

TRAUMA RECOVERY NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Welcome to the Trauma Recovery Network's Annual Report being presented at our first formal AGM in November 2007.

Throughout the last 12-18 months TRN has seen a lot of change and growth from informal membership to a situation where we are developing a more formal membership base as an independent lobbying, advocacy and service provision Forum.

TRN has been developing as a regional network offering cross sector advocacy, organisational development support and research facility to victims and survivors groups and those working with the impact of trauma through a partnership and community development method of working.

Established in 2004, TRN has a founding membership of diverse organisations ranging from local community based projects to regional service providers and from both a community and public sector background.

Our current development direction and planned programme of work has been based on the outcome of our consultation meetings across NI in 2005. One main outcome of these has been the recognition that the common focus of recovery from trauma, however that may be identified, has the potential to assist integration and reconciliation.

As our membership is now growing it is becoming clear that there is a need in the field for a more a dynamic and independent forum based on community development approaches, led by and for groups and not headed up by funding bodies or statutory sector providers.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT??

TRN Vision:

A society where there is real understanding of what precipitates political trauma and what is required for trauma recovery.

TRN Mission:

To develop the lead regional network that will energise, connect and influence the Trauma Recovery Sector.

TRN Aims:

- 1. To build an independent forum that is safe enough to hold challenging dialogue.***

- 2. To influence policy and funding in ways that are responsive to, and supportive of, the needs of the Trauma Recovery sector.***

- 3. To encourage creative and ethical practice to aid trauma recovery and prevention, and break the cycle of transgenerational trauma.***

- 4. To influence the Trauma Recovery agenda regionally, nationally and internationally.***

2. TRN PROGRAMME AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT.

Central Information /Referral Service.

We have been in the process of compiling a Central Information and Database Reference Service which in particular has been consolidated over the past year with the appointment of our Development Officer. We have been working to put together information on service provision available to victims/survivors of NI Political Conflict particularly within the Community and Voluntary sectors and have still some completion to attain in relation to the Statutory Sector.

Through technical support from Computer Connections and Cúnamh ICT we are in the process of developing a web integration tool for our Cúnamh e monitoring Database which in itself is a pioneering system.

To date we have compiled a database with 300 + contacts which relate to service provision in the sector and will soon be approaching groups and individuals formally to consult on whether they wish their details to be made available through our website.

Due to funding constraints and project remit this information will only be made available to groups and individuals working with victims/survivors and who are members of TRN. However, the potential of such a system cannot be underestimated and TRN will be closely monitoring and evaluating the usage and impact of this information service once formally up and running.

3. INFORMATION/NETWORKING & LOBBYING.

From its inception TRN developing as an independent Forum within the sector has been focused on facilitating dialogue and debate on policy and practice, through the commonality of trauma recovery.

Attended by a total of 69 delegates we have facilitated Seminars dealing with: Consultation on Peace III, Interim Commissioner and Chris Gilligan's critique of five assumptions in the theory and practice of conflict related policy work in NI.

In particular, in relation to the Gilligan Seminar in May 2007 TRN was responding to a request from many groups for more detailed debate and discussion on his challenging and provocative analysis also regarded as essentially flawed by many working in the trauma recovery field.

In his critique Gilligan challenged many conventional views on the growth of conflict related trauma referrals and in so doing asked for a response which then was facilitated by TRN.

Three papers were produced as three separate responses to the 'Traumatised By Peace' analysis. Response papers were written by Bríd Keenan (Psychotherapist), Cathy Nelis (Cúnamh), and Geraldine Hamilton (Belfast Trust Trauma Resource Centre). Bríd's paper represented her independent perspective from experienced psychotherapy and community based work. The other responses were organisational perspectives developed at separate workshops which were facilitated by TRN.

48 delegates attended the Seminar in the Stormont Hotel for a lively and emotive discussion. On evaluation of the seminar it was clear that most attendees believed that discussion on this area has only begun and has been neglected and it is therefore an issue on which TRN will wish to develop a fuller policy debate and position.

At the Peace III Seminar in April 06 attended by 35 delegates Funding representatives from CRC, CFNI, SEUPB along with the Head of the Victims Unit were asked to present their views on the many issues surrounding funding and sustainability for groups facing the end of Peace II extension monies.

In an interesting discussion and debate the outcome was very much the need for a forum to influence funding policy in a way that is responsive to the needs of the trauma recovery sector as a whole. Following this TRN lobbied successfully for an extension to the Peace II extension which assisted some groups who were struggling in a gap period.

4. TRN RESEARCH PROGRAMME.

Through a combination of informal consultation with many groups over this period and on analysing evaluation material from TRN work we are soon to commence a study on some particular areas of need relating to the sector working with victims and survivors of our Political Conflict. Particular interest in this piece of work has been identified among the smaller and very often more isolated groups whose opinions and experience may not have had an opportunity to be explored and promoted to date.

Through support from Community Foundation for NI, The Ireland Fund of Canada and the Ark Project at Queens we now ready to commence the study. Through a combination of postal and e mail questionnaires and follow up focus group sessions an analysis will focus on the following:

- initial audit of development, practice, support and planning around service level agreements within the sector**
- analysis of working relationships around funding, practice and relevant policy constraints.**
- investigation of the working relationship between groups, groups and funders and between community, voluntary and statutory sector service providers.**

The outcome of this work and emerging recommendations will be published by April 2008.

5. SOME STATISTICS.

As the role of the network has developed and strengthened information sharing and referral information between groups and professionals working in the trauma recovery field is becoming facilitated more through TRN.

Although our database information project is not yet fully complete TRN has managed the following through our office base over this period:

48 information circulation requests to TRN Database

27 referrals to organisations from other organisations.

78% of those attending TRN Seminars or events have responded positively when asked whether or not they feel there is a need for a TRN Forum in the trauma recovery sector

6.CONCLUDING NOTE.

Throughout our next period of work TRN will face major funding challenges like so many others and we intend to address this on a broad scale through membership meetings, research and lobbying.

In addition we also intend to develop the debate on how best to encourage creative and ethical practice both in relation to trauma recovery and prevention and transgenerational trauma.

TRN will only succeed if our membership continues to grow and become directly involved in planning, influence and general direction to effect real change in the trauma recovery sector.

DIRECTORS/ BOARD MEMBERS 2006-2007.

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STAFF 2006-2007.

Paula Beattie
Regional Manager

Colleen Symington
Development Officer (Membership)

Sara Mc Closkey
Finance and Administrative Officer.

Recognition and thanks to Lesley Crymble and Sinead Clarke (Upper Springfield Development Trust) who worked in administrative and finance respectively before new Staff appointed.

