countries and the Irish and Northern Irish universities' capacities to work in partnership to meet those needs;
- *Six four-day themed workshops* (three in Ireland – the first in April 2008 – and three in Africa) to recruit and involve stakeholders, design and carry out the foresight exercise, run a pilot summer school, and discuss and agree a final report.

The project consists of six work packages:

1. *A stakeholder consultation* among the 14 participating institutions (and external agencies such as donors) using workshops, focus groups, structured interviews and e-consultation;
2. The *foresight exercise* to identify and prioritise areas of existing, emerging and potential HEI research strength (particularly in health, education, ICT and gender) where future investments will realise tangible social and economic benefits for the participating African countries. In particular it will identify key areas of research for poverty reduction.
3. An all-island development research *web portal* to link the Irish and African partners in a virtual community for showcasing Ireland's

development research work, identifying key areas of expertise, and supporting inter-university partnerships.

4. The development of a *set of metrics* for monitoring the RCB process, including the number of researchers, postgraduate degrees awarded, funding received, publications, partnerships, and destination of PhD graduates (quantitative metrics); and attitudes and barriers (qualitative metrics).
5. *Conclusions and recommendations* for building sustainable RCB in African universities, and in development research in Irish and Northern Irish universities (with a particular focus on the processes involved in RCB).
6. *Project management and staff*. The project is overseen by a Steering Committee representing all 14 HEIs; a smaller Executive Committee to manage it on a day-to-day basis; and an International Advisory Board (to be chaired by former Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dick Spring) to provide support from international experts in development research. For staff see above.

• **NORTH-SOUTH MASTERS BURSARIES**

In 2007-2008 there were bursaries for eight students under this expanded scheme (there had been only two in previous years): six €20,000 bursaries to students undertaking a Master's course in a

business-related subject requiring location to the other Irish jurisdiction, and two €15,000 bursaries to students doing the same in a non-business related subject. The former were 50% sponsored by individual Northern and Southern businesses (under the auspices of the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council), which co-funded students doing Master's degrees by coursework or research in ecological management, finance, fire safety engineering, landscape architecture and nutrition. The two non-business related winners did Master's degrees in comparable ethnic conflict and mapping the Irish border. Last year's sponsoring firms were Arthur Cox, BT, CSA Group, Dublin Port, Healy Group and RPS Group. The expanded scheme was launched in March 2007 by the Director General of the Confederation of British Industry, Richard Lambert, a world authority on university-business collaboration.

In 2007-2008 the six business-related bursaries will be sponsored by Arthur Cox, Belfast City Airport, CSA Group, Dublin Port, Healy Group and RPS Group. For the first time, those eligible will include Irish and Northern Irish students at universities in England, Scotland and Wales; and students doing the first year of a Ph.D. The deadline for applications is 2 May 2008.

• OTHER INITIATIVES

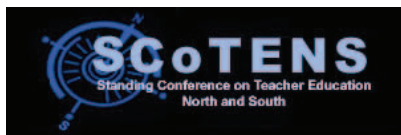
A series of meetings with Universities UK, the representative body of British universities, was initiated in September 2004 in Dublin, with a follow-up meeting in London in January 2006. A third meeting will take place in Dublin on 14 March 2008, at which the presidents and vice-chancellors will discuss matters of mutual interest in the areas of business-university collaboration, university funding and research, and European developments.

Innosport Ireland. In collaboration with *InterTradelreland*, UI sponsored a seminar in Dublin in November 2007 to bring together university researchers and industry specialists in the sports technology area, the first event of its kind in Ireland. The aim of this Innosport Ireland initiative was to produce an all-island application to the next EU Framework Programme in sports innovation and technology (i.e. performance devices and monitoring, sports accommodation, sports nutrition and sporting goods, footwear and clothing).

Universities Ireland is funded by an annual levy paid by the nine universities, and by grants from the Department of Education and Science in Dublin, the Department for Employment and Learning in Belfast and *InterTradelreland* in Newry.

Website: www.universitiesireland.ie

STANDING CONFERENCE ON TEACHER EDUCATION, NORTH AND SOUTH (SCOTENS)

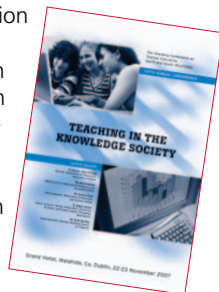


The Centre also acts as the secretariat for the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South. This was set up in 2003 by a group of senior teacher education specialists from universities, colleges of education and other education agencies in both jurisdictions. The 2007-2008 joint chairs of SCoTENS are Dr Pauric Travers, President of St Patrick's College Drumcondra, and Dr Tom Hesketh, Director of the Regional Training Unit in Belfast.

SCoTENS' 2007 annual conference, 'Teaching in the Knowledge Society' was held in November in Malahide, Co Dublin. The keynote speakers were Professor John Furlong, Director of the Department of Education at University of Oxford; David Istace of the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in Paris; Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector at the Irish Department of Education and Science; Dr Roger Austin, Senior Lecturer in Education at University of Ulster; and Keith Bartley, Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for England.

Previous SCoTENS' annual conferences

were on 'Teacher Education and Schools: Together Towards Improvement' in 2006; 'Teacher Education for Citizenship in Diverse Societies' in 2005; 'The Changing Contexts of Teacher Education, North and South' (with a particular emphasis on Teaching Councils) in 2004; and 'Challenges to Teacher Education and Research, North and South' in 2003.



SCoTENS has also provided seed funding for all-island conferences on social, scientific and environmental education (four), initial teacher education, citizenship and diversity education (two), educational research, special educational needs (two), social justice education in initial teacher education (two) and the competences approach to teacher professional development; for North-South research projects on the social/national identity of young children in the border region, ICT in teacher education, children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, student teacher exchanges, student perceptions of history, geography and science, school-based work in colleges of education, the professional development of teachers working with students with special educational needs, examining assessment procedures for trainee teachers, and universities' role in continuing teacher professional development; and for a North-South 'toolkit' for teachers and trainers

working in the area of linguistic and intercultural education (which was launched as an all-island primary school resource in December 2007 by the N. Ireland Minister for Education, Caitriona Ruane MLA, and the Irish Minister of State for Integration Policy, Conor Lenihan TD).

The SCoTENS website (<http://scotens.org>) highlights, in particular, resources on special education and citizenship education.

SCoTENS is funded by annual grants from the Irish Department of Education and Science, and the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education (Northern Ireland). A significant proportion of its funding comes from institutional subscriptions from universities, colleges of education, teaching councils, education trade unions, education centres, curriculum councils and other bodies involved with teacher education. It also receives grant aid from the Nuffield Foundation.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The Centre administers the

International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). The ICLR is a North-South-US partnership to explore and expand the contribution that planning and the development of physical, social and economic infrastructures can make to improving the lives of people in both Irish jurisdictions.

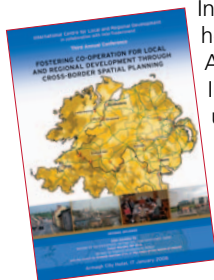
The partner institutions are: the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster; the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Athlone Institute of Technology, and the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Each of these partners brings together complementary expertise and networks – North and South, East and West – to create a unique, all-island centre that is more than the sum of its parts. The ICLR is very open to involving other academic and research institutions in its activities. The director of the ICLR is John Driscoll, who is also a Vice-President of the Institute for International Urban Development.

The ICLR

- Provides independent, expert, joined-up research, thinking and policy advice on cross-border and all-island spatial planning and local and regional development issues (economic development, transport, housing, environment, service provision, etc);
- Offers capacity building programmes

for communities and local, regional and national government representatives and officials;

- Acts as a catalyst and conduit to bring relevant actors, North and South, together to work on common goals;
- Promotes international cooperation and exchanges.



In January 2008 the ICLRD held its annual conference in Armagh (in association with InterTradelreland) under the title 'Fostering Co-Operation for Local and Regional Development through Cross-Border Spatial Planning'. Nearly 150 people attended. The

conference was opened jointly by Mr Batt O'Keeffe TD, Irish Minister of State for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas, and Mr Conor Murphy MP MLA, N.Ireland Minister for Regional Development. Conference presentations (available at www.iclrd.org) included how to implement and finance a collaborative spatial framework on the island of Ireland; how to deliver a cross-border sub-regional strategy for Newry-Dundalk; how small cross-border towns can be reconnected and revitalised; and the role of housing in building sustainable communities.

The ICLRD's work addresses three spatial scales: EU and all-island, sub-regional and local. The conference presentations were based on three research projects:



Speakers and chairpersons at ICLRD annual conference, Armagh, January 2008 (from left to right): Mr Liam Nellis, Chief Executive, InterTradelreland; Mr Batt O'Keeffe TD, Irish Minister of State for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas; Mr Conor Murphy MP MLA, N.Ireland Minister for Regional Development; Mr Feargal McCormack, Chairperson, International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

Implementing Sub-Regional Strategies

A 2006 report outlined the basis for Newry and Dundalk linking as a 'twin cities region'. An ICLRD research team, supported by an InterTradelreland-chaired steering group, is working with the respective Chambers of Commerce and local authorities to identify projects that would support such a linked sub-regional approach, including:

- Building a twin cities sustainable energy community, supported by Dundalk Institute of Technology as a third level centre of excellence in sustainable energy, to position Dundalk and Newry as island exemplars;
- Exploring the concept of a Geo-Park linked to the outstanding geological features of the Mourne, the Cooley Mountains, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford Lough;
- Marketing the Newry-Dundalk

region as a centre for internationally tradeable service operations based at the heart of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor;

- A joint town centre regeneration strategy for Newry and Dundalk to promote both towns as places where people want to visit, settle and work;
- Strong infrastructure connectivity to support a competitive and sustainable development model for the twin cities region.

The project research team comprises Professor Alastair Adair, Professor Jim Berry and Professor Stanley McGreal, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Professor Francois Vigier, John Driscoll and Erick Guerra, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Dr Chris van Egeraat, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth.

Enhancing connectivity in Small Cross-Border Towns

A key challenge for many border region small towns and villages, characterised by their peripheral location and the impact of the border, is how to build a future based on cross-border cooperation. An ICLRD research team has been working with local officials and community representatives in five of these cross-border areas: Lifford-Strabane; Kiltyclogher-Cashel(Scribbagh)-Garrison-Rossinver; Blacklion-Belcoo-Glenfarne; Clones-Roslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea, and

Castleblaney-Crossmaglen. The team, together with practitioners, will present findings in summer 2008 based on a number of common objectives: identifying mutual benefits for participating towns and villages; developing connectivity on the basis of socio-economic development; and emphasising relationship building and mutual understanding.

The project research team consists of Brendan Bartley, Caroline Creamer, Justin Gleeson and Dr Chris Van Egeraat, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; Dr. Neale Blair, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Dr Brendan O'Keefe, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick; and John Driscoll, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sustainable Communities

High-quality affordable housing and sustainable communities, closely linked to good services and employment, are a requirement in any society. In societies divided by religion, class and income, the challenge to provide them on an integrated basis takes on an extra dimension. Through case studies in Antrim, Enniskillen, Derry, Sligo, Cork and Adamstown (Co Dublin), an ICLRD research team is exploring issues of religious, ethnic and income segregation in housing in both jurisdictions. International experience and emerging best practice will also be addressed by looking at examples from Europe and the United States.

The research team comprises Paddy Gray, Michaela Keenan and Professor Stanley McGreal, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster; Krzysztof Nawrotek, NIRSA, National University of Ireland Maynooth; and John Driscoll and Professor Francois Vigier, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Evidence-based Spatial Planning

Evidence-based spatial planning and the demand for high quality data on an all-island and regional basis are increasing. To support this demand for cross-border and all-island information, ICLRD and its partners, along with the All-Island Research Observatory, the National Centre for Geocomputation (both at NUI Maynooth) and the Regional Studies Association, undertook two initiatives in 2007:

The Atlas of the Island of Ireland - Mapping Social and Economic Change.



This pioneering atlas, launched in November 2007, presents a set of detailed, full colour maps on population, housing, transport and the economy

across the island based on census data for the Republic of Ireland in 1991 and 2002 and for Northern Ireland in 1991 and 2001. The Atlas provides an important baseline for the future, especially in 2011 when the censuses in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland occur at the same time.

Spatial planning and analysis conference

In November 2007 in Dundalk, the ICLRD, the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), the National Centre for Geocomputation, the All-Island Research Observatory and the Regional Studies Association held a conference on *Supporting Evidence-Informed Spatial Planning and Analysis – Towards the Development of Spatial Databases on the Island of Ireland*. Attended by over 100 people, the conference presented the findings of two earlier seminars at University of Ulster and NUI Maynooth on spatial indicators needed to assist in high quality analysis for evidence-based planning and policy.

CROSS BORDER OPENINGS

The Centre is also a partner with the Open University in Ireland and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in Cross Border Openings (CBO), an EU-funded project which offers 500 free places on a return to study programme for socially and educationally disadvantaged people on both sides of the border. The project also involves the provision of training on cultural diversity issues, and joint work with the trade

union movement to promote the concept of workplace learning in general and workplace learning agreements in particular.

The CBO project has played a leading role in developing a strategic partnership between the Open University in Ireland and the ICTU, which mirrors the UK-wide agreement between the Open University and the Trades Union Congress unionlearn programme – this offers new learning opportunities and progression routes for trade union members. CBO has also offered learning opportunities to significant numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers. In November 2006 it organised a conference in Belfast on the educational needs of migrants on both sides of the border, and plans a further conference in Dublin in April 2008 to promote workplace learning and learn from European experience in this area.

COMPLETED RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Centre has commissioned 15 cross-border research projects in the fields of telecommunications developments, health services, disadvantage in education, EU funding programmes, local government links, mental health promotion, waste management policies, local history societies, animal health, the euro, sustainable development, diversity in early years education, science and citizenship education, public sector training and hospital services.

These projects involved researchers drawn from 13 universities, colleges and

independent research centres in Ireland and Britain: Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, Dublin City University, University College Dublin, National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland Maynooth, St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Stranmillis University College, the Institute of Public Administration, Belfast City Hospital, Dundalk Institute of Technology, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Centre for Cross Border Studies itself. The research assignments under the North-South public sector training project (see *page 103*) also involved civil and public servants from both jurisdictions.

The Centre has published the following research projects:

The Evolution of Telecom Technologies: Current Trends and Near-Future Implications (2001)

A number of case studies of developments in mobile and wireless telephony across the Irish border from a research team led by two of Ireland's leading specialists in information retrieval, data analysis and image and signal processing: Professor Fionn Murtagh, then of Queen's University Belfast, and Dr John Keating of National University of Ireland Maynooth. The project was sponsored by *eircom*.



Cross-Border Co-operation in Health Services in Ireland (2001)

A study of the past, present and potential for future co-operation in health services across the Irish border by a research team led by Dr Jim Jamison,

formerly director of the Health and Social Care Research Unit at Queen's University Belfast, and including Professor Martin McKee of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr Ciaran O'Neill of the University of Ulster, and Ms Michelle Butler of the

Institute of Public Administration in Dublin.

Ireland's Learning Poor: Adult Educational Disadvantage and Cross-Border Co-operation (2001)

A study of the needs of the more than a million people on the island who left school with few or no qualifications by Dr Mark Morgan of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and Mr Paul McGill, formerly education correspondent of the *Belfast Telegraph*. They concluded that current policies in both jurisdictions were far removed from a vision of lifelong learning

which allows people of all ages and social classes equal access to education and training.

Creating Living Institutions: EU Cross-Border Co-operation after the Good Friday Agreement (2001)

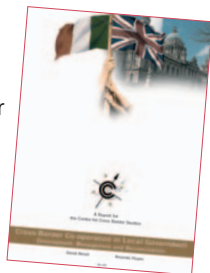
A study by Professor Brigid Laffan and Dr Diane Payne of the Institute for British-Irish Studies at University College Dublin, which analysed the interaction between the North-South Institutions set up under the Good Friday Agreement – notably the North/South Ministerial Council and the Special EU Programmes Body – and the EU's funding programme for cross-border co-operation, INTERREG.

Cross-Border Co-operation in Local Government: Models of Management, Development and Reconciliation (2001)

A study by Professor Derek Birrell and Amanda Hayes of the University of Ulster of the different kinds of cross-border links between local authorities, including one-to-one linkages, local government cross-border networks, and cross-border partnerships involving other agencies. It also analysed the project management methods used, the views of the councillors involved and the involvement of the European Union.

The Foot-and-Mouth Disease Crisis and the Irish Border (2002)

A study of the cross-border dimension of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak by the Centre's research manager, Dr Patricia Clarke, with comments from the Departments of





Agriculture in Belfast and Dublin. Issued exactly a year after the original outbreak in England, the report's findings were praised by the two Ministers, Brid Rodgers and Joe Walsh, as "extremely valuable" in helping the Departments

to formulate actions to deal with animal health emergencies.

Promoting Mental Health and Social Well-being: Cross-Border Opportunities and Challenges (2002)



This is a two-part study by a team from National University of Ireland Galway led by Dr Margaret Barry and Ms Sharon Friel. It examined a number of cross-border projects in the areas of postnatal depression, public awareness of suicide,

cancer support services, the mental health of young men and mental health in rural communities. The study also looked at the comparability and compatibility of mental health data sources in the two jurisdictions.



The Local History Project: Co-operating North and South (2003)

This study, by Dr Jacinta Prunty, Dr Raymond Gillespie and Maeve Mulryan-Moloney of National University of

Ireland Maynooth, provided the basis for the first all-Ireland register of local history societies. They identified 330 societies, but estimated that a complete list would exceed 500 societies, North and South, involving an active membership of perhaps 28,000 persons.

Towards a Green Isle? Local Sustainable Development on the Island of Ireland (2004)

A study of local sustainable development as carried out (through the Local Agenda 21 process) by local authorities and social partners throughout Ireland, by a cross-border team comprising Geraint Ellis and Dr Bill Neill of the Queen's University Belfast's School of Environmental Planning, and Dublin-based researchers Una Hand and Brian Motherway. It found that 54% of local authorities on the island had begun a process of LA21, but stressed that the main challenge is to move from debate to action.



Diversity in Early Years Education North and South: Implications for Teacher Education (2004)

The aim of this EU-funded study was to identify the difficulties facing teachers and children in areas of inter-community conflict and tension on both sides of the Irish border with a view to developing a framework for preparing young teachers working



with children in the early years. It was carried out by researchers at St Patrick's College Drumcondra in Dublin and Stranmillis University College in Belfast, Mairin Kenny and Helen McLaughlin, under the direction of Philomena Donnelly and Louise Quinn.



Citizenship and Science: The Connecting Axes (2005)

The final report of the EU-funded Citizenship and Science Exchange (CaSE) Schools project looked at how a group of 12-14 year old students in 16 schools on both sides of the

border deepened their understanding of the dynamic relationship between science and citizenship. The students explored subjects such as air and water pollution, waste management, GM and fair trade foods, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Much of the cross-border work centred on a shared Web resource.



Improving Government Service Delivery to Minority Ethnic Groups (2006)

This study, funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister Northern Ireland (with additional funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the British Council), examined how public services such as health, education, policing and employment support are provided to

minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Scotland. It had a particular focus on how Northern Ireland's public authorities could learn from their nearest neighbours. The research work was carried out by a partnership led by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in Dublin, together with Piaras MacEinri from University College Cork, the Institute for Conflict Research in Belfast, and Organisation and Social Development Consultants in Edinburgh.

The Wind Across the Border (2007)

This report brought together six award winning research assignments carried out by pairs and teams of officials as part of the North/South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme. They were on the proposed reopening of the Ulster Canal; an all-island service for the recycling of waste fridges and freezers; expanding the CAWT-sponsored eMed renal information system to the whole island; an all-island visitor pass for heritage sites; setting up a cross-border training and accreditation system for installers of renewable energy technologies; and cross-border sharing of patient electronic records.



Removing the Barriers: An Initial Report on the Potential for Cross-Border Cooperation in Hospital Services (2007)



This short report compared the planning of hospital service reorganisation, North and South. It noted that there are different strategies in the two jurisdictions, with Northern Ireland placing greater emphasis on travel time and the Republic on the size of the catchment population. The authors, independent Belfast researcher Dr Jim Jamison and Dr Michelle Butler, Senior Lecturer in UCD's School of Nursing Midwifery and Health Systems, point to the clear scope for joint hospital planning and rationalisation in the border region to benefit the health of the population.

COMMISSIONED STUDIES AND EVALUATIONS

The Centre has carried out **studies and evaluations for government and other public agencies and social partner organisations**. These have included:

- An evaluation of the cross-border GP out-of-hours service for the Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) cross-border network of health authorities (due in June 2008)
- A study of postgraduate flows from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland higher education institutions, for the Irish Department of Education and Science (January 2008)
- How the trade union movement can become more involved and influential in North-South cooperation, for the Northern Ireland office of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (December 2007)
- A review of policy recommendations from the five research projects commissioned by the Higher Education Authority under the 2004-2006 Cross-Border Programme for Research contributing to Peace and Reconciliation: Intergenerational transmission and ethno-national identity in the border area; Equality and social inclusion; Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways; E-consultation; and Virtual Research Centre for Point-of-Care Technology (February 2007)
- An overview of the activities of the Common Chapter of the Republic of Ireland's National Development Plan and Northern Ireland's Structural Funds Plan for the Special EU Programmes Body – in partnership with FPM Chartered Accountants (February 2007)
- A report on public attitudes to the development of cross-border health services, with particular reference to GP out-of-hours services, for CAWT (January 2007)
- A report on education and skills in the North West, for the Irish Department of Education and Science and the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning (2006)
- An Evaluation of the Education for Reconciliation Project, for the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (2003-2005)
- A Review of Cross-Border Mobility Information Provisions in the South

of Ireland, for the North/South Mobility Information Group (2003)

- An Evaluation of the Upstate Theatre Company's 'Crossover' cross-border community drama project (2002-2004)
- 'Towards a Strategic Economic and Business Research Agenda for the island of Ireland', for InterTradeIreland (2002)
- A report on public feedback to the PriceWaterhouseCoopers/Indecon Obstacles to Mobility study, for the North/South Ministerial Council (2002)
- A study into the feasibility of extending University for Industry/learnDirect to the Republic of Ireland, for University for Industry (2001)
- An evaluation of the Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) cross-border network of health boards and trusts, for CAWT(2001)
- A 'scoping study' of North-South School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges, for the Department of Education (Bangor) and the Department of Education and Science (Dublin) (2001)

SEMINARS AND STUDY DAYS

The Centre holds regular seminars and study days in Armagh, Dublin and in the border region to examine strategic areas of interest to North-South policy makers. These bring together groups of policy makers, senior practitioners and academics to discuss a research paper prepared by the Centre under the chairmanship of a distinguished

authority in the field. As the Centre's research programme has developed, these seminars have moved from studying broad policy fields to examining more focussed areas which have been the subject of specific research projects and commissioned work. Cross-border seminars and study days have been organised in the following areas:

- Agriculture
- Education
- Tourism
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Health Services
- Mental Health Promotion
- Developments in Telecom Technologies
- Local government links
- Foot and Mouth disease
- School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges
- European citizenship education
- The euro
- Business research
- The North-South Consultative Forum
- Ageing
- *Border region history**
- *Border region regeneration**
- Waste Management
- *Economic co-operation**
- *Planning and mobility in the North West**
- Science and Citizenship
- Information provision
- Housing and sustainable communities
- Education and Skills in the North West
- Mental Health Research

- Personal Banking
 - Web 2.0 aspects of online cross-border information
- * *For the Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways project*

CONFERENCES

The first major conference organised by the Centre, jointly with the Centre for International Borders Research (CIBR), was held at Queen's University Belfast in autumn 2000 under the title **'European Cross Border Co-operation: Lessons for and from Ireland.'** This international conference was opened by the Irish President, Mary McAleese, and was addressed by a wide range of distinguished speakers, including the then First Minister of Northern Ireland, David Trimble; the Deputy First Minister, Seamus Mallon; the then RUC Chief Constable, Sir Ronnie Flanagan; the head of the EU's cross-border INTERREG programme, Esben Poulsen; the international emergency communications expert, Professor Edward Johnson; Ambassador Hermann von Richthofen of the German-Polish Governmental Commission; and the then SDLP leader John Hume. Participants came from 13 countries to discuss cross-border co-operation in five areas: administrative institutions, security and policing, business and the economy, the environment, and culture and the arts.

The Centre has also organised six North-South conferences on aspects of higher education on behalf of the Department

for Employment and Learning (Belfast) and the Department of Education and Science (Dublin). The first of these, in October 2002 in Armagh, was on **'Ireland as a Centre of Excellence in Third Level Education.'** This conference, which was attended by the presidents of seven of the nine universities on the island of Ireland, was addressed by several world authorities on higher education. These included Professor Malcolm Skilbeck, the OECD's former Deputy Director for Education; former US Secretary of Education, Richard Riley; the Director-General for Education and Culture in the European Commission, Nikolaus van der Pas, and the Chief Executive of the English Higher Education Funding Council, Sir Howard Newby.

In May 2003, the second conference was held in Cavan on **'International Education: A Capacity Builder for the Island of Ireland?'** The keynote speakers were Lindy Hyam, Chief Executive of IDP Education Australia, a world leader in international education and development services, and Neil Kemp, director of the Education UK Division of the British Council. The conference was chaired by Sir George Quigley.

In November 2003, the third conference was held in Belfast on **'Widening Access to Third Level Education on the Island of Ireland: Towards**

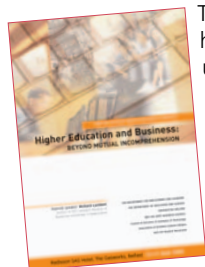


Better Policy and Practice’. The keynote speakers were Dr Arnold Mitchem, President of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington DC, a champion of access to higher education for low income and disabled Americans for 35 years, and Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer of the South African Qualifications Authority.



The fourth conference – entitled **‘Cross-Border Higher Education Cooperation in Ireland and Europe’** – was held in Cavan in May 2004. This examined examples of good practice in cross-border higher education elsewhere in

Europe, notably in the Öresund region of Denmark and southern Sweden (with keynote speaker Professor Linda Nielsen, Rector of the University of Copenhagen), and the EUCOR network between French, German and Swiss universities in the Upper Rhine region. The conference was co-chaired by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and Noel Dorr.



The fifth conference was held in Belfast in June 2005 under the title **‘Higher Education and Business: Beyond Mutual Incomprehension’.**

The keynote speaker was Richard Lambert, member of the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy

Committee, former editor of the *Financial Times* and author of the

seminal Lambert Review of University-Business Collaboration for the British Government. The conference was opened by the Irish Minister for Education and Science, Ms Mary Hanafin TD, and the Northern Ireland Minister for Employment and Learning and Education, Ms Angela Smyth MP. Other speakers included the Presidents of Queen’s University Belfast and NUI Maynooth, Professor Peter Gregson and Professor John Hughes, and leading Irish entrepreneurs Dr Chris Horn and Dr Hugh Cormican.

The sixth conference was held in Malahide in March 2006 with the title **‘What role for Higher Education in the Development of the 21st Century Workplace?’**

The keynote speakers were the Board Chairman of the Intel Corporation, Dr Craig Barrett; the Directors General of the Confederation of British Industry and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation, Sir Digby Jones and Turlough O’Sullivan; the Education and Training Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Peter Rigney; the Chief Executive of Forfás, Martin Cronin, and the President of Dublin City University, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski. The conference was opened by the Secretary General of the Irish Department for Education and Science, Brigid McManus, and the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning, Dr Aideen



McGinley. The event was organised in collaboration with the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council.

SCHOOLS SCIENCE CONFERENCE

In March 2007 the Centre joined with Armagh Observatory to organise 'Discover the Stars at Armagh: a Cross-Border Schools Science Conference.' This brought together 260 students from secondary schools in Belfast, Armagh, Dublin, Dundalk, Drogheda, Dungannon, Kilkeel, Cookstown, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Westmeath to engage in two days of astronomical activities in Armagh. The days started with a lecture from Dr Robert Walsh of the University of Central Lancashire followed by a cycle of 'hands on' activities in the Armagh Observatory's Human Orrery and Astropark and the Armagh Planetarium.

Other partners were the Royal School Armagh (where plenary sessions were held) and Armagh Planetarium, and the event was funded by the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Irish Department of Education and Science. The event was designed to attract students aged 13-14 towards science and scientific thinking at a critical stage of their academic careers. A 32 page booklet was produced for the participating schools by Observatory students and staff (edited by Dr Miruna Popescu) along with a wide range of educational materials (provided by organisations such as NASA – the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration,

and the Royal Astronomical Society). Thanks for the success of this initiative are particularly due to the director of the Armagh Observatory, Professor Mark Bailey, and Observatory staff and students.

BOOKS

In 2001 the Centre published, in association with Cork University Press, a series of short books containing essays by leading writers on key issues of interest to both Irish jurisdictions:

- *Multi-Culturalism: the View from the Two Irelands* by Edna Longley and Declan Kiberd, with a foreword by President Mary McAleese
- *Can the Celtic Tiger cross the Irish Border?* by John Bradley and Esmond Birnie, with a foreword by Peter Sutherland
- *Towards a Culture of Human Rights in Ireland* by Ivana Bacik and Stephen Livingstone, with a foreword by Mary Robinson



WHAT THEY SAY

What the Centre for Cross Border Studies is doing is really important. We hope that you will provide analytical and research support to what we're trying to do in the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, pushing forward a



Secondary school students from both sides of the border at 'Discover the Stars at Armagh: a Cross-Border Schools Science Conference,' March 2007.

significant North-South agenda on a purely practical basis, and looking at the concept of an all-island economy. We need to maximise the benefits of this cross-border work, identifying what will and will not succeed. This is not an academic exercise – its practical outcomes are almost limitless. In economic terms this is a pretty small island which should be looking outwards towards the global economy rather than inwards. We need to be encouraging cross-border cooperation to gain the maximum benefits for Northern Ireland in that global context. This is very rich and fruitful territory for the Centre to be working in.

*Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,
Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, February 2007*

The Centre for Cross Border Studies always takes a very fresh and innovative approach, bringing together sources of energy on both sides of the border that used to be back to back but are now in an extraordinary dialogue.

*President Mary McAleese,
February 2005*

It is essential that North-South co-operation is not the exclusive preserve of the politicians or the public sector. Other actors in the North-South arena – the private sector, trade unions, the farming sector, the voluntary and community sector, the universities and other educational institutions, to name but a few – have a critical role to play also in this process. This is where the role of the Centre for Cross Border Studies has been, and will continue to be, so important and valuable. You have carved out a very useful role in complementing the work of the new North-South institutions created by the Agreement, and serving as a kind of interface between the public sector in both parts of the island and non-governmental practitioners in the field.

*The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD,
February 2005*

The continued excellence of the research

carried out by the Centre brings to mind the words of John Ruskin: "Quality is never an accident. It is always a result of intelligent effort."

Nigel Hamilton, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, March 2006

The Centre for Cross Border Studies makes a hugely valuable contribution to establishing the evidence-based research needed to underpin mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation.

Over the years it has established an unrivalled expertise across a wide variety of economic and social issues of direct relevance to cooperation and collaboration. It has brought together policy makers, researchers, academics and others involved in dealing with the practical issues to share experiences and identify solutions.

The Centre's research findings have helped to inform the development of policy in key areas such as health and education. It is an important resource for a wide range of public bodies, including through information sharing and focussed training programmes. In many areas the Centre, through its research work, has helped identify the way forward and demonstrated the synergies and benefits to be harnessed from North-South cooperation.

Following the historic political developments in 2007 and the renewed meetings of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), the Centre's work continues to play an important role.

One of the Centre's key achievements during 2007 was the launch of the Cross Border Mobility website (www.crossbordermobility.info) which was developed at the request of the NSMC. The website provides a wide range of information for people who wish to cross the border in either direction to work, study and live. The Centre continues to develop the information on the website and monitor its usage.

Mary Bunting and Tom Hanney, NSMC Joint Secretaries, February 2008

2005 EVALUATION QUOTES

by Brian Harvey (Brian Harvey Social Research, Dublin)

'Clients of the Centre appraised its work as more than competent, demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism, coupled with commitment and invariable courtesy. Expert opinion likewise gave a high assessment of the Centre's performance, admiring its quality, output, impact, relevance, value for money, working methods, expertise, vision, tact and diplomacy.'

'Comments were: "its projects are always very thorough"; "doing a great job in challenging circumstances"; "the director has an excellent grasp of what is necessary to move things along"; "nothing more important than north-south reconciliation"; "contributes a significant amount of information to the wider policy arena"; "does important work and deserves more exposure".



Centre for Cross Border Studies director Andy Pollak addresses a seminar on 'Training in cross-border professions' at the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) European conference in Lille ('Cross-Border Territories: Day to Day Europe'), 8 November 2007. From left to right: Professor Luis Dominguez Castro, University of Vigo, Spain; Dr Joachim Beck, Euro Institute, Kehl, Germany; Mr Hynek Boehm, Institut Euro Schola, Czech Republic; Mr Pollak; Mr Jean Pierre Pruvot, CCI Lille Métropole, France.

The Centre was considered to be professional, reliable and worked hard. Its staff were “a pleasure to deal with”. They did a “tremendous job”, provided “good support and service”, “they do what they have to do – and more.” All the staff were good – “but that comes from the values set down from the director at the top”. They were “efficient, focused, interested and believed in what they were doing”.

‘Several commented that the Centre went beyond what was expected, “treating the project pro-actively, bringing fresh energy and commitment, finding imaginative ways to work around problems”.

‘The Centre was admired and respected for its commitment, energy, political even-handedness and ability to open doors to people who might not otherwise be in contact with each other. It has oiled the wheels of co-operation

better than anyone else could, bringing an ever wider range of people into co-operation – “not just border people, but as far south as Cork”.

‘All had a sense that the Centre had performed well on minimal staffing and resources. “It is transparent, managing an extensive programme, working within tight timeframes and with a small number of staff”.

‘One organisation, whose work had been facilitated by the Centre, spoke enthusiastically of the Centre’s commitment to arranging cross-border contacts and promoting relationships between groups that had hitherto little contact, making the comment that: “Once the relationship was established and got going, the Centre walked quietly away. It didn’t try to hog the limelight or build an empire but let them get on with it”.

Board Members and Staff

Dr Chris Gibson (chair), chairman, Foyle Meats Group and Wilson's Country Ltd; chair, Northern Ireland Civic Forum



Chris Gibson

Dr Pauric Travers (vice-chair), president, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra



Pauric Travers

Dr Jane Wilde, director, the Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Professor Liam O'Dowd, director of the Centre for International Borders Research and professor of sociology at Queen's University Belfast

Paul Nolan, director of education (undergraduate programmes), Queen's University Belfast



Patricia Clarke

Stevie Johnston, director, Workers' Educational Association (Northern Ireland)

Professor Ronaldo Munck, strategic theme leader for internationalisation, interculturalism and social development, Dublin City University

Richard Jay, director of education (postgraduate programmes), Queen's University Belfast



Mairead Hughes

Professor Dermot Diamond, director, Science Foundation Ireland-funded 'Adaptive Information Cluster', National Centre for Sensor Research, Dublin City University

The director of the Centre is **Andy Pollak**, formerly religion and education correspondent of *The Irish Times*, and in the early 1990s coordinator of the Opsahl Commission.



Andy Pollak

The Centre's research manager is **Dr Patricia Clarke**, formerly a senior researcher with the London Ambulance Service, and its ICT leader is **Joseph Shiels**, a former software developer with Fujitsu and consultant with PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

The Centre's finance manager and administrator is **Mairéad Hughes**. The director's PA and events organiser is **Patricia McAllister**. The senior information officer is **Mark Kirkpatrick**. The education project coordinator (Immigration, Emigration, Racism and Sectarianism Schools Project) is **Marie Hoeritzauer**. A new administrative assistant, **Eimear McAnespy**, started work at the beginning of March 2008.



Patricia McAllister



Joseph Shiels



Marie Hoeritzauer



Mark Kirkpatrick

EXTRACTS FROM 2006-2007 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The unaudited accounts for 2006-2007 are detailed below. The independent external auditors are PriceWaterhouseCoopers and they have indicated their willingness to continue in office. The 2006-2007 accounts audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers will be available from the Centre for Cross Border Studies in April 2008.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2007

Income and expenditure	2007 £	2006 £
Incoming resources		
Grants Receivable	335,269	300,986
Other income	413,142	317,011
Total incoming resources	748,411	617,997
Resources expended		
Direct charitable expenditure	660,025	574,824
Administrative expenses	13,805	9,427
Total resources expended	673,830	584,251
Surplus for the year	74,581	33,746

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2007

	Notes	2007 £	2006 £
Current assets			
Debtors	9	402,262	239,862
Cash at bank		200	200
		402,462	240,062
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(164,479)	(76,660)
Net current assets		237,983	163,402
Funds			
Unrestricted	11	76,741	42,168
Restricted	11	161,242	121,234
		237,983	163,402

NOTES

Debtors	2007 £	2006 £
Other debtors and prepayments	59,014	81,508
Amounts due from The Queen's University of Belfast	343,248	158,354
	402,262	239,862

Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2007 £	2006 £
Accruals & deferred income	164,479	57,186
Other creditors	-	19,474
	164,479	76,660

Funds

	Balance at 1 August 2006	Incoming expended	Resources expended	Balance at 31 July 2007
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds	121,234	335,269	(276,928)	179,575
Unrestricted funds	42,168	413,142	(396,902)	58,408
Total funds	163,402	748,411	(673,830)	237,983

Unrestricted funds are amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Board in furtherance of the aims of the Company.

Restricted funds are amounts which are expendable only in accordance with the specified wishes of the sponsor. The restricted funds consist of grants and awards for specific projects or administrative functions carried out by the company.

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THESE ANCIENT WALLS BUILT
IN 1618 WERE FIRST SCALED BY
-THE NORMANS-
FROM WHITBY

The city walls of Londonderry. At up to twenty-six feet high, you can walk these ancient walls, taking in the sights of Derry as you go. You'll also get a pretty good view of what to visit once you're back on the ground too. From the magnificent Guildhall to the impressive St Columba's Cathedral, there's a lot waiting to be discovered in Derry. To discover more visit our website at **discoverireland.com**



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