



Diversity, Civil Society and Social Change in Ireland

A North-South Comparison of the
Role of Immigrant / 'New' Minority
Ethnic-Led Community and
Voluntary Sector Organisations

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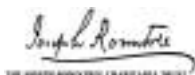


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The Migration & Citizenship Research Initiative is a multi-disciplinary, inter-university and cross-sector research network that supports critically engaged research at national and international levels.

Contents

GLOSSARY	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	10
CHAPTER I	
THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRANT/'NEW'	
MINORITY ETHNIC-LED COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS	17
Establishment & Start-Up	17
Membership, Volunteers & Organisational Structures	21
Activities & Programming	24
Funding	26
I/MELO Relationships	28
CHAPTER II	
SECTOR RELATIONSHIPS: I/MELOS, MSOS & FUNDERS	39
Majority Sector Organisations: Developing Relationships & Working with I/MELOs	39
Fundors: Developing Relationships & Working with I/MELOs	46
CHAPTER III	
I/MELO DEVELOPMENT AND THE OBSTACLES THEY FACE	55
Strengths & Weaknesses – I/MELOs' Views	55
MSOs' & Funders' Views on I/MELO Development & Success	57
Common Obstacles & Added Barriers	59
CHAPTER IV	
IMMIGRANT/MINORITY ETHNIC-LED ORGANISATIONS & THE WIDER CIVIL SOCIETY ARENA	67
Creating a Place in the Sector: Starting at the Bottom & Finding Unity in Diversity	67
Intercultural Capital & the Civic-Based Transformations of Ethnic Diversity	73
CHAPTER V	
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	77
Insights Arising from the Examination of I/MELO Mobilisation	77
Issues & Recommendations	78
♦ Managing I/MELO Diversity, Maximising Outcomes	79
♦ The Implications & Consequences of 'Institutionalised Underdevelopment' for I/MELOs	85
♦ Valuing & Promoting Intercultural Capital in the Evolution of Multi-Ethnic Societies	88
REFERENCES	92
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	93



Glossary/Abbreviations



Intercultural Competence

the orientation, knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in multi-ethnic or cross-cultural contexts. The term originally came from training developed for professionals working overseas and in education, in relation to language training. The concept now also refers to the development of critical self-awareness and the capacities to promote and maintain cross-cultural relationships and cooperation.



Interculturalism

an intercultural approach [that] implies the development of policy that promotes interaction, understanding and integration among and between different cultures and ethnic groups without glossing over issues such as racism' (NCCRI)

Integration

'the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity' (DJELR 1999).

Minority Ethnic Community

a group of people who are ethnically different from (on the basis of ethnic origin or ancestry, cultural practices, identity, language and religion) and constitute a smaller population within the majority society

'New' Minority Ethnic Community

is distinguished from minority ethnic communities 'indigenous' to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, such as Travellers, Black Irish and Jews, even if they are second or even third generation immigrant communities. These are the communities and community-led organisations this research addresses.

Social Capital

the degree to which a community or society is willing and able to cooperate for mutual benefit through access to and use of shared networks, trust, norms and values – and refers largely to the quality of relationships among actors.

I/MELOs

Immigrant/'New' Minority Ethnic-Led Community & Voluntary Organisations

MSOs

Majority Sector Organisations – for the purposes of this study, the term refers to those community and voluntary or 'non-profit' and non-governmental organisations involved work relating to immigrant/minority ethnic communities, as well as semi-state agencies and local authorities involved in Sector- and community development related activities.

Executive Summary

Project Background

The purpose of this research is to contribute to better understanding of the circumstances in which immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic-led community and voluntary organisations (**hereafter, I/MELOs**) are developing, the factors shaping their future success and the implications of their activities for civil society and community life in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. The project was funded by the Royal Irish Academy Third Sector Research Programme and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and the research was conducted in 2003-04 by Alice Feldman, Deo Ladislas Ndakengerwa, Ann Nolan and Carmen Frese.

The project involved interviews conducted in both jurisdictions, including 23 interviews with founders and representatives of I/MELOs (representing a wide range of immigrant and ‘new’ minority ethnic communities), 18 interviews with majority-led organisations (**hereafter, MSOs**) -- 14 of which included staff from NGOs who work closely with I/MELOs or address related issues in the Community and Voluntary Sector (**hereafter, ‘the Sector’**) and 4 with individuals from semi-state agencies, partnership organisations or local authorities -- and 12 interviews with representatives of key funding and statutory agencies. A seminar was held for I/MELO representatives who participated in the interviews to provide an opportunity for them to discuss the preliminary findings, network and attend sessions led by those involved in Sector management training, community development and social movements. Information from the interviews, seminar, Sector activities and related documents inform this work.

The North-South comparison of the differing contexts in which immigrants are mobilising provides useful insights into the circumstances of their communities, the particularities of Sector politics, the dynamics of Sector-State relationships and overall government responses to diversity and immigration issues.

Summary of Key Findings

Diversity, Vibrancy, Dedication (Chapter I)

Discussions with I/MELO members about their organisations reveal many issues and struggles common to other community and voluntary organisations – such as involving their membership, management styles, leadership and so on. The sheer volume and vibrancy of their activities – which defy comprehensive description in the contexts of a report— from community to policy work, reflect a passion for civil society work that is linked to the strong desire to become part of and contribute to the growth of a thriving, multi-ethnic Irish society. The development of I/MELOs provides insights into the relationships between settlement, community formation and integration, in which the dedication to nurturing communities goes hand-in-hand with making a new life at an individual level and with bringing society forward as they themselves and their communities move on.





Due to over-stretched resources, I/MELOs have yet to develop close working relationships among themselves, and report frequently problematic relationships between their organisations and MSOs working in related areas. Whereas MSOs in the North may depend on I/MELOs for information and advice, the relationship between I/MELOs and MSOs in the South was often characterised as one of competition and mistrust. Northern I/MELOs benefited significantly from the mainstreaming of equality measures (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and from high level representative structures such as the Race Equality Forum located in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Sector Relationships (Chapter II)

An examination of the diverse views and positions of different stakeholders (I/MELOs, MSOs and funders/agencies) demonstrates the ways in which the emergence of new civil society actors serves as a microcosm of the wider process of change stemming from immigration and ethnic diversification. I/MELOs are struggling to establish themselves, their communities of interest and their platforms within the complex make-up of Sector politics and structures. The lack of a longstanding infrastructure of policy and practice in relation to ethnic diversity in the Republic, and one that has been limited by a polarised rather than multidimensional application in the North, have generated a variety of obstacles and required substantial learning curves on the parts of all stakeholders. Such factors have served to hinder I/MELOs' development of the social and economic capital necessary both to achieve sustainability and to function strategically. However, as discussed in Chapter IV, despite such obstacles, the work and engagement of I/MELOs within the Sector have catalysed a cross-cultural learning process, yielding new innovations – and possibly new forms of social capital: in this case 'intercultural capital'.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Obstacles (Chapter III)

This chapter demonstrates that I/MELOs must contend with many of the same organisational and technical obstacles experienced by all community and voluntary organisations. They struggle with leadership issues, staff turnover, maintaining membership involvement, and strategic alliance building. Like all stakeholders, their work is also shaped by the legacies of Sector histories, politics and practices, whether resulting, for example, from the ethno-national conflict in Northern Ireland or the prevalence of the 'charity' model in the Republic. I/MELOs must contend with additional barriers, however, in terms of the social, political and material insecurity and vulnerability of their communities and membership. This is compounded by (1) wider societal factors such as racism, sectarianism and xenophobia which generate a fundamental resistance to their efforts to be part of society, and (2) institutional limitations stemming from gaps in effective policy and provision, whether in relation to immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in particular or the mainstreaming of ethnic diversity needs more generally. Being comparatively new to Irish society as well as being new Sector actors and stakeholders, I/MELOs can also lack familiarity with Sector norms and practices. Balancing the need to maintain their distinct identities and autonomy as organisations while integrating within the Sector at the same time, makes I/MELOs' work even harder.

Role in Wider Irish Civil Society (Chapter IV)

Further examination of the dynamics and outcomes of I/MELO development and community mobilisation highlights a deeper, more profound level of change. This level of change is about more than immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities simply adapting to or 'learning the ropes' of civil society in these jurisdictions, or only making contributions within the existing structures. It also involves more than mandates for mainstream infrastructures to 'accommodate' or 'include' them. Interviews with representatives of MSOs and funders provide evidence that I/MELO participation in the 'business' of the Sector has brought about reflection, shared learning and new forms of practice among a growing number of actors. Such outcomes are positive indications of the mutual transformation that lies at the heart of the concepts and aspirations underpinning interculturalism and integration as a 'two-way' process, as well as the promise of stronger democracy that is increasingly attributed to civil society activity as a whole.

Impacts of I/MELO Development & Activities

The Community & Voluntary Sector

I/MELO-based issues and activities demonstrate

- the potential of the Sector to provide spaces and opportunities for the most marginalized to assert themselves and contribute to the public sphere.
- the impact of the cultural and political histories of the Sector on civil society in general and the formation of ethnic minority communities in particular.
- the role of the State in both promoting as well as impeding integration through its regulation of Sector actors and activities.

The Development of 'New' Minority Ethnic Communities

I/MELO-based issues and activities highlight

- the links between community stability, civil society activity and effective policymaking and implementation.
- the variability of definitions, strategies and impacts associated with such key practices and principles as 'community development', 'partnership' and so on.
- the ways in which the introduction of innovations in the practice of critical interculturalism depends upon immigrant community mobilisation and empowerment, and vice versa.
- the ongoing necessity for self-reflection, even among seasoned practitioners/actors and the encouragement of 'learning organisations'.
- the structures of engagement and resourcing necessary for the development of a positive and productive multi-ethnic society.





Recommendations

The following provides a brief overview of the key issues emerging from the research and highlights the measures necessary to effectively respond to and promote the positive changes taking place as a result of immigrant community development and mobilisation. Whilst the recommendations herein are specific to the contexts and time period in which this project was undertaken, it is important to contextualise them within the evolving framework of initiatives in both jurisdictions with respect to equality, diversity, immigration and civil society in general. This includes, for example, the recently published National Action Plan Against Racism and the UN CERD reports in the Republic, and, in Northern Ireland, the framework document, *A Shared Future*, on community relations and integration along with the announcement of substantial funding awarded to I/MELOs and other organisations working in related areas. Given the varying structures and circumstances underpinning each jurisdiction, the recommendations apply somewhat differently in the North and South and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

Managing I/MELO Diversity, Maximising Outcomes

While the growth in the diversity of I/MELOs and proliferation of activity is a positive, desirable and often necessary outcome of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led civil society mobilisation, the research also highlights a number of dilemmas and potential stumbling blocks accompanying this phase of development. Nurturing strategically coordinated action and alliances, both among I/MELOs and with other Sector actors, must take place alongside the organisational independence and individuality that I/MELOs endeavor to achieve. Recommendations/requirements relating to these issues include:

- Increased strategic collaboration & consolidation among I/MELOs.
- Further development of I/MELO alliances and involvement within wider Sector & local/regional governance structures.
- Increased formal political participation of members of immigrant/minority ethnic communities.

Overcoming 'Institutionalised Underdevelopment'

Sector-based policies and practices converge to consistently undermine the developmental success of I/MELOs. This highlights the State's central role, not only in relation to the health and dynamism of the civil society, but also with regard to the formation of minority ethnic communities and a multi-ethnic society as a whole. Recommendations/requirements necessary to remove institutional barriers include:

- Joined-Up Sector Planning & Strategic Funding re: I/MELO Development
- Establishment of Developmental Administrative Structures for the Sector
- I/MELO Resource Development.

Cultivating 'Intercultural Capital' in a Multi-Ethnic Society

A range of innovations in organisational and Sector practices has been generated through I/MELOs' cross-cultural interactions with other stakeholders. The competencies associated with being able to effectively respond to, work with and benefit from such interactions are fast becoming highly valued by actors throughout society – and thus creating a form of 'intercultural capital'. Thus, rather than something that needs to be 'fixed' or simplified – often in the name of 'efficiency', 'accountability' or 'value for money', such diversity and difference are things to be better understood, accommodated and facilitated.

The mobilisation of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led organisations (and the development of their communities) constitutes a crucial link to the development of both social capital -- in the form of trust, shared values and effective networks -- and integration, as a 'two-way process' (DJELR 1999). In this fashion, 'capacity building' is also a two-way process, whereby all immigrant/minority ethnic communities play key roles in the success of the nation as a whole, but also with regard to developing the skills, relationships and practices necessary to benefit from and nurture such diversity as a contemporary, multi-ethnic nation.

Recommendations/requirements relating to the promotion of intercultural capital and competencies include:

- Robust Structures of Engagement & Representation
- Advancement of Interculturalist Policies & Practices
- Cross-Sector, Partnership-Based Research, Dissemination & Training
- Effective Leadership





Introduction

This study arises from the challenges and opportunities associated with the ethnic diversification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It explores the development of community and voluntary organisations led by members of immigrant and ‘new’ minority ethnic communities. In addition to other forms of everyday-life integration and settlement, mobilisation within the Community and Voluntary Sector (hereafter, the Sector) is a key element in the process through which they are moving from the status of *strangers, outsiders, newcomers, refugees and migrants*, to active, enduring constituents within the social and institutional fabric of both jurisdictions. Civil society activity provides the means to bring about the conditions necessary for these ‘new’ communities to thrive as national minorities rather than temporary visitors, and in the process, take up their roles and responsibilities as contributors to society. This research attempts to shed light on the dynamics of these transitions through interviews with founders of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic-led Sector organisations (hereafter, I/MELOs) and the other organisations, funders and stakeholders with whom they work.

This project therefore seeks to shift the focus of discussion away from the exclusive, issue-specific (albeit important) debates concerning racism and border control, where immigrants/‘new’ minority ethnic communities are regarded only as guests of the State, threats to national security or victims of racism. By examining their efforts as new Sector actors, the research provides an important opportunity not only to examine the challenges related to ethnic diversity, but also to gain insight into the general ‘health’ of civil society and democracy, North and South. As demonstrated by the achievements of I/MELOs, civil society provides a space for the most marginalised to assert themselves and to contribute to the public sphere – activities that embody the ‘stuff’ of citizenship, often in the absence of its formal acquisition. Such dynamics invigorate discussions and debates concerning ‘active citizenship’ and participative democracy, and pose pressing questions over what ‘citizenship’ – as a practice as well as a status -- means in the present global era.

Most importantly, the report highlights the intercultural innovations – in the forms of ideas and attitudes, policies and practices, guiding principles and work strategies – brought about through I/MELO activities and their engagement with mainstream Sector actors and stakeholders, in the contexts of the ‘business’ of the Sector – funding, networking and so on. As such, this research conceives of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities as perhaps the newest in a long succession of committed communities of interest whose mobilisations, North and South, have shaped and enriched the national contexts in which they live. The research demonstrates how that mobilisation (and the development of their communities) constitutes a crucial element of the integration (as a two-way) process. Yet it also brings to the fore the ways in which the development of the social and economic ‘capital’ of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities is inextricably linked to that of all communities on the island, and to the cultivation of the national resources necessary for being a successful global actor in both jurisdictions. The resulting recommendations, outlined in Chapter V, are directed towards the realisation of these ambitions.

At the outset it should be noted that, due to the frequency with which comparisons are made in this report between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the terms 'North' and 'South' are used to refer to these two jurisdictions. This is solely for the sake of brevity and ease of reading.

MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES, 'OLD' AND 'NEW' - A WORD ON TERMINOLOGY

Ethnic diversity in Northern Ireland and the Republic has evolved in a number of ways, including intermarriage, international commerce, migrant workers -- and their families -- on employment permits and work visas, international students, refugees and asylum seekers, and so on. There are few, if any, terms that effectively represent the array of circumstances and identities involved. Discussions about appropriate terminology arose many times with many people during the course of this research, with little agreement reached, particularly as the multi-ethnicity of each jurisdiction is still in a dynamic phase of evolution. It employs the category, 'immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led', in relation to organisations and communities as a term that reflects some of these issues and complexities that defy resolution at this time.

The term 'Black' used in the British context originally to refer to people of African descent and has become a broader, political term used to denote 'people of colour'. This includes second generation immigrants, particularly Africans, Caribbeans and Asians, and, more recently refugees and asylum seekers. The term, Black/Minority Ethnic or 'BME', eventually came into use as many communities did not feel that 'Black' was an effective term, particularly with regard to issues of religious diversity, and has come to indicate those ethnically different from the 'majority' society, whether they are 'indigenous', longstanding immigrants and citizens, or newly arrived.

On the island of Ireland, Travellers and Black Irish, for example, would be considered BMEs, and have typically constituted 'indigenous' communities around whom issues and mobilisation in relation to ethnic diversity, racism and race equality have evolved. In many ways, this would include communities such as the Indian and Chinese communities in Northern Ireland, who now constitute second and third generation communities, British citizens and so on. In both jurisdictions, however, the term 'immigrant' is often perceived to identify someone who is in the country 'temporarily'. This term is sometimes preferred by asylum seekers and those granted refugee status because public discourse considers them complete outsiders who are not entitled to be in the State, rather than people who have arrived due to factors associated with the wider flows of global migration --forced im/migration in particular.

Yet the term 'immigrant' is unacceptable to many longstanding ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, and to many who have arrived -- and settled -- in the Republic, regardless of whether they have come on work authorisation or as asylum seekers or refugees. In such cases, the term 'minority ethnic' would be preferable as it indicates a minority among other communities within the national context rather than transient groups. The experiences of all of these different groups, however, and certainly those who have come in recent years, are qualitatively different from indigenous groups such as Travellers in a number of different ways, and, most importantly for this research, so are the dynamics surrounding their forms civil society organisation and mobilisation.





The term 'new communities' (or 'new minority ethnic communities'), has come into use in the Republic as a catch-all label that reflects this array of circumstances and preferences for self-identification. Again, such a term would be considered problematic in Northern Ireland given the length of time many minority ethnic communities have lived there. However, the conflict in the North has institutionalised such a pervasive pre-occupation with the Catholic-Protestant divide that it has rendered minority ethnic communities virtually 'invisible' until after the 1994 paramilitary ceasefires. The new equalities regime associated with the Good Friday Agreement and the rise of racism in recent years, however, have catalysed and inaugurated their more outspoken involvement in civil and political arenas. In this sense, they are 'new' communities as well, and certainly new civil society actors, a status reflected in the still low level of knowledge of these communities in both statutory and social contexts.

In these respects, ethnic diversity in both the North and South is, for the most part, 'new'. This newness is also apparent throughout policy infrastructures, as a result of a notable lack of data, monitoring and general information about the immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities. Questions about ethnicity were only introduced in the 2001 census in Northern Ireland, and will not be included in the Republic until 2006. With responsibilities relating to asylum and immigration spread out across a number of different government agencies and departments, it is difficult, if not impossible, to get a clear, insightful and easily accessible picture of ethnic diversity in either jurisdiction. Research, academic and Sector-based, is only beginning to catch up. Most research focusing on these communities has been done in the contexts of policy/service provision needs or the analysis of racism.¹ Few works provide wider community histories or political analyses.² However, in addition to the increasing attention to research on diversity by academics and by funders at national and European levels, postgraduate students are also taking a substantial lead in advancing the store of knowledge in these areas.³ This report seeks addresses the many processes of diversification currently taking place in order to contribute to our knowledge of the transition to multi-ethnicity in each jurisdiction.

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTORS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE IRISH REPUBLIC – SOME BACKGROUND

The particular histories and dynamics of the Community & Voluntary Sector in each jurisdiction play key roles in shaping the manner in which ILOs are developing and the ways in which the issues they seek to address are evolving. It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a detailed discussion of these factors and how they differ North and South, and there are several histories and analyses of the Sector already in print. It is, however, worth highlighting a few key points particularly as they form the basis for the North-South comparison that underpins this report. The following overview draws from Acheson et al.'s (2004) excellent study.

Northern Ireland is characterised by higher levels of activity with regard to volunteering and Sector investment on the part of government. Its framework of policy and practice was established earlier than in the South, due in large part to the influence of British community development and related practices, Sector reforms and adoption of the welfare state model. Community development practice in the Republic dates back to the

¹ See for example, Connelly (2002), Hainsworth (1998), Irwin & Dunn (1006), Lentin & McVeigh (2002)

² Exceptions include, for example, work commissioned by the Chinese Welfare Association and the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre in Northern Ireland, and Lentin (1998), MacEinri (2001) and MacLaclan & O'Connell (2001).

³ See for example, Frese (2005), Iroh (2005), Mutwarasibo (2004) and Ugba (2004).

late 19th century, along with the extensive social and institutional services provided by Catholic Church in response to the Famine, poverty, mass emigration and institutional neglect. However, social policy goals were subordinated within the struggle for independence (cultural and language policies proving to be the exception), and the development of the Sector reflects this lag.

Community development emerged in the North as early as the 1930s, but it was the rise of the Troubles, the civil rights movement and the collapse of the Stormont government that 'inextricably linked' it to the political situation (Ibid: 41). As such, community development and community relations discourses and practices lay at the centre of much of the peace and reconciliation infrastructure and have shaped the equalities regime that has evolved within and alongside it.

Such divergent institutional histories laid the foundations for different types of relationships between government and the Sector. There exists in the North a close working relationship with key organisations such as Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) established with government assistance, and which play extensive roles in both advocacy and development of the Sector. Statutory agencies such as the Voluntary and Community Unit, the Community Relations Council and the Joint Government/Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, and the Funders Forum contribute to a substantial infrastructure that supports cross-sector engagement in the process of developing the Sector. However, it remains to be seen what impacts the decline of peace and reconciliation funding will have on the future of the Sector.

In contrast, the Republic has taken an 'agnostic' role, eschewing the establishment of units within departments, and an ad-hoc approach in relation to funding. This strategy has led to government-sector relations being primarily funding-based and dependent upon individuals rather than procedures and strategic planning. This informality is argued by some to help prevent the cooptation of the Sector, in the absence of a strong Sector voice comparable to that in the North, it is criticised by others for leading to turf battles, and for its 'immaturity' (Ibid.). Substantial delays and problems associated with the implementation of the 2001 *White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity*, including lack of support among key ministers and a 'poor and untrusting' climate within the policy's Implementation and Advisory Group (Harvey 2004), converge to form a problematic environment at this time.

The last 5 years alone have seen a plethora of consultations and initiatives, policy documents and reports on the Sector. Key initiatives in the North are reflected in the reports including, *Partners for Change*, *Investing Together*, *Investing in Social Capital* and *A Shared Future*. In the South such developments are reflected in the *White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity*, the IAG's Evaluation report, the NESF report on the policy implications of social capital and material linked to the recent establishment of the Task Force on active citizenship.⁴ These policies and initiatives have not escaped criticism, and examination of the submissions, debates and contributions engaged by Sector organisations and university-based researchers are essential in order to ascertain a fuller picture of the dynamics and directions at play. The purpose of this research is to contribute to these dynamic policy debates and proposals by highlighting the central role of I/MELOs and the factors that shape their effectiveness in civil society.

⁴ See Dept. for Social Development (2000), Task Force (2004), CENI (2003), Community Relations Unit (2005), Dept. of Social Welfare (2000), Harvey (2004) and NESF (2003).





IMMIGRANT-/'NEW' MINORITY ETHNIC-LED ORGANISATIONS IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH – AN OVERVIEW

Many of the organisations from the North of Ireland that were included in this study began primarily as informal social and religious organisations in support of comparatively longstanding immigrant communities. They have therefore had the benefit of strong community involvement, volunteer support and, in many cases, financial resources.

In the South, the majority of I/MELOs arose in the contexts of the massive mobilisation of the Community and Voluntary Sector in response to the gross lack of state support and provision for the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, or 'new minority ethnic' communities. Due to the reliance on single issue, once-off government funding schemes, they are generally organised around a wide array activities such as community development, development education, information/service provision and lobbying, with anti-racism being an inherent component.

Thus, on one hand, I/MELOs in the Republic are somewhat more visible and active in the wider Sector and policy spheres than their Northern counterparts have been. On the other hand, the lack of core funding and support for the sustainable development of I/MELOs in the South renders them more precarious and vulnerable in an ongoing way than those in the North. Northern I/MELOs are coming into a period of transition. They have had notable success in responding to the needs of their communities. Section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* has provided new opportunities through the mainstreaming of minority ethnic community and organisational development needs and direct participation throughout public and private institutions. As such, many I/MELOs are beginning the transition to wider societal and policy-related engagement.

However, the increase of racist attacks in recent years reflects the ways in which the ethno-national conflict in the North has impeded growth in relation to ethnic diversity and constitutes a glass ceiling of sorts in terms of realising the potential of the innovative equalities infrastructure that have been put in place. The highly criticised practices in relation to the asylum process, in particular the detaining of asylum seekers in prisons, pose further threats to progress around ethnic diversity and race equality as a whole. In the South, the poor climate in relation to government-Sector relations in general and over issues of immigration in particular continues to pose substantial obstacles. However, these developments are countered by recent innovative campaigns around political participation by new communities and the gradual shift away from mainstream paternalistic, charity models of Sector-based work.

How the recent policy developments in relation to race equality and immigration play out in both jurisdictions will have a significant effect on the development of minority ethnic communities, their civil and political participation and the promotion of a healthy multi-ethnic society. Both governments have developed policies in these areas. Will the Shared Future framework successfully overcome the 'two-community straightjacket' in the North? Will its principles of trust and tolerance achieved through pluralism and integration in a shared society be enough to advance effective understanding and action

in relation to ethnic diversity? Will the ongoing governmental instability defer real change indefinitely? Will the Republic's National Action Plan Against Racism be enough to promote an inclusive, multi-ethnic society in the absence of direct participation of minority ethnic communities in policy structures at national level and a strong policy of integration? What are the implications in both jurisdictions of persistently problematic approaches to immigration? This research highlights the need for developing 'joined-up' approaches to both the discussion and debate regarding ethnic diversity, immigration and the development of 'new' minority ethnic communities and the development and implementation of policy initiatives. The recommendations made in this report therefore seek to: (1) draw attention to needs that have been overlooked or ignored, and opportunities that may be missed and (2) support the realisation of the agreed goals of these current policy initiatives and other relevant developments.

THE STUDY

This research has its beginnings in a study, funded by the UCD Social Science Research Centre Applied Social Research Programme that examined the dynamic expansion of the Sector in the Republic in response to increasing ethnic diversity. Conducted in 2001-2002, it mapped the innovations arising through the cross-fertilisation of community development, anti-racism, development education and participatory research principles and practices. The study focused on refugees' and asylum seekers' views on their participation in these activities. Two central findings emerged from this work: feelings on the parts of refugees and asylum seekers of being exploited (1) by mainstream Sector organisations and the development of their own I/MELOs being hindered by having to compete with them, and (2) by researchers (across all sectors) who draw on their (uncompensated) knowledge and expertise without providing any direct benefit, capacity building or opportunity to participate in the process.⁵ The former set of findings became the subject of the subsequently successful Royal Irish Academy Third Sector Research Programme grant proposal that provided the foundation for this project and further support from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.⁶ The latter finding formed the basis for the establishment of the Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative at UCD, of which this report is the first publication.

In addition to the analysis of policy documents and the wide range of other materials generated by Sector stakeholders and activities, the main tool for collecting the data for this project was qualitative interviews conducted between May 2003 and February 2004, with three main groups of stakeholders: founders and key representatives of I/MELOs, established Community and Voluntary Sector organisations (including Traveller organisations) and related agencies (MSOs) that work in related areas, and representatives of key funding agencies. A range of I/MELOs were selected, using purposive sampling and drawing on the extensive expertise of the authors' collective experience, with the goal of including a range of organisations (in existence for a minimum of two years) that would represent the variety of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, activities and structures associated with these organisations. Representatives of MSOs and funders were selected on the same basis. A two-day seminar and training workshop was held in June 2004 for I/MELO interviewees to discuss the preliminary findings, provide feedback on the analysis, network with other organisations and participate in training seminars.

⁵ See Feldman, Frese & Yousif (2002) and Feldman (2003).

⁶ The Royal Irish Academy TSRP has granted additional funding for further research concerning the nature and implications of 'intercultural capital', a key finding developed in this study.





One of the strengths of this research is that it includes and reports the perspectives of all the different stakeholders involved in this arena – with the intent that the knowledge, activities and work practices of each group benefit from the frank assessments and constructive criticism of the others. This strength is also a limitation in that each interviewee’s perceptions and analyses are shaped by their own particular experiences, level of knowledge and expertise, and location in the social and institutional landscape. As this is an exploratory research study, it was beyond the scope and intent of the project to cross-check in any systematic way the accuracy of their statements. Given the current low level of knowledge of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities and organisations and the implications of diversity for the Sector and wider policy areas, the documentation of such perceptions, even if misinformed and contested, is a necessary and valuable starting place.

As there is little work addressing ethnic diversity in the Sector that approaches the level of analysis undertaken in England and Wales, this work constitutes the initial foundation upon which further analysis can be pursued and developed.⁷ It is hoped that the dynamic foundation of critically engaged, evidence-based policy research and practice concerning civil society in the North and South -- developed by such research centers as the Centre for Voluntary Action Studies (University of Ulster), the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and the Centre for Non-Profit Management (Trinity College Dublin) -- can be emulated in the research addressing ethnic diversity in the Sector as well as the wider issues of race equality, interculturalism and integration more broadly.

THE REPORT

The report consists of 5 chapters which examine the data pertaining to

- I/MELO start-up, structure and activities
- Sector Relationships among I/MELOs, MSOs & funders
- I/MELO development and the obstacles they face
- The role of I/MELOs in the wider civil society arena

The final chapter presents analysis of key findings and recommendations in the areas of I/MELO effectiveness, Sector development and resourcing and the promotion of intercultural competence and capital in civil society in the North and South of Ireland.

⁷ For useful work in the Republic see Ejorh (2004) and Frese (2005), in the North, see Leong (2000, 2001), and with respect to England and Wales, see Mcleod et al. (2001) and Chouhan and Lusane (2004).

Chapter I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRANT/'NEW' MINORITY ETHNIC-LED COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

This chapter discusses I/MELO development. It provides a brief synopsis of the founders' experiences of establishing their organisations and an overview of issues relating to I/MELO structures, activities, funding and relationships with other Sector actors. The I/MELO members interviewed included people from a variety of groups who seek to represent their communities in different ways. Of the 23 I/MELOs included in this study, 16 are based in the Irish Republic and 7 in Northern Ireland. Of the total, 6 organisations were established through the joint efforts of people from both immigrant and Irish communities. In order to maintain confidentiality for those who participated in the study, the following breakdown is necessarily vague:

- **5 'mixed community', refugee/asylum seeker organisations**
- **12 'single community' or 'country-specific' organisations**, linked to the following geographic regions:
 - 4 – Eastern European/Russian
 - 3 – African/Middle Eastern
 - 3 – Southeast Asia
 - 3 – Pacific/Far East
- **6 'pan' or umbrella organisations** that serve or represent multiple communities, many of which are linked to several geographic regions, such as 'pan-African' organisations or Islamic organisations

ESTABLISHMENT AND START-UP

Among those interviewed, organisational founders are typically well-educated and often have relevant experience and training from their home countries, whether with respect to Sector-based work (community development, campaigning, politics) or organisational work (business, management, accounting). This reflects a general level of expertise that stands in stark contrast to common perceptions and assumptions that I/MELOs and their members suffer from a lack of capacity and professionalism.

Catalysts

In establishing their organisations, the founders of I/MELOs were responding to a wide range of issues stemming from the process of ethnic diversification that has been accelerated by the arrival and settlement of immigrants on the island in recent years. The following accounts reflect the ways in which people were trying to address the needs associated with both the development of their communities (ie., family, social and religious life, and changing community demographics) and the transformations in the wider national contexts (eg., racism, global awareness and so on).





Changing demographics

I really discovered that the needs of international students were not catered for: during weekends, local students here travel home and the only people who stay in hostels, houses and residences here are just overseas students. They have got nowhere to go because they have got no friends, nothing to bring these people together. That tipped the idea of setting up the association...[with] the main goal to unite different people from different cultural backgrounds together...During my second year in the office, I realized that what overseas students were experiencing in the university environment was just a microscopic reflection of what might happening to the multicultural community, the international minority community.

At the beginning we only organised the group just for social gatherings...and now because there is a big community now, we hope to get them services, but of course we don't have a paid worker. We just give them information and referrals...and give them support, especially for those migrant workers because there are cases where they have problems...we cannot really provide the help ourselves.

[We were] trying to give free information to the newly arrived, immigrants – mostly to us, now, the new immigrants are students, and a small amount are labourers, working in restaurants, kitchens or roadside -- ...and [they] get lost here...because of the lack of knowledge of this European community or Irish community – Irish type of life.

Global concerns linked to countries of origin

'[O]ur role was to hold public meetings and talk about the humanitarian crisis in that region, mobilise public interest in war and also be the support to people who had been [there] who were back in Ireland'.

Negative reception & lack of knowledge

In 1997 and some time before that, some people, especially the media, took a stand against refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the politicians were using words such as 'bloody refugees' and others to portray asylum seekers as something very negative and something to stop coming in the country. People thought they were invaded and most of them were taking seriously the message conveyed by the media and some authorities. Seeing that, we thought we had to do something to change the situation. We came together... and finally set up this organisation; ...'Swamps', 'spongers', 'refugee rapist', 'floods'... These were all headlines.

A diversity of needs and circumstances

...[O]ur women were having some difficulty –first because we are very few and...we are living in different areas and then secondly because we are in a different culture and this is not our own language that's spoken here...And then we are from all different ethnic backgrounds, so other women speak several different languages because they are from all over the world...So there was a need for some sort of association...for the women to meet, so that would reduce the social isolation and then they would be all together and then they can discuss their needs and their problems, and the culture here and the culture and tradition back home, and how we can continue and contribute to the wider society as well at the same time so we can give and take, its not just to take. For that reason we, first we had informal gathering of the group for at least 10 years and since 1998 we decided to have our own independent organisation.

A lot of organisations Ireland...were very issue-specific...There was no umbrella organisation that actually addressed the needs of everyone. There are Africans here that aren't asylum seekers or refugees, who have come to Ireland to work and study, some who have lived here a long time – there was no organisation to address their needs and interests.

Family, social & religious life

Years ago, there were a handful of 'families who were trying to come together. They started going from one family to another one trying to fulfil their social lives. Then they decided to buy...this building that was auctioned'.

Interviewees identified the following circumstances as the catalysts to which they were responding and which, in turn, shaped the stated objectives and activities of their organisations.

Reasons I/MELOs Were Established	I/MELO Objectives/Missions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative portrayals of and misinformation concerning community members (particularly regarding refugees & asylum seekers) • Racism or the perception that their communities constitute 'threats' • Inadequate service provision • Integration needs • Religious/Socialising needs • The need to unite/create community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising, education, anti-racism • Exchange between Ireland and countries of origin • Changing policies, bringing about new legislation • Improving services • Increasing the quality of life • Developing a strong voice and means of self-representaion and promote political participation • Promoting their cultures, interaction among communities & integration within the wider society

Getting Started

All of the I/MELOs included in this study had humble and often serendipitous beginnings, even if some went on later to obtain funding to support larger operations. They typically started from scratch, were unfamiliar with the history, politics and infrastructure of the Sector, and lacked an existing strategic base. However, as illustrated by the following recollections, the emergent activities, relationships and the importance of the work itself created a momentum that carried founding members through the early stages of development.





Humble Beginnings

So we had to establish everything by our own hands. The Government did not want to hear about it at the very beginning. I think they think if they let you into the country and let you rest here they've already done enough! They didn't think about, when they came in, how would they survive – how would they communicate to themselves, or even with the local government or local community...

Starting from scratch

My house was turned into an office where every body came. We normally met every Wednesday - even up to now...We could sometime meet in the library or in hostels where asylum seekers were living. It was just a way of moving from one place to another place to suit everybody. About communication, we used mobile phone, I have a mobile phone and I use my house phone a lot to communicate. I also go to people's houses.

Making the most of opportunities

Up to that time we used to work from the street. We did not even have a mobile phone. We continued in the same way until a friend of us got a mobile. Then we got a 2nd-hand car and used to work from that one until we got the office...We renovated and cleaned it (ourselves refugees and asylum seekers). We painted it yellow – very bright colours. We made it clean and nice and put a phone in, but unfortunately the landlord said he did not want asylum seekers, so we had to leave and work from the street again...

Keeping going

We're truly friends, you know, that's at the heart of it. We spent a lot of time deciding our name...and so our name is our inspiration and its our energy and it is our vision and its our drive...[A]nd if I were to need help somewhere in the future I would hope to meet a group like us who'd be there to help us so that's our motivation and that's I think the energy that we're kind of using and we're there to support each other.

Deciding to move forward

So at first I started from my own home, I was bringing people to my home and pouring a cup of tea and discussing things. Then we started going to [another organisation] and formed a group there but it wasn't an independent group so we were part of [that] for...10 years. And after that we realised there is a need for totally independent organisation, that's how the idea came from other women particularly...so we can choose to do what we like to do and what is correct for our women, so we'll not have a number of restrictions on us -- you can do such and such, you can't do such and such. And here is a friendly environment because all the women are here and the children so.

They put money together, 1000 pounds each family. You see in [our] society it is very important to have a place to worship... So there was a need of a base, to have a place where people could get together. And again from the social point of view, there were so many families that couldn't be gathered in people's homes unless they were divided into different groups, so it was essential to have one bigger area where everybody collectively could have what is needed. This helped to progress as one community...We couldn't have done this [providing activities and services] from volunteers' homes.

MEMBERSHIP, VOLUNTEERS & ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

One of the first issues for I/MELOs – and in some cases the very reason for the organisation itself – is bringing the community together, both to support as well as benefit from its work.

I think that it is very important to take people where they are. Wherever the communities you are dealing with are at. You can only start from there. You cannot start from where you like. ..I think being led by the people you are working with is very important but I think given the fact that the immigrant community is very new...and might not know or be familiar with the system in Ireland, working hand in hand with Irish people is very important.

But typically where immigrants 'are at' is not a place from which they can engage in civic work, even if led by their own communities. As one respondent reported, 'our biggest problem is bringing people together from our community and convince them of the need to be organised'. Another interviewee stated that 'until now they don't have a large awareness of the importance of how to be together.' Because these community-focused efforts absorb so much of the resources available to I/MELOs, this has implications for the level of interest or availability of I/MELO staff to work with MSOs in the development of their organisations and objectives.

Gaining Community Support & Involvement

Drawing from discussions with participants in this study, several factors emerged that shape the ways in which I/MELOs' target communities responded to their efforts to organise.

Particular cultural backgrounds and national contexts: A lack of trust and fear of involvement often characterises those communities coming from countries shaped by ethnic conflict and repressive regimes. In some cases, those political splits and tensions become part of I/MELOs' work here. There may also be a lack of a 'volunteer culture' in countries of origin – stemming from different values or other ways of 'getting things done'. One person observed that in her country of origin, '*if you bribe, your problem is solved. So, here, when you have to take the situation in your own hands and solve your problem yourself, it is difficult*'. Another emphasised the challenges relating to people learning to work in new ways: '*[A]n NGO can only guide community members, it cannot solve their problems for them...It's hard to gain the trust of your own community – they may then come to you in despair and when you can't help say you are running a bad organisation*'.

Personal circumstances: It is well known that uncertainty, instability and insecurity often underpin life for immigrant community members. Many I/MELOs benefit from the participation of asylum seekers who are often pressed into a sort of 'enforced volunteerism' in the absence of the right to work, but suffer from a high turnover of staff as a result. People who get refugee status often leave their I/MELO work, preferring to 'move on' with their new lives. Migrant workers, because of the nature of their working life, typically cannot attend activities hosted by the I/MELO, let alone contribute to them.





One interviewee noted that even for more secure or longer term residents, according to one person, they don't feel as though they belong and want to buy houses in order to create a sense of stability. This requires working so many hours that they don't have time to volunteer: *'We've been living here for years - the focus becomes just to get money, if you ask people to volunteer they think you're crazy: [they say] "You want me to be a volunteer without money?" ... They are not keen to help out and are more interested in where you got the money to produce the services'*. Others want to be invisible, they do not want *'to be racialised by setting selves off from mainstream'* and adopt strategies of quiet integration – not making any *'noise'* and seeking refuge in their own communities. But even those members of well-established communities who are enthusiastic about being active members of their organisations can run into common institutional obstacles:

If you apply for social welfare and say you are a volunteer, they make your life harder! I remember one guy – he went and applied for benefits – he was working and lost his job. And when he put 'yes, I volunteered at the...Centre' – he used to work with us full time and we appreciate this very much -- but when he put this in his application form, they started questioning him and they refused him and said you are not serious about looking for a job....

Organisational Resources: Whether seeking volunteers from one's own community or through volunteer development organisations, issues of organisational development and the availability of resources are defining issues:

How do you convince somebody...you don't have an office, you don't have a telephone line and you are telling me to come – to start using my own mobile phone and working from my sitting room – what kind of service do I provide? It keeps coming back to that issue that you have to have some place to start working from – you can't just hang in the air and expect people to come and start bringing people – you'll never convince people to join...

Issues of Leadership, Representation & 'Democracy'

While civil society is characterised by people's willingness to work together to bring about positive change, community and voluntary organisations are not necessarily known for being democratic. It is easy, however, to see why and how an organisation can boil to down to a core group of devoted individuals, or become *'one person shows'*. One participant made a joke regarding the problem of *'dictatorship'*: *'When somebody founds an organisation or somebody becomes the chairperson of an organisation, he wants to stay there, and live from there and he wants to give it to his son!'* Another noted that there's more to being a democratic organisation than having elections: *'You could have 100 people elect someone who has no experience or training'*. He noted that

if a shopkeeper wants to employ someone, the first thing they ask is 'what is your experience?' ...What is important is the leadership giving a chance for members to have different organisations and associations based on their knowledge and experience. All members have different knowledge – the leader of the community cannot do everything through one person; it's good to share our experience among our community.

Thus, although less desirable, the reliance on one or a few key individuals may be part of an initial development stage necessary for getting the organisation up and running. Advised one interviewee: *'Just get going and keep going; others will join'*. But the establishment of a volunteer or membership base along with representative management structures ultimately must not be far behind.

Where does the responsibility with regard to representation and participation rest? One person noted that in her organisation, the Board members are predominantly from a particular region of her country. As such, people in her community from that region do not take up its services because they do not feel part of the organisation. But she also felt that *'part of the responsibility is with the funders. If they are going to give money to these organisations, there needs to be at least somebody there who knows about the organisation, the community and sees that its running effectively and smoothly'*. Yet such a scenario also depends on close and effective working relations with funders which, as discussed later in Chapter II, is a problematic option. Mixed majority Irish/immigrant organisations also confront issues concerning representation. But as one person observed, having a mixed group helps avoid problems stemming from *'Irish people who think they know what asylum seekers need'*. She explained that, on one hand, refugees and asylum seekers know what the issues are for them

...but Irish people...know what other Irish people are experiencing or how they might be perceiving things or what might be behind their attitude or their reaction or their thinking, so its a fantastic combination. I suppose we've been working together now over three years so we've tremendous friendship, trust, mutual solidarity in place now so that we can have healthy disagreements, we can challenge each other and arrive at the truth of a situation...

While the expertise among the organisational representatives participating in this study varies, everyone reported having a constitution that typically served as the heart or map for the organisation. It was apparent, however, that having a constitution is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for success. Further structures and practices (eg, AGMs, subcommittees, newsletters and so on) relating to community representation and feedback are also essential in order to be successful and effective: *'To work in an organisation, you have to consider that it's not your ideas, but the rest of the members' are just as important as yours. You do not use your own interests, you don't give yourself priority, you have to listen to the group, that's how you make a good organisation...'* Thus, regardless of the make up of the organisation, good communication and relations are at the heart of good management, and require a significant investment of time and energy. Interviewees identified the following practices they felt are necessary to ensure success:

- consulting with the community, starting where people are at, listening to the group and making decisions together.
- ongoing reflection on the parts of organisational leaders regarding their management styles
- being highly committed but realistic, not taking on too much and being flexible, confident and ready to follow the needs dictated by the organisation or community.
- having effective knowledge of the system and not relying on outside funding.
- working across communities, not just for one's own community or organisation.



ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMING

As highlighted in the previous section, the breadth of needs and circumstances to which I/MELOs are responding ensures that these organisations seek to deliver a range of activities and services. All of the 23 organisations participating in this study were involved in several different pursuits. The following rough breakdown illustrates the diversity of I/MELO activities and high levels of civil society involvement.

Type of Activity	How many of the 23 I/MELOs sponsor them
Community Development	17
Awareness Raising/ Intercultural Education	22
Lobbying/ Advocacy	14
Service Provision	16
Information Services	6
Other	5

Some examples of this varied work include:

Campaigning Classes

key issues, meeting politicians, participating in consultations computer skills, English & home country languages, cultural awareness, anti-racism & intercultural training; school visits, visiting artists & public lectures

Cultural activities

art, dance and fashion shows, music/ choir groups, drama troops, folklore sessions, festivals

Drop-in centres

meeting places for people to come, talk & socialise, have their own space; for service providers & local authorities to come & meet with members;

Information Services

newsletters, workshops, clinics and seminars (legal, education, housing, health, welfare); interpretation services; telephone hotline

Support services

elderly lunch club; youth, women's and parent's support groups, mediation, religious services, social activities

Research

needs analyses, baseline research for policy submissions and consultations, strategic planning work

Social activities for the membership are also essential:

On our committee if we're not talking about a social event happening in the next month or two it'll be like, 'hey come on, we haven't had a social event in a while'...it's an occasion where people come together, whole families can come so it means everyone can come. So we have sports days or picnics or just parties inside with a disco but its kind of, you know, it's a family friendly environment.

So despite the 'Golden Rule' echoed by many – to avoid projects and goals that are too ambitious, focus on doing only a few things but doing them well -- the wide range of activities that I/MELOs undertake reflects the tendency to over-stretch in response to the

- breadth of community needs
- unavoidable links between community circumstances and problems stemming from the wider society and policy structure
- lack of viable strategic plan or unrealistic aspirations

Centres & Offices: The Physical Location of I/MELO Activity

I/MELOs are located in a variety of places: in space provided within larger MSO (majority sector organisation) offices, in rented offices, often shared with other I/MELOs, or MSOs, and through local businesses support organisations. Many are still informally run from people's homes. One interviewee described the way in which the space and place of the organisation is central to all else:

[W]e found that just telephone lines are not enough – people want to come visit you and talk face to face to sort out the things they need to or something like that. So we said we have to set up a centre...First of all we had to find a place for the centre. If you are central then people can reach you, know where you are. So that's why we started. Then, once you've established our centre, and location, that makes things much easier. You establish something, a charity or a minority centre or something like that, if you don't have the location, you still go nowhere – you just give them the phone number and they never phone you back. So now I say, I have this place now, and then suddenly a lot of people come in now, they say, ah, I can give you a hand or I need help or something like that. So the office is very important – even small... this should be more than enough to start – or share an office with someone...to establish the office.

But sharing space also has its benefits. Many I/MELOs who have the fortune to have or rent space in MSO offices say they benefit from the mutual support of other organisations located in the office. When members of their community people visit them, they also find out about that MSO's services and its networks, and vice versa.





FUNDING

Any discussion of the work and future of I/MELOs invariably leads to the issue of funding. The issue of space, whether in terms of having an office or establishing a centre as discussed in the previous section, provides an instructive example of the close relationship between effectiveness in relation to delivering activities and services, and the generation of resources necessary to develop and sustain the organisation. I/MELOs seek funding from a wide range of sources, from trusts to Government, and there is great variation among their funding arrangements. The Sector in both the North and South is dominated by Government-based funding rather than independent sources. This can compromise autonomy and strength of civil society organisations as a whole, and I/MELOs in particular. During interviews I/MELO representatives drew attention to a variety of sources from whom they have received funding or support, and which are included in the list – albeit incomplete – below.

Sources of Funding & Practical Supports Mentioned by Interviews

South	North
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern • Ireland Aid • Arts Council • NCDE • FAS • Trocaire • Government Departments • European Refugee Fund • Comhlamh • Religious Organisations • Community Employment Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Councils • Community Relations Council • Equality Commission Northern Ireland • Women’s Aid • Learn Direct • EU Structural Funds • NI Voluntary Trust • Lottery • Government Departments

In addition to the activities previously listed, funding has also been obtained by I/MELOs for project workers, rent and other ‘core’ costs. However, as discussed in Chapter II, funding for once-off and programme-specific activities is typically the norm. Practical resources such as premises, office support (email, text messaging, telephone), training and in some cases funding are often obtained through MSOs by I/MELOs who avail of their support and mentoring.

Funding sources and strategies

The funding strategies of ‘mixed’ and single community I/MELOs can differ and these differences can have an impact on the level of organisational development achieved. For example, single community organisations that are established by longer settled

communities can enjoy a high level of community-generated funding and volunteer support. But while 'mixed' I/MELOs and others who must rely on external funding – and cope with the uncertainty and instability of the 'funding circus' as one MSO member described it -- a positive outcome of this struggle is often that these organisations become more linked into and more actively engaged in the Sector. This increased level of activity and mobilisation in some cases can lead to greater potential for longterm sustainability in spite of the resource limitations associated with an under-resourced membership. It should be noted that an important downside of this situation is evident in the substantial commentary provided by I/MELOs in the South concerning significant problems with funding, including allegations of hidden administrative and programming requirements, political power games and discriminatory practices among funders.

Attention must be drawn to the fact that immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in the North, for the most part, are longer established than those in the South, have generally larger populations and greater access to employment and material security. Their organisations benefit much more from community-based donations and volunteers. Yet, while single community I/MELOs in the North may, as such, be more 'resource-rich' than 'mixed' I/MELOs, they tend to have been established more in response to social or religious needs. Only comparatively recently have they expanded their focus to wider issues such as racism, social inclusion and so on. Many are therefore currently in a transition stage, where they must now consider applying for external funding so they can expand the reach of their organisations.

It is also worth noting that there are vast differences between Northern and Southern funding regimes for the Sector. The differences between funders' remits, ethos, perceived role in civil society and their relationships with community and voluntary organisations have significant consequences for the development and future of I/MELOs and the issues they address. These issues are discussed at length in Chapter II.

Funding & I/MELO sustainability

The financial situations of I/MELOs also vary considerably over time. Organisations that benefited from start-up grants may struggle to survive once these are discontinued. Others that began on a piecemeal funding basis have been able to move on to larger schemes. There is a tough balance between relying on government funding and maintaining the organisation. A representative of one Northern I/MELO noted that her organisation has been successful in their funding because they don't ask for much, and what they do seek they do so strategically. Funders are more willing to put up the money for one part of a project – printing a booklet or report, for example, after the project has been completed. This does, however, place limits on the level of development or even maintenance the organisation is able to achieve.

Not surprisingly, there is an increasing emphasis on the pursuit of funding other than that which is available from government. A member of a successful I/MELO provides a useful overview:





My advice is if you just depend on minorities, their own communities, is not enough. You must rely on the Irish community. Of course, ...[you] have to rely on government support, but that government support always come at the last, because they are very slow... you have to know the right department to apply for your grant, or blah blah blah... So the Irish community are the most helpful people when you find the right one. So that's what we started with – there's a lot of charity foundations around in Ireland, and Europe, and you just appeal to them and say we have this, can you help us to establish it in some small way or even a big way....[If you just open the yellow pages you can find them. So of course we had friends, Irish friends....so we applied for the four or five Trusts. Finally, one or two responded 'Here, we'll give you a couple of thousand here, we'll give you a couple of thousand there, give you another couple of thousand then', and that's how we started...Then the community ourselves – that's another important – is make them understand that we have to start this kind of centre to be a service to you - a service to your children, service to yourselves. Then you let your own community know: we are here. Any donations are welcome. And like I say, you run some small parties, or some small coffee evenings, people give you 20 or 30 euros and come in just to listen to some lectures or have a cup of tea over. Then you slowly slowly, you're building up. Most important, you have to let the Irish community know. They give a great hand actually.

It is apparent, however, that such a strategy requires that the organisation to target multiple constituencies or 'client bases', in order to provide services (often fee-based) for both their own and for the wider community. This, in turn, constitutes a significant challenge in terms management structure and volunteer base. But there is a growing consensus that 'You can't run it as a non-profit, a non-company type of organisation anymore – there's no such story anymore', and an increasing number of organisations are considering the development of commercial enterprises to support their work in the community.

I/MELO RELATIONSHIPS

This section provides an overview of I/MELOs' relationships in the Sector, including those with other I/MELOs and with MSOs, funders and key agencies.

I/MELO-I/MELO Relationships

Only a few I/MELOs in each jurisdiction claimed to have strong, ongoing relationships with other I/MELOs, as the struggle to survive inhibits the development of strong relationships: 'The cake is very small and only the most successful can secure a slice from it'. I/MELOs express a strong, positive regard for each others' work and support each other whenever possible: 'We get together whenever there's some special occasion, we always get together so we can have a good time at the same time and then learn from each other experience as well at the same time and that's how we support everybody'. And, despite their own struggles, some I/MELOs (typically those who have mixed majority Irish and immigrant structures) have been able to support the establishment of other I/MELOs.

- **The need to work together**

I/MELOs realise that their growing numbers, while an indication of the richness and value of their activities and communities, pose a potential problem in terms of longterm success and civic/political effectiveness. One person noted that different organisations are necessary for different purposes, but that this can become a problem,

especially when communities are so small – they need to be invited to cooperate and organise themselves because the small communities – if you divide them into so many organisations you weaken yourself and get [duplication] and there are many areas that are left out. But if we organise – for example, having a main organisation for a community and then have subgroups.

He went on to recall a joke made by a comedian whereby a man was stepping down as the leader of the town and asked ‘who wants to lead?’ and every one raised their hand. Another emphasised that

if we are not strategic in what we are doing and we are not cautious about how we are doing things, we might in a way be divided into two – the ones on side of whoever is funding and those who are out...It could be true to say as well that sometimes we are divided among ourselves and sometimes we lose a lot of energy as a result of that and some of the skills and resources that we have ... [there are some organisations that] are all working as one and addressing so many issues –but are one organisation. And you go in a place where I live...and there are literally hundreds of organisations and often they are just doing almost exactly what other organisations are doing and there is a sense where people need to say ‘we’re all Africans and we’re all doing similar things – but we cannot work together’ and say that we are actually importing our ‘tribalisms’ into another community, another situation. So I think we need to be careful.

Others do not find a problem with having so many organisations: ‘It’s like development in the family – they need to go off; you can’t keep them under one roof. So I have no problem with so many organisations – but we also have to respect one another, know our objectives and what we want to achieve’. But the vast diversity, even within each community, poses formidable challenges whereby

the people who are coming from their origin countries, they are coming from different backgrounds, with different ideologies – they can’t come together – we have had that experience – different ideologies, different policies, different personal relationships – they cannot come together.

In many ways, however, because of the diversity among organisational members and management structures, I/MELOs by default, have also been successful in developing ‘intercultural working spaces’:





Yeah...this is a collaborative effort...[and] its very easy to say 'oh there must be respect, we must all respect each other'. Its very easy to say that, you know, and people will say that and yet, you know, Irish people or white people will still do all the talking, or will not create a space for someone else to come in and take up a role, or will talk too fast and not slow down so they can be understood, or will talk jargon, you know. So I think we work hard at that stuff in the committee meetings...but, like, they've got to learn that this is an intercultural working space here and I think those tensions are ironed out now...we were all at a learning curve.

- **Umbrella groups**

The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) was established in 1994 and has undergone a remarkable evolution in that it now provides an array of services and leads several innovative national and EU level projects. Considered a representative, umbrella body for minority ethnic communities, its membership consists of many I/MELOs, along with Traveller and religious organisations, but, unsurprisingly, not all I/MELOs feel represented by NICEM and are not members. There is no equivalent in the Republic, although two MSO-led initiatives to support the development of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led forums have emerged over the course of the past year. The first was initiated by the Irish Refugee Council, which has provided practical support for refugee community organisations to meet and network with their British counterparts. This is, however, an MSO-led initiative that, in the absence of further funding, will be unable to evolve into an immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led one. Cáirde, an NGO working to address health inequalities among minority ethnic communities in Ireland has also recently launched the New Communities Partnership, a group of 10 immigrant community-led organisations who have been involved in Cáirde's programme of capacity-building and practical supports for I/MELOs over the past few years. Currently Cáirde secures resources that are then pooled to support the advocacy, alliance building and training activities of the partnership members. As such, this partnership structure is limited to the original 10 organisations.

One interviewee drew attention to the problem that despite the increasing need to work together – even if it involves merging organisations, there will always be those who *'want their own group, their own office, no matter how small – they don't stop to ask what is the scope of the services they are providing or who they represent.'* There is, however, general agreement among the people participating in this research that immigrant- or minority ethnic-led umbrella organisations or councils could serve to strengthen the voice of I/MELOs, create more impact or force than individual organisations, particularly with regard to participating in the policy making process, lobbying, organising and networking. Notable qualifications and issues were raised, however, including concerns about the:

- equity, respect among and accountability to members
- independence, identity and representation of members
- imposition of agendas by individuals
- ability to achieve common vision, mission
- lack of available resources of individual organisations to be able to participate in yet another initiative, despite its importance

Ultimately, the main obstacle to the advancement of such structures has stemmed from the stresses of just trying to survive and the competition over scarce resources. Similarly, while the notion of a cross-border I/MELO organisation is not an impossible one, it is one possibility for the future rather than present moment.

I/MELO-MSO Relationships

While regularised working relationships between I/MELOs and MSOs may be limited to a few key organisations, they have been important ones, some even playing key roles in the start-up of I/MELOs.

MSOs whom 2 or more I/MELOs stated they had working relationships

Organisation (South)	# I/MELOs Reporting	Organisation (North)	# I/MELOs Reporting
Integrating Ireland	4	NICEM	5
Irish Refugee Council	3	Multicultural Resource	
Church or Religious	4	Centre	3
Comhlamh	2		
Spirasi	2		
Amnesty International	2		
Trocaire	2		
Cáirde	2		

Other MSOs each mentioned by I/MELOs in the South include:

Residents Against Racism	Migrant Information Service
Trade Unions	Immigrant Council of Ireland
Access Ireland	International Council for Overseas Students
Student Union	

In the North, I/MELOs mentioned each of the following:

Women's Support Network	Women Into Politics
1 Church-based organisation	British Refugee Council
Law Centre	Committee for the Administration of Justice
Anti-Poverty Network/EAPN	

One refugee/asylum seeker-focused organisation in each jurisdiction mentioned links with an MSO across the border.





▪ **Competition, Climate & Relationships with MSOs**

There are several factors that contribute to differences of perceptions and experiences in the North and South concerning competition between I/MELOs and MSOs. Overall, in the North there appears to be fewer reports of competition by I/MELOs due possibly to:

- the longer standing and more materially secure immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, creating a greater sense of I/MELO self-sufficiency
- a substantial race equality infrastructure already in existence and greater representation of immigrant/minority ethnic communities in policy and service provision structures
- comparatively fewer I/MELOs and only a recent increase in mobilisation beyond social and religious needs
- a smaller 'race relations industry' among MSOs, beyond the sectarian context
- a greater history of rights/community empowerment ethos among Sector actors

As a result, there is less of a 'rush' on the part of MSOs in Northern Ireland to establish new remits in areas relating to immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities that draw on the issue-specific funding made available by government for new policy mandates. Combined with the existence of more broad-based rather than single issue or once-off funding remits (discussed in greater detail in Chapter III), it is possible that I/MELOs in the North therefore have yet to become significant sources of competition for MSOs in terms of either funding or recognition. As a result, there is an environment that is more conducive for I/MELOs and MSOs to mutually support and reinforce each other. However, one I/MELO representative emphasised the fact that relationships between MSOs and I/MELOs in the North are characterised, not by competition, but by dependency – on the parts of MSOs. This person noted that while many MSO representatives express a level of insight with regard to immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities there is still as serious gap in basic knowledge and ability to fully grasp the issues as they relate to these communities. Evidently despite the length of time that most organisations and communities have been in Northern Ireland, MSOs still contact I/MELOs on a continual basis for information and advice, demonstrating that mainstream stakeholders have yet to develop effective competencies in these areas.

The situation in the Republic differs significantly from that of the North. In the South, the size of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities has grown much more recently, is larger, more heterogeneous and materially less stable than those in Northern Ireland. There has been a veritable explosion within the Sector of activities and programmes by both new and longstanding MSOs to undertake campaigns and provide services in relation to 'new minority communities', anti-racism initiatives and so on. The Sector as a whole and these organisations in particular have also been a significant site for the participation of asylum seekers, refugees and members of new minority ethnic communities either through (1) volunteering (both to assist in the integration process and in order to battle the boredom and hopelessness from being denied the right to work) and (2) employment (because many have done such work in their home countries, but also because many are channelled into Sector-related work because the qualifications they obtained in other industries elsewhere are not recognised for work in Ireland).

In addition, many members of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities have begun to leave MSOs to form their own I/MELOs, in effect depriving them of their expertise, insights and contacts as well as creating new competition for the same resources. Moreover, I/MELO members report increasingly frustration stemming from the ways in which their interaction with MSOs and other mainstream stakeholders often leads to their ideas being ‘poached’.¹ The tension emerging from the confluence of these various factors is particularly poignant given the intimate connections between Sector activities and the wider process of settlement, integration and ‘new’ minority ethnic community development within Irish society.

One interviewee cautioned that such problems in the South reflect the legacies of colonial thinking and underdevelopment, whereby MSOs who have raised funds and undertaken projects in Africa, for example, now feel threatened by the existence and growth of I/MELOs here. He noted that this goes some way towards explaining automatic criticism on the parts of both MSOs and funders that I/MELOs are not experienced or able to manage funds: *‘The whole concept of underdevelopment is there – it is also the relation between the [global] North and South – like the western industrialised and underdeveloped countries. And if we can’t break that barrier, it will take us years to move ahead.’* In a somewhat different vein, one interviewee from an MSO wondered if, because of the poor relations between the Government and the Sector as a whole, some of the criticisms made by MSOs of I/MELOs were the result of MSOs merely passing on the negative attitudes the Government have directed towards them.

MSO representatives typically felt that, on one hand, that I/MELOs were not yet well-established enough to create competition for MSOs. One noted that the MSO sector was ‘gracious’ and not competitive. Yet most went on to acknowledge that the conditions contributing to an increase in tensions or rivalries between I/MELOs and MSOs certainly exist. As is the case throughout the Sector, scarce resources and the struggle for organisational survival are the main factors generating conflicts, although one person noted that Irish organisations will never call it ‘competition’. It was also felt that these conditions prevent the development of positive, exchange-based relationships, and illustrates why funding dedicated specifically for I/MELO development is necessary.

In both jurisdictions, however, alliances between and solidarity work among I/MELO and MSO women’s organisations and networks, and with respect to the Equality Coalition are yielding fruitful outcomes and role models for collaborative work.

¹ This issue was raised in previous research (see Feldman et al., 2002) and is not necessarily limited to MSOs. One I/MELO representative reported noticing a trend in which ideas set out in grant proposals which were unsuccessful in receiving funding, seemed to be being taken forward by other organisations and agencies who subsequently attained funding for them.





I/MELO Relationships with Statutory & Semi-State Bodies

The table below shows the range of government and government-sponsored agencies, institutions and expert bodies with whom I/MELOs reported working with, some of which have dual roles as funders.

*Statutory & Semi-State Bodies with whom 2 or more I/MELOs claimed to have working relationships**

Organisation (South)	#	Organisation (North)	#
Equality Authority	5	City Council/Local Authority	4
NCCRI	4	Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister	3
Partnership/Community Development Programme	4	Equality Commission	3
NCDE/Dev. Cooperation Ireland	3	Government Race Equality Forum	2
University	3	Human Rights Commission	2
City Council	2		

Other bodies mentioned by Southern I/MELOs included:

Dept of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
Dept of Education
Dept of Social and Family Affairs
Dept of Foreign Affairs
FÁS
Garda Intercultural Unit
VEC
Health Board

I/MELOs in the North also mentioned:

Community Relations Council
Department of Agriculture
Police Service of NI

On the one hand, I/MELOs based on a cross-community or 'mixed' membership demonstrated somewhat more effectiveness than single community-specific I/MELOs in representing their communities or constituencies in policy and political structures. In many cases, this was due to having a higher profile and stronger networks, possibly because the structure and activities of these organisations cut across and involve a greater diversity of communities and contacts. On the other, such success is also dependent on the existence of strong, efficient and participatory policy structures at government level. It is therefore important to note that, in the North because of Section 75, single or community-

specific I/MELOs are more successful than their Southern counterparts in achieving inclusion within statutory structures specifically because they can be identified as representing ‘a’/‘their’ communities. Because of this legislation, I/MELO/statutory interaction is thus becoming part of a variety of standard practices in relation to participation and representation:

‘[W]hat they do whenever they are having some sort of consultation we always go and take part in that consultation, if we have to provide or produce a document we always do that and respond to that and if we are looking for someone to come and discuss with us in the usual bases, in our own Centre, they do come and then we have the discussion’.

In the South, statutory agencies and departments are experiencing growing pains associated with the proliferation of new areas of policy and new, diverse target groups. As a result many I/MELOs, particularly those who are not well known to key agencies can ‘fall outside the radar’ (as one MSO put it). This outcome is particularly prevalent because agencies (and MSOs as well) tend to prefer or seek out umbrella or ‘pan’ community I/MELOs to work with on the basis of efficiency, added value and so on, and many smaller I/MELOs and communities may be left out as a result.

Overall, these differences between Sector infrastructures and dynamics in the North and South have had the effect of creating

- Greater overall links and stronger relationships **between I/MELOs and MSOs** in the South.
- Greater overall links and stronger working relationships **between I/MELOs and statutory bodies** in the North.

Such differences were evident in the ability of MSO representatives in the South to comment more extensively than funders on the evolving roles of I/MELOs in civil society in the Republic, and the ways in which funders in the North had comparatively deeper insights than MSOs into the contributions made by I/MELOs to civil society there. In fact, as discussed in the next section, funders in the North typically expressed a more extensive knowledge of the immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities and their role in social change than MSOs in either jurisdiction.

▪ **Umbrella, Representative & Expert Bodies**

There are also important differences between the North and South with respect to the development of representative forums for minority ethnic/immigrant/minority ethnic communities. As mentioned previously, as a minority ethnic-led umbrella body, NICEM is typically included on most race/equality-related policy forums at national and international levels. Despite its wide membership and representative role, single community-specific organisations in addition to NICEM also sit on the Race Equality Forum established by the Government and housed in the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister to oversee the implementation of the Race Equality Strategy and related issues. Another key MSO is the Multicultural Resource Centre (MCRC), a subsidiary of Bryson House, a long established social and environmental





charity, and which has a staff of 6. It provides training, practical supports and an advice service for minority ethnic/immigrant community networks, organisations and individuals, and undertakes work involving outreach, youth projects, research and information exchange. Having undergone notable growing pains over the years, the MCRC has come to play a key role in the support of I/MELO activity and in diversity work more broadly, and is also typically included on government-level consultative committees and working groups.

In the South, there is no ethnic minority/immigrant community-led council or umbrella group, nor is there a Government-level race equality forum like that in the North.² The interaction between immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities/I/MELOs and Government is thus highly mediated. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was established by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform following the 1997 European Year Against Racism. NCCRI, comprised of 6 staff, in its role as expert body provides policy makers, those working with minority ethnic communities and I/MELOs with advisory, training, information, public awareness and community development support and assistance in the areas of anti-racism and interculturalism. NCCRI assists in coordinating consultations associated with the policy making process, thus facilitating interaction between minority ethnic and immigrant groups and Government. The largest umbrella organisation is Integrating Ireland (with two full-time staff), which is a network of 200 community and voluntary groups working in solidarity with asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants to promote human rights, equality and integration. Established in 2000 under the auspices of Comhlámh (an NGO originally established for returned development workers), it is currently undertaking the transition to independence. It represents a vast range of groups, organisations and communities involved support in work, primarily in relation to asylum seekers, through the provision of national meetings, training seminars and information exchange networks and by participating in consultative forums. Members of minority ethnic/immigrant organisations and communities are included on the boards of both of these organisations.

However, the absence of a minority ethnic- or immigrant/minority ethnic-led umbrella group at national level hinders the direct participation of these groups and the communities they represent in government policy and social partnership structures, in contrast to organisations such as the National Women's Council, National Disability Federation, National Youth Council of Ireland and so on. Given their longer history of mobilisation in Ireland, Traveller organisations such as Pavee Point, the Irish Traveller Movement and the National Travellers Women's Forum are increasingly included in such structures, the mainstreaming of minority ethnic representation in such structures on a regular basis has yet to take place. NGOs such as the Irish Refugee Council and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (and even the immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led organisation, Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland) often serve as expert bodies or consultative representatives in relation to refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant issues but not in the same way or in the same policy contexts just described. No doubt this reflects a 'chicken-and-egg' situation that seems unlikely to change until there is a national level body for immigrant/minority ethnic communities equivalent to organisations mentioned here.

² An Intercultural Forum has been proposed in the recently published National Action Plan Against Racism, but as yet it is undefined and no consultation similar to that preceding the establishment of the Race Forum in Northern Ireland has been announced.

- **Formal political participation**

It is interesting that, while I/MELOs in the North are more directly active in governance structures, more formal participation in the political scene – such as running in local elections – is reported as being ‘less realistic’ at this time. In the South, however, several candidates from immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities ran in the 2004 local elections, and 2 were elected (despite the fact that this election was taking place alongside the national referendum to limit citizenship). As discussed further in Chapter IV, I/MELOs in both jurisdictions are keenly aware however that they are far from the ‘table’ and centres of power.

Summary

Discussions with I/MELO members about their organisations reveal many issues and struggles common to other community and voluntary organisations (additional obstacles specific to I/MELOs are examined in greater depth in Chapter III). The sheer volume and vibrancy of their activities – which defy effective description in the contexts of a report— which are often engaged through the use of people’s personal finances, reflects a passion for civil society work that is linked to strong desire to become part of and contribute to the growth of a thriving, multi-ethnic Irish society. The development of I/MELOs provides insights into the relationships between settlement, community formation and integration, in which the dedication to nurturing communities goes hand-in-hand with making a new life at an individual level and with bringing society forward as they themselves and their communities move on. This chapter also emphasises the fact that such work cannot be achieved by I/MELOs in a vacuum, but depends largely on the quality of relationships with other Sector actors and stakeholders. The views of MSOs and funders about their relationships with I/MELOs are examined in the following Chapter.



Chapter II

SECTOR RELATIONSHIPS: MSOS' & FUNDERS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH I/MELOS

This chapter presents the views of representatives from MSOs and Funders about their work and their relationships with I/MELOs.

MAJORITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS (MSOS): DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND WORKING WITH I/MELOS

A sample of 20 majority Sector organisations (MSOs) who either work closely with I/MELOs or whose work falls within the race relations/immigration 'industry' were chosen for interview. Of the 20 organisations, 15 are traditional, independent non-governmental organisations (10 in the Republic and 5 in NI) and 5 are linked to semi-state agencies, partnership structures or local authorities. Thirteen work at **national level** (the majority of these primarily involved in service provision or policy) and 7 work at **local/regional level** (4 being community development or partnership organisations).

Types of Majority Sector Organisations (MSOs) Interviewed	
• Development Education	2
• National -level (including some government-sponsored organisations)	7
• Independent Asylum Seeker & Refugee Support (religious-based)	2
• Council/Partnership (including some asylum seeker / refugee support groups)	7
• Traveller Organisations (working in solidarity with immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities)	2

Types of MSOs working with I/MELOs

The organisational remits of MSOs working with I/MELOs and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities shape both the types of relationships they have developed with them as well as the nature of their activity programmes. Among those MSOs included in this study, two broad 'types' of organisations emerged: those based more on a capacity building or community development ethos and those directed more towards service provision or policy development.

a) Capacity Building/Community Development MSOs: classified here as those (5) organisations having a capacity-building focus, who employ community development principles and typically pursue full engagement with I/MELOs or immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in their activities, from start to finish.





b) Service Provision/Policy Development MSOs: these include those (9) organisations involved in service provision or policy-related issues, who are more apt to employ measures to achieve inclusion of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in their work, and who tend to achieve partial rather than full involvement of I/MELOs or immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, usually in the implementation stages of their work rather than from the beginning.

Four organisations straddled the full range of these two remits, and two organisations had relationships with I/MELOs that are more characterised as ones of solidarity and mutually reinforcing, collective action.

Unsurprisingly among the **capacity-building organisations**, a wide range of different community development definitions and strategies are at work. They differ in their aspirations and practices as well as in their levels of success in terms of the extent to which capacity building objectives are actually achieved. This continuum includes an array of organisations, from those whose relationships are based primarily on providing support to I/MELO members to MSOs who are actively involved in community building as part of their overall remit. This type of work involved an impressive variety of activities contributing towards the actual building of communities through the development of organisations and vice versa, that is, the development of organisations through the community-building process. The work of the MSOs therefore varied from providing (1) training or information only, to (2) a variety of practical supports for organisation start-up and maintenance³, to (3) social as well as technical support, to (4) those that encouraged synergy of project outcomes and spin-off projects and organisations.

In contrast, **service provision/policy development-focused organisations** tend more to seek out immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities and organisations for their expertise. Often, because their funding is focused on delivery *per se*, their resources do not permit them to consult or include I/MELOs or members of their communities to any real extent in a partnership or community development fashion. As such, these organisations can often view the need for drawing on I/MELO or immigrant community expertise as actually constituting partnership or collaboration with them. In some cases they may not be aware of the difference.

A key issue is that service provision demands the greatest level of resources and infrastructure – which more established, mainstream organisations are more likely to have. It is important to note that these organisations often may come to work with immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities through the expansion of target or client groups within a broader remit (ie., social inclusion, disadvantage, unemployment, health and so on), rather than having a focus on issues relating specifically to immigrant/minority ethnic communities. I/MELOs or immigrant community members often stress that there should be or that they would like to have a greater role in providing services to their own communities and in the cultivation of sufficient development and resources necessary for doing so. However, there is currently a lag in the development of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led organisations solely for this purpose when established MSOs are already engaged in trying to do this.

³ Such support would include office space, equipment and services, often at low rates or free of charge, facilitate access to and greater presence within agencies and system, assist with funding applications and so on.

The contentious issue – and what many I/MELOs draw attention to, particularly in terms of funding – is when new majority-led organisations are established specifically for the purposes of service provision. I/MELO representatives emphasise that this circumvents the consideration of creating opportunities for I/MELOs to do this work themselves. For MSOs involved in lobbying or policy development, although their work is enhanced through input from I/MELOs, it may not be dependent upon it. As such it may be easier for them to end up drawing on I/MELOs' scarce time and resources (particularly if they are struggling to establish their own organisations) without yielding mutual benefits.

Types of MSO Activities

Activities – longterm and shortterm: MSOs are involved in a great variety of activities with I/MELOs and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities. When asked which activities are most effective in their work with I/MELOs, there was general agreement that activities having a longterm focus are ultimately the most effective for bringing about change, but they are harder to sustain. Those interviewed reported that it is easier to harness enthusiasm, energy and participation over a shorter period of time, particularly because small organisations often are not in the position to have feasible longterm goals or sustain such involvement. However one representative noted that once-off events, even social events, have the potential to generate a multitude of spin-offs and developmental effects, but it depends on the practice and ethos of the organisation and its willingness and ability to follow through on those opportunities. However, she emphasised that it should not be 'simply a matter of economy' whereby once-off events can be funded on the assumption that they will yield benefits beyond the end of the single event, particularly as a way of justifying not investing in longer term initiatives.

Multicultural and Social Events: All of the MSOs included in the study were involved to some extent in activities falling within the broad rubric of 'multiculturalism', about which there were mixed feelings. One person observed that such events are typically for 'ingroup' members – that is people who are involved in the organisation, the specific target groups to which their activities are directed or regular contacts in the Sector itself. As a result, these events may not generate the cross-community or learning exchange they are assumed to do, and often may not even involve many different 'cultures' or groups. This leads to the criticism that multicultural activities involve 'preaching to the converted', and while they can assist in building networks and contacts, they are more for socialising rather than advancing a particular cause. One MSO representative felt that *'social events, when promoted as something other than opportunities to socialise like anti-racism or multiculturalism, have 'a level of dishonesty'.*

However, such events and activities were also seen in a very positive light. Multicultural events do stimulate *'mutual learning, not just at organisational level, but across communities involved in activities [by] changing peoples' expectations, challenging and overcoming negative assumptions...surprising people through their enjoyment even in the most racist/resistant areas'.* This interviewee added that while this may sound 'trite' it is the level at which people are currently engaging. Another agreed that events that are able to break down barriers can be the most important form of multicultural work, but emphasised that such work needed to be directed towards those communities where resistance and racism are most evident





(not those already involved in such work) and must ensure that immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led organisations are there to make their own case and fight own battles.



Social events & spin-offs: According to several interviewees, the value of social events in general should not be underestimated. They play important roles in the process of building communities and in overcoming isolation (a key issue) and provide opportunities for communities to overcome their isolation from each other. Those interviewed also found that it is important to intersperse social events within their programme of work to maintain interest, commitment and participation of I/MELOs and communities. One person noted that the frequent 'all-work' contexts of community and voluntary work in Ireland makes people 'weary'. Social activities may also play a key role in demonstrating MSOs commitment to working with the community and create opportunities to overcome mistrust and suspicion. As such, once-off events can serve as vehicles for moving beyond superficial relationships and engagement.



Because they bring people together, social activities may contribute to building the solidarity necessary for working on other broader issues and from that experience they can then move on to bigger issues. One interviewee felt this is particularly important as people don't automatically see themselves as being 'political', and such activities provide ways of finding out where people see themselves rather than imposing agendas or work programmes on them. They create important starting points: *'sometimes fun can be easier to participate in'*, and many described examples of unique and innovative spin-offs generated by multicultural and social events. Another urged that this work, however, does need to be viewed and evaluated within a wider picture that is characterised by a glut of events, invitations, conference reports and so on, where there is often little follow-up as well as the need for more careful analysis of what people are trying to accomplish through these activities.

MSOs' Views About Their Relationships with I/MELOs

In order to gain an understanding of the nature of their relationships with I/MELOs, MSO representatives were asked to discuss the following: how they came to work with I/MELOs; what types of working relationships they feel work best/least; the importance of these relationships to their organisation as a whole; and in what ways I/MELOs benefit from their work with them.

Informal vs Formal Relationships: MSO representatives were split on the issue of formality concerning relationships with I/MELOs, and views varied across types of organisations and activities. On one hand, many felt that formal relationships went furthest in the establishment of mutual commitment, support necessary for building partnerships and in preventing miscommunications. Others felt that informal relationships warded off unrealistic expectations (usually on the parts of the MSOs) with regard to the level of responsibility and commitment feasible for I/MELO representatives to uphold, given their own workloads and the often unpaid nature of such voluntary work. For some MSOs, informal relationships work best at the moment as they allow for flexibility and leeway with respect to differences in knowledge and skill levels, and for language barriers to emerge and equalise. One person reported that they had lost a lot of

good volunteers because of the formality and amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved, so they opted for a more informal system, while still keeping minutes of meetings and so on. Another noted that while 'Irish formality' had become 'too onerous' in her experience, getting used to working informally was proving to be a challenge. Ultimately, many agreed that, at the heart of developing successful relationships lies, first, the necessity for good communication whereby all parties are clear about what they need and want from the relationship, and, second, a context flexible enough to respond to different ways of doing business and the amount of time necessary to bridge them.

Partnership, Expectations and Realities: When asked what benefits their work has for the I/MELOs who work with them, MSO representatives identified several areas of contribution:

- *expertise and resources* - administrative support and training
- *credibility and complementary activities* – contributing to the visibility of I/MELOs and communities, making links, breaking down isolation, opening doors
- *a measure of security and clout* - circumvent barriers through the use of their independence, freedom to advocate for people who are too vulnerable to do on their own and to get their issues on the agenda
- *challenges to and expansion of I/MELO work* – getting them involved at national level through networks, platforms and other policy forums and within the wider activities, debates and programmes of society and citizens, beyond their community interests

People recognised that such work will always require equal partnership between MSO and I/MELOs, because even though the MSO may have more knowledge of the Sector and resources, the I/MELOs have the most knowledge of their communities and cultures, needs and barriers and the impact such work will have on their communities. This applies whether the activities in question involve I/MELOs providing input or receiving training. For some, particularly those engaged in capacity building/community development work, partnership not only involves working on projects together, from start to finish, but providing whatever is necessary for I/MELOs to take the work forward on their own, only involving themselves when asked. Some even go as far as saying that, according to community development practice, all of their work is ultimately geared towards '*working themselves out of a job*' – even if this might not happen for some time. As one MSO representative stated, capacity building (in terms of helping to remove barriers rather than responding to deficiencies in expertise through training) '*is something that you see in results and it is easier to see in the outcomes rather than in paper or theoretically*'.

- **Practical limitations & trade-offs**

There was acknowledgement that, while quality relationships with I/MELOs are important to most or many MSOs, MSOs have not always lived up to their aspirations or responsibilities. One representative drew attention to the conflict '*between achieving something quickly and following through on a principle that is strong but time consuming and resource heavy*'. Another pointed to the problem, particularly for large representative organisations that work from large databases rather than outreach, of groups falling outside the 'radar' if they are not registered, recognised or visible in the mainstream. Only





one MSO reported that they no longer strive to maintain engaged relationships with I/MELOs because they felt that many had lost their focus and did not have the resources to make exchange of information and referrals worthwhile. That there may be few I/MELOs in the local area also hinders the development of working relationships and partnerships for many MSOs.

- **Blindspots**

Thus, despite good intentions and good practice, a complex blindspot exists, one that is compounded by the particular culture and demands of Community and Voluntary Sector work in Ireland, and by the lack of experience of mainstream organisations in working across cultures. One interviewee captured this dilemma:

[H]ow shall I put it? Perhaps we did not leave enough space for the minority led ethnic organisations - for them to grow because a lot of the work that is done in Ireland is done on the Irish work ethic terms -- and that is understandable. But that means certain rules -- about ...how you carry out your business at the meetings, how you invite [and inform] people... how you organise paying the expenses back – that do not encourage people to participate... And so there would be a lot of expectations on the side of the Irish counterparts here or at least people in the paid positions towards minority led ethnic organisations and there is not that understanding...

Representation, Participation & MSO Structures

One of the main concerns of the I/MELO representatives interviewed centred upon the lack of participation within the structures of MSOs.

- Of the 9 service/policy organisations, 4 had I/MELO/immigrant community representation on their management/advisory boards, and 5 had representation at lower levels within the organisation
- Of the 5 capacity building organisations, 3 included I/MELO/community representation on their management or advisory boards, 2 did not.
- Of the 4 organisations that had both service/policy and capacity building remits, all had I/MELO representatives on their management/advisory boards.

Thus a key point is that not all of the capacity building organisations included in this study had I/MELO/immigrant community representation at management/board level (and thus direct influence over organisational decision-making), despite their ethos and practices. Often I/MELO participation was limited to a committee or working group level. Similarly, service provision/policy organisations often included I/MELO/immigrant community representatives at board level, even though they have less engagement with them in their actual work. Board membership therefore does not ensure community development/capacity building practices. And, despite the problems with inconsistent applications and outcomes of community development and capacity building principles and practices, MSO work that is directed towards strengthening I/MELOs and their staff -- even that which is based on some sort of mentorship basis -- is not inherently paternalistic, regressive or disempowering just because a majority-run organisation is providing or leading the programme of support or service delivery.

MSO representatives also reported a number of interesting outcomes in relation to their developing ethos and practice. In one case for example, an interviewee noted that once an I/MELO is affiliated with their organisation, it then has access to all organisational decision making structure, and to its other partners and projects. She therefore actively encourages communities to form groups so they may be recognised and eligible for affiliation, thereby gaining access to all of the services and support available. As a member of one of the solidarity groups emphasised: *'people do not come from not being involved to being involved en masse...There is a need to get people to believe in what you're doing, show that there are going to be gains from it'*. Many staff also take notable steps to overcome the gaps in representation, both in respect to feeding back I/MELO perspectives to their management and to represent and support them in arenas where they are not 'at the table' in policymaking arenas.

- **Capacity building does not always mean full representation**

In a similar way it must also be acknowledged that consultation with and direct participation of I/MELOs and immigrant/minority ethnic communities is not always necessary, worthwhile or appropriate in the contexts of the work of MSOs. This is particularly true in light of resource limitations, and high levels of burnout among I/MELO and community representatives stemming from such in-depth involvement. Just because an organisation focuses on service provision rather than capacity building, or the fact that community representatives may not be involved from start to finish does not mean the practice or provision is ill-informed. And, while community expertise may be necessary to inform the project or service, it may not be necessary or appropriate to support the creation of an I/MELO for this purpose or as part of the project at hand. Yet, having said this, it must also be emphasised that, in this study, service/policy organisations tended to have little or to have mediated contact with I/MELOs and their communities. In the contexts of the interview discussions however, organisations that did not employ capacity building or community development principles seemed less reflexive and less articulate concerning the nuances of the challenges and contributions made with regard to cultural diversity in the Sector.

Ultimately, it may not necessarily be *what* or *how much* majority-led organisations do for I/MELO's or immigrant/minority ethnic communities, but the particular principles and practices upon which their work and their structures are based. In the same fashion, community development is not necessarily always empowering (or well executed), depending on the wider interests and constraints of the organisation and individual staff in question. It is therefore crucial that, regardless of the nature or structure of the work at hand, there is a need to be mindful and supportive of (1) achieving a balance between the need to diversify expertise and structure, and to maintain the organisation – all of which is shaped by current funding and sector circumstances; and (2) acknowledging that visibility, recognition and legitimisation of I/MELOs are absolutely essential for them to successfully undertake their work, work that is ultimately directed towards the development of active and self-sufficient communities.





FUNDERS : DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS & WORKING WITH I/MELOS

Funding regimes differ significantly between the North and South. These differences have significant consequences for the development and future of I/MELOs and the issues they address, as well as with regard to the wider process of social change. Moreover, how funders see their work and the grant-making process in relation to civil society as a whole shapes how they interpret their remits or mandates when allocating resources. This, in turn, plays a key role in shaping their relationships with I/MELOs, with obvious consequences for the actual formation of 'new' communities within the mainstream society.

Funders' Remits

The remits of the funders interviewed for this project were as follows:

Northern Funders	Southern Funders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building social cohesion, partnership ● Social development across C & V Sector ● Development of policy and practice across C & V Sector, including volunteering ● Anti-poverty & social inclusion ● Geographical mapping & development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development education ● Anti-racism/racism awareness ● Settlement, reception and integration (refugees & asylum seekers) ● Anti-poverty ● Development of national C & V networks ● Resolution of social problems through organisational development

▪ The developmental focus of Northern Ireland schemes

The major funding schemes available for funding I/MELOs in the North are generally directed towards the broad aims of social development, partnership and the development of the Community and Voluntary Sector itself. As a result, the funding gained by I/MELOs under these programmes can, in many cases, be directed towards or contribute as much to their organisational development as to their delivery of programmes and activities. For example, one funder stated:

We are a funding organisation, or at least that's a mechanism we use. But our core business is social cohesion so the development of groups in ensuring that the sorts of ideas that are helpful to moving things forward.... That's the real work as far as we're concerned. The awards themselves are a mechanism to get to where we want to be. They're not the end in themselves for us. So working with the groups is the crucial element of all of that. To that end we have historically been involved in training and development work.

This developmental focus involves such practices as:

- establishing a 'progression route from small grants to core grants to EU funding'.
- 'brokering of partnerships, as smaller groups mightn't have contacts with others who might be able to strengthen their bid'
- facilitating groups' drawing out the policy implications of their work / activities so as to feed into the system of policy making:

because the question of an organisation's capacity to exert some sort of policy leverage on other organisations is something that we would want to support... It's not just a matter of can we get some money to run an event but, when we talk about core funding, can we get some money into the system so that we actually influence a whole lot of events and a whole lot of ways of doing it. That's really where...small amounts of our resource...help really make a difference in there.

The major drawback for I/MELOs with the Northern funding regime is that the schemes are generally more complex and often require applicants to be part of wider integrated networks or collaborative partnerships. Ultimately this demands a more advanced level of I/MELO development and networks to begin with in order to be eligible and successful. Moreover, while Section 75 has ensured that wherever community- or Sector-focused funding exists, I/MELOs are included in the remits and targets of these schemes or agencies, this positive development is hampered by the lack of coordination and responsibility across departments. And, as minority ethnic/immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities are small, their funding tends to be addressed in a more 'piecemeal' fashion.

▪ **The issue-specific schemes in the Republic**

In marked contrast, the remits of funders in the South are typically specific to single issues (eg., poverty, anti-racism, development education). Nearly all provide mostly small, once-off grants for specific activities or projects and generally do not provide any operational or administrative funding to support their delivery or the development of the organisation itself. As one funder noted, '*Organisations we would say, are more the vehicles to addressing the issue, they're the means to the ends, not the ends in themselves*'. Because of such narrow remits, it is easy for I/MELOs to fall outside them – one of the most common reasons funders give for unsuccessful applications. Moreover, because these limited schemes serve the entire Community and Voluntary Sector, and given the fairly large number of I/MELOs, competition (particularly with well-established MSOs) is fierce. That grantmaking remits and criteria are both issue-specific and, in many cases, '*policy-driven*' means that they can be everchanging, adding to the lack of developmental or cumulative strategy.





Funders' Views of Their Relationships With I/MELOs

- **Newness & distance in the South**

It should be noted that, in many cases, for funders in the South not only is their grant work with I/MELOs and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities quite new, but so is the entire policy infrastructure that surrounds it. In some cases, for those linked to Government, the branch or agency, or even the post they occupy, has only been recently established. Combined with the issue-specific nature of their remits, and the generally distant relationship between the Government and the Sector overall, it is not surprising that funders in the Republic may lack the in-depth knowledge of the wider issues and circumstances relating to the Sector as a whole, and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities and organisations more specifically:

We have an emerging relationship. I wouldn't say that it's very well established, maybe because we don't, I suppose, have a sense yet of how many organisations are there... [They] would be the 'new customers' of our schemes... We wouldn't be able to distinguish that well how the actual involvement is of people from minority backgrounds in the leadership of those organisations.

This lack of familiarity both leads to and is exacerbated by the tendency of funders in the South to maintain a greater level of distance in their engagement with I/MELOs. This distance impedes the development of closer relationships and the effectiveness of the funding process as a whole. It also has important implications for I/MELO organisation and development, in terms of how I/MELOs are viewed and – most importantly – assessed. One interviewee highlighted this issue well:

First of all there are so many of them. And quite a few of them have in their names, 'African'. So I wonder why there are so many with the title, 'African'. So you get [an] African refugee and asylum seekers support group and you get [an] African refugee network and you get somebody else from Africa, and so on. So distinguishing between them – of course Africa is a huge country – but I wonder should there be, if there's a regional thing that's happening should we know the region maybe. But it must be difficult for the funding organisations to decide which African group is representative of Africans. And then I see things like, two Congolese groups. Now Ireland's very small – and we're used to – we kind of expect organisations to have just – the Ireland soccer team or whatever, you know or Ireland St Vincent DePaul or the Ireland Red Cross, so maybe it's just, we haven't yet come to terms with the scale of...but I still wonder which organisation – still if I'm presented with application forms from two Congolese groups – I don't know, how do I decide which – I know there will be political differences, but it's just a bit confusing at the moment. And I think the fear of any funding organisation would be duplication...So I don't know what the solution is there. I look in the directories and I see all these huge lists – I see maybe 20, maybe 30 – and then there are these solidarity groups, you know like the Nicaragua Solidarity Group, all these other groups. When I try to phone them I don't get anywhere because they don't seem to have an office or phone numbers or staff. And sometimes you'll see the same name on three groups, or similar names, maybe they're people like ourselves where there can be 5000

John Smiths, or a million Mary Brady's, and so on. But it's just really, you know, for something to help us. Maybe we just need a better description of what the organisation is setting out to do. In the directories you get two lines, maybe that's the solution.

What is noteworthy here is the reliance on databases rather than outreach, and on information seminars rather than engagement. Another funder observed that *'I think the fact now that we have a database, so when we run events in the future, more organisations will have the potential to be at those events. Because we've a bigger database now, so thatso I think that it will be an incremental [process of development]'*.

Such circumstances seem to have contributed to the perception that the funding process is an adversarial one. As a result the participation of I/MELOs (and other MSOs) is kept to a minimum as a result of 'conflicts of interests'. For example, members from these organisations would not generally be included on advisory or evaluation committees and so on. One interviewee noted:

You appreciate our difficulty. If 50 separate organisations send in a proposal...that's practically every NGO group in Ireland and how do you get somebody from the NGO community that isn't involved somehow in one of the proposals, so it was a real struggle...

Interviewees felt that the issue of participation is a problem of 'transparency' – and one noted that it would be both awkward to ask someone on the committee to leave during discussion of a grant that person's organisation had submitted, and would be too difficult for those left on the panel to turn it down, even when the representative was absent from the discussion: *'I don't think this would hold up well to public scrutiny'*. In contrast, in the North, not only would inclusion of I/MELOs be an ordinary practice but it would be seen as a necessary element of transparency and accountability.

Several funders provide at least limited assistance in the preparation of grants (and to a lesser extent provide feedback on failed applications), but for some there is the sense that such involvement:

probably wouldn't be the place of someone on the Government side to do that – obviously there's a conflict of interest when the actual money is being given out from that side. I can see the point you're making all right, but I'm not sure who the right person to do that would be.

▪ **Funding as outreach & capacity building work in the North**

Interviews with Northern funders paint a very different picture, one largely reflecting the very different circumstances, contexts and backgrounds in which their work has evolved. They have longstanding mandates and infrastructures to support developmental work. However, it must be emphasised that, with respect to I/MELOs, they are able to engage at this level because they are working primarily with a handful of organisations representing distinct and easily identifiable communities (even though such distinctions are over simplified and blur the diversity within their communities). As the following accounts highlight, in this context funding responsibilities extend beyond the administration of resource allocation, are inextricably linked to the wider work involved in social change and require constant innovation and investment.





Funding work begins even before the proposal

It is to do with...working with them to think through their own goals...helping those groups to link into the discussions...[T]he discourse that's going on around them is crucial, because that's where the policy leverage comes in, that's where their own picture of how they can make change happen, how they can influence the people who are in [power], where all of that happens.

Inextricable link between civil society and social change

Applications grow out of that and they also influence -- when we talk about trends in funding or whatever, they come from somewhere too. They come from recognition of issues or ideas or problems or things to be tackled in society, so the more that those groups are influencing the frame of the debate, the more then that the applications that they're bringing forward find common cause you know, find a resonance with where money's going to at any given point in time.

Significant, on-going resources

We never fund anything on the basis of a written application. From the time we were set up we always visited the group, to talk through the application...So we've always had a policy of, which is very, labour - costly but I think it was worthwhile in terms of actually going out and seeing the group...in their own place. And we have always employed assessment staff that have at least four to five years as practical development workers so one of the benefits we would argue in terms of that sort of process is that quite often the advice they can give a group, relatively new groups is probably more effective than the level of funding we can give them.

Finding new ways to work

It is important to recognise that you need to leave as a funder some element of almost like research and development space where ideas that have just spontaneously arrived are not familiar notions to you but are worth further investigation...[T]he more deliberate you get about what you fund and when you fund it and your theory -- applying your 'theory of intervention', if you like, to the work you support. The more you move in that direction which can seem more coherent, less reactive, the more you also need to keep some space, to be reactive because new ideas don't belong to anybody, they come from everywhere and anywhere. So you need to leave room for those to emerge.

Funders in the South tend to come back repeatedly to the need to be accountable to their budgetary sources, ensuring value for money and of not being able to take risks, but Northern funders are better able to embrace their role in the process of organising towards social change, with all its risk and uncertainty. This came through in the funders' discussions regarding the 'buzz' (as one termed it) from watching organisations develop and improve their practices, successfully move from smaller to larger grants, and the generation of spin-offs and collaborations through the synergy that can develop around one grant or project.

Partnerships & the Realities of I/MELO Organisational Effectiveness & Success

Funders in both jurisdictions encourage and prefer to fund partnerships and joint efforts for reasons beyond merely trying to streamline their work with I/MELOs and immigrant/minority ethnic communities.

I suppose our issue around partnership funding is that there's an extra expertise across sharing of experience whether it be from the community and voluntary sector and the statutory sector or alternatively the other way around as well. We also feel that it helps with the longer term sustainability of projects as well, by having that partnership approach up front. Maybe running a programme for three years, then there's more of a likelihood of the legacy of that programme continuing into the future.

Moreover, given the limitations of any available budget, funders are concerned to identify and support organisations that they know can co-ordinate efforts in a much larger area and reach more communities: *Again it's a balancing act, you don't want to bury a group in the ground at the expense of a bigger group but you do have to guarantee [competence and value]'.*

As a result, interviewees identified such organisations as immigrant women's groups and partnerships between immigrant- and majority-led women's groups as being particularly rewarding to fund or effective in the grant-making process. This is because they have well established participatory structures, do outreach as part of their work, and typically address a wide range of issues. Rural, youth and peace-related groups were also well thought of because of their active engagement with their local communities.

Large or umbrella organisations are not necessarily the only answer, however. One person commented that it is

very tempting for us to work particularly with umbrella bodies because that's a handy way into the debate. But...that in itself in a funny way shuts the debate down, can be in a sense racist in its own right because it's, there are so many complicated identities and they're each valid in their own right. So the notion of, that we find some handy way to deal with minority ethnic issue if you like, is not where we are trying to get to. We're trying to get a cohesive picture of what's going on in order to allow us to be more complicated about how we look at this stuff for the future.

Such complexity must be acknowledged and responded to. Doing so requires recognition and acceptance that such objectives are integral to funders' work and must be





accompanied by the necessary training and provision of sufficient resources. But I/MELOs, particularly in the South, also need to address the problems stemming from the prolific development of I/MELOs, the complexities of their evolving diasporic communities as they are evolving, and to respond to the increasingly pressing need for collaboration amongst themselves in order to overcome the common perception that they are too disparate:

maybe there's a responsibility on their side to co-ordinate their efforts a bit better and not to be too many disparate groups, maybe to get a few of the groups together and co-ordinate a bit better...[M]aybe there are too many chiefs, too many people heading up their own organisations and that in the space of 2 or 3 square miles you could have 2 or 3 organisations...[I]f they could pool their resources and come together with a more substantial proposal they'd have a better chance of success.

Ever-dwindling resources raise the need to be more strategic: *'there's a day coming where the energy that [all] organisations here have put into identifying funding sources will have to be diverted into looking more at policy leverage and change or at least as much of that question as it is at service delivery and where the money comes from and so on'.*

▪ **Possible models**

During the research, several funders made suggestions on how to maximize the 'reach' of allocated funds.

- Appoint a lead organisation or delivery/award partners that would administer a large grant on their behalf and coordinate activity at local levels, making allocations to others in that sector, so that smaller groups *'got the benefits, the economies of scale and also general practices'*.
- Develop funding strategies based on a regional structure, involving locally-based networks at council or district level where a range of organisations can be funded within a catchment area.
- Fund organisations that provide a fulltime central core structure that feeds into different forums at different national, regional and local levels, and allows people to move in and out of it.

Contradictory demands for I/MELOs to develop

In the South, locally-based groups were lauded for their effectiveness in cross- or multi-cultural work and the need to have them directly involved in the development of policy and provision related to their needs. However, overall support for their development was tempered by concerns that there are too many groups and uncertainty over the relationship between I/MELOs and social change:

if you're going to address the issues faced by minority ethnic communities, they must have a voice, they must be able to state what their issues are so they can then participate within the debate and within talks, discussions, etc, so they have ownership in terms of the resolution of those issues themselves. Otherwise we're going to continue with the model of 'we know best; we will tell you what needs to be done to you, here are all the solutions to your problems which we have identified' -- we [being] the host country -- and then we will be surprised when you don't accept the solutions or don't buy into them...Now, the caution that I put in here is why are the organisations being created and are they creating duplication? Because the reality on the ground is that there are scarce resources. If we have multiple community organisations being established all trying to address the same issue, does it actually dilute the impact? I don't know. And I think it is something that, as we talk about creating the voice and supporting the voice of minority ethnic [communities] you need to be very conscious and very aware of it.

Funders do acknowledge that there needs to be an understanding of the amount of time it takes for an organisation to achieve its stated goal. Providing one year of funding for a 5-year project is ineffective. Moreover, as one funder observed, if an organisation receives funding for one year, it realistically only has 9 months to achieve something because it then has to start focusing its energies on obtaining funding for the following year by that time. Yet, applying for funding for the same project two or more years in a row can often be seen as a lack of advancement rather than an organisation cultivating stability and competency in that area. This is particularly important for I/MELOs who serve a changing client base (like asylum seekers or youth), as seen in the response to a repeat application for such purposes:

[A]ll that and that was fine the first year and they got funding for that for the first year. The second year the proposal was the same and the thing didn't seem to grow, there was no natural evolution of the group, the group didn't get any larger, it didn't come up with any new ideas. And while the first year that sounds fairly innovative...I suppose the thinking... was 'well it's the same as last year and what difference has it made?'...I just think organisations...if they do get funding maybe there's more pressure on [I/MELOs] to show bigger and better results. I hold my hand up and say that's probably the case because you're up against some very long established and big organisations. It's the David and Goliath really isn't it? The smaller have to fight harder.

In the South particularly, demands for I/MELOs to continually demonstrate 'growth' are simply unrealistic given the absence of developmentally focused resources in lieu of project-based activities. Yet such demands are often attributed to the need to justify the spending of public funds:

I think that it's important that they develop themselves -- they can't stand still because expectations always get higher and especially with public funds -- we have to be able to justify this -- it is the taxpayer that pays for this and we have to feel comfortable about all of this, so it has to be taken seriously and people have to develop themselves, and if these organisations want to continue and grow and become stronger, I think they have to develop professionally and that takes a lot of energy and hard work, but I think some of them get there.





The recent announcement of a funding package of £1.7 million over three years awarded to 19 organisations (including 8 I/MELOs and 4 Traveller organisations) working in diversity-related areas indicates that the government in the North has moved to address the obstacles to developmental funding created by the requirements of current schemes. Not surprisingly, nearly all of the organisations opted to fund core staffing costs involved the delivery of activities and programming and efforts to ensure the sustainability of the organisations will flow from there. According to the Equality Minister, John Spellar, the purpose of this scheme is ‘to encourage capacity building within minority ethnic communities, to tackle hate crime and help local communities build strong relationships with minority ethnic people’.⁴ In comparison, following the launch of the National Action Plan Against Racism in the South, €250,000 was awarded to 44 projects to fund anti-racism awareness raising and training activities (of which 3 Traveller organisations and 5 I/MELOs were recipients). A further €200,000 will also be awarded under a sports, recreation and arts scheme.

Summary

An examination of the diverse views of these different stakeholders shows how the emergence of these new civil society organisations serves as a microcosm of the wider changes stemming from in-migration and ethnic diversification. On the one hand, I/MELOs are struggling to establish themselves, their communities of interest and their platforms within the Sector and maintaining their autonomy and distinctiveness is an important part of this process. Various factors have hindered I/MELOs’ development of the social and economic capital necessary both to achieve sustainability and to function strategically. In the Republic there is a lack of a pre-existing infrastructure of policy and practice in relation to diversity. Despite their longer histories, such infrastructures in the North have been diluted/derailed by a polarised, rather than multidimensional application. These circumstances have generated a substantial learning curve on the parts of all stakeholders. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, despite such obstacles, the work and engagement of I/MELOs within the Sector have catalysed a cross-cultural learning process, yielding new innovations – and possibly new forms of social capital: in this case ‘intercultural capital’.

⁴ See <http://www.nics.gov.uk/press/ofmdfm/050401k-ofmdfm.htm>.

Chapter III

I/MELO DEVELOPMENT AND THE OBSTACLES THEY FACE

Views of representatives from I/MELOs, MSOs and funders concerning the state of I/MELO development, success and the wide-ranging obstacles they are struggling to overcome as new Sector actors are presented in this chapter.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES – I/MELO’S VIEWS

Many I/MELOs identified as their key success the fact that their organisation had survived its first years. Many felt their work had proved that immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities can do something for themselves and that, together, they can achieve much: they can assert their rights and needs and encourage new leaders and newcomers to get involved politically. The following table summarises what I/MELO representatives identified as key successes, weaknesses and obstacles, regardless of the specific make-up of the organisation in their development.





STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES & OBSTACLES (I/MELOs' Views)

I/MELOs cited the following as illustrative of their **Organisational Successes**: establishment of good working relationships, gaining community trust, support and involvement, as well as independence, freedom of speech and choice as an organisation; creation of spin-offs, establishing centres, undertaking and publishing research.

Interviewees identified the following **Organisational Weaknesses**:

- the lack of focus and ability to coordinate different ideas and perspectives internally
- the lack of effective management structure, policies
- divisions and poor relations within the organisation
- the lack of understanding of Irish system

Community Successes included: generating awareness, getting people in the community to come together and being able to provide a forum for them to talk, a place to gain support; diversifying their activities and community supports; contributing to policy change and securing better relations between immigrants and service providers.

Community Concerns consisted of:

- unstable and uncertain situations (particularly for asylum seekers)
- lack of integration and acceptance
- breadth of community development, capacity building and training needs
- divisions and community politics

Interviewees drew attention to the following **Successes in the Wider Society**: building bridges and good relations with the wider community; creating awareness of the cultures of their countries of origin, racism and multicultural issues; recognition and engagement in wider political networks, contributing to positive changes in law / policy.

Societal & Sector Obstacles involved concerns relating to:

- inability to keep up with the pace of change in the wider society
- the slow rate of progress made by I/MELOs and MSOs
- inability to work at national level
- lack of sufficient, longterm funding & I/MELO sustainability
- racism and sectarianism

▪ Racism & Sectarianism

Because of they have such impact on the social as well as institutional environments in which I/MELOs and their communities live and operate, particular attention must be drawn to the issues of racism and sectarianism. Lack of trust, negative perceptions towards and/or underestimation of I/MELOs on the parts of key Sector actors and stakeholders, along with racism and wider social inequalities characterise the challenging environment I/MELOs must negotiate for their success. In the North, the Troubles have posed significant difficulties, resulting in a lag in the development of diversity-related infrastructures and policies that address the full range of minority ethnic communities, as well as with regard to the whole political context in which I/MELOs and their communities operate. Because politics are based on sectarian divisions if ethnic minorities speak on a particular issue they are unavoidably associated with either the Catholic/nationalist or Protestant/unionist 'side': *'So people just keep their mouths shut and they prefer not to be involved in politics. So we came from dictatorships and we live, in another way, of dictatorship'*. The failure to acknowledge, in both social and institutional arenas, that racism is a significant problem was identified as a key issue in both jurisdictions, and, according to one I/MELO representative, reflects an immature or underdeveloped understanding of race relations and race politics which prevents the ability to move forward.

MSOS' AND FUNDERS' VIEWS ON I/MELO DEVELOPMENT & SUCCESS

As part of the research, MSOs and funders were asked to discuss their views on how successful I/MELOs have been in achieving their goals, whether or not they are in a position to pursue their goals independently, the obstacles they face, and if they are seen as 'competition' for other Sector actors.

Overall, most of these interviewees recognise the variety of developmental stages and strategies I/MELOs currently reflect. They noted that despite the fact that I/MELOs are indeed struggling, they have demonstrated substantial confidence and competence, are politically astute, able to network and 'clue into' things quickly. They identified the following characteristics and factors as key to successful I/MELO development.

Factors Leading to Successful I/MELO Development

Structure & Funding: The 'tireless' commitment of individual I/MELO staff, the extent of I/MELO expertise concerning knowledge of their communities and the level of community support for them were all cited as factors necessary for success. As with other organisations in the Sector, while many I/MELOs have remained informal, many have developed formal structures. Interviewees recognise the importance of formal structures for organisational development, for credibility and effective representation,; however, some were quick to note that their adoption is also due in large part to pressure from funders. As a result, some MSO representatives observed that I/MELOs often 'get stuck' at the funding stage, and run the risk of funders' values being imposed upon them when they may be counter to their own. This is a challenging trade-off as such resources are necessary for securing premises and other essentials required to do the organisational development work.





Strategic Planning and Programming: Despite being confronted with an endless list of needs and target areas, many felt the key to success is for I/MELOs to be realistic and work within their constraints. This means not taking on more than they are able to do, staying grounded yet flexible, and building up a variety of integrated activities gradually. One interviewee drew attention to need for developing a longterm vision even for short-term goals in order to not miss opportunities. Expanding the range of activities is important, and some suggestions for future stages included becoming involved in the EU and local authority elections, working with local authorities and councils, and becoming social partners.

Relationships: Good relationships in the Sector were seen as essential elements and those I/MELOs who have aligned themselves with established organisations, developed alliances and engaged in local projects as vehicles for their work were seen to be especially successful. One representative felt that shadowing or being mentored by an existing MSO is the best way to learn. It was also emphasised that it is important to not develop only the culture of the community itself but to share it with the indigenous community. It was felt that I/MELOs must consciously place themselves within and involve the local community, and that perhaps cross-community advisory boards might be useful in this respect.

One MSO made the important observation that the challenges facing I/MELOs are more about barriers and needing to reduce them rather than a lack of 'capacity'. Most MSO representatives felt that I/MELOs face the same obstacles as other community and voluntary organisations and which are also related to being the newest subsector. However, they also identified additional barriers affecting minority ethnic communities and I/MELOs more specifically. Moreover, there are different dimensions with respect to the barriers and obstacles faced by I/MELOs – some are experienced by organisations throughout the Sector, some stem from circumstances specific to I/MELOs and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, and some derive from wider social and policy factors. These are outlined in the following table and discussed in greater detail in subsequent pages.

LAYERS AND DIMENSIONS OF OBSTACLES - SECTOR, COMMUNITY AND ORGANISATIONS

<u>Obstacles Common to All C & V Organisations</u>	<u>Added Barriers for Immigrant/'New' Minority Ethnic Communities</u>	<u>Added Barriers for I/MELOs</u>	<u>Difficulties from Wider Social and Policy Factors</u>
<p>Organisational Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, staff & membership • Unrepresentative • High turnover • Lack of consistency • Lack of clear roles • 'One person shows' • Lack of Confidence <p>Technical Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfamiliarity with jargon • Insufficient IT resources <p>Wider Sector Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to participation • Need to develop strategic tactics • Gatekeepers • Paternalism • Barriers to emergence of • Leadership 	<p>Community Instability & Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of Speaking out • Lack of material stability • Geographically dispersed nature of communities <p>Northern Irish Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of drawing negative attention • Getting stuck on one 'side' of the sectarian divide • Derailment of debate re: wider issues of diversity • Peace process stagnating pace of change in all other areas <p>Racism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to I/MELO/IC goals and aspirations • Intimidation • Derailing/hijacking debate 	<p>Status as 'New' Sector Actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressures due to breadth & depth of community needs • Lack of familiarity with dominant cultural norms • Lack of long lead-in time for strategic planning and organisational development • Lack of social capital • Underdeveloped or poor track record • Sector ideologies, lack of listening by mainstream <p>Complexities of Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining distinct identities and practices while integrating within Sector • Different culture, community-specific ways of working • Increasing diversity within and among I/MELOs and communities 	<p>Institutional Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional racism & exclusionary policies • Lack of access to decision-makers • Lack of diversity training & expertise of civil servants & practitioners • Consultation pressures <p>Wider Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety due to change & resistance to diversity • Misconceptions re: immigration diverting attention



Obstacles Common to All Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations

Organisational: Interviewees identified obstacles associated with organisational structures and practices such as internal representation, hierarchy and democracy, leadership, internal conflicts and accountability. Problems relating to individuals include 'one-person shows', the tendency for key individuals to become inseparable from the issues or activities promoted by the organisation, and the prioritisation of individuals' personal history in the organisations over the skills needed for the organisation. Staffing problems involved struggles to maintain leadership energy and managerial effectiveness, consistency and momentum, and to control high turnover.

Technical: Technical problems included learning 'jargon' and developing IT resources, hidden knowledge, learning the ropes, developing confidence and experiencing discrimination posed the most significant challenges according to MSO representatives. Lack of professional understanding of charity laws and regulations also hinder growth.

Wider Sector Issues: Participation in the policy arena is problematic for any organisation, particularly those practical obstacles like childcare as well as the relative ineffectiveness of consultative structures in the policy sector as a whole. Knowing who to bring on board and when, and developing partnerships when an organisation is not negotiating from a position of strength are also key factors. It was also noted that the effectiveness of MSO participation is undermined both by community gate keepers, a history of paternalistic MSO strategies, and government/local authority actions that undermine the emergence of community leaders.

Funding-Specific Obstacles:

Obstacles relating to successful funding applications included:

- proposal was funding-led or driven by one person (leading to problems later concerning grant administration & implementation by the group)
- inability/unwillingness of the group to take responsibility for grants
- lack of resources to put into grant process
- failure to 'translate' good ideas into effective proposals or fitting the criteria
- duplication, similarity with other proposals
- non-application (noting groups are generally successful once they enter the funding process)
- lack of joined-up responsibility across government departments
- lack of resources necessary for conducting needs analyses and documenting the effect of outcomes
- limits to funding budgets (*it's not necessarily a case of organisations actually having failed in their applications, it's only good applications, we can't fund them all unfortunately*)

Added Barriers for I/MELOs

Problems Specific to Immigrant/'new' minority ethnic Communities: MSO representatives noted the extraordinary pressures stemming from the vulnerability of minority ethnic communities that often cause them to 'keep their heads down' and avoid being controversial or being seen as 'trouble-makers'. The diasporic and dispersed nature

of their communities, combined with unstable circumstances, hinders the development of the organisation and creates significant challenges for the balancing act of maintaining their own community identities and being recognised as part of wider community. With respect to the wider conflict in Northern Ireland, it was noted that

there is a nervousness about being too high-profile about anything, and that still permeates the response to all of the issues...There is, particularly at the community level a degree of caution, a degree of anxiety about..."if we make ourselves more noticeable then we'll become part of the more infamous aspects of life here" and that I think has had a degree of influence on development here.

Such tensions were attributed by one interviewee to the legacy of a divided society that

has difficulty in being sure of itself, that feels under threat in many ways, particularly the Protestant community. That is very territoriality-based you know, so they will face the problem of being seen as taking more territory away. And you know a society that is not at ease with itself will find it very difficult to accept yet more diversity.

While these points were made in relation to the conflict in the North, they have clear implications for the dynamics of racism and a growing multi-ethnic society in the South.

Added Barriers for I/MELOs in the Community and Voluntary Sector: It was acknowledged that I/MELOs are under extraordinary pressure to address the many immediate needs of their communities, and whose members are representing many people – often without a strong familiarity with dominant Irish cultural norms. I/MELOs can experience further challenges particularly if they do not enjoy the luxury of having a long lead-in time for developing strategic plans or high levels of trust on the parts of funders and agencies. It was noted that the poor track record of one or two I/MELOs often reflects negatively on all other organisations and contributes to a bias in favour of more established MSOs. These factors make I/MELOs even more vulnerable to funding-led influences such as the problems of trying to ‘fit’ funders’ mandates along with the lack of overall investment in appropriate infrastructures for minority ethnic communities.

One person noted that there are also problems in that other Sector actors are often blinded by their own ideologies and don't always listen to what the communities are saying. She went on to say, for example, that immigrants or refugees often just want support or to get on with their lives '*rather than being drawn into major campaigns or whatever...we think they should be doing or what we think they should be offended over*'. Others noted that the picture will inevitably become more complex, as I/MELOs and immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities become more diverse themselves, as the struggle to become part of the Sector whilst maintaining their unique identities continues through more extended interaction of different culture- and community-specific ways of working.





Further Barriers Stemming from Wider Social and Policy Factors



Additional factors affecting I/MELO success also include:



- **Racism** (social and institutional) and the resistance of wider society (and the government in response) to what immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities and organisations are trying to achieve. It can also hijack debates and steps in response to other cross-cutting or fundamental (eg., rights and entitlements). Some felt racism has 'stunted the progress' of minority ethnic community development in this way. Misinformed concerns about migration also contribute to these obstacles.
- **Institutional practices and protocols** that contribute to social exclusion, the lack of access to decision-makers, slow rate of change.
- **The Troubles** have created a substantial blindspot regarding minority ethnic communities and contributed to the underdevelopment of anti-racism work. The dynamics of a divided society continue to hinder the positive growth of a multi-ethnic society in Northern Ireland. However, it is apparent from interviews that the discourses and practices relating to conflict resolution and community relations strategies used in the past have created greater awareness, understanding and expertise with respect to wider ethnic diversity among practitioners and civil servants across policy areas. While the peace programmes have also provided sources of funding as well as the relevant ethos, the ups and downs of the peace process itself have had the effect of diverting attention from other issues.
- **Section 75** was felt, in the North, to both promote as well as detract from I/MELO success. On one hand, Section 75 has helped raise the profile of minority ethnic communities and organisations, and made it possible to draw on the increasing contributions of related organisations such as the Human Rights Commission. It has also created access to and space within policy infrastructures to address the concerns and development of I/MELOs. Some reported, however, that Section 75 could also be seen as burden as it has resulted in consultation overload for I/MELOs and communities that are already overstretched.

What Every I/MELO Should Know

MSOs noted that there are no secret rules (and common sense and creativity are the best guides), but highlighted the areas in the following table.

WHAT EVERY I/MELO SHOULD KNOW (MSOs, Funders & Key Actors' Views)

Governance and Political System

- Learn how the political system works and key policies like charities regulations.
- Be aware of the context to which the political system is person-oriented/personality-driven; get to know many people from within the establishment who will sponsor or support your issue
- It is essential to establish a niche/budget line as part of a mainstream budget to overcome limits of annual funding, and the termination of key budget lines (eg., peace & reconciliation schemes)
- 'Make a virtue of cooperation'
- Spell out the contributions your organisation/community is making in a 'visionary' way, be clear about what you're trying to change

Networking and Sector Activities

- Learn who's who, what's being done elsewhere and by whom, how to get around the system and the best ways to lobby
- Be aware that no one will necessarily sit down and provide ropes, need to avail of existing training resources
- Identify allies, network and make connections, link in with wider campaigns and coalitions (eg., equality)
- Be up front about asking for and negotiating guidelines for collaboration
- Learn the complex game of power with the state; avoid the temptation of power and co-optation, but realise the importance of creating a voice within the system
- Acquire negotiating and strategising skills; be ready when you get to the table

Civil Society

- Become familiar with histories, strategies and outcomes of central campaigns and movements, learn from them
- Tap into long traditions of volunteerism
- Understand the slow rate of change and institutional practices in Ireland
- Become familiar with key historical events and social and cultural factors shaping the dominant society's responses to change, diversity and so on (Irish famine, owning property, Irish adaptability and the ways Ireland has made many other transitions more rapidly than other European countries etc.)

Other Issues and Practices

- Gain familiarity with the process of developing good practice in the Sector
- Develop responsibilities relating to management and employment
- Overcome the difficulties of using and adapting culturally different work methods





Recognition, Belonging & Successful I/MELO Development

According to one I/MELO founder, in terms of ensuring I/MELO success, *'the first step is to acknowledge people are here to stay'*. Another representative drew attention to the change in language, from one of just 'refugees and asylum seekers' to 'ethnic minorities' as evidence of that shift in the South. Such acknowledgement must also be based on positive recognition:

[T]hey should not think this community, ethnic minority is a burden and they must appreciate that as well. Our community is contributing to Northern Ireland as well. people brought different culture,... experience...skills and they're contributing to this country...There are so many doctors here, so many GP's here, so many consultants here, they are contributing to the society, lecturers here, teachers here and they are the ones who are contributing a lot and it should be appreciated, it should be balanced.

The idea that their organisations are considered 'non-profit' seems nonsensical to many in light of what I/MELOs are contributing, over a long period of time with few resources and little encouragement: *'A lot of work is done for free but no one knows...They say, "How much energy you have!"'* and are happy to invite you to participate in their activities for free. Such issues get compounded when the matter of immigrant community members volunteering (for I/MELOs or MSOs) arises, as expressed by one interviewee:

People don't really appreciate your hard struggle; they don't acknowledge us after so many years that we've tried to contribute to society and this is the pain, many communities are failing and they say "Why should I work on a volunteer basis because they won't recognise me, they won't recognise that I'm here and I'm contributing to society". So that is the biggest problem that we have...Now, instead of acknowledging these people there are a lot of ethnic minorities that are living in Ireland and working in this system and paying taxes – they just come up with a political issue, they just passed the ball [between] the politicians and the government. They don't want to acknowledge that these minorities exist and work in the society, but they want them out – "time to get them out – all these Irish born – out we want them out!"

On the other hand, someone else argued that,

You keep on saying somebody is not appreciating your work. I'm asking "Who should?" Is it the Government that should appreciate your volunteering, what you're doing wherever you're doing it? I'm into volunteering and of course I wouldn't expect McDowell or the Taoiseach to recognise – You can't 'expect the government...to come and say to us, "Kudos, you guys are doing a good job".

Such views, however, must be seen against a backdrop whereby asylum seekers, who do not have the right to work, are encouraged to volunteer essential for their own survival while they battle the emotional and physical ordeal of idleness while awaiting the decisions on their applications. Here it must be noted that this 'enforced volunteerism' of sorts does serve the integration process, and a basis for gaining work experience and references to be used later on: *'whatever seeds you are sowing, eventually you get to reap it'*. While valuable at the individual level for these reasons, it may not be a feasible basis upon which to build a civil society organisation or effective community participation in society.

Summary

As this chapter illustrates, I/MELOs negotiate many of the same organisational and technical obstacles experienced by all community and voluntary organisations. They struggle with leadership issues, staff turnover, maintaining membership involvement and strategic alliance building. Like all stakeholders, their work is also shaped by the legacies of Sector histories, politics and practices, whether resulting, for example, from the conflict in Northern Ireland or the popularity of the 'charity' model in the Republic. I/MELOs must contend with additional barriers, however, in terms of the social, political and material insecurity and vulnerability of their communities and membership. This is compounded by wider (1) societal factors such as racism, sectarianism and xenophobia which generate a fundamental resistance to their efforts to be part of society, and (2) institutional limitations stemming from gaps in effective policy and provision, whether in relation to immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in particular or the mainstreaming of ethnic diversity needs more generally. Being both relatively new to Irish society as well as new Sector actors and stakeholders, I/MELOs also lack familiarity with Sector norms and practices. Contending with the need to maintain their distinct identities and autonomy while integrating within the Sector makes their work even harder.



Chapter IV

IMMIGRANT/'NEW' MINORITY ETHNIC-LED ORGANISATIONS & THE WIDER CIVIL SOCIETY ARENA

In order to get an idea of the ways in which I/MELO mobilisation is evolving, I/MELO representatives were asked if they saw their work as part of larger struggles and if they could envision a time when immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities and organisations might be more strongly organised politically. Aware that since they are fairly new to the civic scene in Ireland – and in many cases unfamiliar with the ways in which their mobilisation converges and diverges from other movements before them, MSOs and funders were also asked to comment on how they saw I/MELOs' role in the wider civil society, and whether they thought a distinct I/MELO subsector was emerging.

CREATING A PLACE IN THE SECTOR: STARTING AT THE BOTTOM AND FINDING UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Overall, MSOs and funders observed that I/MELOs are just starting up and need to build up structures and resources before they can achieve independence. Their current struggles reflect what most felt are developmental stages common to all community and voluntary organisations – which usually means starting at the bottom. On one hand, it was noted that even though I/MELOs continue to be dependent on the support of MSOs they have still had a measure of success, and that this stage is part of the natural evolution of I/MELOs. They identified that there is a growing awareness about minority ethnic communities and organisations but, again, they are still a long way from full engagement through representative bodies. They reported that one would now see minority ethnic community representatives on key boards as well as increasingly active in local politics, which would not have been the case a few years ago. Others felt that not a lot had been achieved given the large number of I/MELOs, and there is a need for one or two to demonstrate substantial output. One observed that there is possibly a time of consolidation coming, but many I/MELOs have survived the initial stages of development. All agreed that achieving independence requires years of work and it is difficult to 'fast track' to this level of development.

Many interviewees felt that there is an important need for I/MELOs to form their own identities as groups, and to create a sense of confidence and solidarity that forms the basis for collective action. This process is especially important as there are few spaces within the Sector for communities to examine their issues and develop their own analyses. Yet





according to most, I/MELOs are still focused on what one participant called 'single high density' work relating to their own communities and the day-to-day work of their organisations. As such, it takes time before they can shift to a focus on broader equality and discrimination issues, towards involvement as citizens, and move through the hierarchy of needs. Interviewees felt it is necessary for I/MELOs to move beyond a community focus, particularly as issues move from policy and practice 'add-ons' to more integrated approaches. Doing so is no easy task, however, as the struggles I/MELOs are addressing take place at many different levels.

Some suggested that the further development of mixed groups, intercultural models and alliances are necessary to prevent people from 'working in boxes'. This, they claim, often leads to the failure to harness the common ground that exists with other policy areas and groups, which may be necessary to build strong bridges and to serve as an avenue for mainstreaming. One noted that because small organisations tend to be taken up by their passion for the issue, they often miss opportunities due to a lack of concern about wider sector politics. Many observed that I/MELOs are starting to move beyond the local, for example, in getting decisions made at policy level rather than ad hoc administrative interventions and relying on good will of individuals. They are gradually linking into policy and good practice that relate to the needs of all Irish people. Even in their antiracism work they are beginning to connect with both Travellers and the wider Irish society.

Beyond Single Issues

But what are the 'wider' issues to which I/MELOs should focus their efforts? MSOs and funders were not particularly clear themselves. They noted that issues pertaining to difference and identity will always be an issue for people who are making a life in a new place and are faced with the challenge of being accepted. And, while racism is therefore a key and underpinning issue, anti-racism, as an umbrella struggle or campaign is not necessarily enough. This is not only because many consider anti-racism strategies to be 'negative' and counterproductive, but because it is also not representative of the crosscutting nature of minority ethnic communities' struggles. Broader platforms such as social inclusion, for example, can create a common thread across I/MELO aims and activities as they involve issues concerning both difference as well as quality of life. These types of policy areas include issues of access and marginalisation along with the need to bridge cultural differences, an area particularly important to immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities. Single issues, asylum seekers' right to work for example, can provide a solid basis for consensus among I/MELOs and other groups.

▪ Lessons from anti-racism work

Anti-racism work serves as a useful example of the complexities of issue-based work in terms of generating collaboration. One I/MELO representative noted that *'as racism in Northern Ireland is directed towards all minority ethnic communities – it is impossible to campaign for only one community if you want to build up an inclusive, racism-free society'*. However even such an inherently unifying issue does not easily translate into coordinated action, as discussed by a Southern I/MELO representative:

The first thing in anti-racism is, we get mixed up with a lot of other things. There is anti-racism that involves Irish people and the issue of asylum seekers and refugees. The needs of asylum seekers are different from those of refugees. They have more problems. There are also a lot of organisations for migrant workers. It is so difficult because there are so many organisations. I always used to say let there be as many organisations as possible. If there was only one organisation then some people might not agree with that organisation....Sometimes I wonder which way is better, but in the end all of them should be there...Unless you have...a strong one and get the right people in, it can be complicated.

In the North, one I/MELO representative noted that issues relating to racism and anti-racism often get 'captured' by the oppositional politics between nationalists and loyalists. Two Northern funders provided additional insights into the ways in which anti-racism, as a unifying banner, is further complicated by the ways in which it plays out in the Sector: *'In fact arguably, there would have been actually less minority ethnic activity around anti-racism, around the policy around anti-racism, more around the actual day to day needs. Sometimes the anti-racist, like the ideological discussion comes more from people with a left perspective who may not even be a minority ethnic'*. Moreover, another noted that given the particular ways Sector work is undertaken, when it comes to racism, it's either about race or it's about nothing at all: *'normal day to day engagement with civic society is difficult because it...can have set aside as something different, that group of people, so normal issues aren't addressed in the normal way'*. Such perspectives taken on additional importance against the backdrop of increasing moves in both jurisdictions to address the issue of multiple identities and discriminations.

▪ **The search for broader issues**

When asked if they saw their own struggles being part of a wider campaign or set of issues, I/MELOs identified the following areas as ones in which their activities were embedded:

- Equality, social justice, access to rights
- Settlement and integration
- Participation, active citizenship & recognition (of organisations & communities)
- Prejudice and racism
- Preserving identities, exercising the right to be different

So on one hand there is the problem stemming from the logistics of the vast diversity within groups and communities. For example, noted one interviewee, even among organisations who might be considered *"all Eastern European" but even those cultures have little in common even at the level of religious practice, different languages...The only common element is that we are all foreigners, but this element is not strong enough to unite us'*. On the other is the importance of working together, observed another:

[I/MELOs] should be working together with all the communities, not just for themselves and to understand each other and respect each other and then they think we can work together and then we can be like a force, but if we are individually here sitting there and there then it is not a force, its just individual effort so its the most important thing that we should all work together with better understanding.





I/MELO representatives are also aware of the need to see themselves as part of wider campaigns and active in other areas of civil society even though they are still focused primarily on community needs and single issues. At the seminar held in conjunction with this research, one I/MELO participant reflected on the problems stemming from becoming ghettoised within the purview of particular issues as a result of the nature and circumstances of their communities and organisations:

It's very important for people from ethnic minorities to live a normal life – themselves to feel they are citizens of this country and they have full rights and they have to live a normal life – because always we are involved in talking about racism and criticising the state and criticising others – but maybe we don't take part outside these activities. For example, how many of us are involved in environmental issues – issues to deal with anti-social behaviour in our areas? There are many meetings being called for such things and I always go and people are surprised to see me there but I want to make a point – I am concerned about these issues as well and I want to be there just because I am a normal citizen – they shouldn't assume that we shouldn't take part in these things – I think with more time we will be accepted and people will realise that we are here, just living normal lives – all issues which concern the wider community concern us.

As such, another I/MELO representative emphasised the need to draw upon different organisational identities and capacities in order to be able to engage in the breadth of the equalities agenda, and therefore able to address the need for change across the full range of policy structures and practices. Again, women's organisations are leading the way in broadening out I/MELO alliances and cooperative Sector work.

- **The need for greater political mobilisation**

Many would like to be more engaged politically but are unable due to resource constraints. And because of their day-to-day struggles for organisational survival, few I/MELOs have a strategic vision of their roles and aspirations in the Sector and civil society beyond immediate community and organisational concerns. While some may see this type of mobilisation as inevitable, they generally find it hard to envision a time when, or the conditions under which, they will be more organised politically. I/MELO representatives are keenly aware of the need for further political involvement – voting, getting involved in political parties, understanding the system: *'Otherwise we cannot help ourselves, we cannot take part in the decision-making procedures'*. Many reported that although much has been achieved, they have yet to make the impact they seek, they are still not at the table and, in fact, even some successful organisations are closing down. There are further problems due to increasing burnout and the need for new leadership to emerge. As far as the situation in the North goes, the Troubles have created an environment whereby, for immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, *'politics in Northern Ireland is a very, very dangerous game...And if you want to take part in politics you have to be careful that you are not going to sit on this side or that side...So this is one of the problems I think will limit any participation of our community and other ethnic minorities in politics'*.

An I/MELO Subsector?

One MSO representative observed that despite the fact there is still much to be achieved, there is a need to distinguish between success related to becoming an effective Sector actor, and success in resolving the issues themselves. She stated that I/MELOs have achieved much that would not have been realised had they not mobilised. Overall, interviewees felt that the evolution of a strong role for I/MELOs in civil society and a time of more active political mobilisation are 'waiting to happen' despite attempts to constrain and undermine them. While some observe that I/MELOs are evolving more slowly than expected, others emphasise that they are doing extraordinary things (like running in local elections in the South which would have been unthinkable only two years ago) which should be seen by government as contributions to Irish democracy as well as economically. In the North, it was felt that strong political mobilisation will take longer because of the conflict situation, but that I/MELOs now have a stronger foundation of support, awareness and infrastructure. Many feel optimistic that the island of Ireland is increasingly recognised as multicultural, that racism has been recognised as a crucial issue and more policy initiatives have been developed in this regard. Others noted that the work and wisdom of Travellers' organisations will help accelerate the development of I/MELOs in becoming effective organisations, gaining access to support and being recognised in their own right to lead their communities.

How, if at all, are I/MELOs becoming a distinct collective of community and voluntary organisations? Are they becoming more visible within the wider sector as clusters according to particular campaigning areas, do they constitute a 'subsector' on their own, or are they simply just another type of organisation in a wide, diverse field of organisations in civil society? This question was posed to interviewees to get an idea of what the collective impact of I/MELOs might be.

Almost all the MSO representatives interviewed recognised the existence of a distinct, identifiable cluster of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led organisations. But rather than a 'subsector', they felt that the work of I/MELOs is characterised more by organisations doing their work individually, not in an integrated, joined up or coherent fashion. It was noted that there does not appear to be the same commonality of interests as in other subsectors. In this way, I/MELOs would be seen more as a part of the wider MSO sector, although very much on the periphery. One person described I/MELOs more as a 'constituency' rather than a subsector, based on the right to organise in order to respond to community needs, to be recognised and invested in. Another observed that minority ethnic communities themselves comprise a very diverse subsector of the wider society, and do not always view themselves as linked or able to identify a common threat or focus.

MSOs were undecided about whether the development of an I/MELO subsector would even be a positive one. Some felt that if it is happening, it is happening out of necessity or due to outside pressures rather than by design: a recognisable subsector is necessary to be able to have a stronger voice and highlight issues that may get lost in the larger agendas of umbrella or generalist MSOs. In the North for example, it was noted that as a result of Section 75, I/MELOs are viewed and treated as a separate subsector in order to establish equality obligations, even though they do not really see themselves as such. Many MSO





representatives agreed that the evolution of an I/MELO subsector would constitute a means to an end rather than an end in itself. They felt it is necessary to establish a space for minority ethnic communities but then move on to what they consider to be a more 'advanced' and healthy stage of being integrated and inclusive, and mainstreamed within the wider civil landscape. Some felt that this step is absolutely necessary in order to see and develop common linkages with other groups, but cautioned that this type of scenario would be possible only as Irish society becomes a more 'mature' multiethnic, multicultural one.

The Wider I/MELO Role in Irish Civil Society

Even if their participation in civil society is more limited as a result of their present circumstances than would be desirable, I/MELO representatives see their wider role and contributions as including the following:

- Promotion of equality and justice, recognition of human rights
- Redefinition of Irish society as viably multi-ethnic
- Realisation of democracy and participation at all levels
- Encouragement for people to speak out
- Ability to serve as a focal point for information and cross-community exchange
- Basis for younger people to get involved in politics

As one interviewee observed,

We would hope that a lot of organisations would make contributions to establishing rights for everyone so that everyone is treated with dignity and equality...We will continue to highlight the issue that Northern Ireland is a multiethnic and multicultural society and this needs to feed into all activities.

Another respondent noted that, as with most other community and voluntary organisations,

It is about the redefining the Irish society, and what democracy is. Who should be represented, what would be good for the new society. Who should be represented in our society in making decisions at all different levels...It is about influencing the development of a kind of democracy that is inclusive of the community we work with. We have done this tangibly through the networks we are involved in.

INTERCULTURAL CAPITAL & THE CIVIC-BASED TRANSFORMATIONS OF DIVERSITY

One of the most interesting and unexpected findings from the research is the extent to which I/MELO growth, activities and interactions in the Sector have begun to generate productive reflection and change on the parts of key mainstream Sector actors. Representatives from MSOs and funders were asked about what they get from working with I/MELOs and immigrant/minority ethnic communities, and how they see the wider role of I/MELOs evolving in Irish civil society. The outcomes of their interaction with I/MELOs that interviewees discussed allude to what may be the setting in motion of the processes of interculturalism in its truest sense. This is a process that involves more than just a sharing of information or the generation of sensitivity to or understanding of cultural differences, but an exchange that brings about a mutual and fundamental transformation of the views, practices and institutions of all actors. MSOs noted that, on one hand, the introduction of any form of newness or difference helps the community building process, increases the knowledge base and simply '*widens your world*'. Many felt that the contributions made through I/MELO mobilisation '*mark the beginnings of cross-cultural communication and transfer between worlds*' and the stimulation of '*mutual learning*' and exchange for all communities and organisations involved in their activities. Representatives from MSOs and funders identified a number of transformations taking place at the levels of organisational practice and with respect to social and political issues at national level.

Change, Reflexivity & Becoming Learning Organisations

Addressing and negotiating across cultural differences is fast becoming part of the 'work' of MSOs and agencies, and the resulting changes are becoming part of the normal process through which practice evolves and is developed. Interviewees noted that work with I/MELOs '*brought up things about ourselves [Irish people]*' and '*affects people on a personal basis - personal growth stemming from exposure to different cultures, ways of working*'. Such dynamics have served to stimulate reflection among the staff:

We have to stand back and reflect on our practice, on our approaches and be challenged and accept feedback and criticism about how we work and how we maybe need to change and adapt, we can't just keep working the way we've always worked, we have to be open.

And while this may be challenging, interviewees saw this as '*healthy*' and '*helpful*' – '*a very good way of making us look at ourselves*'. It is a critical process, one that can be awkward and uncomfortable, as seen in the comments of many throughout this report.⁵ But it is also a natural development in response to the 'newness' of the issues and work surrounding immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, and demonstrates the ways in which capacity building can go in both directions:

⁵ One representative of a partnership-based MSO did state that he thought the cultural differences of I/MELO staff and practices worked against them rather than contributed to their work.





We ourselves are reasonably new to the market so I think that the capacity building is quite difficult and it takes a long time, but the participation of these groups would have brought a lot of perspective to the Irish groups...and sometimes it may be difficult for people to accept the fact that people do things differently I think it has been a very good experience for Irish support groups and Irish volunteers to work with the organisations and to help them grow.



While difficult and challenging for ‘indigenous’ stakeholders, I/MELOs’ work and the interculturalist demands that stem from working with them, involve a process of change that is also surrounded by concrete, positive outcomes for MSOs and the system as a whole. Work with I/MELOs *‘enhances the effectiveness of own work, strengthens own capacity and strength of representation and participation, but also, if we can support them to represent themselves and to take on role of advocates for their own communities, that makes rest of the system work better’*.

Another emphasised these are the very elements that make policy direction and implementation more effective. For example, one person reported, *‘the local authorities are only recently beginning to think of the public as users...And so thinking of the needs of specific types of users is even one step further’*. Again, as seen in the North, effective mandates and structures that accelerate and institutionalise this process play a key role, particularly with respect to ‘new’ communities. This was highlighted by one funder, *‘We have had the fortune of being required to proof what we do and I think it’s been a good thing. It’s made us think twice about our impact, what we do on society and communities we have relations with’*.

New Insights at National Level

Discussions with interviewees about the contributions of I/MELOs in the wider civil society contexts identified interculturalist outcomes from the mobilisation and engagement of I/MELOs, this time at national level. These are outlined in the following table.

THE INTERCULTURAL INTERVENTIONS OF I/MELO ACTIVITY AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Identity/Society

- *'helping us get over ourselves'* and rise above *'parochial'* issues
- providing better ways of addressing issues that are important to everyone; different perspectives at all levels of social needs; and broadening areas of interest within community development
- emphasising the *'multiplicity of society'*, and that *'people have different requirements in terms of sustaining their local communities and themselves'*
- combating negative images and racism
- The Troubles
 - helping to address sectarianism more effectively by breaking down the exclusive focus on Catholic/Protestant divisions or *'two-tribe approach'* by highlighting the multiplicity of society
 - expanding the policy dimensions relating to diversity
 - erving as an indicator of successful engagement in the peace process

Policy/Politics

- providing new role models and influencing political agendas
- helping government to think in terms of what it does well and authorities to think twice about their impact
- making other organisations think about minority ethnic community needs, challenge their own assumptions, consider who else is not around the table
- getting people to address the issues with more complexity

Globalisation

- reopening debates about Irish emigration and its impact on Irish society, *'new learning about ourselves'*; developing a better understanding of the issues of migration more generally
- drawing attention to the *'wider world'*, thinking more broadly and more positively in a global sense; rethinking the global order as well as Ireland's role within it
- how the global has arrived here: *'they've changed the perception...from... "we only deal with people from, for example, from African countries through the charity box"'*.
- raising issues and public awareness around conflicts in other countries, increasing cross-cultural understanding

Both the accounts of I/MELO representatives as those of the Sector actors who work with them, illustrate the many productive outcomes arising from the challenging and onerous processes of ethnic diversification in Irish society:

Well I think they're opening up Irish society to the fact that it's not just homogenous, everybody sort of ascribing to the same sort of sets of norms, which I think is healthy for Irish society because I think it was very narrow.... So I think it's about challenges and opportunities basically.





Such positive observations are particularly poignant given that the issue of immigration touches Irish society and institutions at such pervasive levels, often bringing out the worst in people and in institutions. But this, too, is part of the challenge:



So, and I think that's [racism] still a big issue and increasingly so because of stuff that has happened more recently. But that's not only a challenge for those groups. That's a challenge for all of us who support them as well, to stand up and be counted and say...that the recognition of...a range of identities here and cultural backgrounds is an important part of how we develop, and not an issue for those groups solely, it matters to all.



Summary

Reflecting the many dilemmas and potentials set out in this report, one I/MELO representative observed:

'Maybe we don't have the experience, we don't have money, we don't have this or that. Maybe in 10 or 15 years when people will be settled and everybody will know what's going on, being integrated more or less...the sense of community maybe will be greater and we will have many more means of doing that. Now we are just struggling, we are [like] the 'pioneers of the west' in a sense.'

Further examination of the dynamics and outcomes of I/MELO development and community mobilisation highlights a deeper, more profound level of change. This level of change is about more than simply immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities adapting to Irish civil society or making contributions within its existing structures. It also involves more than mainstream infrastructures accommodating or including them. Such outgrowths are positive indications of shared learning and mutual transformation that lie at the heart of the concepts and aspirations underpinning both interculturalism and 'integration' as a 'two-way' process.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The examination of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic-led community and voluntary organisations in Ireland illuminates the contributions made through the mobilisation of 'new' communities to better understandings of the roles of civil society and of ethnic diversity in the process of social change. The following discussion highlights some of the key findings arising with respect to the Sector, the development of communities and the wider political infrastructure. This chapter draws attention to the significant issues and dilemmas raised in this research, and outlines recommendations that might facilitate useful ways forward.

INSIGHTS ARISING FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF I/MELO MOBILISATION

The Community & Voluntary Sector

I/MELO-based issues and activities

- exemplify the potential of the Sector to provide spaces and opportunities for the most marginalized to assert themselves and to contribute to the public sphere – activities that embody the 'stuff' of citizenship -- even in the absence of its formal acquisition.
- illuminate the impact of the cultural and political histories of the Sector upon the forms and outcomes of civil society mobilisation in general and the formation of ethnic minority communities in particular.
- highlight the role of the State in both the promotion as well as impediment of Sector well being as a whole and positive integration in particular through its relationship with and regulation of Sector actors and activities.

The Development of Communities

I/MELO-based issues and activities

- demonstrate the links between community stability and civil society activity, and between civil society activity and effective policymaking and implementation.
- draw attention to the variability of definitions, strategies and impacts associated with such key practices and principles as 'community development, 'partnership' and so on, in terms of organisational structures and processes, programming and outcomes.
- demonstrate the ways in which the introduction of innovations in the practice of critical interculturalism depends upon immigrant community mobilisation and empowerment – and vice versa.
- highlight the ongoing necessity for self-reflection, even among seasoned practitioners/actors and the encouragement of 'learning organisations'.
- speak to the structures of engagement and resourcing necessary for the development of a positive and productive multi-ethnic society.





KEY ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to emphasise that the recommendations in this report are situated within a vast landscape of legislative, policy and provision infrastructures. Advancing immigrant/minority ethnic-led participation in civil society inevitably overlaps with all other policy areas – both in terms of the concerns such policies address, and the means of their effective implementation. This involves more than the matter of resourcing organisations and activities, and extends to the whole arena of social policy – from health to employment, from anti-discrimination to social inclusion – full consideration of which is beyond the scope of the present work. Neither do these recommendations speak directly to issues relating to the development, implementation or evaluation of effective policies on immigration, integration or anti-racism *per se* in either jurisdiction, all of which are directly and intimately implicated in the future success of immigrant/minority ethnic-led civic activity and community formation.

Overall, the main objectives of the analysis and recommendations in this report are: (1) mainstreaming issues of immigration and ethnic diversity within the dialogues and practices of the Community and Voluntary Sector, and (2) drawing issues relating to civil society into debates and infrastructures concerning ethnic difference and immigration. As such, we seek to expand discussion of these issues -- which has been limited primarily to the arenas of immigration/border control and racism to wider debates of the many changes and opportunities in relation to society as a whole.

We also recognise that many new initiatives and policies have evolved during the course of writing this report, which have direct bearing on the issues and recommendations discussed here. Northern Ireland has seen the emergence of dynamic mobilisation and alliances in response to increasing racism, as well as the publication of two substantial framework documents, one outlining policy strategies for strengthening community relations, and another for resourcing the Third Sector. In the South, since the beginning of 2005, the National Action Plan Against Racism has been launched, the State has undergone its first UN CERD evaluation process, and its first immigration policy has been announced. There is also increasing support for the development of greater university-policy-society collaboration with respect to the research upon which so many policy areas rely for informed development and evaluation. Initiatives concerning social capital and active citizenship have emerged in both jurisdictions. Thus, on one hand, the goal of this section is to draw attention to needs that have been overlooked or ignored, and opportunities that have been missed. Yet the recommendations are also intended to support the realisation of agreed goals of these and other relevant developments.

There are, no doubt, many steps to be taken at many levels, both short- and long-term, in relation to the potential of immigrant/new minority ethnic participation in Irish civil society. Any action is dependent upon existing practicalities, opportunities, available expertise, resources, timing and so on. This section is designed to serve as a resource for responding to these challenges. Toward this end, each of the recommendation areas is broken down into 3 sections. An analysis of central issues raised by the research introduces each section. This is followed by a short rationale that sets out key concerns to

be addressed and a series of possible avenues for effectively responding to them. It is intended that the recommendations serve as a reservoir of ideas and information that may. (1) inform the development and implementation of strategic plans, funding proposals and budget lines; (2) serve as bases for negotiation, consultation, possible cross-sector and inter-institutional collaborations; (3) be taken up as elements of wider agendas carried forward by networks, partnerships, in forthcoming initiatives, and so on.

Recommendations – Section 1

Managing I/MELO Diversity, Maximising Outcomes

The process through which Ireland is becoming more ethnically diverse is complex and multi-levelled. It involves relatively small numbers of very diverse groups of people whose lives are shaped by many different circumstances, and who are engaged at a variety of levels in the process of building communities. In the South for example, immigrant/ethnic minority identities are in transition, as more people make the shift from ‘temporary residence’ to longterm relocation and their children grow up in Irish society (and even learn to speak Irish). In the North, the minority ethnic population currently appears to be more distinctly formed (in terms of ‘the Indian Community’, ‘the Chinese Community’, ‘the African Community’ and so on). Such categories, however, mask the internal diversity of these communities, and probably will eventually give way to the recognition of greater complexity and heterogeneity (in terms of sex, class, age, lifestyle, disability and so on). The increase in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers settling in the North will further erode this façade of clarity with respect to ethnic difference.

There is a common perception that, in both the North and South, the formation of ‘new’ ethnic minority communities is still in its ‘early stages’, but for different reasons. In the North, despite the fact that many such communities have been settled there for at least two generations or more, the polarizing force of the Troubles has rendered them silenced and invisible for much of that time. The gradual evolution of community confidence and expertise, responsive infrastructures and increasing racism have set the stage for their entrée into civic life. In the South, the bulk of immigrant community members arrived within the last 10-15 years. However, it is not the case that advanced civic and political mobilisation is something that must wait for the second or third generation of immigrant families. Perhaps it is the extraordinary and typically intense circumstances surrounding their arrival and settlement and the character of the people who ventured this far, geographically and culturally, that first and second generation qualities of collective action seem to be taking place simultaneously.

In both cases, the people who are making their homes on this island are immersing themselves and actively taking part in the varied processes of social change that go hand in hand with difference and diversity. And many from the ‘host’ or ‘indigenous’ society are joining or supporting their efforts with optimism and commitment. While this high level of activity and the vast diversity of new organisations are positive and desirable outcomes, this research has also highlighted important dilemmas and potential stumbling blocks that accompany this phase of development. The recommendations in this section address the need for I/MELOs to increase collaboration, coordination and partnership with I/MELOs and with other actors, networks and initiatives, and to widen their single issue/community focus. These are important both for strengthening the effectiveness of





I/MELOs as well as the Sector as a whole in terms of addressing ethnic diversity issues. However, while the intended outcomes of such strategies are the benefits of sharing costs and multiplying available resources, it should be noted from the outset that the substantial human and organisational resources necessary to achieve these aims be addressed.

The 3 main areas covered by the recommendations in this section include:

- R1.1** Developing Strategic Collaboration and Consolidation Among I/MELOs
- R1.2** Strengthening I/MELO Alliances and Involvement within Wider Sector and Governance Structures
- R1.3** Increasing the Formal Political Participation of Members of Immigrant/minority ethnic communities

R1.1 DEVELOPING STRATEGIC COLLABORATION & CONSOLIDATION AMONG I/MELOS

RATIONALE

While the reasons and positive outcomes associated with I/MELO diversity are clear, interviewees across sectors highlighted obstacles arising from the numbers and range of autonomous I/MELOs with regard to

- unding eligibility and success,
- acquisition of training and experience from seasoned Sector actors,
- paving the way for the successful development and implementation of proper representative structures, and
- facilitating the process of intercultural learning, reflection and transformation for statutory and civic practitioners.

I/MELOs must nurture strategically coordinated action alongside their goals of organisational independence and individuality. As mentioned in the report, there are many complex issues concerning leadership, representation, collaboration and so on that are involved in such endeavours. Discussing, debating and working through these constitute a necessary starting point.

REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

R1.1a Establishing a National I/MELO Representative Base in the South

In the South, I/MELOs need to develop and join a process through which they can discuss and debate the many issues relating to cooperative, strategic working partnerships and consolidation.

- As mentioned in the report, the Irish Refugee Council has hosted a forum for I/MELOs. Current participants should evaluate the forum to-date, and, through consultation with other I/MELOs around the country, create a strategic plan for its

development if it is to be pursued. This forum could serve as an interim vehicle for this work, at least until an alternative structure is developed and funded. The C airde New Communities Partnership should also be considered and assessed in terms of its potential expansion. The Directory of I/MELOs currently being compiled by the Immigrant Council of Ireland should assist in this developmental work.

- It is also crucial that I/MELOs follow up on the recommendation to establish an Intercultural Forum proposed in the recently launched National Action Plan Against Racism by submitting proposals and entering into negotiations with the Steering Group and other Government agencies. Here, consideration should be given to the development and work of the Race Equality Forum in the Office of the First Minister in Northern Ireland, and any such structure should be housed at an equivalent level.

R1.1b Assessing Existing I/MELO Representative Structures in the North

In the North, similar discussions concerning the development of strategic working partnerships among I/MELOs would also be of great benefit.

- As the past few years have witnessed the establishment of many new groups, it may be timely to consider the potential expansion and strengthening of NICEM's development as a national umbrella body. Discussions are necessary with new groups and those that have not joined NICEM about this and other organisational strategies to enhance the representation of 'new' and 'old' minority ethnic communities.
- I/MELOs (and other minority ethnic-led organisations) should review and evaluate the Government Race Equality Forum on the basis of their experience of it, and strategise with other groups in order to develop further their representational strength.

R1.2 STRENGTHENING I/MELO ALLIANCES AND EXPANDING INVOLVEMENT WITHIN WIDER SECTOR & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

RATIONALE

I/MELOs' relationships with larger, more well-established Sector organisations and local authorities have often been problematic or underdeveloped for a number of reasons. These issues must also be addressed and overcome so that I/MELOs can take full advantage of the range of existing infrastructures in order to:

- make themselves visible, known and available to all Sector actors and stakeholders
- stay in contact and receive information on a regular basis
- take advantage of existing networks and potential alliances
- expand their issue base, and the reach of their activities through the programmes and networks of other Sector organisations
- promote the further mainstreaming of ethnic diversity issues within local/regional governance and community-directed programming.





REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS



R1.2a Linking Infrastructures

There is a multitude of national, cross-border and EU initiatives, structures and networks in existence that involve civil society and Sector actors. These may only be known by or accessible to those organisations targeted by or involved in their initial establishment, particularly if outreach has not been integrated as an ongoing strategy. As a consequence, it may be hard for any new or small organisation to keep track of or gain access to them. If I/MELOs (and all other Sector organisations) are to be successful in their civic endeavours, this will require more effective means for supporting awareness raising and inclusion in these activities.

- In the South this requires
 - I/MELOs registering and meeting with key Sector umbrella organisations such as Comhairle, the Wheel and so on.
 - further expansion of the multiple roles and development-focused services of key Sector umbrella bodies similar to those of NICVA and the Community Relations Council in the North for example.
- In the North this requires
 - design and implementation of programming and the expansion of 'peace and reconciliation' frameworks around the theme of 'civil society beyond the Troubles'. As this direction is reflected in the recent publication, *A Shared Future*, effective implementation of its integration-related initiatives will be crucial.
- Cross-Border institutions have
- a unique capacity to support initiatives which serve to catalyse and coalesce institutional innovations around social and economic development, ensures that they are crucial players. Yet they have yet to engage/be engaged to their fullest extents in this arena.

R1.2b Ethnic Diversity-Focused Sector Practices

- In the South in particular, mainstreaming ethnic diversity-based protocols within key Sector umbrella organisations are essential. For example, the Wheel (increasingly identified as the main umbrella body for the Sector) has only one organisation listed under the category, 'ethnic minority', in its 2005 directory. As stated in the report and recommendations, it is essential that I/MELOs take the initiative to become known to and involved in wider Sector institutions. However, until immigrant/ethnic minority communities have a national level body to represent them in civil society and policy-related processes, the onus of working with I/MELOs in order to carry forward their interests into such arenas falls to the organisations who function as key Sector advocates and representatives.
- As demonstrated by the research, in both jurisdictions, cross-sector clarification and formal or accredited training involving all stakeholders with regard to different practices and strategies in relation to such areas as community development, development education, anti-racism practice, interculturalism, capacity building work, and so on is critical.

- Development and dissemination of good community development and other related practices, particularly in relation to ethnic diversity, would assist the cultivation of effective and balanced MSO-I/MELO partnerships and partnerships with other key agencies. This is especially important as related initiatives increasingly devolve to local and regional governance.
- Expansion of training in relation to community development, interculturalism and anti-racism is necessary – particularly in 3rd level education for would-be practitioners and through accredited programmes for staff of Sector organisations and civil servants.

R1.2c Relationship-Building

- Strengthening social inclusion/equalities infrastructure at local and regional levels (in the South particularly) will assist the development of stronger working relationships between I/MELOs and local authorities.
- There is a need for better coordination at national level by and with key Sector networks, social partners and other coalitions. The Equality Coalition in both jurisdictions is a good example of a structure that allows a variety of different groups to work towards a common goal. The Social Partnership structure in the South holds much potential for cross-sector engagement at government level.
- Design and implementation of paid mentoring, ‘shadowing’ or internship schemes for I/MELO/immigrant community representatives within established Sector organisations and agencies, including two-way exchanges between them would facilitate the development of expertise as well as serve as a relationship-building measure.
- Development of stronger links and twinning with ‘sister’ organisations and networks in Britain would allow organisations to draw on UK-based momentum in relation to the development of policy and minority ethnic political participation.⁶ This would help overcome the ‘two-traditions straightjacket’ in Northern Ireland and to strengthen the mainstreaming of best practice in relation to diversity/race equality in the South.
- Formation of cross-sector principles and codes of practice are necessary to guide the formation of partnerships and working relationships, particularly in relation to those between newly- and well-established organisations.

⁶ It should be noted, however, that immigration status can substantially limit I/MELO members’ ability to travel, attend meetings and network (even between the North and South).





R1.3 INCREASING FORMAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF IMMIGRANT/'NEW' MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES



RATIONALE

Participation in the political arena goes hand-in-hand with the evolution of I/MELO mobilisation, rather than representing a later phase of development or civic 'maturity'.



There is a clear need to cultivate greater participation by and representation of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities in the structures of government. This would:



- facilitate the development of a wider issue base to extend the reach of minority ethnic mobilisation, and the breaking down of structural and ideological barriers that impede minority ethnic political involvement.
- normalise the presence and contribution of members of minority ethnic communities in the institutions of the State
- relieve some of the pressure on I/MELOs to divide their efforts and scarce resources between policy-related activities and on-the-ground community work, and create the spaces for individual members of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities to cultivate their roles as experts and leaders
- create opportunities for other forms of community engagement and social capital to evolve, for example the social, religious, creative and business interests necessary for well-rounded, stable and integrated communities.

REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

R1.3a Outreach & 'Capacity Building'

The following steps are necessary to support the increased political participation of minority ethnic communities generally, and immigrant/'new' communities in particular.

- Civic Education training for immigrant/minority ethnic communities.
- Development and funding of minority ethnic leadership programmes.
- Greater development of civic outreach among city and county councils, and political parties.
- Development of shadowing/mentoring schemes in political parties, councils and other key forums at local and national levels.
- Increased recognition of non-national qualifications so immigrant/new community members can have greater involvement in the businesses and professions in Ireland for which they are trained and have expertise. This would provide greater opportunities for potential political leaders to establish their role as contributors to their wider local communities (and not seen to just represent immigrant/minority ethnic interests) and to cultivate the material basis necessary to support their political activities.

Recommendations – Section 2
The Implications & Consequences of ‘Institutionalised Underdevelopment’ for I/MELOs

Most MSOs and funders are at pains to emphasise importance of the work of I/MELOs, their expertise and the value of their contributions. Such statements, however, are often followed by the observation that I/MELOs are, in some way ‘deficient’ – organisationally, administratively and so on – and therefore are unable to jump successfully through the institutional hoops necessary to achieve funding, sustainability or other measure of ‘development’. The fact that the hoops themselves may be misaligned in relation to I/MELOs’ current position and trajectory is often overlooked.

This misalignment can be seen in the extent to which the perceptions of and expectations regarding I/MELOs varies among the different players. I/MELOs identify organisational survival in itself as a main goal and are happy just to be still in existence. Because they are achieving this in what could be characterised as a hostile environment, they strive to maintain their independence at all costs, typically with little more than their dedication, expertise and good fortune. This has led, in part, to the proliferation of organisations that are preoccupied with community-specific issues, and which are unable to engage fully with the wider Sector. This scenario was identified by MSOs as constituting an ‘early phase’ of development from which I/MELOs will eventually move on. MSOs see partnerships and mentorships as the means for achieving more ‘mature’ civil society engagement. They did not tend to view such relationships as a gateway to exploitation, the theft of ideas and circumvention of their own development, as many I/MELOs do.

Funders and other statutory representatives -- often under the rubric of ‘accountability’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘professionalism’ -- emphasise the centrality of advanced organisational and administrative structures as the bedrock of eligibility for the very developmental funding necessary to build them in the first place. This can push the goal posts well out of reach. Combined with the newness (and therefore inadequacy) of general and Sector-specific policy infrastructures, expertise and practices in relation to increasing ethnic diversity, these institutional barriers come together to enforce a situation of ‘institutionalised underdevelopment’ of immigrant/minority ethnic-led organisations. Evidence of this phenomenon is especially reflected (in some cases) in I/MELOs that have been cultivated solid membership and programmes of activities but that have not advanced in terms of organisational development, and by those who have closed down, despite having achieved a measure of success due to lack of funding.

There are particular dynamics shaping the ways in which ethnic diversification is taking place on the island of Ireland, both in society and the Community and Voluntary Sector, that need to be acknowledged and addressed. The first thing that needs always to be emphasized is the pervasive role and impact of the State on civil society as a whole, due largely to the comparatively great reliance on State funding in both jurisdictions, and its role in establishing and implementing the very representative structures that facilitate or impede the channeling of Sector activity into the policy process. Second, because the mobilisation of I/MELOs has come to constitute a primary vehicle for the formation and





development of immigrant/'new' minority ethnic communities, the State must acknowledge its hand in what amounts to no less than social engineering. This is not to say that such involvement is to be desired, fostered or maintained, particularly if one of the fundamental roles of civic participation is its ability to balance, challenge and off-set the power of the State. But through its allocation of funds and establishment of attendant representative structures and consultation processes, the State is making key decisions about how these processes of social change will take place. The commitments of the governments in both jurisdictions to positively support the growth of the Sector and a multi-ethnic society set out in the white papers and policy documents should provide useful guidance in addressing the developmental needs of I/MELOs, particularly in the following 3 main areas covered by the recommendations in this section:

R2.1 Joined-Up Sector Planning & Strategic Funding re: I/MELO Development

R2.2 Establishment of Developmental Administrative Structures for the Sector

R2.3 I/MELO Resource Development

RATIONALE

What is therefore critical is the removal of institutional barriers that are impeding the advancement of I/MELOs -- and thus undermining the formation of thriving communities within a multi-ethnic society -- so that they have the opportunity to become the self-sustaining organisations and actors they have the potential to be. Greater strategic planning in relation to government funding as well as promoting the development of alternative forms of income generation are necessary. Independent and private funders, too, must respond to these issues.

REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

R2.1 JOINED-UP SECTOR PLANNING & STRATEGIC FUNDING re: I/MELO DEVELOPMENT

Possible steps that will assist the development of a more strategic approach to supporting I/MELO development include the following.

- In the South
 - undertake cross-sector, cross-departmental analyses of I/MELO-directed funding (see for example work funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust on Funding Black Voluntary Organisations; Investing Together report by the OFMDFM).
 - establish a 'Funders Forum' (for the Sector as a whole) in the Irish Republic similar to that in the North, and reinvigorate the Implementation & Advisory Committee established to oversee the implementation of the White Paper.
- Establishment of developmental funding schemes specifically for I/MELOs within wider Sector funding programmes and mainstream cross-departmental support for I/MELO participation in wider issue networks and development of cross-sector partnerships.

- In the North, encouragement and support of mainstream civic organisations to develop adequate training, policies and programmes in relation to ethnic diversity, particularly those working in the broad areas of social inclusion. This is not intended to create competition for I/MELOs, but to help mainstream issues of equality and inclusion beyond the two-community focus. This is important for the Sector as a whole, but is also necessary to help MSOs to become viable partners in collaborative efforts with I/MELOs.

R2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES FOR THE SECTOR

- The establishment of intermediary grant administration organisations, similar to small business start-up support centres or other cooperatives, may be a cost effective way of providing services to I/MELOs (and other under-resourced communities) necessary for grant management, administration, monitoring and evaluation.

R2.3 I/MELO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- There is an immediate need for I/MELOs to develop their volunteer/membership bases, by drawing upon majority society volunteers/volunteer agencies as well as fostering community-based involvement. The development of student internships and student 'service-learning' schemes in 2nd and 3rd level education should also be pursued.
- Given the many problems of a heavy reliance on government funding, there is a critical need for I/MELOs to shift from grant-funding to fund-raising and commercially-generated finance strategies. Possibilities include:
 - linking the sustainable resourcing of I/MELOs to the development of 'immigrant economies' more broadly through the establishment of partnerships and/or internships with small business support organisations, trade & enterprise agencies, chambers of commerce, management training programmes and so on.
 - promoting the development of paid training, consultation and cultural programming that I/MELOs are already doing as part of their programming or as part of the unpaid activities associated with participating in the policy-making process.





Recommendations – Section 3

Valuing & Promoting Intercultural Capital in the Evolution of Multi-Ethnic Societies

In the contexts of civil society, such mobilisation is part of the process through which both ‘new’ and ‘old’ immigrants/ethnic minority communities are trying to create communities in new national contexts. They often strive to accomplish this in the face of hostile politics and social rejection – whether the result of cultural or national insularity, the preoccupation with sectarianism in the North, selective amnesia concerning Irish participation in the colonization and missionisation of immigrants’ countries of origins, the failure to fully embrace Ireland’s roles and responsibilities as a global actor and so on. In an important sense, this constitutes the “new” community development’ in the contemporary ‘age of migration’, whereby increasing ethnic diversity and immigration are permanent and ongoing fixtures of Irish society, not temporary phenomena.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a range of innovations has been generated by the work of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic-led civil society organisations through their cross-cultural interactions with other Sector actors. Intercultural competencies – or the orientation, knowledge and skills necessary to develop effective social and working relationships with people across culturally diverse backgrounds -- are essential, and increasingly valued (creating a form of intercultural ‘capital’). Thus, in the same way that immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic communities and organisations need to bring under control some of the multiplicity and complexity associated with the diversity of their organisational presence as well as cultural backgrounds, Sector and statutory actors must be ready, able and willing to embrace that diversity. Rather than something that needs to be ‘fixed’ or simplified (for reasons of efficiency, accountability or value for money), diversity and difference are things to be better understood, accommodated and facilitated.

As such, the mobilisation of immigrant/‘new’ minority ethnic-led organisations (and the development of their communities) constitutes a crucial link to the development of both social capital -- in the form of trust, shared values and networks -- and integration, as a ‘two-way process’ (DJELR 1999). In this fashion, ‘capacity building’ is also a two-way process, whereby all immigrant/minority ethnic communities play key roles in the success of the nation as a whole, but also with regard to developing the skills, relationships and practices necessary to benefit from and nurture such diversity as a contemporary, multi-ethnic nation.

The recommendations included in this section are directed towards meeting the intercultural challenges of a new era of extraordinary social change, and divided into 4 main areas:

- R3.1** Robust Structures of Engagement & Representation
- R3.2** Advancement of Interculturalist Policies & Practices
- R3.3** Cross-Sector, Partnership-Based Research, Dissemination & Training
- R3.4** Political Leadership

RATIONALE

It is essential that the processes of diversification and cross-cultural growth be given the space they need to evolve organically, in a productive fashion rather than a constricted one. This is crucial for not only avoiding the worst-case scenarios of alienation, discrimination and conflict, but also to avoid missing out on the opportunities and benefits that will benefit the rest of society.

REQUIREMENTS \ RECOMMENDATIONS

R3.1 ROBUST STRUCTURES OF ENGAGEMENT & REPRESENTATION

- Robust and accountable structures of representation and engagement -- across both general policy as well as specialized initiatives such as citizenship and social capital, race equality, integration and immigration -- constitute the bedrock of the achievement and maintenance of immigrant/minority ethnic community participation in civil society. Particular consideration must be given to structures such as the Steering Group for the National Action Plan Against Racism and the National Economic and Social Forum in the Republic which include no representatives of immigrant/minority-ethnic led organisations, and whatever infrastructures are established in the North with regard to the Shared Future framework. In the South, interim measures may be necessary until a national-level representative body for minority ethnic communities has been established.
- The shadowing, mentoring and internship initiatives directed towards the encouragement of minority ethnic political and policy participation that were specified in section R1 of these recommendations would also contribute to positive interculturalist-based changes within social and institutional arenas in both jurisdictions.
- In recent years, the opportunities for participation in an increasing variety of civil society-focused initiatives at both national and international levels have multiplied substantially. More effective coordination and circulation of information and advertisement of these initiatives is essential to ensure the participation of immigrant/minority ethnic organisations and mainstreaming of interculturalist strategies in wider fora.
- Building a multi-ethnic society requires the involvement and contributions of all stakeholders and communities which requires expansion of the role and involvement of all 'cultural workers' (from educators and social workers to artists, lawyers and other professionals)⁷ in this endeavour, and the cultivation of an environment of cross-sector collaboration in the contexts of policy-making and social change.

⁷ See Giroux (1992).





R3.2 ADVANCEMENT OF INTERCULTURALIST POLICIES & PRACTICES



- Development and adoption of guiding principles that express the value of diversity and the promotion of a multi-ethnic society through the development and implementation of integration-focused policies and the mainstreaming of interculturalist principles and strategies across policy areas.
- It is essential to link initiatives focusing on the development of social and economic capital with the rest of the policy infrastructure relating to the Sector as a whole and with such programmes as anti-poverty, community development, equalities and so on, in an effectively joined-up way. Within this environment, there is a need for greater systematic cross-fertilisation, integrated analysis and implementation associated with these activities and evolving policies as they relate to immigrant/minority ethnic communities, anti-racism etc.
- The further development, implementation and monitoring of policies addressing integration, and the adoption of international best practice in this area is also necessary to create an effective foundation from which to advance policies promoting diversity, integration, etc.⁸



R3.3 CROSS-SECTOR, PARTNERSHIP-BASED RESEARCH, DISSEMINATION & TRAINING

- Despite the fact that immigration and ethnic diversity have become defining contemporary issues in North and South of Ireland, and that the diversification of society in both jurisdictions has been taking place for some time, there is still an inadequate knowledge base among State and Sector actors about these communities, their experiences and their developmental needs. Further multi-method, participatory research is necessary for establishing an effective knowledge base concerning ethnic diversity, interculturalism and integration, in both social contexts as well as with respect to analyses of Sector/civil society activities, structures and outcomes.
- Documentation, dissemination and adoption of international best practice and innovative models for work at all levels relating to community development and relations, integration, anti-racism and interculturalism between MSOs, agencies and I/MELOs/immigrant/minority ethnic communities are essential to ensure development of intercultural competencies in Sector- and policy-based contexts.
- The fairly recent and vigorous proliferation of research and policy initiatives in the areas of civil society as well as anti-racism, interculturalism and immigration has had a number of positive as well as negative effects. On one hand, it has begun to fill in crucial gaps in the knowledge base upon which effective policy and practice may be built. On the other, in many cases, the lack of coordination, minimum standards of expertise and codes of practice, and proactive participation of target groups in these activities has generated burnout among respondents, inconsistent quality, duplication, waste of resources along with competition and poor relations among key stakeholders.⁹ In recent years, 'Evidence-Based Policy and Practice' (EBPP) has

⁸ See for example, EC (2004).

⁹ See Feldman, Frese & Yousif, T. (2002); Feldman (2003).

received renewed attention, particularly in the area of migration.¹⁰ This is, essentially, research that is conducted through cross-sector partnerships involving stakeholders from university, government, civil society and commercial arenas. Coordinated EBPP programmes of research, training, dissemination and the development of codes of practice would (1) provide crucial opportunities to develop a comprehensive social policy research agenda, and (2) ensure the added-value of cross-fertilisation and development of skills and expertise that such collaborative efforts would provide with respect to these new areas of work.

R3.4 EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- The strengthened political will to seize the opportunity to lead in the areas of immigration, race equality and social justice nationally and in Europe is essential for realizing any of the aspirations associated with immigrant/minority ethnic-led mobilisation and for ensuring a positive path through these far-reaching social changes in both jurisdictions.
- In light of the low levels of cross-cultural contact, familiarity and understanding that characterises everyday life in both jurisdictions, it is the responsibility of all those involved in shaping public opinion, including politicians, civil servants, the media and those who may constitute many peoples' primary source of information about 'new' communities, to be thoughtful, well-informed and constructive in their actions, analyses and communiqués.

¹⁰ See, for example, Cross, M., R. Henke, P. Oberknezev, and K. Pouliasi 2000. *Building Bridges: Towards Effective Means of Linking Scientific Research and Public Policy: Migrants in European Cities*. Utrecht: Netherlands School for Social and Economic Policy Research.



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