



# women & peace-building: identifying the research gaps

Report  
of a  
roundtable  
discussion

Belfast  
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# women & peace-building: identifying the research gaps

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## introduction

Area Development Management/Combat Poverty Agency (ADM/CPA), hosted a seminar in Belfast on 9 June 2003: *Women & Peace-Building in Ireland: identifying the research gaps*. The seminar brought together key representatives of the women's sector, public authorities and academics from Ireland north and south,

- to share information about existing research and research in progress related to women and peace-building in Ireland;
- to identify significant and strategic gaps in this research and how these can be effectively addressed; and
- to consider and make recommendations about how research on women and peace-building can be used most effectively to promote equality of women in peace-building, conflict resolution processes and shape the development of more egalitarian institutions of governance in the island of Ireland.

The keynote speeches and the discussions that followed were taped and transcribed. This is a report of the day's proceedings. The *Women and Peacebuilding* seminar grew out of previous work done under the auspices of ADM/CPA's *Strategic Gender Initiative* as an implementing body for the European Union's (EU) Peace I and Peace II Programmes.

# introduction

## ADM/CPA *Strategic Gender Initiative*

The Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace I) was set up by the European Commission to foster peace, promote reconciliation and encourage positive growth in those communities most affected by the conflict. Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM) and the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) had joint responsibility for delivering fourteen measures of the Peace I Programme (1995 to 1999), with one particular measure largely allocated to the promotion of women's development and one cross-border measure. Under the new Peace II Programme (2000-2004), ADM/CPA has been named as an Intermediary Funding Body in the Operational Programme and has responsibility for implementing the economic renewal and the social integration and reconciliation priorities. ADM/CPA is also involved in a cross border consortium which has responsibility for the delivery of part of the cross-border priority. One measure under the Economic Renewal priority within Peace II is specifically designed to promote positive action for women. As was the case in the Peace I programme, women are specifically named as a 'target group' for the Peace II Programme.

Under the Peace I Programme, a total of 140 projects funded by ADM/CPA targeted women, accounting for 10.4% (IR£5.2m) of total financial commitment and 9.7% of all approved projects. Funding from Peace I supported the employment of 24 full-time and four part-time women's workers and project leaders by women's organisations and development agencies. In addition, a number of administrative and childcare positions were also supported in the sector.

*The Women's Sector Strategic Initiative evolved as a result of the recognition by ADM/CPA of the structural nature of gender inequality, the lack of support structures for women's work and the need for specific actions to address these inequalities.*

Initially projects were funded on an individual project basis. As the Programme progressed, however, it was clear that a more strategic approach was required to proactively target and support the development of the sector in the region.

The purpose of ADM/CPA's *Women's Sector Strategic Initiative* was to support and facilitate the long-term development and sustainability of the sector in the southern border counties and on a cross-border basis, and to ensure that measures to combat gender inequality were promoted and profiled within the Peace Programme.

The *Women's Sector Strategic Initiative* evolved as a result of the recognition by ADM/CPA of the structural nature of gender inequality, the lack of support structures for women's work and the need for specific actions to address these inequalities. Under *Women's Sector Strategic Initiative*, the following actions were supported by ADM/CPA:

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- The organisation of a seminar in March 1998, which targeted agencies, groups and government departments involved in providing, supporting and funding women's education in the six southern border counties. This seminar formed the basis for future strategic developments supported by ADM/CPA;
- The provision of training and mentor support to 12 women's development workers in the southern border region;
- The provision of training and support to nine voluntary management committees of women's projects employing women's workers;
- Workshops for 50 women involved in women's projects;
- The OWL (Opportunities for Women Learning) Programme implemented by the Workers' Educational Association involved the delivery of 148 classes from September 1997 to April 2001 to women in the southern border region.

ADM/CPA has received applications from women's projects under several measures of the Peace II programme. Some of these have already been approved and others are currently being considered.

A key strategic action funded under ADM/CPA's *Women's Sector Strategic Initiative* was a research project carried out by Women Educating for Transformation. This resulted in the publication of a report, *Research into the Sustainability of Community Women's Groups in the Six Southern Border Counties*<sup>1</sup>. In addition, of 339 feasibility/research projects funded under Peace I, 27 or 8% of project promoters were women's groups or projects with a specific gender equality focus.

## The Structural Funds context

*The EU Structural Funds (of which the Peace Programmes I and II are part) have been an important catalyst for EU and national policies on gender equality.*

Since the inception of the first EU Peace Programme in 1994, there have been a number of developments at EU and national level which have provided a framework and a context within which to progress gender equality and to promote the process of gender mainstreaming. The EU Structural Funds (of which the Peace Programmes I and II are part) have been an important catalyst for EU and national policies on gender equality. Gender equality is a key EU objective and the gender equality dimension must be incorporated into operations co-financed by the Funds. Until now, the Funds have mainly supported specific measures for women or pilot projects. While important, it is however recognized that these cannot remedy structural inequalities. Furthermore gender equality has been addressed primarily through the European Social Fund (ESF), although the ESF final evaluations 1994-

1999 suggest that the measures, as well as jobs obtained after the measures, tend to reflect occupational segregation and gender stereotypes<sup>2</sup>. While gender equality is more effectively dealt with in the current programmes of the Structural Funds than in the previous programming period, it is recognized that,

*Gender equality is concentrated in the field of employment and human resources development and to a large extent funded by the ESF, but neglected in other areas, such as environment, transport, rural development, research and development, etc. Connections between gender*

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*equality and other horizontal themes such as sustainable development or supporting the knowledge society are missing in the majority of the programme<sup>3</sup>.*

Furthermore, the Commission acknowledges that many measures continue to reinforce existing gender patterns and segregation and that measures to promote women in the traditional service sector are more often found than, for example, measures to promote women in decision-making positions. In most of the programmes,

*There is a significant gap between analysis and programming strategy. An analysis of differences in the socio-economic circumstances of men and women in order to define the obstacles to be overcome is evident in only a few plans and programmes. However, even where the analysis clearly points to certain gender gaps, the strategy for reducing these gaps and achieving gender equality does not always match the analysis<sup>4</sup>.*

The Commission has recommended that,

*Managing authorities, Monitoring Committees, local programme managers and project promoters are requested to elaborate and maintain partnership with gender equality experts at all levels and stages during the implementation process, e.g. by regular meetings or consultations, ad-hoc meetings on specific issues, working groups, etc<sup>5</sup>.*

The EU Structural Funds, however, are designed primarily to address infrastructural and economic imbalances. The aim of the ESF is to “achieve a high level of employment, equality between men and women, sustainable development and economic and social cohesion.” The ESF is “the financial means to translate into concrete measures the European Employment Strategy, the process for co-ordinating the employment policies of EU Governments<sup>6</sup>.”

## The Peace Programmes

*Because the Peace programmes have been located within the Structural Funds, there has been a pressure to work in the labour market field, which many groups feel to be in conflict with the essence of peace-building work.*

The aim of Peace II is to address the legacy of violence, take advantage of opportunities arising from the peace process and carry forward the distinctive aspects of Peace I with a new economic focus. According to the Operational Programme, Peace II will build on the radical and innovative approaches of Peace I and be a distinctive application of the structural funds through specific and additional objectives and criteria for peace and reconciliation. Its strategic objective is to “reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.”<sup>7</sup> Because the Peace programmes have been located within the Structural Funds, however, there has been a pressure to work in the labour market field, which many groups feel to be in conflict with the essence of peace-building work<sup>8</sup>.

The Peace Programmes have both explicitly linked the promotion of social inclusion with peace-building, reflecting the fact that much public policy in Ireland is premised on a presumption of a causal relationship between poverty and social exclusion and political and civil conflict. There has,

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however, been an ongoing — and growing — discussion among policy and decision-makers and within the wider civil society about the limitations of an economically-driven approach to peace-building and reconciliation<sup>9</sup>. Compared to the Peace programmes in Ireland, the rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes run by the European Union elsewhere have had a much stronger emphasis on civil society, social inclusion, democratization and support for the capacity of the NGO sector<sup>10</sup>.

Women's organizations, in common with the wider community and voluntary sector have had many difficulties in meeting the criteria for Peace II. They have had to develop projects which both address the 'distinctiveness' requirements, i.e. the specific peace and reconciliation objectives of the programmes and meet other criteria of the Structural Funds. Women's groups in Northern Ireland also in some cases experienced problems because they were 'women only' projects, even though women are a named 'target group' of the programme and positive action for women is an explicit EU policy<sup>11</sup>.

## The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) accepts the obligation to mainstream equal opportunities within all programmes and provides for a number of specific actions designed to ensure that men and women share the benefits of the Plan equally. Within the NDP framework, there are a number of policies and strategies of particular relevance. In particular, one of the key principles of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy is the reduction of inequalities, and in particular addressing the gender dimensions of poverty.

## The Beijing Platform for Action

The 4th United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, set out a broad agenda across twelve Critical Areas of Concern, which are:

1. the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;
2. inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training;
3. inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services;
4. violence against women;
5. the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation;
6. inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources;
7. inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels;
8. insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;
9. lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women;
10. stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media;
11. gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and the safeguarding of the environment;
12. persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.



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Since June 2000, governments, including Ireland and the UK, have been committed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the development of National Action Plans. The Irish Government made its report to the UN in September 2002<sup>11</sup>.

### The Belfast Agreement

The Belfast Agreement of 1998, recognized the right of women to full and equal political participation and committed Government to the promotion of “social inclusion, including in particular community development and the advancement of women in public life”<sup>13</sup>.

The Belfast Agreement and the Programme for Government for Northern Ireland set out a ‘Vision Statement’ of a peaceful, cohesive, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the “achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all”, based on “partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands.”<sup>14</sup>

With the devolution of powers under the Agreement, responsibility for most equality matters was devolved to the NI Assembly, and centralized under the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister. The role of the OFM/DFM Gender Policy Unit is to promote gender equality throughout the work of the (currently suspended) NI Executive. Its remit covers women and men, people of differing sexual orientation, people with and without dependants and people of differing marital status. A primary function of the Unit is to develop policy and strategy for the promotion of gender equality across all NI Departments. The Unit is currently preparing drafting a Gender Strategy for Northern Ireland.

### Women and Peace-building in Ireland

**It was within this wide-ranging policy and legislative context that the participants came together to review existing research on women and peace-building can be used most effectively to promote equality of women in peace-building, conflict resolution processes and shape the development of more egalitarian institutions of governance in the island of Ireland.**



## summary

### *Women & Peace-Building in Ireland: identifying the research gaps*

Area Development Management/Combat Poverty Agency (ADM/CPA), hosted a seminar in Belfast on 9 June 2003: *Women & Peace-Building in Ireland: identifying the research gaps*. The seminar brought together key representatives of the women's sector, public authorities and academics from Ireland north and south. This is a report of the day's proceedings. The *Women and Peace-building* seminar grew out of previous work done as ADM/CPA's *Strategic Gender Initiative* as an implementing body for the European Union's (EU) Peace I and Peace II Programmes. Each of the two keynote speeches, by Joanna McMinn and Margaret Ward, were followed by discussion. These two discussions have been summarized together, because similar issues and themes ran throughout both sessions.

### *Women & Conflict - Women & Peace-building*

**Joanna McMinn**

*Director, National Women's Council of Ireland*

Joanna McMinn referred to the dominant 'Community Relations' discourse on women and peace-building, the feminist discourse and the interaction between the two. She reminded participants that it is important to remember that there is disagreement about what 'women and peace-building' means.

There is a need for clarity of language and definitions and it is important to keep in mind the wider context of unequal power relations. Often in the past, discussion of the wider context has been avoided in attempts to find 'common ground'; but this has created tensions and some women have been silenced because their perspectives did not fit easily within the dominant discourse. Others felt unable to take a stand on issues because they were afraid that by doing so their organization could be threatened, particularly by loss of funding.

We need to explore our differing relationships to power, to the state and to the institutions within which we work and to find supportive frameworks for that task.

The Equality Framework, developed by the Equality Studies Centre at UCD is a useful way of being specific about what we want to achieve in terms of real change for women. This framework defines four 'spheres' of equality: affective, social-cultural, economic and political.

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In relation to the gender specific impacts of the conflict on women, it is important to listen to women's stories and learn lessons from their experiences. While it is important to acknowledge the magnitude of what women have done, it is necessary to be critical of the cliché that 'women hold communities together'. 'Silence' is the most significant barrier to the involvement of women in peace-building. The idea that women had been useful in 'holding communities together' during the period of conflict, but that women's organisations were no longer needed, has to be challenged.

Women and women's organizations have a distinct contribution to make to peace-building, the transformation of civil society and the development of social capital. Despite the evident need for recognition and resourcing to make this possible; there is currently a rolling back of support to the community sector and an undermining of the equality legislation. There is a need to bring to the centre the voices of people who feel marginalised and have been silenced in order to address the specific needs and interests of women arising from the conflict.

### *Women and Peace-building: identifying the research gaps*

**Margaret Ward**

*Deputy Director, Democratic Dialogue*

**Peace-building cannot achieve its objective if it doesn't recognise and include women as full and equal partners with men. We need a gendered analysis of peace-building that addresses the nature of power relations between men and women.**

There is a need to create an enabling environment for peace-building; the creation of an independent civil society that can enhance citizenship, ensure access to political institutions and guarantee public involvement in shaping of government policy.

There are enormous issues about the sustainability of projects when Peace funding ends. The women's sector must be resourced to engage in the development and critique of public policy.

The issue of gender equality ought to be integrated into both project and programme level evaluations. One of the over-arching themes for the evaluation of the Peace programme should be "the extent to which peace-building and reconstruction has addressed socially entrenched gender-based discrimination."

An audit of the gender practices of organisations such as the Parades Commission and research on the inclusion of women in conflict-resolution initiatives at interfaces would make a big contribution to the process of peace-building.

UN Resolution 1325 could be used as a benchmark by which to measure the peace process in Ireland.

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Not only should reconstruction efforts target women and their needs, but the underlying norms which discriminate against women should be addressed and women's rights need to be incorporated in new policies and institutions. There is a need for more research to address underlying gender issues in government and economic reconstruction.

There is international research about the need for a peace strategy that involves a change in patterns of masculinity, making them more open to negotiation, co-operation and equality. Men's identities may emerge more damaged from conflict and unless alternative positive masculinities are developed then the reassertion of traditional gender norms and roles is inevitable. There is a need to examine the link between private violence and the public violence of armed conflict.

Security sector reform usually operates from a gender-neutral stance, which means that in a post-conflict context, women's security and human rights are not part of the security sector agenda, even though in a post-conflict situation there is greater gender-based insecurity, of which increased rape and domestic violence are manifestations. We need evidence-based research on these issues.

More research is needed on institutions and the obstacles that prevent equal participation. There is a need to change the focus from questioning how women need to change to: "what changes are needed in the practice of institutions and political parties?"

Other suggestions for research put forward by Margaret included:

- Identifying the structures and mechanisms needed to encourage and enhance women's participation in post-conflict societies;
- Documenting the norms and institutional practices that militate against women;
- Looking at strategies for women to have an effective economic role in society;
- Exploring how women can be involved in decision making at governmental level and influence policy;
- Gendering the debate on the Bill of Rights, and examining the potential of other human rights instruments;
- Determining lessons from country-based reconstruction experiences, concerning the emphasis given to the rights of women as a group.

We need to sustain the gains that have been made by women in Peace I and Peace II and work to ensure women are included in all areas of peace-building and decision-making. It is necessary to go beyond simply mainstreaming existing services provided by the women's sector.

There is a need for a paradigm shift in male society which will not be achieved until there is a coherent programme that considers the gendered nature of decision-making and challenges the masculine ethos of our society. Research that emphasizes our international obligations to include gender in conflict resolution offers an opportunity to begin that process.

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### Discussion

A research programme funded from the Structural Funds underspend should be pursued. This research programme would address the ‘silenced issues’ and be about new expressions of civil society, including institution building and representative bodies.

There is a need for a focus on women and how the concepts of ‘gender equality’ and ‘mainstreaming’ had actually made the experience of women *less* visible. An important example is in relation to the impact of long-term imprisonment. There has been very little discussion about the impact of imprisonment on the female partners of male prisoners or the specific experience of women ex-prisoners. Projects focusing specifically on women and their experiences are needed to ensure that women’s stories were heard and their needs identified.

‘Gender mainstreaming’ could be defined as: “some women being hauled in to some kinds of co-opted spaces where we can’t speak our minds anymore.”

It was time to put women back on the agenda. At the same time, it was important to be interrogating how the mainstreaming process was being used. Who is gaining and what is being lost? Who is, or isn’t, getting access?

Another view was that the concept of mainstreaming could be used to put gender at the heart of policy-making and could be used in a positive way to benefit women.

A concern was raised that it may be difficult to get funding for women-focused projects. The pressures of the funding environment have affected the positions taken by women’s organizations. Some women had been excluded by other women. Hostility to their politics or the fear that their

inclusion would lead to funding problems resulted in their exclusion. There has been “no room for the standpoint of women who don’t fit the broad feminist or community relations agendas”.

Women need to “claim the space” to have this debate; perhaps it is only now, looking back, that it is possible to have some of these discussions. There is a need to “claim space” for women *as women* and to reclaim space for discussion that has been “constricted” by the community relations agenda.

The mechanism of mainstreaming should be used to create and *maintain* spaces which could be used politically and strategically to express anger and target it at the systems “that are producing the kinds of situations that we’re trying to question.”

“Inarticulate voices” — in particular working class and dissident Protestant voices — need to be heard. While one person argued for an effective, representative voice for women, another person rejected the demand that women should speak with a single voice.

Several participants made reference to the Northern Ireland government’s consultative document, *A Shared Future*. Different opinions were expressed about the value of engaging in the official consultation process. One woman expressed concern that the equality agenda was being “rolled back to the community relations agenda”. The debate about community relations — narrowly and broadly defined — is a gender issue. Another talked about the separation of the discourses on sectarianism and equality and human rights and how this shaped the research agendas of bodies such as the Equality Commission.

The ‘Section 75’ process, although “messy and confusing” had the potential for effecting real change, if it worked. Another person said that the

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‘Section 75’ process is a possible way to change the culture of institutions. Section 75 had the potential to make change, but the institutions did not want the process to work. Those who put forward the argument that women were “only one of the nine grounds” needed to be reminded that women were in each of the other categories: race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and politics. To coin David Trimble’s phrase, women are ‘the greater number of people’ in Northern Ireland; while recognizing inequalities, it was important that women reclaimed their agency.

It is “too easy” to say that women’s experiences during the war were different. It was important that there be an acknowledgement of how some women’s actions had affected others. There is a need for deconstruction before we can be constructive. There is a need to have a shared understanding of the past and to bring a gendered perspective to bear on that discussion.

Individual women within the community sector had been personally disadvantaged as a result of the positions they took during the conflict. Women now working in the sector could find themselves unemployed as the sector is cut back, or under increasing pressure to deliver a particular agenda in order to keep their jobs or their organisation’s funding. There was some discussion also, about the lack of support for women who had managed to reach positions of (limited) power and influence and the sometimes unfair expectations or demands that were placed on these women.

A distinction was made between evaluation and appraisal of the work of women’s organizations and a research agenda. Some of the research that is needed may not easily attract public funding. It was important to identify what needs to be done and not start from the standpoint of what will be funded by governments.

Domestic violence was identified as a specific issue on which there is a need for research. Since 1998 the number of cases of domestic violence has doubled. Research in Cavan/Monaghan found that 100% of women waited until they were injured before they reported domestic violence to the police. This reluctance to involve the Gardai is linked to the Conflict and the Border.

One priority should be revising approaches within conflict resolution efforts to challenge sectarian intimidation. The blockade of Holy Cross School had major implications for mothers and children’s rights, yet the lack of consensus among women’s and community organisations prevented collective action. Research about women’s role in peace-building which addressed the issues raised by the Holy Cross situation is needed.

There is a need to interrogate the way in which the women’s sector had been consolidated by Peace I money, under certain terms and certain exclusions.

There is a need for critical analysis which connects poverty and domestic violence and feminism to the realities of the State in which we live.

Better use should be made of what research is done. There is often a lack of follow up action; before research was undertaken, there should be a plan for how it would be used. Another participant argued in favour of research which was not always policy-related. There was a need for research which was reflective, examining for example, the kinds of democratic structures that we want and need. Policy oriented and theoretical research must inform each other.

It is important that women attempt to ensure a gender perspective is brought to bear in the debate about the new EU constitution.



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There is a need for micro-information about women's lives. More participatory research projects involving women who do not have access to public platforms, and addressing the needs of groups of women in different states of inequality must take place. Women have multiple, intersecting identities – if we are to influence decision-making, we need to be inclusive of women from different racial and religious backgrounds, and women with disabilities, among others.

Women are also involved in public life in many ways, often working in the background. It is important that we find ways to support women working on public bodies.

There is a need for comparative and collaborative research placing the situation in Ireland in an EU and global context.

There needs to be a critical examination of the discourses of feminism and peace-building. There is a lack of research on processes and practices within institutions, political parties, governments and civil society. It is important to build on what research has been done and to put these into more of a North/South context.

There should be more research which focuses on the particular experience of women in the Border region and the impact of the Border on women's lives.

The impact of the conflict — in all its forms — must be the focus of the future research agenda. These impacts are continuing.

A conference should be organized. Some suggestions about the shape of this conference were:

- A conference over three days, well resourced;
- UN Resolution 1325 as framework for the conference;
- Focus on development of critical research and analysis agenda to inform future activity;
- The conference should address the silences about the Conflict, and the differences that have been avoided in the past;
- The conference should include international experience and perspectives; including women who have come to Ireland as immigrants and refugees, particularly those coming from conflict situations;
- The conference should be representative of women from different backgrounds and perspectives throughout the island;
- The conference should be used to develop collaborative and comparative research linking what is happening North and South;
- The conference should be framed in the context of Ireland's presidency of the EU in the first half of 2004.

# welcome

## Ruth Taillon

*Research Co-ordinator, ADM/CPA*

For myself and my colleague, Pauline Perry, I would like to welcome everyone on behalf of Area Development Management/Combat Poverty Agency (ADM/CPA). This workshop is part of ADM/CPA's *Strategic Gender Initiative*. Under the Peace I programme we funded a number of community-based projects which focused particularly on women, and from those projects, some lessons were learned<sup>15</sup>. Peace II criteria have changed somewhat and when we looked at what we were funding under Peace II, it was disappointing to discover that compared to Peace I, there were less women's projects being supported. We were also concerned, when we were looking at our own and other organisations' research agendas, that there did still seem to be some gaps.

We thought it was important to bring together some people with a particular interest in the issues of women and conflict and women and peace-building, to identify where the gaps in knowledge were. We think that it is important to put women back on the agenda, particularly in the context of the discussions about what happens after the Structural Funds and the debate around mainstreaming of Peace II projects.

Most of the measures — at least those in the Border Counties — are oversubscribed and soon to be closed. So we're not coming here as a funder with any promises. We're not saying, "tell us what needs to be funded and we'll fund it". We *are*, however, trying to use some of the space we have in terms of the discussions that are now going on, to put women back into the picture. It's important to make the specific needs of women clear and show women's specific contribution to this society in transition and — hopefully — a society emerging from conflict.





# women & conflict -

## women & peace-building

**Joanna McMinn**

*Director, National Women's Council of Ireland*

It is both reassuring and scary to be talking with one's peers and mentors around this issue, given our experiences. I'd like to start by saying something about the National Women's Council. We have introduced a strategic plan for the organisation that has an equality framework that moves beyond an equal opportunities agenda to a more radical equality agenda, posited in an all-Ireland context. The organisation has at different times been involved in cross-border actions, and currently we are involved in the Power Programme<sup>16</sup>, which is a North/South political education programme for women. If I'm honest, however, I would have to say that, on an everyday basis, there is a silence within my organisation, and others that I am in contact with, around the Conflict in the North. I notice that when I have referred to the north, it causes a measure of discomfort.

Ruth asked me to address some questions:

- How has the experience of women in Ireland been shaped by the Conflict? What are the gender-specific impacts or legacy of the Conflict on women?
- What are the specific interests/needs of women arising from the Conflict? How are these being addressed?
- What distinct contribution do women and women's organizations have to make to peace building, the transformation of civil society and the development of social capital required for this process?
- What are the barriers to women's involvement in peace-building?



*Phyllis McKenna interview sa visitor to Expac office.*

*Expac provides a range of services for political ex-prisoners and their families in the Monaghan area.*

*Photo courtesy EPIC.*

## Women and Peace-Building discourse and the Feminist discourse

In preparing for this seminar discussion, I consulted with several people here and said, "how am I going to answer these questions?" because I found it quite difficult to give a clear answer to them. So I'm just going to talk a little about what came out of my conversations with other people and address these questions in a broad way. The conversations I had were about the different discourses on women and peace-building and what that means. Of these, the women and peace-building discourse fronted by the Community Relations Council (CRC)<sup>17</sup>, could be described as the dominant discourse. There's also a feminist discourse on unequal power relations and the wider context. There has been quite a bit of interaction between these two discourses, but they have very different goals, one to maintain and the other to challenge, the status quo. I think it is important to name these two, because we need to bear in mind when we're talking about this issue that there is disagreement about what women and peace-building means.

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## women & peace-building

I think it is important to acknowledge in this discussion that women are not above conflict. They haven't been above the armed conflict and they're not above conflict within the women's movement generally, or within local groups. Also, women can police each other in different ways, for example making it unpopular or unacceptable to articulate divergent points of view.

We need clarity about the language we use, and we need to talk about the history of the competing discussions and what has come out of that. There is a need for some kind of framework that supports us to talk about this issue of women and peace-building.

### The language we use

There are all sorts of words used in conversations about women and peace-building: conflict, the troubles, peace-building, women, victims, feminism, the women's sector, and the women's movement. All of these are contested. They can be and are used in different ways for different purposes. It's very important for us when we are using the language of women and peace-building to be very clear in what we mean, because in the structural context there are numerous players, who adopt particular terms with different purposes. Within the CRC agenda, for example, the language of peace-building is about reconciliation of Catholics and Protestants and the agenda is individualised; but we know that the context is much wider than individuals and has to be understood in a structural way. It involves a whole range of players including, very significantly, the British Government; the Irish Government; the American government and the security industry (securicrats). It's important when we are talking about women and peace-building that we don't avoid talking about the wider context and the very unequal power relations within it.

### History of the discussion on women and peace-building

If we look at the history of this discussion there often has been avoidance — for the sake of trying to find some common ground — of the wider context. The history of the discussion goes from individual women to community groups to the wider women's movement. It's the story of the personal to the political and the apolitical, both. Within that there's been a lot of tension between different perspectives. At its best, women's groups have tried to recognise each other's position and tried to look at the wider context and each other's stories. On the other side there have been situations where women's organisations felt unable to take a stand — against strip-searching, for example — although individual women did. That was also very much related to funding and the threat, if you stood up and expressed a view, to organisations' funding.

So there has been all that history that most people here would be familiar with. Within that there have been personal stories and memories that contribute greatly to understanding that history. That is very clear from talking to Claire and Eilish about the work done by the Dúchas Project<sup>18</sup> and the value of collecting personal stories. They have so much to offer in elucidating the complexity of experience at

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a personal level and at a community level, and coping with and surviving armed conflict. They also address the issues of inequality between men and women within the community, such as violence against women.

### Silences

People telling their story is a very important activity and experience. It brings our attention back to the complexity of the women and peace-building agenda. To speak of “women and peace-building”, as if women were somehow all the same and the meaning of the peace they built was understood; as if they’ve all been doing the same thing – usually described as ‘holding communities together’, is misleading. As Rosie was saying to me, ‘holding the community together’ also implies is that you’re on the verge of falling apart. So it raises questions around some of the things around which there has been silence, the impact of the conflict on women’s mental, as well as their psychological and emotional health.

*“To speak of ‘women and peace-building’, as if women were somehow all the same and the meaning of the peace they built was understood; as if they’ve all been doing the same thing – usually described as ‘holding communities together’, is misleading.”*

What other silences are there? There is the magnitude of what women have achieved. I heard a statistic recently about how many years had been spent in prison by Republican prisoners: 100,000 years served collectively by 15,000 prisoners. If you think about the support and care that’s been surrounding those individuals, the magnitude of what women have done, and the cost of that, in terms of people’s mental and emotional health has not really been acknowledged or made visible enough. There are other silences yet to be named.

There have been times when there *has* been recognition of different positions. I can remember a Symposium in 1986, *A Difficult, Dangerous Honesty*<sup>19</sup> and a WEA Conference in 1988 where attempts to address the silences created highly uncomfortable workshops. They were remarkable for the honesty expressed, but participation was difficult and personally painful for some women. Most people here would be aware of, and been personally involved in, some of the efforts that have been made to be constructive and honest and to make the difficult issues more visible.

Within the community women’s sector, which is where I’ve worked mainly, there is a need to find tools for moving forward around some of these issues. A lot of community groups have been involved in activities funded by the Community Relations Council, because it is one of the few sources of funding available to them. Women’s groups have genuinely tried to engage with the community relations agenda, and sometimes Community Relations funds have been used by a group of women quite simply just to get away for a weekend to Donegal or somewhere. A group of nationalist/Catholic and Protestant/loyalist women, or various mixtures thereof, trying to get away for a weekend to look at issues that are of common concern will co-operate in getting funding to do it. We’d all be familiar with the Women’s Information Group as an organisation that has brought Catholic and Protestant women together to discuss issues of common concern on a regular basis. While it hasn’t addressed the wider structural

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*Monaghan actress Sinéad Douglas from Upstate Theatre's touring professional show, EPIC (premiered 2001), researched and workshopped with New Border Generation, a community project based in Carlingford. The production was a series of community stories set around the time of the Foot and Mouth tragedy, with echoes of ancient myth. In this photo, Sinéad plays a farmer on a protest for fair compensation.*

Photo by Derek Speirs

political issues (sectarianism, for example), it has managed to have cross-community discussions on violence against women, and a woman's right to choose.

In terms of trying to promote women's equality, there are questions that we need to ask ourselves, such as: "what are the relationships we want to look at?" Generally the community relations agenda has been looking at our relationships with each other, but I think we need to look wider than that. We need to explore our differing relationships to power, to the state, to the institutions within which we work. If we are to have this discussion, we need to try and find supportive frameworks for that task.

### An Equality Framework

Margaret will talk about research more broadly, but I have a very strong feeling that we need a framework to give structure to our discussions. In my own work, for example, we have introduced into the National Women's Council an analysis of equality that is based on four spheres of equality. It is derived from the work of Kathleen Lynch, John Baker and Sarah Cantillon in the Equality Studies Centre in UCD<sup>20</sup>. I find it a very useful way of being specific about what we want to achieve in terms of real change for women. I'm not saying it should be *the* framework, but it's a framework that I use and I would like to share that with you.

The Equality Framework articulates goals of affective equality, social-cultural equality, economic equality and political equality.

*Affective equality* refers to the whole realm of love and care and the rights to that. There is scope for addressing women's interests, since women's lives are – whether they should or shouldn't be – so *intimately* caught up in intimacy. The impact of armed conflict on those relations has been huge. There is silence around that area of women's experience.

Around *social-cultural equality*, the whole issue of parity of esteem is a much wider one than it is currently allowed to be. The NWCI is a member of the Community Platform, which is a grouping of what would be the equivalent of 'Section 75'<sup>21</sup> groups, the equality grounds groups. There are 26

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organisations in the Community Platform, who cover the nine equality grounds in the [Southern] equality legislation. The Platform was part of the 'community and voluntary pillar' that is involved in the social partnership negotiations with government. In the last round of negotiations, the National Women's Council, along with the Community Platform, didn't sign up to the agreement and asserted that we were going to launch a movement for equality and social justice. Currently the government is taking the position that, "you don't count any more, there are lots of groups ready and willing to represent the community and voluntary sector". However, we're insisting on our right to be present in different fora where policy is negotiated and arguing for parity of esteem for all those groups.

In terms of *economic equality*, I don't think women's position in the labour market has been affected one way or another by the armed conflict. There is still a huge disparity between men and women. The gender pay gap is still there and may have worsened. Women are still in part-time, poorly-paid service work. Women also are the key workers in the community and voluntary sector. Increasingly, funding for that sector has been rolled back, so the resources for groups are becoming much harder to get. There was a time when money was being poured into community development projects. Women's groups were able to access money because they were seen as the peace-builders; they were seen as keeping the community together and so on. Now it's much harder to get resources.

Combining this with the question of *political equality*, the questions of civil society and social capital are key — at least in terms of what I see happening in the South. It might be different in the North. There are issues around what has been called 'the politics of presence,' and representation, not only of women as half the population, but also of their interests, which may be different and conflicting depending on a range of factors.

There are also issues around violence against women and how that has shifted in this period of conflict and around women's human rights. Since this year is the year that both the British and Irish Governments have to report on CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, I think there are quite a number of women's interests that can be addressed through an international forum. We should be taking advantage of that.

Coming back to the local, the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) has within it both the possibility of a progressive equality agenda and also — the position that's more favoured by the British Government — the CRC agenda; the idea that the Conflict is just between Catholics and Protestants and really "you're as bad as each other". Women have grappled with the complexities of trying to address equality issues; and the differences *between* women that have emerged over the years have been very difficult. We need some kind of integrated framework in which to address how we talk about 'women and peace-building', and also we still need resources.



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### Women and the Conflict — Women and Peace-building

Coming back to Ruth's questions:

*How has the experience of women in Ireland been shaped by the conflict, and what are the gender-specific impacts or legacy of the conflict on women?*

We only know that from the stories we've heard and the memories that people have had. Very clearly one of the ways in which we can learn more is from people's actual stories and memories. We need to acknowledge the magnitude of what women have done, and be very critical about the idea that "women hold communities together". It's easily said, but we have to ask what happens when they're *not* holding communities together; when they haven't been able to hold themselves, or their relationships, together. What can be learned from that?

*What are the specific interests and needs of women arising from the Conflict and how are these being addressed?*

I think the discussion will probably elucidate some of the interests and needs and you will have something to say on that. There is definitely a need to bring to the centre the voices of people who feel marginalised and who have been silenced; to actually challenge that silence and make the whole issue more visible. Again, to use that expression: the 'politics of presence'; how we achieve that? How we bring women's presence, their interests and needs into politics? That needs organisation, it needs resources. It needs research to promote particular issues.

*What distinct contribution do women and women's organisations have to make to peace-building, the transformation of civil society and the development of social capital required for this process?*

Well, a lot I believe. When I read about civil society, I'm often reminded of Mary Robinson talking about countries where there was no kind of civil society infrastructure and the consequences of that. I often think that women's contribution to civil society in Ireland has been very under-resourced and yet very strong.

In the South at the moment, the idea of social capital is developing as a discourse favoured by government; interpreted as promoting volunteering. I recently sat on a National Economic and Social Forum working group on social capital. We were saying, "isn't it the same thing as community development?" We were asking, "isn't it what women's groups are doing and aren't they good case studies? Isn't that really what we should be building on?" Yet this kept getting written out of the report every time we saw a draft. Even though the researcher who was writing it seemed sympathetic to what we were saying, every time we saw it, it had been written out.

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There appears to be a rolling back of the community sector in the South, with funding sources shrinking or being withdrawn. There is a distinct perception that a move is on to disempower community groups who are speaking with a more radical voice or trying to promote the interests of specific groups, such as Travellers and people with disabilities. In the case of Travellers, it is seen in the attempts to sabotage the Equal Status legislation; with disabled people, it's the reluctance to adopt a rights approach to disability. Women and women's organisations have a huge contribution to make, particularly around recognising differences and women's cross-cutting experiences of inequality. On the last question then:

### *What are the barriers to women's involvement in peace-building?*

I think the largest barrier is the silence that has been around the issue. It's "women did a great job during the Conflict in holding communities together, now that's all gone so really they don't need to be doing that anymore. They should be volunteering and helping with youth groups or whatever; or making the tea for the football team or doing something useful". The implication is that an infrastructure of women's organisations isn't needed. That attitude has to be challenged. It has to be demonstrated that promoting women's equality is a much wider thing, it reaches out to all marginalised groups; because of the differences among women we've had to reach out and be much more inclusive. I'm not saying feminists have always succeeded in doing that, but there has been a real effort to address groups that are called 'socially excluded' — working class groups: Travellers, migrant women, groups of asylum seekers, lesbian women, a whole range of different groups.

Overall, what hopefully will come out of this is that, as well as articulating the complexities and the differences and the disagreements that exist, we can find some way of identifying some frameworks and some common ground that can be used in taking forward research. Through organisations like ADM/CPA, we can be informing both politics and policy, and social movements.

**Ruth Taillon:** I know that the questions posed to Joanne to generate discussion in this section were all-encompassing. The aim was to try and see if there are ideas coming from women that are different from those coming from other sections of society. While different women have different points of view, there has been a discourse about conflict resolution and peace-building within women's organisations that may be different from what has been going elsewhere. There certainly *has been* an assumption that women have been holding communities together, without the recognition of the damage that has been done or the price that has been paid, or the things that haven't been addressed as a result. This discussion is wide open for you to identify some of the issues and at least get on the record some of the concerns that you have on your agendas.

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**Pauline Conroy:** I want to respond to Joanne's first remarks on the need for a framework. She made that remark just after she had been speaking about *A Difficult, Dangerous Honesty* and the need for respite from stress, and it came very quickly after those comments.

I would also like to answer a point Ruth has made, what about the agenda? We need a framework, and I would see it as made up of five elements: a research programme that was about:

- 1) silence, or silenced issues, which would include stories and temporarily repressed – or suppressed, self-suppression – issues.
- 2) It would include new expressions of civil society which would include some of the Section 75 groups and others.
- 3) It would include organised civil society, which we are all, here, many of us.
- 4) It would include institution-building, and
- 5) representative bodies.

I think it's worth about £100,000,000 sterling. It should come from the first round of underspend at the Midterm Review of the Structural Funds and the whole lot of it should go to the gender issue which is in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and in the regulations. So I think by law it's ours. It's a question of whether we can script a sufficiently annoying and leveraged text with signatories and backup to appropriate it. If so, it could be fairly distributed among five measures that would represent five levels of inter-relationship within the process, and which would have relevance North and South.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** I think it would be difficult to achieve, if you want to develop such programmes focussed simply on women. If you want to tell stories, would it be valuable to do it simply for women? Or should we want this kind of honest storytelling to be done across the whole of society? Should there be a separate project for women, and not have it for men?

*“It was very clear that there was a gender difference between the impact of long-term imprisonment on the minority of long-term prisoners — who were women — and the majority, who were men. What was even clearer to us was the silence that arose around anything that was not male experience.”*

**Bernadette McAliskey:** Fundamentally there are a million different positions, but there are only two genders: men and women. Ruth Jamison and I worked together on a previous project. The first one we did was the impact of long-term imprisonment. The needs of the research dictated we had to work with people who would work with us. So the people around whom the research was based were long-term republican prisoners, but the methodology set in place a framework that could easily be adapted to look at the impact of long-term imprisonment within the loyalist community. It was not intended as a piece of male research, but it *was* a piece of male research. When we came to study the impact of long-term imprisonment, it was true that the majority of long-term prisoners were male; but not all of them. It was very clear that there was a gender difference between the impact of long-term imprisonment on the minority of long-term prisoners — who were women — and the majority, who were men. What was even clearer to us was the silence that arose around anything that was not male experience. It wasn't put that way, but we're just back to the classic position: human experience is male experience, with a few women added in to meet Section 75 requirements.

**Ruth Jamison:** Whenever we tried to raise the question of women's perspectives, we weren't shouted down or dismissed, but the response was usually, “well, I wouldn't be able to speak about



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that authoritatively.” Somehow — no matter how many times it was raised in the project — it got sidelined, in the nicest possible way. As an outsider to this process I was really quite amazed at how deftly this was achieved, on every occasion, in a very lovely kind of way. There was never any

*“... if you have a ‘criminal’ record you can’t adopt children. For the women, the most practical impact for us is that we can’t adopt children. So the expunging of records is ... very important to us.”*

confrontation, it was always, “Well, I would defer to you on that, I wouldn’t be able to speak about that.” It was quite remarkable. Part of the project involved a residential with ex-prisoners and their partners. We had two sessions of what was a women’s caucus, and even then there was a reticence to discuss things because of this habit of loyalty and not ever discussing things that were to do with intimate relationships. It was quite remarkable! On the one hand the men very politely declined to comment and on the other hand the women were ‘their’ women, and were reticent. It was quite frustrating because it was clear there was another story to be told that didn’t get told. So that’s why we’re now doing a project that’s women-centred.

**Ella O’Dwyer:** I’d have to support what Bernadette and Ruth are saying. One of the more practical impacts for women ex-prisoners is that if you have a ‘criminal’ record you can’t adopt children. The male biological clock gives them more of a chance of being able to have children. For the women, the most practical impact for us is that we can’t adopt children. So the expunging of records is something that you could put onto the agenda, because that’s very important to us. As Bernadette found out, the effects of long-term

imprisonment for males are one thing; but there is another story there that hasn’t been told very much at all.

**Ruth Taillon:** When we invited you all here there was an assumption of shared analysis that women did have specific needs or interests and that there was a need to set out a space for women — even within the mainstreaming debate — that we did need special initiatives and special programmes for women.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** The reason I asked that was because of the funding question. It will be difficult to say, “it’s going to be women’s stories only”, from the practical standpoint.

**Bernadette McAliskey:** I understand what you’re saying. It raises the question that I’d like to put on the table, rather than an answer. I know that the focus of this discussion is within the existing Peace II funds, which is why I liked Pauline’s idea of go for broke, gather up the money they can’t spend and do something useful with it for a change. I have concerns that we are confusing things. There is only a limited amount of value that is within the peace funding. There is work that has to be done in its own right.

We ought to take a step back. It’s very easy to say the experiences are different. That hasn’t been dealt with. It’s not simply that the experiences are different. The *sense of abandonment* — felt by feminists who include me, by feminists who did not include me — for the duration of the war is *not* settled by a gentle admission at this point that we may have been excluded. We were crucified.

Ella was strip-searched. That the women’s movement, on a funding issue, thought it hard to support that needs some acknowledgement and resolution. I don’t say that to be contentious at this point, but to be constructive.

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We can't be constructive until we begin some deconstruction about what all of us as women and all of us as feminists were doing; how that impacted on each other and on each other's work; and how you move from there. That's that affective bit. *I am affected*, and I need that resolved amongst my sisters, so I can sort out who my sisters are from here on in.

On the social and cultural question that is also important. Again, on a funding level, we have been forced down the Catholic/Protestant agenda of community relations. It's not just the Catholic/Protestant agenda, it's been the Catholic/Protestant agenda where the women would play in the middle. There's been no room in the Catholic/Protestant community relations agenda for many long years for dissident Catholic or dissident Protestant women. There has been no recognition of the validity of the standpoint of the women who didn't fit either the broad feminist agenda or the community relations agenda.

On the economic level, I *don't accept* that the Troubles did not have an impact on women. My colleague and contemporary, Avila Kilmurray is running the Community Foundation. I'm running the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme. Eilish Rooney is a university lecturer. As an active participant in this conflict it affected my economic status and that of a lot of other women who at an individual level paid economically very dearly for the positions they held. I think we have to look at whether we are being, as women, co-opted by the state as a cheap state agency for the delivery of community development. There is a gender factor in community development and as it's being professionalised there are serious economic and political questions around that. If it is underfunded, it is women currently in employment at community level who will go back to being unemployed, or who will be encouraged to make certain decisions. Such as: if you want to stay in

employment you deliver the centrist agenda. Then you can become part of social capital. I think those are all issues that we have a serious duty to look at, within the broad feminist discourse, as women. Again that's why I like the idea of looking at the levels. There's work that needs to be done now.

Finally, I think that intellectually we have to look at the danger of downgrading important research

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to mean nothing more than evaluation and appraisals of women's actions in a way that will encourage further funding. I'm not saying that's not a valid activity, but in my book the word for it is not research. The words for it are appraisal or evaluation. We really have to be clear about what it is we want to do and how it ties in with what is happening.

We cannot take research and the needs of women and fit them into to what the government is paying for. I would like to see us perhaps using some of this money to take a step back and try a bit more — with a protective framework — dangerous dancing. Maybe we should run a conference of women that looks at those issues. I'm just back from a women's peace-building conference in Zurich. I went for three days and it was like three weeks holiday. Nobody mentioned what the government was paying for. Nobody mentioned how we fitted in, where, what we would have to

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do in order to meet other people's demands. It was centred around the experience of women, the definition of peace-building. Nobody was allowed to be constructive. It was a deconstructive conference. We should organise one here, take a step back, put some of the funding around the things that Joanne talked about. We need to do some deconstructing of our own on all of those issues. So I'll go with Pauline's suggestion. Let's go for making a serious ideological bid for a significant portion of the underspend right across women's issues.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** There is money — The Community Fund and also possible money from the government — which is why I was asking those questions. The money is there. It's just how it's presented.

have. That is reminding me of so many different phases. You think you get somewhere and then you realise you have to regroup and claim the space once again.

In relation to the Duchas archive, we are finding that as well. The space that we're being constricted by is community relations space. The archive is not being funded under Peace monies at all at the moment. It has been described as "a narrow and one-sided account". It may have men and women in it, but you know what I mean. It's within that work in the community that we as women have to claim the space. I find that in working in the archive. That needs to be done within that context and can be done; there's enough space within the context within which we work in the Falls Community Council that the [gender] argument



*Donegal parents at the Border Counties Childcare Network conference, September 2001. Photo courtesy BCCN.*

**Claire Hackett:** But maybe we need to start from the need that is there. This issue is about claiming space: claiming the space in order to have the difficult debate that we've touched on but haven't really gone into at all. Maybe you can only do that in the stage that we're in now, looking back. Maybe we are at a stage now where we can do this. Maybe we have the courage to do it. Maybe there's the possibility of the space to do it as well, but we do have to claim it, just like we always

can be had. What there doesn't seem to be enough space for is the argument *to have the archive* — that it is a valid archive — for that work to happen within the current funding context.

So it's just the different ways in which we're talking about claiming space. The two things that have been mentioned seem to come together. One is the thing about gender, and the way that we've done that in the past. We should be able to build on that. We have been able to grasp some nettles

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*“We’ve moved on a wee bit in terms of the equality agenda, but this seems to be going away from that again, back to the community relations agenda. ... The debate about community relations — narrowly and broadly defined — is a gender issue.”*

in the past, and there’s a big nettle to be grasped now. The other one is around this notion of the community relations agenda. There are those two different kinds of spaces that I feel that I’m grappling with at the moment.

**Ruth Jamison:** Although everybody in this room knows too well the practical reality of being a supplicant in the funding game, it’s also important to recognise that the funders — the state and the various funding bodies — *need* women to play the game. Our participation in this game is required or else the whole house of cards will collapse. They do need women to play along with the community relations game and all the different funding games. If people started to say, “I’m sorry but our issues aren’t being addressed and there’s no use pretending they are” – as Pauline suggested – there’s a lot more power in that position than people are accustomed to think.

**May McCann:** This discussion is touching on things I’ve been thinking about since I’ve been put back into the world of community relations by the *Shared Future* consultations. I feel very strongly that I need to make a very serious response to this. In terms of this gathering, it would be nice if we could do a really concerted attack on the document. I have serious problems with every aspect of the document. We’ve moved on a wee bit in terms of the equality agenda, but this seems to be going away from that again, back to the community relations agenda. It is a very flawed

document. The debate about community relations — narrowly and broadly defined — is a gender issue. We can’t really turn this into a discussion on the issue, but it would be nice if we could all work together as women to get a framework for approaching that very critically.

**Eilish Rooney:** I was at a *Shared Future* workshop last week and I got so angry that they had to silence me. Sometimes anger can make you highly articulate and lethal. I know that I annoyed some people with my anger. I annoyed them unintentionally, because they weren’t the object of the anger, but I was so angry that it has made me hold back a bit. I was thinking, before coming in here, “don’t get angry, it’s much better to be constructive”. But anger can be constructive.

We’re sitting here in the Equality Commission. I have a real personal problem with carpeted floors, push open easy, easy access, equality and access. That’s where equality should be, in the centre and well-funded. What it generally means, though, is that the Equality Commission — along with the other civil society bodies that have emerged in the course of the last 30 years, who have emerged stronger and stronger and sometimes in competition with each other — breathe air at a level we just look up at, and in which we have no interest. I’ve been looking at the research from the Equality Commission and what their focus has been in terms of relatively well-funded research. Yes, they’re looking at some issues that are very important but they haven’t been looking at what we’ve been talking about. And their language is not even such as would allow for the deconstruction that we’ve been talking about.

In the context of the Conflict, you have ‘women’ or ‘sectarianism’, you don’t have both. What we’re talking about is both. It’s not on the Equality Commission’s agenda. It’s not on the Commission of Human Rights’ agenda, it’s not on the agendas

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of any of these agencies that are being funded and are being run to treat the Conflict in a different way.

Yes, I'm attracted to what Pauline put forward too. That's the answer. A big pile of money, put it together and a way forward. So I daresay there's an awful lot of work to be done and there will be an awful lot of competition amongst agencies as to who should own that and where that should go, but maybe we can take that further. Maybe the idea of the conference is a fruitful one, as well. There are lots of voices that aren't here, lots of people aren't here. So I'm hoping to get the volcanoes rumbling.

**Ailbhe Smyth:** I do want to pick up on Eilish's point there. A little anger around these matters, articulately expressed, is no bad thing at the present time. Presumably one of the major mechanisms of mainstreaming is *precisely* to create spaces in which it is impossible for us to express that anger. It seems so impolite and unacceptable and won't be funded. So it is really important to maintain the spaces and to use those politically and strategically wherever we are; where we express that anger and target the people who do deserve it. In other words, not the people we're trying to work with, but rather the systems that are producing the kinds of situations that we're trying to question.

The second point I wanted to pick up on is the issue of language. Of course the languages are different. Obviously if the languages in which we operate – albeit extremely diversely as women – if the ways we speak are not there on the policy agendas, then of course we can't get near them. That linguistic divide is *not* accidental, it's *not* a coincidence. What makes me very angry at the moment is that we do *talk* 'gender' all the time, but as we've said for the past decade, what we *mean* is 'women'. What we mean by 'gender mainstreaming' is some women being hauled in



*Ruth Taillon, ADM/CPA Research Co-ordinator, at the ADM/CPA Advisory Forum April, 2003.*

to some kinds of co-opted spaces where we can't speak our minds any more. It doesn't seem to me that politically that's going to be very useful. We want to put women back on the agenda.

Also — doing a U-turn — one of the things that is very important to be doing at the moment is to be looking at the precise mechanisms of mainstreaming and what is the cost of those. What is gained and what is lost by being hauled into the mainstream, or walking into it? Who gets to walk in — the question of access — and who doesn't, under what kinds of conditions?

**Ann Hope:** Mainstreaming is about putting gender at the heart of policy-making and taking it away from the periphery. We've tried to turn it around from this notion that it is something that means you lose your identity, you disappear within a range of other issues. Mainstreaming is saying that



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*“I was sent the statistics on domestic violence in the North. It is really dramatic how the figures have doubled since 1998 and have stayed at that very high level.”*

we are at the heart and not the periphery. Maybe if we keep coming from that all the time and using it, turning the words back on those who use it in a different way, this might also help move the idea of mainstreaming forward in a way that is positive.

**Maggie Beirne:** The point that Bernadette and Claire were making about dealing about the past is an extremely important one, to which I’m certainly not going to contribute substantively. The GFA seems very much looking forward. You can read between the lines and work out what were the problems of the past, but there was no shared discussion, no shared agreement about what that past was. I think that even from the very brief comments today, there is a gender perspective to bring to bear on that discussion. I think we’re now coming to a point where we realise that we as a society need more of that discussion.

But I was particularly picking up on things that were more about the future. There were two practical things that struck me when Joanne was making her comments. I was getting material together for some UN committee, and I was sent the statistics on domestic violence in the North. It is really dramatic how the figures have doubled since 1998 and have stayed at that very high level.

It seems to me that there is something crucial there about violence and the legacy of violence and issues about where violence occurs. It is a statistic that has jumped out at me consistently, and I think some work needs to be done on that.

Secondly, Bernadette was talking about the

community and voluntary sector and Section 75 groupings. This made me think about how the very different approaches to work with the community and voluntary sector among women in the North and in the Republic. Section 75 is very much *not* about traditional partnership, representative groups.

It is actually potentially revolutionary — if it worked — in that you are meant to be dealing with the people who are directly affected by the policies.

It’s messy and confusing and maybe that’s why we are getting such negative feedback about the process; there’s a need to tidy it up. It’s a very different model to the model in the Republic, which is about building relationships and partnership arrangements. I wouldn’t say that necessarily one’s obviously good, one obviously bad, they are very different models. I think there could be some very interesting learning around that.

**Sonya Murray:** I’m interested in picking you up on the issue of domestic violence. Joanna touched a bit on it, about the silence that occurs in the South. I’m originally from the South, spent half my adult life in the North, and now in the last few years have been working back again in the South. I’ve been struck by the silence around the North. I went straight into the community sector, where I expected some discourse, some level of awareness, and have been appalled. It’s constantly, “don’t mention the war”. At every opportunity we do, and we’re ignored; politely and nicely, but ignored.

*“I’ve been struck by the silence around the North. I went straight into the community sector, where I expected some discourse, some level of awareness, and have been appalled. It’s constantly, ‘don’t mention the war’.”*

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*“...most feminists ignore the border as an impact or equality issue.”*

On the issue of domestic violence, I’m interested in the different experiences of how the border and the war has impacted. We did a piece of research on domestic violence in Monaghan, and one of the startling findings was that in Cavan/Monaghan, *100% of women in the year 2000 waited until they were injured before reporting to the Gardai.*<sup>28</sup>

Rurality doesn’t account for it. In no other rural county in Ireland does that statistic come anywhere near it. When I did some anecdotal research people working in the field said, “it’s the Border”. Why is it? It’s because of authority, silence, all those kind of things, a whole angle that doesn’t get picked up on in the research. It doesn’t get picked up down South, because most feminists ignore the border as an impact or equality issue; or in the North because there’s a Belfast view, people are looking at it from here. Maybe that’s more appropriate for the second discussion about identifying gaps in things.

**Ella O’Dwyer:** Someone mentioned the word

anger there. I don’t have anger but I need to get some of this off my chest a bit before we go anywhere. There is an industry of conflict/post-conflict. There are two words here, gender and conflict. I need to say this; I need to get it out of my system. There is a whole lot of air that needs to be cleared about this whole wave of funding-led, industry of conflict, post-conflict, truth and reconciliation. We have had 30 years of god knows what going on. Then in Peace I and Peace II, there’s millions of pounds and millions of euros and what does it actually affect? Who does it impact on at the end of the day? I just needed to say that.

**Pauline Conroy:** I think it’s just a regional variation. If you go down to Sicily, the women are being invited by the Structural Funds to fight the Mafia. Now how women are going to fight the Mafia with the Structural Funds remains somewhat unclear. It appears to be that they should join the border guard and get equally shot along with everyone else. If you go into the North of Europe it’s all about urban regeneration and “rebuilding myself and my city”. So, it’s variations on a theme. If you go into Eastern Europe, it’s all about “let’s build democracy”; and would women mind being



*Paula Cunningham (standing), Chairperson of the Derry Well Woman Centre Stakeholder Group, consults with members of the Centre’s staff. Photo courtesy Derry Well Woman Centre.*

## discussion

So I have a very pragmatic view. This is the supermarket of global ideas. This is what's on offer. Now, what is its truly honest significance to anything that impinges on my or other's lives?

I think there are some intersections that we could sweep across without tainting or soiling or contaminating ourselves too much by over-optimistic social democracy or gloomy pessimism.

If we were sufficiently bonded, or collectivised or connected I think we could do it without too much damage. But I think it's important that the point be made that integration of the gender dimension has been unsatisfactory at the minimum.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** These things don't happen by coincidence. It's not that somehow the needs of women have been ignored. You asked, who gains from all this funding? I think that's the question. This is what is used to perpetuate particular systems of power. So it's very difficult, if we are serious about changing it. If you ask people for Structural Funds to do something they'll only give it to you as long they are damn sure it's not going to make a difference in their agenda. We have to be quite clear-sighted about things like that. It's not a question of saying, "oh those needs exist" and they say, "oh yes, we didn't see that before, we want to fund it." They don't want to change things, to start with. That's where we start from, isn't it?

**Rosie Burrows:** I want to make a bid for inarticulate voices. I'm feeling a bit inarticulate and I think it says something about my background and where I've been, in terms of coming from a working class Protestant background. One of the impacts on me was growing up not getting the Eleven Plus;<sup>29</sup> going to a crappy school where you didn't get Irish history. So I feel very strongly about all that: the lack of working class voice here, or taking a voice, taking the risk, taking the courage.

Bernadette, I do feel a sisterliness with you and a solidarity in terms of identifying what the real

forces of oppression have been here. For me, growing up, it would have been about growing up with the sense of identifying with the state, and not really seeing how the state was oppressing me.

It has taken me this time – 43 years – getting friendships with women who are more radical, and slowly shifting my analysis. It's still a big deal, even moments like this, meeting Bernadette, because my daddy would have been saying when you were on TV, "look at that hellion, that's a disgrace".

I was totally indoctrinated all the time against radical women and republicans. It's taken me years and years and it's still sort of scary. So, one of the impacts on me is fear. I feel fear at a gathering like this because there's so many articulate voices. I'm just starting to feel like I'm getting a voice. In terms of dissident Protestants, I think that's important.

**Dympna McGlade:** I haven't found the women's movement, or whatever we want to call it, particularly supportive or helpful throughout my career. I find the gap between being involved in the women's movement or the women's sector, and being a woman working to make change as an individual, vast. I think we need to be more receptive to women who have worked and fought hard to get where they are and put themselves in positions of power — albeit not a huge power — but some power and influence. See beyond the organisations they're working for and see the individual. Put a bit of trust and confidence that that person will be responsible, will represent women and help carry the agenda of equality for all sectors and all sections of the community and all individuals.

On Rosie's point, there's a gap for me. I'm not sure that it's a class thing or because of background, but it's there, and that needs to be addressed and stopped. We need to be looking at women where



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they're at and how we can do the best for them, first and foremost.

On a broader basis, organisationally, the women's sector has been fragmented. There is no coherent voice coming from women in terms of community relations. I'm involved in policy in the CRC. Lots of different organisations have come forward with position papers and discussion papers. We try and make sure that that policy is then adopted and translated into strategy and policy and at the end of the day, funding. We can sit back and say we need all sorts of things; but we actually need to put something down on paper, ask for it and be turned down before we can complain. Quite honestly, I don't believe there is a comprehensive, cohesive voice coming forward. The idea of getting that done now, of putting forward research into a programme is a good idea, but where does it start? Who takes responsibility, and how do we co-ordinate that? How do we get it done? It hasn't been done in the past. There has been a lot of good work with individual organisations and women, but I don't think we've put forward a very effective voice or a voice that represents all the women we're talking about. There are a lot of good women out there who are not represented by forums like this, their voices aren't heard. Quite often I think we need to be bringing more of those women forward to be heard.

I'm not here to defend the CRC. When I joined the organisation about six months ago I was wondering what the hell I was doing there. I would suggest to you – and hopefully you'll take account of my ideas, and have some respect for my background and my work – that it's a changing organisation and that it is worth pushing at that door because it's half open. I can guarantee that as a woman I'll make sure that any issues being put forward in relation to women, where they fit with the CRC remit, I'll make sure it happens, and will push that to the outcome.

In terms of the *Shared Future*, I'll be honest. I'm a bit miffed at how you feel angry and frustrated.

People have said it's a British Government agenda, and that's come from both the nationalist and the loyalist perspective. It's a government document that's out for consultation. As with all consultations – whether or not at the end of the day it will be taken seriously – the Assembly is in suspension at the moment – the important thing is that if you don't get involved in the consultation and have your say you will not be heard. Once you do have your say, you have to follow through with lobbying and pushing it. I don't think there is any point in saying it's this, that or the other. It's an opportunity, warts and all. It's not brilliant; what is? It's an opportunity for everyone to have their say and put forward something and push something. I don't see the point of just criticising it. We're out to try and get people engaged in it. We're not saying it's a brilliant document and it's going to solve all your problems, but when it's there, get in there and see what we can do.

**Bernadette McAliskey:** There are three points that I'd like to come back on. I'll start with the personal one; that I agree with. There has to be a recognition. The core drift of the women's movement over recent years has been to get women into politics, in different ways; the end result has been to get women more active in civic life. There has also been a tendency that as soon as that is done we then take the knees off the women, you take the legs off them from the knees down.

I think there is a real issue around women being mainstreamed. Men do not demand, when men get jobs, that they look after other men and other men's interests in the whole world and Potters Bar. Women are asked to do it. A woman goes out and actually gets a decent job, like working for ADM/CPA for example, and then suddenly everything in the world is going to be Ruth's fault, or it's going to be Dympna's fault, or it's Marie-

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Claire Finnegan (headphones) & Laura Duffy learning technical skills on an Expac radio production training course.  
Photo courtesy Expac.

Helene's fault because she's at the funding level. Somehow women are now in these positions, and individual women are asked to carry the politics and the ethos and the problems of the world. They're only earning their living. It's only a job. I'm quite clear about what I'm doing; keeping my P11, fulfilling my job description and doing my job within my principles. It's only a job. I do take that point. That is a point that has to be addressed. We're all good at making demands that women get in places, then as soon as they get in, we're all very good at cutting them down without reason. I have two other points.

I always feel annoyed when people ask for a voice. You can't have *a* woman's voice. You *can* have diverse women's voices, but there is no 'woman's voice'. Certainly if there ever is anywhere there's not one around here. This demand that the community sector speak with one voice is not a demand made of business. The private sector doesn't speak with one voice, it speaks according to its own particular interests. The idea has to be challenged. The community sector doesn't have one voice; the women's sector doesn't have one voice; 'Section 75' doesn't have one voice, except

when it is saying, "move over".

I do accept that organisations are changing and that we have to look at strategies as to when good people — particularly good women — are in organisations, a) how they are supportive and, b) how they can be supported in supporting good things being done.

Finally, on the point of your *Shared Future*. There was a document which went out for consultation called *Fit for the Future*. It was around health. Taking your point again, *Fit for the Future* hit the ground for consultation when the first Assembly<sup>30</sup> went into cold storage. In the rural areas, as we often do, we organised a series of consultations around *Fit for the Future*, which became locally known as "*Fit for the Bin*". People sat and discussed it, and at the end of the consultations, various groups took their courage in their hands and reported back to the Department of Health that, for all the reasons listed, it was their collective opinion that it was not fit for the future. It was fit for the bin.

We're doing the same with the *Shared Future* document. We're going around in our own area with all the people and we're going through the consultation process. We're encouraging people to deconstruct and construct documents. We are increasingly finding that the collective response coming back from our area is, "thank you for the document, my future isn't in it". So you can look forward to getting those back from ethnic women; from migrant workers; people with disabilities, young people; people who do not define themselves as from one of the main communities, Catholic or Protestant; because people group themselves differently, with their other identities.

I think it's important to go through the consultations because I think they have educational value; especially if the end result might be, "I don't see my future in here". That's a valid conclusion. I

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think the *Shared Future*, when the Assembly comes back, will actually be in the bin. I have no doubt about that, but I don't think that's a reason for not using it as an educational tool — to give people the confidence of working through that and saying, "look, wait till I tell you, I live on the Shankill. I'm trying to hold my life together. I don't have a job. I don't see anything in here for me.

Whoever's future is being shared in this document, mine isn't in here, good night." If people send all those back it will be in the same bin as *Fit for the Future*. The Assembly can start, then, to get some guidelines around what can be done. Whatever it's weaknesses, the Investing for Health Partnership is quite largely based on a total rejection of *Fit for the Future*. So some new partnership around sharing the future might emerge from being articulate, angry and rejectionist about the present document; doing it through the process of consultation.

**Ann Hope:** The issue isn't that we don't think that community relations is an important issue that has to be addressed in Northern Ireland. What makes *A Shared Future* so awful is that it has got such a narrow perspective on "what-can-we-do" initiatives. We're back down to Protestant and Catholic as opposed to all the many facets which make up the issues which actually engage us — around not just community relations but all the other issues, around the perspectives that go to make us up as women, as feminists, as trade unionists, as whatever. That is the big flaw in this document. So what we're really looking for is a community relations document that has a breadth to it, that can bring all the things we were talking about this morning, but broad enough again in terms of race, disability, sexual orientation. None of that is looked at in that document.



Minister Dermot Ahern TD, with members of the Border Counties Childcare Network's Management Committee, 1998.  
(Photo courtesy BCCN).

**Ruth Taillon:** Margaret Ward has been asked to do a broad overview of what research has gone on and is going on. From that, hopefully, we can pinpoint some of the things that need to be done. Again, not just within the context of Peace II, but coming out of Peace II. The reality is that there are limited resources within the Peace Programme at this stage. We need to be setting the agenda for after Peace II and for mainstreaming on both sides of the border. I would also make the point that the discussion in terms of where we go post-Peace II is being framed very much in an all-island context now.

# women & peace-building: identifying the research gaps

**Margaret Ward**

*Deputy Director, Democratic Dialogue*

What I have put together is *Women and Peace-building – identifying the research gaps*, so although I will look at some of the work that has been done, a lot of it is me thinking of what work needs to be done. So it might seem idiosyncratic to you when you hear what I'm saying. And somebody else writing a paper having been briefed by Ruth might write a very different paper.

I'm also very much talking on the basis of women and peace-building in terms of gender. We've had a discussion that was very much woman-focussed and I'm stretching that away now. That's unusual for me because my whole *raison d'être*, politically and academically, would be very woman-focussed. It still is woman focussed — in that a lot of gendering stuff really means men by another name and women disappear under the gender notion. This is trying to gender the discussion very much from a feminist perspective; keeping women firmly within that. The other caveat is that it is very Six County<sup>31</sup> focussed. I realise that I was still thinking of peace-building very much in terms of a society in conflict and forgetting about where the rest of the island is.

The basic principle, in starting to look at peace-building, which underlines what I want to say, is that peace-building cannot achieve its objective if it doesn't recognise and include women as full and equal partners with men. We need a gendered analysis of peace-building – one that addresses the nature of power relations between women and men. That's my current focus.

## Developing a vision of peace-building

What I want to do is to look at how we can have a vision of peace-building. I want to look at some international lessons for developing research criteria which I think could be important and may be important in terms of future funding, and to look at UN Resolution 1325.<sup>32</sup> Then I will go on from that to touch briefly on masculinity, and then look at current and future research.

*“... peace-building cannot achieve its objective if it doesn't recognise and include women as full and equal partners with men. We need a gendered analysis of peace-building – one that addresses the nature of power relations between women and men.”*

Brandon Hamber, who is a research associate with Democratic Dialogue, speaking fairly recently at a Community Foundation conference, made an important distinction between peacemaking, which he calls a 'pragmatic task' and peace-building, which he said was a 'vision-orientated task.' To build peace over time, he says, we need an enabling environment in which an appropriate vision can be realised. So we need the creation of an independent civil society “that can continue to enhance citizenship, ensure public access to political institutions, and guarantee an ongoing public shaping of government and government policy.”<sup>33</sup>

Peace I funding played a crucial role in building up the women's community infrastructure. All the research that we have had, has looked at the essential services that the women's sector has provided, the capacity building that has been achieved, and the importance, economically, socially and culturally,

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of the contribution that women have made. We've identified the lack of women in decision-making structures and initiated ground-breaking projects intended to redress that imbalance, yet I don't think we have succeeded in challenging traditional gender norms and roles, at least in the sense of men

### Outline of UN Resolution 1325

#### In the 18 point resolution, the Security Council:

- Urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels.
- Encourages the Secretary General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.
- Urges the Secretary General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys.
- Urges the Secretary General to expand the role and contributions of women in UN field-based operations, including among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.
- Requests the Secretary General to provide training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and particular needs of women.
- Urges member states to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender sensitive training efforts.
- Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians.
- Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse.
- Emphasizes the responsibilities of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide crimes, including those related to sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls.
- Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian characters of refugee camps and settlements with particular attention to women's and girls' special needs.
- Invites the Secretary General to carry out a study to be presented to the Security Council on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building, the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions.\*

*\* This outline and the full text of the Resolution can be found at: [www.peacewoman.org/un/sc/1325.htm](http://www.peacewoman.org/un/sc/1325.htm)*

understanding and responding to our challenge. If we had done, I think we would see women involved to a much more significant extent in conflict resolution.

We need to have a vision of women and peace-building, and certainly if we look at what's been funded under Peace II we don't get that vision. At the European Roadshow in the Europa last week, we were given the list of all the projects funded under Peace II. Looking at what's been funded in terms of women: the areas of personal development, job creation and child care – all very necessary, they start to help women participate in public life, but they're not really more than gestures to level the playing field. I have great concerns that, for example, projects that are enabling women to set up micro-



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businesses in Short Strand won't be sustainable. What kinds of business, what kinds of hinterlands have you got there that will sustain that kind of business? Also, the huge network of child care that's been funded by Peace II has to be mainstreamed or it will disappear. So that there are enormous issues there of what's going to happen in terms of the Peace II projects.



*Participants in an ADM/CPA seminar on diversity awareness, Corcaghan.*

I think that one example of child care alone indicates how important it is for the women's sector to have policy workers who can intervene in policy debates and make the case for women. When I was writing this paper I put out a request on Women's Link for people to tell me what they thought should be included in my paper, and Judy Seymour of the Women's Resource and Development Agency said very clearly that she felt that there have to be resources for policy work and "we need to look at this in the widest sense: knowledge and skills, structures, partnership building with statutory bodies, ways of working in a participative way..." The Programme for Government has mentioned childcare,

once. It's fallen off of the agenda, and we need to have that very sustained critique of policy.

There has been a lot of talk about building up weak community infrastructure. However, from the kinds of Peace II projects that have been funded, I can't get any sense that gender is being considered. When the application forms are being filled in and assessed, are the funding bodies insisting that gender must be an issue for communities? Do we have any indication that future evaluations of projects will consider the role of women? If evaluation comes only at the end of a project, then it is too late for lesson learning. Eithne McNulty, writing on what I should say here, made the point that evaluation budgets have been kept at a very low level for Peace II, and to quote from her, "Peace I really did demonstrate the need for extensive qualitative evaluation at project level if we are to learn anything about the effectiveness of an EU special initiative such as this in terms of peace-building."

### Evaluation

I would add that I don't think that evaluation should simply be project specific – it needs to have overarching themes, and one of the most crucial will be to measure the extent to which peace-building and reconstruction has addressed socially entrenched gender-based discrimination. We need methods of monitoring and evaluation can guide gender perspectives in peace-building initiatives.

*We need methods of monitoring and evaluation that can guide gender perspectives in peace-building initiatives.*

Can we document more effectively the difference women have made in peace-building and argue for



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mainstream funding to sustain that work? It is agreed that a lot of the learning from Peace I was lost

*We need to have a vision of women and peace-building, and certainly if we look at what's been funded under Peace II we don't get that vision. ... Looking at what's been funded in terms of women: the areas of personal development, job creation and child care – all very necessary, they start to help women participate in public life, but they're not really more than gestures to level the playing field.*

because it was not documented. Bernadette has made the good point earlier on that a lot of the evaluation is appraisal, not research, but I would argue that the kind of evaluation I'm talking about can be important research. It depends who's conducting it and the kinds of frames of reference they would have. If you take Women Waging Peace for example, looking at their website, they have some

very important things to talk about in terms of research methods that are inclusive of community needs<sup>34</sup>. The ethics and the methodology of research is something that we really need to flag up. I would be severely critical of the fact that we have very big consultancy firms that are doing most of the evaluation and I would like people here to be critical of that as well.

### International lessons for developing research criteria

ADM/CPA's research criteria for peace projects includes the following:

- involving the target groups of Peace II in the design and implementation of peace-building initiatives;
- putting issues of social inclusion, equality and human rights at the centre of their peace-building work;
- building a local vision of what a peaceful future might be; and applying the findings of research from other post-conflict situations world wide.<sup>35</sup>

I would agree with all of these, but I would add that they need to be viewed through the lens of gender.

Regarding that last point, looking at post-conflict situations world wide, these issues are being considered by academics and practitioners in a global context. There are a lot of lessons to be learned from transnational and international experiences, and some of them I'd like to highlight, because I think they do give us ways of looking at where we could go in the future.

The International Centre for Research on Women argues that efforts to introduce gender-sensitive approaches to peace-building have met with limited results since they fail to address the underlying norms that define

*The International Centre for Research on Women argues that efforts to introduce gender-sensitive approaches to peace-building have met with limited results since they fail to address the underlying norms that define gender relations and power dynamics. They call for new transformative approaches to peace-building, to transform gender roles and create more gender-equitable partnerships.*

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*An ADM/CPA support session for funded projects  
held in Ballyshannon, in January 2003. ADM/CPA Development Worker, Pauline Perry is on the right.*

gender relations and power dynamics. They call for new transformative approaches to peace-building, to transform gender roles and create more gender-equitable partnerships. So, for example, it is not enough to simply develop the infrastructure of the women's sector – and we want to do that – but as well as that we need a strategy for peace that includes a change in masculine identities<sup>36</sup>.

I came across some action research on Northeast India which was aimed at engendering a peace process in Northeast India. It had a number of objectives: strengthening women's advocacy skills in peace-building and the processes of mediation and negotiation; sensitising agencies on issues of gender to bring about attitudinal changes; and restoring the capacity of men and women living in vulnerable conflict areas through participatory development initiatives. All of this was intended to both to encourage women to participate in problem solving while also challenging traditional masculine behaviour<sup>37</sup>.

It made me think of our own experiences here. For example, North Belfast, which has so many initiatives at the moment. Have they been gender proofed? To what extent is have funding decisions and, the organisations that have been set up – say by the OFM/DFM taskforce –included women from the community? Have they looked at that in terms of an equal participation?

Recently, I was talking to a researcher from the Parades Commission<sup>38</sup>. We know that there are no female commissioners on the Parades Commission; but further on down the levels of mediation, two out of their 12 authorised officers and seven of the 20 monitors are women. You might have seen recently they were advertising for people to apply as mediators. They advertised in the newspaper – I know NICVA<sup>39</sup> had it as well – but, did they approach, say, the Women's Support Network<sup>40</sup>, or other women's organisations, to try and encourage women to come forward as mediators? Unless you've

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got a perspective within the Parades Commission that sees women as being important and also sees outreach work to encourage women to come forward I think you're going to remain an organisation where women with a lot of talent for negotiation are going to remain outside of that process.

*Research on the extent to which women have been included in conflict-resolution initiatives at interfaces would make a big contribution to the process of peace-building.*

So I think one of the areas we could usefully research is to engage with those kinds of organisations and audit their gender practices. Research on the extent to which women have been included in conflict-resolution initiatives at interfaces would make a big contribution to the process of peace-building.

In the briefing paper that you got for this event, Ruth included the *Beijing Platform for Action*<sup>41</sup>. When *Beijing +5* started to look at what had been achieved in terms of the Platform for Action they noticed the continuing resistance to women's involvement in decision-making

in relation to peace, security and conflict issues. And that led to an open debate within the United Nations on women, peace and security in October 2000. You are probably aware of this, but I think it's important to highlight the fact that the UN then passed Resolution 1325, which really is a watershed political document. It makes women and gender central to all peace negotiations and peace-building around the world. And it's the first time the UN has included women's issues in the political agenda, not just in the development and human rights agendas. It acknowledges the critical efforts that women have made in peace processes, and the importance of having the direct presence of women at the negotiating table. It is that perspective that needs to inform peace-building initiatives here. We can use what the international community has done; and the fact that we have obligations to live up to Resolution 1325. Because it argues that reconstruction efforts that simply target women and their needs may be constructive, but only as a short term strategy if they do not address underlying norms that discriminate against women or if they do not incorporate women's rights in new policies and institutions. "Women-specific programs tend to remain under-resourced and marginalised, subordinating women's economic needs and priorities to those of men."<sup>42</sup>

I think that's the stage that we're at, at the moment the development of the women's sector has not been incorporated into all of the different institutions and initiatives here. There are women-specific programmes but they're under-resourced, marginalised, and women's economic needs and priorities have been subordinated to men's. We need more research to address underlying gender issues in government and economic reconstruction.

Looking further on the question of gender and peace-building I've noted that more and more theorists are arguing that a strategy for peace also requires a strategy of change in masculine identities, replacing them with "patterns of masculinity more open to negotiation, co-operation and equality."<sup>43</sup> One woman, Tina Sideris, has argued that men's identity may emerge as more damaged from a period of conflict, and she argues that if no

*We need more research to address underlying gender issues in government and economic reconstruction.*

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attention is made to develop alternative positive masculinities in opposition to essentialist masculinity, then a reassertion of traditional gender norms and roles is inevitable.

Sonya and Maggie both mentioned domestic violence this morning. Shelley Anderson, writing on women and reconciliation, said that it is estimated 40 to 60 per cent of women and girls in any given culture will experience rape, domestic abuse and/or incest at least once in their lives. She says that this link between private violence and the public violence of armed conflict has to be examined because the attitudes and values that give rise to the former lay the groundwork for the latter. She says both are rooted in mind sets where domination, control and beliefs in certain groups' superiority and other groups' inferiority are central. A mindset that permits and justifies the use of physical or psychological force by a superior against an inferior cannot be safely relegated to one corner of life such as the home. She says it will become part of public life<sup>44</sup>.

When I read words like that I think of deeply dysfunctional communities like the Lower Shankill, dominated by the worst brutalities of paramilitarism. What values will be necessary to enable this community to develop? Shelley Anderson says it's time that the traditional 'feminine' values of tolerance, listening and openness to dialogue become accepted as values for both women and men. She's not saying, in any kind of essentialist feminist way, that that's what women have. She is saying that those kind of values that we in the women's sector would like to promote need to become the norm in society.

The evidence shows that when security sector reform – the police, the military, judicial institutions, the whole gamut – operates from a gender-neutral stance, they don't look at women's experiences, which means that in a post-conflict context women's security and human rights are usually not part of the security sector agenda, even though usually in a post-conflict situation we have greater gender-based insecurity. We know from South Africa that the incidence of rape has soared in the post-apartheid era. The evidence here is that domestic violence is a serious issue. We need to collect that evidence, and we need evidence-based research to influence our institutions and to contribute to improving the situation of women.

*... in a post-conflict context women's security and human rights are usually not part of the security sector agenda, even though usually in a post-conflict situation we have greater gender-based insecurity.*

### Current research

The research that Bernadette and Rosie have talked about this morning, is very important, because it does stress women's agency. That is, those at the heart of this research are not *victims* of conflict but *survivors*; who strategised for survival for themselves and the maintenance of their families. They are looking at how women determined between competing demands and identities in the midst of violent conflict. We talked about breaking that silence of how women have survived, and I very much would urge

that that kind of research is undertaken and funded. I have also looked at motherhood in a divided society; the strategies used by women to maintain the safety of their children. I haven't been able to get extra funding for it.

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**I would argue that none of that kind of work fits the criteria laid down by funders at the moment, and none of it is funded through Peace money.**

Are there other projects being undertaken that are relevant to women and peace-building, but are outside the parameters of Peace II? If they are outside it, can we start to collate the kinds of research? If we do have that body of money and objectives that Pauline identified at the beginning, then those are the kind of research areas that we should now be getting together and arguing for the importance of funding. We have plenty of action research on empowering women to take part in public life – the *POWER* Partnership; WEA's *Women on the Fringes*, *Democrashe*, empowering women in political life. We need much more research, however, on institutions and the obstacles that prevent equal participation. So much of our research has been focussed on women; women beating themselves up on why women aren't taking part in public life, and what skills women need in order to do that. What we haven't been doing enough is interrogating those institutions which don't welcome women. We need to start asking them what their practices are; in order to change those practices. There should be research on women who haven't been adopted as candidates; asking political parties why they're not making use of the legislation that permits women-only shortlists. We should be researching things like that, in order to change that emphasis and make institutions more receptive.

### Suggestions for future research

There are so many suggestions for future research that people here have already identified.

- Identifying the structures and mechanisms needed to encourage and enhance women's participation in post-conflict societies;
- Documenting the norms and institutional practices that militate against women;
- Looking at strategies for women to have an effective economic role in society — *not* strategies that are completely outside what we would regard as meaningful occupations, such as the development of microbusinesses;
- Exploring how women can be involved in decision-making at governmental level; how women can influence the policy process and the policy agenda. What steps are necessary to achieve this? How we can facilitate dialogue between the women's sector and policy makers;
- Work around the Bill of Rights, the potential of human rights instruments combined with gender analysis to shape peace-building and reconstruction programmes. Looking at that whole debate around the Bill of Rights, and gendering that debate a lot more;
- Determining lessons from country-based reconstruction experiences, concerning the relative emphasis given to the rights of women as a group versus the general framework emphasising the rights of all citizens.

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## Conclusion

To conclude, we are concerned about how can we sustain the gains that have been made by women in Peace I and Peace II to ensure that they continue beyond the next few years. How can we work to ensure that women are included in all areas of peace-building and decision making? Obviously we need greater resources for women, and for women's organisations, but we need much more than simply mainstreaming services currently being offered by the women's sector. That's a danger in a lot of work that's being done at the moment, such as the task force that's being set up. The onus is on the women's sector to show the services they offer provide value for money, so that the funding will be mainstreamed. I think that's a very dangerous route if we only concentrate on that. The political implications of that have been mentioned this morning; the dangers of moving to the centre and keeping quiet.

**We need a lot more work. We need to work to change the mindset, to have a paradigm shift in the attitudes of male society; politicians, civil service, the judiciary, security and many in the community sector. I don't think it can be achieved until we have a coherent programme that considers the gendered nature of decision making and challenges the masculine ethos of our society; research that emphasises our international obligations to include gender in conflict resolution offers an opportunity to begin that process.**



## discussion

**Claire Hackett:** I started off thinking about the impact of sectarianism, but as you were talking, Margaret, I realised there were allusions to things. Words you were saying were bringing me back to the Holy Cross situation. You talked about North Belfast, and then mediation skills and motherhood. Every now and again, I would just be coming back to my experience of the Holy Cross<sup>45</sup> situation, and my feeling of having failed those children. I was involved in walking up the road with the pre-school children. There were children who would come out of school who were four or five years old and I would be walking up the road through the police cordon with them. It made me think, whenever you were talking about mediation skills. What I needed more of there was something about challenging the police for the way that whole situation was policed, because it was really terrible.

I felt that I didn't take on any kind of role other than walking up and walking down with the children, trying to be some kind of buffer. I didn't do anything about the way the police were treating the parents and the children there. I was intimidated as well. It reinforced for me questions around how do you do peace-building and how do you do conflict resolution whenever some kind of structure for challenging that isn't there? How do you deal with that kind of sectarianism and the damage that it creates?

It made me think, as well, about how women mothered and looked after their children in that situation and tried to preserve their children's rights and dignity. That's so recent, that situation, and it looks like it could be happening again. It feels imperative to me that if we are going to do research around peace-building and the role of women somehow all of that has to be in there.

**Eilish Rooney:** I went to a meeting around that time of the voluntary sector organisations that had an interest in children, and their question to



*Representatives of Peace II-funded projects, attending an ADM/CPA support session in Ballyshannon, January 2003.*

themselves was: “what can we do about the Holy Cross situation?” It was very difficult because there were so many political perspectives. What happened was that no one was able — the space wasn't there for them to move in to — to collectively actively *do* anything. It seemed to me quite a straightforward situation, but that wasn't possible.

I'm going to try to make connections between Joanne's and Margaret's presentations. You asked us to interrogate the institutions. I think that the women's sector has been consolidated by Peace I monies. We need to interrogate that as well, because it's been consolidated under certain terms, requiring certain exclusions. Some of the exclusions that have been required for a certain part of the women's sector to become consolidated have involved some big issues. We know this. Speaking about it isn't about wanting fights or arguments, or wanting to do 'yah boo' stuff. It's about being able to be critical of what's happened. Not to beat up on ourselves, but to connect poverty and domestic violence and feminism and those other issues to the realities of the State within which we live.

It's absolutely crucial, it defines all of us, and our experiences of the State need to be brought into

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the story. It needs not to be seen as some kind of betrayal of the good work that the women's sector has done to be saying that the women's sector has been constructive in a particular way, and promotes a certain political agenda. Those things are connected to real issues of women's lives and how they're lived. I don't think it's such a hard job to say we need to bring that in; we need to do the business of deconstructing to bring that in, in order to move forward. The shared future to which we

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want to move forward has to have some understanding of the past on which it builds.

So not including the island, or not including the State, and relationships of women to the State, are crucial gaps that need to be integrated into the analysis of our lives.

**D y m p n a  
M c G l a d e :**

There's been excellent research done in all sorts of different areas.

One of the

difficulties is that there's no co-ordinated approach to the lobbying on the findings. The research is done, and reported to the funding body, but it then seems to sit there. There's no follow-up action to address the issue that the research has identified.

So I would be keen that any research is done in a way that there is an agreement on what research needs to be done and what's going to be done with

it. It should be followed through by agreed organisations, rather than just out there so you can cherry-pick at it as and when you want to quote from it.

What groups tend to do, rather than say, "Here's what our vision is for the future"; is to throw everything on the table and say, "Here's what the problems are". Once they've done that, then they'll look and say, "Here's what we think could be solutions to it, and that includes research". A *Shared Future*, warts and all, has provided an opportunity for people to come together — maybe for this group to come together and broaden out — to talk about what the issues have been. There are resources to enable all consultations at any level, be it a small group or a big group. If you want to take this a bit further and put it under the umbrella of *A Shared Future*, but not necessarily solely that — we can provide facilitators, and funding for a venue. All organisations need to do is provide the people. I would like to make you an offer of that resource, open until the 30th of September.

**Pauline Conroy:** Margaret's presentation was fascinating, and in particular her comments on the lessons to be learnt from the Parades Commission, and the need for audit of gender practices at certain moments and at certain phases.

Very specific suggestions might come under the area of institution building. I find it very relevant to what happened in Dublin in 2001 when the Structural Funds were being converted into operational programmes. There was a lot of discussion as to whether there would be three, four or five operational programmes to spend the money, and a number of women senior civil servants wanted to have an extra operational programme which was going to be equality and exclusion. They put together a budget for it and designed programmes and measures. They didn't believe for 10 seconds that they'd get it, but they did it for tactical reasons so that they would get a greater

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share of the operational programmes that were going to come on stream. These were women militants within the public sector who would be relatively invisible to the outside world, but who nevertheless took that important action because they felt that for the society as a whole there were significant exclusions coming up the line that needed to have a public sector or a public welfare view, or they needed to be aired in public in some way.

In response to that, a number of other developments occurred in the same period. The Department of Transport and Public Infrastructure decided to appeal to Brussels for an opt-out, so that they didn't have to take gender on board, and they succeeded. I could be disputed on this,<sup>46</sup> but they succeeded in getting at least for the first three years of Structural Funds that there would be no gender view on transport as a public issue. All expenditure would go ahead without any screening for gender. So public safety, lighting of train stations, use of busses, building of roads, access for prams, you name it, was not going to have a gender view, and the same for public infrastructure projects, hospitals and so on. Now some of the biggest scandals that are emerging right now are in the areas of public building construction, lack of access, and in the areas of roads, lighting, all the areas where the public are screaming are the very areas that were sealed off from the gender scrutiny.

So Margaret is making a very important point on this gender audit, because it has the benefit not only of opening up to half the society, but to all the residents and the citizens. Also, it opens formal doors to accountability. That's very necessary if you're not going to have the society littered, as at present, with tribunals of enquiry into corruption. It's a necessary democratic way of allowing people to see what their own society is, and whether they think it is their own, or somebody else's. It allows that movement to occur.

**Ailbhe Smyth:** I found Margaret's paper a very good overview, particularly of the gaps, because we would all be very conscious of the gaps. Thank you very much, Margaret. There were two points I wanted to make, and to some extent they follow on from some things that have already been said. One of them is in terms of women's diverse and very urgent and acute needs; but also in terms of the need for women to effectively take control of development, of change. For all kinds of reasons it's very often quite difficult to step back from empirical research, or policy-related research. There is a huge pressure to produce work that we can actually use and that can be promoted and can be used for lobbying.



*Mary Kelly, head of ADM/CPA's Finance Section.*

Of course I'm in favour of that, but at the same time, and particularly during periods of change, it is extremely important that some people doing research should be saying, "Hold on a moment, let's stand back from this, let's get a perspective. Let's really explore some of the underlying questions that are going begging." So that when we say, for example, we want more women in decision-making, well, yes, of course we do. We want more women to be able to have agency and to make decisions; but we don't necessarily want more women to be making decisions in the kinds of structures and ways and according to the sorts

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of processes by which decisions are actually made.

We need to be looking at something Margaret and Pauline raised: what kind of democratic structures, what kinds of meaningful democracy can be brought forward at a particular moment in time and at a particular place? A moment of intense change, with all its difficulty, is also a moment of opportunity, for saying, “well, it’s all really dreadful.” We can’t afford, precisely because

*“...what kind of democratic structures, what kinds of meaningful democracy can be brought forward at a particular moment in time and at a particular place? A moment of intense change, with all its difficulty, is also a moment of opportunity, for saying, “well, it’s all really dreadful.” We can’t afford, precisely because things are bad, just to cobble it together into some kind of look-alike version of what happens elsewhere.”*

things are bad, just to cobble it together into some kind of look-alike version of what happens elsewhere.

So it is really the moment to be saying: what do we mean by democracy? What do we mean by decision-making? What exactly do we mean by participation? Are our democracies going to be only representative, or are they going to be

contributive and participative and so on? What’s that going to look like on the ground? Then you really get back to the practical issues.

There always needs to be that kind of dialectic between the practical and the policy oriented, and what as an academic is more theoretical. It is very important, and the one is informed by the other. There isn’t enough talk about that on the island of Ireland at the present time and there isn’t enough talk about it in the EU either.

My second point – these are kind of related – is that we do talk about the women’s movement and (in the North in particular) the women’s sector. Of course, that’s extremely complex and it also leaves out a great deal. There are an awful lot of women who don’t identify with the women’s sector, and they are very often the women in power that someone spoke about earlier. One of the things we do very urgently need is much more micro-information. That would enable everyone to arrive at a better understanding of what happens to the lives of women who have *not* had any kind of access to a public platform, or when they have, have never been listened to. I’m thinking about very diverse groups of women who are often spoken for, and for whom we have as feminists, in different ways, tried to set up the kind of research projects which really are participatory. There isn’t enough of that, and the groups of women keep changing; there are always new groups of women.

We really need that micro-information if we’re serious about addressing the needs of groups of women in very different states of inequality.

My third point is the need for more comparative and collaborative research, because what’s happening here in the North has to be thought about as that, but also in the EU context and in terms of other global movements. What happens here is not just controlled by whoever is making decisions here or in the UK or the South, it is also part of the global trend, drift, tendencies. It’s very important for us in Ireland as a whole to be mega aware of that at the present time because we are talking and behaving as if we can make changes that are going to stick for everybody.

**Ann Hope:** I’d like also to thank Margaret. A lot of what she said raised different things in my head.

One of them was around women and decision-making, women in decision-making bodies, women in public life. You were right to put a lot of emphasis on that, particularly since the Belfast



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Agreement leads to thinking in many ways in terms of women in formal political structures and public bodies. Not forgetting, of course, that women are still involved in public and political life in so many other ways. We need to consider how we support those women and the way in which they change, make and influence policies as well; because we all do it, even if we're not a member of the Assembly or on a public body. For instance, responding to *A Shared Future*, that's very much about influencing public life and decision-making at the highest levels.

I'm also on the Equality Commission, and I'm conscious that many times I would like more information to help me come to decisions that I make around policies in there. I'm a woman activist and I have very little time to sit back and reflect. A lot of the work I do is very reactive. I get dozens of documents on my desk almost every day that need responses. These could be about looking at the transposition of European directives into domestic legislation; it could be somebody's equality impact assessment, it could be *A Shared Future*, it could be on pensions. I'm sort of knocking them down like skittles without really sitting back and thinking, how does this impact across sectors? While I would look at Section 75, if I'm working with my Section 75 hat on, there's many times I look at some other policy without even thinking about the Section 75 impact.

Regarding what Margaret said about interrogating the institutions, it isn't about women beating ourselves up because we are not going forward for every public body; or we're not going on to the Parades Commission because we haven't time or we haven't the reasons. It's about actually saying that the culture has to change as well as various institutions, and we really ought to be focussing in on those. Maybe we should think about using Section 75 as a possible way to do that. A lot of people are saying it isn't working. I think it's that

the institutions don't really want to make it work, as opposed to the fact that Section 75 hasn't the potential to make enormous changes.

It's also about 'women' being one of nine grounds. Women are there in terms of race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, politics. We have to find ways to look at the multi-identities that women have and continue to put that across. Which makes me wonder why we're all white women sitting here today. None of us have got any disabilities; and many would say most of us come from one particular religious background. So if we're going to talk about how we influence the decision-making, how we influence the shared future, why aren't the women here from different race backgrounds, why aren't the women with disabilities here?

The public life issue is still one that really needs to be tackled in a whole variety of ways. Public life also means women who are beaver away in the background just to try to influence a change of policy at a different level. We need to tie them in, make contact, build up support groups for women on public bodies to feed them through the stuff that needs fed through. We should think about how we do that, how we structure that. Also to encourage, as we have been doing, more and more women to come at all those consultative documents and look for a shared perspective on it as well.

Gender is being knocked off the new European Constitution. Margaret talked about women in the old Eastern European countries. Many of them want enlargement of the EU because they see enlargement and being part of Europe as the way in which they can buy into that gender agenda and into equality. It's going to be much more difficult to do that now because gender's no longer holding one of those central positions. We need to write to whoever we need to write to, to continue to

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influence that constitution's changes.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** We should try to think very deliberately about research for our own benefit. There should be some kind of pool of people that think about these theoretical issues, so that there is some kind of relationship. At the beginning of the women's movement there were a lot of new ideas, people were not afraid of them, they weren't reactive. Now, what's happening is that we're always trying to be practical. Something has been

*"The reduction of inequality in this country to a phrase known as 'Section 75' is scary. ... the greater number of people in the North are actually women. So why are we sitting down in the Section 75 section?"*

lost. We can only be effective if we have this core of thinking of radical things that are going to seem a bit threatening to the people that are actually in the system. What used to happen was that there was

not a good synergy between the two, and if we could do that it would help connect people thinking purely on issues to people that can implement ideas. We need to think about what we want to do before we actually see how we implement it. We need to work with women — people — who are already in power, who would be much more effective. At the moment we limit ourselves, because we think reactively, in terms of what can we do about a particular inequality. What we should think about is, what do we want to do? Where can we get the money? It would be a lot more effective if we did that.

**Bernadette McAliskey:** Two things. First of all, it's quite clear that we're all sitting around talking about more than what we're going to do with Peace II money. Having started a conversation, and a discussion, we find ourselves, as usual, with insufficient time to do it. I'd like to thank Ruth

and ADM/CPA for creating this opportunity, and Margaret again for setting out so clearly the things we have to do. It does bring us back. I'm particularly interested in the UN Resolution 1325 because sometimes we are so — I was going to say that undiplomatically and I'll continue, as usual, to behave undiplomatically — full of our own importance sometimes that it frightens me. We are a small island on the periphery of Europe. Our international strategic importance is nil, apart from when somebody needs a handy airport that saves them flying across the world.

Yes, I think there's value in starting with our own experiences, but there is little value in then redefining the entire world in terms of how it fits in to a quite limited agenda of our own. So there's great value in starting with the UN Resolution. Maybe that's a good key to go back to my first point, of beginning to look at creating space in terms of women and peace-building, which was the name of the Zurich conference that I attended.

It started from a totally different agenda. Very high on the international agenda is the UN Resolution, which doesn't really get mentioned here at all. Yet it's very key to other conflicts in Africa, outside of South Africa. In peace-building we tend to have a domino effect. What happened in South Africa, we made it work here and we teach it to the Palestinians. Peace-building done.

Then if we are having women, we will have *women* peacemakers from South Africa, from here and from Palestine in the women's peace-building conference; and that's *it* done. Then we go on to the economics, and the social capital. The economics is how to get women into the big business, and the social capital is how to get women to do it for nothing; and that's *it* done.

We really need to make space, and to look at a conference over a period of three days and be prepared to put the money into it. We need to look at the development of critical research and analysis



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that *informs future activity*, without putting the onus on the researcher to solve the issues identified. It's not necessarily the function of a researcher or a research programme to then also become lobbyists and advocates. We can't have the attitude that you can't research unless you are going to take that through to enacting the legislation.

There is serious work to be done and we've identified it here, in terms of peace-building and very clearly understanding what it is we mean by it, and also understanding the whole issue of identities within that. The reduction of inequality in this country to a phrase known as 'Section 75' is scary. The Equality Coalition<sup>47</sup> of which some of us are members, is very good in networking in addressing that. It is, nevertheless scary that on the one hand we have the dreaded multiple deprivation indicators — you need to be able to show that you're actually wedged between 49 pieces of deprivation before you can get anything, but your identity is now boxed. You are either a person with a disability or you are a woman. You actually can't be all of those things. Your capacity, for example, to be a rural woman with dependants whose sexuality is lesbian *and* you have a physical disability: they will just say, "take her away". Which would you like to be today; because you can only be one of the nine. Which of these boxes would you like to sit in today?

We have to an extent fed into that. Women in the North are numerically, I believe, the 'greater number of people', as Mr Trimble would say. The 'greater number of people' in the North may, on one axis be unionists; but the greater number of people in the North are *actually* women. So why are we sitting down in the Section 75 section? Bearing in mind where inequalities and states of inequality are, we have to get our agency back. A lot of women's agency is a casualty of the peace. We have been boxed into Section 75 as women, or fit within the Peace criteria. That's very

disempowering for the work we have to do and the impact that we can make right across the board.

I agree with Ailbhe that somewhere in the middle of that — and I mean theory in its best sense, I don't mean isolated — the theory, the academic, the intellectual interrogation of things is lost, a casualty of the peace. I go back to saying that one of the things that should come out of this discussion is a conference which allows us more time to explore those things, right across the board. People from here and people whose experiences aren't from here — preferably not confined to South Africa and Palestine — can inform us at local, neighbourhood, academic, and state levels. Then out of that, maybe a serious bid for the Women and Peace-building Operational Programme for the island.

**Maggie Beirne:** I want to emphasise Margaret's point about the need to research the obstacles. I think we do have a fairly clear idea, at least in certain areas, of what we want to achieve, but the wheel keeps getting reinvented. We need to work out who is behind that, what's happening. It would be a very important contribution to how we actually secure change.

**Ella O'Dwyer:** I wanted to take up what Bernadette was saying. The theoretical, academic approach, and then things about the casualties of the peace work, identities, that sort of stuff. I just wonder why we aren't talking about the ideological or the political? Is it that we can't say these words here? Can we really solve one issue of equality without trying to solve the whole lot? This is what gets me, talking about the so-called socialist republic, that great inspiration. Can we actually take one little chunk out of this whole thing or do we have to do the whole lot in one leap? Maybe it's the only choice we have.

**Bernadette McAliskey:** Well, the one thing you can be sure of, it'll not be funded. Part of the

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problem is that people think if they are very cunning it will be. It won't. There is no way that's on the agenda, but it does go back to what – in the overall sense – we're doing. Looking at it in an overall sense, what part of it, what areas of work are fundable, and what needs to be done in other ways?

I do feel that there are areas of work in the building of the socialist republic we have had to do elsewhere. There are areas of this work that are not in direct contravention of it; there are areas that are.

**Ailbhe Smyth:** I absolutely *would not* evacuate politics from the country. I use the word academic, because I will be perceived as an academic here. I'm talking about something theoretical, but that's hugely important to any political project. Effectively, what we are, variously, involved in – we would define this, I'm sure, very differently – is a transformative project. It is a revolutionary project, in effect. Bernadette *isn't* going to get funding for a conference organised by women called 'Reflecting on revolution and its future on the island of Ireland' but that actually *may* be what we might like to do. The cunning could perhaps relate to the way in which that's framed, and how the proposal for such a conference is framed. It could nonetheless provide a space for doing the subtitle which is not actually up in neon lights but is whatever I said it was — reflecting on the future of revolution on the island of Ireland — which I think wouldn't be a bad undertaking at all. We might not get very far in three days.

Words like 'reflection', 'critique', they're the ones that have come up — 'conflict', 'resistance'; and they're difficult in the wake of the peace. They are also — in the South, where we ignore everything going on in the North — very difficult in the wake of things like partnerships, consensus, mainstreaming and so on. So let's not make any mistake and think that somehow the North of Ireland has got really far behind, the radical things

that are happening elsewhere. Do you really think they are happening elsewhere? You *don't* actually think that, you know they're not. There are specific conditions which produce the pull-back and the centrism at the present time in the world. They do vary from place to place, but the result is pretty much the same, wherever you're looking. There is no radical thinking going on, or very little. Trying to get beyond that is a big challenge.

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**Ruth Taillon:** There seems to be a consensus emerging about a conference. In terms of the research element of this I think there is also a consensus that there needs to be more critical analysis in terms of issues around a society in transition from conflict and whatever other buzz words we want to use. Can I get some idea from people about whether they see a conference being a necessary step to set the research agenda; or is it something that's needed at another level, around taking forward a policy agenda we already have? If we're agreed that there is a need for more critical analysis, are we agreed where that needs to focus?

Do we know enough about the impact of the conflict on different people in terms of how some people came out of it and some people didn't? Where we want to go with that? I know for instance that nationalist women in 1994, when the peace process was developing, did try to set some agendas in terms of issues such as how do we define

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democracy, and that got lost somewhere in the peace process and the peace programme.

**Pauline Conroy:** The way I would feel about this is that the conference idea is very useful in thinking beyond Peace II, III, IV and forever. It's a futuristic idea that we should do now. The question about which we were asked to come here today is a different question. We were asked, what parameters or frames or visions would you put on a research programme if it were possible to have one? The conference is not opposed to that, but I think it's a slight step beyond it. It's so complex that the

of feminism and peace-building. Those discourses contain conceptual traps. Because you're always trying to dovetail your projects for funding, you start to think in the funding framework terms of reference and forget your feminism and forget other issues. It might be useful for this group to identify what those traps are and what projects you've done where you think, perhaps, "I did that, but really if I had it to do again and I wasn't constrained by funders what would I have done?"

Everybody in this room — you've been here for 30 years — you know what the issues are. You've



*Helen Johnston, Director, Combat Poverty Agency, (left) and Avila Kilmurray, Director, Community Foundation of Northern Ireland (right), with journalists Eamonn McCann and Susan McKay at the ADM/CPA Challenges of Peace seminar, February 2003.*

two would probably need to go together on a different time frame.

I would see the research question coming back out of the summary of the discussions today, and the conference as an ongoing idea that should carry through into a number of post-Peace situations. Hopefully somewhere there'll be elections; parliaments, elections, governments. We have a big problem in that there is no government in part of Ireland, and it's ungovernable in parts of the rest of Ireland. So we're in a difficult situation to be formulating clear ideas, but I think the contributions today have been very helpful.

**Ruth Jamison:** We need to look at the discourses

also had to be the supplicants to funders. If you think of the ways that you've been constrained and limited by it, it might be one way of identifying those traps. Whatever small amount of money is left under Peace II, it still can be sought without anybody feeling compromised if we're reflective and self-critical now about all the corner-cutting and compromising that has been done in the past that may not have been all that productive. Maybe that would be a place to start. What are the traps?

What are the things that weren't done that you might have wanted to do if you had been more free from those constraints?

**Pauline Perry:** I work very much on the ground

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and I come very much from a social inclusion background. I've just recently moved into the Peace Programme. I find the silence there amazing.

We spent a lot of time at Peace I in building up capacity and creating the beginnings of some sort of trust. In Peace II we have jumped so far forward that we haven't identified or deconstructed where we are.

I thought the idea of the conference was in order to kick start the research, or put more meat on the bones, a thing that would help do that. Because of where I'm coming from — a very broad community development perspective and I've lived in the North and worked in the South. —I find the silence is amazing, particularly in the South. No one articulates peace-building. We're asking people to come up with outputs and we're going to meet those outputs, and we're going to have all the people trained in personal development, but personally I can't see it making great inroads in terms of peace-building on the ground. There's a silence there when you look at Holy Cross. We still after all these years don't know how to deal with that.

I would like to see some research coming out of this in terms of how it is for women on the ground.

Something that will actually break down that silence, the things which have stopped us saying what it is that is stopping us moving forward. I just thought that a conference, looking at where we're at and how we can put some structure on research, is a good idea.

**Bernadette McAliskey:** I don't think that the idea of a conference is outside of Pauline's parameters.

The next step is recognising that we're a group of people who come round this table by invitation to kick-start something. That's why we're here, we're here by invitation. We have to go back. If we're saying, "where are the gaps?" — the first place they are is round the table, which is not

anybody's fault. Sometimes the best way to start anything is by inviting the people who are known to have a specific interest and have already identified the issue. Then you do have to go back and see where the gaps are. I think the gaps we have identified will be reflected by other people, but there will be new gaps.

This country is in transition. One of the single biggest impacts of the peace has been inward migration to Northern Ireland. It's an entirely new phenomenon. It's partly the political stability here, it's partly the expansion of the European Union. For the first time we are dealing with women who don't have linguistic capacity in English. It's not on anybody's agenda until it's specifically seen to be problematic, until we're dealing with a crisis, and then we'll crisis-manage it. So when I said that we should be looking towards people with experiences outside this country I didn't mean we should be having an international conference on global peace-building. There are women in Angola, there are women in Mozambique coming out of war, who are putting it together on the ground. There are women who have very good experiences at that level to share about silences and about lack of context against which to work. We don't know any of those women's needs until we organise some way by which all the others can come.

We need to have access to the stories that people tell. But while that's important, just telling the stories isn't enough. Not everybody can read through the stories of a particular area and draw from them the lessons that might be important in a generalised sense, even though they can empathise with the stories themselves. That's where I think there is a need for research as opposed to appraisal.

So I don't think that a conference is juxtaposed to what Pauline is saying. I'm not talking about an international conference. I think we do need a

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research programme. I think if we are to look at the gaps in the research, and what research is best—then we need a wider and more structured input from women. Part of that conference has to be a

*“One of the single biggest impacts of the peace has been inward migration to Northern Ireland. It’s an entirely new phenomenon. It’s partly the political stability here, it’s partly the expansion of the European Union. For the first time we are dealing with women who don’t have linguistic capacity in English. It’s not on anybody’s agenda until it’s specifically seen to be problematic, until we’re dealing with a crisis, and then we’ll crisis-manage it.”*

recognition that there is not – there may be from here out but there is not from here back – a shared memory of where we have been. We have not all been in the same place. That has to be acknowledged. If we are all coming to the same place from now, we are not just coming to it from different *perspectives*, we are coming to it from different *places*. And those places have, in the past, been oppositional. We need to do our own peace-building. That conference, properly structured, is a piece of research in itself that leads into and makes the case for the research programme. There may be other conferences after it. So I don’t think they’re juxtaposed.

**Ann Hope:** I’m sure we’ll all come back with much more concrete things about what needs to be inside the framework, that Pauline put forward earlier, which was very useful. We might need to think about linking bits in so that there is a whole. We could have all very discrete bits of research that we could all be interested in, but there might

be some value in looking at how they link together into providing information around a number of linked issues. We’d all like to do particular things, but we’re all going to be working within particular limits, within parameters that we don’t set. Maybe we should identify what would be the most useful kinds of research inside of that.

*It was agreed to continue the discussion after lunch, although some participants were unable to stay on.*

**Joanna McMinn:** It’s important to build on what has been done, as well. One of the things at the moment is that there is a very strong groundswell around women and decision-making and therefore being involved in institutions, and women’s participation in organised civil society. Julia, you said something to me about *Jobs for the Boys*.<sup>48</sup> The National Women’s Council research on jobs for the boys is purely around proportionality, getting more women number-wise into positions. And it makes recommendations around legislation such as parity laws. What is clearly lacking in that is this whole issue of researching processes and practices within institutions and political parties and government, within civil society generally. The photographic exhibition<sup>49</sup> has caught people’s imagination in terms of being a very visual reflection of the lack of women in those places. It’s important to build on some pieces of research that have been done — there’s a groundswell around — and also to put those into more of a North/South context. At the moment we are doing research into childcare policy. It’s the same issue North and South, but it plays out differently, in the way things are structured. It would be useful to be looking at things like that. Those kinds of collaborative and comparative pieces of research could build on things that are already happening around which there is some interest. I know we need to stand back and look at some of the other things as well, but to capitalise on the energy that



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is there, in research already going on, would be very useful.

**Margaret Ward:** Over the years, that North/South linking hasn't been developed. We are either talking about things happening in one part of the country or the other. A lot of things are happening in parallel. If we are having a conference, could part of that be making that link and developing that link?

**Joanne McMinn:** I don't know if everybody is familiar with the work of the Research Collaboration Group (RSG). Eight pieces of research were done North and South and were brought together.<sup>50</sup> However, they remain disparate pieces of research and the RSG hasn't been able to move beyond looking at the research content.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** We should research with intent, have a clear intent at the beginning of the research. We shouldn't end up with a piece of research and then wonder what do we do with it, but agree what are we going to do with it at the beginning. It seems to me that a lot of research doesn't really have the impact that it should have; it doesn't actually change very many things. Some of it could have a lot more impact if we thought about impact at the very beginning.

**Ruth Taillon:** There are different pieces of research done by different people for different purposes. Hopefully, what comes out of this day is that we can pinpoint the issues – not for just the women's sector or the trade unions, or academics to do in their different agendas. There is space for academic research which could be used by all sorts of people, and you couldn't necessarily say this is how it should be used at this stage, whereas on the other hand a woman's organisation might decide we need a specific piece of research in order to lobby on a specific issue.

**Ailbhe Smyth:** I don't think we should say there's academic research there, and there's research by women's organisations, and so on, because that way, ultimately, madness lies. Because the academics will just go on doing what academics do, and so will women's organisations. Facilities need to be there, and they are already, in lots and lots of examples. One of the parameters for future research does need to be precisely that; that it looks at collaboration and co-operation not only in terms of cross-border stuff but also very much between different types of insights or contacts, or whatever. That is vital to women's interests.

**Ruth Taillon:** I don't disagree with you at all. All I was saying is that we shouldn't necessarily be prescriptive before we start.

**Sonya Murray:** This is the most stimulating and interesting discussion I have participated in for a very long time that was entitled anything to do with peace-building. I've been in awe of some of the contributions and the thinking, and delighted to be here. I'm also saddened that this kind of discourse doesn't seem to take place in any other fora in which I've ever participated.

Under the rubric of work that – as somebody said earlier – has to be done in its own right and not defined by Peace II, is something that has been touched on by Bernadette and others. It's concerning the discourses we need to have — the conversations we need to have — and the healing that needs to be done between feminists on this island; for those who were ignored, who ignored each other, who didn't support the others. That needs to happen anyway. Maybe, in a fancy way, some of the fractures, some of the not smooth energy that we have in pursuing things arises from us not having had those healing conversations and discourses. I got really excited about having a conference that would bring together a range of people with that possibility. We've all this money



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for healing, but somehow it's like because we're women we don't need to do that, or we don't need to have that kind of conversation separately. That's one thing I would really like to see.

On the research, people talk of the different voices and us not knowing enough. There are a lot of gaps. We don't know enough about the stories and experiences of a variety of people and their perspectives on issues. One of the ones I keep battering on about is that for women in Southern Border Counties there are particular experiences. Joanna made the point about things being played out differently; they're played out even more differently for people on the Border. There are women there who are immensely resourceful, who have their children in Craigavon Hospital and use the library in Crossmaglen, and use some other services in Carrickmacross, and who mediate the Border all the time. But the impact of the Border on their lives has not been documented in any way. They're peripheral to Belfast and they're peripheral to Dublin. So I would make a plea for that gap in the research to be acknowledged.

**Pauline Conroy:** Timing is important in these questions. In 2004, Ireland is going to hold the Presidency of the EU just before or as it enlarges to 25 countries. So it will be seeking to soak itself in Presidential glory. It would be a great regret if it wasn't able to do that with all the women of the island. So the timing is important in relation to the when and how of this conference, if it is to take place.

**Claire Hackett:** What we are talking about is the impact of the Conflict. It seems very stupid saying that now, but that's a way to focus on the research, to take up on Sonya's point. We have been talking about lots of different possible impacts that we have experienced ourselves, but also that we see in the work that we do. Just to make that very obvious point; that is the research that we're talking about.

We have to talk about those impacts and all the different ways that they are. How they're continuing to impact; because the conflict is going on in some areas. We really cannot forget that. Also, how the impacts are still carrying on; and how we can change that. Just to pick up on Marie-Helene's point; yes, be clear on what is the point of it, but the point of it is to change things.

**Joanne McMinn:** We are talking about a conference and a programme of research. Two things. There should be a certain amount of progression in parallel in those two things, but if they were to — as Claire articulated — address the impact of the Conflict in order to move forward then you could see the two being within Pauline's framework. So would that become a way that we could begin to frame it? In other words, the conference and the research programme would have the same general purpose, but it could also be within a much wider European, international, global context?

**Claire Hackett:** Yes.

**Margaret Ward:** The questions that the conference addresses will be the questions that have been raised here, and which will also inform research topics; but we have the option of also emphasising the broader applications outside of Ireland.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** If we're going to have a research programme which is going to be non-prescriptive maybe we should also spend some time looking at processes. If we are going to apply for funding we have to be quite clear about how it's going to be delivered. We can't do that now, but should we not work on it?

**Joanne McMinn:** The Community Foundation's standing community convention is all about peace-building, but it is very general in terms of

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community development. I would have thought that an important part of that would be to take women as one aspect, and that would possibly give statutory financial support to that.

**Marie-Helene Knox:** I don't think there is any problem about finding funding for it, but we are going to have to be quite clear in our heads about what kind of a research programme we want, what exactly is going to happen.

**Ruth Taillon:** I now think that the gist of the conference is around silences, which to a certain extent is back to what Bernadette was saying, but

we started the discussions about broadening it out to let other people participate. Part of the purpose of the conference will be to identify and let people talk about certain areas. It will give space to the voices of certain groups of women around particular things – like the community relations debate, or what is democracy, what sort of democracy we want. To a certain extent it will be identifying what research is needed. I'm now seeing the two things more fitting together more than what I thought before — which was a conference and a research agenda. Now I'm seeing that the one is informing the other.

*There followed a discussion about the practicalities of funding and organising a conference. It was agreed that Joanna McMinn, National Women's Council of Ireland, and May McCann, Women's Support Network, would co-ordinate a working group to organise an all-island women's conference in January 2004, to coincide with the Irish Presidency of the EU.*

## references

- <sup>1</sup> www.weft.ie
- <sup>2</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Structural Funds programming documents 2000-2006.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> *The ESF 2000-2006 Ireland*, Directorate of Employment & Social Affairs, European Commission.
- <sup>7</sup> Brian Harvey, *Review of the Peace II Programme*, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, 2003. ., p. 35.
- <sup>8</sup> Brian Harvey, *op. cit.*, *Executive Summary*.
- <sup>9</sup> In the context of new all-island structures and the Combat Poverty Agency's ongoing involvement in the funded Peace II Programme, Combat Poverty has recently commissioned research which will identify and assess the relationships between anti-poverty and social inclusion measures and conflict resolution processes, drawing on national and international experiences. This research will be published early in 2004.
- <sup>10</sup> Brian Harvey, *op. cit.*, *Executive Summary*.
- <sup>11</sup> Ruth Taillon, *NI women's organisations' experience of EU funding programmes*. Women's Support Network, Belfast, 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> *Report to the United Nations on the National Plan for Women 2002 on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*.
- <sup>13</sup> The full text of the Agreement can be found at [www.nio.gov.uk/agreement](http://www.nio.gov.uk/agreement).
- <sup>14</sup> See difference.
- <sup>15</sup> ADM/CPA document
- <sup>16</sup> See *The POWER Report ( Politically Organised Women Educating For Representation) A Summary Report of A Women's Political Development Programme - Feminist Approaches to Politics, the State and Economy in Ireland, North and South (1997-1999)*, the Power Partnership, 2000.
- <sup>17</sup> Information about the Community Relations Council can be found at [www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk).
- <sup>18</sup> Duchas Oral History Project, Falls Community Council/Comhairle Phobail na bhfál, 275 Falls Road, Belfast BT12 7FD. Email: [Claire@fallscommunitycouncil.org](mailto:Claire@fallscommunitycouncil.org).
- <sup>19</sup> See *A Difficult, Dangerous Honesty*,
- <sup>20</sup> Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin. See or email: [Equality@ucd.ie](mailto:Equality@ucd.ie).
- <sup>21</sup> Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –
  - a. between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
  - b. between men and women generally
  - c. between persons with a disability and persons without; and
  - d. between persons with dependents and persons without
 A public authority is also required in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- <sup>22</sup> The Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 promote equality. Both Acts prohibit discrimination on nine grounds. These are: Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief, Age, Disability, Race, Membership of the Traveller Community.
- <sup>23</sup> CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981. The Convention establishes not only an international bill of rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. In its preamble, the Convention explicitly acknowledges that "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist", and emphasizes that such discrimination "violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity". As defined in article 1, discrimination is understood as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex...in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field". The Convention gives positive affirmation to the principle of equality by requiring States parties to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men"(article 3). The agenda for equality is specified in fourteen subsequent articles. In its approach, the Convention covers three dimensions of the situation of women. Civil rights and the legal status of women are dealt with in great detail. In addition, and unlike other human rights treaties, the Convention is also concerned with the dimension of human reproduction as well as with the impact of cultural factors on gender relations.
- <sup>24</sup> After two years of talks between the British and Irish Governments and political parties in Northern Ireland, an Agreement

## references

- was reached on 'Good Friday', 10 April 1998. Also known as the Belfast Agreement, it was endorsed in two separate referenda of the people in Northern Ireland, and the people in the Republic of Ireland, on the same day, 22 May 1998. The Agreement is composed of three main components, called *strands*. concerns the internal structure of Northern Ireland. concerns Northern Ireland's relations with the Republic of Ireland. concerns the relations between the Republic of Ireland and the UK. In addition, the agreement includes sections on , , , and
- 25 Mary Robinson, seventh President of Ireland (1990-1997).
  - 26 The NESF was originally set up by the Government in 1993 for the purposes of achieving consensus, on as wide a basis as possible, on major economic and social policy issues. Since 1998, the Forum's work is focused on evaluating the implementation of policies dealing with equality and social inclusion. See [www.nesf.ie](http://www.nesf.ie).
  - 27 *A Shared Future: A Consultation Paper on Improving Relations in Northern Ireland*, Community Relations Unit, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, January 2003. Available online at .
  - 28 Garda Síochána, (Guardians of the Peace), Irish police service.
  - 29 The selection test for primary school children in Northern Ireland, which determines whether children are eligible for grammar school (intended to lead to university) or will attend a secondary school or comprehensive school from which the majority of students do not proceed to third level education.
  - 30 Since 1998, the Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended four times. It was indefinitely suspended at the time of this discussion.
  - 31 The six counties, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone, [London]Derry which comprise Northern Ireland.
  - 32 Resolution 1325 was passed unanimously by the UN Security Council in October, 2000. It calls on the Council, the UN Secretary General, member states and all other parties i.e. non-state actors, militias, humanitarian agencies, civil society to take action in 4 inter-related areas: 1) Participation of women in decision making and peace processes; 2) Gender perspectives and Training and Peacekeeping; 3) The protection of women' and 4) Gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programme implementation mechanisms.
  - 33 Brandon Hamber, *Peace-building Post 2006: the need for a more expansive view of peace-building*, Keynote address to the Peace-building Post 2006 Workshop, Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, 4 February 2003.
  - 34 Women Waging Peace, Summary of discussions at the 3rd annual Women Waging Peace Research Symposium, November 2001, Harvard University, [www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/researchcenter/symposium/2001/index.asp](http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/researchcenter/symposium/2001/index.asp)
  - 35 ADM/CPA Guidance Notes, Section 5, Project Selection Criteria, p.7.
  - 36 *Gender Equity and Peace-building: from rhetoric to reality, finding a way*: Richard Strickland and Nata Duvvury, International Centre for Research on Women, Washington, 2003.
  - 37 Women governing peace: from personal trauma to political struggle, see Women Governing Peace, [www.kit.nl/gcg/html/women\\_governing\\_peace\\_projects.asp](http://www.kit.nl/gcg/html/women_governing_peace_projects.asp)
  - 38 [www.paradescommission.org](http://www.paradescommission.org)
  - 39 NICVA, The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, an 'umbrella' group for community and voluntary organisations.
  - 40 Women's Support Network, a coalition of community-based women's projects, organisation and networks. See [www.womenssupportnetwork.org](http://www.womenssupportnetwork.org).
  - 41 See page 5.
  - 42 Strickland and Duvarry: 19.
  - 43 R.W. Connell, 'Masculinities, Violence and Peacemaking', *Peace News*, 2443, June-August 2001.
  - 44 Shelley Anderson, 'Women and Reconciliation', article first published in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World*, 1999, European Centre for Conflict Prevention.
  - 45 A blockade by loyalists of the Holy Cross girls' primary school in Ardoyne, North Belfast began in June 2001. The dispute involved serious violence and intimidation against children, parents and teachers. Daily protests throughout the school term continued until 24 November. See the RTE and *Guardian* websites: ; .
  - 46 Julia Long, following the roundtable discussion has offered the following clarification: the measures exempt from the gender mainstreaming process under the Irish National Development Plan are those relating to water, waste water, waste management, energy, coastal protection and national roads, NOT public transport or health.
  - 47 The Equality Coalition is a broad based alliance of groups committed to the full implementation of the statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act). A range of umbrella organisations participate in the Equality Coalition, representing people from the nine equality categories. See: [www.nicva.org/working\\_together/equality\\_coalition](http://www.nicva.org/working_together/equality_coalition).
  - 48 *Irish Politics: Jobs for the Boys*, National Women's Council of Ireland, November, 2002. See: [www.nwci.ie/publications](http://www.nwci.ie/publications).
  - 49 *Putting Women in the Picture: a photographic tour through the corridors of power*. See: [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie).
  - 50 The Research Collaboration Group has produced a joint publication, which summarises the eight research reports and provides an introduction highlighting the collective and crosscutting themes. See [www.weft.ie](http://www.weft.ie).

## keynote speakers

**Joanna McMinn**, *Chief Executive, National Women's Council of Ireland*

**Margaret Ward**, *Deputy Director, Democratic Dialogue*

## participants

**Maggie Beirne**, *Committee on the Administration of Justice*

**Rosie Burrows**, *Researcher, Barnardos.*

**Pauline Conroy**, *Independent Policy Analyst*

**Claire Hackett**, *Co-ordinator, Dúchas Oral History Archive, Falls Community Council*

**Ann Hope**, *Equality Officer, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI Committee)*

**Ruth Jamison**, *Independent Consultant*

**Marie-Helene Knox**, *Peace II team, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland and member of the Victims' Commission*

**Eileen Lavery**, *Director of Policy & Research in the Equality Commission*

**Julia Long**, *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; NDP Gender Equality Unit*

**Catherine Lynch**, *Researcher, Co-operation Ireland*

**Bernadette McAliskey**, *Director, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme*

**May McCann**, *Outreach Officer, Women's Support Network*

**Dympna McGlade**, *Community Relations Council*

**Pauline Millar**, *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Gender Equality Unit*

**Sonya Murray**, *Director Associate, Triskele Community Training and Development*

**Ella O'Dwyer**, *Coiste na n-Iarchimi, the Committee for Republican Ex-Prisoners*

**Pauline Perry**, *Development Officer, ADM/CPA*

**Eilish Rooney**, *Course Director of BA/BSc Community Development Programme, University of Ulster*

## chairperson

**Ruth Taillon**, *Research Co-ordinator, ADM/CPA*