

## PEACE AND RECONCILIATION – ROBERT VINCENT

This chapter has been included because Northern Ireland offers some crucial insights into how intra-faith conflict can be successfully addressed. These insights, and many practical activities, are generic and can be applied to inter-faith dialogue and engagement. Much of the research undertaken by Robert Vincent was the result of an input he made to the Forum for the Advancement of Muslim Education (F.A.M.E.) Conference in March 2006, where he addressed the issue of 'Terrorism' (download from [www.sdsa.net](http://www.sdsa.net)).

In Northern Ireland, the idea of Peace and Reconciliation groups developed in the late 1970s, as a response to the ongoing conflict in that part of the United Kingdom. The key aim was to explore practical ways of working towards understanding and reconciliation between different groups, building bridges between communities polarised by historical and political circumstances.

*Peace will only come when the major groupings in our society trust one another enough to plan and build the future together. Our job as reconcilers is to dismantle the real and painful barriers which stop this happening. We believe that everyone has a part to play in making peace.*

[Statement of Purpose published by the Peace and Reconciliation Group 1984]

[www.peaceprg.co.uk](http://www.peaceprg.co.uk)

Below are the details of some of the youth projects that have been developed.

**Human Rights: One World, One People: Cultural Youth Exchange** – In the Summer of 2004, PRG, in conjunction with Smile UK, a charity in England, ran an eight-month programme promoting cross-community links with 24 young people (18-25 years old) from Northern Ireland and England. There was a group of 12 from each region, which was representative of the communities discussed below.

The 12 individuals from each region met up on several occasions to promote community links both within the religious divide in Northern Ireland, the Racial "Turf War" in the Wolverhampton/Willenhall area and the sexual discriminations and tensions between males and females from different cultures. The two groups of 12 will meet up twice during July and August (Once in Wolverhampton and once in Derry/Londonderry) to discuss and address these issues as a larger group as well as experience communities unfamiliar to their own.

The culmination of this exchange was the final project in The Gambia, which will take place in October. Under the management and supervision of Wonder Years Centre of Excellence, the young people helped with WYCE's current building project. WYCE is currently building a nursery, primary and secondary school in a small village called Medina Salaam. This experience allowed the young people to see first hand a culture, which is dramatically different from their own, and in which there is still extreme poverty.

The purpose of the project was to get the young people as a whole to discuss socio/economic and religious/racial issues with the ultimate aim of exploring the idea that regardless of our apparent differences on the surface, we are all really the same.

***Growing Together: Cultural Youth Exchange*** - In the spring of 2002, the Peace and Reconciliation Group (PRG) gathered six Catholic and six Protestant students from five local secondary schools to take part in a tri-partite youth exchange with young people from Liverpool and Bradford, England. After several months of pre-exchange work, the three groups travelled to each other's cities over the course of five months. The aim of the exchange project was to examine culture from the perspective of the background of each group, as well as common aspects of youth culture (i.e. drinking, drugs, peer pressure, etc.). The L/Derry group represented the culture of religion; the Liverpool group, the culture of economics/unemployment; and Bradford, the culture of race/ethnicity.

From the standpoint of personal growth amongst the participants, this exchange project was an unparalleled success. PRG organises exchange trips every two years. However, this was the first time PRG participated in an exchange that worked to build understanding and trust between groups throughout the United Kingdom, as well as between members of L/Derry's cross-community group. Although the exchange project officially ended in late-October, 2002, the L/Derry participants have maintained contact with each other and with some of the members of the Liverpool and Bradford groups. The relationships built between the L/Derry group members resulted in a request for further work, which has been honoured by PRG in maintaining bi-monthly meetings with the young people.

*Gave me more confidence to work with and understand others.  
Our group got along very well. Religion did not seem to matter because so much more was going on.*

***Cross-Border Youth and Citizenship Project*** - This project was an 18 month, four-phase programme exploring the relationship between young people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This project was launched in the spring of 1999, involving 15 young people, ages 15-18, from Waterside (L/Derry), Letterkenny and County Donegal. The aim of the project was to look at the impact of culture, national identity and heritage on individuals and communities. Through workshops, cultural visits and residentials, the group worked to understand the differences and similarities that divide and unite them. In Phase II, the participants met politicians in Stormont, talked with community leaders in both L/Derry and Letterkenny and explored issues of prejudice, discrimination, identity and culture. Phase III highlighted the rights and responsibilities of young people. Phase IV started in January 2000 and ran through April of the same year, when the project concluded with a cross-border young people's conference, entitled "Mapping Our Millennium." This conference allowed the sharing of project learning with other young people and the demonstration of the relationship between young people and citizenship during that time of political transformation. This project won a Citizenship Values Award and past participants received awards at a showcase conference in September 2002.

Some other examples of peace and reconciliation work follow.

***Community Relations Week*** - Over the past 30 plus years, the field of community relations has changed dramatically to meet the needs of the people of Northern Ireland. Today, various groups and organisations work to build positive relations between the Protestant and Catholic communities in our city and throughout Northern Ireland. As the population of Northern Ireland grows and changes, community relations work is broadening to include new religious and ethnic groups. As it has changed and evolved, community relations has become

an established part of the society of Northern Ireland. Led and organised by PRG staff and generously supported by the Community Relations Council, some of the leading community relation's organisations in the city came together in April 2003 and April 2004 to host Community Relations Week. The week is designed to allow people across the city to be exposed to current CR programmes, explore the potential for CR work in our area and identify CR needs. The events were open to all and were free of charge.

**Community Cleanup: Working Together** - As part of Community Relations Week 2004, The Peace and Reconciliation Group, The Junction, and Towards Understanding and Healing teamed up to bring an active face to community relations in Derry/Londonderry. These organisations invited other local community groups to participate in a clean-up event that featured community workers providing the muscle to clean parks and public spaces all over the city. The idea was to send the message to the people of Derry that community organisation's and community workers are a cohesive unit and are 'Working Together' to make Derry/Londonderry and Northern Ireland a better place. We believe that an event like this not only strengthens bonds between and among community workers but it also gives the wider community a sense of unity and builds confidence in the community work that is being done throughout the city. Several members of the community came out on the day to do a bit of work and enjoy a bit of craic. We were fortunate enough to have dry and sunny weather and were able to be a visible presence in the city as we displayed our new CR Week t-shirts and picked up rubbish.

**"You, Me and Them: Children's Art Exhibition"** - Also during CR Week 2004, The PRG and Community Relations And Christians took community relations out to the general public in the form of an art exhibition. The aim was to spark interest and discussion around community relations and specifically the theme "You, Me and Them". Art pieces created by primary school children from 8 local primary schools were displayed in two public venues: the Foyleside Shopping Centre and The Millennium Forum in Derry/Londonderry during Community Relations Week. The works of art we received were very creative and offered insight into how the children of this city view our community and the greater Northern Ireland society. We feel that the exhibition was a great success and proved to be a positive contribution to CR Week and raising awareness about community relation's issues. The Exhibition was launched during a short ceremony on Saturday 3rd April at the Millennium Forum and was displayed for the whole of CR week. Although we had hoped to have more people at the launch in the Millennium Forum, it was great to see children come along with their parents to enjoy the exhibition and see their own artwork on display. We received a lot of positive feedback around the exhibition and hope to potentially make this project an annual event.

**Shared Identity: A Photographic Experience** - This project, a part of CR Week 2003, was a brainchild of two PRG staff members, this project originated as a vehicle for examining the city of Derry/Londonderry through "different eyes." With the understanding that looking through the lens of a camera often gives people a new perspective on subject matter that is very familiar to them, it was decided that a photography project that challenged the way that people view the shared space of Derry/Londonderry would be an ideal addition to Community Relations Week. The aim of community relation's work is to celebrate individual cultures, while discovering shared experiences/identities. This project was seeking to do just that. In bringing together Catholics and Protestants who are actively involved in their communities, the project encouraged participants to

examine their own identities and other groups with whom they share the city. All eight participants were in their 20s and were both professionally and non-professionally involved in the life of their community. The participants plan to bring the new training and insight gained through their participation in the project back into their communities. Over a period of four weeks, participants in the project were trained by a professional photographer in: the history of photography, photographic techniques and the black and white developing process. Participants were supplied with cameras and film, as well as developing materials. From taking the photos, to developing the film, to hanging the exhibition, the participants did all of the work themselves. The results are sometimes beautiful; sometimes difficult to look at, but speak loudly the story of the city they share.

**Corrymeela Family Holidays** - Each year Protestant and Catholic families leave L/Derry to go to Corrymeela's Ballycastle centre for a week of fun and relaxation. Led by a PRG staff member, this trip allows families from each community to get to know each other in a non-threatening manner. There is a challenging evening reconciliation programme for adults led by PRG staff, with input from Duncan Morrow, the chief executive of the Community Relations Council. A big time commitment for all involved, this has proved to be one of the most successful cross-community projects that PRG is involved with each year.

Useful links connected to peace and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, though not exclusively so, follow:

[www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org) Church of the Brethren, similar to the Quakers

[www.incore.ulst.ac.uk](http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk) An International Centre of Excellence for the Study of Peace and Conflict. Established in 1993, INCORE is a joint project of the United Nations University and the University of Ulster. Combining research, education and comparative analysis, INCORE addresses the causes and consequences of conflict both in Northern Ireland and internationally and promotes conflict resolution management strategies.

[www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org) A Christian community in Northern Ireland. Some of its aims are to provide opportunities for meeting, dialogue and learning in communities to dispel ignorance, prejudice and fear and to promote mutual respect, trust and co-operation; to address contemporary issues of faith and ethics. Some of its projects and activities are:

- Residential twinned (Catholic/Protestant) School, Youth, Adult and Church projects with follow-up support work
- Open residentials for all traditions on social, cultural, political and religious themes
- Support for new projects in peace and reconciliation work. Support for new projects in peace and reconciliation work
- Training and learning projects in the fields of conflict, mediation etc.
- Sanctuary and support for victims and those under stress.

[www.seupb.org](http://www.seupb.org) This is an EU site containing a very comprehensive set of links regarding work on peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

[www.learnuk.org](http://www.learnuk.org) The UK arm of the International and Resource Network - a non-profit internet learning community that aims to link children and young people across the world on a wide variety of projects.

Here is a collection of sites containing useful material on peace and reconciliation from around the world.

1000 Peace Women <http://www.1000peacewomen.org/>  
ACCORD - African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes  
<http://www.accord.org.za/>  
Action for Children in Conflict <http://www.actionchildren.org.uk/>  
Action Without Borders <http://www.idealists.org/>  
African Centres for Peace Education and Training (ACPET)  
<http://www.peace.ca/africa.htm>  
Alliance for Conflict Transformation <http://conflicttransformation.org/>  
Alternative Dispute Resolution Links <http://adrr.com/adr0/links.htm>  
Alternatives to Violence Project <http://www.avpbritain.org.uk/>  
Amnesty International <http://amnesty.org/>  
Arabic Regional Resource Center on Violence Against Women  
<http://www.amanjordan.org/english/index.htm>  
Asia Pacific Forum of Human Rights Institutions <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/>  
Austrian Peace Library <http://www.aspr.ac.at/library.htm>  
Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution  
<http://www.aspr.ac.at/>  
Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies <http://www.berghof-foundation.lk/>  
Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation <http://www.berghof-handbook.net/>  
Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management  
<http://www.berghof-center.org/>  
Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation <http://www.russfound.org/>  
Better World Links <http://www.betterworldlinks.org/>  
Beyond Intractability <http://www.beyondintractability.org/>  
Bonn International Centre for Conversion <http://www.bicc.de/>  
Boston Research Center for the 21st Century <http://www.brc21.org/home.html>  
Buddhist Peace Fellowship <http://www.bpf.org/>  
Canadian Centers for Teaching Peace <http://www.peace.ca/>  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/>  
CDRSEE - Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe  
<http://www.cdsee.org/>  
CEI - Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Nicaragua  
<http://www.ceinicaragua.org.ni/>  
Center for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/>  
Center for Humanitarian Dialogue <http://www.hdcentre.org/>  
Center for Peace Studies, McMaster University Canada  
<http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~peace/>  
Center for Policy Alternative, Sri Lanka <http://www.cpalanka.org/media.html>  
Center for Security and Peace Studies - Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
<http://www.csps.ugm.ac.id/>  
Center for Strategic and International Studies <http://www.csis.org/>  
Center for the study of Violence and Reconciliation  
<http://www.csvr.org.za/index.htm>  
Centre for International Peace Operations <http://www.zif-berlin.org/en/index.html>  
Centre Loloke <http://www.centrelokole.org>  
Centro de Investigacion para La Paz  
<http://www.fuhem.es/portal/areas/paz/index.asp>  
CERTI - Linking Complex Emergency Response and Transition Initiative  
<http://www.certi.org>  
Citizen Base <http://www.citizenbase.org>  
Civicus <http://www.civicus.org>  
Civil Rights Mediation <http://www.civilrightsmediation.org>  
Collaborative Development and Learning Projects <http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/>

Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration <http://www.ccma.org.za>  
 Community Builders <http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/>  
 Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/>  
 Conflict & Peace Dept, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)  
[http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_34567\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_34567_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)  
 Conflict and Peace.Org <http://www.conflictandpeace.org/>  
 Conflict Development and Peace Network <http://www.codep.org.uk/>  
 Conflict Management toolkit <http://cmtoolkit.sais-jhu.edu>  
 Conflict Prevention & Civilian Crisis Management, European Union  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/cpcm/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/)  
 Conflict Prevention Database <http://www.conflict-prevention.org/db1/search.php>  
 Conflict Prevention Network <http://cpr.web.cern.ch/cpr>  
 Conflict Research Consortium <http://conflict.colorado.edu/>  
 Conflict Resolution Information Service <http://v4.crinfor.org/>  
 Conflict Resolution Network Canada <http://www.crnetwork.ca/>  
 Conflict Sensitivity <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/index.htm>  
 Conflict Web <http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/conflictweb>  
 CONTACT - Conflict Transformation Across Cultures  
<http://www.sit.edu/contact/index.html>  
 CRE - Commission for Racial Equality, UK <http://www.cre.gov.uk/>  
 Culture of Peace <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/>  
 Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University  
<http://www.pcr.uu.se>  
 Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Waterloo  
<http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs/index.shtml>  
 Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University  
<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/>  
 Diversity Exchange <http://www.diversityexchange.com/>  
 Earth Charter <http://www.earthcharter.org>  
 Eastern Mennonite University <http://www.emu.edu/ctp/>  
 ECREA - Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy  
<http://www.ecrea.org/fj/>  
 Eldis Gateway to Development Information <http://www.eldis.org>  
 Ethnopolitics Journal <http://www.ethnopolitics.org/>  
 European Centre for Conflict Prevention <http://www.conflict-prevention.net/>  
 Fellowship of Reconciliation USA <http://www.forusa.org/>  
 Forgiveness Guide <http://www.forgivenessguide.org>  
 Friends for a Non-Violent World <http://www.fnvw.org/>  
 Gender and Peacekeeping Course <http://www.genderandpeacekeeping.org/>  
 Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform <http://www.gfn-ssr.org/home.cfm>  
 Global Information Networks in Education <http://www.ginie.org/ref/>  
 Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict <http://www.gppac.org/>  
 Hague Peace <http://www.haguepeace.org>  
 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research  
[http://www.hiik.de/en/index\\_e.htm](http://www.hiik.de/en/index_e.htm)  
 Hiroshima Peace Institute <http://serv.peace.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/English/index-e.html>  
 Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>  
 Humanitarian Affairs Review <http://www.humanitarian-review.org/>  
 Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Harvard University  
<http://www.hpcr.org/>  
 Humanitarian Practice Network <http://www.odihpn.org/>  
 Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University  
<http://icar.gmu.edu>

Institute for International Mediation and Conflict Resolution <http://www.iimcr.org/>  
Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy <http://www.imtd.org/>  
Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, South Asia <http://ipcs.org/>  
Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation <http://www-igcc.ucsd.edu/>  
Interaction <http://www.interaction.org>  
International Crisis Group <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm>  
International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict  
<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/>  
Irish Peace Institute <http://www.ul.ie/ipi/>  
Japan Center for Conflict Prevention <http://www.jccp.gr.jp/eng/index2.htm>  
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust <http://www.jrct.org.uk>  
Just Vision <http://www.justvision.org/>  
Kubatana Trust and NGO Network Alliance Project – Zimbabwe  
<http://www.kubatana.net/>  
List of Peacemakers <http://www.42explore2.com/peacemak2.htm>  
London Mennonite Centre <http://www.menno.org.uk/>  
M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence <http://www.gandhiinstitute.org/>  
Mahatma Gandhi Research and Media Service <http://www.gandhiserve.org/>  
Metta Center for Non-Violence Education <http://www.mettacenter.org>  
Minority Rights Group International <http://www.minorityrights.org/>  
Network for Peace <http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk/>  
New Internationalist <http://www.newint.org>  
Non Violent Peace Force <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/>  
Non-Violence International <http://www.policy.hu/kamenshikov/ninis/>  
One World <http://www.oneworld.net>  
Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution <http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/>  
Open House <http://www.openhouse.org.il/>  
Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment <http://www.bellanet.org/pcia/index.cfm>  
Peace Direct <http://www.peacedirect.org/>  
Peace Journalism <http://peacejournalism.com/>  
Peace Research Institute, Oslo <http://www.prio.no/>  
Peace Rights <http://www.peacerights.org/>  
Peace X Peace <http://www.peacexpeace.org/>  
Peace, Conflict and Development an Interdisciplinary Journal  
<http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/>  
Peacemaker Circle Community <http://www.peacemakercircle.org/>  
People Building Peace <http://www.peoplebuildingpeace.org/>  
Reconciliation Australia <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/>  
Responding to Conflict <http://www.respond.org/>  
Safer World <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/>  
Scottish Centre for Non-Violence <http://216.119.119.205/nvs/index.php>  
Search for Common Ground <http://www.searchforcommonground.org/>  
SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute <http://www.sipri.org/>  
The Carter Center <http://www.cartercenter.org/>  
The Change Agency <http://www.thechangeagency.org/>  
The Children and Armed Conflict Unit, University of Essex  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/>  
The Coexistence Initiative <http://www.coexistence.net/>  
The European Network University, Conflict Cluster <http://www.netuni.nl/>  
The Forgiveness Project <http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/>  
The Multicultural Skyscraper <http://www.multicultural.net/>  
The Ruckus Society <http://www.ruckus.org/>  
The Tanenbaum Centre <http://www.tanenbaum.org>  
The Third Side <http://www.thirdside.org>  
Training for Change <http://trainingforchange.org>  
Training for Peace <http://www.trainingforpeace.org/>

Transcend <http://www.transcend.org/>  
Transformative Approaches to Conflict  
<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/transform/>  
Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research  
<http://www.transnational.org/>  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/>  
Truth Commission - Strategic Design <http://www.truthcommission.org/>  
UN - United Nations <http://www.un.org>  
UN Human Rights <http://www.un.org/rights>  
UN Institute for Disarmament Research <http://www.unidir.org/>  
UN Peacekeeping <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/index.asp>  
USIP - United States Institute for Peace <http://www.usip.org/>  
WYPS - World Youth Peace Summit <http://www.wyps.org>