

<b>1 Introduction</b>	2
1.1 Executive Summary	2
1.2 Background	4
1.3 Project Aims	5
1.4 Terms of Reference	7
<b>2 Strategic Context and Area</b>	8
2.1 Area Profile	8
2.2 Public Policy	11
2.3 Belfast Local Strategy Partnership	14
2.4 Intermediate Labour Markets	14
<b>3 Programme Operation</b>	16
3.1 Overview of Programme	16
3.2 Participant and Employer Recruitment	17
3.3 Participant Profile	19
3.4 Outcomes	23
3.5 Value for Money	30
3.6 Management	33
<b>4 Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	35
4.1 Conclusions	35
4.2 Recommendations	39
<b>5 Appendices</b>	42
5.1 Consultation List	42
5.2 Participant Outcomes	43
5.3 Training Programme	43
5.4 Expenditure	43
5.5 Letter of Support	43

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1.1** The Rebuilding Civic Society programme is an initiative of North Belfast Employment Centre and Intercomm. It seeks to tackle the high levels of unemployment, deprivation and community division that exist in North Belfast by providing a programme which provides employment and training and builds the capacity of participants to make a difference in their communities. The programme was funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.
- 1.1.2** The programme ran from February 2005 until May 2006. A total of 11 participants were recruited onto the programme and all completed the employment and training successfully. All of the participants had low qualifications and/or long periods of unemployment. Each participant was placed in a job for one year with employers in the private and community sectors in North Belfast. Each participant also received a tailored training programme to enhance their employability and encourage them to play a more active part in their community.
- 1.1.3** The participants each received a salary of £12,000 per annum paid by R.C.S. Employers did not make any financial contribution although they were involved in managing the employee and liaising with R.C.S. staff. Each participant was also assigned a mentor who, although with the Programme Manager, provided support and guidance throughout the programme.
- 1.1.4** All of the participants report that the programme has been very successful in terms of building their skills, experience and confidence. All of the participants completed the programme and six have secured full-time employment. The remaining five have just finished their placements and are confident that their job search will be successful.

**1.1.5** The programme has achieved all of the objectives set out in the letter of offer. It has been a very successful programme in terms of retaining participants and producing a very positive outcomes. Several participants had attended other employment programmes in the past, such as New Deal or Work Track, but felt that they did not benefit from these. The additional support and the opportunity to work in a placement for an extended period, along with the tailored training, had been very effective and successful. This project has shown that, with additional support and training, people who have struggled to join the labour market can develop the confidence and skills they need to secure employment. The programme provides a model for assisting those furthest from the labour market to secure employment. There has been very positive feedback from employers and participants.

**1.1.6** This programme does require a high level of resources because of the additional input required by those who have been unemployed for extended periods of time. This will mean that it is more expensive than standard Government programmes. However, it should be pointed out that this programme has achieved much better results than Government programmes, particularly for those who are furthest from the labour market. In conclusion, this has been a very successful programme and the evaluation report makes a number of recommendations for the future delivery of the programme. This programme meets real identified need in North Belfast and there is a strong case for its continuance. The recommendations from the evaluation include:

- ◆ N.B.E.C. and Intercomm should seek further funding to deliver the programme on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ The programme should seek to increase the number of participants to at least 30 per year.
- ◆ The programme should work with community organisations in North Belfast, including those who work with ethnic minorities, to recruit participants who are furthest from the labour market.
- ◆ Employers should be asked to make a contribution towards salaries.

- ◆ The salary provided by the programme should be linked to the salaries for the placement. This should be agreed with the employer.

## **1.2 Background**

**1.2.1** The Rebuilding Civic Society (R.C.S.) programme is a pilot Intermediary Labour Market (I.L.M.) programme which promotes peace and reconciliation efforts by targeting the unemployed within North Belfast. The programme is promoted by the North Belfast Employment Centre (N.B.E.C.), supported by Intercomm, and funded by the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership (B.L.S.P.) under the Peace II Programme. The initiative has offered 11 programme participants in North Belfast a contract of employment for one year based with a variety of host organisations (in the community and private sectors). The aim is to support their individual personal development, facilitating a move to sustained employment, and ultimately impacting on the local community. The R.C.S. initiative is a customised, tailored employment/training programme aimed at developing, supporting and encouraging programme participants and meeting community peace building and regeneration needs in the local area. The ultimate aim is that participants will become agents for social and economic change in their community.

**1.2.2** N.B.E.C. was formally established in 1990 in North Belfast. N.B.E.C.'s mission is to assist people in removing the barriers they face to employment. These include lack of job related skills, lack of personal skills, lack of qualifications, lack of experience and a wide range of other barriers arising from personal circumstances. N.B.E.C. has also played an important role within North Belfast and, at a strategic level, participates actively in groups, seminars, conferences, etc., relating to economic development and in particular employment and unemployment issues. N.B.E.C. has developed excellent working relationships with a wide range of other groups and agencies in North Belfast, across the sectarian divide. The organisation is well respected and well known within North Belfast.

**1.2.3** The Inter Community Development Project, known as Intercomm, was established in 1995 with the aim of addressing social and economic problems in North Belfast. The troubles had a particularly devastating impact on North Belfast and there was, and continues to be, significant sectarian division and unrest in the area. The ethos of Intercomm is to seek to build relationships between Protestant and Catholic groups which have not been able to co-operate in the past. Intercomm employs over 20 staff and is currently delivering a range of projects aimed at social and economic development and peace building in North Belfast. Intercomm has developed a network of relationships within North Belfast, throughout Northern Ireland, Ireland and internationally.

### **1.3 Project Aims**

**1.3.1** The Rebuilding Civic Society project was designed to address the ongoing issues of unemployment and sectarianism in North Belfast by promoting a programme of formalised, on the job, training which would be targeted at those furthest away from the labour market. By providing a structured training and employment programme, participants would have the opportunity to increase their level of skills and experience which can assist them in seeking employment. The initial objectives of the project are listed below, although these were later amended to fit with the funding available from B.L.S.P.:

- ◆ To develop a customised training and employment programme for each participant.
- ◆ To develop the employability skills of up to 20 programme participants over two years (this was subsequently changed to 11 participants in one year).
- ◆ To assist the transition of programme participants into full-time employment.
- ◆ To empower local communities to take ownership of local conflict related issues that impact on their daily lives.
- ◆ To develop training opportunities, through the use of I.C.T., that will enhance local employability and cross dialogue.

- ◆ To actively contribute to peace building and reconciliation through the empowerment of the target market.
- ◆ To contribute to the development of the indigenous economic base and the social economy sector.

**1.3.2** The programme received funding of £254,078 for one year from B.L.S.P., (subsequently this was increased to £278,145, to allow for a 3 month extension) which is responsible for distributing funding under the European Union Peace and Reconciliation Programme (Peace II). The programme fits under Measure 3.2, Locally-based Human Resource, Training and Development Strategies.

**1.3.3** The funding terms were set out in the letter of offer:

- ◆ To establish an I.L.M. programme to operate in North Belfast.
- ◆ To operate a training and employment programme over a period of 15 months.
- ◆ To provide a 12 month programme of work experience with a host organisation for 10 unemployed people in North Belfast.
- ◆ To provide a programme of customised training for 10 unemployed people in North Belfast.
- ◆ To contribute to social and economic development of the project area by targeting long-term unemployed people living in areas suffering from multiple deprivation.

**1.3.4** The following outcomes were set as targets for the end of the programme:

- ◆ 60% of programme participants to progress onto employment after the project is finished.
- ◆ 30% of programme participants to progress onto further training programmes after the project has finished.

## 1.4 Terms of Reference

1.4.1 Williamson Consulting were appointed to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the Rebuilding Civic Society Programme. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- ◆ Make recommendations as to the continued effective delivery of the programme.
- ◆ Evaluate internal monitoring systems.
- ◆ Review the participant training undertaken.
- ◆ Carry out a baseline study of participants and host organisations in order to measure development between the interim and final evaluations.

1.4.2 The evaluation was undertaken on an ongoing basis over the life of the programme. This has included monitoring of performance, consultation with participants and host organisations and reporting on outcomes. The interim report, in November 2005, assessed the set up of the programme, the recruitment of participants and hosts and the effectiveness of monitoring criteria and systems. This report, while considering all of the above, will look in greater depth at the outcomes of the programme. There has been regular contact with each of the participants on the programme on a number of occasions to gather their views on issues concerning their involvement in the programme at key points. We have also consulted with the employers involved in the programme to seek their views on a number of issues surrounding the programme. Consultation with relevant statutory bodies has been undertaken. A list of consultees is included in the Appendices.

## **2 Strategic Context and Area**

### **2.1 Area Profile**

- 2.1.1** Before commenting on the outcomes of the project itself, it is important to set this in context and to assess the rationale for such provision in North Belfast. North Belfast is defined as the area from Belfast Lough to the east, the city centre to the south, the Crumlin Road to the west and Rathcoole in Newtownabbey at its northern boundary. North Belfast contains some of the most pleasant and affluent parts of Belfast but also some of the most deprived and troubled areas. As defined, it has a population of around 85,000 people.
- 2.1.2** There is a rapidly changing population profile in many parts of North Belfast. In most parts it shows a changing community profile, with a young, growing Catholic population, compared to neighbouring, ageing and declining Protestant populations. Hence, Protestant communities frequently feel threatened and under siege, while Catholic communities have a high demand for housing which cannot be met. Poor communication has contributed to a lack of understanding and mistrust of “the other side” and segregated living has become part of North Belfast’s spatial and social fabric. Communities have often become inwardly focused and dominated by fear and a defensive attitude. This has contributed to a lack of positive community leadership. North Belfast has also experienced some of the worst sectarian violence in Northern Ireland over the last 35 years and this has continued, post ceasefires, with well publicised incidents at interfaces at Duncairn Gardens, Limestone Road, Ardoyne and Whitewell.
- 2.1.3** The following table shows the community backgrounds for wards in North Belfast. As can be seen, wards such as Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Duncairn, New Lodge and Water Works are extremely polarised reflecting the nature of community division in North Belfast.

Community Background - North Belfast Wards (Census 2001)

Wards	Catholic	Protestant	Other	All Persons
Ardoyne	6,363	212	26	6,601
Ballysillan	262	5,461	297	6,020
Bellevue	2,998	1,741	203	4,942
Castleview	1,520	3,136	222	4,878
Cavehill	2,712	2,383	187	5,282
Chichester Park	3,827	1,304	248	5,109
Cliftonville	3,704	1,584	133	5,421
Duncairn	221	3,616	170	4,007
Fortwilliam	1,579	3,075	144	4,798
Legoniel	2,082	3,273	173	5,528
New Lodge	5,086	115	24	5,228
Water Works	5,717	420	168	6,305

**2.1.4** Deprivation

The table below provides an overview of the levels of deprivation in the 37 Super Output Areas in North Belfast as measured in the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures - 2005. The Noble Index measures relative deprivation within 890 "Super Output Areas", each of which has a population of approximately 2,000 people.

**2.1.5** The table below indicates the ranking of the wards in relation to each deprivation measure. In each case the most deprived ward ranks 1 and the least deprived ranks 890. S.O.A.s which fall into the 20% of S.O.A.s with the highest levels of unemployment are marked in bold. Of particular relevance to the programme is the employment domain score. 18 of the 37 SOA's in North Belfast rank in the top 20% for employment deprivation in Northern Ireland.

Super Output Area	Multiple Deprivation	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Proximity to Services	Living Environment	Crime & Disorder
Ardoyne_1	28	30	45	47	23	839	2	240
Ardoyne_2	20	25	32	21	19	772	1	341
Ardoyne_3	13	8	26	25	16	867	8	178
Ballysillan_1	92	125	100	71	41	615	347	364
Ballysillan_2	272	358	300	131	156	733	337	326
Ballysillan_3	264	314	278	119	236	625	540	202
Bellevue_1	479	545	472	187	747	495	507	86
Bellevue_2	189	175	227	173	202	823	300	81
Bellevue_3	260	245	307	152	325	695	422	70
Castleview_1	156	174	136	247	85	689	216	307
Castleview_2	651	616	575	401	852	667	557	146
Castleview_3	242	255	164	169	332	725	399	377
Cavehill_1	723	777	647	440	798	604	802	153
Cavehill_2	831	843	872	643	871	638	786	133
Cavehill_3	633	768	642	236	783	468	798	162
Chichester Park_1	100	105	93	51	445	878	186	8
Chichester Park_2	304	307	360	111	771	787	212	29
Chichester Park_3	302	295	329	96	693	731	378	84
Cliftonville_1	121	111	165	105	195	842	137	28
Cliftonville_2	420	471	366	200	633	785	299	111
Cliftonville_3	76	128	118	44	95	670	165	13
Crumlin_1	19	42	17	33	6	873	36	169
Crumlin_2	4	21	3	2	4	861	6	31
Duncairn_1	17	37	10	11	25	736	192	114
Duncairn_2	44	78	57	35	29	797	159	11
Fortwilliam_1	367	462	426	68	717	804	357	92
Fortwilliam_2	276	405	367	147	146	761	144	124
Fortwilliam_3	445	451	484	179	781	686	354	51
Ligoniel_1	57	99	70	43	64	420	194	32
Ligoniel_2	116	218	111	89	73	721	218	56
Ligoniel_3	329	420	267	245	346	700	532	42
New Lodge_1	9	7	16	20	26	874	24	14
New Lodge_2	8	5	12	9	31	884	45	85
New Lodge_3	15	16	27	12	20	889	30	110
Water Works_1	22	17	23	29	86	881	22	19
Water Works_2	50	62	73	19	124	858	92	7
Water Works_3	54	69	53	23	291	856	38	5

**2.1.6** The following table shows the working age population, numbers employed, unemployed and economically inactive. It is clear from the table that, despite great improvements in the local economy, high levels of unemployment exist in North Belfast, compared to other parts of Northern Ireland. Five wards experience higher levels of unemployment than the N.I. average, and in four wards the unemployment rate is more than 50% higher than the N.I. average. Also noticeable are the very low levels of economic activity in parts of North Belfast. Only one of the 11 wards exceeds the N.I. average. Four have less than 50% of the working age population in paid employment. The total number of unemployed people in North Belfast in October 2005 was 1,901.

Ward	Population aged 16 - 64 *	Total Employment	Economic Activity Rates (%)	Total Economic Inactivity	Un employment Rates (%) Oct 2005
Ardoyne	3,841	1,078	28.1	2,042	7.2
Ballysillan	3,664	2,217	60.5	1,238	3.9
Bellevue	3,053	1,636	53.6	969	3
Castleview	2,907	1,828	62.9	929	3.8
Cavehill	3,249	2,356	72.5	740	1.4
Chichester Park	3,216	1,956	60.8	1,071	5.3
Cliftonville	3,278	1,918	58.5	1,113	3.9
Duncairn	2,306	1,082	46.9	1,057	7.1
Fortwilliam	2,876	1,926	67	834	2.5
Ligoniel	3,357	1,992	59.3	1,150	3.6
New Lodge	3,184	1,086	34.1	1,775	7.9
Waterworks	3,780	1,761	46.6	1,713	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,711</b>	<b>20,836</b>		<b>14,631</b>	
NI Average			72.3		4.7

\*Source Northern Ireland Census 2001

## 2.2 Public Policy

**2.2.1** The Government's plans for the next three years are set out in the document *Priorities and Budgets: 2005-2008*. This is the policy framework for Departments in Northern Ireland. The Government's vision for the future of Northern Ireland is for a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and the protection and vindication of human rights for all. There are three main themes:

- ◆ Economic competitiveness - to make Northern Ireland a more competitive and productive region.
- ◆ Building equality and community cohesion - to increase opportunity for all and ensure stronger communities.
- ◆ Better public services - to ensure excellent and efficient public services for all.

- 2.2.2** Government's priorities include creating a more inclusive society, tackling poverty and disadvantage, and promoting good relations and reconciliation. Tackling the problems within North Belfast are specifically mentioned. The Rebuilding Civic Society project has the potential to make a positive contribution towards these priorities. It could impact on the economy in North Belfast by providing employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market. This will help to address long term unemployment and economic inactivity. It also could assist people to address issues of sectarianism and community division through conflict resolution and facilitating contact and dialogue between people from different communities in North Belfast. The project aims to provide participants with the confidence, knowledge and skills to have a positive impact on their community and to effect change. It could help improve public services through piloting a new approach to issues of unemployment and poverty to complement statutory provision.
- 2.2.3** North Belfast has the reputation of being the most divided area in Northern Ireland. North Belfast has the highest number of "peace lines" dividing communities of any area in Northern Ireland and has also, in recent years, seen the most frequent and serious incidents of sectarian unrest and violence, particularly in interface areas. In December 2001, the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development jointly commissioned the North Belfast Community Action Project. This followed a long period of sectarian unrest and violence between communities in North Belfast, highlighted by the well publicised disputes around the Ardoyne/Alliance and Glenbryn areas. In May 2002, the Project Team published the Dunlop Report setting out an analysis of the issues facing North Belfast. This followed extensive consultation with residents, community groups and statutory bodies.
- 2.2.4** The Dunlop Report was commissioned to assess the complex and deep seated problems in North Belfast and to recommend positive action to address these. It describes North Belfast as a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and peace lines, in which people have an intense sense of belonging. Segregated living has become part of North Belfast's spatial and social fabric, particularly in interface areas where the problem of sectarianism is seen in its most destructive form. The report notes that some parts of North

Belfast are prosperous, while others suffer from multiple disadvantage and deprivation. Overall educational standards are low and North Belfast demonstrates some of the poorest health in Northern Ireland. The report concludes that there is little chance of improving people's standards of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their participation in planning processes. The issue of territory, particularly of Protestant and Catholic areas, is particularly apparent in North Belfast and there are a number of interfaces, often marked by "peace walls" or derelict or blighted buildings. Interface areas are often also marked by high levels of social and economic deprivation, as well as frequent sectarian unrest and violence. Contentious territory has affected physical infrastructure, economic investment, housing, transport, health and employment.

**2.2.5** Within Northern Ireland the Department for Employment and Learning carries statutory responsibility for employability and the interface between potential employees and employers. The department's activities are focused around three key elements: Preparing People for Work; Supporting Employers and the Northern Ireland Economy; and Promoting a Learning Culture. Under the heading of Preparing People for Work the Department's key criteria are:

- ◆ Implementing the Welfare Reform agenda to help all customers of working age to overcome their barriers to employment, supported by a modern, technology-enabled employment service
- ◆ Providing, either directly or through delivery partners, training, education and employment programmes and services that will equip people with the skills and knowledge they need to obtain work.
- ◆ Providing an advice and guidance service to help people to take up training, education and employment opportunities that are appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

## 2.3 Belfast Local Strategy Partnership

2.3.1 B.L.S.P. is responsible for the distribution of European Structural Funds under a variety of measures. This programme has been funded under Measure 3.2. The rationale and background for Measure 3.2, Locally-based Human Resource, Training and Development Strategies, is to involve key stakeholders in shaping, developing and implementing appropriate strategies to solve local problems, local regeneration and development strategies to support the development of active and dynamic communities capable of assessing their own needs through the delivery of a range of interventions designed to break the cycle of state dependency and exclusion. The aims and objectives of the measure are to develop a range of actions at local level which will ensure that the training and development needs of the local community are met. This will specifically include the development of training interventions tailored to meet the needs of the most socially excluded who, through lack of qualifications and competencies, have been unable to access the labour market. It will also ensure that the training needs of local businesses, the enterprise and social economy sectors are catered for.

## 2.4 Intermediate Labour Markets

2.4.1 Since the 1980's a range of initiatives have been established to better explore the factors that prevent people getting employment and to seek to bridge the gap between unemployment and employment. Many of these fall within the definition of I.L.M.s. These are initiatives that provide temporary waged employment in a true work environment with ongoing support to assist the transition to work. The term transitional employment is also used to describe I.L.M.'s. I.L.M.'s have often been successful employment interventions, however, their success has been shown to depend on a number of factors:

- ◆ **Jobs need to be well targeted.** ILMs work best when targeted at participants who have no work record, low confidence and come from disadvantaged or discriminated groups.

- ◆ **Moving on needs to start early.** Work to create transition from subsidised employment to fully paid employment needs to happen early in the process.
- ◆ **On the job training needs to be specific to the job.**

## **3 Programme Operation**

### **3.1 Overview of Programme**

- 3.1.1** The Rebuilding Civic Society Programme was developed jointly by N.B.E.C. and Intercomm. Both organisations recognise that there are particular needs around long term employment and peace building that are most acute in North Belfast and require specific interventions. R.C.S. was designed as a programme that could meet that need.
- 3.1.2** The programme set out to target people who had been long term unemployed and coming from a low skills background, who had the potential to become involved in their local communities and contribute to peace building activities. By offering participants a 12 month work placement, tailored training opportunities across a number of areas, and ongoing support and mentoring it was hoped that this could be achieved.
- 3.1.3** 11 participants were recruited in total from a range of areas in North Belfast with different religious backgrounds, ages and educational skills. All were offered placements in areas of personal interest, as far as was possible.
- 3.1.4** While in employment each participant was in regular contact with the Programme Manager who provided management, guidance, support and advice. Each participant was monitored weekly and was expected to maintain a work log of what they were involved in with their job and an attendance record. Each participant also worked with the Programme Manager to develop a personal Training Needs Analysis, which set out a personalised training programme.
- 3.1.5** As well as help and encouragement from their employers and from the management team of the programme, participants were also assigned a mentor. This was a person who was not directly involved with the programme and so acted as an impartial adviser. Their role varied from rectifying problems

that may have occurred, guidance on employment issues or motivation and support. The participants seem to have enjoyed a close relationship with their respective mentors and this relationship has clearly been very important to the programme's success.

**3.1.6** Further feedback from the employers indicated that, to date, all are very happy with the work of their employee and the way the programme has been operated. Some had previously been involved with Worktrack programmes and reported that the Rebuilding Civic Society Programme had been much better for both the employer and the participant. It was thought to be well organised and the support from the programme had been critical. There was clearly a good working relationship between employers and the programme staff, which maximised the benefits to participants. Several employers noted that the participants had experienced early problems, but that the Programme Manager had worked closely with the participant and the employer to resolve these.

**3.1.7** The placements lasted for up to 15 months and are coming to an end in May 2006. Several of the participants are being retained by their employers and the rest have received assistance from the programme in job search and job applications. The content and outcomes of the programme are assessed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

## **3.2 Participant and Employer Recruitment**

**3.2.1** The programme promoters intended that the direct beneficiaries of the R.C.S. initiative would be those involved, or with the potential to become involved, in building the capacity of others within their community to participate in their community and peace building activities. They should also be either long-term unemployed or have been excluded from realising their full potential in the labour market. The programme sought to give them skills which would increase their employability, through a one year tailored training intervention delivered on a cross community basis.

- 3.2.2** The programme was advertised widely in the local media in North Belfast. This included newspapers such as the Belfast Telegraph and North Belfast News. This was how the majority of participants became aware of the programme. Word of mouth also played an important part in the recruitment of participants, with a number of participants learning about the programme through other people. The applicants approached N.B.E.C., were given information about the programme and, in some cases, were assisted with the application form. In all there were 20 applications.
- 3.2.3** The selection process involved an assessment of the client through an interview. This considered the client's educational background, employment record, personality and attitude to work, enthusiasm to do something about their situation and also what areas of work they were interested in. This sought to determine their suitability for the programme and to what extent they were likely to benefit from it. The 11 participants who were picked represent a broad range of people in terms of gender, age, religion and the length of time they have been out of work. Most participants have a relatively low level of marketable skills and have experienced unemployment for significant periods of time.
- 3.2.4** Recruitment of the employers involved with the programme happened in a number of ways. N.B.E.C. approached a number of employers directly and explained the programme and how they would benefit. Other employers joined the programme after responding to adverts for the programme. Employers perceived the programme as an excellent opportunity, and relatively risk free. The participants, in most cases, had little experience and/or few qualifications (or none that are directly relevant to the post that they were pursuing), so the employer was not asked to contribute anything to their wages. The programme also provided support from the Programme Manager and mentors for both participants and employers. While the employee does not cost the employers anything in financial terms, the employers support the programme in other ways such as providing benefits in kind including management support and development of the employee's skills.

### **3.3 Participant Profile**

**3.3.1** The 11 participants represented a broad range of people in terms of gender, age, religion and the length of time they had been out of work. Most of the participants had a relatively low level of marketable skills and had experienced unemployment for significant periods of time. They all lived in North Belfast. Brief backgrounds of each of the participants are set out below:

◆ **Participant A - Male 48**

Participant A is a resident of North Belfast. He has 5 O-Levels and an O.N.C. in Electrical Engineering. He has spent a lot of time in self employment over the last 30 years until 2002, but has been unemployed since. He is married with a family. He feels that this programme has been a very positive experience and has given him the opportunity to get work experience in the voluntary sector. He would like to secure a job in the community or voluntary sector and to make a positive contribution to his community. Participant A's position was not extended due to lack of funding for his post. However, he is carrying on in this role on a voluntary basis and is very hopeful of finding employment soon. He has benefited greatly from the programme and is very positive about his future now.

◆ **Participant B - Male 21**

Participant B is a resident of North Belfast. He has 7 G.C.S.E.s and an H.N.D. in Business Management. He had worked part-time at Tesco for 5 years until January 2005. He felt that he had been unable to establish a career because he found it difficult to get experience. The programme has given him the opportunity to work in a company and expects that the experience will enable him to compete more effectively in the labour market. Participant B has been kept on with his placement employer on a full-time basis and he is extremely happy with his job there.

◆ **Participant C - Male 37**

Participant C is a resident of North Belfast. He has 7 C.S.E.s and an O.N.C. in Care in the Community. Prior to his involvement in the programme he had been unemployed for 9 months. Participant C, while not carrying on in his community sector placement job, has found suitable employment within the health sector.

◆ **Participant D - Female 30**

Participant D is a resident of North Belfast. She has 2 G.C.S.E.s and a R.S.A. qualification. She was employed during 2004 until January 2005. She was unemployed for three months prior to joining the programme. She had worked in elderly care but wanted to work with children. She has a young family and had given up work to look after her 2 children. She had found it difficult to get back into the labour market as she required qualifications in child care. The programme has given her the opportunity to get work experience and train in child care at the same time. She hopes to continue working in child care and has gained a N.V.Q. 2 in child care. Participant D has been kept on with her placement employer on a full-time basis.

◆ **Participant E - Female 22**

Participant E is a resident of North Belfast. She has 6 G.C.S.E.s. She had worked for a year as part of a training programme. After its completion she then joined R.C.S. on a part-time basis. She didn't know what career she wanted to pursue. The programme has given her the opportunity to gain work experience and to undertake training, improve her skills and gain qualifications. Participant E was able to secure further employment with her placement employer and was delighted to continue in a role she enjoys.

◆ **Participant F - Female 28**

Participant F is a resident of North Belfast. She has 4 G.C.S.E.s, a RSA stage 3, European Computer Driving Licence (E.C.D.L.) and a City and Guilds qualification. Until she joined the programme she had been unemployed since 1998. She has children and wanted to get back into the labour market. She lacked confidence and experience and wanted to be more employable. She found the application and interview process daunting but got support from the programme. She has learned many new skills and has gained a lot of confidence. She has found the work challenging and sometimes overwhelming but has received lots of support from the programme staff. Participant F was also able to secure further employment with her placement employer.

**Participant G - Male 43**

Participant G is a resident of North Belfast. He has 6 G.C.S.E.s and also holds an out of date UK and US pilot's licence, but no up to date flying experience. He has been unemployed since 1999 but has undertaken some voluntary work. He feels that he needed to gain experience and qualifications to enable him to get a job. The programme has enabled him to try a new career and to gain the experience and qualifications he needs. Participant G has enjoyed a successful placement and has secured full time employment with his employer. The programme opened up the door for him to train for a new career and he has had an extremely positive experience of the programme.

◆ **Participant H - Male 19**

Participant H is a resident of North Belfast. He holds 5 G.C.S.E.s and a goalkeeping coaching certificate. He has had a couple of short periods of employment but had been unemployed since December 2004, before joining the programme. He had found it difficult to commit to a job for any length of time and the support from the programme has helped with this. Participant H has secured employment with a local council as an Environmental Officer and he has made "giant leaps forward" as a result of his involvement with programme.

◆ **Participant I - Male 40**

Participant I is a resident of North Belfast. He holds 3 G.C.S.E.s. He worked in Harland and Wolff from 1981-1990 as a steelworker and then in Shorts as an aircraft fitter, from 1990-2003. He has been unemployed since 2003, but was on a Worktrack programme for 6 months in 2004. He is married with a family. He has really enjoyed, and benefited from, the programme and his placement with a football club. He has gained a lot of experience in working with people and in administration and will continue with this type of work, either in a paid or voluntary capacity. Participant I was unable to secure further employment with his placement employer due to restrictions in available funding. However, by the conclusion of the programme he had secured a job with another employer.

◆ **Participant J - Male 21**

Participant J is a resident of North Belfast. He holds 8 G.C.S.E.s, an intermediate G.N.V.Q. in Manufacturing, E.C.D.L. and a U.E.F.A. 'B coaching' certificate. He has had short periods of employment as a barman and as an apprentice plumber, but has been unemployed

since 2002. During that time he has been involved with both New Deal and Worktrack programmes. He feels that this programme has been much more beneficial than other training programmes in terms of providing motivation, support, work experience and training. Participant J has been kept on with his placement employer on a full-time basis and he is extremely happy with his job there.

◆ **Participant K - Male 42**

Participant K is a resident of North Belfast. He holds 7 C.S.E.'s, CLAIT and E.C.D.L. He has worked in the bar trade and was also a soldier until 1994. Since then he had various jobs and periods of unemployment but had been unemployed since September 2003. He stopped work due to ill health but wanted to get back into the labour market. He had found this difficult because of lack of experience. He wanted to get into community development work. The programme has enabled him to get qualifications and experience in this, but he would like to see the programme run for 2 years. Participant K was unable to secure further employment, again due to lack of funding available for a community development post. However he is actively seeking other employment with the help of the Programme Manager and continuing in further training programmes.

## 3.4 Outcomes

**3.4.1** The following objectives (set out in detail in section 1.2.1) were established out for the programme. To measure the progress of the programme the consultants have assessed each of the objectives against the work that has been done to date, through consultation with participants, employers and the project staff. The comments from the interim report have been included for comparison.

### **3.4.2 To develop customised training and employment programme for each participant.**

◆ Interim

- This is ongoing at present. Each participant is involved in both generic and tailored training courses. Participants are free to select courses that interest them or are of direct relevance to their chosen career path.

◆ Final

- Feedback from each of the participants indicates that, throughout the programme, their training needs were assessed and accommodated. There were a variety of generic training programmes that all of the participants attended regardless of their job. These have included the de Bono Six Thinking Hats, Dealing with Conflict in the Workplace and Cultural Awareness. In addition, all participants were offered training relevant to their personal needs and their placements. This included, for example, driving tests, book keeping, E.C.D.L., child care, various N.V.Q. courses and levels. The participants also feel that the training programmes that they attended have improved their knowledge, skills and confidence and will enhance their future employment prospects.

### **3.4.3 To develop the employability skills of up to 20 programme participants over two years (this was subsequently changed to 11 participants in one year).**

#### ◆ Interim

- The programme is currently working with 11 participants to develop their employability. This target appears to be being met in year one.

#### ◆ Final

- The programme has continued to work with the 11 participants on developing their employability. All of the original 11 participants (with 1 exception who left very early on for domestic reasons and was replaced) have completed the programme, so the programme has a zero drop out rate. It is not uncommon for such employment programmes to experience a drop out rate of more than 30%. The programme has addressed employability by providing actual job placements for a 15 month period, so allowing participants to experience actual work situations. It has also provided mentoring support and tailored training to develop skills and knowledge, along with training and support in job search and application techniques. All of the participants believe that they have developed their skills, knowledge and confidence as a result of the programme and therefore this objective has been met.

### **3.4.4 To assist the transition of programme participants into full-time employment.**

#### ◆ Interim

- This is a key objective of the programme and will perhaps be the most important factor when deciding if the programme has been a success. Participants clearly feel that the programme has been helpful to them and has added to their employability. Many hope to remain with their present employers after the programme finishes. Many employers have also indicated that they are considering retaining the services of their employees, subject to finance being in place, but this is by no means guaranteed.

◆ Final

- Of the 11 participants, 6 have been guaranteed further employment with their placement employers after the subsidised employment period has ended. A further 3 have found suitable employment with other employers. Of the remaining 2, both were employed in the community sector and there was uncertainty over the future of their posts due to the funding required to maintain their employment. However, the 2 who are not currently employed are very confident about their chances of obtaining employment soon. This represents a marked change from 12 months ago when many of the participants were becoming very disenchanted with the labour market. The Programme Manager has assisted the participants during the transition period by organising job search classes and help with CVs for all of the participants who require it. In a number of cases, participants suggested that further employment may have been possible had the salary been set at a lower level. While the employer was very happy with their work, the financial implications of having to pay the employee the equivalent of their current salary proved too big a leap for some to make. The programme had targeted 60% employment at the conclusion as an objective of the programme. This equates to approximately 6.7 obtaining paid employment. The programme has exceeded the target for this objective and this may increase further in the near future as participants job search continues.

**3.4.5 To empower local communities to take ownership of local conflict related issues that impact on their daily lives.**

◆ Interim

- To date there is little evidence to suggest whether or not this is being achieved but this will be more fully tested later in the evaluation.

◆ Final

- The programme has impacted significantly on the social and interpersonal skills of the participants on the programme as well as their confidence. The consultants have witnessed this transition in the 7 months between the first, second and third meetings with each of the participants. Many have gone back into their local communities with a more proactive approach towards peace building and conflict resolution and realised that

this approach has the potential to be very effective. Looking at specific examples of participants involved in the programme, one participant has been working as a community worker based near an interface. He has been heavily involved with dialogue between the two communities and with people who have influence in his neighbouring community. This has surprised even him. Two participants have tried to overcome local conflict through sports programmes. One oversees children's football coaching, which benefits 250 children on two nights each week. Without his involvement the club would not have been able to host this. Another participant has gone out to schools and worked with a large number of children on a cross community basis.

#### **3.4.6 To develop training opportunities, that will enhance local employability and cross community dialogue.**

- ◆ Interim
  - Extensive training opportunities have been made available to participants. Examples of training have included conflict resolution, enterprise awareness, team building, work skills and also a residential in Dublin.
- ◆ Final
  - This has continued and, as mentioned earlier, an extensive range of training opportunities has been made available to the participants. These opportunities should significantly increase the participants' employability.

#### **3.4.7 To actively contribute to peace building and reconciliation through the empowerment of the target market.**

- ◆ Interim
  - The programme operates in an area that has suffered greatly. The programme is run on a cross community basis, with participants from both of the main traditions. It encourages participants to mix and to seek employment opportunities outside of their traditional community boundaries. In addition, participants are given relevant training and development opportunities. This has included organising meeting with political representatives, a visit to Stormont, learning about the

history of their area, visiting other areas of Belfast and conflict resolution work.

◆ Final

- There is no question that the programme has enabled some participants to mix with people who they would not normally have met prior to the programme. The programme has also enabled participants to visit places of interest from a political perspective, such as the Houses of Parliament, where participants met with their local Member of Parliament to discuss their involvement with the programme, and the European Parliament in Brussels. The participants also took part in a presentation at Belfast City Council in relation to R.C.S. It is clear from consultation with the participants that these visits have impacted on their views and perceptions of others and this is reflected in the scoring in the table of objective.

**3.4.8 To contribute to the development of the indigenous economic base and the social economy sector.**

◆ Interim

- Many of the employers on the programme are social economy or community based employers. The programme has assisted businesses to take on staff, although it is too early to measure the effectiveness of this or to assess whether they are additional or displacing other employees.

◆ Final

- All of the participants who have worked within the community/voluntary sector have made positive contributions in their various roles. Their contributions have largely been additional to what was already going on. Many employers reported that the work the employee had been doing would simply not have happened had the employee not been in place. This has clearly benefited the local communities in which they have been placed.

**3.4.9** When consulted, participants indicated a number of benefits that they have received during their period of employment. Most had joined the programme after a significant period out of work and with low self confidence. Most felt that they lacked appropriate experience and qualifications to obtain suitable

employment. Participants felt that the programme had been a positive experience on a number of levels. The fact that they were working as part of a team and had built relationships within the group had helped their inter-personal and social skills, as well as promoting self confidence. The group was working very effectively with people, forming close relationships and helping each other. The availability of support from the Programme Manager and mentors in dealing with work related and other problems had helped a number of participants to cope with the transition to work after, in most cases, long periods of unemployment. Some of the qualitative outcomes that were highlighted to the consultants as a direct consequence of their programme involvement included the following:

- ◆ Getting relevant qualifications to pursue a definite career path.
- ◆ Ability to work as part of a team
- ◆ Increased self-esteem and self respect.
- ◆ More self-confidence
- ◆ It has given them a “can do” attitude
- ◆ Constant motivation from project staff
- ◆ Improved quality of life
- ◆ More of a sense of purpose in their lives.
- ◆ Reluctance to go back onto benefits

**3.4.10** It is always difficult to measure changes in attitudes towards employability or peace building, in an objective way. The table below seeks to do this by scoring attitudes at different stages of the programme. The table sets out the objectives that were measured for each of the participants. This was conducted by the consultants towards the end of the employment period, with participants asked to score themselves at the start of the programme and the end of the programme. The results below are compiled for all of the participants, so as not to reveal individual scores. As can be seen from the table there has been a significant rise across each of the objectives although

aspirations, ability to compete for jobs and self confidence have improved most dramatically.

#### 3.4.11 Explanations of each of the objectives which were measured:

- **Aspirations** - This assessed the participants' aspirations and hopes for the future. Issues such as employment choices, planning for the future, length of unemployment prior to joining programme, qualifications and personal backgrounds, etc., all impact on someone's expectations of life. This was measured and any changes examined
- **Motivation to join Labour Market** - This looked at the participants' motivation to find employment at both time periods. Factors such as length of time unemployed before joining programme and success with various applications for employment were discussed and a score noted.
- **Ability to compete for jobs** - This assessed each participants' confidence in their ability to compete for jobs with other job seekers in the job market. How this had changed over the period of the programme was considered especially important
- **Self Confidence** - This measured participants' level of confidence before joining the programme and measured how this may have changes as a direct result of being involved on the programme.
- **Awareness of jobs that were available** - This looked at candidates' ability to find suitable jobs that they are suitably qualified for and how the range and nature of jobs that they could do may have grown since joining the programme.
- **Skills/Experience** - This looked at each participants' thoughts on how their skills and experience have changed as a result of being involved with the programme and the impact this has had.
- **Knowledge of how Government/Community Works** - This objective attempted to assess participants' knowledge of how Government and the community sector operate, and how effective decision making happens..
- **Involvement in Local Community** - This looked at participants' involvement with their local communities and how this may have changed during the course of the programme and if any of this change was attributable or influenced by their involvement on the programme.

- **Cross Community Involvement** - an important aspect to the programme and the grounds under which it was funded. We asked participants to assess how their cross community involvement, attitudes and understandings of different communities may have changed since they joined the programme and how much of this was linked to programme participation.

Objective	Average Score at Start	Average Score at End	% Increase
Aspirations	4.3	8.9	107
Motivation to join Labour Market	5.3	9.1	72
Ability to compete for jobs	4.1	8.7	112
Self Confidence	3.8	8.7	129
Awareness of jobs that were available	4.5	8.3	84
Skills/Experience	4.8	8.5	77
Knowledge of how Government/Community Works	4.8	8.2	71
Involvement in Local Community	5.8	8	55
Cross Community Involvement	5.4	8.5	57

### 3.5 Value for Money

**3.5.1** The project has received funding of £278,145 from Belfast Local Strategy Partnership to run the programme. This covers the full cost of the programme over a 15 month period. Detailed financial information is contained within the appendices, but the main components of expenditure are as follows:

- ◆ £153,250 (Participants' salaries including NIC)
- ◆ £59,503 Salaries (Over 15 month period including NIC)
- ◆ £20,500 Participant training
- ◆ £9,899 Running Costs

**3.5.2** The programme is strictly monitored and robust financial controls are in place. A more comprehensive expenditure breakdown is contained in the appendices.

- 3.5.3** The programme provides a high level of investment in the participants. The high level of intervention, which is a key component of the programme, can not be delivered without a high level of investment. For this reason, the cost of the programme is relatively high. The total cost was £278,145. If all 11 participants secure employment at the end of the programme, this would represent a cost per job of approximately £25,000. At this stage, 9 participants have secured employment, so the cost per job is approximately £31,000.
- 3.5.4** However, it would be overly simplistic to simply focus on the cost of the programme. It is also important to consider whether the programme provides value for money, particularly in the context of North Belfast. As already stated, the programme has shown that there are unemployed people who face significant barriers to employment because of the unique circumstances in North Belfast. These people are, for the most part, unlikely to benefit from standard approaches to employability and require higher levels of investment if they are to not be left in a cycle of unemployability and poverty. That being said, it is difficult to justify a programme costing more than £25,000 per participant. However, this is a pilot and it should be possible to reduce the cost per participant significantly if the programme is to be rolled out. This is addressed in later sections of the report.
- 3.5.5** R.C.S. encompasses much more than just an employment programme and it would be incorrect to directly compare it to initiatives such as New Deal or other I.L.M. programmes. Many of the participants had previously been on New Deal and the consensus of opinion was that it was not helpful to them. However, a comparison on the basis of costs is a useful indication to reinforce the consultants' opinion in regard to the cost of the programme.
- 3.5.6** New Deal has a cost per participant of around £4,000 (NB. This is for a three month period and on a pro rata basis represents an annual cost of £16,000 plus benefits). In a report by the Centre of Economic and Social Inclusion (by Marshall and MacFarlane), a figure of £13,860 was quoted as evidence of high cost per sustainable job, for an I.L.M. programme. Other Intermediary Labour Market programmes in

Northern Ireland have had a cost of around £6,000 per participant and £8,500 per employment outcome. In the U.K. the average L.M.I. cost is £8,500 per participant and £11,000 - £14,000 per employment outcome. The R.C.S. figure in comparison is expensive, although it should be noted that this is a pilot which increases the overall costs. The reason for the higher costs is the high level of support provided and the set up costs for the pilot programme.

- 3.5.7** The management team of the programme could reduce the cost per participant by reducing salary levels to align these with employers' salary levels. By way of example, using the national minimum wage, participants over 21 years old would have an annual salary of £9,191 (based on 52 weeks \* 35 hours \* £5.05 an hour) and 18-21 year olds an annual salary of £7,735 (£4.25 an hour). This would have a considerable impact on reducing the operational costs of the programme. A contribution from the employer to salary costs would not seem unreasonable and a cost per participant of around 50% should be achievable. All of the employers consulted were very happy with the programme and how it operated. Many of the employers questioned indicated that if they were asked to contribute to salaries this would not affect their likelihood of taking someone through the programme. (Other employers also indicated that, without the funding, the participant would not have had a job).
- 3.5.8** Increasing participant numbers and reducing costs would go some way to reducing the cost per job, thereby making the long term sustainability of the programme more likely. For example, if the above recommendations were followed, the total cost for 30 participants would be £298,000, based on 30 employees with a salary of £9,200 p.a. (allowing for a 50% contribution from employer and a participant training budget increased to £50,000. All other costs remain the same). If all the jobs could be sustained, this would give a cost per job of under £10,000. It would seem likely that employers who are asked to contribute to the salary cost would also be more likely to maintain the job thereafter. Effectively, they would have to find a further £5,000 p.a. in this circumstance, while at present they would have to find nearly £13,500 p.a. at the end of the programme period. This would be a much more sustainable level of expenditure.

### 3.5.9 Other economic factors which must be considered include:

- ◆ **Displacement** - this is the extent to which public funding has the potential to displace existing facilities. There are other employment schemes available for the unemployed such as New Deal, I.L.M.s and Job Assist Centres. The R.C.S. participants would have been eligible for these programmes. From consultation over the course of the programme we are not aware of any similar provision in this part of the city. North City Training runs a large scale programme called Jobs Direct which is focused on the Greater Shankill area. Some displacement would have occurred as a result of this project as if the R.C.S. participants had not availed of the programme it is likely that they may have used some of the previously mentioned schemes. However these have not worked for many of the participants in the past so displacement is justified in these circumstances.
- ◆ **Additionality** - this is the extent to which the project produces additional benefits relative to the injection of public funds and is reflected in the extent to which it could proceed without public funding. Other employment programme options do exist for job seekers, however none offer the range of benefits that R.C.S. provides for its participants. Therefore the benefits from this project would be wholly additional and could not have been achieved without public funding.

## 3.6 Management

- 3.6.1** The programme employs two full-time staff, a Programme Manager and Programme Administrator. The Programme Manager was responsible for running the programme on a day to day basis. This involved overseeing employees' wages, resolving any issues/problems they had, a weekly visit to each employee in their work environment, organising relevant training for each individual, internal monitoring systems, programme budgets and generally overseeing the running of the programme. The Programme Manager had a very hands on role throughout the programme but particularly during the early periods of employment, as some participants required a lot of support while integrating into the work environment. This support was critical to the effectiveness of the programme and has contributed heavily to the positive outcomes of the programme. The type of support given has varied, depending on the individual and their attitude to work. Examples of the

support given by the Programme Manager has included: being a point of contact for information; offering the participants encouragement and keeping them motivated as they adjusted from being unemployed to working; and knowing when an arm around the shoulder was less appropriate than a more directive approach. All of the participants without exception have spoken highly of her involvement with the programme.

- 3.6.2** The Programme Administrator is responsible for developing and maintaining administrative procedures, processing claims to ensure that funds are efficiently drawn down, operating financial and administrative procedures in accordance with N.B.E.C.'s and funder's rules and procedures and collating all necessary information for monthly management and monitoring returns for the funding body.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

**4.1.1** The programme was developed in response to a need identified by N.B.E.C. and Intercomm to tackle unemployment and social issues in North Belfast. North Belfast has suffered greatly as a result of the troubles and this has contributed to a number of economic and social problems. Economic problems include high unemployment, lack of inward investment and high levels of deprivation. The social problems in North Belfast are well documented. Economic activity in North Belfast is around 50% and it is one of the most fragmented and divided societies in the UK.

**4.1.2** The programme is a pilot and therefore operated with relatively small numbers. N.B.E.C. and Intercomm created a well designed and structured programme which offered a tailored approach for each participant, by focusing on the needs of the individual to enable them to successfully access the labour market. For example, participants are able to receive appropriate training that will enable them to progress in their job or improve their employability. The programme has been very effective at bringing unemployed people into employment, some of whom were unemployed for long periods of time prior to this.

**4.1.3** While the number of applications to the programme was lower than might have been expected, given the level of unemployment in North Belfast, the programme was successful in filling all of its available places. The participants represent a reasonable cross section of unemployed people in North Belfast who, while having some qualifications and experience, had been unable to gain employment for extended periods of time. A number of these had previously been on New Deal and Worktrack programme but had not found these particularly helpful. While many of the participants had qualifications, they were generally unmotivated, lacked relevant job skills and confidence. It is the consultants' opinion that the programme selected people who were likely to benefit from the programme. The programme had an objective to recruit from

minority ethnic groups in North Belfast, although none applied and consequently none were actually recruited onto the programme.

- 4.1.4** As can be seen in section 3 of the report there have been very many positive outcomes for the participants, and they have all benefited greatly from their involvement in the programme. By having access to paid employment for 15 months, as well as the opportunity to access a range of training needs to suit their own requirements, the programme has delivered a range of benefits to a group of people who have previously had great difficulty finding employment.
- 4.1.5** At the conclusion of the programme, 9 of the participants had been offered jobs either with their placement employer (6) or had found other suitable employment (3). At 82% this easily exceeds the original target of 60% employment. The remaining 2 are very confident that they would find suitable employment in the near future and have been working intensively with the Programme Manager on job searches, preparing C.V.s and also availing of further training opportunities. It is very likely that within a short space of time (< 3 months) the remainder of the participants will have found full time employment.
- 4.1.6** Interestingly, the six who stayed in post in their placement jobs all worked with private sector employers. The other participants who got jobs have also been employed by private sector employers. This highlights a potential difficulty with continuity of community sector jobs due to the temporary and funding dependant nature of this sector.
- 4.1.7** This programme requires a high level of input and resources because of the nature of the client group. In most cases, these are people who face significant barriers in terms of the labour market and who have not benefited from previous employment programmes such as New Deal or Worktrack. Part of the rationale for this programme is that there are people who will not be able to access the labour market without a higher level of intervention than is possible through standard “one size fits all” approaches. The programme has piloted an approach that provides an actual job for an extended period, with personal

one to one support and tailored training. This has been shown to be very successful and to have succeeded where other, less intensive, programmes have failed.

- 4.1.8** This high level of intervention can not be delivered without a high level of investment. For this reason, the cost of the programme is relatively high. The total cost was £278,145. If all 11 participants secure employment at the end of the programme, this would represent a cost per job of approximately £25,000. This appears expensive, although it should be noted that this is a pilot which increases the overall cost. The reasons for the higher costs include the high level of support provided and the set up costs for the pilot programme.
- 4.1.9** However, it would be overly simplistic to simply focus on the cost of the programme. It is also important to consider whether the programme provides value for money, particularly in the context of North Belfast. As already stated, the programme has shown that there are unemployed people who face significant barriers to employment because of the unique circumstances in North Belfast. These people are, for the most part, unlikely to benefit from standard approaches to employability and require higher levels of investment if they are to not to be left in a cycle of unemployability and poverty.
- 4.1.10** At £12,000, the salary level may not, in all cases, adequately reflect the job placements. However, most employers were happy with the salary paid and felt that it reflected the responsibility of the post. A pay structure more closely aligned with the salaries paid by employers for similar posts might be more appropriate and may increase access to the programme. The salary could be capped at £12,000. Similarly, some employer contribution could increase the number of potential participants.
- 4.1.11** The R.C.S. programme has had a very high success rate in terms of retention of trainees. Many I.L.M. programmes have a drop out rate of more than 30%. In contrast, the R.C.S. programme has had no drop outs (apart from one recruit who left the programme early on because of domestic reasons and was replaced). This high success rate has been largely down to the level of support built into the programme through the

Programme Manager and mentors. This constant support, reassurance and motivation, when required, has played a vital role in the project's operation and has been instrumental to the success of the programme. Without this, it is very likely that several of the participants would have not managed to remain in employment.

**4.1.12** As stated in the interim report the targets outlined in section 1.4.1. could have been more specific in terms of employment and personal development outcomes. However, it is the consultants' opinion that these have been more than adequately met by the programme and the programme has achieved the objectives for which it was funded.

**4.1.13** A clear need for such a programme has been identified, given the high and persistent levels of unemployment, deprivation and community division in North Belfast. The I.L.M. structure of the programme is consistent with Government policy and best practice elsewhere. The programme is very focused on meeting the needs of the participants and reducing barriers to unemployment. The programme is producing positive outcomes and would be worth continuing. However, two interlinked issues must be addressed for the programme to be feasible in the longer term.

- ◆ Reducing the costs of the programme must be a priority for the programme management, as the levels of funding for the programme may not be sustainable in the long term.
- ◆ Increasing participant numbers should also remain a priority for the programme.

**4.1.14** In summary, the R.C.S. programme has been very successful in meeting need in North Belfast. It has provided actual job experience, support and guidance and tailored training and has made a significant difference to the employability of participants. It has succeeded in keeping all participants on the programme, securing employment for at least 82% of participants and improving the experience, knowledge and skills of participants. In several cases, the same participants had failed to benefit from other Government programmes and it is worth bearing in mind that repetitive participation in

mainstream programmes is also expensive and demotivating for those who want work. It has also helped participants to better understand how their community and other communities work and to be more proactive in their community.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

- 4.2.1** The programme has run as a pilot to identify its impact and effectiveness. With the staff and management structures in place and with experience of delivery, the programme should be able to cope with greater numbers of participants in future. Increased awareness of the programme and more directed recruitment may help it to achieve greater interest, if the project could be sustained. The project could also approach D.E.L. directly to recruit potential participants. D.E.L. is well placed to identify suitable participants and, while it is acknowledged that this introduces further potential barriers to participation, the department should not be ruled out as a partner in further programme activity. It is possible that those people who are most disillusioned with the labour market are less likely to respond to advertisements, therefore alternative community and statutory based approaches should be considered. Evidence in I.L.M.s elsewhere has highlighted the importance of community structures in recruiting hard to reach participants. The Programme has already identified this as an issue and would recruit through advertising and community contacts for any future programme.
- 4.2.2** The programme should seek to increase the number of participants to at least 30 per year. This should be undertaken in three phases of 10 participants each. This would reduce the cost per participant and should be manageable within the existing staffing structure.
- 4.2.3** The programme should seek to ensure that ethnic minorities can access the programme by targeting community groups in North Belfast that work with ethnic minorities.
- 4.2.4** The management team of the programme should consider matching salary levels for participants (with a cap of £12,000)

with the responsibilities of a placement, rather than a flat rate of £12,000. This would introduce greater flexibility and realism. Increasing participant numbers and reducing costs would go some way to reducing the cost per job, thereby improving value for money and the long term sustainability of the programme. A detailed analysis of salary levels based on minimum wage with a contribution from employers towards salary is included in the appendices. It is the consultants' opinion that this represents the best way forward for the project. The consultants have considered the potential impact that this may have on recruitment to the programme. For example, joining the programme may become less attractive when compared to the benefits a potential participant may forego. However, this becomes less significant when considering the longer term benefits to the participant.

- 4.2.5** Approaching large scale employers in the public and private sectors, as well as maintaining the current employers, would be helpful to the sustainability of the programme in the longer term. Belfast City Council has shown a great deal of interest in the programme and is using the programme as an example of best practice for employment programmes.
- 4.2.6** In summary, Rebuilding Civic Society has been a very successful pilot programme. The programme has been successful in attracting people who were finding it difficult to access work and has provided an employment based programme which includes training. This has helped the participants to develop confidence and learn new skills and given them a greater understanding of their community. The programme has shown itself to be a vehicle for driving change and is something additional to what is already on offer from statutory bodies. In the consultants' opinion, this programme is worth continuing and N.B.E.C. and Intercomm should seek funding from statutory bodies. It has also received support from the local M.P. and the Minister for Employment and Learning both of whom have met participants and took a great deal of interest in the programme. It focuses on the individual's needs, has produced tangible benefits in an area of high need, and has succeeded where other programmes have failed to deliver.

## **5 Appendices**

### **5.1 Consultation List**

- ◆ North Belfast Employment Centre
- ◆ Intercomm
- ◆ Rebuilding Civic Society participants
- ◆ The Department for Employment and Learning
- ◆ Ri-Interactive
- ◆ Wee Care
- ◆ Stakeholder Development
- ◆ 123 House
- ◆ Printers' Cafe
- ◆ Crusaders Football Club
- ◆ Loughside Football Club
- ◆ Physical Fundamentals
- ◆ Mount Vernon Community Development Forum
- ◆ Mid Skegoniel Community Group

## 5.2 Participant Outcomes

Participant	Placement Employer	Employment Outcome
A	Intercomm (HAVE)	Continued Education
B	Ri-Interactive	Employed
C	Mid Skegoneil	Employed
D	Wee Care	Employed
E	Stakeholder Development	Employed
F	123 House	Employed
G	Printers Cafe Bar	Employed
H	Crusaders FC	Employed
I	Loughside FC	Employed
J	Physical Fundamentals	Employed
K	Mount Vernon	Continued Education

## 5.3 Training Programme

## 5.4 Expenditure

## 5.5 Letter of Support