



WOKING IN PROGRESS

September 2022

Vision:

NICRE's vision is of a society where human rights are respected and guaranteed.

Mission:

NICRE's mission is of a society that is fair and inclusive, where there is racial equality and justice for all.

Aim:

To promote good race relations and to endeavour the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of human rights and racial equality.

NICRE is a black and minority ethnic led membership based organization. It currently has 18 ethnic minority and migrant organizations as well as individuals' members. NICRE was set up to continue the policy work of the previous NICEM (NI Council for Ethnic Minority) which was under voluntary administration in November 2016.

BREXIT Irish Citizenship Campaign

NICRE continue to lobby politicians, North and South of the border, to support for full Irish citizenship for all BME people who have been working and living in Northern Ireland for at least 5 years, including their spouse/partner, children and parents., whether they are British or other nationalities, EEA or non-EEA migrants, asylum seekers or refugees.

The Brexit campaign has been ongoing over the last six years period through our intervention at the All-Island Dialogue on Brexit and on the Human Rights Consortium Steering Group on Human Rights & Brexit. We integrate several issues such as immigration, passport check, settled scheme, future migration, etc. And the Northern Ireland Protocol is the only hope to protect the BME people and communities that is based on the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in which a set of human rights and equality rights under Chapter 6 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity'. Northern Ireland is part of the EU and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people can have their human rights and equality protected.

ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY CONFERENCE

Due to COVID-19 pandemic we had cancelled live events and Professor Dagmar Schiek and Aislinn Fanning present a paper on Brexit and Future Equality Law in Northern Ireland on 27 November 2021. Hope next year we could organise the Annual Human Rights and Equality Conference in person!

ALL PARTY ASSEMBLY GROUP ON ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITY

For 2021-2022 we had Paula Bradshaw MLA Alliance Party and Sinead McLaughlin MLA Socialist Democrat Labour Party. Sadly, Christopher Stafford MLA Democratic Unionist Party was suddenly passed away on 19th February 2022 at the age of 39. The rest of the APG are Rachel Woods MLA Green (vice-Chair); Gerry Carroll MLA People Before Profits (Secretary); Paul Frew MLA DUP (Treasurer); Emma Sheerin MLA Sinn Fein; Dr Steve Aiken MLA OBE UUP; Robbie Butler MLA UUP; Chris Lyttle MLA Alliance Party; Patsy McGlone MLA SDLP.

We had the following experts provided briefing to our APG:

Maurice MaCartney Migrant and Minority Ethnic Council on Race and Ethnic Disparities Commission

Lassane Ouedrogo Chair of Africa Centre Ireland and Co-Chair of European Network of People of Africa Descent on UN International Decades of People of African Descent

Livingstone Thompson Chair of ACSONI on UN International Decades of People of African Descent

Orla McStravick Head of Infrastructure and Racial Equality, the Executive Office on Ethnic Minority Development Fund

Jesse Wong Northern Ireland Strategic Partnership on BNO Visa Scheme and Services

Robin Dempsey Officer of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Department, PSNI on Hate Crime

Helen Flynn Head of Policy, Research and Campaigns of Justice Fair UK on UK draft Report to the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Committee

Orla McStravick Head of Infrastructure and Racial Equality, the Executive Office on Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025

Rosemary Fennell Head of Equality, Human Rights & Delivering Social Change Unit, the Executive Office on Universal Periodic Review 2022

Patricia Zimmermann Ministry of Justice on UN Periodic Review 2022

Ivanka Antova Brexit and Human Rights Working Group of the Human Rights Consortium on Brexit and Northern Ireland Protocol: Immigration Bills, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Elizabeth Griffith Law Centre NI on Draft Refugee Integration Strategy 2022-2027

Lumturi Podrimaj Advice NI on EU Resettlement Scheme

NICRE provides secretary support for the meeting since 2017. The current priority are Hate Crime, Brexit and immigration; Review of the Race Relations law; Racial Equality Strategy implementation and its Action Plan; Ethnic Monitoring and Ethnic Minority Development Fund, etc. For more details, contact Patrick Yu, NICRE Secretary.

SERVICES

- Support Services for Migrants

The Migrant Centre NI, Law Centre NI, local Independence Advice Centres and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) provide the first tier of advice and support for most of the issues experienced by BME people, including legal advice on immigration matters. **NICRE signpost and/or make referral directly to these organisations.**

NICRE also work with Trade Unions, who may be able to provide free advice, to support BME people.

- Support for Victims of Racist Violence and Discrimination

Currently, Migrant Centre NI provides bilingual advocacy to support victims of racial violence and different forms of hate crime and hate speech. They provide interpreters for those who cannot speak English, and for those with little English. This a free service supported by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The service also extends to people who have experienced different treatment simply because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, religion, culture or language; whether in the workplace, accessing public services such as public transport, benefits, GP and hospital appointments, completing school registration, or if their children are experiencing racially motivated bullying in school – which are all forms of discrimination.

NICRE continues make direct referral and/or signpost those who need this service to a Bilingual Advocate.

- Islamophobic Hate

We employed a part-time Advocate for one year, subject to future funding in February 2022. The purpose of the project is to support survivors of Islamophobic Hate and marginalised groups from within the Muslim community through advocacy, advice and support of individual needs, with particular focus on women, refugees and asylum seekers. The project aims to develop a local support network to tackle Islamophobia and to address underreporting and the related barriers to criminal justice system through the following objectives:

1. Awareness raising for Muslim communities on access to justice and underreporting on hate crime and hate speech;
2. Confidence building measures through capacity building and leadership development programmes for local Muslim community;
3. Participation in Action Research in scoping the issues and needs of Muslim community on the impacts of Islamophobia; and
4. Share experiences and practice with other local and regional civil society organisations.

In our day-to-day work we follow a trauma-informed, intersectional approach with respect to both engagement with affected persons, communities and partner organisations. Using advocacy as a tool to protect rights and promote social change, we work closely alongside community organisations and community law centres to identify legal and policy issues, supporting affected people to find means to act upon their rights, access justice and exercise their rights. Similarly through power mapping and analysing the decision-making processes involved, we identify and create avenues (mechanisms) for the active and meaningful engagement of disadvantaged groups in the decisions which impact on their lives.

- Casework

NICRE continues to support people who have case against public authority and/or other complaints whether it is basic service provisions, discrimination, racist harassment and racist violence. We refer cases to Equality Commission, Law Centre, Public Interests Litigation Support project, etc. We are now busy to provide advice to them.

- Anti-Racism, Equality and Diversity Training

NICRE has expertise and consultancy functions to develop and to deliver anti-racism, equality and diversity training for the statutory, voluntary, community, trade union and private sector, with the aim to take an integrated approach to the issues and to address the policy and practice of organisations. We had a few enquires about our training. We conducted one training for the dinner ladies and senior management team in a Secondary School in West Belfast. A lot of enquires whether we can provide training through Zoom platform or online training. We are all decline to provide as no interaction between staffs team could not identify the underlying issues of racism.

- Capacity Building

NICRE's Capacity Building programme address two levels of interrelated issues – (i) the capacity of the community in terms of leadership, and (ii) the capacity of the community to participate in public life, particularly in response to consultation under both Section 75 and/or new policies and services. NICRE can provide tailor-made training programmes for both leadership and policy. Our capacity building programme must involve working in partnership with individual BME communities, or with multiple communities. Joint funding applications can also be explored to deliver these programmes.

CONSULTATION AND MEETING

NICRE attended the following meetings and events with consultation element:

2021

1. The Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Simon Hoare launched “The Experience of Ethnic Minority and Migrants People in Northern Ireland Inquiry launched on 19 April 2021 and NICRE made a joint submission with the All-Party Group on Ethnic Minority Community.
2. DEFRA Draft Equality Impact Assessment Consultation starting on 7th July 2021.
3. Department of Health Consultation on the COVID Recovery Plan in July 2021.
4. Department of Health Cancer Strategy Consultation on 25 August 2021.
5. NICRE AGM Notice and AGM Seminar on Wednesday, 27th September 2021 at 11am to 12:30pm via Zoom. We had Professor Dagmar Sheik of University College Cork and Aisling Fanning presenting “Brexit and Future Equality Law in Northern Ireland”
<https://nicre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/working-in-progress-2021.pdf>
<https://nicre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Schiek-Fanning-Equality-Law-in-the-UK-and-the-EU-after-secession-2021-final-ssrn-version.pdf>
6. Big Lottery Fund consultation on Participatory Grant Making in Northern Ireland Programme Design with BAME Communities on Barriers, Needs, Hope and Dream from October 2020 to January 2022.
7. Housing Executive Consultation on Ending Homeless Together, Draft Homeless Strategy 2022-2027 on 27 October 2021
8. Department of Finance Consultation on Belief Marriage and Minimum Age for Marriage or Civil Partnership in November 2021.
- 9.

2022

1. Department of Justice Consultation on Hate Crime in January 2022.
2. Department of Health Consultation on the Draft Leaving Prostitution – A Programme of Assistance and Support in March 2022.

PUBLIC POLICY SUBMISSION

NICRE has been submitted to the following policy consultation and/or Inquiry:

2021

1. NICRE and APG on Ethnic Minority Community made a joint submission to the NI Affairs Committee on 20 May 2021.
<https://nicre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NICRE-APG-Joint-Submission-to-NI-Affairs-Committee.pdf>
2. NICRE submission to DAERA on Agricultural Wage Board on Draft Equality Impact Assessment on 7 July 2021.
3. NICRE submission to Department of Justice on Minors Settlements Consultation on 20th August 2021.
https://nicre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Minor-Settlements-my_response-2.pdf
4. NICRE submission to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Reaching Rural Strategy 2021-2025 Consultation Response on 28th September 2021.

<https://nicre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rural-consultation-response-form-PDF-123KB.pdf>

2022

1. NICRE submission to Department of Finance on Belief Marriage and Minimum Age for Marriage or Civil Partnership in March 2022.
2. NICRE submission to the Ministry of Justice on UN Universal Periodic Review 2022 on 27 January 2022.
3. NICRE submission to the Department of Justice on A New Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy Public Survey on 2 March 2022.
4. NICRE submission to Department of Justice on Hate Crime on 28 March 2022.

Visit the E-Library section on our website for a full range of publications relating to a wide range of issues and groups we work with <https://nicre.org/e-library/>

NICRE is the member of the following work group or group attending regular meetings:

Department of Justice Domestic and Sexual Violence Tasks and Finish Group and the Communication Sub-group

Human Rights Consortium Brexit & Human Rights Working Group

Equality Coalition

All Island Dialogue on Brexit

The All-Party Assembly Working Group on Ethnic Minority Community

Equality Yours Forum (UK wide Forum on human rights and equality)

UN Universal Periodical Report compilation and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Working Groups on UK Report (co-ordinated by Just Fair)

NICRE COMMITTEE FOR 2021-2024

Chair: Naomi Green (Belfast Islamic Centre)
Vice-Chair: Javaid Naveed (NI Muslim Family Association)
Secretary: Patrick Yu (Individual member)
Treasurer: Ashok Sharma (Hindu Council of Ireland)

Other members:

Dr. Satyavir Singhal (Indian Community Centre)
Nick Cassidy (Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group)

Shuyb Miah (Bangladeshi Welfare Association)
Dr Raied Al-Wazzan (Belfast Islamic Centre)
Kamini Rao (Strabane Ethnic Community Association) – co-opted to the Trustees
Board

If you have any query on this report, please contact Patrick Yu, Secretary, at patrick@nicre.org or contact him at 07710 767235

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