



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Research Report 13

Evaluation of the Community Facilitation Programme

November 2004



Neighbourhood
Renewal Unit

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Executive Summary

As an immediate response to the disturbances that took place in northern towns in the spring and early summer of 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) appointed Regional Coordinators (RCs) for Public Order and Community Cohesion in the nine Government Offices (GOs). Their task was to deploy community facilitators to undertake conflict reduction and resolution work in 34 areas that were identified as showing signs of high inter-ethnic community conflict and tension. This work was viewed initially as short term. However, upon the publication of the Denham Report (Home Office, 2002a), the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) was extended by a further 18 months, with an aim to developing a longer-term strategic approach to building local capacities for community conflict resolution. In November 2003, the NRU commissioned the Tavistock Institute to undertake an evaluation of the CFP.

Key Findings	
<div>Programme implementation<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CFP was developed from a focused initiative, based on the deployment of ‘community facilitators’ to address potential conflict situations, to a broader programme encompassing issues relating to community conflict resolution and the wider community cohesion agenda.• RCs were committed and capable. They were appointed from a range of backgrounds: some had relevant conflict resolution experience while others did not, and many had not worked in the civil service before. Most brought fresh but also different perspectives to the work, and some found difficulties in integrating themselves into the GO structure and <i>vice versa</i>.• GOs themselves are not providers and had to work with and through local authorities, the community and voluntary sectors, local service providers, and other key individuals. The pressure to act quickly meant that many GOs decided to proceed by building on existing projects, actors, structures and networks.• A key barrier to programme implementation was a fairly widespread lack of basic infrastructures to deal with inter-racial or community conflict among local statutory agencies. This included the absence of strategic planning or planning capacity, low levels of awareness of conflict, and little acceptance of the responsibility for addressing such problems. In such cases, RCs were aware that developing a conflict resolution capability required prior work before a facilitator, or any initiative in this field, could be supported effectively.</div>	<div>Impact and effectiveness of projects<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were many good and worthwhile projects funded under the CFP that achieved significant local backing and commitment. The response from community participants was good, and projects demonstrated that they could create and promote new discourses, new approaches and new networks.• Projects broke down into three main areas of activity:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• facilitation and mediation;• developing structures and resources for conflict resolution; and• building community development and cohesion.• The most notable impacts of the programme have been in the areas of conflict prevention, the prevention of conflict escalation and learning from conflict.• As a result of the CFP, a new capacity was created in GOs and local authorities to more effectively understand and address community cohesion issues. Moreover, new conflict resolution arrangements were mainstreamed in the form of incorporation into LSPs, or were maintained through continuing on into Community Cohesion Pathfinders.• The actual work and impact on immediate conflict resolution and on reconciliation was much less prominent, in part due to the necessity of putting the other building blocks in place before such work could be attempted, and in part due to the absence of immediate crises to address.</div>

1. The Community Facilitation Programme

The Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) was set up in July 2001 by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as a quick response to a number of serious disturbances in northern towns in England that summer. The original plan was for a six-month initiative to establish a programme of work in 34 areas that had been identified as showing signs of high inter-ethnic community conflict and tension. The areas targeted included those where violent incidents had occurred and also those areas where it was considered that there was a significant risk of open conflict. The original emphasis was on providing and working to ensure the immediate availability of conflict resolution expertise in the selected areas. Regional Coordinators (RCs) for Public Order and Community Cohesion were appointed to the nine Government Office (GO) regions. Their task was to deploy community facilitators and to promote training and support for this role.

In February 2002, the programme was extended by a further 18 months, following the publication of the Denham Report (Home Office, 2002a). The aim of this longer-term programme was to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by developing and supporting local conflict resolution and prevention processes. The following objectives were identified:

- to improve intelligence gathering;
- to undertake conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified;
- to develop quick response interventions when disturbances occurred;
- to strengthen the existing capacity for conflict resolution; and
- to remove barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal within neighbourhoods experiencing conflict.

The report also made a commitment to retain the RCs, and stated that they would be responsible for developing a longer-term strategic approach to capacity building and conflict reduction. This was, in effect, placing more emphasis on the promotion of local conflict resolution capacity and community cohesion. Many of the grassroots projects and innovations that had already been set up fitted into this wider remit and they were able to continue. Annual grants of £90,000 were allocated to each of the 34 areas to fund such projects.

In the spring of 2002, the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU) within the Home Office (HO) took on the lead responsibility for community cohesion. In autumn 2002, the NRU undertook a review of the CFP in consultation with the GOs, and the decision was taken to close the CFP. The programme came to an end in April 2004.

2. This evaluation

This evaluation study was commissioned in late 2003, at the point when most of the CFP projects had ended. The evaluation thus took place when many projects (and jobs) had come to an end and there was some concern about future direction.

The evaluation brief was, over a five-month period, to assess how well the CFP as a whole met its objectives and in doing so to:

- provide examples of learning and good practice;
- identify lessons to inform future policy and policy delivery; and
- assess programme impact.

Our approach to the evaluation was participative, and was aimed at modelling the structures and processes that were being established as part of the mediation and facilitation work of the CFP. By way of interactive workshops, we engaged with and listened to a wide range of people involved at all levels of the CFP. We used workshops and feedback discussions, including regional feedback workshops and a national workshop towards the end of the study, both to validate findings and to check emergent ideas.

In practice, the evaluation study was in three main parts:

- visits to all nine English GO regions, which included *in-situ* interviews, group discussions and project visits to obtain an orientation and overview of the CFP as a whole;
- case studies of six frontline projects in four regions, selected to provide a range of different approaches and ideas in order to obtain a grounded understanding of their work in their local contexts; and
- analysis of documentary and interview information on 114 projects in order to understand the range of work and to assess impact.

3. Understanding the Community Facilitation Programme

The evaluation team developed a number of definitions and models for understanding the work of the CFP. In the programme itself there had been considerable confusion in the terminology used, for example, people often used the terms 'community facilitation' and 'community cohesion' interchangeably. Some talked of 'conflict resolution' and some of 'facilitation'. The lack of clarity about these quite different, though connected, activities was an issue in the implementation of the CFP and in the relationship between it and other frontline initiatives in the broad area of community-based development. For these reasons we developed a set of working definitions which grew from, but were also tested by, the research.

Community

Our definition is based specifically on the notion of a 'community' as a geographical area, which may or may not have meaning for (all of) its residents in terms of providing them with a clear or acceptable identity. On this basis, a community area will have a number of interest groupings, many of which will be based on race, culture or religion, but some will also be about class, age, length of time in the area and so on. To an extent it will also be an administrative area in terms of local government and service provision, and economic and social development.

Conflict

The term 'conflict' itself needs some unpacking; it resonates differently for different people in different situations. Conflicts, or at least differences of view and opinion, are an essential part of negotiation, change and political processes. However, we distinguish between negative and positive conflict. Negative conflict will tend to worsen situations and is not part of building towards cohesion. It includes physical and psychological violence, and all forms of unintentional violence, which hurt or humiliate and so generate antagonism, harden disputes and/or damage trust and relationships. Positive conflict, on the other hand, is non-violent (physically or emotionally), although it may still be robust and forceful. The difference is that here conflict is channelled into the kind of debates and exchanges that can help build solutions and trust. It is contained within a framework or a set of rules and processes which protect participants and ensures that they are not damaged by the process. The term 'conflict' is usually taken to mean negative conflict but it is helpful to see how conflict may be positive and essential to effective change.

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution can be defined as a specific and focused system of processes, structures and human resources that is designed to address community unrest and conflict. Different elements of the system are needed depending on the risk of violence or disorder, and they come into play at different stages in the development of conflict and in different regions with differing levels or risks of conflict. Simply stated, these elements cover:

- anticipation and prevention;
- rapid response to actual violence;
- mediation and resolution following an incident;
- learning from an incident; and
- ongoing dialogue to promote awareness and understanding in order to prevent unrest.

Thus, each element links with and can inform the others as an integrated system.

Community facilitation

Community facilitation, as described in the initial policy documents of the CFP, refers to conflict resolution practices and structures. In light of the CFP experience, we would now understand the term community facilitation in a broader sense, being that body of knowledge and skills used to help people, groups or communities to find consensual strategies or common grounds on which they can work together. Thus, while these skills are used in conflict resolution, they are also applicable across much of the work of community development, community health and education, youth work, anti-racism, equal opportunity and equality work.

Community cohesion

The development of community cohesion is the attempt to build communities with four key characteristics:

- a common vision and a sense of belonging for all sub-communities;
- the valuing of diversity;
- similar life opportunities for all; and
- the building of positive relationships across community boundaries.

Thus, community cohesion refers to a much wider set of concerns in relation to a community as a whole and which may include service provision, economic development, issues relating to social inclusion, education, planning and so on. A capacity for conflict resolution is then one element that is necessary in developing community cohesion.

For our purposes then, we suggest that the relationships between conflict resolution, community facilitation and community cohesion might be described as 'nested': each is subsumed in the next and they are essentially linked.

The 'competent community'

The notion of the 'competent community' has emerged from the evaluation of the CFP. It is a way of describing a community which has in place, or is building towards having in place, all the elements needed to provide a comprehensive conflict resolution system and has the capacity to maintain this. It assumes broader community facilitation knowledge and skills. It assumes also that the prevention of the long term and underlying causes of conflict (poverty, exclusion, deprivation) rely on wider systems and developments, i.e. those that lie in the fields of community development and community cohesion. In this model we recognise that developing the competency to recognise, name, manage and resolve the inevitable conflicts that arise in the process of community change is one element in moving towards a cohesive community. Building community competencies (and the structures and processes to implement these) is how a community moves from dislocation towards cohesion.

As people at all levels in the CFP, including project participants, made clear, it is unlikely that the causes of conflict and violence in and between communities reside 'simply' in any one person, group of people or between groups. It is much more likely that the causes will be complex, dynamic and systemic. Developing ideas about causes can lead to the development of approaches and strategies which are appropriate at different 'stages' in seeking to reduce community conflict. The 'stages' involved in addressing conflict typically include:

- **prediction** – gathering intelligence and information in order to anticipate and pre-empt trouble;
- **prevention** – addressing the issues that cause unrest;
- **intervention** – the rapid response to actual violence; and
- **reflection** – learning from a violent incident and other stages in the process.

By breaking down these stages further we can distinguish between:

- **conflict prevention work** – which tends to be long term as it seeks to address the causes of conflict and, thus, has close links with community cohesion and development agendas;
- **prevention of conflict escalation** – which is concerned with more immediate intervention in pre-empting actual violence; and links with
- **conflict management** – which is done when a conflict is taking place, usually involving police intervention;
- **immediate conflict resolution** – which is undertaken when the conflict has been contained in the short term to bring the parties together; and this helps build towards
- **reconciliation** – which seeks to build relationships after a conflict; which allows
- **learning from conflict or conflict transformation** – which involves ongoing reflection and learning, and which also involves values and hearts and minds, as well as practical approaches to conflict resolution.

These are very different activities, but they are related. Making clear distinctions between them can help to ensure that interventions which may sound the same, such as ‘mediation’, are seen as distinct in their objectives and are not confused with other parts of the process.

At the same time, these distinctions prompted us to think of community facilitation as a broad ongoing process which involves many linked elements. The model we present is an attempt to show a dynamic – a ‘moving towards’ – community cohesion. It is based on three assumptions which seemed to flow from our discussions with CFP participants. First, that the different elements are essentially linked. What makes sense is an integrated approach in which all sections of the community, individuals, community groups, faith organisations, voluntary and statutory sector agencies, and the private sector are involved or are encouraged to be involved. Second, that the move to achieve cohesion, maturity and competence is never ending. There is no ‘we’ve done it!’ or ‘we’ve got there!’. Third, that reactive modes, those which come into play to address violent conflict, are essential but that the way forward would be to shift to the proactive modes, those which anticipate and seek to defuse conflict. The model proposes that all the elements are needed by the ‘competent community’.

Assessing the achievements of the CFP

By adopting this model (or something like it) we can go on to suggest that the various projects which made up the CFP might be assessed according to how their work helped to build competences in their area. As well as seeking to achieve their specific objectives, they might also, as a spin-off from the process and experience, contribute to the overall learning and to the development of local capacity for conflict resolution.

4. Findings from the evaluation

Implementation

This was a complex programme with demanding timescales. The salient points about implementation can be summarised as follows:

- There were **many levels** involved in the implementation of the CFP:
 - Ministers at the central government level;
 - central policy and implementing departments, like the NRU of the ODPM and the CCU of the HO;
 - GOs for the regions;
 - local authorities and statutory, voluntary, community and faith organisations;
 - communities based in neighbourhoods, in race and in cultural backgrounds; and
 - community leaders and individuals.

Developing ideas, deciding on action, setting up projects and approaches involved all levels, and at each level new and different perceptions and interests entered with different ideas about how to proceed. The journey from the Whitehall vision to practical activities at the frontline involved debate, negotiation, the winning of support, adapting to local interests and sensitivities, managing priorities and areas of overlap.

- It was clear that most GO regions welcomed the overall intent of the CFP. However, the idea of providing community facilitators was not necessarily viewed to be the best way to proceed and so in some areas adjustments were made in light of the local context.
- GOs themselves are not providers and they had to work with and through local organisations across the sectors and with key individuals. The pressure they felt ‘to do something’ quickly caused some anxiety in negotiating with the local agencies and services, and many GOs decided to proceed by building on – adding value to – existing projects, actors, structures and networks, in order to move quickly and to create new capacity.

- There was a lack of basic infrastructures in some areas, accompanied by (or as the result of) a low level of awareness or acceptance that there was a problem. Here, GO regions were aware that developing a conflict resolution capability required prior work before a facilitator was likely to be accepted.
- In the later stages of the CFP, differences between NRU and CCU agendas at a GO level were reported. There were, as a result, uncertainties about the overall emphasis of the work, and about extensions and funding which did, in some areas, have an effect on relationships with project partners, participants and local communities.
- RCs were committed and capable, often seen as ‘a new kind of person’ in the GO. However, they had to work with the differing views around the CFP and these were, for many, both the inspiration for the programme and the cause of tensions. Many RCs were from outside Government, and there were some issues about differences in perspective and ideas about ‘how to do it’.
- Overall, then, the CFP developed from a fairly narrowly focused initiative, based on ‘conflict resolution’ (narrowly defined), to a broader notion nearer to the idea of community cohesion. The CFP was welcomed partly because there was room to ‘think out of the box’.

The projects and their achievements

A wide range of projects was set up which achieved significant local backing and commitment. The response from community participants was good and projects demonstrated that they could create new opportunities, for example: for young people to learn about each other from joint activities, as well as from training and experience in mediation and facilitation; and for raising awareness of (and providing safe ways of) exploring differences across communities. The focus on youth often defined what was relevant to include in the way of training and actual conflict resolution. Realistically, projects could not aim to train young people in a relatively short time-period to go into conflict situations but there were benefits for individuals.

Who was involved¹

The majority of projects targeted young people but a significant number were involved specifically with refugee or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

Target group	No. of projects
Young people	67
Refugees/asylum seekers	27
BME	25
Mixed	27
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	25

Focus of the projects

The projects broke down into three main areas of activity:

- facilitation and mediation between individuals, groups and communities;
- developing structures and resources for conflict resolution; and
- building community development and cohesion.

However, there was frequently considerable overlap between areas of activity in individual projects.

Facilitation and mediation (18 projects)

The projects here tended to be in an area of actual violent conflict or real risk of actual violent conflict. They were concerned with conflict between ethnic communities and they aimed to create or support dialogue between parties who otherwise would not communicate about their conflict.

Developing structures and resources for conflict resolution (39 projects)

The projects here were seeking to create structures, processes and resources for dealing with conflict as it arose. There was a range of approaches which included:

- training and supporting lay community facilitators, thus increasing, and seeking to sustain, local capacity;
- creating structures, networks and processes that enable dialogue;
- planning for action;
- providing intelligence;
- promoting informal and formal arrangements for inter-agency co-operation;
- recruiting individuals with key expertise; and
- carrying out longer-term conflict prevention work.

Community development and cohesion (87 projects)

The projects here had a wider orientation, often focusing on 'surfacing' issues and on raising awareness. They sought to set up more general opportunities for participation and dialogue, and they tended to have a longer-term holistic perspective based on what the community wanted, like youth festivals, arts projects and conferences, training and development work in race/cultural awareness, youth development, etc. These did enhance understanding and increased levels of awareness across community groups, even where they were not set up with that specific aim. Community development projects were influential in the overall CFP by demonstrating that people could work together on joint ventures, for example, campaigning for youth facilities for all and increasing participation in sports across communities. They contributed to building local infrastructure and local capacity for community facilitation and to wider community cohesion.

Project objectives

The majority of projects focused on increasing understanding across communities. This, together with intelligence gathering and the development of facilitation skills, are, in a sense, instrumental objectives, i.e. those which may need to be achieved before one can realise the ultimate objective, in this case the reduction of conflict.

Objectives	No. of projects
Intelligence gathering	25
Develop a quick response capability	6
Immediate conflict resolution	9
Enhance capacity for conflict resolution	16
Develop facilitation and mediation skills	27
Increase mutual understanding	63
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	40

Project activities

The activities by which projects pursued their objectives included the following:

Activity	No. of projects
General training	44
Specific facilitation training	15
Developing facilities and joint events	54
Consultation/survey	28
Combination of methods and approaches	10
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	31

By far the most common activity employed to meet project objectives were general training and the development of facilities and joint events, followed by consultations and surveys.

Project achievements: outputs and outcomes

The following tables summarise project achievements. We make a distinction between outputs – the immediate and tangible products of the work – and outcomes – the changes and development to flow from the projects, some of which are directly attributable and others which may be harder to link.

Project outputs

Outputs	No. of projects
Conference	11
Workshop/training event	53
Networking	29
Media recognition	8
Video/report/newsletter	45
Public meeting	3
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	47

Project outcomes

The table on the following page attempts to show the overall outcomes of the CFP according to the different levels. What this suggests is that the most numerous benefits, but probably the most noticeable and therefore the most likely to be reported, were for individuals. The relatively lower scores as you move across the table, i.e. 'up' successive levels, are to be expected. The projects were not, on the whole, set up to monitor impacts; it takes longer to effect change in groups, agencies and communities. The success of some projects in achieving whole community outcomes is encouraging, especially given the relatively small-scale nature of many of the projects. Again we may note that the achievement of actual conflict resolution capability is low, while developmental work towards establishing this capability is high.

Project outcomes	Target individuals	Target agencies	Target communities	Inter-agency	Local services	Whole community
Increased awareness	46	24	27	16	14	21
Acquisition of skills	46	8	14	4	1	1
Actual conflict resolution	1	-	1	-	-	3
Potential for conflict resolution	15	8	14	-	-	4
Individual progress/success	24	-	-	-	-	-
Service development	-	19	-	-	-	-
New services/ facilities	-	17	-	-	-	-
Better relations	-	12	19	-	-	-
Other	4	9	6	-	4	8

Cross-cutting findings

The CFP projects and, in particular, the six case studies pointed to three 'theories in use' or ideas about the change underpinning them: these were broadly in line with the three main kinds of approach outlined above.

Facilitation and mediation: the underlying idea behind these projects was the belief that open, structured and honest discussion is the basis of responding to conflict effectively. Facilitated, and therefore safe, opportunities for exchange lead to effective de-escalation of conflict and to the possibility of identifying and agreeing ways of dealing with tensions. Conflict cannot be reduced without agreeing to ways of tackling it and this, in turn, depends on identifying and defining the conditions that lead to tensions. Both depend on dialogue between the key communities, parties or individuals. The importance, effectiveness and potential of facilitation and mediation approaches was highlighted by the CFP.

Structures and resources: the belief here was that infrastructures and networks can ensure effective conflict resolution, reduction and prevention. New projects, service innovation, developments by voluntary and community organisations, partnership and integrated working, and opportunities for engagement and participation can lead to relevant, acceptable and effective practice. A linked notion is that of ensuring local policy makers, decision makers, service personnel, and the public generally use the information and the new services provided.

Community development and cohesion: the notion here was that a broad base of public and community awareness is crucial. Engaging people in meetings, consultations or multi-racial projects will increase understanding, dispel prejudices, decrease tensions and will be more likely to support services and individuals who seek to ensure that conflict is prevented or resolved quickly.

In a sense, these cannot be distinct categories: clearly the underlying ideas are linked, all are relevant and they complement each other. The point was more about where people thought it best to get started, and how and where to intervene.

5. Learning from the programme

The study indicates that there are valuable lessons to emerge from the CFP with implications for future programmes and practice. We present these by trying to identify generic issues that may be relevant at all the levels of implementation and delivery: frontline projects, localities and the community level, and regional and strategic levels.

In presenting these points, we refer back to the process model: 'towards the competent community' (which was presented earlier). This was based on three underlying ideas which seemed to be implied in discussions with CFP participants across the regions:

- that the elements which go to make up the 'competent community', i.e. one that has the capacity for conflict resolution, are essentially linked;
- that the move towards community cohesion, in which conflict resolution makes a key contribution, is never ending – there is no 'we've done it' – and this implies that continual learning and development are important; and
- that the reactive modes, those deployed in response to actual violence, are essential but the strategy should be towards proactive modes, those which anticipate and pre-empt violence.

We have organised the learning points which flow from the CFP into sections about the integration of effort, capacity building, and participation. These points are inter-linked and are mutually supporting: in a way, it is somewhat confusing to make distinctions between them, but is necessary in order to cover the ground in a reasonably coherent fashion.

Integration of effort

As we outlined earlier, conflict resolution may be viewed as part of a wider whole. A strong point to emerge was that a whole community response is needed to address tension and conflicts. There was room for more 'joined up' thinking and mainstreaming', i.e. ensuring that local statutory and voluntary agencies are aware of and consider their work in relation to the needs, priorities and issues of the whole community. Everyone can make a contribution to, for example, risk analysis, information gathering, reaching isolated people, supporting professional community facilitators, providing opportunities for reflection and learning, and so on.

Capacity building

Capacity building requires an integrated system of linked and complementary activities. The overall focus should be on the idea of developing the 'competent community' or 'good enough community'. That is, a community that has the capacity to recognise and surface unrest, ways and means of allowing this to be expressed, and ways of addressing conflict which prevent actual violence and disorder. There should be an emphasis on building long term and sustainable capacity (e.g. through funding, training and extending statutory responsibility) and permanent infrastructures (e.g. to monitor and gather information).

The capabilities needed include risk assessment, prevention, rapid response, learning from incidents, ongoing development of capacity, monitoring community issues, and recognising and addressing causes. Different modes and activities, such as conflict monitoring and resolution, community facilitation, peer facilitation and mediation, and aspects of community development, all have a place and, arguably, all are needed. The point is to find ways in which these can inform and support each other.

Participation

Understanding and finding ways of addressing conflict requires a general level of awareness/ownership that there are problems and wide participation at the community level in attempts to address these problems. The ways forward will need to build on the kind of work on community involvement and grassroots intelligence pioneered by the CFP.

Enabling people to get involved

The CFP indicated that people wanted to have their say and would get involved if they felt it was safe and worth their while to do so. The projects recognised the high levels of fear which held people back. Given safe opportunities to speak out, communities responded. Creating safe, relevant and reliable opportunities for dialogue and the exploration of difference within and across communities and interests can be key in addressing tensions and unrest. The projects that offered ways to help people of all ages deal with suspicion, anxiety and fear were valued and effective. The methods and skills used in facilitation and mediation are central to providing such opportunities. There is also value in ensuring that service providers and practitioners across the sectors are briefed and trained so that they recognise the importance of, and are familiar with, the concepts of community facilitation.

Reaching the community

There were indications of deep mistrust of statutory agencies and some issues about how well people felt they were represented by recognised or established community leaders. Reaching the community might mean setting up particular and safe opportunities for them to do so.

Grassroots involvement

Grassroots involvement is of critical importance. There are likely to be problems if solutions are, or appear to be, 'imposed' without dialogue and debate which include all key interests. The issue for good practice is how to ensure that people are able to get involved, feel that it is safe to do so, and believe that there can be positive results. Establishing trust and credibility takes time and sensitivity: participation at all levels is key.

Where and when to intervene

Addressing problems by identifying or targeting one group, for example when developing services, can result in people or groups feeling that they are being left out or that they are being singled out for blame. Any initiative or new policy needs to be assessed carefully for potential 'ripple' effects of this sort.

Values and approaches

The study suggests that the way people think about community conflict is significant in shaping responses, approaches and strategies. This is true for frontline practice but also at the levels of programme development, strategic planning and policy making. Here we summarise some of the points which we have presented in the course of the report.

Conflict can be positive

There needs to be an acknowledgement that there will always be differences and a degree of conflict in communities and that this is healthy. The term 'conflict' is usually taken to mean negative conflict, but it is helpful to see how conflict may be positive and essential to effective change if the issues are channelled into the kind of debates and exchanges which can help build solutions.

Communities are resourceful

A belief that the intelligence, ideas about potential solutions, abilities, motivation and resourcefulness reside in communities is more likely to ensure that this potential is realised. It contrasts with the policy tendency to promote, if not impose, approaches and ideas from 'above'.

Conflict can 'get into' people and organisations

Conflict situations, because they are intense and emotive, can be distressing and can cause high levels of anxiety for the people, organisations and partnerships trying to prevent unrest and violence. Good support that acknowledges these emotional impacts through, for example, supervision, debriefing sessions and forms of awareness training, can help to ensure that the issues are not 'acted out' in inappropriate ways.

In summary

The evaluation indicates that the investment in the CFP and the contribution of the frontline projects provided important opportunities to explore and rethink some key issues in relation to the community cohesion agenda. The key perspectives came, we suggested, from the frontline projects and their participants, and so the learning has focused on some of the detail of relationships, of helping people to get involved, debating the way forward and agreeing the 'action points'. Managing anxieties and finding ways to reassure people in the communities that they could speak out safely and effectively emerged as a crucial element, perhaps the pre-requirement, for increasing participation and, therefore, making progress.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to record their appreciation of the support that they received from the many people involved in the course of this study.

We are particularly grateful to Arianna Haberis, Asma Shaikh and Leo Musyoki from the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who provided information and advice with patience and good cheer. Their interest and support were invaluable.

We are also considerably in the debt of staff in the Government Offices for the Regions and the Regional Coordinators who gave their views and commentaries on the Community Facilitation Programme, participated in workshops and discussions, and, crucially, helped us to make contact with the people and organisations running frontline projects.

Our meetings with project participants and people in the communities were lively and provided us with detailed information and robust views. We are especially grateful to them all for their willingness to be involved and we realise that, in some cases, it took courage to do so. For many of the young people we met, this was the first time they had been asked to comment on their experiences – that many were able to do so with thought and enthusiasm was, in itself, a testimony to the success of the projects in helping them to 'have a say'. We admired their energy, commitment and hopefulness: we hope this report does justice to their ideas and achievements.

'In house' we give warm thanks to colleagues who got involved in discussions about 'conflict' and 'community' and 'facilitation', and particularly to our Support Services team which helped with data inputting and analysis, and who provided us with efficient and cheerful backup.

1. The Community Facilitation Programme

“Movement means friction. Only in the frictionless vacuum of a non-existent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict.”

Saul Alinsky

The Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) was set up in July 2001 by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as a rapid response to a number of serious disturbances in northern towns in England that summer. The original plan was for a six-month initiative to establish a programme of work in 34 areas that had been identified as showing signs of high inter-ethnic community conflict and tension. The areas targeted included those where violent incidents had occurred and also those areas where it was considered that there was a significant risk of conflict. The original emphasis was on providing, and working to ensure the immediate availability of, conflict resolution expertise in the selected areas. Regional Coordinators (RCs) for Public Order and Community Cohesion were appointed to the nine Government Office (GO) regions. Their task was to deploy community facilitators, and to promote training and support for this role.

In February 2002 the programme was extended by a further 18 months, following the publication of the Denham Report (Home Office, 2002a).¹ The aim of this longer-term programme was to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by developing and supporting local conflict resolution and prevention processes. The following objectives were identified:

- to improve intelligence gathering;
- to undertake conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified;
- to develop quick response interventions when disturbances occurred;
- to strengthen the existing capacity for conflict resolution; and
- to remove barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal within neighbourhoods experiencing conflict.

The report also made a commitment to retain the RCs, and stated that they would be responsible for developing a longer-term strategic approach to capacity building and conflict reduction. This was, in effect, placing more emphasis on the promotion of local conflict resolution and community cohesion. Many of the grassroots projects and innovations that had already been set up fitted into this wider remit and were able to continue. Annual grants of £90,000 were allocated to each of the 34 areas to fund such projects.

There was also an emphasis on working with young people. Part of the rationale for this was in line with the strategy outlined in a later report to bring young people into the debate to “**give younger people a bigger voice and stake in democratic activity**” (Home Office, 2002b).² Equally as influential in setting up the CFP projects was the view that, since it was so often young people who were involved in (causing) violent incidents, ways should be found to reach and engage them in alternative means of expressing and dealing with their anger and difficulties.

The overall shape of the programme, then, was the setting up of specific projects within the selected areas supported by an RC and the GO.

The policy context

Although the disturbances during the spring and early summer of 2001 focused attention nationally, the underlying causes of tension were not new. For example, just before the events of that summer, Sir Herman Ouseley wrote of Bradford:

“There are signs that communities are fragmenting along racial, cultural and faith lines ... people’s attitudes appear to be hardening and intolerance towards difference is growing.”

Commission for Racial Equality (2001)

As we have seen, the conflict in the northern English cities did prompt the Government into action. Fearing escalation and widespread political repercussions, the Government responded with innovative ideas on the appointment and deployment of community facilitators. The notion behind this strategy was to provide conflict resolution and mediation skills and expertise based on practices in this field in the UK and in other countries.

The idea of community facilitation, which evolved and became defined during the latter months of 2001, was taken as the title of the programme. In addition to the training and deployment of ‘community facilitators’, the concept included the setting up of conflict resolution structures and processes. It drew on several sources of knowledge and expertise: voluntary community mediation in the UK; experiences in Northern Ireland; and approaches and methodologies from the international conflict resolution field.

The innovative nature of the CFP began with attempts to clarify policy terminology. However, the words ‘community facilitation’ came to be used in a wide variety of ways. They occur in conjunction with terms such as community cohesion, participation, empowerment, community development, racial equality and renewal. ‘Community facilitation’ is also closely associated with the concept of community cohesion, and many people use the terms interchangeably. The report of the Independent Review Team on Community Cohesion makes just one reference to community facilitators, noting that the “**creation of a network of Community Facilitators is a useful and positive development**” (Home Office, 2002b). However, the concept was not defined and did not appear as part of the recommendations.

The CFP was set in the policy context of neighbourhood renewal and community cohesion. However, it aimed to bring a conflict resolution perspective to those agendas. In October 2001, with the CFP now underway, the NRU reported:

“our overall objective is to develop NRU’s capacity to support districts where inter-community relations have broken down and ensure that implementation of the National Strategy (for Neighbourhood Renewal) works to prevent and resolve conflict between and within neighbourhoods.”

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2001b)

²Home Office, (2002b). Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team. London: Home Office.

The relationship between conflict resolution and the cohesion, renewal and public order agendas is complex. As we were to find out, these ideas were not always well defined or understood, thus creating the possibility of confusion, tension and competition between the very people trying to promote community cohesion. We suggest some working definitions of these concepts in Chapter 2 and we consider them throughout this report.

What we may highlight from the foregoing are several aspects which affected both the implementation and follow up of the CFP:

- there was a policy shift in the course of the programme;
- funding and timescales altered as a result – short term intervention in the first instance shifted to the medium term;
- while programme content shifted to a longer-term approach to conflict resolution, the programme itself in the end lasted two years – much longer than originally envisaged but a short time in terms of capacity building timescales;
- there did appear to be a lack of clarity in the way the terms ‘community facilitation’, ‘community cohesion’ and ‘conflict resolution’ were used in setting up the CFP and in its subsequent development; and
- there was also some confusion, or elision, between the community cohesion and conflict resolution agendas, which was not clarified by the advent of the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU).

The structure of this report

This report comes from an evaluation of the CFP that covered the nine GO regions in England, the 34 areas targeted for the initiative and a number of grassroots projects within these areas. The study thus draws on a wide range of information and experience, and is, in part, dedicated to all those who we met in the course of the study and to all those who seek to tackle community conflict nationally, regionally or locally. We heard about the elation and frustration experienced among those who sought “**open and honest dialogue**” (Home Office, 2002b). The CFP has played its role in learning honestly, humanly and justly, to confront the conflicts that accompany our aspirations.

This introduction has outlined the main features and background of the CFP, and has identified some of the concepts underlying the work. The outline for the rest of the report is as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides information about the study itself, the aims of the evaluation and how we undertook the task. It also suggests some working definitions and a model for framing our understanding of the CFP.
- **Chapter 3** gives an account of the programme in practice, drawing mainly on the experience of the frontline projects, but also highlighting some issues about implementation.
- **Chapter 4** begins to identify the learning from the programme at all levels. We look at what helped and at what hindered the attainment of the programme goals.
- **Chapter 5** outlines some longer-term implications for policy and practice, and we identify some points for reflection.

2. Framing the evaluation of the Community Facilitation Programme

This report is based on the evaluation of the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) and it is helpful to explain how we approached the study. We also suggest some working definitions of key terms and a model for framing our understanding of the programme.

The aims of the evaluation

The brief for the evaluation of the CFP was, in broad terms, to assess its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. This was a national remit covering all nine English Government Office (GO) regions. It involved looking at strategic levels of operation, at how the programme was implemented, and considering local contexts, as well as the 'grassroots' projects and those who participated³ in them. The following sections give an outline of how we went about the task and why we approached the research as we did.

The overall aim for the evaluation was to provide an assessment of how well the programme met its objectives. In doing so, the intention was that the study would be able to:

- highlight learning and provide examples of good practice;
- identify lessons which could inform future policy; and
- assess impact and effectiveness.

One or two points help to give a picture of the evaluation, its scope and its limitations. The study was commissioned in November 2003, with fieldwork starting in earnest in early 2004. Most of the frontline projects set up as part of the CFP had ended earlier in 2003, although there were some which continued into 2004. This meant that our discussions with participants were often retrospective and that sometimes it was not possible to reach key people, like project staff or community participants. The geographical spread of the programme across nine regions, which themselves cover large and diverse areas, meant that we were, potentially, looking at wide variations in the kind of problems faced, in community characteristics, in available resources, in histories and experience, in strategies and in outlooks. The time frame for the individual CFP projects was short, originally about six months, although many did have extensions. The evaluation was designed to be completed in a little over six months and so was not a study that could get to know areas over time or follow up on the progress of projects or individuals. In looking at the findings of this study, it is helpful to bear these limitations in mind. The evaluation is, perhaps, best described as a focused and contextualised exploration of a national programme, based primarily on the accounts, commentaries and experience of frontline participants.

³In what follows we refer to everyone who was involved in projects as 'participants'. Those who set up and ran projects we refer to as staff or organisers; people recruited to join in from the communities we call 'community participants'.

In summary, our aim in this evaluation has been to:

- provide an account of the approaches adopted to problems of community conflict;
- assess the progress of the programme against its objectives;
- identify what works, what is helpful and the kind of barriers encountered; and, where possible,
- build on common threads and ideas in order to construct some generic points for good practice.

Our approach to studying the programme

The evaluation is based on the idea that any profound social change may provoke tension and that conflict is, therefore, potentially everywhere: within and between communities; between the old and young; between those with resources and power and those excluded; between the north of England and the south; between the inner city and the leafy suburb; between men and women. We also acknowledged that the programme's projects were designed to shape those changes and promote development, like the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, and that these can themselves become the focus for conflict. They may be seen as too much or too little, as perpetuating or confronting injustice. Conflict is inherent in any dynamic human system, and it cannot be wished, planned, or decreed away. It needs to be recognised, its causes and meanings understood and tackled in active but sensitive ways.

We wanted to use a methodology which would complement the overall aims of the CFP, i.e. which would be inclusive and facilitate participation. The approach we chose was based on participative action research (Stringer, 1999) or, applied to this study, action evaluation (Rothman, 1997). The idea is to involve stakeholders – all those with an interest and investment in the study – in monitoring and analysis, and develop a learning cycle of dialogue and exchange. The aim is to identify the key issues and achievements, the things which are helpful and those which constitute barriers or difficulties, and so develop ideas about (and communicate) what constitutes best practice.

This approach seemed to us to be in sympathy with the objectives of the CFP, all of which imply the importance of local knowledge, understanding, expertise and relationships. The approach recognises that it is the stakeholders, in dialogue with each other and reflecting their different perspectives and positions, who are best able to define the learning from a programme. The central activity of such an approach is listening. If structured according to best practice, listening can, in itself, be a process of inclusion. Moreover, the work of evaluation can be framed so that listening to people (individually and in groups) becomes both a process of data gathering and analysis around a set of focused questions, and also a process of development and confidence building.

This is in some contrast to research approaches that ask people to respond to pre-set questions; questions which have been formulated by people (researchers, commissioners, etc.) at some remove from the 'frontline' or field of action. In order not to pre-judge what is important, this approach assumes that the relevant issues, priorities and ideas about solutions and the way forward will emerge through the research process.

Given the summative aspect of the evaluation – assessing overall effectiveness – the aim was that stakeholders, in dialogue, would be able to surface and describe why and how the programme worked, and be able to articulate their 'theory of change' (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). Such involvement can lessen the anxiety and defensiveness which summative evaluations can evoke.

A final point about this approach is that listening to the different views of different people and accepting these as a 'truth' from their particular worldview is to respect identity and difference. It is more likely to engage interest and participation than to provoke anxiety, suspicion or open hostility.

The work conducted

The study sought to hear the many different perspectives on the CFP, and so journeyed through the many layers of policy makers and implementers that shaped and defined it. Starting from Whitehall, we traced its definition and implementation through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) and later its relationship with the Home Office's (HO) Community Cohesion Unit (CCU), and on to the GOs in the regions. We consulted the Regional Coordinators (RCs), charged with implementing the programmes in each region, and then we moved on to local authorities and non-statutory sector bodies. From there we traced the programme to local community, faith and voluntary sector bodies and the outreach workers of statutory bodies, who delivered the programme on the ground. As far as possible, we consulted individuals and communities that participated in the work.

Our work was akin to a journey of accompaniment. We started listening and enquiring at the NRU and CCU, and we moved 'down' to the towns and neighbourhoods where the work was undertaken. The return journey was one of providing feedback – on what we heard, what we saw and what those involved in the work told us they had learned – and checking our findings through workshops at the regional and national levels.

The research was carried out in several phases.

Preliminary meetings and interviews

The researchers met and had formal interviews with a number of key personnel in the NRU and the CCU.

We then convened a national workshop for the RCs, which focused on their views and ideas:

- What were the issues in relation to conflict for each region?
- Were there issues about the evaluation?
- How could they prepare for the regional visits by researchers?

Orientation visits to all nine regions

Researchers visited all nine English GO regions and met with a range of people in order to obtain an overview of, and orientation to, the CFP. Each visit was planned separately but most included discussions with key stakeholders, group meetings, visits to projects, and collating documents and reports.

Quantitative analysis

We collected basic data on almost all the projects⁴ in the nine regions for quantitative analysis. The key characteristics were the type of project, level of funding, intended outcome, participants, main activities, kind of output and, where discernible, outcomes.

Detailed case studies in four regions

Detailed case studies based on specific projects were carried out in four regions: London, the East Midlands, the North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber. We wanted to gain an understanding of these projects in context, i.e. within their locality and in relation to the particular issues they were set up to address.

As part of this, a workshop was convened in each of the four regions, which included a range of stakeholders (community leaders such as local religious leaders, civil society leaders, leaders of ethnic communities, local activists, the police, officials from different local and central departments, community facilitators and representatives of other community organisations).

The projects were selected on the basis of obtaining a range of approaches. Researchers visited the projects and spent time discussing the work with project staff, community participants and others, spreading the net as wide as feasible to see if we could obtain information about the impacts of the work in the locality.

⁴The information about a very small number of projects was too incomplete to use and/or projects were too small.

National workshop

We presented our findings in a national workshop for CFP participants as an opportunity for verification and discussion.

Framing the Community Facilitation Programme

The evaluation team developed a number of definitions and models for understanding the work of the CFP. In the programme itself there had been considerable confusion in the terminology used, for example, people often used the terms 'community facilitation' and 'community cohesion' interchangeably. Some talked of 'conflict resolution' and some of 'facilitation'. The lack of clarity about these quite different though connected activities was an issue in the implementation of the CFP and the relationship between it and other frontline initiatives in the broad area of community-based development. It led to misunderstandings and misperceptions about what was proposed and why, about who was to do what and where, and so on. For these reasons we developed a set of working definitions which grew from, but were also tested by, the research.

For our purposes, then, we suggested that the relationships between conflict resolution, community facilitation and community cohesion might be described as 'nested'; each is subsumed in the next and they are essentially linked. All, in a sense, come within the overall remit of community development, as we show schematically below. There were also issues about what was meant by 'community' and 'conflict'.

The notion of community

Part of the difficulty in reaching shared understandings may arise from rather different ideas about what sort of 'community' is being referred to. Our definitions are, therefore, based specifically on the notion of a 'community' as a geographical area which may or may not have meaning for (all of) its residents in terms of providing them with a clear or acceptable identity.⁵ (This then is distinct from the equally valid notion of a 'community of interest' or a 'community of affiliation'.) On this basis, a community area will have a number of interest groupings, or 'sub-communities' (each of which may be linked to wider communities of interest or affiliation), many of which will be based on race, culture or religion, but some will also be about class, age, length of time in the area and so on. To an extent it will also be an administrative area in terms of local government and service provision, economic and social development.

Conflict and communities

The term 'conflict' itself needs some unpacking; it resonates differently for different people in different situations. Conflict, or at least differences of view and opinion, are an essential part of negotiation, change and political processes. However, we distinguish between negative and positive conflict. There are two forms of negative conflict. The first is violence which may be either physical violence (ranging from violent civil disorder to one-on-one interpersonal violence or psychological violence), which is the intentional degrading or humiliation of another, in public or private, as a means of imposing one's will over them. The second type of negative conflict is that which, albeit unintentionally, generates antagonism, hardens disputes, damages trust and relationships. Negative conflict will tend to worsen situations and is not part of building towards cohesion.

Positive conflict, on the other hand, is non-violent (physically or emotionally), although it may still be robust and forceful. The difference is that here conflict is channelled into the kind of debates and exchanges which can help build solutions and trust. It is contained within a framework or set of rules and processes that protect participants and it ensures they are not damaged by the process. The term 'conflict' is usually taken to mean negative conflict, but it is helpful to see how conflict may be positive and essential to effective change.

We can understand a violent incident (series of incidents) as a demonstration of unrest, conflict and unresolved tension, and, as such, it has meaning; it carries a message. This meaning will have some general characteristics shared with other maybe similar incidents in other places, but it will equally, perhaps more so, have particular meaning relating to the specific contexts (locale, history, preceding events, social and political issues, etc.) in which it occurred. If this can be read, then it is likely that the incident can provide clues about, and lead to better understanding of, the causes of the tensions and how to address them.

Our discussions and observations lead us to the view that tension and conflict are 'part and parcel' of everyday life, and that the ideal state of 'community cohesion' may never be realised. Wherever one lives there will be issues and differences; to some degree we should all expect to be caught up in some level of dispute in our community. The critical issues to which we were alerted are:

- how such differences or disputes are recognised and 'surfaced'; and
- how they are addressed.

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution can be defined as a specific and focused system of processes, structures and human resources designed to address community unrest and conflict. Different elements of the system are needed depending on the risk of violence or disorder, and they come into play at different stages in the development of conflict and in different regions with differing levels or risks of conflict. Simply stated, these elements cover:

- anticipation and prevention;
- rapid response to actual violence;
- mediation and resolution following an incident;
- learning from an incident; and
- ongoing dialogue to promote awareness and understanding in order to prevent unrest.

Thus, each element links with, and can inform, the others as an integrated system.

Community facilitation

Community facilitation, as described in the initial policy documents of the CFP, refers to conflict resolution practices and structures. In light of the programme experience, we would now understand the term community facilitation in a wider context, being that body of knowledge and skills used to help people, groups or communities to find consensual strategies or common grounds on which they can work together. Thus, while these skills are highly relevant to, and are used in, conflict resolution, they are **also** applicable across much of the work of community development, community health and education, youth work, anti-racism, equal opportunity and equality work. In short, community facilitation knowledge and skills are part of community capacity and capability.

Community cohesion

The development of community cohesion is the attempt to build communities with four key characteristics:

- a common vision and a sense of belonging for all sub-communities;
- the valuing of diversity;
- similar life opportunities for all; and
- the building of positive relationships across community boundaries (Local Government Association, 2002).

Dr Roslyn Lynch, in the Cantle Report, says that “community cohesion ... is helping micro-communities to get or mesh into an integrated whole. These divided communities would need to develop common goals and a shared vision” (Home Office, 2002b). Most importantly, she quotes Ferlander and Timms (1999) as saying that “social cohesion requires that participation extends *across* the confines of local communities, knitting them together into a wider whole” (emphasis added). Cohesive communities would have three main characteristics:

- individual commitments to common norms and values;
- interdependence arising from shared interests; and
- individual identification with the wider community.

Thus, community cohesion refers to a much wider set of concerns in relation to a community as a whole which may include service provision, economic development, issues relating to social inclusion, education, planning and so on. It is not cohesion as such which sorts out tensions, it is having the requisite knowledge, understanding, people, skills and resources, infrastructures and institutions through which actual conflict may be prevented or, if it erupts, may be dealt with effectively for all concerned. A capacity for conflict resolution is then **one of the elements** necessary in developing community cohesion.

In this way we can locate community conflict resolution and community facilitation as being within the wider community cohesion agenda. They are an element within, and have a significant contribution to make to, an overall community cohesion strategy.

These relationships are represented schematically in the following diagram:

Community conflict resolution in context



The 'competent community'

As a vision or aspiration, there would seem few grounds for objecting to the notion of 'community cohesion'. However, in reality, many communities are far from cohesive. In many places the CFP was confronted with intolerance of different lifestyles and cultures, with fear, distrust, and perceived and actual injustices. Such communities were tense, dislocated and segregated, and were lacking the means of addressing deep-rooted problems.

How then does a dislocated community move towards cohesion? One answer is to invest in the infrastructures, services and institutions of the community. This is happening via many Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes. It is against this background of a commitment to renewal that the CFP attempted to put in place elements of a conflict resolution strategy. Including such a strategy within the concept of community cohesion makes the concept dynamic. The movement from dislocated community to cohesive community requires, along with other streams of work, the capacity and skill to recognise, name and deal with conflict. We refer to this as developing competence: the 'competent community' has the means to ensure that conflict does not become destructive, violent or lead to civil disorder.

This notion is a way of describing a community which has, or is building towards having in place, all the elements needed to provide a comprehensive conflict resolution system, and has the capacity to maintain this. It also assumes that the prevention of the long term and underlying causes of conflict (poverty, exclusion, deprivation) rely on wider systems and developments, i.e. those that lie in the fields of community development and community cohesion. In this model we recognise that developing the competency to recognise, name, manage and resolve the inevitable conflicts that arise in the process of community change is one element in moving towards a cohesive community. Building community competencies (and the structures and processes to implement those competencies) is how a community moves from dislocation towards cohesion.

We might, then, define the 'competent community', in relation to reducing conflict, as one which has (established) the means to provide three essential elements:

- ways and means for people to articulate dissatisfactions, inequities, etc.;
- ways and means of addressing these issues which are trusted, equitable, relevant and effective; and
- ways and means of engaging in continuing dialogue about community matters and of anticipating (recognising) potential threats to community interests – individual and collective.

Towards the 'competent community': a process model

The process model of conflict resolution, which we outline here, grew from the research and was helpful in the later stages when we were organising our thoughts about the achievements of the CFP and the projects.

As people at all levels in the CFP, including project participants, made clear, it is unlikely that the causes of conflict and violence in and between communities reside 'simply' in any one person, group of people or between groups. It is much more likely that the causes will be complex, dynamic and systemic. Developing ideas about causes can lead to the development of approaches and strategies which are appropriate at different 'stages' in seeking to reduce community conflict. The 'stages' involved in addressing conflict typically include:

- **prediction** – gathering intelligence and information in order to anticipate and pre-empt trouble;
- **prevention** – addressing the issues that cause unrest;
- **intervention** – the rapid response to actual violence; and
- **reflection** – learning from a violent incident and other stages in the process.

Building blocks

We have suggested that the competent community has in place the capacity to cover all these stages of conflict resolution. By breaking down these stages further we can distinguish between:

- **conflict prevention work** – which tends to be long-term as it seeks to address the causes of conflict and, thus, has close links with community cohesion and development agendas;
- **prevention of conflict escalation** – which is concerned with more immediate intervention in pre-empting actual violence; and links with
- **conflict management** – which is done when a conflict is taking place, usually involving police intervention;
- **immediate conflict resolution** – which is undertaken when the conflict has been contained in the short term to bring the parties together; and this helps build towards
- **reconciliation** – which seeks to build relationships after a conflict; which allows
- **learning from conflict or conflict transformation** – which involves ongoing reflection and learning, and which also involves values and hearts and minds, as well as practical approaches to conflict resolution.

We would characterise these elements as the ‘building blocks’ of community conflict resolution. These are very different sets of activity. They are related and may be linked chronologically, but making clear distinctions between them can help to ensure that interventions which may sound the same, such as facilitation, are seen as distinct in their objectives and are not confused with other parts of the process.

At the same time, these distinctions prompted us to think of conflict resolution as an ongoing process which involves many linked elements. The model we present is an attempt to show a dynamic – a ‘moving towards’ – community cohesion. It is based on three assumptions which seemed to flow from our discussions with CFP participants:

- First, that the different elements are essentially linked. What makes sense is an integrated approach in which all sections of the community, individuals, community groups, faith organisations, voluntary and statutory sector agencies, and the private sector are involved or are encouraged to be involved.
- Second, that the move to achieve cohesion, maturity and competence is never ending. There is no ‘we’ve done it!’ or ‘we’ve got there!’
- Third, that reactive modes, those which come into play to address violent conflict, are essential but that the way forward would be to shift to the proactive modes, those which anticipate and seek to defuse conflict.

The model proposes that all the elements are needed by the ‘competent community’. Using the model could help to shape a strategic and integrated approach to conflict resolution by:

- mapping the skills, knowledge, resources, structures (etc.) required;
- identifying who, and at which level (local groups or agencies, local government, etc.), can make provision; and
- drawing links to show how each can inform and be informed by others.

Assessing the achievements of the Community Facilitation Programme

In adopting this model (or something like it) we can go on to suggest that the various projects and approaches in the CFP can be assessed according to how their work contributed to building towards these competencies in their community.

As well as seeking to achieve their specific objectives, they might also, as a spin off from the process and experience, be able to contribute to the overall learning and development of local capacity for conflict resolution by, for example:

- demonstrating ways of reaching and listening to communities;
- designing ways of providing mediation for frontline workers;
- trying out models of training for and supporting facilitators;
- contributing knowledge and information;
- building networks or partnerships;
- reaching new groups and interests; and
- creating opportunities for joint ventures.

As well as addressing substantive challenges in achieving community cohesion, including:

- promoting positive single-group identities;
- embracing multi-culturalism; and
- race equality work;

we also identify and discuss some of these kinds of outcomes in the rest of the report.

3. The programme in practice

In this chapter we present the main findings from the study. We focus mainly on the work of the constituent projects; the frontline initiatives which were set up with the monies from the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) in the selected areas. We start with a brief overview of the implementation of the programme.

Implementation

This was a complex programme covering all nine Government Office (GO) regions. The 34 areas targeted for the initiative were selected either because they had experienced violent disturbances or because they were seen as areas of high or significant community tensions. The 'areas' were mainly large towns or cities.

Implementation involved many levels of administration:

- the Ministerial level where the original ideas for the CFP were set out;
- central policy and implementing departments, like the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU) of the Home Office (HO);
- the nine regional GOs;
- statutory authorities and services at the local level, like the police, education, social services and housing;
- voluntary agencies and providers, and faith organisations;
- community groups with race and cultural backgrounds based in neighbourhoods; and
- community leaders and individuals.

Developing ideas, deciding on action, setting up projects and approaches involved all levels and, at each, new and different perceptions and interests entered, with varying ideas about how to proceed. The journey from the Whitehall vision to practical activities at the frontline involved debate, negotiation, the winning of support, adapting to local interests and sensitivities, managing priorities and, of significance in many areas, issues of overlapping interests and responsibilities.

The understanding and experience of civil disorder, the analysis of the causes of that disorder, and effective strategies to deal with it, are all issues that look very different if viewed from Whitehall, from a GO, from a local community organisation or from young people on the streets in, say, Peterborough, Plymouth or Burnley. As a consequence, tensions grew up between and within the different levels of implementation, and these tensions reflected, in part, the different visions of reality which were held but were not always well explained or expressed.

The Government Offices and Regional Coordinators

It was clear that most GO regions welcomed the overall intent of the CFP. However, there was some tension between keeping to the programme remit and the adjustments and accommodations required to 'make it fit'. Typically, GO personnel initiated meetings and consulted as widely as possible with local organisations, groups and individuals in order to debate and decide how best to get started and, in some regions, recommend which areas would be included.

In most, but not all regions, an early step was the appointment of a Regional Coordinator (RC) for Public Order and Community Cohesion to deploy community facilitators and to promote training and support for this role.

The original objective of the CFP was, as we noted earlier, to provide, and to work to ensure the immediate availability of, community facilitators to assist in conflict resolution in the selected areas. In practice, the GOs and RCs needed to work with and through local authorities and other public agencies. The idea of bringing in experts was not always seen as possible, or necessarily the best way forward. The remit 'to deploy' community facilitators was not always clear but there was emphasis on recruiting, training and supporting local people to become facilitators. However, many projects had objectives which were wider than this: seeking to reach out to young people and to raise the general level of awareness and inter-racial understanding.

GOs themselves are not providers and they have to work with and through local authorities, providers and agencies across the sectors and with key individuals. The pressure they felt 'to do something' quickly caused some anxiety in negotiating with local agencies and services, and many GOs decided to proceed by building on – adding value to – existing projects, actors, structures and networks.

RCs were appointed from a range of backgrounds: some had relevant conflict resolution experience while others did not, and many had not worked in the civil service before. Most brought fresh but also different perspectives to the work, and some found difficulties in integrating themselves into the GO structure and *vice versa*. It is clear that the RCs did become the focus for competing demands and they had to work hard, in some cases, to reconcile divergent views and expectations. In particular, the issues arising from the shift from a short term to an extended programme were considerable in terms of managing expectations and local relationships.

RCs were committed and capable, often seen as 'a new kind of person' in the GO. However, they had to work with the differing views around the CFP and these were, for many, both an inspiration and the cause of tensions. As we noted earlier, it was to be expected that a programme addressing conflict and major concerns about community violence would experience tensions and difficulties, and it was perhaps the RCs who were most likely to have to deal with these effects.

There was considerable variation both within and across the regions as to the extent, nature and causes of conflict, and, as we noted above, this meant that different GOs responded rather differently to the CFP brief.

However, there were some common issues and one clear point to emerge was a fairly widespread lack of basic infrastructures in some areas, which included cities, urban and dispersed rural areas. This included the absence of strategic planning or planning capacity, low levels of awareness of inter-racial or community conflict, and little acceptance or a culture of 'buck passing' of responsibility for addressing such problems. Here RCs were aware that developing a conflict resolution capability required prior work before a facilitator, or any initiative in this field, could be supported effectively.

Some of the key issues for implementation were:

- the requirement to get started quickly;
- the need to adapt sensitively to local circumstances;
- short time scales which limited what could be done;
- accommodating new roles and clarifying responsibilities;
- uncertainties about funding arising from the extension of the programme;
- the lack of awareness of, and the lack of local support for, conflict resolution; and
- the lack of human resources, expertise and basic infrastructures to support the initiative both at the GO level and on the ground.

Overall, the CFP developed from a focused initiative, based on the deployment of ‘community facilitators’ to address potential conflict situations, to a broader programme encompassing issues relating to community conflict resolution and the wider community cohesion agenda. The CFP was welcomed by actors on the ground because there was room to ‘think out of the box’. While its effects were mixed, it did produce benefits for the individuals and communities that it targeted.

Characteristics of the Community Facilitation Programme projects

In the course of our work we examined 114 projects through documentary review and interviews with key informants. These projects covered the vast majority of activities and took up most of the total CFP spend.

This section provides a quantitative analysis of a database of these 114 projects, covering most of the programme activities. The frequency counts presented here are closely in line with proportional spends (and for that reason the latter are not separately presented).

Who was involved⁶

The majority of projects targeted young people but a significant number were involved specifically with refugee or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

Target group	No. of projects
Young people	67
Refugees/asylum seekers	27
BME	25
Mixed	27
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	25

Focus of the projects

The projects broke down into three main areas of activity:

- facilitation and mediation;
- developing structures and resources for conflict resolution; and
- building towards community development and cohesion.

Facilitation and mediation (18 projects)

The projects here tended to be in an area of actual violent conflict or real risk of actual violent conflict. They were concerned with conflict between ethnic communities and they aimed to create or support dialogue between parties who otherwise do not communicate about their conflict.

Developing structures and resources for conflict resolution (39 projects)

The projects here were seeking to create structures, processes and resources for dealing with conflict as it arises. There were a range of approaches which included:

- training and supporting community facilitators, thus increasing, and seeking to sustain, local capacity;
- creating structures, networks and processes which enable dialogue, planning for action, joint approaches, providing intelligence, promoting informal and formal arrangements for inter-agency cooperation, recruitment of key individuals and expertise; and
- long-term conflict prevention work.

Community development and cohesion (87 projects)

The projects here had a wider orientation, often focusing on ‘surfacing’ issues and on raising awareness. They sought to set up more general opportunities for participation and dialogue, and they tended to have a longer-term holistic perspective based on what the community wanted – these included work that promoted (through mechanisms such as youth outreach, festivals, arts projects and conferences):

- race and cultural awareness;
- community development with single identity groups;
- personal development programmes for young people; and
- work with gangs.

These did enhance understanding and increased levels of awareness across community groups, even where they were not set up with that specific aim. Community development projects were influential in the overall CFP by demonstrating that people could work together on joint ventures; for example, campaigning for youth facilities for all and increasing participation in sports across communities.

This point becomes clearer when we look at the projects' stated objectives.

Project objectives

The majority of projects focused on increasing understanding across communities. This, together with intelligence gathering and the development of facilitation skills were, in a sense, instrumental objectives, i.e. those which need to be achieved before one can realise the ultimate objective, in this case the reduction of conflict.

Objectives	No. of projects
Intelligence gathering	25
Develop quick response capability	6
Immediate conflict resolution	9
Enhance capacity for conflict resolution	16
Develop facilitation and mediation skills	27
Increase mutual understanding	63
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	40

Project activities

The activities by which projects pursued their objectives were varied. Many were based on providing training of one sort or another, but some were focused on giving people the opportunity to obtain skills in facilitation and mediation. Such skills were also seen as generic, of value not only in terms of conflict resolution but also, for example, in youth work, in campaigning for facilities and community involvement in general.

Activity	No. of projects
General training	44
Specific facilitation training	15
Developing facilities and joint events	54
Intelligence gathering/consultation	28
Combination of methods and approaches	10
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	31

Some specific activities included:

- providing safe opportunities for exchange and dialogue between groups and communities;
- recruiting young people to become peer facilitators;
- increasing the local capacity to anticipate and respond to conflict;
- awareness raising and promoting inter-racial understanding; and
- seeking to create new networks.

Project achievements: outputs and outcomes

The projects did achieve a number of benefits. We make a distinction between outputs – the immediate and tangible products of the work – and outcomes – the changes and developments to flow from the projects, some of which are directly attributable and others which are harder to link.

Project outputs

Outputs	No. of projects
Conference	11
Workshop/training event	53
Networking	29
Media recognition	8
Video/report/newsletter	45
Public meeting	3
Other/unclear (insufficient data)	47

Project outcomes

Here we attempt to show the overall outcomes of the CFP according to the different levels. What this suggests is that the most numerous benefits, but probably the most noticeable and therefore the most likely to be reported, were for individuals. The relatively lower scores as you move across the table, i.e. 'up' successive levels, are to be expected. The projects were not, on the whole, set up to monitor impacts; it takes longer to effect change in groups, agencies and communities. The success of some projects in achieving whole community outcomes is encouraging, especially given the relatively small-scale nature of many of the projects. Again, we may note that the achievement of actual conflict resolution is low, while developmental work towards establishing this capability is high.

Scenes from practice – six frontline projects

In order to understand the work of the projects in some detail, we undertook a series of six case studies in four of the regions. These case studies involved reviews of all available documentation and interviews with the key actors at regional, local authority area and local level. The studies involved visits to and discussions with frontline participants in the selected projects, but we also wanted to understand the environments and contexts within which they were designed, set up and run. We held workshops and discussions in the region in order to understand, as far as possible, this wider picture.

Project outcomes	Target individuals	Target agencies	Target communities	Inter-agency	Local services	Whole community
Increased awareness	46	24	27	16	14	21
Acquisition of skills	46	8	14	4	1	1
Actual conflict resolution	1	-	1	-	-	3
Potential for conflict resolution	15	8	14	-	-	4
Individual progress/ success	24	-	-	-	-	-
Service development	-	19	-	-	-	-
New services/ facilities	-	17	-	-	-	-
Better relations	-	12	19	-	-	-
Other	4	9	6	-	4	8

This section provides a descriptive analysis based primarily on the work of these projects, but it does also draw on others from across all the regions (we reviewed documentation on, briefly visited and met actors in the five other regions early on in our work).

Case study selection

The six cases came from four regions (the North West, London, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the East Midlands). A number of suggestions were made during the regional workshops attended by local project and programme participants. The final selection of the case studies reflected the three different project types that we had identified:

- **Facilitation and mediation:** the criteria for selection here were that the projects were:
 - in an area of actual violent conflict or real risk of actual violent conflict;
 - concerned with conflict between different ethnic communities; and
 - concerned with creating, or directly supporting the creation of, dialogue between parties to conflict, or the supporters of parties to conflict, who otherwise do not communicate about their conflict.
- **Developing structures and resources for conflict resolution** (i.e. interventions concerned with creating structures, processes or mechanisms for dealing with conflicts as they arise). The criteria for selection here was that the projects were:
 - about identifying, training or in other ways supporting those directly involved in bringing about those dialogues and ensuring that they are successful (the community facilitator role);
 - about creating or supporting the structures, processes and mechanisms that are directly needed to ensure those dialogue processes take place; and
 - about long term conflict prevention work.

- **Community development and cohesion:** these are projects with a wider community development orientation, focusing on increasing awareness and mutual understanding and promoting opportunities for participation and dialogue. The projects here tended to:
 - have longer-term objectives;
 - have a holistic perspective; and
 - be based on activities and initiatives defined by the community, such as a festival, a community arts projects, campaigning for facilities, training in cultural awareness, race equality, single identity group development, etc.

In all the cases there was a common selection criterion that the project was in an area where actual violent conflict had occurred or where it was a real risk, and that the project was concerned with conflict (or potential conflict) between different ethnic communities. (In some of the regions where case studies did not take place, conflict was more of a longer-term possible risk and not so much an immediate danger – typically in these regions the projects focused on longer-term community development and cohesion work).

As we have seen, the first two categories (facilitation and mediation, structures and resources) focusing on issues of short and medium term conflict resolution were well represented in the mix of projects, but community development and cohesion projects were by far the most numerous in the CFP. We decided, however, to concentrate on examples of the former as these represented the most novel aspects of the CFP (and thus of a type least studied to date). The selected projects for case studies are identified in the following table.

Case study projects

Region Category	London	East Midlands	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber
Facilitation and mediation	Tower Hamlets – ‘RESOLVE’	Leicester – ‘Resolving Differences’	Oldham – ‘Good Relations’	
Structures and resources			Burnley – ‘Training Community Facilitators’	Bradford – ‘Community Accord’
Community development and cohesion				Leeds – ‘Harehills-i’

As observed earlier, it should be noted that projects were multi-faceted and did not necessarily fit into just one category – thus, for instance, the Oldham Good Relations project addressed both shorter-term facilitation and mediation challenges, and helped put in place medium term structures and resources (processes). We have argued earlier that facilitation and mediation, structures and resources, and community development and cohesion may be seen as ‘nested’ activities, however they may also be understood as possible different aspects of single projects.

A profile of the projects

The Tower Hamlets RESOLVE project was run jointly by the local Mediation Service and the rapid response team of the local Youth Service. The project’s aim was to recruit and train local young people in mediation and facilitation with a view to becoming Youth Advocates. There were real possibilities for employment from participation in the project for selected young people. Part of the training and experience was for participants, as peers, to reach out to other young people, especially the harder to reach, and encourage them to move away from a street and gang culture and into training or involvement in youth activities as a constructive way forward. This was pursued through an ‘on-street’ presence and by being role models.

In Leicester, the Resolving Difference project was established for the “**recruitment, support and employment of a team of community facilitators**”. The community facilitators’ role was to establish contact with disaffected young people and adult residents and other interested parties, listen and record their views, and mediate between groups to resolve differences. This was part of the development of a medium term strategy to prevent disorder and to increase community cohesion and leadership. The project was proposed to address tensions and specific difficulties that the new Somali community and the wider community in Leicester were experiencing.

In Oldham, the Community Cohesion Panel of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) invited Mediation Northern Ireland to make an assessment of the situation in Oldham. Following that assessment, the Oldham Good Relations project was established. In its first phase it consisted of four extended workshops for 34 leaders and opinion formers in Oldham. Each workshop dealt with issues arising from the assessment, and sought to deepen understanding and to build trust. The workshops provided a safe, mediated space in which people could explore the issues that lay at the heart of inter-ethnic conflict in the town. A second phase has been planned and funding has been secured.

The Burnley Community Facilitation project aimed to develop the community mediation service, to develop local facilitation networks and to provide training to local facilitators. The project was undertaken by two Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers, in association with local organisations, and was administered by the Burnley Council for Voluntary Services as the lead organisation of the Community Empowerment Network. The project consisted of a facilitation training course, the establishment of a Facilitators' Network, and the deployment of newly trained facilitators on a programme of Town Meetings. A series of Town Meetings took place and the Facilitators' Network was successfully formed.

The Bradford Community Accord project addressed problems that were identified following the disturbances that took place in Bradford in 2001. The community highlighted the need for some sort of facilitation/mediation service to address the continuing potential for conflict in the community. The aim of the project was to identify tensions before they escalated into actual conflicts, and to diffuse the tensions by enabling people to discuss honestly, in a safe manner, the issues at stake and to come to mutually agreed actions to deal with those issues. This involved providing a safe place/space; negotiating a process whereby people were heard and listened to; and training facilitators to listen to problems, to clarify issues, and to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to have their say. During the project, five mediation cases, which came from referrals by the police, the Criminal Defence Service (CDS) and the education service, were undertaken. There were also two Open Forum workshops.

In Leeds, the Harehills-i project was part of a wider youth support programme, which included mediation training and management committee training. The project was funded to address the lack of consultation and involvement of young people in the decisions that affect their area. The project gathered the views and opinions of young people aged 13–25 from various backgrounds through film and new media, and produced a video. The video was written, produced and edited by the young people themselves. A website was created early in the project, where clips were made available and comments from participants and the wider community were posted. The completed video was presented by a number of the young people to councillors, community workers, MPs and participants' family and friends, and to the St James Partnership, the local Neighbourhood Renewal partnership.

A more detailed description of each of the six case studies can be found in Annex 2.

The Tower Hamlets, Bradford and Leeds case studies focused on particular projects, whereas the Leicester, Oldham and Burnley studies took a broader view of the programme in those areas. Nonetheless, there are a number of similarities and differences between all the case studies:

Reflections on the response to conflict

Starting points: causes of concern

Across the six case study areas there were different initial causes of concern. In Bradford, it centred on trouble arising from opposing racist and anti-racist marches that resulted in conflict between a crowd of rioters and the police. In Burnley, the police reported a number of critical incidents over two days, which culminated in an attack on an Asian taxi driver. This was the sparking incident that provoked widespread violence between communities and against the police when they intervened. In Oldham, there was a perception that there could be a re-occurrence of disturbances if inter-ethnic relations continued to be neglected. In Leeds, the prompt to action seems to have been the fall out from what was considered to be unfair treatment of an Asian man by the police. In Leicester, concerns were raised by inter-ethnic incidents between Afro-Caribbean and Somali groups that led to a series of disturbances. In some contrast, the borough of Tower Hamlets has been the site of inter-racial conflict over many years and, despite a high level of awareness and numerous initiatives, the communities had remained mistrustful and the potential for violence was ever present.

The underlying causes of conflict

In each case the underlying causes of conflict were socio-economic deprivation, elements of segregation, perceived unjust development opportunities, the lack of tailored service provision for different communities, perceived and actual racism, perceived discrimination in the provision of state/local authority services and support, and poor job prospects for many young people. In some areas this was compounded by recent changes in the ethnic composition of areas (arrivals of new ethnic groups) and an element of background hysteria, fanned by the popular press, about the numbers of asylum seekers/illegal migrants.⁷

These conditions led to environments where social, racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and generational differences provided the fuel for tensions and the potential for conflict.

The projects' focus and targets

Each of the projects identified as case studies had made significant attempts at increasing the local capacity for conflict resolution in one way or another. In Bradford, Burnley, Tower Hamlets and Leicester, the projects centred on providing a facilitation and mediation service. In Oldham, the project concentrated on improving understanding and creating dialogue, and on moving towards creating a structure through which potential conflict could be addressed. In Leeds, the project was about engaging young people in the local democratic structures, although this was also linked with facilitation and conflict resolution work.

The projects all approached the implementation of the CFP through consultation, the recruitment of experienced project workers and, on the whole, well considered work plans. However, one of the case studies, where planning had not been as grounded, ran into difficulties and had, in effect, to restart the work.

Recruiting participants

All the cases had a strong focus on working with young people and most aimed to recruit them for facilitation training and/or project work. Harehills-i recruited young people from different, already established, youth groups, while in Bradford and Burnley the facilitators came from a range of backgrounds (including different ethnic groups) and ages. In the Leicester project, the community facilitators were recruited from a range of sources, including youth workers, community volunteers, young and more experienced people and other professionals already working in the area.

Each of the projects recruited in different ways. In Bradford, consultants were used in recruiting, selecting and in the initial training of facilitators. The RESOLVE project in Tower Hamlets started with a public meeting, where people were invited to apply to be trained as facilitators. Those who then applied were interviewed and 20 were selected for a week of training. From this group, 12 were selected for the full six-month training course and experience. The young people who participated in this case were self-selected, in that they were first attracted to attend the public meeting, then to make a formal application to join and then, if they wished, put themselves forward to join the full programme.

In Leeds, the project recruited young people to become involved in a collaborative project to identify their common concerns and suggestions, and then presenting them to local decision makers. The outcome was a video. A sub-set of this group was given conflict resolution and management committee training. This approach had a more sustainable outlook as it provided the opportunity for individuals in the group to develop on a personal level and to acquire new skills, as well as being able to gel with others and to learn to work together.

The studies suggest that the incentive of employment and pay was a factor that added to the success in recruiting a range of people. In Bradford, the facilitators were paid a monthly retainer and a fee for cases, although not all the facilitators took these payments. In the Tower Hamlets RESOLVE project, there was an expectation that the facilitation work could provide a route to employment and this was seen as one reason for the high level of interest in the project.

Providing training

Training for facilitation/mediation work was common in most of the case studies. The training was delivered in different ways, ranging from short interventions to more long term development. Two of the areas had involvement from the National Coalition Building Institute, the others used local organisations to provide training or, as in the case of RESOLVE, the project partners designed a specific training package. Oldham also used Mediation Northern Ireland for a series of mediated group workshops. In Burnley, there was very little demand shown for the mediation training programme. In retrospect, it was felt that this was because the course on offer was too long (few people could invest that amount of time) and mediation skills may have appeared too specific for many people.

The training for facilitation and mediation work was seen as well provided and satisfactory in the case study areas, but in most areas the follow-up was considered inadequate. There was little opportunity to consolidate the training.

There was an issue about attending to people's training needs. This is borne out in the Leicester study where facilitators were either recruited from youth and training institutes or were community volunteers. People in the former group were well placed organisationally but they felt they were not given the training needed to fulfil their potential. The latter group, on the other hand, was provided with a well thought through training programme, but they were not from an organisational setting in which their training could be of maximum value. In contrast, the RESOLVE project in Tower Hamlets paid particular attention to the needs of the participants. It was realised that they faced issues and tensions during their 'on street' experience which formed part of the training, but that this was also a real learning opportunity. Regular debriefing sessions, group discussions and one-to-one support for the young people were, therefore, provided as part of the course.

Take up of facilitation and mediation services

Take up of the facilitation and mediation services established varied across each of the case study areas but, in general, the take up was poor. In Bradford, the project was set up as a service to respond to referrals made by service providers. There were five referrals, where most only involved one session which invariably was only an initial mediation stage. The work, however, ranged from an intra-ethnic conflict at a secondary school, to a neighbourhood dispute over developments concerning a right of way, to a dispute between groups involved in the management committee of a community centre. In Tower Hamlets, the project participants were proactive, going out on the streets in selected areas to get to know and reach young people who 'hang out' in gangs as part of the street culture. The approach was seen as moderately successful and encouraging, given the relatively short time span of six months.

Dissemination

Some of the projects held workshops and opportunities for dialogue, which resulted in a range of outcomes. Bradford held two successful facilitation workshops, while Oldham brought together a well-specified group of 40 to 45 opinion leaders from the town for a series of mediated, off-the-record discussions and experiential activities. The process led to a reference group of senior civic leaders being formed. In Burnley, a Town Meetings project was developed to bring together members of Citizens' Panels in five areas of the town. Although the meetings were not well attended (as if to underline the difficulty that exists in discussing issues that are denied or hard to confront), the Council had found the information coming from them useful. The RESOLVE project ended with an open conference and debate on gang culture, organised and run by young people, which aimed to attract more young people and the wider community.

The theories in use and their effectiveness

Underlying the projects, the case study sample and projects across the CFP were particular ideas about how best to intervene and how to prevent violent conflict. There were essentially three theories of change.

Facilitation and mediation are tools for conflict resolution: the underlying idea behind these projects was the belief that open, structured and honest discussion is the basis of responding to conflict effectively. The idea is that through facilitated, and therefore safe, opportunities for exchange comes:

- effective de-escalation of conflict; and
- the possibility of identifying and agreeing ways of dealing with tensions.

Conflict cannot be reduced without agreeing ways of tackling it and this, in turn, depends on identifying and defining the conditions which lead to tensions: both depend on dialogue between all the key communities, parties or individuals.

Structures, resources and processes are needed to support conflict resolution: the belief here is that it is service development (new infrastructures and networks) that will lead to effective conflict resolution, reduction and prevention. It is through public service innovation, developments by voluntary and community organisations, partnership and integrated working, and new opportunities for engagement and participation that relevant, acceptable and effective inter-organisational and inter-group practices will emerge.

Linked to the notion of service development is that of ensuring that local policy makers, decision makers, service personnel and the public generally, recognise and accept the issues, and so they will encourage, support, fund and utilise the information and new services provided.

Developing community awareness is important for reducing the potential for conflict: the notion here is that it is through a broad base of public and community awareness that change will come. Engaging people in meetings, consultations or multi-racial projects (whether diversionary or conflict-related) will increase understanding, dispel prejudices, decrease tensions and be more likely to support services and individuals who seek to ensure that conflict is prevented or quickly resolved.

In a sense these cannot be distinct categories of 'theories in use': clearly the underlying ideas are linked and complement each other. The point is more about where people thought it best to get started and how and where to intervene. There are no 'right' answers to emerge from the projects, as we will discuss in the next chapter, but there are decisions to be made about what is of priority given the stage of development, capacities and resources of a particular area.

Project effectiveness in practice

Facilitation and mediation

The case studies suggest that facilitation and mediation approaches had a number of effects. They can create space for open dialogue which can identify issues, allow reciprocation of views and potentially lead to agreed common steps. In the Bradford case study, there were five mediation cases and, although many of these did not go beyond the initial meeting, it was reported that participants found the process invaluable in agreeing a common approach to discussing their views. In the Oldham case study, the Good Relations project provided a safe space for dialogue, where there was respect and dignity.

Where mediation or facilitation took place, the participants found the approaches useful. In particular, having a 'safe space' which could offer the opportunity to explore different points of view was seen as vital. A safe environment can allow the exploration of different ideas and strong feelings by ensuring that these are expressed and contained without spilling over into physical or verbal conflict. They were seen as most successful when used at the early stages of tension. However, there are contextual limits and external pressures both on the 'space' and on those within it. For example, in some of the cases it was observed that mediation does not work if other processes or activities are ongoing.

There are different roles for service personnel and community volunteers involved in facilitation and mediation, but they need to work together, and their respective training and ongoing development needs to be thought through together.

Structures, resources and processes for conflict resolution

Many of the projects were based on existing partnership or established working links. Partnership working was generally perceived as essential to these projects, and project success depended heavily on the effectiveness of partnership working. Communities with a history of effective partnership working in other areas tended to be best placed to take on the challenge of establishing structures, resources and processes for conflict resolution.

Partnerships did not always work well in practice (in fact, a legacy of previous poor partnership working often underlay some of the difficulties that communities were experiencing). There were examples of key people, such as facilitators, being isolated or undervalued and of poor support structures. In one of the cases examined, for example, the lack of effective partnership working, both at the strategic and delivery levels, hindered the development of the service, and there was perceived to be a 'wishing-away' of problems and tensions.

Nevertheless, it was in the projects that were attempting to put in place structures, resources and processes for conflict resolution that there was probably the most learning created about what is required to effectively address community conflict. The 'building block' model of creating the 'competent community' presented in Chapter 2 emerged from the learnings from just these projects.

Developing community awareness (community development and cohesion)

Most of the regions funded a range of community development projects. A number of these were seen as successful in engaging people but, as far as we could determine, only moderate numbers continued with ongoing engagement, and, as we have seen, many were of six-month duration. Many key workers reported frustration and concern about the lack of follow-up and continuity, especially because they saw these kind of interventions as essential work for tackling tensions before they escalate into open conflict.

The Leeds case study (Harehills-i) showed that community development successes need to be accompanied by wider structural and service developments. Also, widely across the CFP, experience pointed to the potential benefits of learning across projects in the same area. The projects tended to be quite local in scope and small scale, but there were possibilities of building up ideas and knowledge through sharing and widening involvement. In this way communities can become more engaged, and building on project experience could contribute to communities and services developing hand-in-hand.

Cross-cutting findings

A number of cross-cutting findings from the cases may be noted:

- There were many good and worthwhile projects funded under the CFP. A wide range of projects was set up that achieved significant local backing and commitment. There was a good response from community participants and projects demonstrated that they could create new opportunities.
- The original focus of developing facilitation and mediation capacity specifically for conflict resolution was redefined in the course of the programme. As a result, wider benefits were demonstrated which helped to highlight the links between the different elements of conflict resolution that we outlined in the 'building block' model presented in Chapter 2. Frontline projects intervened at different points in the process but most addressed issues of increasing community awareness and mutual understanding. This was seen both as a prerequisite to developing conflict resolution capability and as a means of understanding the causes of conflict.

Arguably, the CFP achieved most as a ground clearing exercise, in awareness raising and as a learning process. It promoted new discourses, new approaches and new networks.

- The projects not only demonstrated a range of actual outputs and outcomes, they also indicated the potential benefits arising from the activities involved, the so-called process outcomes, which affect individuals, groups and wider interests in the communities where the projects operated. Together they provide a resource of experience and learning that others may draw on in the future. Although short term in most cases, many projects did provide some capacity for, or demonstrations of approaches which could be adapted or built on by, later initiatives; for example, the CCU Pathfinder projects.

- Generally, projects used some external training and expertise but existing community mediation organisations tended (in the main) not to be involved, perhaps through a lack of local links or information. RCs and community co-ordinators typically knew their communities and understood many of the key issues involved in the programme, but not the field of mediation and conflict resolution *per se*.
- The focus of the projects was predominantly on young men. This may make sense in terms of targeting the immediate protagonists but it is not just young men that are the issue, often they are only acting out the antagonisms that exist in the wider community. In Bradford, for example, they recognised the potential of involving women in exploring issues, and there was recognition of the inter-generational issues often at stake, but currently there is no model for how to address this particular type of tension.
- Many projects were evaluated as part of their plan. However, these assessments tended to look at the achievements rather narrowly in relation to project objectives and these were mostly stated in very broad terms. It did seem that there were opportunities to look at other outcomes which were not realised. For example, few noted the number of people who participated in the activities; there was no real tracking of how individuals or specific groups fared or what they thought of the experience; there was little reflection on what had been learnt or what might be useful for other initiatives; and there was little indication that evaluators or project participants saw that they might have a wider and valuable contribution to make.

Project impacts

What then can our case studies tell us about the kind of overall impact that CFP projects have had on addressing community conflict? In Chapter 2 we proposed a process model of working towards the ‘competent community’ composed of a number of ‘building blocks’, namely:

- conflict prevention work;
- prevention of conflict escalation;
- conflict management;
- immediate conflict resolution;
- reconciliation; and
- learning from conflict or conflict transformation.

In what follows we look at how the three categories of projects identified – facilitation and mediation, structures and resources, community development and cohesion – mapped against these ‘building blocks’ and contributed to a move towards developing ‘competent communities’.

Facilitation and mediation

The 18 CFP projects identified that were concerned mainly with facilitation and mediation combined training a range of frontline workers and activists (in developing facilitation and mediation skills and knowledge, including peer facilitation and mediation) with the use of contracted outside expertise. There was a fairly limited set of actual local facilitation and mediation services/interventions where these new skills and outside expertise were put into practice particularly, with the youth and ‘on-street’ element.

As such, these projects had a particular potential (in terms of our ‘building block’ model) to contribute to:

- the prevention of conflict escalation;
- immediate conflict resolution; and
- reconciliation.

As we have seen from the review of the projects and the case studies above, the contribution made by these projects to actual **immediate conflict resolution** and **reconciliation** has been modest to date – although our Oldham case study indicates the kind of potential impact such work can have. Unsurprisingly – given the focus of most of these projects – what was more apparent in our research in terms of impact were frequent instances of **prevention of conflict escalation** in potential conflict situations, particularly as regards:

- effective liaison between youth, police and wider local authority area partners by trained activists with credibility in all quarters; and
- modelling of new ‘on-street’ behaviours and attitudes by peer youth outreach workers.

Significantly, these projects helped create in their areas a ‘cadre’ of youth and community development workers and activists with facilitation and mediation skills and a knowledge and appreciation of wider conflict resolution systems. These facilitation and mediation projects helped establish new ‘models in the mind’ of how conflict resolution systems are constructed and how they can work, as well as developing some of the practical skills and orientations (capabilities) needed by the ‘competent community’.

Structures and resources

The 39 CFP projects identified as concerned with developing structures and resources to address conflict resolution undertook a wide variety of tasks which included:

- training and supporting community facilitators;
- creating structures, networks and processes that enable dialogue, planning for action, joint approaches, providing intelligence, promoting informal and formal arrangements for inter-agency co-operation, recruitment of key individuals and expertise; and
- long-term conflict prevention work.

In principle then, these projects had a potential to contribute to the development of all the aspects of our ‘building block’ model and, in particular, to address creating structures and resources for:

- the prevention of conflict escalation;
- conflict management;
- immediate conflict resolution;
- reconciliation; and
- learning from conflict.

In practice, most of these projects’ impact was in the form of:

- creating arrangements for the **prevention of conflict escalation** (through establishing mediation and facilitation services; improving intelligence and early warning systems; creating collaborative networks between agencies and between agencies and community groups to head off problems before they arose);
- creating or enhancing structures to handle **conflict management** if or when the need arose (committees/partnerships/working parties/taskforces/liaison groups/etc.); and
- creating spaces/forums for **learning from conflict** experiences (typically these being the same groupings created or enhanced to handle conflict management).

The actual work and impact on **immediate conflict resolution** and on **reconciliation** was much less prominent – in part due to the necessity of putting the other ‘building blocks’ in place before such work could be attempted, and in part due to the absence of immediate crises to address.

However, the major impact of these projects was not, in our view, in their establishment of specific structures and resources, but rather in their beginning to create **conflict resolution systems**, i.e. beginning to create the preconditions for the 'competent community'. This was manifested in several ways:

- a new **capacity** was created in GOs and local authorities through the involvement in CFP to more effectively understand and address community cohesion issues; and
- new **conflict resolution arrangements** were mainstreamed in the form of incorporation into LSPs (e.g. Oldham) or were maintained through continuing on into Community Cohesion Programme pathfinders (e.g. Kirklees).

Community development and cohesion

The majority of projects (87) in the CFP addressed broader issues of community development and cohesion, including work that promoted (through mechanisms such as youth outreach, festivals, arts projects and conferences):

- race and cultural awareness;
- community development with single identity groups;
- personal development programmes for young people; and
- work with gangs.

As such, in terms of our 'building block' model, these largely concerned conflict prevention work.

Although they also frequently made a limited local contribution to:

- reconciliation; and
- learning from conflict.

While it is notoriously difficult to measure or demonstrate the impact of longer-term 'soft measures', such as awareness raising, this set of community development and cohesion initiatives appeared to be reasonably well run and be successful projects, both in their own terms and in relation to the wider objectives of the CFP.

Conclusion

In summary, then, we can say that the main impacts the CFP projects have had on addressing community conflict, and on helping a move towards more competent communities, have been in the areas of conflict prevention work, the prevention of conflict escalation and learning from conflict.

Less impact was had on actual conflict management, immediate conflict resolution and reconciliation.

4. Learning from the programme

We can now begin to look across our findings and consider the main learning points. This chapter covers a number of key questions about what the experience of the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) indicates about planning and implementing future programmes, about methods of intervention, timescales, and about what helped and what hindered the constituent projects. We do so by trying to identify generic issues which may be relevant at all levels of implementation and delivery: frontline projects, localities and the community level, and regional and strategic levels.

In presenting these points we refer back to the process model, 'towards the competent community', presented in Chapter 2. This was based on three underlying ideas:

- that the 'building blocks' which go to make up the 'competent community', i.e. one which has the capacity for conflict resolution, are essentially linked;
- that the move towards community cohesion, in which conflict resolution makes a key contribution, is never ending – there is no 'we've done it' – and this implies that continual learning and development are important; and
- that the reactive modes, those deployed in response to actual violence, are essential but that the strategy should be towards proactive modes, those which anticipate and pre-empt violence.

We have organised these learning points into sub-sections about:

- the integration of effort;
- building capacity; and
- participation.

These are inter-linked and are mutually supporting, and, in a way, it is somewhat confusing to make distinctions between them, but is necessary in order to cover the ground in a reasonably coherent fashion.

Integration of effort

One of the strong points to emerge is that a whole community response is needed to address tensions and conflicts. This means that, in a sense, it is everyone's responsibility.

Realistically, the lead will come from those with established authority, and we noted that in many areas there was a failure either to recognise the issues or to deal with them in a comprehensive, integrated or strategic way. We found areas where there was little evidence of debate or the sharing of concerns but, instead, a reluctance to confront issues and find solutions. Any lack of respect for the governing institutions and other structures is likely to create a situation which leaves room for radical views of all kinds to attract support.

Clearly, political leadership and that of powerful groups is significant but not, the projects would indicate, the only way to get movement. The value of links between agencies and services at local and regional levels, of raising general awareness and 'mainstreaming' the tasks and responsibilities across all sectors was implied by project experience, both from their presence and their absence. There were many examples where the success of projects had given them sufficient status to bring issues to local attention and had helped to push these up the political agenda.

There was certainly room for more joined-up thinking so that projects could link with, benefit from and contribute to wider contacts and networks. A mainstreaming approach, that which promotes thinking about, and awareness of, community conflict across all services and providers, was seen as potentially beneficial. This might be achieved through training opportunities of various kinds but equally by raising the visibility of activities and by influencing the content of local debate. The projects demonstrated that new people and groups can be brought on board through the media and particular events, like a music festival, which in turn widens participation. Equally, established services, for example, in youth, social services and housing, have a potential part to play.

Building capacity

Distinguishing between different activities

We have suggested that the competent community has in place the capacity to cover all the elements of conflict resolution – prediction, prevention, direct response – and that building capacity rests on maintaining a continual process of reflection and learning. All are part of developing the integrated approach discussed above and there are several aspects to building capacity.

The learning points here are about recognising that these are distinct activities. It is all too easy to conflate them, resulting in a productive stream of work being muddled by others; unwitting overlaps or elisions can confuse participants or erode goodwill. The earlier discussion about the integration of effort is relevant in appreciating what different actors and agencies are doing in the overall conflict resolution system, specifically to avoid such situations but, equally, better dialogue between services can help people to realise how and where different activities may complement and learn from each other.

Building capacities is likely to depend on longer-term strategies and supports. We have noted the question of infrastructure. This may be about recruiting the co-operation of existing services and community groups. It will also be about creating new structures and processes specifically designed to address conflict resolution that cover both reactive and proactive forms of intervention.

Facilitation and mediation

At the heart of building capacity are facilitation and mediation skills. Mediation usually refers to a specific and supported dialogue between the parties to conflict. Facilitation is usually used as a more general description of part of the skill-set used by conflict practitioners. It is about creating relationships, trust and dialogue between the parties (or their supporters) involved in conflict.

This does not just mean having the resource of expert practice held by people in specialist posts as facilitators and mediators; many people in different community and cohesion roles need facilitation skills for their work. The projects demonstrated that a variety of people could benefit from training in these skills. For example, community volunteers were a valuable resource in several facilitation/mediation services, particularly because they were seen as independent from statutory agencies, which helped to promote trust. In one city, the facilitation/mediation project was set up as a service provided by local paid volunteers who were able to respond to referrals by service providers.

Statutory and voluntary agencies provide a comprehensive range of services and so come into contact with large numbers of people in the community. They are in a position to obtain information about concerns and issues, and to become quickly aware of increasing tensions. They could, therefore, provide early warnings, refer people or groups to mediation services, or help people to find ways of exploring their problems. The projects suggested that this kind of thinking was not widespread but was enhanced through training and better information about facilitation and mediation services. For example, in the Tower Hamlets case study the project included the training of Youth Service staff.

As we noted, these services were not always involved in projects and this was apparently partly due to a lack of local knowledge. It does suggest that people involved in specific projects in this field could do more to recruit the support and active involvement of service providers and practitioners in statutory and voluntary agencies.

However, the experience of the CFP does point to the value of specialists; people who are aware of the fine lines between the stages of growing tension, overt antagonism and actual violent conflict, and are able to spot potential escalations. These are people who are trained in both facilitation and mediation processes, as well as conflict resolution. As we have noted, the essence of conflict resolution work is that building trusting relationships with those involved in conflict, and establishing the structures and mechanisms through which conflict practitioners can work with them, does imply consistent work from practitioners who are around for a significant period of time.

A further aspect is that trained facilitators can distance themselves from the situation and, where appropriate, call in additional help. As we have seen in our case studies, projects in Bradford, Oldham and Leicester all benefited from (indeed depended on) the involvement of outside experts.

Sustaining capacity

Issues arise also around sustaining capacity and looking after the people involved. The organisations that run projects in the field of community conflict, their staff and community participants face a number of pressures arising from the intensity of feelings and undercurrents involved in addressing conflict. We referred, in Chapter 3, to the kind of support that youth participants received to help deal with the impacts of being in the frontline, 'on the street'. Good support that acknowledges these emotional impacts through, for example, supervision, debriefing sessions or forms of awareness training can help to ensure that the issues are not 'acted out' in inappropriate ways.

Time frames

The issues about sustaining capacity relate to those of managing long term objectives. A clear message from the CFP was that the short term nature of the projects did lead to difficulties on the ground. Many were compromised as there was little time to build the kind of contacts and trust that are essential in such work and, equally, there was little opportunity to make connections with others to promote learning and development. One danger was that time-limited programmes can raise expectations. A main learning point was that short term interventions can, as we have reported, make a difference; they can demonstrate possible ways forward. However, they do need careful 'labelling' for all concerned, first to indicate that they are short term and, second, to make it clear whether any follow-up funding is likely, if it is dependent on results, what the exit plans are, and so on.

Part of the problem was that the programme started off as a short term (six-month) intervention but was later broadened and extended in scope. This caused difficulties in managing expectations and projects on the ground – in a sense the programme was (like most time-bound programmes) both too short (in terms of longer-term capacity building) and too long (in terms of having an effect on immediate presenting problems that the programme was initially set up to address). Such a difficult and challenging issue as conflict resolution is not really susceptible to short term interventions unless they are based on effective diagnoses, are highly focused and are expertly staffed. Effective short term intervention assumes that the required expertise is readily available to undertake such diagnoses, design highly focused interventions and undertake this work.

For example, in terms of our ‘building blocks’, in the different local areas about which there were the greatest immediate concerns at the inception of CFP, immediate needs varied from prevention of conflict escalation, conflict management, conflict resolution to reconciliation. Equally, in the local areas of less immediate concerns, it was conflict prevention work or learning from conflict that was more relevant, work which is by its very nature longer-term.

Participation

One of the striking achievements of the projects was in bringing people together, mostly in fairly small and very local ways. The involvement in joint activities and ventures achieved several things: it raised levels of awareness, helped people to revise long held ideas and assumptions, and, perhaps most interestingly, began to allay deep fears about ‘others’. The joint activities also achieved tangible results in terms of, for example, enjoyable arts ventures and festivals, and visible awareness campaigns. The participants in these activities began to think differently about where they lived: they began to think a little more positively about their city.

Unless community groups and individuals were involved, and both were able and enabled to participate, it was hard to make progress. Community intelligence and the views of individuals, groups and organisations were crucial to understanding what was going on, how to get involved and what might need to be done. Many CFP projects had to find ways to help people to overcome suspicions, fears and years of caution about ‘others’ before they could get involved, perhaps even then against their better judgement. To reassure people, projects and project staff had to be trusted and credible. The learning here was that considerable and sensitive efforts, based on an accurate and informed appreciation of community concerns and experience, were needed to succeed. Project workers were only able to build trust, for example, where young people believed in their genuine (and non-coercive) intentions and that the opportunities on offer were concrete. Participation can only be voluntary; it cannot work if there is compulsion or any formal requirement.

Most forms of community development and engagement are dependent on reaching the whole community, including those who are isolated, whose voices are not raised or heard and the so-called ‘hard-to-reach’. There were some significant successes in this area but the learning was that it needs to be multi-layered and consistent, in the sense of key people and services being there, being reliable, and sending out the same message to all, over time.

A key issue was the ability to get all concerned parties into the process. Those that remain outside the process will not only be left out of developments, they may resent and undermine them. The projects gave some indications that the people least likely to become involved in facilitation or mediation processes were those with power. They tended to see such moves as a potential threat, as negating or dissolving their advantage. The learning was that the way forward was to persuade the powerful party that the invitation is to participate in a process of mutual exploration that seeks to find agreement and enhance everybody’s capacity to act and sense of control.

Listening

People wanted, and could respond to, opportunities to be heard if these were experienced as safe, relevant and accessible. The indications were that individuals and communities have the knowledge and intelligence, in both senses of the word, to know what matters, what is sparking unrest and what might help to address the issues. A key refrain in this study, that of listening, was highlighted, especially by young people, as an essential element in participation and also as a vital tool in understanding and addressing conflict.

We have noted that initiatives can lead to conflict and tension. Setting up opportunities can create issues between those who join the project, receive the training, etc., and those who do not. Trying to ensure that all stakeholders, those indirectly as well as most directly involved, have at least good information about what is proposed and an opportunity to air their views is likely to pay off.

Summary of learning points

The case study work suggested that there were considerable learnings from the programme:

Policy and programme implementation

- An integrated and comprehensive approach is needed at all levels, one which seeks to put in place all the elements required to have full conflict resolution capacity at the local level.
- There are benefits in promoting awareness in the community and in ensuring that service providers and practitioners across the sectors are briefed and trained so that they recognise the importance of, and are familiar with, the concepts of community conflict resolution. Participation at all levels is key.

- There are likely to be benefits in mainstreaming responsibilities. Local statutory and voluntary agencies can make some contribution to, for example, risk analysis, information gathering, reaching isolated people, supporting professional community facilitators and providing opportunities for reflection and learning. Such agencies interface with many others and can assist in developing projects and activities as appropriate.
- Interventions need to be carefully designed and tailored to circumstances, and project timescales need to match the nature of the work to be accomplished.

Frontline projects

- The projects as a whole demonstrated that people do respond to opportunities; young people and community groups can take on responsibility and make things happen.
- Creating safe, relevant and reliable opportunities are important in establishing credibility and trust, and, therefore, in encouraging and enabling people to come forward and get involved. Wide support from the community and good levels of awareness are key to making progress.
- Offering ways which help young people (and others) to deal with suspicion, anxiety and fear are valued and effective. Listening and providing open dialogue takes time but are key to addressing tensions and unrest. Gaining the participation of the whole community is the most difficult thing to accomplish but it is also the most productive thing of all.
- Expert support from individuals or organisations with specialist community conflict resolution knowledge and skills will often be needed.
- In all these, the methods of facilitation and mediation are relevant and can be highly effective.

5. Reflecting on the findings: a concluding discussion

The points that we present in this concluding discussion highlight a number of issues for practice, for future programmes and for policies in this area. We should highlight, however, that our experience of the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) and its constituent projects is weighted in particular ways.

First, our study drew primarily on the perspectives of the frontline projects which were focusing mostly on locality (neighbourhood) or area (city) level objectives. This means that the observations were most likely to reflect grassroots concerns, issues and details; a ‘bottom-up’ perspective.

Second, the emphasis in the CFP was on initiatives for young people. As we noted in Chapter 3, nearly 60 per cent of the projects analysed focused on youth, most involving young men. Part of the rationale for this was, in line with the strategy outlined in the Cantle Report, to bring young people into the debate to **“give younger people a bigger voice and stake in democratic activity”** (Home Office, 2002b). Equally as influential in setting up the CFP projects were the views that, since it was so often young people who were involved in (causing) violent incidents, ways should be found to reach and engage them in alternative ways of expressing and dealing with their anger and difficulties. As we saw, many projects aimed to recruit such young people, the so-called hard-to-reach, to be peer workers and youth advocates. Again, a grassroots or peer-level approach.

Third, the particular objectives which the projects pursued were about intelligence gathering, raising awareness, increasing inter-racial understanding, and seeking to increase local capacities for facilitation and mediation. The experience of actual conflict resolution services was more limited. In a sense, then, the projects were working to achieve some of the pre-conditions for effective conflict resolution, such as good information, wider community understanding and participation.

A fourth ‘bias’ is the focus on facilitation and mediation, and on structures and resources in our case study work. Most of the projects we looked at in detail were based on facilitation and mediation approaches and skills; in promoting dialogue, for creating safe opportunities for exchange, for intervening in potential and actual conflict situations, as the basis of training, and so on.

For these reasons, the matters we discuss here are mainly concerned with what we might call the detail or fine structure of relationships; issues for practice at frontline or the local level. There are some implications for planning, strategic and policy levels to flow from these, which we consider under the heading ‘Values and approaches’.

Enabling people to get involved

In setting out a strategy for community cohesion, the Cattle Report (Home Office, 2002b) highlighted the need for ‘new citizenship’, ‘cross-cultural contact’ and ‘myth busting’, all based on the idea of promoting participation and dialogue within and between community groups and involvement in developing services and facilities. Similarly, guidance from the Local Government Association (Local Government Association, 2002) pointed to the importance of participation and ‘ownership’ of the community cohesion agenda by all partners, wide consultation and getting people involved in ‘open and honest debate’.

We would suggest that the contributions which the CFP projects made are in providing ideas about, and demonstrations of, how to approach these objectives. How do you enable people to give their views and get involved? How do you encourage people to participate? We obtained a lot of evidence that people of all ages and backgrounds were able to come forward, get involved and express their views, but only given the right circumstances. Arguably, what the projects did was to pay particular attention to the way opportunities for exchange were offered, set up and supported.

The depth of people’s anxiety and fears of suffering abuse and violence in the areas we visited cannot be overestimated. Some of the young people we met acknowledged that they lived in perpetual anxiety, fearing for their safety and, being young, they handled this by being aggressive and pre-empting attack from ‘others’. Elders would not go outside ‘their’ neighbourhood, certainly not to a public meeting or one initiated by unfamiliar people.

In realising these fears, many projects worked hard to make the activities – training, discussions, joint ventures – above all, safe. This meant, for example, working to agreed ‘rules’ for exchange, ensuring that neutral and trusted people actively facilitated meetings, trying to make sure that the press did not misrepresent the project or its intentions. In previous chapters we referred to examples of interventions which, by setting up a confidential, informal and mediated space, allowed people to voice painful issues, to hear and be heard, and to develop new relationships to speak in a frank way, unencumbered by political or media attention. Attention to detail and to the sensitivities of participants was critical to success. Only if the context felt safe and genuine, and relevant to their concerns, could people begin to talk ‘openly and honestly’.

We also learnt of the deep mistrust of formal and statutory agencies in some areas. Expecting people to give their honest, or any, views if consulted by these services in these circumstances is clearly unrealistic. Debates and discussion initiated by people who are trusted and seen as neutral are, again, necessary. The advice “**ask, don’t tell – give people a chance to have their say**” (Local Government Association, 2002) is helpful but incomplete. The CFP experience would suggest putting it a bit differently: invite people to contribute their views and actively create safe opportunities for them to do so.

Where and when to intervene

The CFP experiences indicate that focusing on particular groupings can be problematic and needs to be approached with care. The focus on youth was seen by some as identifying youth as 'the problem'. Similarly, there were areas which questioned being included in the CFP – a local authority did not consider that they had a sufficient level of inter-racial unrest to warrant being labelled as 'at risk'. Singling out a group or area can both stigmatise it and take attention away from the larger picture. The CFP project experience suggests that although it might primarily be young people, specifically young men, who were involved in violent incidents, they were, in many ways, acting out the frustrations and fears of their communities. To focus on changing the behaviours of young people can seem like placing all the responsibility on them to make things better. Similarly, a focus on a particular refugee group can be unrealistic. Taking a narrow focus, without considering the ramifications and the possible ripple effects in other parts of the community, may be counter-productive.

This is not to say that targeting specific groups should not be part of a wider strategy. One of the clear messages to come from the frontline projects was that people, especially young people, responded well to the opportunities to express their views and ideas. In this way, so-called problematic sections of the community can become part of the solution. The point is more about taking a strategic approach in which specific interventions are one element in a bigger plan for the community.

We suggested in Chapter 2 that the way forward might be to emphasise proactive modes, i.e. those which seek to predict, anticipate and prevent conflict. In relation to youth, some detached youth workers, trained as community facilitators, found that this gave them the scope, tools and confidence to seek out actual or potential parties to conflict and to engage them in mediation discussions. With good support and training, this outreach approach can be developed in association with, for example, youth services or schools. Similarly, the concept of peer mediation is established in many schools and other settings. It shares traditions and concepts with mentoring, coaching and other 'buddy' approaches. Support for those involved in peer mediation can be a valuable part of any neighbourhood renewal or community cohesion strategy.

Facilitation and mediation as core skills

Facilitation and mediation skills were deployed in many of the CFP projects. They were seen as core skills in conflict resolution and prevention, and in reaching and encouraging people to participate. However, the fact that so many youth projects took facilitation training as their key activity indicates a broad level of recognition that such skills have a generic as well as a specific value in this field. They were seen as likely to be useful for the young people as individuals, in their family and social lives and in seeking work, as well as contributing to the project's aims.

They can also be viewed as integral elements in the wider agendas of implementing community cohesion, neighbourhood renewal and race relations and other community based developments. We note that the work of many organisations involved in community cohesion work involves the constant task of reconciling different positions and strategies. Such skills could, then, be seen as important to a wide range of professionals and community activists for whom facilitation skills could be included as part of their training or as ongoing training. Allied to this notion of, in a sense, mainstreaming facilitation and mediation, it would be helpful if our general understanding of facilitation and mediation was in terms of skills and processes rather than specific people or posts.

Political and local leadership

The Local Government Association guidance (Local Government Association, 2002) referred to some issues about community leadership and representation, recognising that there are those whose voices are not heard and many who do not feel well represented, either by elected members of local authorities or by community leaders. We noted that informants in several areas involved in the CFP reported a lack of political awareness of inter-racial tensions and community unrest, which in some cases included elected members. Only when there was actual violence was attention paid to the issues leading to, and wider concerns surrounding, the incident.

The projects in the CFP confirmed that there are many people out there who do not feel represented – well or otherwise. Community leaders identified and consulted by local authorities and statutory agencies were not necessarily recognised as such by all sections of the community. Assumptions are easily made, especially when there is pressure to move quickly, that getting certain, established names on board is sufficient. Closer examination and on the ground discussions would reveal that, for example, certain neighbourhoods, class or age groupings were not represented or that support for some leaders had shifted. As far as projects were concerned, we noted that it was the most powerful who were sometimes the most difficult to engage. The point to emerge is that the fine detail of grassroots views may be overlaid by broad brush, even out of date, local political views and understandings.

Values and approaches

The study suggests that the way people think about community conflict is significant in shaping responses, approaches and strategies. This is true for frontline practice but also at the levels of programme development, strategic planning and policy making. Here we summarise some of the points which we have presented in the course of the report, with particular reference to local authority and policy levels.

Risk management

It is realistic to acknowledge that there will always be differences and conflicts in communities. Tension is an integral part of the experience of change, and we live in a society in which change can come quickly and can be quite radical. The view is, as we discussed in Chapter 2, that conflict can be used positively and that tensions within and between community groups have a message. This approach is more likely to lead to open and creative thinking rather than defensive reactions. The concept of risk management is useful here: it accepts and confronts the fact that risk is endemic to human systems. As conflict is inevitable but civil disorder is not, the incorporation of a risk management approach, together with other preventative activities, can anticipate problems, plan for contingencies and focus responses.

Communities are complex systems

Communities, in the sense of the geographical definition which we suggested in Chapter 2, comprise a complex inter-weaving of numerous elements and characteristics which go to make up a unique whole. What is required is a systems approach to planning and action. This is one that attempts to bring a comprehensive picture, the wide-angle lens, into play in order to see the relationships and connections between different parts of the whole as the basis of thinking about and designing policies, programmes and interventions in communities. This kind of thinking assists in two ways:

- it can help to ensure that initiatives do not have perverse knock-on effects; and
- it highlights links and complementary streams of work, which can be used to add value through sharing and learning.

Community resourcefulness and ownership

The indications from the CFP were that seeking to work with communities rather than imposing ideas and solutions on them was an effective and valued strategy. The belief that the intelligence, ideas about potential solutions, abilities, motivation and resourcefulness, reside in communities contrasts with the policy tendency to promote, if not impose, approaches and ideas from 'above'. Communities can be helped to develop ways of recognising and surfacing issues, the means of allowing these to be expressed, and ways of addressing conflict which prevent actual violence and disorder. Mobilising community resourcefulness is a significant challenge, but the skills and approaches of facilitation do offer some practical possibilities about 'how to'.

Conflict resolution is an integrated process

The idea is that understanding and finding ways of addressing actual or imminent conflict requires specific processes, methods, systems and skills. We provide a model in Chapter 2 that depicts these as essentially linked, each with the potential to inform the others, through systems of ongoing dialogue, monitoring and learning.

Different interventions or activities may be needed at different stages in the process. Thus, taking the prevention of conflict, in the immediate prelude to episodes of violence or civil disturbance, **preventative measures** will have an impact if they are pre-planned and involve joint working between, for example, the police, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies, and if preparations are made in those areas where civil disorder is most likely.

Rapid response may require the external (to the community) recruitment of staff or the use of external skills. Although local and trusted people are likely to be the best option, developing such a resource takes time and existing networks may not have the capacity or may be inadequate. Capacity building will be useful in the longer-term.

Different modes and activities, such as conflict monitoring and resolution, facilitation and mediation, peer facilitation and mediation, and aspects of community development, all have a place. The key is establishing a sufficient level of integration between principal actors, and in identifying how different organisations and interests can work together.

In relation to specific conflicts, it may still be necessary to provide a mediation service at a community level. Many Community Mediation Services already exist. It would be useful to investigate the provision of a mediation service that could be provided to the community cohesion sector.

Conflict can 'get into' people and organisations

The final points relate to the notion that conflict can 'get into' and affect the very people, organisations, partnerships, systems and programmes trying to prevent unrest and violence. The emotionality and stress of dealing with conflict can run high and can naturally 'spill out' or be 'exported' on to something or someone else.

There are innumerable statutory, voluntary, faith and community organisations working at the frontline of neighbourhood renewal and community cohesion whose staff deal with conflicts, tensions, aggression, fear and the possibility of disorder everyday. Such organisations can take in those emotions and they themselves then exhibit symptoms of tension, fear and conflict. These can be manifest as, for example, interpersonal disputes, blaming others, inappropriate competitiveness or possessiveness, or disputes over other issues.

Many organisations do have mechanisms to deal with these emotions, as well as structures to hold and support their workers. Opportunities to discuss the experience, to debrief, which were well recognised by several youth projects in the CFP, are invaluable. There are organisational development skills, practices and processes that can be of real value here and they can help people to stay focused. Many frontline organisations employ external supervisors to provide staff groups with this kind of support.

We note here the possibility that the impacts of working on conflict resolution and cohesion programmes reach beyond the frontline to the implementation and policy levels. It seems fair to suggest that staff at all levels, in GOs, local authorities and government departments, who are vitally engaged in these issues, will also experience similar effects.

In conclusion

This evaluation indicates that the investment in CFP and the contribution of the frontline projects has provided important opportunities to explore and rethink some key issues in relation to the community cohesion agenda. The key perspectives came, we suggest, from the frontline projects and their participants, and so the learning has focused on some of the detail of relationships, of helping people to get involved, debating the way forward and agreeing the 'action points'. Managing anxieties and finding ways to reassure people in the communities that they could speak out safely and effectively emerged as a crucial element, perhaps the pre-requirement, for increasing participation and, therefore, making progress.

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Annex 2: Case studies

Community Accord: Bradford	
	Summary
	<p>Following the disturbances in Bradford in the summer of 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) established the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in all nine Government Offices (GOs) to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>The Community Accord project was developed as a direct response to the disturbances and was funded by the NRU's CFP. Public meetings after the disturbances highlighted the need for some sort of facilitation/mediation service, as there was nowhere to express and deal with tensions between and within communities (geographic, cultural, ethnic) or between communities and services. The project aimed to identify tensions before they escalated into actual conflicts and to diffuse them by enabling those involved to discuss them openly. Participants in the programme's open forums felt that it was the first time they had had an opportunity to input their opinions and concerns to decision makers and into the local policy process.</p>
	Aims/Objectives
<p><i>Identifying tensions and training facilitators to work with people to develop mutually agreed actions to address these.</i></p>	<p>The aim of the Community Accord project was to provide a mechanism for service providers and people in the community to identify tensions before they escalated into actual conflicts. These cases would then be referred to an independent service where newly trained facilitators would defuse the tensions by enabling people to discuss honestly, in a safe manner, the issues at stake, and to come to mutually agreed actions to deal with those issues.</p> <p>Particular communities would be identified (either by service personnel or by the communities themselves) as having difficulties with, for example, another community, a service, or a particular locale. Referrals would be taken up by the project manager who would contact the concerned parties, assess the potential for violence, negotiate and clarify the process with those involved, set up the initial meetings and bring in the facilitators. The meetings would entail either a group conversation facilitated by a third party, or separate meetings with the parties followed up by joint mediation meetings.</p> <p>This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employing a project manager; • training facilitators; • receiving referrals from local service providers and people in the community; • providing a safe place/space and to negotiate a process whereby people listen and are heard; • developing mutually agreed actions to deal with tensions; and • the project manager organising debriefing sessions with the facilitators to discuss the cases and to identify follow-up actions.

Where	
<i>Bradford, Yorkshire and the Humber.</i>	<p>The district of Bradford city.</p> <p>It is perceived by sections of the community that the disturbances of 2001 were due to the failure of public services to cater adequately and fairly to all sections of the community, and to address long term socio-economic decline in a previously prosperous city. It is recognised that inter-ethnic conflict is a problem, but conflicts between generations, intra-ethnic conflicts on cultural or religious grounds, grievances with services, and neighbourhood disputes are also highly important.</p> <p>The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population in Bradford is around 87,150, approximately 18 per cent of the total population. The majority of this group is of Asian origin (around 75,050), whereas the Afro-Caribbean population is much smaller (around 5,900).</p>
How did it do it?	
<i>Creating a steering group, recruiting a project manager and 15 facilitators, finding a safe place for discussions and exchange, and receiving referrals from local service providers and people in the community.</i>	<p>The Community Accord project was one of four projects set up in Bradford using funds from the NRU's CFP. This programme was managed regionally by the GO for Yorkshire and the Humber, and was administered locally by Bradford's Community Development Services (CDS).</p> <p>The head of Bradford's CDS set up a steering group made up of representatives from approximately 45 partner agencies to guide all four projects. The group met every three to four weeks to drive the projects forward. However, the number of people turning up to steering group meetings began to dwindle and so the steering group was restructured. A sub-committee was created specifically for the Community Accord project, from which a project steering group was drawn.</p> <p>The Community Accord steering group took forward the detailed discussions about how the project was going to be developed – who the facilitators were going to be and how the service would work. The operational management group for the project was formed from the remainder of that sub-group. The council and the police took joint lead on the project, while other members included the local housing association's mediation service and Bradford Vision (the Local Strategic Partnership).</p> <p>The steering group advertised locally for a project manager and recruited a local volunteer who had been involved with the group.</p> <p>The Community Accord project was set up to provide a facilitation service that would be seen to be independent of the council. As such, the recruitment of the facilitators was undertaken by a consultancy organisation and the job specification was developed by the steering group. Essential skills listed in the job specification included active listening, good communication skills and impartiality.</p> <p>The call for facilitators was advertised via local newspapers and two local radio stations, and there were three information sessions held in local libraries. People who attended information sessions were given an induction pack and an application form. There were then panel interviews, with the project manager, a representative from the volunteering unit of social services, and a police sergeant. The 15 facilitators that were selected all lived locally and came from a diverse range of backgrounds (ethnic, cultural, religious, socio-economic and gender) and ages.</p> <p>A residential induction weekend was set up and was run by the consultancy to explain the ethos behind the service, to encourage team building and to train the facilitators in mediation techniques. The facilitators all reported being impressed by the diversity and enthusiasm of their team. Subsequent training was organised by the project manager.</p>

How did it do it? (cont.)	
	<p>The spaces used for the mediation were primarily community centres in council buildings, and agreed with the participants beforehand. The 'safety' of the space was ensured by the processes of the sessions.</p> <p>The information about the service was provided through adverts in the local media, leaflets distributed to community centres, and the project manager held meetings with the local service provider staff.</p> <p>Timescales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2001 – creation of large steering group. • Late 2001 – creation of the Community Accord project. Research into similar projects elsewhere (Northern Ireland and South Africa). • Summer 2002 – consultancy firm involved in recruiting, selecting and the initial training of facilitators. Recruitment of project manager. • January 2003 – project manager in place. Operational management group formed from the steering group. • May 2003 – official launch of the Community Accord project. • April 2004 – CFP funding comes to an end. Project manager leaves for another post.
Who was involved?	
<p><i>Bradford City Council Department of Community Development.</i></p> <p><i>Local Strategic Partnership.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CDS (one of five services in the Department of Community Development and Lifelong Learning in the city council). The head of this unit was the lead of the CFP in the city, and the joint lead, with a police inspector, of the Community Accord project. A representative from the LSP (who had also taken over responsibility for housing the project from the CDS), a representative from an umbrella Tenants and Residents organisation, and a recent additional representative from the police force were also on the operational management group. • Although involved initially, the housing association mediation service no longer attended meetings – the initial representative had moved on, there were issues of competition between the services, and the housing association lacked the manpower to engage fully in the partnership.
What did it achieve?	
<p><i>Five mediation cases and two open forum facilitation workshops.</i></p> <p><i>Facilitators have acquired new and transferable skills.</i></p> <p><i>Too early to measure impact.</i></p>	<p>There have been five group mediation cases and two open forum facilitation workshops undertaken by the Community Accord facilitators. The project manager has also been involved in three separate emergency meetings over incidents in schools.</p> <p>The five mediation cases came from referrals by the police, the CDS and the education service. Three of the mediation cases progressed beyond the initial meetings. These cases involved an intra-ethnic conflict at a secondary school, a neighbourhood dispute over developments concerning a right of way, and a dispute between groups involved in the management committee of a community centre.</p> <p>The open forum facilitation workshops were set up by the CDS but utilised the Community Accord project as independent facilitators of the process. These were day-long (one women-only session and one mixed) events with targeted communities (one was with the African community), and involved the facilitators manning a stall for a particular issue and the attendants voicing their opinions, concerns and suggestions to them. The facilitators then summarised these points, clarified them and the group drew up an action plan on service improvements for the council to report back on in future meetings. There was a large turnout for these events (over 300) and the attendants reported that it was the first time that they had felt that they had been engaged with by the council. Action plans on prioritised issues were drawn up and were to be reported on in follow-up meetings.</p>

What did it achieve? (cont.)

The facilitators were all very appreciative of their learning opportunities (they received qualifications for their mediation training), and they were confident of the efficacy of the process. Some had used it in other circumstances, and one reported using it to successfully address an ongoing issue that they had come across in their locality.

Learning points

- Getting referrals both from service providers and from communities proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Not all personnel in partner agencies seemed to be clear on what the Community Accord service offered and how their referrals were necessary for it to work. The referral process also required commitment from agency staff in terms of making contact with the parties engaged in conflict and soliciting their interest in the service before making the referral.
- As it was a new service, there was limited awareness of it among the public, and the nature of the work meant that its interventions could not be publicised and that people might be reluctant to use it – people were not inclined to admit that they were part of a conflict and that they needed outside help. The programme lead and manager both reported the need to promote the service more effectively, and had plans for widening the project's activities to make it better known.
- In the mediation cases, external pressures, both from parties involved in the conflict, and from other services, hindered the process. All concerned needed to be involved in the process, otherwise those attending mediation could progress but the underlying conflict would remain, since external parties have not been consulted. Service providers had to allow the service time and space to work, since parallel action (such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) by other services disrupted the mediation process.

Impacts

It is too early to tell on impacts. It is notoriously difficult to assess preventative work. The programme lead felt that it would take up to five years of monitoring and recording their interventions to map and interpret trends and indicators.

Check list

- The model of good practice was still developing.
- Partnership working requires ongoing commitment and communication from personnel at all levels of the concerned agencies.
- Gaining trust is an ongoing process. The independent status of the service and the facilitators gave them a level of legitimacy with the public, but had also been a factor in the disinclination of some agency personnel in working with the service.
- The service needs more proactive promotion, but also needs to ensure that promotion does not create unfavourable impressions in either service agencies or the public.

Training Community Facilitators: Burnley

	Summary
	<p>Following the disturbances in Burnley in the summer of 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) established the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in all nine Government Offices (GOs) to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>As part of the CFP, the NRU commissioned two conflict resolution Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers (NRAs) to undertake a scoping exercise and to develop a proposal to build local capacity for conflict resolution and mediation at the community level in Burnley. The Burnley Community Facilitation project emerged from this process. Its aims were to develop and train mediation and conflict resolution specialists, to develop the community mediation service, to develop local facilitation networks and to provide training to local facilitators.</p> <p>The trainees found the training useful, the series of Town Meetings took place and the Network of Facilitators was successfully formed. The challenge is to sustain the work by identifying funding for the future.</p>
	Aims/Objectives
<p><i>To develop and train mediation and conflict resolution specialists, to develop the community mediation service, and to develop local facilitation networks and to provide training to local facilitators.</i></p>	<p>The focus of the programme was to build the capacity of people and organisations in Burnley to resolve and prevent community conflicts. This would be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing and training mediators and conflict resolution practitioners in Burnley; • developing the local community mediation service, Specialist Mediation in East Lancashire (SMILE); and • developing a local facilitation network and providing training to local facilitators. <p>This work would enable local people to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and engage in conflict prevention, resolution and transformation; • enhance and develop communications and event design-skills; • identify community cohesion needs; and • design events and interventions to build bridges between communities. <p>All these skills would be transferred to local people so they were not reliant on outside intervention in order to identify and manage local conflict.</p> <p>All these objectives were in support of a broader set of priorities which also included planning for future disturbances, enhanced community participation in the allocation of resources, providing opportunities for different ethnic communities to mix, to confront divisions within communities, and to enhance the design of local events to enable people to speak out about and resolve differences.</p>

	Where
<p><i>Burnley, northwest England.</i></p>	<p>The project took place in Burnley, scene of serious disturbances in the summer of 2001. Burnley has a population of 91,130, of whom 9 per cent are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, mostly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The Asian population is concentrated mostly in the inner-city. One inner-city ward, Danehouse, is in the top 1 per cent of deprived wards in the country and is the sixth most deprived ward in England for child poverty and income deprivation.</p> <p>It is against this background of long term economic and social deprivation that the causes of the 2001 violence are set. Racial tension already existed in areas of long term polarised communities. Political leadership was divided and ineffective. BME communities were under-represented (especially at senior levels) in many statutory and non-statutory bodies in the town. Research by Lancaster University among young people found deep-rooted and widespread prejudice. Many people remarked on the racism that existed. There were high levels of crime associated with the drug trade among both the white and Asian communities.</p> <p>The police reported a number of critical incidents over two days, which culminated in an attack on an Asian taxi driver. This was the sparking incident that provoked widespread violence between communities and against the police when they intervened.</p>
	How did it do it?
<p><i>A scoping exercise followed by facilitation training, a youth training project and Town Meetings.</i></p>	<p>In October 2003, the NRU, in conjunction with the GO for the North West, commissioned two Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers (NRAs) to undertake a scoping exercise in Burnley. They talked to statutory bodies, community, faith and voluntary bodies, and interfaced closely with the Community Empowerment Network and SMILE, the local community mediation service. The task was to look at ways to support local organisations in facilitation and resolution work. The local administration for the programme was provided by the Burnley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), the body that was also co-ordinating the Community Empowerment Network.</p> <p>An eight-day mediation training programme was designed and advertised. It included elements on conflict analysis, diversity issues, equality issues and conflict resolution skills. It was aimed at training a new tranche of SMILE mediators, community leaders from BME communities and white community leaders from areas that experienced the effects of the disturbances. However, there was very little demand shown for the programme. In retrospect, it seems that the course on offer was too long (few people could invest that amount of time) and mediation skills may have appeared too specific for many people.</p> <p>The programme was therefore revised. The facilitation training went ahead, in its original form, but this was supplemented by a project of youth training and the development of a new idea of Town Meetings.</p> <p>In the summer of 2003 the facilitation training programme took place. It attracted 14 people, mostly recruited via the Community Empowerment Network. Five of them were paid or volunteer workers from the Youth and Community Sector, people from Burnley Council, carers, a person from a faith community, two chairs of residents' groups, three mediators from SMILE and someone from a local community consulting organisation. Thus, the course was able to attract four frontline workers and community activists: 25 per cent were from the Asian communities.</p>

How did it do it? (cont.)

The programme consisted of two three-day modules. It sought to link theoretical inputs with the participants' own experience, to develop a spirit of facilitation, to supplement that with core skills and methods, and to put the whole package in a way that was of most value to participants in their work environments. This was a well thought through learning methodology for developing skills that are both intellectually and emotionally demanding in their use. The first three days of theory and practice ended with participants presenting their own conflict analysis of the situation in Burnley, using mapping and analysis tools from the conflict resolution field. The second module contained feedback sessions and one-to-one coaching sessions on dealing impartially and non-judgmentally with people (especially those under stress), and planning the longer-term development of their own work and their future work as community facilitators. Finally, there was a session that enabled trainees to evaluate what they had learned.

The newly trained facilitators set up a Coordination Group to provide ongoing support, training and space for reflection for trainees. They have met formally five times and have had many other informal contacts. Their work has included obtaining funding for their group, reviewing work they have undertaken and planning the Town Meetings project.

The Town Meetings project brings together members of Citizens' Panels in five areas of the town. They are events planned and facilitated by the trained facilitators with support from their trainers. The events create a safe, facilitated space for residents to discuss some of the difficult racial and cohesion issues that confront their town. Although at the start of one of the meetings the participants said they were happy to discuss anything except racism, the facilitators were able to help them overcome their reluctance. Racial stereotypes were confronted and discussed in a productive way. At the end of the meetings, agreed written reports of the discussion were produced. Although the meetings have not been well attended (as if to underline the difficulty that exists in discussing issues that are denied or hard to confront), the council has found useful the information coming from them. They have also provided an excellent practical opportunity for trainees to develop their facilitation skills.

Who was involved?

- Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers (NRAs) deployed by the NRU.
- The GO for the North West.
- Burnley CVS.
- The Burnley Breaking Barriers project, a youth project run by the Youth and Community Service.
- Burnley Youth Theatre.
- Burnley Borough Council.
- Trainees from a variety of organisations.

	What did it achieve?
<p><i>Facilitation programme completed by 14 people. Built links with local agencies.</i></p>	<p>The planned mediation training programme did not take place due to insufficient demand.</p> <p>The facilitation programme was successfully completed by 14 people. The participants, of whom four were from the Asian communities, reported positively on the training they received. Two of them now attend the Community Safety Partnership meetings. One has dealt with a dispute in the Danehouse area, and has completed an exercise working with the community to identify and analyse the causes of the conflicts in the area – sometimes referred to as a conflict mapping exercise. SMILE participants have now undertaken some multi-party mediations. The Town Meetings project has been undertaken. The group of facilitators continues to work together, but a shortage of funds limits their potential.</p> <p>Training of local community facilitators enhances the community's conflict resolution capacity. Analysis from the overall evaluation of the CFP shows that conflict resolution and mediation skills are useful for many frontline health, community, education, faith and voluntary sector workers. These skills are used as part of their everyday work.</p> <p>Mixing outside intervention (in the form of NRAs, some of whom were involved in the work over an extended period of time) with local organisations proved to be a good working combination. Outsiders were able to bring a different perspective and some different skills into the area. They were able to be detached from the intense dynamics of local conflicts and were able to provide ideas, experience and skills from outside the area. These included conflict resolution skills, training in methods of conflict resolution and examples of practice from other areas. In an area of intense difference and polarisation, an outside perspective proved to be useful.</p> <p>The project was able to build links between many local organisations and statutory bodies. It created a space where the different organisations could focus on the conflict resolution agenda and devise common strategies for confronting the issues. The project negotiated with many local organisations in order to put on the training courses. It relied on such organisations for its administration. It was important to have local administration in place as such programmes are very time consuming to establish and run.</p> <p>It is too early to say what impact this project will have in the long run. However, it needs to be sustained, the training extended and the facilitators supported if the full impact is to be achieved.</p>
	Check list
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine outside expertise with local knowledge when designing courses. • With the right selection of participants, training courses can contribute directly to creating new networks. • Learning design needs to reflect the circumstances and motivations of the target learners. • Once trained, facilitators and mediators may need ongoing support and refresher courses. • Learning that is immediately put into practice is the most likely to endure.

Harehills-i Community Facilitation project: Leeds	
	Summary
	<p>Following the disturbances in northern cities in the summer of 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) established the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP) to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in all nine Government Offices (GOs) to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>This project in Leeds aimed to develop young peoples' mediation and democratic skills. The short term aim was to involve young people in a consultation exercise that would be presented to local decision-makers, and the longer-term aim was that this would lead to young people becoming more involved in local decision-making processes. Young people made a video that highlighted their concerns with community safety, particularly crime, drugs, tensions with the police, and the poor environment. They also made suggestions about developing education, employment, sports facilities and regeneration in the area. The participants displayed the ability to articulate concerns and engage in reasoned dialogue.</p>
	Aims/Objectives
<i>To develop young peoples' mediation and democratic skills.</i>	<p>The project was concerned with developing young peoples' mediation and democratic skills. The short term aim was to involve young people in a consultation exercise that would be presented to local decision-makers, and the longer-term aim was that this would lead to young people becoming more involved in local decision-making processes. Specifically, it was hoped that the young people would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet and work with people from different backgrounds; • learn how to identify their common problems and the issues involved; • learn how to get together and deal with their problems in a constructive way, with aims and objectives, and to take responsibility for the project; • learn how to resolve their conflicts, and move forward with them rather than to sit and do nothing; and • understand management committee processes, how the organisations that they may have contact with work, and how things are debated.

	Where
<p><i>Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber.</i></p>	<p>The Harehills-i project was set up in the Harehills area, within the recently re-named Gipton and Harehills ward in Leeds, in response to the disturbances that took place in the area of Harehills in the summer of 2001.</p> <p>The disturbances were not considered to be inter-ethnic conflicts, although they seem to have been sparked off by an incident involving a young Asian man being arrested by the police for not having his road tax. The tensions were identified as being centred on the dissatisfaction and frustration of young people with their area, that is, the lack of adequate services and the inequality between the area and others, which results in unequal life-chances.</p> <p>There was a gradual awareness by Resourcing the Community (RtC) through their community work that the tensions in the area were due to a lack of involvement of young people in democratic or decision-making processes, a lack of awareness by young people of the processes and skills needed to become involved in them, and their negative view of the processes involved.</p>
	How did it do it?
<p><i>The project provided mediation training for about 25 young people recruited by a Youth Facilitation Co-ordinator.</i></p>	<p>The Harehills-i project was one part of a broader youth facilitation project run by RtC. The other components were a mediation skills programme and a management committee training programme. RtC responded to the invitation to tender by the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) to run a youth facilitation programme in 2001, and was offered the Youth Facilitation programme in Leeds. RtC then recruited a Youth Facilitation Coordinator to oversee the three main components of its programme. For the Harehills-i component, RtC issued an invitation to tender and subcontracted a media organisation to provide the technical advice, equipment and to work with the young people.</p> <p>Pavilion, the media organisation chosen, were considered to have the most awareness and experience of working with young people, and of the issues involved with working with young people of different backgrounds. They showed a willingness to engage in reflective practice, both in regards to working with the group of young people and also with RtC. They were also willing to adopt a facilitative role with the young people, leaving the decisions and responsibility regarding the video, the processes and the equipment to the group. They were considered to be able to provide the best technical production skills, so that the video would be of the highest quality possible.</p> <p>The project was designed by RtC, who set the specifications for the Youth Facilitation Coordinator post and who commissioned the media arts organisation. Both were designed on their experience of working in the community and with community groups. The Youth Facilitation Coordinator had experience of the educational sector, working with voluntary groups in the area, and with young people.</p> <p>The Youth Facilitation Coordinator initiated the approach to participants. She approached existing youth groups in the area about the project in order to get the young people in these groups involved in the project. Her role was primarily to support the Pavilion workers and the young people involved.</p>

How did it do it? (cont.)

The project aimed to make a video about living in Harehills, gathering the views and opinions of young people aged 13–25 from various backgrounds through film and new media, with the video written, produced and edited by the young people themselves. Around 25 young people were involved in the core production team. A website was created early on during the project, where clips were made available and comments from participants and the wider community were posted. The completed video was presented by a number of the young people to councillors, community workers, MPs and participants' families and friends at an event in April 2003. It was also presented to the St James Partnership (the local Neighbourhood Renewal partnership). The audience included representatives from the GOYH, Leeds City Council, various other service providers and the Chief Superintendent of West Yorkshire Police. The video was also presented to Leeds Council's Neighbourhoods and Housing Scrutiny Board.

The project was linked closely to the management committee training and the Youth Facilitation/Mediation skills programme organised by the Youth Facilitation Coordinator. Some of the participants were involved in the management committee training. Both participants from the Harehills-i project, and youth workers from the participating youth groups, were involved with the facilitation/mediation skills programme.

Timescales

- Tender for Youth Facilitation programme.
- Youth Facilitation programme started – April 2002.
- Hiring of Youth Facilitation Coordinator – November 2002.
- Shortlisting for media organisation – November 2002.
- Start of the Harehills-i project – mid-January 2003.
- Management committee training (during the Harehills-i project).
- Launch of video – April 2003.
- End of the Harehills-i project – June 2003.
- Presentation by members of the Harehills-i project to St James Partnership Board – June 2003.
- Presentation to Leeds City Council's Neighbourhoods and Housing Scrutiny Panel.
- Youth Facilitation/Mediation/Conflict Resolution skills training.

Who was involved?

A voluntary organisation (RtC) working with Leeds City Council's Youth Service.

- RtC is a Leeds-wide voluntary organisation, formed in 1997, that acts as an umbrella group for other voluntary groups, and as a network and information conduit, as well as administering the allocation of funds (Objective 2, Community Chest), while also running its own projects. RtC's offices are in Harehills. The Community Facilitation programme in Leeds is split between RtC and Leeds City Council's Youth Service.
- Pavilion is a media organisation based in Leeds with a wide experience of working with young people.
- The St James Partnership is the local Neighbourhood Renewal partnership.
- Youth Facilitation Partnership (Youth Service, Education Leeds, RtC, Leeds Council Fund) – used as the steering group for the RtC's Youth Facilitation programme.
- Young people from ten different youth groups were involved.

What did it achieve?	
<p><i>Outreach to young people.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing support group.</i></p> <p><i>Video.</i></p> <p><i>Local interest and support.</i></p>	<p>Short term</p> <p>Young people became engaged with the project, learned technical skills, and also made contact with other young people from different backgrounds and developed their confidence and social skills.</p> <p>“Some have, through the project, developed increased confidence and self-esteem and have learned respect for other cultures.” (Coordinator)</p> <p>In July 2003, young people from the Harehills-i project and local residents took part in a community clean-up of Banstead Park, and were involved in inputting new amenities in a redevelopment of the park. Some of the young people involved have continued to meet on a weekly basis to discuss issues arising from the video and to plan activities to address them, and this is supported by RtC.</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>The young people’s representatives had made a number of presentations to local councillors and to the St James Partnership. However, a tangible response from local decision-makers is needed in order to maintain the enthusiasm to make further presentations.</p> <p>Service providers regarded the information gathered through the video and website as more than just anecdotal – it gave credence to what people were saying previously, and it also brought their issues and concerns to a wider audience, giving the area a positive profile.</p> <p>Although a number of service providers had used the video, and some ward members had taken forward some of the issues raised, there still appears to be some resistance by some service providers to talking directly to the young people.</p> <p>Learning outcomes</p> <p>The individuals involved have benefited from learning technical skills but, more importantly, they have developed an appreciation of the shared circumstances of young people across the area, developed a sense of self-efficacy and learnt people skills.</p>
Check list	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting young people requires activities that they are interested in, and encouragement for them to take control of these activities in a structured manner. • Ongoing support and learning needs to be responsive to young peoples’ needs. • Inviting people in democratic structures and consultation requires agencies and bodies to respond to their input to make it meaningful.

Resolving Differences: Leicester	
	Summary
	<p>Following disturbances in several northern towns in the summer of 2001, Leicester was chosen as one of five areas in the East Midlands to receive funding from the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP). The CFP was established to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in all nine Government Offices (GOs) for the regions to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>The CFP funding was for the 'recruitment, support and employment of a team of community facilitators', whose role was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish contact with disaffected young people and adult residents and other interested parties; • listen and record their views; • mediate between groups to resolve differences; and • develop a medium term strategy to prevent disorder and increase community cohesion and leadership. <p>The project was designed to address tensions and the specific difficulties that the new Somali community and the wider community in Leicester were experiencing. The project was implemented in part by the Education and Lifelong Learning Service of Leicester Council, and in part by the local office of a national organisation, the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI).</p>
	Aims/Objectives
<p><i>To consult the community, seek peace-building discussions, build a medium term strategy to prevent disorder.</i></p>	<p>The project was conceived as having three objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to consult the community, while listening to and recording views of grievance and possible solutions; • to seek solutions by bringing together groups from the community in peace-building discussions – these groups may be different cultural groups, different generations and/or service providers; and • to build a medium term strategy to prevent disorder by addressing the conditions that may generate it. <p>The concept of 'community facilitator' was new to community cohesion activities. The Resolving Differences project produced some clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities, and the specifications against which they would be recruited. Their roles would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make contact with young people at venues where they usually meet; • to encourage them to voice their concerns about likely causes of disorder; • to find appropriate ways of providing a 'voice for young people' by which they can be heard by policy makers and service providers; • to make young people more aware of racial and cultural diversity; • to start to build solutions to some of the conflicts and grievances identified; and • to demonstrate a process of listening and mediation appropriate to the neighbourhood. <p>Community facilitators would be recruited from a range of backgrounds. Some were youth workers or community volunteers, and others were professionals already working in the area.</p>

Where	
<p><i>Leicester, East Midlands.</i></p>	<p>Leicester City has the highest Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population in Britain, an estimated 33.7 per cent of the 279,923 population. Twenty-two per cent are Hindu, originally arriving in the 1970s from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania, and later from Gujarat and other parts of India. There is a significant Afro-Caribbean community (from Antigua, Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados) and a small African community from Ghana and Nigeria, who together make up 2.4 per cent of the population. Finally, the Muslim community in Leicester comes from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Gujarat. There are also more recent refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia. The most recent change has been the arrival of up to 10,000 Somali migrants from other EU countries, particularly the Netherlands. This case revolves around the newly arrived Somali community and their relations with the wider community.</p> <p>Although Leicester is seen as having developed resilient community relations, it has experienced violence that is widely seen as racial in origin. In 1979, there was violence over a National Front demonstration and, in 1981, there were three nights of rioting and looting. More recently, there has been violence associated with tensions around the newly arrived Somali community. In autumn 2001, this tension turned to violence between young Somali and young Afro-Caribbean people. This led to serious inter-community tension, with vigilante groups formed and hate mail widely circulated. This tension spilled over into a 'serious public disorder' at Leicester College in October 2001, involving 34 people. Reports of recurring disputes and fights were also frequent at Regents College, Babington Community College, Moat College and others providing for the new Somali population.</p> <p>Underlying these events are the more fundamental issues of inner-city and outer-estate deprivation, and unequal opportunities for different communities, perceived and actual racism and poor job prospects for many young people. As in many other cities, the BME communities are concentrated in seven city wards (each having over 50 per cent BME residents), with six wards having less than 5 per cent BME population. Also, 25.4 per cent of black households and 9.8 per cent of white households are classified as unsuitably housed by Leicester City Council, and 50 per cent of Leicester's population live in wards which are among the 10 per cent most deprived in the UK. These statistics give some example of the underlying causes of tension.</p>
How did it do it?	
<p><i>A number of colleges and youth associations worked together to reach and provide mediation for Somali young people.</i></p> <p><i>Activities and opportunities for discussion were provided.</i></p>	<p>The work with youth and educational establishments was coordinated by Leicester City Council's Education and Lifelong Learning service. A project steering group was established to coordinate the work and a project manager was appointed. The project involved work in Babington Community College, Moat Community College, Leicester College, Regent College, Leicester Asian Youth Association, Somali Voluntary Organisations Partnership, the Somali Education and Community Centre and St Mark's Youth Centre. So the aspirations were broad in scope but well focused on the issue of the relations between the new Somali community and the various host communities.</p> <p>The work of two of these institutions will illustrate the range of tasks undertaken within the programme. The first is St Mark's Youth Club, which employs two hourly-paid community facilitators for a few hours a week. One had previously worked as a detached youth worker. Building on relations established in the youth club, they engage with the local Somali young people and seek to resolve issues that arise. They needed to be able to work with the range of different communities, have experience of working with young people from disaffected communities, have mediation and conflict resolution skills, and be able to help communities find their own solutions to local problems and be willing to pass on their leadership skills and knowledge to existing or emerging community leaders. They needed to be trusted, experienced, able to work objectively and dispassionately, have leadership skills and be able to represent the views they heard.</p>

How did it do it? (cont.)

Some examples will illustrate the work that a community facilitator undertakes. A problem arose over access by Somali young people to a local youth facility. They felt that the reception staff were insensitive and inflexible. The relations between the facilities administration and the young people deteriorated and threats were made, cars daubed with paint and items were stolen. The community facilitator was able to speak to the centre manager and through him share the views of the young Somalis. Changes were made in staffing arrangements and the issue was resolved without further confrontation.

A second example involved a confrontation between police and a group of young Somalis. They felt that the police had been heavy-handed over an incident and had removed a sum of money (its ownership was in dispute). The community facilitator was able to help them to make a formal complaint, a path that they felt was being blocked to them. The result was satisfactory, the disputed money was returned and an additional benefit was that the police officer involved and the community facilitator established a positive working relationship for the future.

Other activities undertaken by community facilitators included running a Somali and Bangladeshi girls' group at the Medway Bangladeshi Centre and taking groups of young people to the School Inclusion Conference. Some also went to the Youth Commonwealth Conference where they had the opportunity to speak. They also provided sessions for mixed groups of young people to discuss issues of concern (for example, drugs), and they acted as friends and mentors to some young people who were at risk of exclusion from school.

In education establishments across the city, the programme provided:

- peer support groups for 'at risk' students;
- home work clubs that were sensitive to the language needs of the newly arrived Somalis;
- a range of sports coaching, events and tournaments (one of the football programmes attracted the involvement of an ex-Leicester City FC coach);
- activities and then a music technology course targeting students who had already been in trouble and who had received the support of peer mentors;
- parent meetings and home visits to listen to, inform, reassure and win the support of Somali parents;
- help for students to understand and work towards the validation of the qualifications obtained in other countries;
- a two college programme working with girls at risk of exclusion;
- supplementary classes for Somali students; and
- a welcome pack for new Somali students, using outside arts workers to help the new students express and present their own cultural heritage in words, pictures and drama, and putting Dutch on the college curriculum (as many of the new Somali students came from the Netherlands).

Facilitators played a role in developing many of these activities and in recruiting students to them. In other cases, the student support team in a college did the work. Although this may have been done as part of the usual student support work, "what was good about the **Resolving Differences** funds is that they gave us a chance to legitimately target pieces of work at the Somali students. This is not always possible with other funding sources," observed one senior student support manager.

How did it do it? (cont.)

The second strand of the Resolving Differences programme involved community facilitator training provided by the NCBI. Twenty-two trainees were recruited between the ages of 15 and 22, and they received training in the NCBI approach to prejudice reduction, which is based on ideas from re-evaluative co-counselling. It involves empowering trainees by supporting them in leading concrete, replicable prejudice reduction workshops in a variety of school and college settings. Trainees are encouraged to think of themselves as champions of diversity and as catalysts in effecting deeper institutional change. The development of peer leadership teams is seen as both an organisational strategy for confronting the issue of prejudice but also as an experiential teaching method for training school and college leaders.

Trainees came from three schools: Riverside, Rushey Mead and Sir Jonathan North, and from the Millennium Volunteers with whom the NCBI were already working. They came forward to join the programme as a result of their own experiences of bullying, racism or homophobia. They received a Foundation Workshop entitled Welcoming Diversity and Prejudice Reduction. This gave them the opportunity to think and learn about diversity, identities and stereotypes. It involved a 'talk out' session to allow them to speak of their own experiences and seek ways forward. Also, they learned ways to confront prejudice in line with Saul Alinsky's principle of everyone having potential for daily small wins. This workshop was followed by a three-day Trainer Training Workshop. They were introduced to the NCBI 'controversial issues process'. This workshop begins the process of preparing them to deliver the initial workshop in their own schools and colleges.

The facilitators worked at 'learning tables' at a range of festivals (Lesbian and Gay Pride, Asian Mela, the Caribbean Carnival and the Braunstone Carnival) to meet young people and to give them the chance to tell their stories of prejudice. Some also had the opportunity to attend the NCBI's UK Regional Retreats for further training. Finally, some facilitators got involved in the Friends Against Bullying (FAB) Clubs in various schools. During the Resolving Differences programme, NCBI staff went in to run these clubs. Now they depend on learning mentors and facilitators.

The NCBI believes that this process of training young people is an opportunity to get them involved as part of the solution to the problem of prejudice rather than them becoming part of the problem.

Who was involved?

- The Education and Lifelong Learning Service of Leicester Council.
- Youth clubs, schools and colleges from across the city.
- The NCBI.

	What did it achieve?
<p><i>Benefits for schools, colleges, youth clubs and community organisations.</i></p> <p><i>Benefits for individuals.</i></p>	<p>For relatively small sums of money, and an approach that targeted the specific issues faced by the recent Somali arrivals, services have been provided via schools, colleges, youth clubs and community organisations. These have been delivered in the main by building on existing service provision and by using existing providers. It is impossible to make any objective statements about the impact of these initiatives on the levels of tension and violence involving the Somali community. The social, economic and political system that gives rise to the tension and violence is complex, with hundreds of variables at play. The Resolving Differences input to this system was one among many in addition to the many other non-planned and macro inputs.</p> <p>Trainees on the NCBI programme gave positive evaluations to the training they had received. Many felt confident to use their training at a series of events, which provided a multiplier effect for the original training.</p> <p>However, it is difficult to ignore the positive feelings expressed by participants, implementers and other social activists at the innovative potential provided by this programme. The activities were extensive across the city, and they were targeted at the communities and educational establishments affected by the influx of new Somali residents. Some of the training inputs were innovative and the use of community facilitators has provided good learning for the future. In addition, the programme appears to have influenced other policy makers.</p>
	Check list
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training young people in schools and colleges needs to be done every year, as trainees move on as their studies take them to other establishments. • Facilitation skills are useful for youth workers (especially detached youth workers), for peer mediators and for other frontline people working with the community. • The long term sustainability of community mediators requires long term funding. At present this is difficult to find.

Good Relations: Oldham	
	Summary
	<p>Following the disturbances in Oldham in the summer of 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) established the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP). The CFP was established to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in all nine Government Offices (GOs) for the regions to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>In October 2002, the NRU asked Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) to start community conflict resolution work in Oldham, and following discussions with the Community Empowerment Network and Oldham's Community Cohesion Panel, MNI were invited to undertake an assessment of the situation in Oldham.</p> <p>The first phase consisted of four extended workshops for 40–45 leaders and opinion formers in Oldham. Each workshop dealt with issues arising from the assessment, and sought to deepen understanding and build trust. The workshops provided a safe, mediated space in which people could explore the issues that lay at the heart of the conflict in the town.</p> <p>The four workshops are now complete. A second phase is being funded by the Community Cohesion Partnership – a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The second phase seeks to explore strategies to confront the issues discussed in the first phase. The participants' response to the first phase has been positive.</p>
	Aims/Objectives
<p><i>The aim of the programme was to improve understanding about promoting community relations in Oldham and to inform the Community Cohesion Partnership.</i></p>	<p>The aim of the programme was to improve understanding about promoting community relations in Oldham and to inform the Community Cohesion Partnership – a sub-group of the LSP – regarding its contribution to community relations. In the field of community relations, the role of civic mediation is two-fold: to sustain peace by resolving disputes and managing conflict; and to build good relations by assisting reconciliation and promoting mutual respect.</p> <p>Through the use of mediation methods, MNI aimed to build relationships between the 40–45 members of a development group who would, in turn, bring their experience to bear upon their work in Oldham. At the same time they aimed to develop a consensus about the possible contribution that could be made by the Community Cohesion Partnership.</p> <p>The aim was to use mediation services as a way of providing an impartial 'outsider' in situations of conflict and in assisting people to resolve or manage differences in positive ways.</p>

Where	
<i>Oldham, northwest England.</i>	<p>The project took place in Oldham, scene of serious disturbances in the summer of 2001. In 1991, the Oldham population of 216,000 contained 8.7 per cent Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, mostly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. Of these, 85 per cent were concentrated in the Werneth, Coldhurst, St Mary's and Alexandra wards of the city. These wards have high levels of poor housing and unemployment, and a lack of economic opportunities. They are among the worst 1 per cent of deprived wards in England. Asian residents often suffered higher levels of deprivation than local white communities.</p> <p>In education, many schools are sharply divided along ethnic lines. Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils make up 80 per cent of the roll in 17 of the 100 primary schools in Oldham. In 67 schools, less than 5 per cent of the pupils are from BME communities. At secondary level, there is a similar concentration in some schools. One school has 98 per cent and another 77 per cent of BME pupils. In Oldham in 2000, 26 per cent of Pakistani and 25 per cent of Bangladeshi origin pupils obtained 5 GCSEs at C or above. This compares with 49 per cent of white pupils. Some parents, both white and BME, report having to move house to be able to send their children to culturally mixed schools.</p> <p>It is against this background of poverty and exclusion that the poor state of race relations, poor political leadership and unequal development opportunities sparked disorder. Although much had happened in the town since 2001 there remained a need to confront the 'hidden social and psychological barriers'. As one observer stated, "There is lots of talk, but the basic situation of parallel lives, lack of community interaction and poverty remain". Far right parties continue to have a political presence and many people fear that they will gain ground in the local elections. There is a legacy of anger at what some people see as the longer prison sentences given to Asian young people arrested after the disturbances compared with the sentences given to young white people. There is need for political leadership that 'can stand above the ethnic divides'. Some report that segregation had not been confronted and that racism remains endemic in the town.</p>
How did it do it?	
<p><i>The project established:</i></p> <p>a) <i>A Development Group of 40–45 people representing a wide cross-section of the community, supported by mediators.</i></p> <p>b) <i>A reference group of senior civic leaders.</i></p>	<p>The project confronted four issues that were identified during the scoping phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • segregation and integration; • policing; • social and economic issues; and • civic leadership. <p>The key mechanism was the Development Group. This was made up of 40 to 45 people, drawn from community, voluntary and faith organisations, from education and youth services, the police, civic leaders, local government and the business sector. The group contained a cross-section of the traditions, cultures, interests and diversities of the community. Within the Development Group, the intellectual and emotional encounters of the wider society would be recreated in a workshop. They could then be considered and explored in safety. A key element of this dynamic was the role of the mediator who had to create the safety, hold the impartiality and manage the process on behalf of the participants.</p> <p>Development Group meetings took place from 1pm to 9pm. They were held in a hotel, away from any normal work environment. Informal time together over meals was an important part of the dynamic.</p>

How did it do it? (cont.)

In the Development Group, the mediators employed a range of different processes. The basics were a clear framework for the day, and clear ground rules concerning confidentiality (the Chatham House rules of non-attribution). They undertook witnessing interviews, where members of the group tell their story in an interview with the mediator while the rest of the group observes. One interviewee reported how difficult and threatening such a personal interview might have been in the wrong environment. But in safety, they were able to give a sensitive account of life in Oldham. On another occasion the group was split into identity groups. Each group was then asked to reflect on the characteristics of their own identity and on the identity of other groups. This generated a discussion on stereotypes.

At another time, the group constructed a shared history of the town to understand together the factors that led to the present situation. All these were processes that enable participants to identify the key (often contentious) issues and to discuss them honestly, safely and constructively.

The process has been described as confronting the 'chemistry' of the situation rather than the 'physics'. Thus, rather than talking about structures, and organisations, this initiative looks at the actual interactions between people and creates a situation where different sorts of interactions can take place. In this way, trust is built and people have the opportunity to listen and to learn. Participants are encouraged to think 'in big boxes rather than in little boxes'. This involves seeing things in their context and from different points of view.

A Reference Group was established of senior civic leaders who had the opportunity to reflect on what was happening in the Development Group and to think through its implications. Also, a Liaison Group was established to provide the continuity between meetings of the Development Group. They would contact people between meetings, keep people informed, and get their reactions to the work in the Development Group and think through the dynamics of future Development Group meetings. The overall design, implementation and mediation were provided by MNI.

The project has just finished its stage one, which consisted of four workshops aimed at diagnosing and understanding the situation and creating relationships. Phase two will identify and explore options for the future to confront the issues identified in phase one.

Who was involved?

Bradford City Council Department of Community Development.

Local Strategic Partnership.

- Mediation Northern Ireland.
- Oldham Council.
- Voluntary Action Oldham, the Community Empowerment Team.
- Participants in the Development Group came from a wide range of statutory and community, faith and voluntary organisations.
- Community Cohesion Partnership, a sub-group of the LSP.
- Government Office North West as chair of the Reference Group.
- The NRU as project initiator and member of the Reference Group.

	What did it achieve?
<p><i>Demonstration of the value of exchange.</i></p> <p><i>The key role of mediators.</i></p> <p><i>Experience about who should be involved.</i></p>	<p>This intervention has been well received by most participants. Some are very positive (“I would give MNI a permanent base in Oldham”, “Brilliant, but not enough time”) and spoke warmly of the value of this type of safe dialogue space. There is very strong support for the professionalism and the relevant experience of the mediators, and this suggests that their skills are important aspects of the success of the project. “They did not come in as experts.” “They were people-centred and looked after participants.”</p> <p>The participants reported that the topics for each of the meetings had been well chosen. The consultation process to scope the topics for discussion was well received.</p> <p>Some participants have not attended or only attended irregularly. This disrupted the cohesion and continuity of the group. Some key figures from the LSP and other senior people have not attended. Some participants were reluctant to contribute in the group, and their confidence grew as the workshops progressed. However, it may be that not everyone felt safe in the group.</p> <p>There was discussion about who should have been invited to be members of the group. While it is clear that all communities should be involved, there is discussion about whether it is aimed at civic leaders and senior implementers or whether it should involve grass-roots voices, including young people as well. There is a risk both that the group may be no more than the ‘usual suspects’ or become a platform for unproductive polemic discussions. As one participant described it, the Development Group should be “a mixture of big people and little people”.</p> <p>There was an interesting issue of identity for some participants. Were they in the group as residents of Oldham (‘Oldhamers’) or as professionals involved in the development of Oldham? Some participants were clearly one or the other, and some participants were both.</p> <p>The dynamics of the group have encouraged some deep and significant interchanges to take place. There has been the safety to disagree and to discuss issues that normally are avoided. One participant said that the “meetings of the development group were not meetings. They provided space for passion and honesty”. Discussions on race and racism have also been significant.</p> <p>The use of outside speakers has been found to be useful if the speakers have experience that is helpful and can be adapted to the Oldham reality.</p> <p>There is debate about the range of views that are admitted into the group. The voice of the poor white residents of the town may have been under-represented. Some members said they would not attend if people from the British National Party were invited to attend. Others felt that their views should be represented so that they could be subject to the scrutiny of the group.</p>

What did it achieve? (cont.)	
	<p>It is too early to assess the impact of the project. The Community Cohesion Partnership (a sub-group of the LSP) has agreed to fund the next stage of the process, in which the group will look for joint strategies to confront the issues identified in the first stage. Some participants have reported that they now look at things differently (“I am less sceptical”, “I have changed”, “It is no good pretending everyone else is responsible except me”, “We have been given a great opportunity ... if it does not work it is our responsibility”). Others are still waiting to see if the work is significant. (“Lots of talking, some useful, some irrelevant”, “I am not sure how all the individual stories will add up to a final result”, “Nothing has changed yet”).</p> <p>This is a method of intervention which could be transferred to other contexts. It is likely to work best where there are issues of governance and where it is necessary to engage senior people from a number of organisations.</p>
Check list	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that the work is undertaken following consultation with all parties and that group membership covers all perspectives. • Creating and holding the space for dialogue requires skill and patience. • Consistent attendance and visible support from senior people in key organisations is needed.

RESOLVE: Tower Hamlets	
	Summary
	<p>Following disturbances in several northern towns in the summer of 2001, Tower Hamlets was chosen as one of a number of areas in London to receive funding from the Community Facilitation Programme (CFP). The CFP was established by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to reduce inter-ethnic community conflict in high-risk areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving intelligence gathering; • undertaking conflict resolution and prevention work where tensions were identified; • strengthening conflict resolution capacity; and • removing barriers to the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. <p>Regional Coordinators (RCs) were appointed in the nine Government Offices (GOs) for the regions to implement and oversee the CFP.</p> <p>RESOLVE was a project run jointly by Tower Hamlets Mediation Service (THMS) and the Rapid Response Team (RRT) of the Tower Hamlets Youth Support Service. The aim was to recruit and train local young people in mediation and facilitation, with a view to becoming Youth Advocates within the youth service. The plan was that they would reach out to other young people, especially the harder-to-reach, through an 'on-street' presence and by themselves being role models.</p> <p>The main achievements were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrating the ability to attract young people; • benefits for the individual participants in acquiring skills and experience; • reaching young people on the streets in selected areas; and • raising awareness of the issues for young people.
	Aims/Objectives
<i>To train young people to provide facilitation and mediation in their communities.</i>	The aim was to train young people in mediation and facilitation so that they could become Youth Advocates. The idea was that they would reach out to other young people and become role models. There would be benefits for the individual participants in developing skills, and benefits from developing better understanding and awareness of community relations among young people in the neighbourhoods involved in the project.
	Where
<i>London Borough of Tower Hamlets</i>	<p>The project was based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This is a multi-cultural area with long standing issues of inter-ethnic conflict within and between Asian and white communities. However, it is an area that has also seen many initiatives and developments, and there is a general level of recognition that there are deep-seated racial and cultural issues and long-standing social problems.</p> <p>A big issue is that many young people have an 'on-street' culture based on 'gangs' – especially those aged 16 plus. The reasons for this include crowded housing and a lack of youth clubs. Unemployment is high, while employability is low. Different ethnic groups live on, and keep to, particular estates or neighbourhoods. There is strong mistrust of people and facilities in 'other' areas and so there are significant tensions between different areas, for example Poplar and Bethnal Green. People, including young people, feel unsafe in or crossing through neighbourhoods that they do not know.</p>

How did it do it?	
<i>Training and practical experience to become peer advocates.</i>	<p>The basic model was to create a 'snowball' – to recruit local young people into training who would then reach out to young people on the streets, engage their interest, and help them to see that there might be alternatives to their lifestyle and current view of their areas and culture. By providing training and supported practical experience, the project also sought to provide a route into employment and to establish some role models.</p> <p>The method was to provide a group of young people with information and training in facilitation, awareness and more general social skills, and then to employ these people to help reach 'harder-to-reach' young people.</p> <p>The design could be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public meeting was organised to provide information about the project, to explain the possibilities and the basic 'offer'. The turnout of 180 people was far higher than expected. • People were invited to apply to join up. • Group interviews were conducted in order to select a group of 20 people. • This group followed a six-day basic training course which covered conflict management and mediation skills, involved detailed discussions and role play, and included more direct input on quite specific topics, such as child abuse and family difficulties. It is important to note that participants were paid to attend the training course. A number of the participants would not have been able to get involved on a voluntary basis. • This was followed by a second round of selection of 12 people, from the original 20, to continue training as youth advocates. • They followed an intensive package over six months, involving three evenings a week. This involved working on the street, in teams, and with a youth worker. This was supported by ongoing training and debriefing sessions. Again, the young people were paid. • This led to the possibility of being employed as youth advocates and a number of young men were successful in this. • The project ran an end of programme conference, designed and run by the young people, which attracted wide participation, debating 'Gang conflict – what's it worth?'
Who was involved?	
<i>Tower Hamlets Mediation Service, Rapid Response Team, Tower Hamlets Youth Support Service.</i>	<p>RESOLVE was a project run jointly by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THMS, which provided experience and expertise in a) designing and b) running training courses in mediation and facilitation and other skills – THMS also had local knowledge and networks; • the Rapid Response Team of the Tower Hamlets Youth Support Service, which provided youth workers, local knowledge and networks, contributed to the training and running of the 'on-street' programme, and provided some employment and ongoing support; and • there was also input from Connexions and support from youth workers and clubs.

	What did it achieve?
<p><i>Benefits for project participants and for young people in the communities.</i></p> <p><i>A demonstration of using peer advocates.</i></p>	<p>For individual participants Those who were accepted onto the project gained a great deal individually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the ground experience; • good training and support; • new skills; and • possible pathways into youth work. <p>Five of the participants were later employed by the Rapid Response Team as Youth Advocates. What was less clear is what happened as a result of the raised expectations of those who showed an interest but were not taken onto the project.</p> <p>For young people in the communities This was less easy to assess. Indications from discussions were that the project participants were able to engage with their peers hanging out on the streets and were able to encourage some of them into more organised youth activities in various clubs. The main attractions seem to have been the activities provided by youth clubs and getting out of the area for an excursion.</p> <p>Young people on the project felt safer – for example, crossing neighbourhoods that they did not know and had had fears about because “now they could say – this is where X lives – I might give him a call”, or “it’s OK for him so it’s probably OK”.</p> <p>The project widened understanding, for example; of public agencies and the police. As part of the training the participants met/interviewed police officers, went into schools, and asked about problems.</p> <p>One Youth Advocate thought he was a role model for others on this estate – showing that you can get a job and be respected, but he noted that there is caution and mistrust and he was uncertain how the work they had started could be sustained. The Youth Advocates were valued by the service and the RESOLVE project showed that there was potential in the idea of peer advocates.</p> <p>For the neighbourhoods and communities The project had some impact in raising awareness of the work and issues for young people generally. In terms of racial tensions and facilitation – apart from the individual young people involved as Youth Advocates and as recruits from the street, and to some extent their families – there were no real indications that this had had an impact on relationships more widely, as yet.</p> <p>However it seems that the project was a clear demonstration that there is an ‘appetite’ among young people to do something positive, gain experience and make progress. Not all were motivated to join the project from a sense of community service – it was probably more self-interested than that – but equally they seem to have responded positively to the training in mediation, and reacted responsibly in facing tense and potentially violent situations.</p>

What did it achieve? (cont.)	
	<p>Impacts and 'spin offs'</p> <p>The model of peer recruitment also seems to have worked well – young people were attracted off the streets and into more organised activities – even if these were not focused on issues of conflict reduction <i>per se</i>.</p> <p>The RESOLVE project has become well known in the borough and people are proud of it. For example, the project has been featured on TV as best practice, and has been profiled on the Pathfinders' video. The ideas are being taken up by the Ideas Store (the library) through its initiative of setting up Ideas Champions who seek to engage more young people.</p>
Check list	
	<p>The key lessons are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of young people – element of self-selection. • Payment of participants. • Peer advocate approach. • Valuing their knowledge, experience and commitment. • Training that is carefully designed for the purpose. • On-street experience as part of the training. • Good and ongoing supports for the young people.

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Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
Printed in the UK, October 2004 on paper comprising
75% post consumer waste 25% ECF pulp.

November 2004

Product code: 04NRU2620