

ICLS Bradford

Impact Evaluation Report

Abridged Version

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Walls

*With no consideration, no pity, no shame
they have built walls all around me, thick and high
And now I sit here feeling hopeless.
I can't think of anything else: this fate gnaws my mind –
because I had so much to do outside.
When they were building the walls, how could I not have noticed?
But I never heard the builders, not a sound.
Imperceptibly they've closed me off
from the outside world.*

Konstantine Cavafy

"It was great to have that chance to spend time with people and break down some of the barriers that seem to surround us all the time. I'd not had that opportunity before".

ICLS Seminar Participant

"ICLS gave me those relationships with people. ICLS crystallized relationships. I was able to ask questions that I couldn't have asked in other places. It gathered a network together – not just the usual suspects."

ICLS Seminar Participant

"The Intercultural Communication and Leadership School (ICLS) was launched in 2002 to bring emergent young actors together from all backgrounds and beliefs. A generation of able young Bradfordians went through the ICLS school and built a connection with each other which has fed fresh approaches to challenges in the district."

Bujra and Pearce (2011:178)

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1. Introduction

We live in a world in which walls tend to characterise how we view our surroundings. More accurately, they offer an image that illustrates how our worldview is often blocked and overshadowed by our prejudices, fears and ignorance. The poem 'Walls' by Cavafy offers a devastatingly insightful view of human nature and our capacity to allow walls, both physical and psychological, to be built around us. Its observation that these walls often go up without our being aware of the fact is something we can all recognise. Only when we acknowledge the existence of the walls can we begin our attempts to dismantle them.

Over the past 10 years, the work of the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School (ICLS) in Bradford has aimed to contribute to the dismantling of these walls.

The founders of ICLS believed that the key to cultivating peace was through encouraging and helping strengthen capacity to build bridges across communities. They recognized the importance of building relationships, trust and cooperation, and sought to create and support networks of emerging leaders who were in positions to make a difference in their communities. Through offering training in intercultural communication and leadership to young adults from different cultures, backgrounds and communities they aimed to create intentional spaces that would help build community resilience.

The summer of 2001 saw major disturbances and urban violence in northern English cities. Work had already begun prior to this in Bradford, one of the cities most affected, towards developing an ICLS pilot project. There was a strong desire to ensure that nothing similar happened again, along with the belief that the future was dependent on investing in young people. The first ICLS seminar in Bradford took place in April 2002 after consultation with representatives reflecting different ages, backgrounds and communities and also with the support of local partners. The young adults who were identified as emerging leaders came from different faith perspectives, ethnic backgrounds, areas of the city and professions. Whether their values were secular or rooted in a particular faith tradition, they were united by their desire to engage with and explore perceived or real differences, deepen their cultural and religious literacy and to build ways of working together towards common goals. The second seminar was held in October 2002 and the inclusion of a police officer from West Yorkshire Police helped establish a pattern that was replicated in subsequent seminars. The Bradford seminars continued to be held twice yearly with the local implementation being entrusted to Active Faith Communities (AFC), operating based on the principles of the ICLS.

This report is based on the responses collected from 28 people who participated on ICLS seminars between 2002 and 2009 in Bradford, UK. It focuses on their experience of both seminar itself and post-seminar initiatives.

Through questionnaire, interview and ancillary documentary research, it has sought to distil reflections on the experiences of these individuals in order to assess the impact of participation on the seminar in the context of their work across the Bradford district.

Interpretation of the qualitative data was done by adapting the monitoring and evaluation methodology known as 'Most Significant Change Technique'¹. The responses were analysed and then categorised into emerging thematic areas. The data determined the themes rather than the analysis being based on pre-determined criteria. Key reflections were then drawn from these themes. All the responses were viewed through the context of a peacebuilding lens as outlined in the 'Peacebuilding and Community Resilience' chapter.

A full evaluation methodology can be found in the complete report.

This abridged report concentrates on providing insights and context relating to peacebuilding and community resilience and the key findings and resulting recommendations for ICLS regarding potential future work. It also includes recommendations directed towards a broader network of policy-makers, funders, community organisations and individuals in Bradford and beyond who have an interest in learning from this journey. An exploration and analysis of the data, along with the raw data itself can be found in the full report.

As a peacebuilding practitioner and lecturer, the author has sought to bring over 15 years experience to his interpretation of the data. It should be noted that he was a participant on the 2nd ICLS seminar in Bradford. This had no impact on his ability to analyse the data in an impartial manner and was in fact of assistance in the process of gathering the responses from participants.

The information shared by participants was not simply analysed in an objective and disconnected way. The author was looking for patterns, themes and also insightful comments that echoed and reinforced theories relating to peacebuilding and community resilience. These theoretical frameworks, when combined with his own professional experience have been the maps that have guided him through this task. The conclusions and recommendations are rooted in practical realities that are backed up by theoretical insights.

It is hoped that this report will help bring insights and lessons from the past ten years to a wider audience, and that future work can build on the foundations that have been laid.

The conclusions and recommendations aim to support all who work towards peace in Bradford and beyond. Responsibility for the conclusions that have been reached in this report rests, of course, with the author alone.

Acknowledgements

This report would not exist if it were not for the generosity of time extended by the ICLS alumni who responded to the invitation to reflect on their experiences. It was a great privilege to be able to review and engage with the information that respondents shared. A debt of gratitude to them is in order. It was clear from the responses that these people cared deeply about where they lived and worked and their ongoing commitment towards working to create a prosperous and peaceful Bradford is clear at every stage.

¹ <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

2. Peacebuilding and Community Resilience

“Peacebuilding requires a vision of relationship. Stated bluntly, if there is no capacity to imagine the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of that historic and ever-evolving web, peacebuilding collapses”.

John Paul Lederach (2005:35)

In order to fully appreciate, understand and assess the work that ICLS has been engaged with in Bradford it's important to locate it in wider efforts working towards peacebuilding and community resilience. The aim of this section is to try and condense ideas and theories into an accessible and relevant outline that focuses on Bradford, illustrates key points and provides a frame of reference upon which the evaluation is built.

The definition of peacebuilding varies according to scholars and practitioners. Some focus on a very narrow area such as post-conflict reconstruction. However, the definition that provides the most relevance for our context comes from John Paul Lederach, a key figure in the academic field of peace studies who has almost 40 years of experience of working in and writing about peace and conflict. Lederach argues that we need to take a broad view of peacebuilding and defines it as “a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships.” (Lederach 1997:20) This is an approach that acknowledges the importance of efforts at different levels of power and influence. It is an inclusive process that recognises and incorporates the voices of everyone. It recognises the complexity of individual situations and aims to reflect the specific needs of a community rather than imposing a one-size fits all solution that has been designed without consultation.

Referring to the work of Mark Huffman, the authors of *‘Contemporary Conflict Resolution’* suggest that genuine peacebuilding must abandon attempts to create “uniform and bureaucratically imposed structures”, that it needs to demonstrate “a far greater sensitivity and nuanced understanding of local conditions”, and be willing to ensure that voices from all sides enjoy full participation in the conversations which affect them. Huffman states:

“As a first step it would mean a move away from the paternalistic, technocratic one-size-fits-all approach to peacebuilding. Shifting to a more bottom up, society building approach, there is a need to engage creatively and dynamically with local dynamics without falling into the trap of ‘romanticising the local’ or entrenching existing structures of violence and/or inequality. A peace that is built on the ground needs to reflect the interests, needs and aspirations of local populations rather than those of the international peacebuilding community. If we start by asking what ‘we’ want to achieve then we are starting with the wrong question.”

(Ramsbotham et al, 2011: 227)

With genuine peacebuilding we're being encouraged to engage with complexity, think creatively, listen thoroughly, reflect thoughtfully and resist the temptation to believe that there's an easy fix.

With regards peacebuilding, the one positive from the fact that our world has so many examples of violence and intolerance is that we are also presented with examples of how people have transformed seemingly intractable situations. It is these examples that we should look to and learn from.

The Four Disciplines of Peacebuilding

Looking at his experience of working alongside people trying to build peace in divided communities, Lederach began to wonder if there were specific characteristics that were commonly found. When it comes to peacebuilding and community resilience, what would an attentive observer see? He categorises them into the following four disciplines stating that without their presence, peacebuilding would be impossible (Lederach 2005: 34)

- *The Centrality of Relationships*
- *The Practice of Paradoxical Curiosity*
- *Provide Space for the Creative Act*
- *The Willingness to Risk*

The Centrality of Relationships

Understanding that relationships are central to building peace is one of the first steps we all need to take. Changing structures and systems is also important, but experience shows that relationships are key and provide the platforms from which other changes can be built. We're called to develop an ability to envision connections that didn't exist and relationships that need to be created or strengthened. These relationships become the glue that helps hold communities together in times of tension. In order for communities to be resilient towards the challenges of intolerance and prejudice, these relationships need to exist on all different levels of society, from the top levels of decision-makers through to the grassroots. Developing links between those sectors is something that requires continual attention. The importance of relationships is often dismissed as being 'fluffy' or irrelevant. Experiences from conflicts around the world demonstrate that an investment in taking time to sit down and enjoy a cup of tea with someone, learning names and listening to opinions are of much more value than they are imagined to be. In practical terms, this involves people with the capacity to influence others across a community being in contact and communication with each other.

Lederach uses the term 'web-weaving' to explain what happens here. He's talking about weaving webs of relationships and states that it is these webs or networks that help develop resilience and strength. He calls us all to act as 'web-weavers' and to consciously view our communities in these terms.

"It's invisible webs of relationships which hold things together" (2005: 75)

Those of us working towards building peaceful communities therefore need to both develop new ways of looking at the areas in which we live, and also to encourage others to do the same. We're called to intentionally link people who don't necessarily have the same opinions or who don't interact. We're being asked to look beyond political, social and economic dividing lines and begin to develop networks between people who are presently unconnected. We're being challenged to find ways in which we can link different but interdependent groups and to recognise that change does not just happen. The changes we work towards come about by acknowledging the centrality of relationships and then building relationships or spaces that are either weak or have never existed (2005: 85). This is 'know-who' and 'know where' rather than 'know-how'.

“In pragmatic terms the web approach asks early and often: Who has to find a way to be connected to whom?” (2005:89)

The Practice of Paradoxical Curiosity

Put simply, ‘the practice of paradoxical curiosity’ is a way of approaching the realities of social challenges with the following appreciations (2005: 36):

- an abiding respect for complexity
- a refusal to fall prey to the pressures of ‘us-them’, ‘we’re right, they’re wrong’, ‘we’re the victims, they’re the perpetrators’
- an inquisitiveness about what holds seemingly contradictory social energies in a greater whole

It’s about encouraging people working in somewhere like Bradford to look beyond what’s immediately apparent. It’s about suspending judgement in order to explore seeming contradictions. It’s about refusing to accept simplistic answers or pre-determining what the problem is without adequate appreciation of subtlety and uniqueness of a situation or place. It’s about being curious in a conscious manner. It is of huge importance to develop a keen eye for the latent possibilities that exist amidst contradictions and conflict. By doing so, complexity becomes a friend rather than an enemy “for from complexity emerges untold new angles, opportunities and unexpected potentialities that surpass, replace and break the shackles of historic and current relational patterns of repeated violence” (2005:37)

Provide Space for the Creative Act

Too often, communities become stuck in the crippling familiarity of well-established, tried, tested and failed ideas. Communities around the world, who have found ways of moving beyond division and violence, or demonstrating a determination not to be consumed by it, bear witness to a different reality. There is one in which one foot is firmly grounded in the lived reality while the other is firmly rooted in the realm of creative possibilities. When our balance is wrong, we tend to go nowhere. If we’re too heavily focused on lived realities we become too cynical, whereas if we’re only thinking of new ideas that are unconnected to practical reality, we become ‘wishy-washy’ and irrelevant. Lederach shares his experience of the need to deliberately provide space for creativity to blossom. He challenges us to embrace creativity by accepting the idea that it helps move us towards something new while “rising from and speaking to the everyday” (2005:38).

It asks us to reflect on how do we consciously encourage innovation? How do we extend generosity towards alternative or non-traditional views? How do we make our communities and neighbourhoods places in which the values of the artist are celebrated and respected? This creativity and the willingness to be hospitable towards imagination are crucial because without them we can never fully accept that new behaviours and attitudes are possible.

Without such a commitment and respect towards creativity, the peaceful communities we work towards will not grow.

The Willingness to Risk

The idea that we can develop peaceful communities without being willing to take risks is absurd. When we are trying to imagine a new way in which divided communities can interact we are being called to step into the unknown, without guarantee of success or even safety. When someone makes the effort to go to a meeting in another part of a divided city and meet with members of a different community, they take considerable risks. They may be alienated by their own community for doing so and their hand of friendship rejected by those to whom it is extended. This concept cannot be divorced from with the fact that relationships are key. How do we deliberately create the space in which relationships can be built and sustained? How do we encourage people to take those steps into the unknown?

Around the world, Lederach witnessed similar patterns in which significant risks were taken. Consistently, those risks bore similar fruit: “The results were complex initiatives of building peace defined by moments that created and then sustained constructive change” (2005:40).

Critical Yeast

“When I reflect back on my peacebuilding experience, the most significant components that shaped processes, made a difference, and held up over longer periods of time consistently were those where a small but strategically connected set of people worked for change with an instinctive knack for web thinking”. (2005:98)

The term ‘critical mass’ is commonly heard when people talk about making a difference and bringing about social change. When a group is relatively small it is often dismissed as lacking significance. It’s dismissed because not enough people are involved. Credibility is attached to numbers and the belief that the more people who are involved, the more successful an initiative will be. Experience in peacebuilding and developing community resilience suggests that the opposite is in fact true. Lederach explores the fascinating and insightful theory of ‘critical yeast’ (2005: 87). In bread-baking the ‘critical mass’ is flour. However, without the addition of yeast, the bread will not rise. In the context of building peace, Lederach suggests that a crucial element to focus on developing this ‘critical yeast’. The measuring stick should not be quantity and the number of people involved. It is much more to do with the “quality of relational spaces, intersections, and interactions that affect a social process beyond the numbers involved” (2005:100).

It leads us to ask questions relating to the concept of influence. Who are the people who can influence others? Who are the individuals whose interactions with others will act as a catalyst for wider interactions? With whom does the potential for wider change lie? It asks us to be strategic and instead of trying to simply fill a room with people in order to create a great photo opportunity or make it appear that a lot is being done, it calls us to focus our energies in specific and intentional ways. Lederach uses the examples of Nicaragua and Northern Ireland to illustrate the validity of this point (2005:99)

“The conciliation work in Nicaragua that helped shape the end of the war between the East Coast and the Sandinistas was a relational, web-based understanding of process. The work in Northern Ireland among former paramilitaries and cross-community groups, the infrastructure that helped keep the process alive when all else seemed doomed, was built on hundreds of invisible, unmentioned sets of contacts, conversations, and co-ordinated processes, which understood and

strategically built relational spaces. In both cases fewer than a dozen people made the key links and held the mostly informal processes of relational space-building together.”

From Riot to Resilience

In July 2001, fears, rumours and provocation related to a banned Far-Right march in Bradford rapidly spread to the rioting that drew attention from all over the world. The financial costs ran into the millions. While no lives were lost, the physical, emotional and psychological scarring across the District was significant. A strong sense that this could not be allowed to happen again helped forge a number of initiatives with that explicit intention. The ICLS was among those.

In August 2010 the presence of another Far-Right group, the English Defence League (EDL), was felt in Bradford. They hoped that their presence would spark similar scenes of violence to those of 2001. Everyone braced themselves, and Bradfordians came together in an inspiring demonstration of defiance and community resilience. The rioting that many predicted simply did not happen. The numerous journalists, gathered on that sunny day to witness another riot, went home without the story they were expecting. The contrast between the two summer days, separated by nine years, could not have been starker. The contrasting nature of both days was not the result of luck. It happened as a direct result of almost a decade’s worth of hard work to build a resilience which had been lacking in 2001. This journey is explored in the excellent book ‘Saturday Night and Sunday Morning: The 2001 Bradford Riot and Beyond’ by Janet Bujra and Jenny Pearce from the University of Bradford’s world-renowned Department of Peace Studies.

Exploring some of the findings outlined in the book helps us locate the work of the ICLS in context and also allows us to identify the core ingredients that led to the resilience demonstrated so clearly on August 28th 2010, the day the riots didn’t happen. As Bujra and Pearce note:

“...Bradford’s collective achievement in August 2010 was to forge unity of purpose against the EDL protest. Networking and communication at all levels, from politicians to police, from activists to angry young men generated that success” (2011: 184).

It is a remarkable story.

The Big Response to ‘The Big One’

When, in July 2010 the EDL publicly declared their intention to march in Bradford just a few weeks later, they referred to it as ‘The Big One’. They chose August 28th, a Bank Holiday in the middle of Ramadan. Their plan was to specifically target Bradford’s Muslim community, in particular to try and provoke young Muslim men. It would be a real test to see how far Bradford had come since 2001 in building resilience (2011: 190).

Lederach’s four disciplines of peacebuilding can be found throughout Bradford’s journey from riot to resilience. Relationships and networks are at the heart of that resilience and have provided the platforms from which strong partnerships, coherent planning and effective policing were built. People have committed to look beyond the immediately apparent and been open to embracing complexity. They have demonstrated creativity in how they have approached emerging challenges and people have shown an

ongoing willingness to take risks. Small but focused and well connected networks have provided the critical yeast that has helped ensure the whole District has benefitted from their efforts.

On August 28th, the threat that was posed was considerable, but constant and clear communication between agencies and individuals and at every level of influence was demonstrated consistently and helped defuse tense situations, counter rumours and prevent violence from starting (2011: 193). Strong leadership was demonstrated, from informal peer leadership amongst friends on the street through to statutory agencies, the council and the police. All of this was manifested in a huge collective effort by people united by their care and love for Bradford.

The police were at the heart of this multi-agency approach and their approach was very different to 2001: “This time they had wider and deeper connections to all communities and understood much better the impact of Far-Right hatred” (2011: 196) In the run up to August 28th, they organised meetings, listened to concerns, explained the limitations of police power and engaged with differing opinions:

“The police attribute much of the effectiveness of the approach to the EDL to a shift to neighbourhood policing: ‘Community engagement is the rock on which any operation is built’. They acknowledge the importance of talking to everyone in everyday contexts rather than a few spokespeople in emergency situations – not ‘parachuting in to have a conversation when they want one’. Since 2001 they have invested a huge amount of time in building relationships and trust, getting to know the local issues and understanding why communities feel under threat. This enabled them to play a key role in bringing people together in the community with local authority and other agencies in preparation for the EDL protest” (2011: 197)

It’s worth paying attention to a few key points expressed in that paragraph as they represent efforts that illustrate broader characteristics of the resilience that developed in Bradford over the past decade:

- “Community engagement is the rock on which any operation is built”
- “Talking to everyone in everyday contexts” rather than limited people only in an emergency
- The investment of a “huge amount of time in building relationships and trust”
- “Getting to know the local issues”
- Understanding fears and concerns and as a result, demonstrating empathy
- Acting as ‘web-weavers’ in “bringing people together in the community”.

Positive relationships do not just happen. Trust does not appear overnight. Significant efforts, mirroring those outlined above, were made by individuals and groups across the Bradford district between 2001 and 2010. They were developed in order to deal with ongoing and emerging issues, local, national and global, and also to engage with conversations and questions that naturally unfold in such a diverse city. In the lead up to the EDL’s arrival, the Youth Service, the Council, Bradford Women for Peace, The Council of Mosques, churches, Bradford District Faiths Forum, the university’s Programme for a Peaceful City and many other groups succeeded in deliberately creating the spaces in which these conversations could take place. The Programme for a Peaceful City, for example, has been creating those spaces and helping encourage connections on a regular basis for a decade. It was precisely because of a broad range of ongoing efforts and initiatives that were happening, without fanfare and without much recognition when tensions were low, that Bradford was able to be so effective when tensions were high. The time spent having a cup of tea with someone, asking about family, sharing ideas, discussing issues, exploring different cultures, sitting down for a curry, proved to be of great value as they were the things which helped build the relationships and build the trust that was so effective on August 28th. It is also worth noting that

Bradford remained calm in the aftermath of the London 7/7 bombings, and was also a rare example of calm during the urban riots and disturbances of August 2011 that affected so many UK cities. The source of Bradford's ability to respond so positively and dynamically to the EDL visit had been developing for a number of years and "the fabric of resilience lay in the connections people had built since 2001, which did not reveal how robust they were until the EDL forced people to draw on them" (2011: 201)

The network of ICLS alumni formed a part of the wider web of personal and professional relationships that demonstrated its strength on August 28th 2010. The importance of deliberately creating the spaces in which relationships can be built or strengthened cannot be underestimated. It is also important to note that an ongoing commitment to maintaining those 'webs' and networks is key. Bujra and Pearce are mindful to add a cautionary note that should be acknowledged and engaged with regarding Bradford's future.

"But that focus on connections deep into communities of the District and upwards to decision makers, needs strengthening to promote the communication, collaborations and community mobilisations which were so effective when the EDL came to Bradford". (2011: 211)

The essential ingredients of peacebuilding and community resilience are clear. We would be wise to pay attention to them.

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3. Key findings

In Bradford, like every city, town and village in the UK, you will find a memorial to those who have died in wars. Most of the time we walk past them without a second glance. In November our attention is once more drawn to them and we consciously acknowledge the sacrifices and efforts made by those commemorated. It is right and proper to do so.

In none of these cities, towns or villages will you find any kind of recognition to those who stopped a war start or who prevented violence from erupting. Being able to pinpoint specific interventions or individuals who helped in such a way is an almost impossible task. Almost. We can however, identify characteristics of peaceful communities. We are learning to quantify and measure the ingredients of resilience. It is important that we continue to do so and that we acknowledge the significant and wide-ranging value of such efforts. We can do that by not taking them for granted and continuing to invest time, effort and resources in those who are working towards peace.

On August 28th 2010, based on an expectation that a riot would unfold, it is not difficult to imagine a journalist reporting back in to an editor and stating that “nothing happened in Bradford”. That statement could not be further from the truth. Something remarkable and significant happened in Bradford that day and it was the manifestation of not only the focused energies and efforts of countless people in the weeks beforehand, but of years of quiet, uncelebrated, mundane, tiny and seemingly unimportant conversations, connections and encounters. The ICLS was part of all those efforts.

The work of the ICLS in Bradford between 2001 and 2011 contributed to the resilience that developed across the district after the 2001 riots and which was demonstrated so clearly in August 2010 with the visit of the EDL. The ICLS deliberately created the spaces in which individuals could meet people from different neighbourhoods, backgrounds, traditions and who were united by the fact that they working on similar issues across Bradford. Those spaces allowed participants to engage with different ideas and opinions. ICLS intentionally sought to bring people together who could play a part in influencing attitudes, ideas and policies across the District, recognising that this was not happening and needed to.

The ICLS recognized the importance of building relationships, trust and cooperation, and sought to encourage and support networks of individuals who were in positions to make a difference in their communities

Echoing effective peacebuilding work around the world, ICLS acknowledged the value and importance of building relationships, ‘web-weaving’ and an acknowledgement of the value of small, focused efforts that John Paul Lederach refers to as ‘the critical yeast’.

Participation on the ICLS seminar was valued by people for a number of reasons, most notably the opportunity to meet and engage with others in the district who shared similar values, interests and commitments, to build relationships, develop networks, gain new perspectives and because it provided a very rare space in an overcrowded schedule, in which to do all of this. The fact that it was a residential and in a beautiful location were important and valuable and should not be discarded as irrelevant.

The space that the ICLS seminar provided in which shared values, common issues and different perspectives could be explored was of more importance than a specific 'curriculum'. The 'curriculum' and training provided useful new perspectives. However, the space for dialogue, both in a formal and informal setting, was what was so valuable.

The importance placed by people on the value of relationships and networking reinforces the disappointment that ICLS post-seminar contributions were not as successful as the actual seminar. Participants were, and are still, looking for spaces in which encounter and dialogue can continue, ideas and advice can be shared etc. They are still looking for ways to help build relationships that do not exist or help strengthen those that do. This is something of great value and needs to be addressed.

Over the course of a decade, ICLS has run seminars in a number of countries and they have been valued by participants. ICLS can claim credit for initiating many of the relationships that have developed between alumni and beyond. Despite significant efforts and a lot of good will, ongoing contact between alumni in Bradford continued primarily as a result of individual efforts as opposed to direct ICLS involvement. Responses from alumni indicate that the earlier emphasis on working together on joint projects was, in the main, unhelpful. People tended to be too focused on their existing work commitments to start something new. The needs they have expressed focus on a desire to be aware of who is working on what, who is interested in what areas, what skills can different people offer, what lessons have people learned etc.

Many participants felt that their participation on an ICLS seminar and the connections it encouraged, contributed to their professional and personal lives and that as they lived out and shared those insights, these in turn had the potential of impacting others. The ICLS helped act as a catalyst. It helped start conversations and helped foster strong relationships. It is impossible to track all the growth that developed out of the seeds of connections and ideas that were planted through involvement with ICLS. That should not diminish the importance and value of planting those seeds.

Regarding the impact the ICLS seminars had on the District, most people agreed that it was difficult to gauge, especially due to its size. However, we can state that the relationships made through ICLS clearly played a valuable role in helping develop community resilience. Bradford's ability to respond so positively and with such strength to the presence of the EDL was a superb team effort. No single group can claim credit. The ICLS and the legacy it helped create were members of that team. As Bujra and Pearce note, in referring to the Programme for a Peaceful City:

"They used their own connections built up over many years, to keep in touch with people who had street-level influence. Amongst others they worked with graduates from the Intercultural Leadership School (ICLS), as part of a 'Stop it Kicking Off Network' on the day. The information they transmitted was trusted and was another means by which rumours could be discounted" (2011: 200)

The impact that ICLS participation had on individual career paths appeared to depend on which stage of career a participant was at. For those who were already on established career paths, the seminars were valuable, but the impact it had on their career was very low. For those who just leaving school or university, it often had a very significant impact and set in motion a career path focusing on community sector work. It is worth noting that this question relates specifically to 'career paths'. Respondents made a number of references to the positive impact that participating on the ICLS seminar has had on their work, such as *"I think the networks were important but my career path has been multifaceted and not necessarily*

been defined by my participation with ICLS though the importance of such work is reinforced through its vision."

The ICLS participants who responded are all still actively involved in work relating to peacebuilding and community development, and the vast majority are still based in Bradford, a city and district they care deeply about and are committed to.

The work of the ICLS in Bradford was not without flaws or beyond criticism. Reflections on lessons from the past ten years will be outlined in the final chapter. However, the positive contribution ICLS made in helping encourage conversations, build relationships, explore ideas and foster trust needs to be acknowledged.

They deliberately created the spaces in which something might happen, and like peacebuilders all over the world, had to accept that they may never fully know exactly what those things are.

4. Recommendations

We can gather a lot from the responses shared by ICLS participants. Some relate specifically to the ICLS and should be taken into account in any potential future work they develop in Bradford. Other reflections and recommendations are relevant to a broader collection of groups including those involved with strategic vision for Bradford, the Local Authority, community organisations, West Yorkshire Police and individuals who are looking to develop their capacity to respond to the emerging challenges.

Although these relate to Bradford specifically, and we must always remain hospitable to an appreciation of the subtle uniqueness of any location, they do have broader relevance and implications for those working elsewhere.

As has been stated earlier, these recommendations are based on comments made by participants, literature relating to peacebuilding from around the world, community resilience in Bradford and from the author's professional experience.

The author's hope is that these recommendations act as conversation starters and stimulate debate in a wide range of settings.

General Recommendations

With this in mind, this evaluation leads to the following general recommendations:

- Community resilience is grounded in strong relationships, equitable partnerships and approaches that have community engagement as its foundation. Initiatives such as ICLS, that deliberately create the spaces in which relationships can be created or strengthened should be encouraged and supported.
- The value of intentionally created spaces which enable a broad range of both informal and facilitated conversations to happen should not be underestimated. Where they exist they should be acknowledged and encouraged, and where there is a need for them, they should be created.
- Compared to day events, residential programmes tend to be more expensive to organise and are certainly much more costly in terms of the time employees are away from work. However, they provide an invaluable space that allows for reflection, encounter, creative thinking and the development of relationships that simply cannot unfold in the limited confines of a day's training workshop. Therefore, funders and employers should recognise that they are making a sound investment that will reap both short-term and long-term benefits for their employee, their organisation and the wider community.
- Funders should be aware of the fact that short-term initiatives tend to reap short-term benefits. Having a 10 year approach to cities with challenges is recommended by Lederach² and this view is supported by the ICLS experience of working in Bradford as it allows for relationships to mature, web weaving to become more intrinsic and ultimately, resilience to be more robust. An ability to

² <http://being.publicradio.org/programs/2012/art-of-peace/>

work together with local partners on shared long-term visions will help strengthen local capacity and help contribute to an ongoing ability to respond effectively to emerging issues.

- There has been no repeat of the 2001 riots in Bradford due to measurable interventions and initiatives. Funders and policy-makers should pay as much attention, interest and willingness to invest in a peaceful Bradford, as they would if it was on the cover of every newspaper for all the wrong reasons.
- Lessons from Bradford's journey from riot to resilience are relevant to other parts of the UK and should be shared broadly. Valuable 'teachers' can be found in the local police, community organisations, local authorities, the university and gathered on street corners with their peers. Spaces should be created for those 'teachers' to share the learning that they have developed.

Recommendations for ICLS

The aim of ICLS to provide both a seminar and follow-up support to encourage relationship-building and develop capacity among emerging community leaders across Bradford, is sound in both theory and practice. The fact that some of the execution of that aim could be strengthened should not diminish this fact.

In order for ICLS to be most effective and sustainable, future programmes should seek to build on the successes of the past 10 years, namely:

- Deliberately creating spaces for dialogue, encounter, relationship-building and networking.
- Encouraging capacity-building by offering introductions to vocational skills such as media training and grant/proposal writing, project management etc.
- Providing a residential space outside of a city that allows for new ways of reflecting and engagement to emerge.
- Acting as a catalyst for conversations and connections

Within that context, the following recommendations are offered:

General

- In order to ensure the most effective long-term impact, funders need to be persuaded to invest in more than simply a seminar. Funding for post-seminar follow-up work will help strengthen the effectiveness of more long-term, focused efforts and ensure that the momentum created by the actual seminar is sustained.
- Ensure that the primary focus and rationale for seminars is always relationship-building and dialogue with the skills training element continuing to serve this.

- Establish a database of ICLS alumni in Bradford, mapping current work activity, areas of expertise and professional interests. This should be made available to alumni in order to strengthen existing and future networks
- The current ICLS website is useful from a broad 'information source' perspective but is not particularly helpful for alumni in a particular area such as Bradford. It is therefore recommended that a website specifically focusing on ICLS in Bradford is set up. This does not need to be complicated or expensive, but does need to be 'user-friendly'.

Seminar-Related

- Keep engaging with local partners and remain open to having assumptions challenged. Contexts and dynamics of communities are constantly changing. An ongoing commitment to remaining open to external ideas, combined with flexibility in design and delivery is key. This is where the value of an openly discussed 'Theory of Change' in planning and preparation is invaluable, as it provides the space for in-depth local wisdom to be incorporated.
- Continue to take a broad understanding of the term 'emerging leaders' and encourage local partners to do the same.
- The training acts as a conversation starter and as such, seminars should always retain an element of flexibility in their design in order to allow emerging needs of the group to influence programme direction.
- Build into the seminar programme specific blocks of time that provide an opportunity for participants to share and explore their own creative responses to existing and emerging issues in their communities. Encourage ideas and create the space in which the wisdom of the group can come to the surface and be shared.
- Participants on any future ICLS seminars should demonstrate a commitment to staying in Bradford, or at the very least a willingness and interest in doing so.

Post-Seminar Related

- Focus post-seminar efforts on supporting ongoing contact between alumni, helping them to share best practice, new ideas and offer mutual support.
- Build on the existing goodwill and experience of alumni in Bradford with regarding recruitment for and facilitation of future seminars.
- Explore funding possibilities for 'away-days' for ICLS alumni in Bradford in which they can reconnect, develop new links, share ideas and discuss common issues
- In order to improve existing efforts to maintain and encourage contact between alumni, incorporate the need to strengthen ongoing organisational capacity into funding bids for each seminar.

5. Celebrating Bradford

For generations, the people of Bradford have demonstrated a remarkable tenacity, strength, forthrightness, determination, dignity and above all pride in the place they call home. They have experienced the misery of industrial decline, the tragic horror and trauma of fire, the embarrassment and cost of riot and continue to struggle against the daily challenges of economic deprivation. Over the past 150 years the fabric of its people has been woven from all corners of the world, each strand bringing its own richness and together creating a collective strength and resilience.

This report has focused on one particular initiative and the way its path has crossed with the lives and work of 28 people from many different backgrounds, united by their common goal of working to make the city they love as vibrant, welcoming and prosperous as it can be. Their shared values and commitment to Bradford provide an inspiration to all.

The road up to this point has not been easy and the road ahead will no doubt provide its own challenges. As the people of Bradford walk together into the next decade, the rest of the UK would be wise to take some time and pay attention to the path that Bradford and its people have taken.

It is an honour to be part of that ongoing journey.

Michael Fryer

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