



European Union

European Regional
Development Fund

Investing in your future

PEACE III - European Territorial Co-operation 2007 -2013 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland

INTERREG IVA – Cross-border Programme for Territorial Co- operation 2007-2013

Progress Report

EXPLANATORY NOTES

This Progress Report template may be subject to change over the life of PEACE III.

The report is to be completed WITH EVERY FINANCIAL CLAIM and is used by the JTS to assess the progress of your project against the agreed actions outlined in your Letter of Offer. Failure to submit a progress report with an expenditure claim will mean that the expenditure claim cannot be paid until the report has been submitted and reviewed by the JTS. Failure to achieve satisfactory progress may affect the payment of grant aid.

The report, once completed, should be signed and dated by the Project Worker and then countersigned by the Project Director/Manager (who should not be a cash beneficiary of the Project).

In completing this Progress Report, please pay particular attention to the Outputs, Impacts, Results and Conditions of your project as outlined below and as stated in your Letter of Offer for funding.

Should you have any difficulties in completing this report, please do not hesitate to contact your Case Officer.

Project Partners:-

1. Mater Dei Institute of Education
2. Society of Missions to Africa
3. Hydebank Young Offenders Prison
4. The All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism
5. Embrace NI

Estimated Job Creation

	Permanent	Temporary
Full Time		2

Progress to date

It has been a full autumn, consolidating a number of the Project programmes, delivering and developing a wide range of inputs and covering all of our financial, communication and reporting responsibilities.

The external evaluators are in place and have been reviewing the past work of the Project as well as meeting with some of the key stakeholders. In addition, time and consideration has been given to developing some new strategies and approaches for meeting Project objectives.

Progress will be reported separately in each of the six strands of the Project.

A. Two more modules of the 3 year Catholic/Protestant Undergraduate Certificate Course in Theology were delivered over the reporting period. The numbers attending the course both for credit as well as audit have been maintained and are consistent. The partnership with Mater Dei and the SMA's continues to go well and we are meeting our Aid For Peace assessment indicators.

Status: Ongoing

B. Good progress can be reported for the Inter-Church Training Placements for Protestant ministerial and Catholic students. On 1st October 09, 72 students from Mater Dei Institute did a one day training placement in Belfast. The four Methodist Ministerial students have been undertaking their training placements in Catholic settings over these 3 months. Plans are in place to extend and increase these placements in 2010.

Status: Ongoing

C. As mentioned in the previous report, The Young Offenders' Identity Project has experienced some delay. A programme plan is in place and we expect to have this in operation in the new year. Our target is to have 60 young people involved, and to date we have had 37 participants.

Status: Ongoing

D. The work in the Exploring Identity and Oppression within and between Loyalist and Republican communities has continued to develop. Relationships with Republican and Loyalist leaders have continued through regular contact and involving them in presenting their experiences and the challenges of their new work. The initial planning stage for a leadership initiative has been completed and this will be finalised in the new year.

Status: Ongoing

E. The Creative Exploration and Engagement in Inter-Culturalism strand has continued to develop during this reporting period with Embrace NI and AICCMR meetings and events, the ministerial weekend, the Olive Branch, and other speaking engagements.

Status: Ongoing

F. The dissemination of resources has continued and the drafting of further resources has been undertaken. An updated leaflet of information on migrants and people seeking asylum will be printed in the new year and plans for a training conference with church leaders on inter-culturalism are in development. As the external evaluators make more progress, their input will assist in this strand of the Project.

Status: Ongoing

2. Outputs/Results/Impacts

Outputs

- A. Fifty people trained (most likely from Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Down, Louth and Monaghan but open to participants from the other counties in the eligible area) in an inter-denominational, undergraduate certificate in theology (Catholic and Protestant) awarded by Dublin City University over a three year period.
- B. Ten Methodist ministerial students placed in Catholic institutions/parishes (Donegal, Louth, Sligo) as part of their formation programme and to place ten Catholic students in Protestant institutions/congregations (Antrim, Down, Tyrone) as part of their degree programme (over a three year period). Placements may include Fermanagh, Derry and/or Leitrim but it is likely that they will be undertaken in the counties mentioned above.
- C. At least 60 young offenders in Northern Ireland provided with the tools to explore and appreciate their own identity and to address issues of difference in regard to sectarianism and racism.
- D. Forty to 50 loyalists and republicans (from Louth, Armagh, Monaghan and Down) enabled to engage in dialogue (in a structured and creative way) centred around their identity and issues of oppression and injustice and to generate opportunities for sustainable relationships.
- E. Indigenous churches/communities and people from minority ethnic communities equipped with the skills to appreciate difference, forge relationships with 'the other' and experience the values of diversity and integration.
- F. Documentary evidence of the lessons learned from the Project programmes in order to develop practical resources on the methodologies which have been proven to develop the capacities of participants and make positive attitudinal changes across the whole of the Project. These will be disseminated to the key stakeholders in each area.

Results

- A. Course participants given the skills, experience and confidence necessary to undertake practical work over the long-term within their communities and ministries towards reconciliation, integration and a shared society.
- B. A legacy ensured of significant inter-church and cross-community relationships by equipping young leaders in reconciliation and integration work with the attitudes, skills and motivation to

promote and extend this work into their communities and churches.

- C. Sustainable relationships generated while providing the tools and confidence that will foster greater understanding, reconciliation and integration across the Region amongst marginalised groups.
- D. Models of good practice and practical resources produced that can be used across the Region and beyond (by theological colleges, Christian churches and a range of voluntary and community groups) that will contribute to the building of positive relationships at the local level, improving trust and tolerance.

Impacts

- A. An overall normalising of inter-church, cross-community and inter-cultural relationships through the implementation of strategic models of collaboration focused on creating the framework conditions for building peace, fostering reconciliation, facilitating integration and contributing meaningfully to a shared society.
- B. The ultimate impact of the Project should be as a significant contributor to reconciliation and integration between and within communities. By fostering relationships amongst local church and community leaders and equipping them with the skills to facilitate and advance reconciliation, the Project should leave a sustainable legacy of trained leaders who will broaden and deepen the work of building peace. The work with young offenders and marginalised groups should inspire people often excluded from peace building processes to incorporate the values of reconciliation and integration and encourage them to address pressing issues within their sphere of influence. Overall, the work should equip people practically to see difference and conflict as opportunities for modelling and creating healthy relationships and will give leaders confidence in addressing difficult issues and inspiring sound cross-community, inter-cultural relations.
- C. The emphasis on relationships should ultimately create the framework conditions for a healthy, stable and connected society in which people come to appreciate difference and embrace the diversity of traditions, cultures and views within the Region and beyond.

The Indicators are subject to amendment to incorporate “Aid for Peace” Indicators

Progress to Date

- A. The three year Catholic/Protestant Undergraduate Certificate Course in Theology continues to meet its time and participant targets. The 50 students are still attending the course and fulfilling their requirements. Within the eligible region, students are drawn from Antrim, Armagh, Down, Louth, Monahan, and L’Derry. The module on Peace and Justice was designed and delivered by the Project Officer this term.
- B. The Inter-Church Training Placements for Protestant ministerial and Catholic students have exceeded their target for this reporting period. There were 72 Catholic students who participated in the 1 day training event on the 1st October. The four Methodist ministerial students due to take up their placements this term have done so and have made good progress in meeting their goals and objectives.
- C. Despite delays, the Young Offenders’ Identity Project is still on schedule to meet its outcome and output targets (out of the target of 60, 37 young people have participated to date).
- D. Exploring Identity and Oppression within and between Loyalist and Republican Communities has worked well. A one day event entitled ‘Working with Exclusion’ was delivered with a Loyalist leader and involved 22 participants. A series of meetings was held with various

stakeholders on devising a leadership initiative. A detailed proposal for this has been drafted and is in circulation for refinement and confirmation.

- E. Work on Creative Exploration and Engagement in Inter-Culturalism involved 70 people from 12 organisations. In partnership with the AICCMR a one day meeting was held between leaders of migrant-led churches and those from indigenous Irish churches (14 people). With Embrace, a strategic planning day was organised and involved 12 people. The Olive Branch met in Drumalis and spent the day focused on 'Appreciating Difference' (19 people). A weekend event with the ministerial students entitled 'Ministry in a Diverse Society' was held in November (25 people).
- F. For Resource Development and Dissemination, the Project has continued to disseminate resources through its website and by distributing them directly to stakeholders and other key leaders. The external evaluators are putting in place a process for identifying models of good practice and innovative approaches in the Project; this will help the Project in developing relevant resources.

Many of the strands of the Project have entailed elements of training within them. Many of the speaking engagements and events organised by the Project build in training and incapacity building. The Peace and Justice module in Dromantine was fashioned and delivered in an interactive way, engaging participants own experiences and challenging their perceptions of the 'other'. The training placements with the ministerial students have delegated responsibility to them, targeting development needs that they have and priorities for their ministry.

With a view to longer term sustainability, the Project has been developing a leadership initiative focused on people from Republican and Loyalist communities. The approach of the ETC-RIPP has mainly been one of delivering short-term or one-off workshops and courses to various groupings of people (e.g. young people in loyalist areas, women's groups, clergy, young offenders, etc.) These have been successful in equipping people with various skills, meeting the aims and objectives of the Project and passing on resources and experience. To complement this work and to ensure longer term sustainability, it was felt that a leadership initiative would be an especially helpful approach. The experience of the project thus far and particularly in the recently organised meetings and discussions revealed that there a lack is of leadership input into the lives of many people who come from certain backgrounds within Loyalist and Republican areas. Many people who are not living and working within a supportive and nurturing context would benefit from a focused intervention on developing leadership potential. Therefore, planning for this has been evolving and the final details of the initiative should be complete in the early part of the new year.

The key focus for the Project is building relationships between and amongst people who would not otherwise ordinarily meet. Reconciliation and integration are only possible when people are connected with each other in a positive way. It is important that the encounters that are organised to create relationships always allow the 'other' to be humanised in the interaction process.

Cultural and attitudinal change is inextricably linked to the objectives and targets of the Project. The Project has addressed and explored perceptions of difference at many levels and in various areas. This is happening at institutional and community levels as well as on a personal basis. The Project contributes to positive change by equipping and resourcing people to address sectarianism and racism in personal and practical ways.

The Reconciliation Project seeks to provide encounters where the framework and the context for mutual understanding and respect can emerge. When creative approaches are adopted, people tend to engage with each other more easily and are less hesitant to avoid expressing potentially contentious views and opinions.

3. Summary Update and Looking Forward...

Please provide an overall summary update on the project progress against the planned schedule, highlighting key achievements and challenges in the past period.

Now in its second year, the Project is pleased that many of the participants have acquired and put to use practical skills for working on Reconciliation and Integration. The Project has been greatly encouraged by verbal and email feedback as well as by some reflections and written monitoring forms. We look forward to the data and insights that the Evaluators will bring in assessing progress and results.

The Exploring Theology course has been inspiring. The students who have been involved in it have built up a range of relationships with one another. Within the course, there is a healthy and vibrant environment for listening and dialogue. In delivering the Peace and Justice module this term it was especially encouraging to see first-hand the benefits the people are receiving from the course and the many ways in which they are actively involved. The Project learned that as a direct consequence of the course some students have initiated reconciliation projects within their own communities and parishes.

The training day in Edgehill for Catholic students from Dublin was a great success (see Appendix). The Project is delighted that the Methodist Ministerial students have undertaken their training placements this term. They have been challenged by their experiences and report that it has been of significant benefit to them in their preparation for ministry (see extracts in Appendix).

In regard to the Young Offenders' Identity Project, meetings have been arranged for the new year and the new programme should be initiated shortly thereafter. The Project is excited about its leadership initiative which is still in the planning and draft stages but seems to have great potential. Relationships with Loyalist and Republican communities are solid and create a number of opportunities for developing this initiative.

Pivotal inter-church and cross community relationships continue to be developed through the Project and its partners. Links with minority ethnic communities, support organisations and migrant-led churches are strong and are growing. The Project has been able to use this network of relationships to engage greater numbers of people in inter-cultural understanding and integration activities.

The website has emerged as a useful tool and resource in disseminating learning to the wider community. The Project has shared effective approaches and useful with key stakeholders as well as with people, from further afield. During this reporting period, the Project has been visited by people from Australia, Croatia, Romania and the United States. More training sessions have been planned for the next reporting period.

Section 2: LETTER OF OFFER CONDITIONS

	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	
CONDITIONS AS PER LETTER OF OFFER	COMPLETE D?	Relevant Supporting Doc Attached?
Pre payment & Post Payment	Yes /No	Yes/No
PRE-COMPLETE - pre-funding conditions followed by post-funding. NOTE: ONLY INCLUDE THOSE NOT YET MET, AS INDICATED BY FIELD IN DBASE - IF MET, EXCLUDE FROM THIS REPORT.		

<i>No additional conditions set for this project</i>		

Please provide an update on how the Letter of Offer Conditions outlined above are being met or how you are working towards meeting these? (Please attach relevant supporting documentation)

Section 3: EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Please COMPLETE the summary expenditure table

CLAIMS ANALYSIS

CLAIM No.	Period	Value of Claim	Date Paid	Amount Paid
Advance	2008 Q4	36,000	13/05/09	36,000
3	2008 Q4	984.90	19/06/09	984.90
4	2008 Q4	11,206.88	19/06/09	11,206.88
5	2009 Q1	11,786.16	19/06/09	11,786.16
7	2009 Q1	2,698.00	19/06/09	2,698.00
8	2009 Q2	6,672.00		6,672.00
6	2009 Q2	15,104.22	24/07/09	15,104.22
9	2009 Q2	32,900.00	24/07/09	32,900.00
10	2009 Q3	14,151.84	28/10/09	14,151.84
11	2009 Q4	14,864.87	09/12/09	14,864.87
12	2009 Q4	33,426.22	03/12/09	33,426.22
TOTAL		143,795.09		143,795.09

Budget Analysis

Budget Heading	Grant allocation per Budget Heading	Grant paid to Date	Balance
Salaries & Wages	£144,849		
Consultancy & Professional Fees	£29,547		
Programme Costs	£118,103		
Capital Costs	£3,000		
Total	£295,499		

Q5. (a) Please give a brief explanation/rationale on any (RETROSPECTIVE) variances from the agreed budget and actual expenditure to date.

Quarter	2008 Q4	2009 Q1	2009 Q2	2009 Q3	2009 Q4

Expenditure Planned	13,627.00	14,414.00	53,133.00	18,151.00	48,034.00
Cumulative planned expenditure	13,627.00	28,041.00	81,174.00	99,325.00	147,359.00
Date Claim Expected			30th Oct 09	31 st Jan '09	31st April'10
Amount of Claim Expected			54,676.22	£18,151	£40,145
Advance Payback to be built in	-	-	-	4,000.00	4,000.00

The difference between what was budgeted and what was claimed is simply a matter of some documentation which was outstanding that has since been recovered and will be submitted in a subsequent claim.

NOTE: ANY ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO YOUR AGREED BUDGET MUST BE SUBMITTED SEPARATELY IN WRITING and IN ADVANCE TO THE JTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Signed: **DR SCOTT BOLDT**
Programme Manager

Date: 4/01/10

Approved By: _____
SEUPB Personnel

Date:

JTS OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Is the project progressing satisfactorily ?

Are there any significant changes/issues which need to be addressed?

Are you content to authorise release of payment subject to verification?

Name: _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____
(Case Officer)



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PEACE III - European Territorial Co-operation 2007 -2013
Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland
INTERREG IVA – Cross-border Programme for Territorial Co-operation 2007-2013
Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland

Quarterly Communications Report

**Please complete on a quarterly basis and return to the
SEUPB's Communications Team:**

Programme (PEACE III or INTERREG IVA):

Project Title: Edgehill Theological College Reconciliation and Integration Partnership

Report Submitted by: Dr Scott Boldt

Date sent: 4/01/10

Period covered: 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009

Communications Team

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Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The report is to be completed on a QUARTERLY BASIS.

By completing the report on a quarterly basis you will be better able to track all of your communication activities and create a more comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness. It will also be used by the Communications Team to assess the implementation of your Communications Plan.

Submitting this report is a requirement of all Lead Partners as part of their adherence to publicity and information guidelines.

The report, once completed, should be signed and dated by the designated Communications Lead and then countersigned by the Project Director/Manager (who should not be a cash beneficiary of the Project).

Please ensure that examples are provided where applicable. Evidence of evaluation undertaken should also be clearly demonstrated. A number of suggested evaluation techniques have been provided for each communication activity as outlined in the following tables. Please note however that these are not exhaustive and individual projects may wish to use additional, or even alternative, evaluation measures.

In each instance however it is advised that samples be provided to verify that evaluation has taken place.

Please note that it is not necessary to undertake all of the activities detailed under the information and publicity measure tables. Only report on what communication activity has been undertaken at the time of the project review and can therefore be claimed against.

Should you have any difficulties in completing this report, please do not hesitate to contact the SEUPB's Communications Team: communications@seupb.eu.

INFORMATION MEASURE TABLE - Please Complete the table below and refer to appendices as applicable

Information Measure	Date(s) (from and to if ran over period of time)	Description	How was the EU and the ERDF referenced in this measure?	How was this measure evaluated? (examples should be included as an appendix)	Cost £ /€
Website page	October 09 to December 09	Pages devoted to publicising the Project and providing info and resources.	ERDF logo placed on website pages. Textual reference to EU contribution on homepage http://www.edgehillcollege.org/Reconciliation%20Programme Link to SEUPB.	Verbal feedback from visitors. Google Analytics account has been set up to measure amount of website hits. (See Appendices)	n/a
Information Roadshow	n/a				n/a
Conference/ Annual major info. activity	n/a				n/a
Journalist Visit	n/a				n/a
Site visit	October 09 November 09	Students from Mater Dei Institute of Education Dublin visit Edgehill College. Talk given to Masters Theology students from Irish School of Ecumenics at Edgehill Theological College.	Verbal reference to EU. EU questionnaires given out. Resources given out with ERDF logo on them. Verbal reference to EU contribution as well as overall summary of Project. Resources given out with ERDF logo on them.	72 students visited Edgehill College and expressed their enjoyment and interest in the day both verbally as well as by questionnaires. 32 students attended and verbally expressed their interest in the work of the Project and asked for more information and resources.	n/a
Intranet	n/a				n/a
Publication	n/a				n/a
E-Zine	October 09 to December 09	Regular contact with Project partners, key stakeholders and the Advisory group on various programmes.	Project partners and stakeholders alerted to events by group emails. Press releases with textual reference to EU contribution attached. Progress Reports with ERDF logos distributed to Advisory group.	The Project has 5 project partners: Mater Dei Institute of Education, Society of Missions to Africa, Hydebank Young Offenders Prison, The All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism and Embrace NI. Email correspondence on a regular basis with partners explaining Project progress.	n/a

2. PUBLICITY MEASURE TABLE - Please Complete the table below and refer to appendices as applicable

Publicity Measure	Date(s) (from and to if ran over period of time)	Description	How was the EU and the ERDF referenced in this measure?	How was this measure evaluated? (examples should be included as an appendix)	Cost £ / €
Project launch	n/a				n/a
Press release	n/a				n/a
On-line marketing	October 09 to December 09	Website used to advertise events related to the Project, e.g. Embrace on the Street Christmas Appeal	ERDF logo placed on website page at www.edgehillcollege.org	Email correspondence from people wanting more information about the Project.	n/a
Radio / TV features	n/a				n/a
Print Media	October 09 to December 09	Article for Methodist Newsletter submitted.	Description of EU funding and requirements.	Feedback from editors.	n/a
Public Notice		Notice board in Edgehill College Reception used to publicise the Project and provide information and resources, including <i>Your EU</i> .	ERDF plaque erected above notice board in Reception area. ERDF logo placed on resources provided, as well as promotional material on notice board.	Interest in the Project gained from students and visitors attending the College	n/a
Advertorial	n/a				n/a
Publicity/ Promotional material	October 09 to December 09	Posters created relating to events and resources relating to the Project.	ERDF logo prominently placed on the <i>Directory of Migrant-Led Churches and Chaplancies</i> poster	Directories requested as a result of the promotional poster. ERDF logo also on Directory itself.	n/a
Representation at other events	December 09	Representative from Project at Open Space Technology event.	Verbal explanation on how the EU contributes to the project.	Verbal interest shown in the Project and contacts made.	n/a
Project closure event	n/a				n/a

3. APPENDICES - Please include supporting documents and examples

Google Analytics

www.edgehillcollege.org

Visitors Overview

Dec 1, 2009 - Dec 31, 2009

Comparing to: Nov 1, 2009 - Nov 30, 2009

553 Visits

Previous: 693 (-20.20%)

424 Absolute Unique Visitors

Previous: 541 (-21.63%)

2,033 Page views

Previous: 2,075 (-2.02%)

3.68 Average Page views

Previous: 2.99 (22.78%)

00:02:58 Time on Site

Previous: 00:02:03 (45.45%)

51.18% Bounce Rate

Previous: 53.82% (-4.92%)

68.17% New Visits

Previous: 71.00% (-3.97%)

MATER DEI STUDENTS VISIT TO BELFAST OCT 09 - RESPONSES

Please give your overall impression of your visit to Belfast.

- Excellent. Really beneficial.
- Excellent.
- Great, a lot of history of Belfast.
- Very good – learned a lot, enjoyed the day out.
- Great to see what we are studying first hand. Brought the theory alive.
- Well worth it. Would definitely do it again.
- I highly enjoyed my visit to Belfast and Edgehill College were very hospitable.
- Very enjoyable day. Felt very welcome.
- I thought the day was very productive. It was also enjoyable and we were looked after very well by the Methodists. It was very well organised.
- Very well organised. Good variety of activities. Methodist Church visit was perhaps too long.
- It was a very enjoyable trip. The co-ordinator was very welcoming. It is a lively city which is very diverse. The speakers were informative and I learnt a lot.
- It was a lot more interesting to go to a different environment and everyone was very nice and helpful.
- The college was very welcoming and helpful. I enjoyed listening to the female minister speak about her experience.
- Very good. Going to the Methodist Church after hearing about it in the morning lecture was helpful and also having the lecture in the Church.
- Very interesting and exciting trip. The people we met were very very hospitable. It was interesting to see the influence of different Christian Churches on the city of Belfast.
- I found our ecumenical trip interesting and educational. It was really beneficial to experience the facets of the Methodist Church first hand.
- Very enjoyable trip. Was my first time up North, was great to see the city and talk to different people about the history of the place and the religious troubles.
- I found it very enjoyable and educational and also very welcoming.
- Visit was extremely beneficial in assisting my understanding of Ecumenism and Methodism.
- It was very productive. They made us very welcome and I learned a lot.
- Quite long but interesting.
- Very good. Trip was interesting and full of learning.
- It was a fun and interesting trip. I learnt a lot from the day. It was good that we moved around and weren't in the same place all day.
- I really enjoyed the experience of Belfast. It allowed me to be immersed in the culture of the city and understand the troubles better.
- A really enjoyable and beneficial day. The overall experience was entirely positive. Everyone was really welcoming and helpful. The day was well structured

A Ministerial student's response to Mater Dei Institute Visit, 1st October 09

This was a day in four parts and as this was my first 'placement' experience I was unsure what to expect.

The first part of the day was the meet and greet over tea and scones and I felt this was a great way to break the ice and to chat to the visiting students.

The second part was the start of the more formal part of the day, an overview of history of Methodism up to the present day. It was also interesting to note the numbers of students for which this was their first trip to Belfast.

What this session helped me realise was that people will ask questions that seem simple / strange to me, (only because I know the answer) in order to broaden their own knowledge. This is something that I must remember as I seek to learn more about groups, communities and religious beliefs. It works two ways.

After this session it was all onto the buses for a guided tour through Belfast to the East Belfast Mission (EBM) for lunch and a presentation on the Skainos Project (The Skainos Project is an urban regeneration project in inner East Belfast providing shared space for community transformation and renewal.)

The bus journey was another opportunity to gauge the Mater Dei students attitudes to Belfast and for informal chat about each others courses. The final part of the day saw us move over to Mountpottinger Methodist Church for the final session of the day on Methodism and the Eucharist. This session was greatly aided by the fact that it took place in a Methodist Church – it's one thing to try and describe how a church looks but being in one aids the whole learning experience.

Again in this session it was the questions that were asked that sought to draw out an understanding of the differences.

This was a great introduction to placement; I took away a lot to think about and would love an opportunity to have a visit to another group/denomination based along these lines – history, practice and theology.

A Ministerial student's response to Dromantine

The purpose of my visit to Dromantine was to attend a lecture on the topic of the Roots of Sectarianism in Ireland. This was one in a series of six lectures which form the Peace & Justice Module of the Theology Programme which Mater Dei Institute, Dublin, and Edgehill College; Belfast & SMA collaborate to offer.

I was amazed at how welcome I was made to feel, it was as if I had known the priests for years rather than minutes. Fr Noel gave me a brief history of the SMA over the meal and he said that he has been working in Nigeria for 22 years prior to his appointment at Dromantine. Over the meal I also discovered that Fr Kevin and myself both lived in the same street, just 5 doors apart and were able to talk about issues concerning our home town along with the work he currently does within the SMA.

The lecture was a two hour lecture attended by approximately 100 people. The demographic make-up of the group appeared to be very varied, and certainly those whom I talked with at the break confirmed this.

I had never really thought about the Roots of Sectarianism before, as I think I assumed (being born in the early sixties) that sectarianism arose only in the 20th century; therefore I found this lecture challenging in that it helped me question my own perspective of sectarianism and its roots. Having only briefly studied Irish history as a foundation course for university, I was amazed at how far back sectarianism in one form or another was recorded.

The lecture allowed people to examine their own perspective, and I feel the exercise on symbols was particularly helpful in allowing us to see how things can appear different to those of others on our own personal perspectives/beliefs/culture.

It was a lively group, who were free to ask questions and seek clarification/understanding and I certainly got a lot from it,

On reflection this is a topic area I feel I will need to learn more about in order to have an understanding, at a basic level, of the problems sectarianism creates such a benign apartheid and the problems this in turn creates for these communities.

I would also like the opportunity to chat more with the members of the SMA in order to get some insight to their work in the mission in Africa as this is something I have no experience of and it is unlikely I ever will. I have some idea how mission work is organised in the Methodist Church through Mission Partners, but I feel it would be good to have knowledge of both systems.

This evening was worthwhile as it certainly provoked my thinking with regards to how barriers are to be broken down – it helps to understand the others perspective.

Interface Theology Conference, Maynooth 6-7 November 09

“I continue to be surprised at how Edgehill is changing my opportunities and perspectives on the world.”

“It was an intense and exhausting conference but I enjoyed meeting many interesting people.”

“I was able to talk to Sister Brid Liston, Pastoral Director at St Patrick’s about the increasingly necessary role of their Deaconate & Lay Ministry, not so different from our own ‘Non-Stipendary’ Minister. I also shared with Monsignor Hugh Connolly, President of St Patrick’s.”