

Healing Through Remembering

The Report of
the Healing
Through
Remembering
Project
June 2002



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F O R E W O R D

Foreword



Foreword

Healing Through Remembering has sought to identify and to document possible mechanisms and realisable options for how remembering should occur so that healing can take place for all people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The project was grounded in a search for answers to the question "How should we remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland so as to individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of our society?"

Our work has been premised on the view that remembering is an important part of social and psychological healing in the context of conflict. It recognises that as individuals and communities we are and live out our histories—what we remember is what we are. At the same time, we need to ground this in a genuine appreciation of the fact that addressing our conflicted past is a long-term, complex and difficult task. We need to be aware of what remembering can and cannot deliver.

That said, remembering is inevitable. For individuals and groups affected by the conflict forgetting the past is not an option, the wounds of the past will simply not heal by ignoring them. The challenge for us therefore as individuals and as a society is not about the need to remember, but rather how to find creative ways of remembering that enable us to go forward as a society. While remembering and attempting to deal with the past can be, and are, often divisive, they remain an important part of reconciliation.

Context

The work of the project has been energised and inspired by the many initiatives within society. There is hope and encouragement in the work of communities as they too come to terms with their histories. Paradoxically, the greatest possibilities for moving beyond our histories reside within our differences. In a peaceful society our difference and diversity should be our strength.

This does not mean that we can simply leave the past behind, but rather we need to find ways to acknowledge difference and build on it. In so doing we need to develop our own locally owned solutions and ways to remember. No model can be imported from the outside, nor would it be advisable—we need to find our own unique ways of dealing with the past.

Project Work

It has been my privilege to be a member of the Project Board, to witness the efforts, commitment and sincerity of each and every member as we struggled to understand ourselves, and our own histories, while pursuing the work of the project. The membership reflects a broad spectrum of views.

While the goal of the project provided a justification for coming together, at the outset there was little else to hold us together. There was no history of trust, rather a legacy of memories and experiences that—as for the rest of our society—has tended to alienate us from one another. We have spent many hours together over the past 18 months—itsself a source of inspiration. Through the very process of joint working, our disparate group gradually bonded, achieving a level of trust and commitment that has made the project possible. It has demonstrated that through engaging together a meeting of minds is possible—discovery of shared histories, acceptance of difference and valuing of that difference.

The project has set itself the task of finding the views of those affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. We have tried to be faithful to that objective, carrying out our work to the best of our abilities and without bias. The Report represents many hours of consultation and I am exceedingly grateful for the time and effort given by all those individuals and groups who have made submissions or met with members of the Project Team. The 108 submissions have provided us with much information and ideas. The essence of these are summarised in this Report.

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Of great encouragement has been the extent to which the wide variety of options and suggestions bears little relationship to what would be regarded as traditional alignments. There springs from this project a convergence of ideas and options. These include creative ways forward, new possibilities for being faithful to our histories, for giving dignity to our past, respect and acknowledgment to all those individuals and communities who have been hurt. We, as the Board of Healing Through Remembering, have also attempted—by drawing on the submissions—to make a set of recommendations on how to move the process forward. I trust these will make some contribution.

It has been a great privilege to chair the Board of the Healing Through Remembering Project and to participate in its work. I have been moved by the commitment, integrity and good humour that each member of the Board has brought to the project and which has sustained it throughout our intensive deliberations.

The sincerity, commitment and interest of the many individuals and groups who have responded to the consultation process have been a source of encouragement for our work. I hope the discussion and debate will continue, as we seek to find the optimal way of dealing with the complexity of our past. I am inspired by the emergence of recurring and coherent themes endorsing the importance of remembering our past as essential steps to peace and reconciliation for our children and ourselves.

My thanks, both personal and on behalf of the Project Board, to Alex Boraine, Kate Turner, Brandon Hamber and Alex Tennant without whose professional skills and insights this project could not have been undertaken.

Roy McClelland
Chairperson
Healing Through Remembering Project

Executive Summary

Introduction

In February 1999 Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) jointly invited Dr Alex Boraine to visit Northern Ireland. Dr Boraine, at the time Deputy Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, met a number of groups and individuals to discuss the experience of—and the lessons learnt from—South Africa and to consider any bearing they may have on the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The essence of these discussions was captured in a report entitled *All Truth is Bitter* launched in March 2000.

All Truth is Bitter recommended that it would be a useful exercise to hold wide-ranging discussion to explore and debate ways of examining the past and remembering so as to build a better future. To this end—and on the initiative of the individuals and organisations who first invited Dr Boraine to Northern Ireland—a number of individuals were invited to form a Board. After much discussion, in June 2001 a group of individuals formally agreed to become the Healing Through Remembering Project Board. The Project was formally launched on 8 October 2001.

The vision of the project was:

An acknowledgement of the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and in so doing, individually and collectively to have contributed to an understanding of, and the healing of, the wounds of society.

The specific mission of the project was:

...to identify and document possible mechanisms and realisable options for healing through remembering for those people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Building on a range of previous and current local, national and international initiatives, including discussions with experts, the Project will undertake a range of in-depth discussions with organisations, communities, politicians and individuals on the issues of truth-telling and healing.

Consultation Process

The key task of the Healing Through Remembering project was to undertake a consultation process on how Northern Ireland, and those affected both in and out of Northern Ireland, could remember and deal with the past, and in so doing move towards healing. The purpose of the consultation was to produce a document outlining a range of options for dealing with the past and truth recovery, to be submitted to the British and Irish Governments and Office of First and Deputy First Minister, and to the public.

To undertake the consultation the Board agreed on the following primary question for the consultation:

How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?



So far as possible the project endeavoured to ensure that as many voices as possible were heard through the consultation process. To this end the project was interested in attracting a wide range of views from the general public, as well as from organisations and individuals with a specific concern with dealing with the past. All were invited to make a submission to the project either in writing, or through the project website.

The call for submissions was advertised in all the major newspapers. Organisations were also personally invited by letter to make a submission. All were also offered an opportunity to meet the project staff or

have a facilitation session on the issues at hand. This opportunity was taken up by fourteen organisations. A number of seminars and background interviews were also undertaken during the life of the project.

- *A call for submissions was placed in 56 local newspapers*
- *Over 400 organisations were personally invited by letter to make a submission*
- *5000 project leaflets were distributed*
- *The project website was visited 1940 times recording 39,934 hits*

The Response

In total, 108 submissions were received by the project from individuals and organisations. The individual respondents included victims, ex-service personnel, ex-prisoners, students, academics and service-providers. The organisational respondents included victims' groups, NGOs, religious organisations, security forces, artists and performers. The bulk of the submissions were from Northern Ireland, with some coming from England and the Republic of Ireland, and one from the United States of America. All submissions received were individually summarised by a member of the project consultancy team. These summaries were then collated under the themes that arose from the submissions and written up.

Summary of Submissions

Drawn together, the 108 submissions provided a varied range of opinions and insights into remembering processes that may help to address the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. While there was general support for remembrance, contributors also expressed many concerns over the practicalities, and whether remembering would increase division and violence, or bring healing.

Those who made submissions proposed fourteen different forms of remembering process:

- **Storytelling and oral history:** Provided sufficient support is available, many contributors felt that telling individual stories of the past could be both cathartic for the person telling their story, and could develop understanding in those listening.
- **Memorials:** A wide range of memorials was suggested in the submissions, ranging from permanent monuments to living, organic memorials (e.g. peace parks, tree planting).
- **Museums, exhibitions and art:** A number of submissions recommended the establishment of a museum displaying a wide range of stories of the conflict, using a variety of media and art.
- **Public and collective commemorations:** While recognising the importance of individual remembering, it was maintained by many submissions that remembrance must also be public, collective and inclusive in order to allow society to reflect on its past as a whole. A Day of Remembrance was the most common suggestion in this regard.
- **Truth recovery processes:** This option attracted the most comment, and the most concern. Many submissions expressed recognition of the importance of establishing the truth about the events of the past, and suggested some form of truth recovery process. However, few felt able to describe what this might look like and many were concerned about its potential implications.
- **Other forms of legal processes:** Two other forms of legal process were put forward in some submissions, namely trials and inquiries. Those who argued for these options felt that prosecutions would be important to establish truth and justice.
- **Community and intercommunity interactions:** A number of submissions stated that community and inter-community work would be essential in order to develop respect and understanding as we attempt to deal with the legacy of our violent past.
- **Support for individuals and victims:** For several contributors, supporting those most affected by the conflict was one of the most important ways of addressing the legacy of the past, as well as moving forward in a positive and healing way.
- **Research and social policy development:** Research into the impact of the conflict and social policy development was mentioned in a number of submissions either as a necessary precursor

- to other remembering processes, or as a remembering process in its own right.
- **Centre for remembrance:** While the establishment of a centre for remembrance was suggested by a few submissions, opinions about its activities and purposes varied significantly.
- **A financial response:** Two forms of financial response were proposed – the establishment of a memorial fund, and of a satisfactory compensation system for those who had been most severely affected during the conflict.
- **Education and training:** While education was widely identified as a desired outcome of several of the remembering processes mentioned above, it was also suggested as a remembering process in its own right.
- **Supporting current remembering processes:** Several submissions mentioned the importance of supporting the work already happening around healing and remembering, in order to prevent duplication of activities.
- **Self-examination of institutions and apologies:** A few contributors suggested that it would be important for institutions and organisations to undertake self-examination in order to reflect on their role in the conflict, both positive and negative. Public apologies might follow.

Findings and Recommendations

Many of the submissions endorsed the value of remembering and spoke of the importance of finding ways to move society forward. At the same time, others expressed their concerns about the potential pitfalls of remembering. Clearly, the idea of remembering also evoked an emotive response, suggesting that much hurt and unresolved pain is still present. Because of this the Board felt that they had a responsibility not only to reflect back what was said, but also to help chart a way forward.

The Board came to the view that it was a sufficiently diverse and a large enough group to make a meaningful and unified comment on the various recommendations received. The members of the Board, as members of the wider community, felt they had a moral responsibility to be more than simply a passive reflection of a list of opinions raised in submissions. Therefore a series of potential future options are set out, which seek to remain faithful to the views expressed in the submissions.

The Board has prepared six detailed recommendations. They form together a collection of mechanisms and strategies to promote healing through remembering. They are presented here in no particular order of importance and will need to be interrelated in their implementation, as they are complementary. Furthermore, each option is still some way off, and in order to succeed will require ongoing discussion and inclusive participation.

Recommendations

The experience of the project has strongly impressed upon the Board how much remembering and commemoration work, is and has been, going on across our society, some of it well known, some unknown. This work must be supported and would benefit from being collated and co-ordinated through the establishment of a network of remembering projects.

Recommended:

A network that will link together the diverse forms of commemoration and remembering work, learn from past and present initiatives, facilitate information exchange, and improve access and activity between those involved in commemoration and remembering work and society at large.

Storytelling and the archiving of stories about the conflict and its impact are important. Their importance lies not just in being a testimony to, and affirmation of, our individual and collective experiences, but because it is through such a process we come to know others and ourselves. Storytelling can be an important part of healing including the opportunity for acknowledgement. To work effectively this process

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requires broad community support transcending historical divisions so as to give voice to those individuals and communities who have suffered as a result of the conflict.

Recommended:

A storytelling process known as 'Testimony'. Stories and narratives will be collected from all who wish to tell of their experiences of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. These stories—collected by those already undertaking this type of work and by community groups through a flexible but standard method—would form part of an archive housing the stories of the past and serving as a vehicle to learn lessons for the future.

We need temporal aids to remembering. We need time to pause, to think and to reflect. As such, the Board was persuaded of the need for a Day of Reflection to remember all those who have been affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Reflecting on the past in a respectful and dignified manner can help us remember our hurts and in so doing remind us of the need to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and learn new lessons for the future.

Recommended:

An annual 'Day of Reflection'. The day will serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

We need structural aids to remembering. A permanent living memorial museum offers an important and tangible vehicle, where living active memories of events of the conflict can be accessed by society, including children and visitors. The living memorial museum would not only serve as a memorial to the those injured and bereaved in the conflicts of the past through housing a garden of reflection, plaques and other commemorative items: it would also serve as a location for knowledge dissemination, future learning and hope. The Museum could form part of a collective grieving and reflection process, at the same time being a memorial that can evolve, and is not static.

Recommended:

A permanent living memorial museum. The Living Memorial Museum will serve as a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict and keep the memories of the past alive. It will provide a diverse chronicle of the history of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, increase public awareness of the impact of the conflict, disseminate information and provide educational opportunities ensuring lessons are learnt for the future.

It is only on the basis of truth that reconciliation can take place. A formal truth recovery process should be given careful consideration. An important first step is acknowledgement. Acknowledgment by all, of our acts of commission and/or omission during the conflicts of the past, needs to be forthcoming. Acknowledgement by all of what they did and what they did not do to prevent further loss of life is the first and essential step toward any collective and beneficial remembering process or processes. This would lay the foundation for further exploring the feasibility of a truth recovery process. Finding the truth concerning past events is part of our corporate remembering. It is our strong impression that more than acknowledgement is needed, but the idea needs much more focused investigation.

Recommended:

That all organisations and institutions that have been engaged in the conflict, including the British and Irish States, political parties and Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, honestly and publicly acknowledge responsibility for past political violence due to their acts of omission and commission. This could be the first and necessary step towards the potentiality of a larger process of truth recovery.

If acknowledgement is forthcoming, inclusive and in-depth consideration should be given to the establishment of an appropriate and unique truth recovery process. In order for this to develop a team comprised of local and international expertise should be established—using a fair and transparent method—to explore the specific feasibility of such a process.

In order to ensure the implementation of the Healing Through Remembering recommendations a body to oversee this work is needed. It should also assess where the progress of each recommendation could be supported, as well as monitor and evaluate the implementation of each recommendation. Such a body could also provide a basis for learning and developing ideas derived from the initial consultations and from other schemes, local, national and international. It could also become a beacon and a point of contact for individuals and groups elsewhere in the world who are searching for ways of dealing with their own past.

Recommended:

A Healing Through Remembering Initiative managed by a representative Committee that will be a visible expression of society's commitment to move forward while remembering and learning from our violent past. The Healing Through Remembering Initiative will have primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the recommendations of the Healing Through Remembering Report and monitoring progress, thus ensuring a future where our children can cherish the past and be freed to transform our society for the better.

Conclusion

There is no single treatment for the healing process. Processes of remembering, reflecting, informing and educating must be sustained for another generation at least. All have a part to play in dealing with the memories of the past. This will be a painful and difficult task, however it should not paralyse us and prevent us from moving on, but encourage us to avoid further damage, seek solutions and create a better future.

The recommendations presented here should not replace what is already in place and what is developing in other sectors. It is our belief that the recommendations taken as a whole can usefully complement current initiatives that should continue to be supported and developed.

Each of the six recommendations is presented above as stand-alone recommendations. In practice, however, they are related and, if realised, the relationships between each will need to be explored in greater detail. They should be seen as an ensemble rather than as isolated activities. The realisation of the recommendations will take time, and each option can only be developed following inclusive discussion and when the time is right for that option.

This Report will stand or fall on the commitment of those who are willing to take it forward. While the Healing Through Remembering Board is committed to this, the process is much larger than what the Board alone can offer. To ensure its implementation the British and Irish Governments, and local political leadership, will need to endorse this Report. Communities, community groups, individuals and organisations need to do the same, while continuing to develop their current work.

To translate the recommendations into dynamic and unique practices and methods for dealing with the past in a spirit of tolerance and respect will require a willingness to take risks. Our society as a whole will need to grasp the opportunity of remembering in a constructive way, to enable us to move into a new future built on a shared acknowledgement of our conflicted past.

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C H A P T E R O N E

Background

Establishment of the Healing
Through Remembering Project

Background | Establishment of the Healing Through Remembering Project

1.1 Precursors to the Project

In late 1998 Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) decided to jointly invite Dr Alex Boraine to visit Northern Ireland. In February 1999, Dr Boraine, who was at the time Deputy Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visited Northern Ireland and met a number of groups and individuals. With them he discussed the potential lessons for Northern Ireland from South Africa's attempts to deal with its past. The visit was funded by the Community Relations Council (CRC), the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT) and the Ireland Fund.

1.1.1 All Truth is Bitter

After the visit of Dr Boraine, a small working group was formed consisting of those individuals who had co-ordinated the visit and representatives of the CRC. The aim of the working group at this stage was to process the records of the meetings held during the visits. With funding from the CRC, this working group produced a report of the discussions that took place, entitled *All Truth is Bitter*. Dr Boraine returned to Northern Ireland in March 2000 to launch this report and to engage in further discussions.

It was clear from these meetings that there was a surprising amount of consensus amongst those whom he met that the issues touched upon in the *All Truth is Bitter* needed to be discussed and debated across society and in greater depth. It was agreed that it would be a useful exercise to explore and debate ways of examining the possible parameters within which we in Northern Ireland might establish a mechanism to identify our own truth, or at the very least, deal with our past in a positive manner.

1.1.2 Proposal

Believing that the issues being addressed might be important for a healing process—and that they could form some of the basic building blocks for transforming the conflict—the working group prepared a proposal with the intention of having another stage of debate and discussion. This proposal involved more in-depth conversations with individuals and representatives—some previously contacted and some new to the debate—in order to distil the specific ideas and suggestions that arose in Dr Boraine's initial discussions.

Central to the proposal was the idea that the people who had suffered as a direct result of the conflict must be given space to make their own decisions as to what attitude—and action—to take in order to deal with what had happened. However, the proposed project also aimed to include everyone in the search for options that could contribute to the healing of the wounds of society. The intention was to make these options available to the various Governments and to the public so as to attempt to further the debate about how best to address the wounds of the past.

The main objective of this proposal was stated as follows:

To submit a written report and recommendations to the British and Irish Governments and to the First and Deputy First Minister's Office that may identify a specific programme of action likely to lead to a successful truth finding process.

On the basis of this proposal the independent funder, Atlantic Philanthropies, offered to fund this further work. The subject matter of the project was inevitably political and it was felt that in order to get political buy-in from all constituencies the project could not be led by any single constituency, funder or government. The funder generously supported the project on these terms and made no efforts to lead the project, preferring a more hands-off approach in the interests of a more acceptable outcome.

1.2 Establishing Healing Through Remembering

In the proposal, the working group made it clear that they felt strongly that any process must be coordinated by a more diverse group of individuals than themselves if it was to succeed. They set in place the necessary structure for an independent project. This project was named 'Healing Through Remembering' with the aim of implementing the project proposal.

Thereafter they approached a number of individuals, of diverse backgrounds, whom they felt might consider how to implement the proposal and might be willing to be part of the project. Those approached included some who had met with Dr Boraine, or engaged in debate following the publication of *All Truth is Bitter*, and others who had expressed opinions on this topic. They were invited to a meeting to consider the formation of a board to oversee the project.

1.2.1 The Board

The invited individuals, with a few additions, met on a number of occasions to discuss and debate the proposed project. They eventually agreed to form a Project Board to implement the project.

The discussions and debates prior to reaching this decision were intense, reflecting the different social, political and working backgrounds of those present. Over a series of meetings the purpose of the project and responsibilities of each Board member were examined in detail.

The Project Board also worked to agree guidelines to be followed during their work together. These were agreed as a basis for operation. The provision of such guidelines was seen as a protection for both the Healing Through Remembering Project and the individuals concerned, and as a way of building trust and strengthening the operations of the project.

The agreed guidelines dealt with the following issues: decision-making; collective responsibility; communication; confidentiality; the relationship between Board members and consultants; and an agreed set of values. It is felt important to reproduce some of our values here as they formed the bedrock of the levels of understanding and tolerance that led to this Report (see Appendix (A) for full guidelines.)

1.2.2 Values of the project

The agreed values were as follows:

- The project will recognise and appreciate the fact that diversity of opinion, belief, skills, experience and community background exists among the Board. This will be regarded as a strength.
- Board membership will be monitored to ensure a balance in the gender, religious belief, political opinion and social status of members.
- There will be respect for the fact that decision-making processes benefit from hearing and accommodating diversity of opinion.
- Board membership will be on an individual basis. While it is understood that ratification may be sought from employers (or organisations with which an individual is involved) for participation in the project, no organisation has the capacity to replace an individual board member.
- There will be a commitment to fair and equitable ways of working and access to decision-making structures and processes.
- There will be recognition that being part of a team brings both rights and responsibilities-consultation and empowerment being matched by loyalty and co-operation.
- There will be recognition and commitment to work being carried out in a trustworthy, responsible and competent manner and with integrity, honesty and courtesy.

One of the most difficult issues to resolve was the issue of representativeness. The Board remained acutely aware that they did not represent the full spectrum of communities or groupings concerned with this issue. However, they hoped that they formed a group diverse enough for everyone to feel able to approach at least one member of the Board as the project unfolded (see *Chapter Three* for more discussion on this issue).

The Board also realised that it was not practical to include individuals affected by the conflict who lived outside Northern Ireland, nor those for whom being part of such a diverse Board was not acceptable. The Board agreed to do all in its power to ensure that all would feel able to work with the project (see *Chapter Three* for a discussion on perceptions of the Board).

In June 2001 the group of individuals formally agreed to become the Healing Through Remembering Project Board (see *Appendix (B)* and *(C)* for the list of Project Board members). The Board then ratified the temporary arrangements that had been set in place by the working group regarding the appointment of a Project Chairperson, the project consultants, the set up of the project office, and the project logo.

The Board also devised and agreed wording for a Project vision and mission.

The vision of the project was:

...an acknowledgement of the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and in so doing, individually and collectively to have contributed to an understanding of, and the healing of, the wounds of society.

The specific mission of the project was:

...to identify and document possible mechanisms and realisable options for healing through remembering for those people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Building on a range of previous and current local, national and international initiatives, including discussions with experts, the Project will undertake a range of in-depth discussions with organisations, communities, politicians and individuals on the issues of truth-telling and healing.

The Project Board then began to address how best to fulfil its mission and applied itself to the consultation process, which was the mainstay of the Project's work.

Methodology

The consultation process

2. Methodology | The consultation process

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Introduction

One of the key tasks of the Healing Through Remembering Project was the undertaking of a consultation process on how Northern Ireland, and those affected both in and out of Northern Ireland, can remember and deal with the past, and in so doing move towards healing.

This was no small task, but it was important that the views of all communities and groups were reflected. The purpose of the consultation was to produce a document outlining a range of options for dealing with the past and truth recovery, to be submitted to the British and Irish Governments and Office of First and Deputy First Minister, and the public.

2.1.2 Project Questions

Before any consultation could be started it was important to clarify what the project would ask in the consultation. After debate and discussion, the Board agreed on the following primary question for the consultation:

How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?



Further sub questions were also agreed as follows:

What should be remembered?

What form could the remembering take? For example, individual processes, community processes (e.g. storytelling, art exhibitions, etc.) and/or national strategies such as truth commissions and/or inquiries and/or trials in the courts, etc.

What could be the hurdles to such processes?

What could be the implications and consequences of such processes?



While the Board members had views (individual and collective) about the geographical and temporal boundaries that they would like to have considered in the primary question, it was agreed that these should not be specified. It was agreed that the view of each individual respondent should not be limited by any defined timescale or location. All views could then be taken into consideration in the analysis.

2.1.3 Consultation

As far as possible—in principle and in practice—the project endeavoured to ensure that as many voices as possible were heard through the consultation process. To this end the project was interested in attracting as wide a range of views as possible. In line with the view that the conflict in and about Northern Ireland concerned and affected all, it was decided that both the general public and organisations with a specific concern with dealing with the past should be targeted.

2.1.4 Options for making submissions

A number of options were available for making submissions:

- The project questions were advertised widely and people were invited to respond to the questions in written form to the project office. All written answers to the principal project question were accepted as submissions – these included faxes, e-mails, letters and handwritten sheets of notepaper.

- A simple submission form (see *Appendix (E)* for sample copy) was created to assist the submission process. This form listed the project questions and included a front cover sheet for providing contact details. Anonymous submissions were accepted, but the form also allowed respondents the opportunity to request that their name was withheld from the final report. The submission forms were available from the Project office on request. They were also widely circulated by Board members.
- An on-line version of the Submission Form was available on the project website for online submissions. This also enabled completely anonymous submissions to be made.
- On request, an information pack was distributed giving more detailed information about the project—history, Board membership, mission and vision statements—and this included a submission form.

Organisations, or groups of people, were also offered the opportunity of a meeting to debate the project questions facilitated by the project consultants, or Board members. The aim of these facilitations was to assist groups in making submissions to the project and explain more fully what the project was looking for.

2.1.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was recognised by the Board as an important factor when approaching people for their opinions, especially on such a sensitive and often personal topic as dealing with the hurts of the conflict.

If people or organisations wished not to be identified by their name in the final report, they were offered the opportunity to decide how they could be identified while protecting their anonymity.

At all times the person/organisation could decide how they would like to be described. It was felt necessary to include the descriptions in this final Report to demonstrate the spectrum of respondents (see *Appendix (J)* for list of people who did not want to be identified, but chose a way of describing themselves).

It was also decided that while the Board members would have access to the text of all submissions, only the project consultants analysing and processing submissions would have access to the identity of the author/s of any submission. Submissions were at all times identified by a code ensuring that submissions were not pre-judged by their source, but rather assessed on their content. The same considerations were used with reference to the background interviews. (See below for description of these).

2.1.6 Ensuring maximum participation

To ensure maximum participation, four broad groupings and strategies were adopted in the consultation. These were:

- Reaching the general public;
- Reaching specific organisations, service providers and individuals;
- Facilitating debate and discussion on the issues within organisations and groups, and
- Background interviews.

The Project was formally launched on Monday 8th October 2001. On the same day, the website went live. The launch was covered in local print, radio and television media.

The project website www.healingthroughremembering.org was designed to allow people to find out about the project anonymously and in their own time.

In December 2001 an advert outlining the intentions of the project, the project questions and the options for making submissions, was placed in 56 local newspapers and a number of publications. It was also placed in *Corrymeela Connections*, *Lifestyle Today*, *CRC News* and *Business Connections*.

Articles about the project and the issues to be addressed were placed in *SCOPE*, *Irish Times* and *news@theforum*.

In January 2002 *Sunday Sequence* (Radio Ulster) broadcast interviews with a number of Board members and project consultants in which the aims of the project were explored. *Sound Vision Ulster* ran a piece on the project and offered to assist any visually impaired respondents with a facility for audio responses.

2.1.6.1 Reaching specific organisations, service providers and individuals

The project endeavoured to ensure that organisations, individuals and service providers with a concern or interest in this area were contacted directly. The Board members identified several hundred individuals and organisations. The chairperson wrote to those identified, outlining the project aims and objectives and invited them to make a submission.

Demand for information packs proved so great that a project leaflet was produced detailing the mission and vision of the project, Board membership, the background to the work and the project questions. Leaflets were distributed—some 5,000 in total—to organisations and individuals in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

Board members and project consultants also made direct personal contact with interested groups/individuals to inform them of the work of the project and/or encourage submissions (see *Appendix (F)* for a list of those contacted).

- A call for submissions was placed in 56 local newspapers
- Over 400 organisations were personally invited by letter to make a submission
- 5000 project leaflets were distributed
- The project website was visited 1940 times recording 39,934 hits

2.1.7 Facilitating debate and discussion within organisations and groups

2.1.7.1 Facilitations

Amongst the options for making submissions, organisations and groups of interested people were offered the option of a facilitation, i.e. a meeting to debate the project question facilitated by the project consultants or Board members. These facilitations were to assist groups in making submissions to the project and discuss some of the issues in more detail.

This offer was taken up by fourteen groups (see *Appendix (G)* for list of organisations).

Several facilitations proved to be emotionally charged events, especially those that were with groups of individuals directly affected by the conflict. In these facilitations many took the opportunity to express their feelings (often dismay) about how their suffering had been dealt with in the past.

These facilitations often became a venue for the re-telling of painful stories rather than just information exchange sessions. This points to the fact that much of the hurt about the past has not been dealt with. At the same time valuable information—rooted in practical need—was gleaned. All the groups for which facilitations were held made detailed submissions to the project.

2.1.7.2 Seminars

The project was keen not just to gather views and opinions, but also to develop the knowledge level and encourage debate in the wider community. To this end, the following public events were arranged:

- A seminar entitled ‘Dealing with the Past – Chile: a Case Study of Human Rights and Human Wrongs’ was co-hosted with INNATE (Irish Network for Non-violent Action Training and Education) in November 2001. This was led by Roberta Bacic, a Chilean woman who is currently based in London. Through a number of different media those present examined how the past had been dealt with in Chile and considered lessons that could be learned for Northern Ireland.

- The project arranged a visit by Priscilla Hayner, author of *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. This book, published in 2001, details the variety of truth commission processes that have been held in 21 countries world-wide. In November 2001 she gave public talks in Omagh, Derry/Londonderry and Belfast outlining how these commissions had operated differently throughout the world as appropriate to the particular needs and requirements in each country.

2.1.7.3 Background interviews

A number of key individuals whose views and opinions the Board felt would enlighten their considerations were interviewed over the course of the project.

The basis for the informal interview discussions was the project questions. Nine interviews were carried out (see *Appendix (H)* for list of interviewees). The project consultants carried out all the interviews

It is important to note that this was at no time regarded as a definitive list of people whose opinion in these matters was important. Many significant individuals chose to make personal submissions, or were part of a group submission.

Notes were kept of all interviews and tape recordings were made as a back-up source. The Board was kept informed of the options and views raised in the interviews without the source of the comments being identified.

Resource and time constraints—and the substantial and diverse input from the submissions—meant that in the end the Board decided to limit the number of interviews. The interview process was always seen as providing limited background information for the project, with the submissions as the primary data source.

2.1.8 Board meetings

Throughout the project the Board held monthly business meetings (twelve in total). At these meetings the Board was updated on all progress of the project, and decisions were made about all aspects of the work of the project.

There were also five special meetings of the Board -- these included separate meetings with both Alex Boraine and Priscilla Hayner to discuss methods and options used in other countries, and also meetings where the information from the submissions and interviews were presented to the Board and discussed.

2.1.9 Board sub groups

The Board formed four sub groups to consider particular areas and then report to full meetings of the Board. These sub groups were as follows:

- **Support:** to monitor support requirements for Board members and consultants and also to prepare agendas for Board meetings;
- **Language:** to develop an agreed vocabulary of terms to be used in all project publications;
- **Diversity:** to monitor the diversity aspects of the project in terms of Board membership, submissions received and interviews carried out. Where necessary, to recommend appropriate remedial actions, and
- **Political Contacts:** to ensure all political parties and the two Governments were kept informed of the goal and timeframe of the project.

2.1.10 Position statements

At regular stages throughout the project, the Chairman prepared Position Statements outlining the progress to date. These statements were agreed by the Board and made freely available on the website.

2.1.11 Political parties

Efforts were made to keep the political parties and British and Irish Government representatives aware of the existence of the project through one-to-one meetings. These meetings were information exchanges on the progress of the project, although it was made clear they were not to seek support for the project or gather opinions at this stage.

2.2 Information received

2.2.1 Submissions received

In total, 108 submissions were received by the project. Of the 108 submissions received:

- 76 were from individuals, 27 from organisations, 2 from groups and 3 from a pair of individuals or a family;
- 27 were posted in on submission forms, 27 were posted (on paper), 24 on-line forms, 25 e-mailed and 5 faxed;
- 82 were from Northern Ireland, 9 from England, 7 from Republic of Ireland, 1 from America and 9 from unknown locations, and
- The individual respondents included victims, ex-service personnel, ex-prisoners, students, academics, service-providers.

The organisational respondents included victims groups, NGOs, religious organisations, security forces, artists and performers. Three of the submissions were from groups of under-18 year olds.

2.3 Processing submissions

All submissions received were individually summarised by a member of the project consultancy team. The identity of the contributor was not known to the person making the summary as names were taken off all submissions before processing. This was done to ensure that any potential for submissions being pre-judged based on the author/s could be eliminated.

These summaries were then collated under the themes that arose from the submissions. A sample of interviews was also then re-categorised by another project staff member to ensure consistency of categorisation of themes. Each submission was given an individual code number and this number was included after any quotation or specific mention of a submission in the categorised theme document.

The Board members were given free access to all submissions with the identity of the respondent removed. They were also encouraged to crosscheck the summaries and summary of themes, against the unidentified submissions using the code number, to ensure that the views of the submissions were appropriately reflected through the analysis process.

While the list of contributors who were willing to be identified (see *Appendix (J)* for list of contributors) was made available to the Board members, as it is to the public, at all times the identity of the author(s) of a particular submission was known only by the project consultants.

The summary of themes became the primary source for the Board's own work developing the possible options suitable for remembering the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

The same process was adopted for summarising the content of the background interviews. The summary of themes from the interviews was a secondary source for the Board's analysis. The responses from the submissions were always regarded as the primary source as they were from people who had chosen to send their comments to the project as opposed to those few individuals identified by the project for background interviews. The findings of this Report are based on the submissions.

Context

The approach of the Healing
Through Remembering Project

3. Context | The approach of the Healing Through Remembering Project

3.1 The project in context

On the surface, the mission of the Healing Through Remembering project was straightforward, i.e. to go out and ask people for their opinions on whether remembering the events of the past—on an individual, community or collective level—could contribute to healing or not. Thereafter, the project sought to document, based on the opinions of those canvassed, a menu of possible mechanisms and options for how remembering should occur.

However, this task raised a number of formidable challenges. Some challenges were purely practical and concerned the mechanics of the consultation process. Others were more fundamental and revolved around the social and political acceptability, as well as the legitimacy, of the Project and Board.

3.1.1 Practical challenges

The major technical challenge facing the Project was how to ensure a sufficiently broad and equitable consultation process with a limited budget and staff. The amount of time available for the task was minimal and the amount of work needed to analyse over one hundred submissions substantial.

The Board and staff spent considerable time designing and implementing a consultation process that was accessible to all so that they could contribute to the project (see Chapter Two). Deciding on the questions and ensuring wording that would be broadly acceptable to all also took a significant amount of time.

There were a number of drawbacks to considering a written consultation process. The task of writing a submission could be a lot of work for those responding. Individuals and organisations had been asked for submissions on a number of issues since the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Concerns about burdening people with yet another process were noted. Nonetheless, it was felt to be the best way to gauge interest and elicit views. Considerable effort was clearly made by those who contributed submissions, and for this we are appreciative.

A group of Board members known as the Support Group was set up to assist with the logistics of the project and give direction to the project staff. As the submission process neared conclusion, a full time additional researcher was also hired to help with some of the data coding and analysis.

3.1.2 Socio-political challenges

On the non-technical side, the project and Board members were faced with the ongoing challenge of getting a diverse group of nineteen individuals to form a cohesive whole. A number of workshops for Board members were devoted to developing trust and building an atmosphere of open and constructive engagement within the Board. Although personally demanding for many of the Board members, this proved to be one of the most rewarding and satisfying parts of the project for all concerned.

3.1.2.1 Representation

The issue of representation was a difficult issue throughout the life of the project. All Board members came with their personal histories and community affiliations. Although this grew to be a strength of the project, in the early stages there was much debate as to exactly who the Board members represented.

It was eventually agreed that all Board members represented themselves and not organisations or constituencies. It was acknowledged that, although the Board was from a broad spectrum of society, it could not claim to represent every voice in and outside of Northern Ireland with a stake in the conflicts of the past.

Nevertheless, the Board felt they were a sufficiently diverse and large enough group of individuals from civil society to at least make a unified contribution to building peace and addressing the legacy of the conflict. In addition, it was felt that the consultation process was the core of the work of the project, and this had to be judged as accessible to all and that all views were represented through this process.

3.1.2.2 Dealing with internal problems

To deal with potential areas of disagreement and difference between Board members the Board used an independent facilitator throughout. It also set up two sub-committees made up of Board members. The Diversity sub-committee continually reviewed the reach and diversity of the Board and project. This was an ongoing task as the Board was determined to ensure that as many people as possible had access to the project and an opportunity to contribute.

A Language sub-committee was also created. This group explored the different terminology that would be acceptable to all in the project. For example, this group in discussion with the Board, came up with the useful phrase 'in and about Northern Ireland'. This phrase resolved a debate within the Board about how to speak about the conflict in a way that recognised that it extended beyond Northern Ireland itself.

3.1.2.3 Legitimacy

One of the biggest challenges facing the project throughout was how to ensure that the project—and the Board—had sufficient legitimacy within the broader society to guarantee that key individuals and groups would engage with the project. This was not an easy task, as many perceptions and concerns existed about the project when it first started. It is to these we now turn.

3.1.3 Perceptions of the Project and Board

The Board is unanimous in its view that the experience of working together and building the project was personally—and socially—beneficial. That said, the Board was not—and is still not—agreed on every issue. If anything, it has learnt to engage with difference in a more tolerant and enriching way through the project. As such, the project exemplified the potential of dialogue in this difficult area.

Some were anxious about what the outcomes of the project might be. A few victims' groups stressed to us that they wanted something concrete from the project and were worried it may be "wishy-washy" or a "talking shop". To this end, we have tried to be honest about what we may be able to achieve. We have endeavoured to promote the project not as a solution or quick fix, but rather as an effort to identify progressive and positive steps in the direction of addressing the wrongs of the past.

Dealing with the past, following extensive political conflict, is a long-term and humbling task. The Board's intention is simply to move forward the process of dealing with the past and to open room for debate. To this end we feel we have achieved our goal.

There were also those who were concerned that we were reinventing the wheel and could undermine work which had already begun. This, if it were true, would be quite contrary to the aim of the project. The consultation confirmed for us our initial assumptions that significant and commendable remembering, commemoration and healing are happening in many communities. It was agreed that beginning this work again would not only be counter-productive, but would fail to acknowledge the valuable contributions that have already been made in this area.

Others raised with us the potential danger that parts of this Report might be cherry-picked and implemented, at the expense of others. Specifically, some were concerned that any mention of the need for a truth recovery process could be used by government as a justification for developing a broad mechanism that would undermine current inquiries and the judicial process to which they are legally bound. We can only stress, however, that our intention has always been to add to current processes and not replace them. In principle, we would not want to see any processes already underway being undermined or circumvented—particularly if those directly affected find them helpful.

The project has always seen its aim as looking for the collective methods that could be used to remember the past and in so doing to heal wounds. This is no easy task. Our intention is to open this debate to a greater extent rather than foreclose it. We trust others will use our Report as such, and ensure that any processes adopted are broadly acceptable to all and a product of ongoing consultation.

3.1.4 Specific misconceptions about the Project

A number of specific misconceptions about the link between the Healing Through Remembering Project and other projects are also briefly worth mentioning, as they came up throughout the consultation process and the Board feels there has been some misconception about the aims of the project as a result.

3.1.4.1 The Bloomfield Report

Some saw the project as an extension of the Bloomfield Commission of 1997, which was set up by government with a remit to ‘look at possible ways to recognise the pain and suffering felt by victims of violence arising from the troubles of the last 30 years’. This Commission reported in 1998 and published a report entitled *We Will Remember Them*. Any perception that we were linked to this process is wholly incorrect.

The Board has never seen itself as an extension of the work of Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and has never sought to explain itself in those terms. Rather it is made up of a concerned group of individuals from a range of constituencies who see the Healing Through Remembering process as distinct from Bloomfield because:

- The initiative for the project was taken by a group of concerned individuals and driven by the Board: there was no request for this work to be done by government or the Assembly;
- We are totally independent of government;
- Our Board members, as members of civil society, have a different stake in the outcome of the project than a government Commission, and represent in themselves a set of multiple and divergent voices and concerns;
- The project was funded by the independent donor Atlantic Philanthropies who did not in any way attempt to lead the project or prescribe its outcome;
- We were set up outside of the direct political arena and as such feel our personal motivations for being involved in the project cannot be accused of being part of any political deal or attempt at appeasing victims following the political negotiations, and
- Finally, although we recognise we may inevitably not meet the expectations of all groups, we have endeavoured to hear and represent as many views as possible—a task the Bloomfield process struggled with, as is evident in its failure to represent adequately the views of victims of State violence in its final report.

That said, as much as we are not an extension of the Bloomfield process, we are also not in competition with it, or any other body trying to deal with the past in some way. We also need to be acutely aware that some issues raised in the Bloomfield Report and debates thereafter have not been addressed. Many victims still feel their pain has not been acknowledged.

In the submissions, some urged us not to "revisit the Bloomfield report", others said we needed "to look at the Bloomfield report when considering remembering processes". The fact that some issues are still coming up that were touched upon (or neglected) in the Bloomfield report suggest that the past has clearly not been dealt with.

3.1.4.2 The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Throughout the consultation process, time and time again, it was assumed that we were advocating, or consulting on whether Northern Ireland should have a South African-style truth commission. Although lessons may be learnt from that process—as they could be from over twenty truth commissions that have happened around the world in countries as diverse as Uganda and Argentina—we have never understood

our role to be one primarily concerned with any idea of marketing or solely consulting on the viability of a South African-style truth commission for Northern Ireland.

This confusion was in part what motivated us to arrange a public seminar series (see Chapter Two for a full discussion on this) with Priscilla Hayner, international truth commission expert. In the seminars we tried to impart information on the multitude of processes that have taken place around the world. We are, and remain, interested in all options and all comparative experiences.

Naturally, one of the forms of remembering that was discussed in this process was the question of truth commissions, and many of the submissions addressed it directly, but equally it would be a mistake to presume that any model could be imported without local participation and consultation. We saw our job as to listen to and to document views on this process, and certainly not to prescribe any model over and above any other.

3.1.4.3 The OFMDFM Victims' Strategy Document

Towards the end of our consultation process, the Healing Through Remembering project received mention in the Victims' Strategy document (Reshape, Rebuild, Achieve) developed by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) in April 2002—a strategy which aims 'to deliver practical help and services' to victims

The Strategy Document explicitly chose not to comment on the issues on truth and justice pending the release of the Healing Through Remembering Project Report. Although the Victims' Strategy document stresses that the Healing Through Remembering project is "completely independent", this did create some confusion concerning our role in the process.

Some were concerned, for example, that we might have approached government and asked to be included in their report. Others simply expressed dismay that the Victims' Strategy did not take a firm stand on the issues of truth and justice. We were contacted by the OFMDFM and informed that we would be mentioned in the report. However, the choice to effectively defer any comment at this stage on the issues of truth and justice was wholly that of those drafting the Victims' Strategy.

We were pleased that the project was clearly taken seriously by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and particularly the Victims' Unit. However, we trust the work of the OFMDFM will in future address the issues of truth and justice—along with the British and Irish Governments—more thoroughly. Much of the responsibility, in our opinion, for these critical issues lies with them. We hope our Report can make a contribution to this work.

3.2 Opportunities and risks

3.2.1 Inherent tensions in the remembering process

3.2.1.1 Tensions in remembering

In fragile political contexts there is a tension between the desire to address the hurts of the past and to ignore them. Either way the line between risk and opportunity is a tenuous one. On the one hand, leaving the past untouched could help a society make an artificial break and truly move into a new order. On the other, leaving the past untouched may result in it continuing to surface in the future, particularly during times of political tension.

We accept that we have a personal responsibility in that regard. We, as active members of this society—like all others—have a moral and collective responsibility to try to find a way forward. In this Report we attempt to provide a matrix for decision makers to consider. However, we also understand our responsibility as greater than simply reflecting back what those participating in the consultation process have said. We will be active participants in any process that unfolds.

To this end, the Board chose to highlight certain recommendations, and has proposed a series of potential future steps needed to address the issues of healing and remembering (see *Chapter Five*). This Report will hopefully make a contribution to moving the process forward, whilst recognising that all processes can only unfold when the timing is right, resources are available and the proposals are broadly supported.

3.2.1.2 The hierarchy of victims

There has been much said of late about the perceived ‘hierarchy of victims’. This term has been a source of conflict. This debate continued to play itself out in the background throughout our work. As such, we adopted several views in relation to this.

We recognise the value of the recent definition of ‘victim’ by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. The Reshape, Rebuild, Achieve Strategy defines victim as:

... the surviving physically and psychologically injured of violent, conflict related incidents and those close relatives or partners who mourn their dead.

We would like to add, however, that we recognise that some individuals, groups and communities have suffered more than others in the last 30 years, and have sustained more injuries, losses and bereavements. Nevertheless, alongside this recognition that the distribution of suffering is uneven, we uphold the principle that each human life is of equal value, and no individual’s, group’s or community’s pain is inherently more important or less valid than another, nor should anyone’s pain be discounted.

For the purposes of this project we also debated whether our consideration of remembering processes should only be about ‘victims’ as defined above. We firmly believe that dealing with their needs and the pain afflicted directly upon them is central to any remembering process. However, we feel it is important to make two additions.

Firstly, it is not only individuals who have been affected by the conflict. Entire communities have been impacted upon. Secondly, the suffering of any individual or community cannot be seen outside a broader context. This broader context is society at large, which either through unofficially endorsing what happened to victims or by doing nothing, is a vital part of the picture when dealing with the past.

Thus, we are concerned not just with how to address the needs of those people and communities directly affected by the conflict, but also with the need to ask how to deal with the distorted relationships within our society at large.

We understand the conflict in and about Northern Ireland as a society-wide and systemic social problem. Recommendations need to be geared accordingly. In addition, we all—including those in leadership positions and those who feel the conflict had ‘nothing to do with them’—need to take responsibility to set the situation right.

3.2.1.3 The value of remembering

Throughout the process of developing this Report the Board was acutely aware of what ‘remembering’ can and cannot deliver. We do not believe there is inherent value in collective remembering unless it leads to change for the good. We recognise that Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society. There was still much evidence of ‘blaming the other’ in the submissions—blame which was seldom matched by feelings of commitment and responsibility to create a better future.

It was also pointed out to us in some submissions that the need to remember and revisit the past was not confined to those who see themselves as primarily involved in the conflicts of the past, i.e. politicians, the victims and perpetrators. For any collective remembering process to be helpful, as we noted above, it needs to engage the entire society and particularly the ‘uninvolved’.

Nonetheless, we were encouraged by the support for constructive remembering in the submissions. To this end, the Board has chosen to endorse the idea that it is better to attempt to deal with the past, preferably in a structured manner, than to leave it untouched.

More than anything, this is motivated by the fact that throughout the consultation process we were reminded of the burning need for acknowledgement that still exists in society. Acknowledgement by all parties and individuals of what they did and what they did not do to prevent further loss of life—ourselves included—is the first and essential step toward any collective and beneficial remembering process or processes.

3.2.2 Risks and opportunities

3.2.2.1 The emotive impact of remembering

As the consultation process unfolded a pattern of engagement with the issues at hand seemed to emerge. Most submissions and facilitations began with individuals first raising—often very strongly and emotively—their concerns about advocating any remembering process.

Some people feared remembering might provoke more violence. Many were concerned with the perpetuation and/or escalation of sectarianism and conflict. The conflict still goes on in some areas.

A handful of submissions even attacked the project Board in a hostile manner. The authors of one submission went as far as saying they were withholding their names for fear of attack from the ‘murderous Board’. This served as a reminder of the strength and rawness of emotion that still permeates our society.

A few submissions spoke of the pain of actually writing the submission (or even thinking about writing one) and revisiting the past. These individuals were acutely aware of the tension between the pain of remembering and the relief that forgetting can bring. They reminded us of the complex and difficult task ahead, and the respect that those who have suffered deserve.

Others expressed anger at feeling that their voices had not been heard by political leaders and those who had wronged them. They felt that they were unjustifiably victimised in the past and that this has never been properly acknowledged. This view came from all sides of the political spectrum.

Still others highlighted the risk of this Report being caught up in tension in the political process, i.e. issues or options raised in the Report being used by political parties and government as issues upon which to win votes and credibility, at the expense of evaluating options on their merits for society at large.

It was only after these concerns, and others, had been vocalised, that most groups and individuals began to engage with different ideas in a more creative way. This could equally be said to be true for our own process of engagement with each other in the Board.

3.2.2.2 The value of the submission process

Some people found the actual process of completing the submissions helpful in itself. A number of individuals thanked us for the opportunity to have their voice heard at last—or at least have a forum where they could express themselves without the dangers of their views being manipulated by political parties.

We found it instructive that most of those who wrote into us were individuals and were not always representing a group or organisation. These voices are vitally important. The degree to which individuals are often sidelined from the political process was borne out by the fact that a few people referred to themselves as “just an individual”. Some even asked if they were allowed to submit a submission in the first place if they were not part of a formal group.

This in itself is a useful finding and should encourage organisations and political groupings to reach out to those isolated from mainstream processes. Specifically, some said they found making their submission to be healing. Others felt it helped them to clarify their own thoughts. One individual said participation in the process made him feel less isolated, unheard and cut-off. This encouraged us and pointed some way toward the value of speaking out about the past.

We were also pleased to receive detailed submissions from some large and influential organisations in Northern Ireland. Many of their thoughts, and some of their projects, were highly developed and their contributions informative.

We hope that, regardless of how this Report is accepted or taken up, we have provided at least some space for these organisations, individuals and groups to debate the issue of remembering for themselves and to deepen their own processes already underway. At the end of the day it is they who will move this process forward and not this Report alone.

3.2.2.3 Lessons learned

Based on the above, it can also be expected that initial reactions to this Report will be varied. We can safely predict hostility, anger, fear and apprehension. Hopefully some of the glimmers of optimism seen in the submissions and in the willingness to explore the issues in more depth will also come through. Of course, it is the former that is of more concern.

We firmly believe that dealing with the fears of revisiting the past—including fear of causing anger and not reconciliation—is a necessary part of the healing and remembering process. We know we cannot—just as any collective process for remembering cannot—please everyone or address all needs.

However, for us, the key question has become not, How does this paralyse us and prevent us from moving on? but, How we can avoid further damage, seek solutions and create a better future?

We trust that if the correct conditions are created many of the initial concerns will eventually subside. Some will be transformed constructively into an essential part of the process of remembering. Invariably fears will be raised before solutions are sought. However, our experience of this process—and our own responses to it—suggests that with time and basic levels of trust, realisable options and a vision for a better future for all will become achievable.

The process of actually putting issues on the table, discussing them and at times disagreeing, may in the end be more important than agreeing on a collective method. Engaging in the debate about how to deal with the past is in itself a way of dealing with the past. Therein lies both a risk and an opportunity.

Remembering Process

Summary of the submissions received

4. Remembering Processes | Summary of the submissions received

One hundred and eight submissions were received by the Healing through Remembering Project, reflecting a wide range of perspectives. Drawn together, they provide a resource of opinions and insights into remembering processes that may help to address the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. While there was general support for remembrance, contributors expressed many concerns over the practicalities, and whether remembering would increase division and violence, or bring healing.

In all, fourteen different forms of remembering process were proposed:

- Storytelling and oral history
- Memorials
- Museums, exhibitions and art
- Public and collective commemorations
- Truth recovery processes
- Other legal processes such as trials and inquiries
- Community and intercommunity interactions
- Support for individuals and victims
- Research and social policy development
- Centre for remembrance
- A financial response
- Education and training
- Supporting current remembering processes
- Self-examination of institutions and apologies

4.1 General themes discussed in submissions

While a wide range of opinions was expressed in the 108 submissions received, the view shared by most submissions was that remembering was necessary. Around 83% were clearly in favour, 6% against, and 11% unclear or giving limited support for remembering processes.

Typical responses in support of remembering included:

People and communities must be given a way of dealing with their suffering, wounds and grief. There is a need for opportunities for the past to be addressed symbolically, ritually and liturgically. [3]

We should remember the tragic events of our past so that we can stop them from recurring, remember but change. [13]

I feel there would be great benefit in helping to heal the wounds in Northern Ireland for Civic Society to examine the stories and hidden costs of the conflict on its people. The hurt, injury and suffering must be acknowledged before we can move on to create a new inclusive society at peace with itself and with others. [86b]

It is...important that society itself, in particular the victims and survivors most alienated from mechanisms of truth, justice and healing are afforded the opportunity to examine our individual and collective past. [100]

There is an awareness that, unless (a group's) experience is documented, an official discourse which writes out their experience will predominate. [104]

Some of those against remembering included:

The act of remembering ... does not necessarily mean that the process is healing or reconciling it can indeed be the process by which the hurt is kept alive. There is strong historical evidence in our conflict and in others how acts of remembrance have played a critical part in influencing future generations to continue the conflict ... thus there are dangers as well as opportunities with any remembrance process. The dangers of not providing a process which has the opportunity of healing means that the chance of what ever is there concentrates on remembrance and thereby repetition. [83]

Healing will not come through remembering but forgiving and forgetting. [4]

Dwelling on history is divisive. [71]

4.1.1 What can remembering achieve?

The submissions recognised the potential for remembering processes to be divisive, and, as many contributors wrote, to ‘reopen old wounds’, stirring up hatred and desire for revenge. Furthermore—if not conducted in an appropriate way—there would be a chance that remembering could prove harmful to victims. That is, victims might be asked to remember distressing events that have been suppressed, and leave themselves vulnerable to manipulation or attack. As one contributor wrote: ‘It should not be assumed that remembering necessarily brings healing’ [3].

On the other hand, most contributors held high hopes for remembering processes, if conducted in an appropriate way. Primarily, they hoped for a new beginning for society, through a better understanding of why the conflict happened, learning the lessons of history, and moving on to build an equal and inclusive society in which all can participate in building towards a positive future. As one submission noted:

Remembrance can provide further impetus to establishing a strong human rights and equality agenda to educate, inform and influence the new nascent society. Let the lessons of history teach us to re-create the place that is Northern Ireland, whether its future lies with the Republic or the British Isles, so that the region becomes one of the leading lights of Europe—a beacon society. [6]

Helping to ease the suffering of victims, through providing recognition and acknowledgement was a key goal of remembering processes for many. It was stressed that many victims have been isolated and ignored in the past, and that in order to start to heal they need to tell their stories and be listened to. In so doing, they would have their dignity restored, and feel reassured that society has not forgotten them or the loved ones they lost. For some, of course, this will not be sufficient. These individuals will require some form of truth and/or justice before healing can proceed. It was hoped that public remembering processes might bring some form of catharsis and closure for those most affected by the conflict.

In general most contributors believed that remembering processes might help develop understanding of the causes of the conflict and its impact on individuals and communities. Through dialogue it was hoped that more inclusive ways of thinking would be developed, and better relationships fostered within and between communities. As two submissions commented:

Remembering processes might change people’s stereotypical views of the other, helping them see human beings on the other side, and therefore be conducive in convincing people to pursue their differences/visions through politics rather than conflict. [33]

As we begin to unfold the disparate narrative, we can begin to understand that no one has the monopoly on ‘victimhood’. [74]

Some contributors suggested that, through developing a better understanding of what occurred during the

conflict, people would be challenged and change their views of others and themselves. As one person said, remembering processes might ‘provide a voice and empower people to move from being passive onlookers to active policy shapers’ [91]. It was also felt that remembering might be educative—particularly for young people and children—who may have a very limited understanding of the past. As it was noted:

The young have no memory. If we do not find ways to maintain memory, important and bitter lessons will fade from the public mind and the wisdom derived from a generation which has experienced the Troubles will accompany us to the grave. [98]

4.1.2 What will remembering require?

However, despite the hopes expressed for remembering processes, there was also awareness that success in achieving these would be dependant on many factors. Contributors wrote in detail of what would be required.

Sensitivity would be essential throughout any remembering process given the levels of trauma and distress experienced by many throughout the conflict. Support mechanisms would also need to be put in place to ensure that participants would not be re-traumatised by the process that it was hoped would bring healing.

In addition, there was a wide recognition of the fears that many potential participants might have, particularly if the process was public or inter-community, or if it involved victims recalling traumatic events. It was stressed that these fears would have to be addressed, and safety would need to be ensured in all processes. Many contributors recognised the levels of division that remain within society. Some argued that the situation had got worse since the ceasefires, perhaps because the legacy of the conflict had not been addressed to any significant degree.

Unsurprisingly, there was also a great deal of suspicion about the focus of any discussion around dealing with the past. Many believing that remembering is—or will be—driven by a hidden agenda and that remembering processes would be used to create an official truth about the past that would be contrary to the experiences of many. Concerns about letting those responsible for much of the suffering ‘off the hook’ for political reasons were also expressed.

4.1.3 Determining who should be involved in remembering

In order to begin to overcome these divisions, it would be vital that any remembering process is conducted in an open, honest and transparent manner. This would confidence in the process. It would be essential that it be as inclusive as possible, ensuring a wide sense of ownership of the process.

While political groups and the British and Irish State would need to be involved, the view was expressed that they should not be allowed to dominate the process. The process should be lead by civil society, and be focussed particularly on meeting the needs of individual victims and communities affected, rather than party political ends.

A major concern for most contributors was also the issue of participation. Some believed that there would be a lack of will to be involved in any remembering process on the part of a number of significant groups, and that this would compromise the process significantly.

Some felt that governments would only be involved if they felt they could manipulate the outcome. A number felt that the British government in particular would be reluctant to be involved in discussing the past openly, and to honestly acknowledge their role in the conflict. Some expressed concern that the British security forces would receive a blanket amnesty for any actions during the conflict, or they would be able to construct a dominant version of history that would exclude others’ experiences, and mirror their own. Other contributors were concerned that the Irish government—and those from other countries that had been involved in the conflict—would be unwilling to be involved.

Many people who had lost family members during the conflict felt strongly that the perpetrators should not be involved in a remembering process. While others felt that they should, this was only insofar as they should have to face up to the suffering they had caused, either morally or through legal cases. Others again were unequivocal that remembering processes needed to be inclusive of all parties involved in the conflict, and indeed those who had remained uninvolved.

However, many contributors questioned whether perpetrators would be willing to be involved. For those who had been publicly identified as responsible for violations—and who had spent some time in jail—there would be little motivation in coming forward to answer again for their actions.

Furthermore, the view was expressed that, without an amnesty, it would not be in the interest of perpetrators who had not been caught or prosecuted to face up to their role in the conflict, or the suffering they had caused. Some expressed the pessimistic view that all parties, including non-State actors, would only become involved in remembering processes if they believed that this would be in the interest of themselves or their organisation.

Given the depth of divisions remaining in society, many recognised the difficulties in involving people from different backgrounds in remembering processes, and in encouraging them to recognise the validity in each others' stories. This was certainly borne out in a number of submissions, which included exclusive perceptions of who were 'victims' of the conflict.

Even those who claimed to see the term 'victims' as one which included all who had lost loved ones or been directly affected by the conflict, often clearly believed certain groups of victims were more important, or more innocent and subsequently more deserving. This view did not seem to be restricted to any community or grouping.

4.1.4 What should be remembered?

Equally there were divergent views over the subjects of remembering processes. While most agreed that those who had died, or been injured, should be remembered, again there was often an emphasis on certain types of victims. Other submissions argued that there was a need to recognise the wider impact of the violence on society and on communities. From this perspective it was important to remember and honour the individuals and groups that had played a positive role, i.e. intervening to save lives, support the suffering, or speaking out against injustice.

We need to remember those who tried to direct society in a better way. Those who tried to put back in place the human values that were neglected. Those who created spaces and mechanisms for healing and hope. Those who themselves suffered for being witnesses to peace. We need to be touched by the dynamic which their truth produces. [88]

Others suggested that we need to remember more widely. We need to remember the roles of protagonists, perpetrators, prisoners, politicians, and bystanders. The role of institutions and organisations were also put forward as important, including the media, trades unions, statutory agencies and churches.

Many argued that what should be remembered was the human cost of the conflict, the suffering and sacrifice. Some wrote of particular events that should be commemorated, such as the Enniskillen and Omagh bombs, or Bloody Sunday. However, others felt strongly that to commemorate these high-profile events would trivialise other events, and argued that remembering had to be inclusive since 'each murder was as important as the other to their relatives and family' [79].

For a proportion of the contributors, it was felt that the act of remembering should include critical reflection on the causes of the conflict, and on the behaviour of State and non-State actors. In addition, a number argued that there was a need to assess the impact of government policies on communities and on the dynamics of the conflict. Others felt strongly that the focus should be on "terrorist organisations", which should be held to account for their actions throughout the conflict.

A number of contributors warned that, given the degree of distrust and disagreement, it would be unrealistic to expect quick results. They suggested that, while remembering should be supported, it will require a long term perspective, and patience. Also, given the long term and inclusive nature of remembering processes, they will also require significant financial and human resources.

4.1.5 The spirit of remembering

A number of contributors focused on the spirit that they believed should underlie any remembering process. Most of these emphasised that, for remembering to lead to healing, it should be done in a positive, inclusive, and understanding manner. As one submission noted:

One needs to remember events with an open heart and mind. If the spirit is bitter, then the conflict will still continue in people's hearts and minds. There is a great need to remember with the spirit of forgiveness, for in that the healing will commence – until that is evident, the hurt will continue, the scars will not heal and the old root of bitterness will destroy more lives. [12]

While a number of contributors agreed that forgiveness is necessary, or would be beneficial, many believe that this is not a realistic goal of a remembering process. Many contributors who wrote about their personal suffering and loss reflected this view. Some felt that they could not be part of any process that would expect them to forgive. As one contributor stated:

The expression of pain and hurt is a natural reaction for those that have suffered as a result of the troubles and some require justice as a prerequisite to the healing process. [90]

Honesty was suggested as central to any remembering process. People should be allowed to express real and raw emotions, and should expect honesty and openness in the responses from other individuals and groups. According to several submissions, remembering must not be used to justify actions or as a form of political 'spin'. Remembering should be done in a way that honours those who suffered, and enables people and communities to 'build a future together in a spirit of justice, equality and inclusiveness' [64].

4.2 Remembering processes suggested in submissions

This section lists fourteen forms of remembering identified in the submissions as possible ways of addressing the legacy of the conflict. These were offered in response to the question:

What form could the remembering take? For example, individual processes, community processes (e.g. storytelling, art exhibitions, etc.) and/or national strategies such as truth commissions and/or inquiries and/or trials in the courts, etc.

Comments on each option from the submissions are discussed, and are followed by an indication of the number of submissions that stated a preference for or against the remembering process, or were unsure of how they felt. In a few cases this had to be interpreted by the researcher because views both for and against the same process were stated within the one submission.

These figures give some suggestion of the extent of the discussion around each of the options, but they can only be read as rough indicators. This is due to the variation in the numbers of people involved in the production of any of the submissions that were received from individuals, groups and organisations. In addition, most contributors favoured more than one option, many stating that a single approach would not meet the needs of all individuals and groups.

It was suggested in some submissions that what was needed was a combination of approaches, at the individual, community and regional level. Furthermore, while some of the following forms of remembering might be possible at present, the time may not yet be right for others. The honesty, trust and cooperation that may be necessary does not currently exist in certain quarters. However, an outcome of the 'softer'

remembering processes might be to build the conditions needed for the more difficult and challenging forms of remembering to develop.

The options highlighted in the submissions—and expanded below—include:

- Storytelling and oral history
- Memorials
- Museums, exhibitions and art
- Public and collective commemorations
- Truth recovery processes
- Other legal processes
- Community and inter-community interactions
- Support for individuals and victims
- Research and social policy development
- Centre for remembrance
- A financial response
- Education and training
- Supporting current remembering processes
- Self-examination of institutions/organisations and apologies

4.2.1 Storytelling and oral history

Storytelling was the form of remembering most often suggested to the Healing Through Remembering project. In general it was felt that the process of telling one's story could be a cathartic one. It could equally be inspirational and informative for the listener.

Many felt that it would be important to record the stories of individuals' experiences of the conflict as a historical resource, and a way of enabling society to examine the wealth of meanings and learning connected to the conflict. Some submissions expressed concern that, unless a wide range of accounts are recorded and archived, a singular, exclusive narrative of the conflict will become dominant over time. This appeared to be particularly important to people who felt that their experience of the conflict had been ignored.

It was also suggested that the person telling their story, if listened to empathically, could experience a degree of healing. Equally, it was recognised that recounting painful experiences of the past could, in the words of several contributors, 'reopen old wounds'. It would be essential that support services be made available throughout the process and afterwards. Some contributors felt that it would be important that individuals—particularly victims—be given the chance to tell their stories in their own words. They did not want the involvement of the media as they felt they had been manipulated by the media in the past and had in some cases lost control of their own story.

While story telling might occur on a local level, most contributors felt that it would be important that the stories be collected into a central archive. This archive would include stories from a wide range of contributors. Some submissions suggested that the stories might then be published in an anthology of ordinary peoples' stories. A similar book to *Lost Lives* but produced by victims' themselves, was also proposed.

In fact, a wide range of methods of presenting stories was suggested, including CD-ROMs, multimedia databases, the recording of testimony similar to the Stephen Spielberg victims of the Holocaust project, as well as video and audio representations and documentaries. Internet archives of stories interspersed with video and audio recordings were also recommended.

That said, mention was also made of some of the challenging issues around storytelling and archiving of stories. A number of contributors felt that some may not feel free to speak openly if they knew that their stories would be made public. Fear still existed that active combatants may target them, or that what they

said may result in criminal prosecutions of either themselves or others. To overcome this, some suggested that the individual could be involved in the editing of their own story, and the original destroyed. Storytellers might also decide to be anonymous, or have an embargo put on their story for a period of time.

Some had expressed concern about their stories being presented alongside those of perpetrators, or of others with whom they disagree. However, the inclusive nature of the collection of stories (in whatever form) was clearly articulated by the majority as a key condition of the success of such a process.

Many were hopeful that—provided the process was well managed by skilled facilitators—the hearing of each other’s stories might develop understanding and compassion, and lessen the chances of a return to violent conflict. As was noted:

Through the physical recording of stories and an ongoing storytelling process, opportunities for individual healing and societal healing may emerge, as well as providing a forum for a shared and diverse history. [81]

Number of submissions For: 42 Against: 2 Unsure: 0

4.2.2 Memorials

A wide range of memorials was suggested in the submissions, ranging from permanent monuments to what were described as living and organic memorials.

Some felt that there should be a single monument in Northern Ireland. Several submissions mentioned the Vietnam War Memorial wall as a possible model. Other suggestions for monuments included a light on top of a mountain that could be seen from a distance all around. A water feature including stones from various jurisdictions was also suggested.

A few contributors expressed a preference for monuments and memorials similar to those erected to remember the dead of the First and Second World Wars. Those who spoke of these said that they should be placed in towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland.

There was some disagreement over the caption that might accompany such monuments. Those espousing a memorial wall were in favour of a list of names of all the dead—perhaps with some indication of whether they were members of the State security forces, paramilitary organisations, or if they were ordinary citizens. Most, however, felt that including names would be extremely problematic. This was felt strongly by some, and several contributors concluded that it was the issue of ‘names’ that makes the option of a monument impossible or undesirable. As one submission noted, the inclusion of names would have consequences on how the conflict would be remembered:

There is no clearer way of defining the conflict than through naming who is a victim. [82]

Some contributors suggested captions such as ‘Lest we forget’, or ‘In memory of those killed in the Northern Ireland conflict’, as alternatives to a list of names, while others argued that any monument should be symbolic, open to be interpreted in a range of ways, and therefore without a caption.

Whether a memorial would be vandalised was of great concern to many contributors, and they argued that this would need to be considered when determining the location and form.

Other suggestions for forms of memorial were a festival, a Christmas tree with lights representing victims, a memorial book listing names of those killed, and a memorial quilt composed of panels representing individuals killed contributed by their families.

A relatively large number of submissions supported the idea of a Garden of Remembrance, or some other form of environmental memorial. These were viewed as positive, reflective forms of memorials, providing opportunities for healing and relaxation. Three submissions suggested tree-planting schemes, one contributor writing:

There is something meaningful about this simple but beautiful idea. Each life that has been taken is symbolised and remembered by a living thing. Collectively all the trees form a small wood or little forest. As a group they form another living thing, which has the capacity to support a wide variety of life, season after season, year after year in a continuum... These areas would not so much act as gardens of remembrance but more as protected, peaceful woods where life is held in respect, nurtured, fostered and sustained. [1]

While the number of trees planted would equal the number of people killed in the conflict, individual victims would not be associated with any particular tree. One submission suggested that if the trees were planted in areas of ancient historical significance, this might 'tie our casualties into the long history of this place and give them and their families more respect' [25].

As with many forms of remembering processes recommended in the submissions, the question of who would be remembered through the memorials was recognised as potentially divisive. This led many to choose options that could be inclusive of all killed, without listing names, such as the memorial gardens. Others argued that monuments or plaques representing individuals or certain groups of people killed might be placed in the towns or communities in which they had lived. However, these forms of memorial were also highlighted as contentious, particularly given the disagreement that had emerged over recent monuments remembering paramilitary dead that have been perceived as offensive to the families of the victims of these groups.

Other submissions expressed concern that memorials, particularly monuments, may become ignored or be considered irrelevant as time passes. One contributor wrote that:

The way an event or a monument is viewed will change over time. There are some monuments that can appreciate in symbolic value over a period of time. Likewise there are others that depreciate until they are either ignored or destroyed or no one can remember why they were there in the first place. As the political context changes so does the understanding of the monument or ritual. [82]

This individual suggested that, if the memorial is to remain meaningful to a wide range of the population, 'symbolic capital' would need to be added to it, through regular collective rituals.

Still other contributors argued that we already have many memorials to the dead of the world wars, and that what is needed more than another memorial is truth, justice and the recognition of the suffering of individuals.

Number of submissions For: 34 Against: 4 Unsure: 5

4.2.3 Museums, exhibitions and art

Two main ideas that emerged from the submissions concerned museums and exhibitions.

A museum that would use art, photographs, film, poetry, drama, and individual stories to demonstrate the consequences of the conflict and the historical factors leading to the conflict was proposed in a number of submissions. The Anne Frank museum in Amsterdam and the Holocaust Museum in Washington were suggested as possible models. A few submissions suggested that it be called the 'Museum of the Troubles'.

Exhibitions were also a popular option among those who wrote in. Several contributors felt that exhibitions should be split into sections. Some proposed that exhibitions be split into two, namely 'orange

and green'. Another proposed that up to six streams may be necessary in any submission, i.e. Unionist, Nationalist, Republican, Loyalist, Security Forces and a 'Civic Centre/Civic Interpretive Centre' where all sides could look forward around a number of civic principles for the future [98].

It was argued that this division of the exhibitions would allow the visitor to choose which areas they would like to visit, and to self-censure parts that they feel they might find difficult. It would be hoped that, with time, people would feel more willing to view others experiences of the past, and to explore the museum more fully.

In some submissions a museum was mentioned as a place where individual stories might be archived, along with other resource materials. All archival footage, documentary film, and written material relating to the conflict would be housed, and made available to students, schools, researchers and the general public as an educational resource. These materials would also be used in the exhibitions, presenting individual stories against a backdrop of the wider context. Some contributors also suggested collecting information on other conflict areas around the world.

The stated purpose behind the museum was clearly educational, some saying that schools should visit it, and use it to teach the history of the conflict to children. In one submission it was suggested that, since it would be largely intended for young people, that they should be involved in the set up and management of the Museum. It was also felt that the resources collected could provide a basis for research into the conflict. The museum could therefore:

Develop as an international centre of excellence, acting as a focus for intellectual work on interpreting our violent past and designing peaceful solutions. [75]

A number of contributors felt that such a museum would be a fitting memorial to those who had died in the conflict, and would ensure that future generations would remember the past and learn from it. It was noted that:

Such an institution would be an active enduring symbol of our past, enabling our community to grow away from violence. [75]

One submission suggested that the museum should be constantly changing and adding to its exhibitions in order to continue to attract visitors. This would be its unique feature it would be dynamic in its concept and worth visiting and re-visiting as it grows and develops [69].

A further suggestion that was frequently put forward was the idea of a travelling exhibition, a 'factual transportable historic archive'. Containing similar material to that suggested for the museum, this exhibition of the conflict would travel around Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, and possibly overseas. It could be added to as it toured, perhaps with local material, and would eventually be housed in a permanent museum.

One specific idea was for an exhibition of pictures of those who were killed in the conflict, along with details of their lives, based on the 'Portraits of Grief' exhibition composed of pictures of victims of the September 11th attack in the United States of America.

A number of contributors advocated the use of art, plays, music, film and drama as ways of remembering the conflict. It was argued that using these activities as ways of expression could be cathartic and healing. As one contributor wrote of using poetry: 'It is intensely personal and subjective and can lead the victim to a greater understanding of the process called healing' [32].

In particular community drama was suggested as a way of enabling people to reflect on their own experiences. It was noted:

We believe that drama is an ideal forum (in addition to many other worthwhile processes) for raising contentious issues within a non-threatening and safe environment and gives participants the opportunity to work through these issues in a constructive and fruitful manner. [92]

It was suggested that such exhibitions or performances would be challenging for the audience, and provoke them to explore their own experiences of the conflict. In addition, it was suggested that artists, dramatists and musicians might be commissioned to perform or exhibit in public places to express memory and healing.

That said—while there was general support for museums, exhibitions and art as mechanisms for remembering—there was also recognition of difficulties associated with these options.

In particular, it was suggested museums and/or exhibitions should be balanced and neutral, including a wide range of perspectives. Concern was expressed that some communities might be more ready for this process than others, perhaps leading to an imbalanced input. As one contributor noted, ‘The keepers of the exhibits would need to be proactive in their efforts at encouraging submissions in order to maintain a balance’ [69]. Neutrality would also have to extend beyond the exhibits to include the staff, management and location. In one submission it was suggested that a museum be located in an area of perceived conflict.

There was also recognition of the length of time it would take to establish a museum, and of the resources that would be required—human and financial resources. Sustainability was also an issue highlighted in some submissions.

Number of submissions For: 32 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.4 Public and collective commemorations

While in many submissions the importance of individual remembering and healing was recognised, in a large number it was maintained that remembrance must also be public, collective and inclusive in order to allow society to reflect on its past as a whole.

Some contributors suggested peace demonstrations or declarations, although the majority of submissions on this topic felt that a day should be set aside each year to remember those who had been affected through the conflict. Various titles were attached to this day, such as Remembrance Day [14, 64, 9, 101, 104], A National Day of Reconciliation [34], Northern Ireland Victims Day [40], and Day of Sorrow [98].

There was wide support indicated for the day to be either a Sunday or Monday, and if the latter, for it to be made a Bank Holiday. Most contributors seemed to see the event as being largely contained within Northern Ireland, while others felt strongly that it should extend to the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, as the conflict had also extended to these areas. There was, however, some concern raised that people would see it just as another day off and not use it to reflect upon the past.

Suggestions as to the spirit of the day were split between celebration and sorrow. Those who preferred the former felt that there needed to be both quiet reflection, and a celebration of the work around reconciliation that has occurred, that is:

Celebrating achievements towards peace building, showing how communities have worked together to overcome barriers that were previously there. [101]

Those who felt that the spirit of the day should be more sorrowful favoured a quieter, remorseful event. One contributor wrote of the ‘Sorry Day’ that had occurred in Australia in 1998. On this day 40,000 people wrote messages of regret about how the aboriginal people had been treated. The messages were compiled in a book that was consequently presented to tribal leaders.

It was suggested that—having spent time in reflection prior to the day—organisations might use it to express remorse over the negative aspects of their role in the conflict. These organisations might include British and Irish governments, local politicians, paramilitary groups, churches, schools and security forces.

On the whole, however, only a few contributors offered detail of the specific form the day might take. One suggestion was that a 10-minute silence might be respected. Another was that there might be a peace gathering at a monument or garden. It was also suggested that it might be an appropriate time for a public Declaration of Peace to be made, i.e. a declaration of peaceful intent by the people and politicians of Northern Ireland and Great Britain [32].

One contributor suggested the following words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn as a basis for such a declaration:

We have to condemn publicly the very idea that some people have the right to repress others. In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousand-fold in the future. When we neither punish nor reproach evil-doers ... we are ripping the foundations of justice from beneath future generations.[32]

Several contributors felt that church services would be appropriate on this day, most preferring these to be interdenominational. However, one contributor strongly expressed opposition to interdenominational services. This individual also stressed that church services should be for the remembrance of only ‘innocent victims’. They wrote:

(We) want no part in any service which places our family in the same vein as the perpetrators of murder. They are not victims but criminals and murderers. [8]

The majority, however, did not share this view, feeling instead that it would be very important that the event be as inclusive as possible. Nevertheless, there was a recognition that this might prove problematic for some of those who had lost loved ones through the conflict who might demand the exclusion of paramilitaries or State security forces. Despite this, a majority maintained that, central to the day would be an understanding that grief was the same for all who lost loved ones, and that ‘there has been pain on all sides’ [101].

Number of submissions For: 32 Against: 1 Unsure: 0

4.2.5 Truth recovery processes

This form of remembering proved the most contentious, and the one addressed in the greatest detail by those who made submissions.

In general there was support for a truth recovery process, although most submissions simultaneously qualified this and raised potential concerns with the option. It was recognised that any truth recovery process would have to be designed so as to be appropriate to the situation in Northern Ireland. A typical response on this point was:

The point should be made that Northern Ireland has its own unique circumstances in relation to its particular conflict. If a meaningful truth finding mechanism were to be established it would not be a replica of any other truth finding mechanism but would be unique to the place. [77]

A number of contributors were opposed to a truth commission. In some cases this was because a truth recovery process was perceived to be linked to the granting of amnesties, and a national process of forgiveness. There were also fears that a truth commission might be used to justify past actions, or to avoid prosecutions. For example:

I feel that it is a part of a Nationalist/Republican agenda that will be used to justify Republican atrocities, ease the collective Republican conscience and, for all time, condemn so-called British imperialism as the root cause of everything that is wrong with Northern Ireland society. [21]

In a few submissions opposition to Truth Commissions was expressed with the suspicion that either the Healing Through Remembering project, or other unnamed parties were pushing for such a process.

A large proportion of contributors that discussed truth recovery processes mentioned the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Several pointed out either that Northern Ireland could not be compared to South Africa, or that the South African process had numerous flaws. There was little evidence of an awareness of other examples of truth recovery processes. That said, some contributors recommended that if a truth commission was set up in Northern Ireland it should be informed by the experiences of other countries.

A range of proposals was put forward for truth recovery processes. Most of these suggested open processes, where families of those who had been killed would be able to hear the facts about what had happened to their loved ones. This was seen as necessary since many had received little information in the past.

One contributor wrote that she had not received any information about the death of her son, and when she had enquired was told that the case had been closed [38]. Several people wrote that they primarily wanted information on the deaths of loved ones, for example:

We would like to know the truth—we don't want anyone prosecuted. What is done is done. We have always said we don't want prosecutions. It's all about compromise. [104]

It was suggested that information might be gathered from police files, and/or from individual perpetrators or the organisations to which they belonged. Whether or not this process would involve face-to-face meetings between victims and perpetrators was also considered. Some were in favour of this and others felt that it might re-traumatise victims. Fears over personal safety were also highlighted as a factor that might possibly prevent individuals from participating. Some contributors felt that these problems might be reduced if there were adequate support systems put in place.

Others felt strongly that they would not want to be involved in a process that included paramilitaries. Unrealistic expectations of closure or reconciliation were also not welcomed. They argued that truth processes would need to be conducted in an open and honest manner, and not be used by groups to justify past actions.

While some contributors wanted individual perpetrators to accept responsibility for their actions, others recognised this might prove impossible to deliver. They saw responsibility as lying primarily with organisations. Those holding this opinion argued for a truth commission which would reflect upon the role of organisations—State and paramilitary—throughout the conflict, assessing their actions against international humanitarian and human rights standards.

Many contributors were very pessimistic about the participation of State and paramilitary organisations, feeling that they could be unwilling to be involved.

Some suggested that State security forces could be reluctant to be involved if they felt this would put them on an equal footing with paramilitaries, and might also lead to prosecutions. A few expressed concern that the State may now try to set up a non-legal process in order to avoid possible prosecutions of State security force personnel. It was noted:

There is great concern amongst those who have campaigned in these cases (for inquiries into deaths of Rosemary Nelson, Billy Wright, Robert Hamill etc) and others that the establishment of a broad based truth process may in reality become a mechanism to reduce the truth telling process in relation to the above cases and others to a relatively meaningless exercise which will essentially allow the State to shirk its responsibilities. [93]

From another perspective, it was also argued that paramilitary groups would be unlikely to participate because many of their members had already served long sentences for their actions. Others who had been freed under the early release scheme had little to gain by participating in any process. In addition, those who had not been prosecuted might be unwilling to speak openly about their actions without some form of amnesty from prosecution.

As a result it was reluctantly concluded in some submissions that amnesties might be necessary in order to establish the truth about the deaths and injuries that occurred during the conflict. However, it was felt that amnesty should be conditional on an admission of guilt. There seemed to be little support for blanket amnesties without some form of truth process. For example it was noted:

While of course amnesties may be considered necessary to ensure the development and maintenance of the peace process, victims cannot be expected to engage in a collective act of amnesia. The granting of amnesties, if being seriously considered by the government, must be linked to some truth telling process. [93]

There was general recognition of the wide range of issues that would have to be resolved in the design of a truth process. For example, what period of history would be covered—thirty, eighty, or several hundred years? There was recognition in these discussions that—while the period under scrutiny would have to be precisely defined—there would also be the need to reflect upon the roots and context of the conflict.

Another issue highlighted as needing resolution was who would lead the process and who would appoint individuals to these roles. Many expressed caution about the role of the State in these appointments. It was expressed that the State should neither lead the process, nor identify individuals to do so. Groups within civil society were the preferred option to make these decisions. With regards to Commissioners international figures were mentioned as a potential, but there was little clarity on this point.

Another parameter identified for decision was whether the process would deal only with deaths, or if injuries and policies might also be investigated. Furthermore, while some argued for any truth finding process to run for a specific and clearly defined time period, others argued that it should be flexible, and continue for as long as necessary.

To conclude, the opinions on truth recovery processes considered in the submissions were very mixed with few stating unequivocal and confident support. Those who did advocate this form of remembering did so with hesitation and many conditions attached. There appeared to be little clarity or agreement about what form a truth process might take. There was also concern about the potential negative outcomes that might result. Nonetheless, the idea of truth being necessary to healing was endorsed and it would seem that there is scope for further debate on this form of remembering process.

Number of submissions For: 29 Against: 11 Unsure: 10

4.2.6 Other legal processes

Two other forms of legal process were put forward in the submissions, namely trials and inquiries. Both of these were contentious choices—while ten contributors supported the setting up of more inquiries, six disagreed. Although five were in favour of trials, five were opposed to them, and two were unsure.

Those who advocated inquiries felt that these would be appropriate for ‘mass murders’ and controversial

deaths. It was mentioned in several submissions that some victims feel resentful that seemingly only high profile cases would be investigated in this way, and others ignored.

Two contributors felt that current moves for inquiries focussed too much on Nationalist concerns, and that these cases needed to be balanced by inquiries into ‘atrocities’ by paramilitaries. Other submissions felt it was wholly appropriate for inquiries to focus on cases of State violence or where collusion was alleged.

In several submissions mention was made of the cost of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry as a reason not to pursue inquiries. It was felt that it was unlikely that inquiries would result in justice being done despite the amount of money spent. It was argued by these contributors that the money could be spent in a more useful way. For example:

We are against inquiries because of profiteering by lawyers at Tribunals and it is unlikely that we shall ever see senior RUC/Army people responsible for directing bronze squad/SAS prosecuted for war crimes. [102]

Furthermore, as it would be impossible to provide inquiries for all deaths, it was felt that it would be better to have none than to discriminate. Others were against inquiries as they felt they led to ‘whataboutery’, i.e. where groups focus on blaming each other in response to being criticised for their actions rather than considering their behaviour.

However, those supporting the setting up of inquiries felt these could establish justice. Justice, they argued, was crucial to allow society to move on from its divided past and might also enable the families of the victims in question to move on after hearing the truth about the deaths of their loved ones. Though it was felt this might well depend on how the inquiry is set up and run. One contributor, reflecting on testifying before Bloody Sunday Inquiry, reported feeling worse after testifying due to the adversarial context. For example:

When Tony Blair announced that there was going to be an inquiry I remember thinking that this was going to be our [the Derry people] opportunity to tell the world about what really happened, but when I gave my account I was made to feel that I was a liar, that I was making it up. It was as if I was responsible. I was so angry. [91]

The other legal option raised in the submissions was trials of perpetrators who had not yet received sentences. For some, moving on from the past would not be possible unless perpetrators were punished for their crimes. These contributors were strongly opposed to amnesties, arguing that these ‘sanction the forgiveness to perpetrators of heinous crimes and are open to manipulation and abuse’ [87]. In general, some felt that trials would only increase division and blaming. Others felt that they are an essential step towards healing, providing they are done in an open and transparent manner, and not following some hidden agenda.

Number of submissions For: 15 Against: 8 Unsure: 2

4.2.7 Community and inter-community interactions

In a number of submissions it was felt that community and inter-community work was essential in order to develop respect and understanding as we address our violent past.

Single identity work was seen by some as a vital precursor to inter-community dialogue, or other forms of remembering. One person stated that work within communities ‘will be particularly important in unionist communities as there is less community development in these communities than in Nationalist communities’ [91].

However, it was apparent from the submissions in which this form of remembering was advocated that the ultimate goal would be to develop ‘honest dialogue’ [26] between individuals, groups and communities.

Storytelling and listening would be key to such processes, enabling people from different backgrounds to share and learn from each other’s experiences. In a number of submissions it was also suggested that restorative justice workshops be used involving victims and perpetrators. One contributor suggested that such dialogue processes should remain private, since:

The conflict was fought by a minority of people. Similarly the peace can be made by a minority of people, whose actions can be borne witness to in public ways. [98]

At the same time, many recognised that meetings between victims and perpetrators may be very painful and traumatic, and that the time may not yet be right for these kinds of processes.

General cross-community work was also recognised as important in building positive relationships between communities and in development understanding. Cross-community work could include seminars, conferences and residential workshops, as well as helping people engage in a ‘real’ and significant manner. Work with young people was also highlighted as essential as they are often perceived as being to blame of most for their community’s problems.

In terms of commemoration, many contributors felt that, while commemorative acts might be done on a single identity basis at first, gradually these should be extended to become more inclusive. One contributor suggested that cross-community projects of remembrance might be funded by the government through an all-party Reconciliation Committee [36]. Intercommunity processes may also focus on jointly analysing the roots and dynamics of the conflict, and enable communities to be proactive in shaping their own futures.

That said, there was some suspicion in a few submissions about the motivation behind cross-community work. It was pointed out that some people are reluctant to take part or engage in dialogue with the ‘other community’. Some noted that even where cross-community work is happening, there needs to be an understanding of the long-term nature of the work—there are certainly no ‘quick fix’ solutions.

However, many contributors felt that—despite the difficulties associated with community and inter-community remembering processes—these are essential in developing understanding about the past. The building of positive relationships through community work and inter-community work was clearly seen as instrumental in ‘breaking through the vicious circle of fear and violence’ [53].

Number of submissions For: 19 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.8 Support for individuals and victims

For several contributors, supporting those who have been most affected by the conflict was one of the central ways of addressing the legacy of the past, and moving forward in a positive and healing way.

There was recognition of the valuable work being undertaken by the voluntary/community sector with victims. It was proposed that existing groups should be funded to continue to provide these services and that work with victims should be victim-led and involve users in determining the most appropriate forms of support. One individual victim living in England wrote of how valuable he had found travelling to Ireland to meet with other victims. He suggested that funding be made available to enable more victims to travel from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland for such experiences.

While much of the work with people directly affected by the conflict would involve befriending, welfare and group work, providing individual support through therapeutic processes was also seen as essential for

some. These processes might include individual counselling, psychotherapy, storytelling, and/or facilitated group sessions.

Number of submissions For: 17 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.9 Research and social policy development

Research into the impact of the conflict and social policy development was mentioned in several submissions, either as a necessary precursor to other remembering processes, or as a remembering process in its own right. While some wrote of the need for research into the general impact of the conflict, others felt that research should focus on the impact of the conflict on specific groups, organisations, communities or services. Some of these included tertiary education provision, staff working in statutory agencies, people in mixed marriages and vulnerable groups that were forcibly displaced.

Contributors that mentioned this suggested that such research should then feed into policy development that would aim to ameliorate the continuing legacy of the conflict around these issues. For example, one submission went into some detail of how the Housing Executive might build housing developments that would encourage mixed communities. Another wrote of the need for a national strategy to address the issue of mixed marriages.

Number of submissions For: 11 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.10 Centre for remembrance

Several submissions suggested the establishment of a centre as a form of remembrance. However, there were differing ideas around the activities involved.

Some of the ideas proposed included a place where people could meet to discuss contentious issues; a centre for studying conflict transformation and peace building; a resource centre for victims, offering practical assistance in welfare, training and counselling and containing a Memorial Room, 'for prayer, meditation and reflection of the lives that have been lost or who still suffer' [79].

In the submissions, there was overlap with this option and the ideas about memorials. Several contributors specifically saw a centre as fulfilling a memorial function, i.e. 'a living memorial as a tribute to the innocent who were murdered' [24]. It was suggested that the centre might be placed in a memorial garden, with trees planted for each person killed.

A few submissions supported the idea of setting up a centre to assist in the implementation of remembering processes. Such a centre could undertake research into the willingness of individuals and groups to engage with them. It was argued that a community-based Board should run such a centre. It would have the responsibility of assessing and supporting remembering processes. It would do this by offering advice and securing funding.

Number of submissions For: 9 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.11 A financial response

In three submissions it was suggested that a fund be set up to finance community/voluntary sector initiatives assisting in the healing process, e.g. community projects working in education and health. It could also offer grants for remembrance projects such as community memorials, individual memorials, conflict resolution processes, as well as training and dialogue projects. In addition, one contributor felt that it could fund international placements for trainee conflict resolution practitioners.

Other financial responses were also suggested, particularly in the form of compensation for victims. One submission noted how ordinary financial issues often became unmanageable for those directly affected by the conflict and unable to work. Despite hearing so often about money going to victims he had seen none of it, other than a small grant from the Memorial Fund. Recognising that the needs of many victims are financial, several felt that the government should address these needs by setting up an adequate compensation scheme.

Number of submissions For: 8 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.12 Education and training

While education was widely identified as a desired outcome of several remembering processes mentioned above, it was also suggested as a remembering process in its own right.

Some submissions argued for the setting up of education projects focussing largely on young people. These projects in schools would encourage students to learn lessons from the past, and try to think differently about the future. These contributors argued that education in conflict resolution processes should be supported. They also noted that it should use a challenging, ‘interactive, thought-provoking methodology’ [74]. While teachers may be trained to educate children in these issues, some felt that it might be better if others from outside of the school delivered programmes.

Number of submissions For: 7 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.13 Supporting current remembering processes

Seven submissions mentioned the importance of supporting the work already happening around healing and remembering, in order to ensure that there is not duplication.

Number of submissions For: 7 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

4.2.14 Self-examination of institutions/organisations and apologies

Some submissions suggested that it was important for institutions and organisations to undertake self-examination in order to reflect on their role in the conflict, both positive and negative.

While the churches were the organisations most often mentioned in this regard, one submission felt that the statutory agencies should also reflect upon their service provision throughout the conflict. This would include recognising the expertise and outstanding work of staff, many of who served over a prolonged period in very difficult circumstances.

Others noted that a public apology ceremony should take place where an organisation recognises that it played a negative role in the conflict. Remorse might be expressed at such an event. As one submission said:

‘History suggests that such apologies are necessary in order to heal past hurts, bring closure and move on’ [64].

Number of submissions For: 5 Against: 0 Unsure: 0

The Way Forward

Recommended options identified by the Board

The Way Forward | Recommended options identified by the Board

5.1 Introduction

The Healing Through Remembering Project was encouraged by the number of people who endorsed the value of remembering. Many also spoke of the importance of finding ways to move society forward.

As such we feel we have a responsibility not only to reflect back what was said to us, but also to help chart a way forward. We are fully aware of the risks of any process we suggest and we have dealt with this at length elsewhere in the Report (see *Chapter Three*). As one person making a submission said to us: "Almost any remembering model one can devise carries a serious risk of a negative outcome" [45].

Nevertheless, in the spirit of wanting to build a better and prosperous future we have made a series of recommendations which we believe are worthwhile and which capture the core essence of the submissions.

We present six recommendations which together form a collection of mechanisms and strategies to promote healing through remembering. They are presented here in no particular order of importance. While we deal with each option separately, they are complementary and interrelated. We feel that, if managed correctly, consulted upon, and broadly agreed to by all, they would make a positive contribution to healing the wounds of the past.

The recommendations focus on a:

- Network of Commemoration and Remembering Projects
- Day of Reflection
- Collective Storytelling and Archiving Process
- Permanent Living Memorial Museum
- Acknowledgement
- Healing through Remembering Initiative

Below we introduce the options outlining a number of principles that informed our thinking throughout their development.

Following the recommendations, there is also a section dealing with the interrelationship between the options and then a comment on the way forward.

5.1.1 Principles underpinning the recommendations

In developing the recommendations we used a number of principles to guide us. These were:

- 1) Commitment to a better future. A future free from inequality, discrimination, violence and sectarianism. A society where all views are accommodated with tolerance and understanding. A future that sees diversity as strength, and where our children can feel optimistic and secure. The recommendations we present here are all aimed towards achieving this and reinforcing the positive, and that we all can make a difference. This is our vision and the vision of many of those who made submissions.

- 2) Commitment to inclusivity. Any strategy for remembering and healing needs to be inclusive. All the options recommended and their subsequent implementation should be as inclusive as possible. They incorporate the bulk of suggestions that came through the submissions received. At the same time, as the debate unfolds following this Report, as many voices as possible need to continue to be heard. As a result we decided to include 'Next steps' in each of our recommended options, many of which are directed toward ensuring maximum consultation and discussion.
- 3) Recognition of the strength in the variety and diversity of opinion. Many different views came through the submissions. We saw this diversity as a strength. We tried to make our recommended options as wide-ranging as possible, accommodating as many of the diverse opinions we encountered as practically possible.
- 4) Responsibility to move the process forward. We wanted to make recommendations that would move the healing process forward. This was highlighted by many submissions that expressed concern that what we may propose would be similar to what had been done before. As such, we tried in this Report to develop the recommendations to some degree so that they would provide a framework with which to advance the process. What we present is not a blueprint, but rather what we believe is a contribution and step forward.
- 5) Recognition and appreciation of the variety of work already underway. From the outset we have appreciated that a range of remembering projects and work is already underway. We did not see it as our task to reinvent this work, or be in competition with it, but rather to stimulate debate about the potential collective strategies that could be forwarded. We aimed for the recommendations to stimulate thought and open social space for discussion. We hope that the recommended options that touch on work others are already undertaking will serve as a clear endorsement of their work.
- 6) Acknowledgement that there is no single solution to dealing with the past. A number of simultaneous options are going to be needed if the process is to move forward. As such we have recommended a range of options that we believe together form a whole and are interrelated. Although those reading the recommendations may be tempted to identify a preferred option to advocate (or denigrate)—we believe each option should be given equal standing and that the most favourable result would be achieved by implementing all options together.
- 7) Acknowledgement that any workable option is dependent on timing and will take a long time. We recognise that some of the suggestions we are making now may not be appropriate immediately, or conversely may only be suitable to the current context. As such, we have included processes for discussion and consultation within each option. We believe that in a divided society the process of realising the option is as important as the final product. Although realising each option will take a long time, we trust people will be enthused by that and will begin the process, with a new and peaceful society as their ultimate goal.

5.2 A Network of Commemoration and Remembering Projects

5.2.1 Recommendation

We recommend the establishment of a network that will link together the diverse forms of commemoration and remembering work, learn from past and present initiatives, facilitate information exchange, and improve access and activity between those involved in commemoration and remembering work and society at large.

5.2.2 Purpose

Over the past thirty years in Northern Ireland there have been many initiatives aimed at commemoration. These have included books, exhibitions, songs, murals, artwork, monuments, commemorative gardens, local history projects, ceremonies and commemorative events such as lectures and religious ceremonies. The collective knowledge and experience of this work should be harnessed to further reconciliation and healing within our society.

It is anticipated that the work of the network of commemoration projects will have an educational value. It would enrich individual and collective understanding of the past, whilst challenging attempts to construct monopolies of suffering or grievance. It would specifically—through exposure to the work of others and joint participation in the network—aim to increase understanding of the ‘other’.

In addition, for many in Northern Ireland, it is difficult to gain access to information, materials or people who can contribute to increasing such understanding. Yet, the healing process partly depends on a recognition and acknowledgement of the humanity (and at times suffering) of those who have caused hurt or damage. The proposed network would contribute to increased understanding between groups working on similar projects from similar perspectives, as well as across the political divides.

The specific purposes of the network would be to:

- Link together and network the diverse forms of remembering and commemoration work being undertaken in and about Northern Ireland;
- Enable all future work of remembering to take account of ongoing and past work in the field;
- Enable those involved in such work to build on and learn from this work;
- Facilitate information exchange between those participating in the network, and support collaborative work, where it arises;
- Improve access to the work of network members by a wider audience, providing the outsider with an overview of the range of work ongoing in the field;
- Increase public involvement in commemoration and remembering work across political divides, and
- Establish and secure co-operation and support of a critical mass of those engaged in this work.

5.2.3 Principles and values

The following principles and values should underpin this initiative:

- Commitment to involve and work with appropriate individuals, groups and organisations at all community levels in establishing the network;
- Commitment to working collaboratively with—and ensure leadership from—those already engaged in remembering and commemoration work;
- Tolerance for the inclusion of people with different views and perspectives of Northern Ireland’s history, and with different political aspirations;
- Obligation to provide support, dissemination and a showcase for the work of network members, and to build on and publicise their work;
- Commitment to a network that can grow and be added to as more people come forward to participate;
- Commitment to maximise accessibility of the work of the network to all sections of the population, including those across the political divides, as well as young people, women, ethnic and other minorities, and people with disabilities;
- Commitment to ensure that the suffering and experience of everyone involved is represented and respected;
- A focus on human suffering rather than on political (or other) aspects of the past, including a commitment to the use of commemoration as a means to easing the pain of the past, rather than inciting conflict;
- Commitment to the educational value of commemoration to increase awareness of the consequences of violent conflict, and to apply memory and knowledge of the past to the task of preventing recurrences;

- Commitment to ensuring that the network is used for the communal benefit of local people in Northern Ireland, and
- Commitment to resolve conflict peacefully and to work co-operatively and non-competitively with other network members.

5.2.4 Obstacles

In principle, we feel it would be difficult to object to increased co-operation and information exchange between those working on commemoration and remembering projects. However, conflict between those of opposing political standpoints could be an obstacle to the establishment of the network. Competition between those working on similar projects could also be a difficulty, specifically where this involves a competition for funding.

These issues should be highlighted at the outset and a commitment sought from network members to work through any difficulties. The principles and values set out above may also provide a useful guideline for work and participation. In our own experience—and that of others—it is possible for groups to respectfully work together successfully on a common task in spite of divergent views.

5.2.5 Proposed activities

Once a network has been established of all those working on commemoration and remembering projects, a number of activities could be undertaken. The network would:

- **Arrange visits:** the network members could facilitate visits of participating projects, and could thereby assist and disseminate the work of members of the network both within and between communities. Regular visits to projects, individual community murals, grave headstones and other sites could be organised into an educational programme for schools, tourists, community groups and other interested parties.
- **Fund-raise and undertake income generation:** the management of the network could address sustainability by including fundraising in the objectives of the project and having regular fundraising events. It could also set up an organisation that would generate finance with people becoming "friends" and benefactors of the establishment.
- **Maintain a central directory:** access to information and other resource materials could be compiled and regularly updated to provide a directory. The directory would include: contact names; nature and location of projects; opening hours and access arrangements; photographs or other representations of the work; potential sources of funding; data on past and existing projects, and a database of technical advice and support for projects.
- **Publicise the network:** central publicity for participating projects could be sent to victims, victims' groups, network members, government and statutory bodies, local libraries, and individuals. It would invite the public and others to contribute to the various network activities. Such publicity would also serve the function of reaching out to formed victims' groups and assisting with the development of ideas to keep the network supplied with up-to-date material and information. A newsletter or bulletin could be developed. This could be circulated on a regular basis to participating projects updating them on matters of interest, arranged visits, fundraising, consultations and other activities. The network could establish a website that would provide an avenue to disseminate information to a wider audience, making the information collected more accessible to others around the world. The website would complement the regular printing and publishing of a directory of projects, newsletter and research materials on commemoration and remembering.
- **Hold regular meetings and events:** the Network could convene regular meetings and events to review and advertise its continued work. As new projects are established it is important that they be invited to join the network. If new information and research material becomes available it should be disseminated to all interested bodies and individuals.

- **Hold members meetings:** internal members' meetings could be organised focusing on traditional forms of commemoration and remembering, such as folklore, academic symposiums on good practice, and festivals, as being ways of giving a platform to different cultures and traditions via the use of storytelling, community narratives, songs and poetry. The goal of these gatherings would be to improve understanding between network members and across communities.
- **Identify and learn from good practice:** good practices in the field of commemoration could be discussed and agreed among network members and could then be shared more widely. This could include ways of addressing conflict over commemoration in divided societies.
- **Host an annual conference:** the network could, as part of its continued development, establish an annual conference to provide an arena for exchange of information, relationship building and a platform for new or existing research, innovation and good practice. By attracting professionals, academics and community workers from other countries it would assist in stimulating new thinking and debate in the area of commemoration and remembering.

5.2.6 Next steps

To realise the above recommendation we suggest the following course of action be considered:

- 1) Undertake networking, consultation and discussion about this proposal with related organisations, community groups, governments and funding agencies;
- 2) Conduct an audit of existing work such as story-telling projects, memorial events, monuments, museums and exhibits, relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Document the nature, location, main features and purposes of each project;
- 3) Compile a directory of organisations and individuals that have been or are undertaking this type of work;
- 4) Convene an inclusive meeting of interested individuals, groups, relevant agencies and organisations to explore the proposal to form a network;
- 5) Amend and expand the proposal, the concept, suggested activities and purpose of the network, based on consultation and discussion;
- 6) Outline, through ongoing meetings of groups convened under (4) above, the steps necessary for full implementation of the network;
- 7) Choose, through ongoing meetings of groups convened under (4) above, a mutually agreed interim-host organisation to initially convene the network, and
- 8) Establish a network with its own infrastructure, staffing and operational plan.

5.3 A Collective Storytelling and Archiving Process

5.3.1 Recommendation

We recommend the establishment of a storytelling process known as 'Testimony'. Stories and narratives will be collected from all who wish to tell of their experiences of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. These stories—collected by those already undertaking this type of work and community groups through a flexible but standard method—would form part of an archive housing the stories of the past and serving as a vehicle to learn lessons for the future.

5.3.2 Purpose

Our society is becoming increasingly conscious of the psychological, emotional and spiritual effects of the conflict. Many of us have some personal experience of hurt and damage caused by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Some have not been able to come to terms with what has happened. Others still wrestle with the legacy of our recent past.

One way of dealing with what has happened is to seek understanding of our separate psychological, emotional and spiritual wounds through their disclosure to each other. It is our belief that we need to share our stories, tell our truths, actively listen to each other and document what has taken place. As such we recommend that storytelling continues and becomes a national project in which all our stories are recorded and archived. These narratives should be available for future generations to learn from the past.

Storytelling is happening at many different levels within our society today. It is an internationally recognised coping and healing mechanism for individuals and communities living through painful memories.

The specific purpose of the storytelling and archiving process would be to:

- Affirm the work of all those who are already engaged in storytelling and archiving work;
- Promote the healing power of story telling and giving of testimony;
- Affirm our individual and collective experience and in so doing learn to know ourselves and other people, consequently shaping our identity, emotions, hopes, dreams and desires;
- Make individual and communal stories—both positive and negative—available to all sections of our community, thus opening the possibilities of hearing the human and emotional, as well as the factual and forensic, detail of events;
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and perceptions of events and in so doing strengthen the healing process that comes with accepting the diversity of ‘truths’ that exist in our society;
- Build an archive of stories that documents and preserves the past so that lessons can be learnt for the future, and
- Actively demonstrate that different perspectives can be housed together in a sensitive and tolerant way, and in so doing preserve individual dignity, strengthen our communal forms of remembering, and increase respect and tolerance for all.

5.3.3 Principles and values

The following values should underpin this initiative:

- Commitment to involve and work with appropriate individuals, groups and organisations at all community levels;
- Commitment to work collaboratively with—and take guidance from—those already engaged in similar initiatives;
- Commitment to value every story;
- Commitment to treat all stories—and those relating them—with dignity, respect and due privacy;
- Commitment to promote the usefulness of documentation of living accounts as it enables people from all levels within our society to become the authors of our own history;
- Commitment to stress the importance of our perceptions recorded in context, and not having those perceptions interpreted or misinterpreted at a later date;
- Recognition and acknowledgement of differing motivations, the impact of various actions taken or withheld, and the consequent legacy, to help people to come to terms with, and make sense of, the conflict, and
- Understanding through recognition and acknowledgement to move our society towards positive peace with the knowledge that as a society, ‘Yes we have suffered, but we have also caused hurt’.

5.3.4 Obstacles

Different and sometimes contested truths exist. A danger is that facts and stories can be manipulated and events sensationalised and used to score political points. Although this is a risk, a mechanism that allows all equal opportunity to speak for themselves of their own personal experience in a supportive environment may be the best way of recognising multiple views, experiences and perceptions.

Other obstacles might be the questions of safety and disclosure. The question of safety we believe splits into two strands: 1) safety with respect to emotional participation in an event; and 2) safety with respect to a sense of personal security from reprisal as a result of telling one's story.

With the former it will be the responsibility of those co-ordinating the process (see Next Steps below) to engage with other professionals and experienced personnel to ensure that emotional safety is primary for the process. Existing support programmes could be consulted and utilised in this regard.

The latter concern for personal security is something that could be addressed by way of using existing precedents like the methods employed by governments with respect to sensitive public records being embargoed for up to thirty years. This option could be offered to concerned individuals. It could, under exceptional circumstances, be extended to cover the lifetime of the storyteller.

There may also be disclosure difficulties with regard to public servants and members of State security organisations who took an oath towards secrecy of sensitive material. Some protection could be offered by employing the thirty-year embargo rule in some cases. However, if this option were realised, further discussion with governments and others would need to follow to see if, without compromising the judicial process, a legislative solution could be sought.

Another potential obstacle to the success of this process might be apathy and denial. Some would say that these states of mind contributed to and/or prolonged the conflict. The only solution is to make the process as meaningful, user-friendly, open and accessible as possible. All stories should be sought, i.e. from those directly involved, and those affected, as well as those who have always felt—rightly or wrongly—that the conflict did not involve them. It is only with the help of all that we may establish a fuller picture of the past and learn lessons for the future.

5.3.5 Proposed activities

A storytelling process will be developed, and opportunities to tell of their stories and experiences would be afforded to all the people of Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and on the island of Great Britain, along with others affected around the world. Stories would be recorded through a flexible but standard method. This method should be designed by drawing on the experience of those already undertaking this work and using local expertise.

Local community groups and those already undertaking this work would record the stories. They would be trained to use the standard method of story gathering. All would be encouraged to come forward and tell their story if they so wished.

Stories would then be housed within an archive available, on permission of those whose stories have been recorded, to the public. Consideration should also be given to stories already recorded by various organisations and whether these can be immediately included in archive. Other resources like publications, videos, films and testimony-type programmes, similar to Radio Ulster's Legacy Project, could also be housed in the archive.

For this process to work effectively it would require the support of all sections in our society and traverse the vertical as well as the horizontal divisions existent in our present context. In essence, this form of storytelling would offer the opportunity to give voice to those who have suffered both directly and indirectly as a result of the conflict, thereby creating a new open culture with a transparency of liberty and inclusivity. Institutions and other agencies involved at the coalface of the conflict also have an important voice that needs to be heard and acknowledged, particularly those that had to respond to the aftermath of violence in all its forms.

This work would necessarily require a wide range of resources, for example audio, video, text, arts (necessary for symbolic expression for those yet unable to articulate their experience), etc., allowing people to best express their own experiences and relate to the 'other'.

5.3.6 Next steps

To realise the above recommendation we suggest the following course of action be considered:

- 1) Promote debate at all levels on the value of the collective storytelling and archiving process as conceptualised in this proposal;
- 2) Encourage existing story-telling projects and bodies, and other appropriate agencies and organisations, to identify the knowledge and skills required for such a project;
- 3) Encourage the governments, donor agencies and private bodies to set aside resources for such a storytelling process and archive;
- 4) Hold a debate in the Assembly, relevant government bodies and the Civic Forum on the principle and importance of documenting stories of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland as conceptualised in this proposal;
- 5) Set in place a representative steering committee made up of interested parties and those with experience in the field of storytelling and archiving;
- 6) Design a flexible but standard method for collecting stories drawing on local experience;
- 7) Ensure that those who are to tell their stories have a say in the nature of the subsequent archiving;
- 8) Develop a culturally sensitive and event-focused training programme for those gathering the stories;
- 9) Train facilitators (including initial and follow-up training) from within community/neighbourhood groupings and the voluntary sector to undertake the collecting of stories;
- 10) Offer and organise support for those who may need assistance psychologically or otherwise in telling their story, and
- 11) Compile the stories; then index, archive and house them in a collective memorial or museum site.

5.4 Day of Reflection

5.4.1 Recommendation

We recommend an annual 'Day of Reflection' be established. The day will serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

5.4.2 Purpose

The Day of Reflection would be promoted as an inclusive, positive event that would emphasise a commitment to a peaceful new society. As one of the submissions to the project commented: "Remember the tragic events of our past so that we can stop them from recurring, remember but change" [13].

It would be a source of strength and support to those who have been adversely affected by the conflict, especially those who have felt forgotten within the progression towards a peaceful society. People would be free to reflect and remember what they want on the day in a non-confrontational manner.

It is envisioned that initially the Day of Reflection would be focused on reflection and contemplation. People would be encouraged to remember and reflect on the causes and effects of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland in a peaceful, tolerant, respectful and introspective way. Initially it would not focus on public commemoration and remembrance.

The Day of Reflection would be a time for organisations and individuals to reflect upon their role in the conflict and look toward reconciliation for our society in the future. The day would not only primarily focus on remembering, but groups, institutions, churches, political parties and other organisations would be encouraged to express their responsibility and remorse for the conflict, moving forward to a new society characterised by non-violence.

The purpose of the Day of Reflection could develop over the years, moving from personal and organisational reflection to becoming more collective, public and shared among communities, groups, churches and organisations. Public commemorative activities could be undertaken as the time becomes right.

The specific purposes of the Day of Reflection would be to:

- Allow the people of Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain an opportunity to remember all those who have been adversely affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland;
- Learn lessons arising from that conflict;
- Provide an opportunity for people to remember the events of the past in a non-confrontational, dignified and respectful manner;
- Provide society with an occasion to acknowledge and recognise the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland;
- Initially be a day for private individual reflection, but develop towards ensuring a collective and public dimension whereupon many—sometimes from opposing perspectives—would be remembered and commemorated on the same day, and
- Undertake peace building, contemplative reflection and community relations activities and events. Respectful and collective commemorative projects could be co-ordinated in every Local Council area throughout these islands.

5.4.3 Principles and values

The following principles and values should underpin this initiative:

- Commitment to a totally inclusive and positive day, emphasising a commitment to a new peaceful society and non-triumphal forms of commemoration and remembering;
- Commitment to involve and work with groups and organisations at all community levels;
- Commitment to positive ways of reflecting on our past, to promote change in our society so as to enrich all communities affected by or part of the conflict;
- Obligation to provide space for reflection and commemoration and be tolerant of people with different views, political aspirations and perspectives of the conflict;
- Responsibility to incorporate those from different ethnic backgrounds into all activities;
- Commitment to remember and reflect with dignity, respect and sensitivity, and
- Commitment to using reflection and commemoration as a means of easing the pain rather than incitement to further conflict.

5.4.4 Obstacles

It is important to be sensitive to the feelings and experiences of those who have been adversely affected by what they have experienced as a result of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. For some, it might be too early to participate in a Day of Reflection because they may still be in the process of coming to terms with how the conflict has impacted on their lives. Some may not wish their loved ones to be remembered on the same day as others. Others may feel that it is premature to promote such an event given that they feel the conflict is still ongoing.

A further concern may be that the Day of Reflection would be taken over by local and national politicians, paramilitaries, or the State, to get their own particular viewpoint across, thus reducing the impact of the central themes of reconciliation and the awareness-raising of the need for healing.

There will also be a cost factor.

However, the idea of the Day focusing—at least initially—on reflection might set aside some of these concerns. The initial reconciliation and reflective dimension of the day will need to be emphasised. The day should not be a string of exclusivist community activities and potentially offensive commemorations.

Rather, people and communities should be encouraged to personally reflect, thus allowing people to use the day in their own way, in peace and without others if they so choose. The privacy dimension is central to the success of the day. There would need to be support services for those who may feel isolated as a result of the day.

In terms of cost, although it is recognised that there will be costs associated with the day, these will need to be weighed against the cumulative value of establishing a more tolerant, stable and reconciled society. In addition, corporate funding should be encouraged as a way of getting large businesses to engage in reflection on their role in the past and future.

5.4.5 Proposed activities

In the initial one to three years of the Day of Reflection it is suggested that the day be a day of genuine reflection on the past, i.e. what has happened to individuals and how we each are somehow complicit in the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Initially the day would be one for private reflection and people would be free to reflect (religiously or otherwise) in an appropriate manner of their choosing. In the initial years of holding the Day of Reflection public events would not be encouraged.

Beyond the first one to three years, it may evolve towards more inclusive and collective forms of remembering and commemoration. Programmes of events may be organised. It is suggested, for example, that Community Relations Departments of Local Councils throughout the islands engage in the process of organising local events in keeping with the theme of reflection and the particular focus of the day itself. A co-ordinating body could assist with the provision of resource material and suggestions.

Given the success in recent years of special fund-raising days, it is proposed that the gorse bush—an impartial and native symbol—be promoted as an emblem for the day. People would be encouraged to buy a lapel-pin or buttonhole of the gorse to symbolise the day. The proceeds from sales of the pin would go towards defraying the expenses of public relations. The private sector should also be encouraged to support the day financially.

5.4.6 Next steps

To realise the above recommendation we suggest the following course of action be considered:

- 1) Promote debate at all levels on the value of a Day of Reflection;
- 2) Lobby and discuss with the relevant legislative assemblies, trade unions, and employer organisations the feasibility of a Day of Reflection as conceptualised in this proposal;
- 3) Encourage political and community leaders to take responsibility for obtaining an annual officially recognised public holiday for Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. The preference would be that a Monday would be chosen.
- 4) Hold a debate in relevant government bodies, the Assembly and the Civic Forum on the principle of a Day of Reflection;
- 5) Legislate for the establishment of a Day of Reflection;
- 6) Establish an inclusive working group to help ensure that the central message of reflection for the day is adequately put forward in the initial period of the observing of the day;
- 7) Formalise and commemorate the first Day of Reflection;
- 8) The inclusive working group established under (6) could help expand, over the years, the Day from private reflection to shared reflection and reconciliation. The working group could undertake community consultation to develop an acceptable programme of events, and
- 9) Hold subsequent Days of Reflection.

5.5 A permanent Living Memorial Museum

5.5.1 Recommendation

We recommend the establishment of a permanent living memorial museum. The Living Memorial Museum will serve as a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict and keep the memories of the past alive. It will also provide a diverse chronicle of the history of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, increase public awareness of the impact of the conflict, disseminate information and provide educational opportunities ensuring lessons are learned for the future.

5.5.2 Purpose

It was stressed in many of the submissions to the Healing Through Remembering Project that it was important to remember the past and commemorate loved ones lost in the conflict. Many advocated the establishment of memorials, peace parks, museums, gardens of remembrance and the like. We chose to incorporate these suggestions into one idea, namely a permanent ‘Living Memorial Museum’.

The Living Memorial Museum, as we have conceptualised it, would not only serve as a memorial to the those injured and bereaved in the conflicts of the past through housing a garden of reflection, plaques and other commemorative items. It would also serve as a location for knowledge dissemination, future learning and hope. As such, the Living Museum could not only be a repository of memories, but would also accommodate research and views on the past alongside perspectives on how to move beyond conflict and deal with current problems.

The museum could also play a strong and unique role in promoting public awareness and understanding of the values, conditions and mechanisms that help sustain peace, and serve as a keeper and interpreter of different cultural traditions and different understandings of the past. Different exhibition space could be offered on a rotating basis to a diverse range of communities and groups to display their interpretations of the past and/or current peace-building work.

The knowledge that would be housed in the Living Memorial Museum—and the various forms of commemoration offered on site such as a garden of reflection—could also help promote a reflective and experiential culture of learning. The venue itself could form part of a collective grieving and reflection process, at the same time being a memorial that can evolve and is not static.

Finally, the museum would provide future generations with a realistic view of the past, increase public awareness of the impact of the conflict and serve as a guide to future conflict resolution, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict in the future.

The specific purpose of the living memorial museum would be to:

- Promote understanding and appreciation of different beliefs and perspectives of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland by preserving, interpreting and sharing the range and diversity of past experiences;
- Provide commemorative space—along with educational space—in the form of a garden of reflection and various forms of commemorative remembering such as plaques or memorials;
- Build an understanding of the different cultures through educational programming and living exhibits designed by communities themselves;
- Remember the past and our conflicted history in a safe and measured way so as to learn lessons and guard against future violence;
- Actively demonstrate that different perspectives can be housed together in a sensitive and tolerant way, and in so doing preserve individual dignity, strengthen our communal forms of remembering, and increase respect and tolerance for all;
- Provide an informal way of learning—not only about the past but about each other—in a reflective and peaceful environment and in the way the individual chooses;
- Record the journey of the Healing Through Remembering project and provide a home for the historical information about it. This record will be for the benefit of others directly or indirectly engaged in similar initiatives and not only for academic/historical consideration, and
- Be a resource for other places to provide knowledge and experience to mitigate violence and conflict.

5.5.3 Principles and values

The following principles and values should underpin this initiative:

- Commitment to involve and work with appropriate individuals, groups and organisations at all community levels in representing and interpreting the past;
- Commitment to work collaboratively with—and take guidance from — those already engaged in similar initiatives;
- Commitment to value each perspective and experience equally;
- Commitment to treat all representations and interpretations of events and atrocities with dignity, respect and confidentiality;
- Assurance to be both responsive to and representative of the interests of society and those directly affected by the conflict;
- Assertion that all exhibitions, collaborative projects and museum programmes promote the values of equality, appreciation of diversity, non-violence and peace-building;
- Commitment to the future and the welfare of the next generation, making children and youth a specific focus of all programmes, and
- Commitment to evolve and develop the project over time to meet the changing needs of society.

5.5.4 Obstacles

How such a project can be developed in an inclusive fashion in a divided society will be an issue of ongoing concern. It is important that while recognising this tension, the vision implicit in the Living Memorial Museum could offer a lead to what may be possible.

There will undoubtedly be concerns that different versions of the past and different cultural traditions will not be represented and interpreted in an inclusive manner. The principles and values outlined above could help with this, along with ensuring an inclusive involvement throughout. The process of establishing such a museum in a divided society should, itself, be part of the museum exhibitions.

The initial use of different spaces for exhibitions—and providing space for communities to make up their own exhibitions—could also ensure greater accommodation of diverse views in the short-term. The vision, however, would always be that with time a more integrated and holistic approach should, and could, be developed.

The location of the museum may pose an obstacle. The location would need to be carefully considered and consultation with local communities will be important. It is critical that the Living Memorial Museum is supported by local communities and benefits these communities and regenerates them if possible, but at the same time it needs to be a space where all are welcome.

Funding is another important factor. While the initial capital cost may be seen as the largest hurdle, it is the sustaining of a project in the years ahead that requires the greatest commitment. The purposes of the museum—and specifically its ability to remember those directly affected and provide lessons for the future creating a new and more productive and reflective generation—should be a central consideration in any cost-benefit analysis.

5.5.5 Proposed activities

The Living Memorial Museum will only succeed if it is developed in an inclusive fashion involving people from bodies with expertise in museums and memorials, and those from groups and agencies who have been working in the field of healing and remembering.

The project should also be part of a network of other commemorative projects and museums, which contribute to healing and remembering the conflict in and around Northern Ireland. The Living Memorial Museum should not be viewed as a stand-alone initiative, or the definitive word on how to represent the conflict, but be part of such a network. Networking and building partnerships will be a major activity of the museum and its staff.

It will also need to be realised from the start that setting up any memorial or museum is inevitably a

contested process, especially in a divided society. The process of setting up the Living Memorial Museum and the debates that ensue should all be documented. These—in themselves—should ultimately form part of the museum. This exhibit would hopefully demonstrate very actively how difficult the process of peace building and accommodation can be, but also that it can be done. The museum would also house the archive and story of Northern Ireland's attempts to deal with the past, including the history of the Healing Through Remembering project and other initiatives.

Given the divided nature of our society it may be necessary—at least in the initial years of the museum—for material from different perspectives to be displayed in separate rooms. Some of those who made submissions suggested there could be 'orange' and 'green' routes in a Museum. While others suggested there would need to be more than two routes to adequately represent the conflict. Those visiting can then decide whether to enter particular areas or not. This will mean that material of an inclusive nature is available, but participants can deal with other interpretations of the past in their own time and when they feel ready.

The museum—as a memorial—could provide the venue for a number of activities connected to remembering, for example:

- A garden for reflection;
- A home for existing material about the conflict of the past;
- Living exhibits designed by communities themselves;
- A repository of memories and collected stories;
- A place for exhibitions of different kinds, and
- A venue for research.

The museum, and the memorial space, could trigger off painful memories for some. Therefore, one activity of the museum will be to ensure the availability of necessary support. Furthermore, as the project will be working with young people it will be important that young people are central to the discussions leading up to the establishment of the museum and have an input into the development of exhibitions.

5.5.6 Next steps

To realise the above recommendation we suggest the following course of action be considered:

- 1) Debate be promoted at all levels on the value of a permanent Living Memorial Museum as conceptualised in this proposal;
- 2) Undertake networking, consultation and discussion about the proposal with related organisations, community groups, governments and funding agencies;
- 3) Encourage museum-related institutions, memorial bodies and other appropriate agencies to identify the knowledge and skills required for such a project;
- 4) Bring together the various bodies and interested parties to discuss what plans each has so as to develop a coordinated approach and detailed business plan for the project;
- 5) Undertake an economic feasibility study;
- 6) Encourage governments, donor agencies and private bodies to set aside resources for a permanent Living Memorial Museum;
- 7) Set in place a representative steering committee made up of interested parties and those with experience in the field to guide the project, and
- 8) Establish a Living Memorial Museum.

5.6 Acknowledgement

5.6.1 Recommendation

We recommend that all organisations and institutions that have been engaged in the conflict, including the British and Irish States, the political parties and Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, should honestly and publicly acknowledge responsibility for past political violence due to their acts of omission and commission. We see this as the first and necessary step having the potentiality of a larger process of truth recovery. When acknowledgement is forthcoming, we recommend that measured, inclusive and in-depth consideration be given to the establishment of an appropriate and unique truth recovery process. In order for this to develop, a team with local and international expertise should be established using a fair and transparent method to explore the specific feasibility of such a process.

5.6.2 Purpose

The need for recognition of suffering caused to victims was stressed time and time again in the submissions to the Healing Through Remembering Project. In addition, a number of submissions spoke of the importance of truth in the process of coming to terms with past hurts. Much was said about whether a truth commission—which often meant very different things those making submissions—could deliver recognition, acknowledgement and truth.

Some consideration was given by the Board to the establishment of a specific model of truth recovery, but it was felt—given the complexity of the issues arising from discussions and the broad views expressed in the submissions—that the Board was unable to propose at this stage a single specific model. In addition, it was felt that a number of other processes are necessary prerequisites to the establishment of a specific model.

To this end, the Board was unanimous that the essential first step in developing a truth recovery process is acknowledgment. It is the Board's view that it would be fruitless to propose a highly specific truth recovery mechanism without addressing a basic level of acknowledgement.

This is why it is felt that organisations, political parties, institutions, the British and Irish State, and Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries should honestly and publicly acknowledge their various responsibilities for the conflicts of the past. Such acknowledgement could cover physical and psychological acts of violence, active encouragement, passive engagement or not doing enough to prevent them. All should also publicly commit themselves to learning from the past to prevent a future recurrence of conflict.

Acknowledgement by all role-players—no matter how benign they like to think their role to have been—of their responsibility for past violence is the first step in any process that would allow unresolved and contested truths to be examined. Genuine acknowledgement would go some way to allow victims, and many in society, to feel that there is a greater sense of recognition for the suffering caused and that there is hope for a future free from conflict.

The first step of acknowledgement would open the door for a more honest engagement as to whether a broadly acceptable, organic and unique truth recovery process could be developed. Once such acknowledgment has been achieved a wider input of technical expertise will be needed. An intensive process of targeted and inclusive debate will also be required before a specific model can be developed.

The Board is persuaded that some mechanism to address the issue of truth about the past may well be necessary. There seems to be a clear call in the submissions to warrant deeper exploration, and that the Board should recommend investigating the idea of a truth recovery process further.

A truth recovery process built on a bedrock of acknowledgement may provide the potential for resolution. The more detail about past events that is uncovered the greater possibility there is that those affected, and society as a whole, can try and deal with it.

A truth recovery process could contribute to resolution and closure for a significant number of individuals whose ongoing quests for truth and justice are not being met by current truth recovery processes.

Furthermore, it is important for society as a whole to examine—in a spirit of reconciliation and learning—the past role of institutions, including churches, political parties, the media, health services, judiciary, police, educational bodies and republican and loyalist organisations. In so doing their role in the past could be fully understood, and lessons learned so as to develop better institutions in the future.

If broad acknowledgement were to be forthcoming—and a targeted debate were to produce a unique and appropriate model for truth recovery—it would need to be decided if the issue of truth would need further exploration at both an organisational and individual level.

That said, a specific model might be some way off. It will not be an easy process, and is dependent on a basic level of acknowledgment which should be the initial priority. Only when this has been achieved do we recommend the setting up of a group with both local and international expertise who could explore the feasibility of a model for a truth recovery process.

The specific purpose of a truth recovery process, if it were to be developed, would be to:

- Promote reconciliation, peace and healing; and to reduce tensions resulting from past violence;
- Clarify and acknowledge as much unresolved truth about the past as possible;
- Respond to the needs and interests of victims;
- Contribute to justice in a broad sense; and possibly ensure accountability and responsibility for past actions from organisations and institutions—and possibly from individuals;
- Identify the responsibilities of States, of republican and loyalist organisations, and of other institutions and organisations for the violence of the past; and
- Make recommendations for change that will reduce the likelihood of future conflict.

The Healing Through Remembering Board acknowledges that there are formal truth finding structures that already exist, namely those within the existing justice system and other associated mechanisms. These mechanisms include inquests, police investigations, prosecutions and inquiries. It would be important for any new formal truth recovery process to be able to relate to, rather than replace, any existing truth finding mechanisms. The Board would not wish to subvert or undermine other mechanisms.

This process, if established, must not displace (or be seen as more important than) other methods of dealing with the past, such as a Day of Reflection, monuments, story telling and archiving processes, and museums. The Board takes the view that all of these are of importance and each, or a mixture of them, as well as the use of the official judicial process, is the optimum way to proceed.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the establishment of a truth recovery process would be a single response, and it is not recommended that it replace those already in existence. The relationship between different processes (for example, judicial and/or inquiries) would be complicated and would need to be explored in detail. For this reason it is proposed—if a basic level of acknowledgement were forthcoming—that there should be more focused and specific debate on possible models.

5.6.3 Principles and values

The following principles and values should underpin this initiative:

- Acknowledgment by organisations, political parties, institutions, the British and Irish Governments, and loyalist and republican paramilitaries, of their own responsibility through acts of commission and/or omission during the conflicts of the past;
- Commitment to enter into further discussions on a truth recovery process in a spirit of reconciliation and healing that aims to re-establish relations between different communities in society and improve relationships between States, their governments and their citizens;
- Commitment that transparency and openness be acknowledged and practiced throughout;

If broad acknowledgement is forthcoming, such a process will require:

- Commitment to participate in an in-depth, focused and inclusive discussion on developing an appropriate and unique truth recovery process for the conflict in and about Northern Ireland;
- Commitment to the exploration process with the final outcome to be societal-led and victim-centred;
- Assurance that existing formal truth-finding mechanisms (e.g. inquiries, courts, etc.) would not be undermined through the establishment of a truth recovery process, or that the rights of victims to use the judicial system to seek truth if they so desire would not be negated;
- Commitment to uphold the principles of international law;
- Commitment to ensure that any process that develops in the future would be non-adversarial and would not be damaging to victims, and that proper support processes would be in place for those who need them.

5.6.4 Obstacles

Any further development of a truth recovery process will stand or fall on whether acknowledgement is forthcoming for acts of omission or commission for past conflict. The denials of broad responsibility, however, will be the key obstacle to an acknowledgement process and a truth-recovery process if it were to develop.

Examples of resistance to acknowledgement (and ultimately a truth recovery process were it to develop) might come from:

- Political parties who have a particular analysis and fear that acknowledgement or a truth finding body may dismantle, or at least radically change, the perspective they have always held as absolute;
- Security forces, and Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, because it is possible that, when particular truths are exposed, publicly stated positions and accounts may be undermined and challenged, as well as the rationale for specific actions;
- The British and Irish States who have attempted to portray their role in the past solely as one of brokering peace rather than as being part of the conflicts in and about Northern Ireland;
- Institutions such as churches, political parties, the media, health services, judiciary, police and educational bodies who may fear acknowledgement of their responsibilities as part of the broader context of the conflict, seeing it as a denigration of their positive contributions;
- Individual victims of the conflict who may not wish to revisit particular incidents because of ongoing grief, the fear of opening old wounds, and concerns about possible political exploitation of their pain;
- Individual perpetrators who would experience fear of reprisal after disclosure, or do not see the importance of taking some individual responsibility for their actions;
- Victims, witnesses and informants who would fear reprisal if they speak out about what they know, or about those by whom they were victimised,
- Large organisations and institutions—and the individuals and groups who lead them—which are by their very structure often pre-disposed to non-disclosure; and may be disinterested and apathetic; and
- Individuals who may also be disinterested and apathetic in engaging in such a process.

If acknowledgement were forthcoming and the process moved forward, undoubtedly there would also be many other concerns. A cost-benefit analysis would have to be considered. It would need to be ensured that victims would benefit directly from the process, rather than professionals.

There have been many different models of truth recovery used in other jurisdictions but there is still only a limited knowledge of their operation. Such models and the experience that followed from them will be useful in offering guidance for our own needs. However it is important that they be seen only as guides. The particular circumstances that exist in Northern Ireland must be the key determinants in informing any proposals for our own truth recovery process. If a model were developed it would need to be locally

owned and not imported from the outside. It would need to develop organically through debate and discussion. An over-reliance on models from other societies, or an overly legalistic approach, would not be advisable.

It would also need to be appreciated that certain people may not want a truth recovery process at all due to some of the reasons outlined above. Open discussion would need to be held to find ways of resolving this. Linked to this, the expectations of any process would also need to be tempered. From the outset it would need to be recognised that no process can satisfy everyone. At the same time this will need to be balanced against the possibility of devising a process that will be of positive benefit to at least a majority.

That said, any process should not raise expectations about premature closure of the past, healing, reparations, apologies, forgiveness and reconciliation. Rather it should be based on a clear understanding of the irredeemable nature of loss. Needs will be long-term, and multiple methods will be needed to address them.

However, perhaps the biggest obstacle will be that at the present time the parties to our conflict have a strong sense of the rightness of their particular cause, linked to a belief in the culpability of the other side. There are still many fears that if basic acknowledgement and a truth recovery process were to happen they could be used against one or other side in the conflict.

There are genuine fears that if a truth recovery process focusing on individuals were to develop, it could be used wrongly to absolve organisational and institutional fault and failures. On the other hand, there are also genuinely held fears that such a process could be used to prosecute a particular political agenda by subjecting certain organisations or the State to disproportionate attack and blame.

If a truth recovery process is to follow acknowledgement by the parties to the conflict, a key issue to be resolved will be the emphasis such a process places on individual or organisational responsibility. However, there is little doubt that institutions and organisations—especially those of the State, Republicanism and Loyalism—will all have to agree at some stage that an analysis of their contribution to the conflict must be assessed. It will be difficult to resolve these differing views, but, challenging as this is, it will have to be the nature of the discussion and debate as proposed.

All this, however, hinges on a basic level of public acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility for past violations. This will need to be matched by a commitment to participating further in exploring the issue of truth in an open and inclusive manner.

5.6.5 Proposed activities

In order to develop the process of acknowledgment (and potentially a deeper investigation into a formal truth recovery process) a number of activities will need to be undertaken.

Firstly, organisations, political parties, institutions, the British and Irish States and Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries will need to make a general acknowledgment in respect of culpability for acts of commission and acts of omission in the past. This acknowledgement should be led and initiated jointly by both British and Irish governments with the expectation that other relevant parties would promptly follow suit.

Reactions to the acknowledgement should be monitored and, if deemed appropriate, a group with local and international expertise should be appointed in a transparent and fair manner. This group should focus on developing an appropriate truth recovery process. It should ensure that inclusive and focused debate takes place at all levels about the feasibility of such a process. It should also undertake an audit of individual cases that are either contested, or about which there is unsatisfactory resolution. The group could also learn from current or past processes such as the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

The group should be required to identify how a process of truth recovery can effectively examine both organisational/institutional and individual responsibilities. It should also consider how such processes

could be used positively to improve relationships and trust in the future. Were such a process to develop, the legal, psychological and political impact on participants, observers, the public and those bereaved and injured or otherwise would need to be considered. In addition, it would have to consider how any process, were it to be developed, could be used to prevent future conflict.

5.6.6 Next steps

- 1) Undertake networking, consultation and discussion about the proposal with related organisations;
- 2) Promote debate at all levels on the value of acknowledgement;
- 3) Encourage the British and Irish governments to lead a process of acknowledgement of their role in the conflict—other organisations and institutions to follow suit promptly;

Then, if acknowledgement is forthcoming:

- 4) Identify resources needed to establish a group composed of individuals and organisations with local and international experience and expertise from a range of perspectives, communities and disciplines to explore the possibility of a suitable, unique and specific model for truth recovery;
- 5) Set up a group composed of individuals and organisations with local and international expertise from a range of perspectives, communities and disciplines in a manner that is fair and transparent;
- 6) Undertake networking, consultation and discussion about the idea of a truth recovery process with related organisations and individuals;
- 7) Promote debate at all levels on truth recovery;
- 8) Promote and debate the issue of an appropriate truth recovery mechanism within government and Assembly structures;
- 9) Conduct an audit of individual cases against both State and non-State actors that remain contested. This would involve inviting submissions and consultation;
- 10) Design—if deemed appropriate and necessary—a truth recovery process specific to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland;
- 11) Consult on the relevance, appropriateness and acceptability of the proposed truth recovery model;
- 12) Examine how the specific truth recovery process would relate to (and complement) other existing mechanisms, e.g. courts cases, inquiries, etc., and
- 13) Implement the truth recovery process.

5.7 Healing through Remembering Initiative

5.7.1 Recommendation

We recommend the establishment of a Healing Through Remembering Initiative managed by a representative Committee that will be a visible expression of society's commitment to move forward while remembering and learning from our violent past. The Healing Through Remembering Initiative will have primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the recommendations of the Healing Through Remembering Report and monitoring its progress, thus ensuring a future where our children can cherish the past and be freed to transform our society for the better.

5.7.2 Purpose

The launch of this Report will hopefully mark a new beginning. Its greatest challenge, however, will be ensuring the commitment and determination of individuals, organisations, academics, the governments and civic, religious and political leaders, among others, to ensure that it is implemented. Therefore, we propose the establishment of the Healing Through Remembering Initiative with the initial task of promoting and facilitating the response to this challenge.

A representative Committee should be selected and it will be the driving force behind the Initiative. The

Initiative will assume overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this Report. It will aim—as a structure outside government—to ensure that the process of remembering is steered by community and local level input, rather than solely by governmental and political interests.

This will be done with a recognition that the recommendations presented here will benefit from amendment, consultation and ongoing inclusive discussion. The Healing Through Remembering Initiative will employ the same methods of learning and growth that culminated in the Healing Through Remembering Project and this Report. The recommendations and the process that follows will have to evolve over time recognising that each strategy for remembering and healing has its time and place.

As a consequence of its work, the Healing Through Remembering Initiative will acquire considerable expertise on methods and processes for dealing with the past both here and abroad. As such it will monitor and document the processes employed to inform other local, national and international healing and remembering initiatives.

The Initiative should also invite critical analysis of its methods (and those of other countries) and seek to identify and share learning gained from comparing and contrasting methods employed in other conflict situations.

Youth—as the custodians of the future—should also be a specific focus of the Initiative and the implementation of this Report. The Initiative should ensure they are an active part of the process of implementation, and any healing and remembering processes that may develop.

In addition, the Initiative will become—over time—a resource for those who wish to discuss, debate and reflect on ways of remembering. This will result in the generation of knowledge on how remembering and healing might be done in the future. To this end, developing models of best practice, and using the healing and remembering process taking place in and about Northern Ireland as an example of success, would be a focus of the Initiative.

The specific purposes of the Healing Through Remembering Initiative would be to:

- Serve as a vehicle for the implementation and development—through discussion, debate and consultation—of the Healing Through Remembering recommendations;
- Raise awareness of areas of society’s life where healing through remembering is not taking place;
- Engage with others in attempting to recognise and identify the particular challenging areas where healing is needed, and search for a resolution;
- Explore and learn from international best practice initiatives especially where these have the potential for local application;
- Be alert to the complications for nationals and immigrants here of unresolved conflicts elsewhere in the world, and
- Develop the Initiative and the healing and remembering process taking place in and about Northern Ireland as successful examples of excellence.

5.7.3 Principles and values

The following principles and values would underpin this initiative:

- Commitment to involve and work with individuals, groups and organisations at all community levels in developing the Healing Through Remembering Initiative and implementing its recommendations;
- Commitment to work collaboratively with—and take guidance from—those already engaged in similar initiatives;
- Commitment to ensure the Initiative is accessible and available to all;
- Responsibility for addressing all the recommendations of the Healing Through Remembering Report as an inter-related collection of realisable options;

- Commitment to transparency and accountability in all activities;
- Commitment to ensure that in its membership and activities the Committee and Initiative promote the values of equality, diversity, non-violence and peace building;
- Commitment to ensure that information, advice and learning is shared widely across all levels of society so that all contributions are valued and used, and
- Commitment to ensure that the work of the Healing Through Remembering Initiative evolves and develops over time as new learning emerges.

5.7.4 Obstacles

There will be an understandable concern, as with all recommendations in this Report, that funds may be diverted from important and necessary activity to support this new work. It will be important to ensure this does not happen. There is much invaluable work undertaken by organisations, groups and individuals in addressing issues related to the conflict. The funding that will be necessary to take forward the Healing Through Remembering recommendations should not come from sources that would threaten the future survival of current service providers.

A vital role for the Committee will be to ensure that funding sought and secured does not come from sources that will directly compete at this level. Adequate and appropriate consultation on the entire process will be necessary to ensure societal and community buy-in to the process. The Initiative will also need to be accessible and its core activities spread widely, rather than being based in one location.

Our vision for the Initiative is one of an organisation that works to continually broaden the range of groups and individuals in the process. If this is not realised the Initiative will become isolated and institutionalised—it will fail. The Initiative will not succeed if the recommendations of this Report are not implemented or if the Initiative becomes a stand-alone project.

The challenge will be to inject into the evolution of the Initiative—consequently realising the recommendations of this Report—the kind of change and development the Healing Through Remembering Board has experienced collectively and individually in working towards this Report. The benchmark of the Initiative’s success will be the extent to which groups and individuals nervous of, or indeed opposed to, a remembering process, can be convinced and involved in the healing process.

5.7.5 Proposed activities

To establish the Healing Through Remembering Initiative, a number of inter-related activities will need to be undertaken. The first activity will have to be the establishment of a Committee to guide the process. A Committee that has the necessary competences—and is broadly acceptable across the social and political spectrum—will need to be set up. This body could draw on the resources that already exist within the current Board, but will also need to look beyond it. Any gaps in expertise and representation will need to be addressed through the appointment of new individuals.

This Committee—which in effect will be the foundation of the Healing Through Remembering Initiative—will have the initial task of ensuring the implementation of this Report. To this end, the Healing Through Remembering Initiative will need to:

- Develop a strategic and operational plan for implementation of the recommendations of this Report. This would include a detailed analysis of how the different recommendations could relate to each other, of the resources needed to implement each recommendation, and of the appropriate monitoring, evaluation and support systems needed;
- Identify appropriate mechanisms aimed at ensuring that both Governments fulfil their respective obligations to the implementation of the Healing Through Remembering recommendations;
- Produce an annual report, monitoring the Healing Through Remembering process as it affects society;
- Develop working partnerships and consult with individuals, local community, voluntary, statutory organisations and others involved in healing and remembering processes;

- Develop effective funding relationships with central governments, i.e. British, Irish and US,—and the EU,—to be supplemented by funds raised from other private sources, and
- Develop appropriate protocols and procedures for working with children and young people.

The Healing Through Remembering Initiative should also—over time—document the archive of the process surrounding the HTR project and its subsequent implementation. It could also engage in international debates concerning best practice for remembering work on an ongoing basis. An essential component of its work could involve the expansion of the network of those engaged in healing through remembering work and implementing strategies for dealing with the past in different contexts.

The Healing Through Remembering Initiative could, through consultation with local community and voluntary groups, explore the creation of a mechanism aimed at informing and shaping government policies relevant to healing and remembering. This might focus on matters of social and public policy, including issues of health, employment, education, criminal justice and transport that directly and indirectly impact on the needs of society and individuals for healing and remembering.

5.7.6 Next steps

To realise the above recommendation we suggest the following course of action be considered:

- 1) Undertake networking, consultation and discussion about the proposal (and these recommendations as a whole) with related organisations, community groups, governments and funding agencies;
- 2) Widely distribute the HTR Report and in doing so actively encourage debate on the value of a Healing Through Remembering Initiative;
- 3) Appoint a representative steering committee to give advice and direction to the Initiative, and to oversee the establishment of a suitably constituted Committee;
- 4) Set in place a representative Committee to guide the implementation of this Report;
- 5) Set in place a strategic and operational plan for the Healing Through Remembering Initiative;
- 6) Visit other international venues where similar work is being done in order to further inform debate and discussion;
- 7) Agree staffing structures necessary for the day-to-day operation of the Initiative;
- 8) Link with government, donor agencies and private bodies encouraging them to support such an initiative;
- 9) Establish an advisory panel made up of individuals with relevant experience and knowledge from other conflicts, and
- 10) Ensure the implementation of the Healing Through Remembering Report.

5.8 Realising the recommendations

5.8.1 Relationships between the options

Although we have presented the six recommendations as stand-alone recommendations, they are related. They should be seen as a collection of related processes, rather than as isolated activities. That said, we realise that each of the options will take time to develop. We have deliberately not attached time frames to each option as we feel the steps outlined—and the debate and consultation that must necessarily follow—will need to unfold at the pace at which society can deal with the issues at hand.

In practice, the recommendation for a network will be instrumental to the implementation of all the recommendations. Information exchange and building of a core group of people involved in remembering and commemoration will be vital. The network, for example, will be the seedbed for many of the exhibits and material ultimately found in the Living Memorial Museum. As was noted above, the Living Memorial Museum should not be the definitive word on how to represent the conflict, but be part of

a network of those working on these issues. The network too can be a place where ideas are generated for the Day of Reflection. It will also be complementary to any acknowledgement process, storytelling or truth recovery process, not to mention all the debates that would precede the realisation of any of these options.

In a similar way, the storytelling initiative and a truth recovery process—were it to develop—would crossover and have linkages. The stories of victims would provide a valuable addition to any process that was attempting to map the collective, institutional and structural aspects of the conflicts of the past. The specific relationships between such processes would need to be investigated as the options are realised. In addition the museum may well become the natural home for the storytelling archive.

Finally, the Healing through Remembering Initiative could provide a dynamic link between all the options and final implementation. It will provide an organisational force for monitoring and evaluating the progress of each recommendation. As was noted above, the Initiative would need to undertake a detailed analysis of how the different recommendations relate to each other. It will be responsible, along with the structures set up under each recommendation, for identifying the resources needed to implement each recommendation. Monitoring, evaluating and providing the correct support systems will also need to be a central consideration for the Initiative and each recommendation.

The larger task behind all the recommendations, however, will be to ensure that the process does not become institutionalised or isolated. The barometer of the success of the entire process—and the Healing Through Remembering Initiative which would be one of the driving forces behind it—will be the degree to which the vision of each recommendation is shared and implemented in an inclusive way that deepens peace building for all in the future.

5.8.2 The way forward

After consultation and reflection the Board of the Healing Through Remembering project is left in no doubt that there is no single solution for the healing process. We all have a part to play in dealing with the memories of the past. Closure and, where possible, moving on will take time and considerable effort. The recommendations presented here do not replace what is already in place and what is developing in other sectors. It is our belief that the recommendations taken as a whole can usefully complement current initiatives, as current initiatives should shape any processes that develop from this Report.

This Report will stand or fall on the commitment of those who are willing to take it forward. While the Healing Through Remembering Board is committed to this, the process is much more than the Board alone can provide. Even if an inclusive Healing Through Remembering Initiative were to develop, it too would only be another piece of a much larger context. Ultimately the remembering and healing process needs to reach out to the entire society. In that regard, we feel the British and Irish governments, and local political leaderships, have special responsibilities.

We call on the British and Irish governments, and local political leaderships, to endorse the spirit of this Report: a spirit that acknowledges that we need to remember, not in order to remain stuck in the past, but rather as a way of learning and changing. We hope this endorsement will then be matched by a commitment to active support and participation in the remembering process. A genuine acknowledgement of hurts caused in the past also needs to be forthcoming. This will require willingness by all to take risks, which are essential to translate the recommendations into dynamic and unique practices and methods for dealing with the past in a spirit of tolerance and respect.

Processes of remembering, reflecting, informing and educating must be sustained at least for another generation. The issuing of this Report is only the beginning of a journey for which hopefully the recommendations can provide useful signposts along the way. We trust that the Report will stimulate new thinking, as individuals and groups consider the recommendations derived from our consultation and develop new methods and models for dealing with the past.

C H A P T E R F I V E

The final say must go to the people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Throughout the Healing Through Remembering process the Board has been impressed time and time again by a strong sense of personal and community resilience and, above all, by the hope for the future expressed by these people and the community organisations that support them. At the same time, it is essential that there is appropriate health and social provision to meet the needs of those who have been severely traumatised. Efforts to offer this support from community groups and the statutory sector need to be fully supported.

We are in no doubt that many people have not merely survived the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, but have moved on to inspire and encourage others. We hope our contribution will do them justice and encourage all to grasp the opportunity of remembering in a constructive way, so that we may move into a new future built on a shared acknowledgement of our conflicted past.

Appendix

Appendix

(A) Board Guidelines of the Project

Below are a series of working guidelines, which members of the Board should consider as a basis for operation. The provision of such guidelines is seen as a protection for both the Healing Through Remembering Project and the individuals concerned.

1. **Decision Making**
It is presumed that decisions, recommendations and statements made by the Healing Through Remembering Project Board Members will reflect the general aspirations of the Project.
2. **Collective Responsibility**
While debate, discussion and disagreement may occur as an item is under review, Board Members should aim to reach a consensus on all important decisions. Collective responsibility will be accepted once decisions are made. Any difficulties, and ways of resolving them, will be discussed and agreed with the Board.
3. **Communication**
The success of the Project will depend on effective communication with outside groups, individuals and the wider public. Board Members will need to be sensitive to both what is communicated and how. Members are encouraged to discuss the work of the Project with interested parties using the short agreed statements developed and agreed by the Board as a basis for discussion. Members should only approach groups or individuals in the name of the Project when this has been agreed by the Board, the Working Group or the Chairperson. Media communications and public relations will normally be the responsibility of the Chairperson or a consultant/advisor to the Project.
4. **Confidentiality**
Confidentiality is of great importance in developing a trusting relationship between Project Board members themselves, the Secretariat servicing the Project and the Project Funders. All Project Board members and members of the Secretariat servicing the Project are expected to maintain and respect the principle of confidentiality during and after their period of work with the project. The detailed content of discussions held at Board meetings should be kept confidential to Board Members. It will be important to differentiate between such detailed discussions, explorations essential to our journey of discovery and decision-making, on the one hand and resolved statements on the Project, its work and recommendations on the other. While the former are confidential to the Board, the latter can and should be communicated by Board members.
5. **Board Members and Advisors**
Advisors and Consultants are employed under contracts of service, which have been agreed by the working group and the consultant concerned. These consultants and advisors will try to assist Board members with all reasonable requests for assistance. However, if a request is made which may impose undue demands on their time, and disrupt an already established work programme the Advisors will discuss this with the Chairperson, who will endeavour to achieve a satisfactory arrangement with all concerned.

Agreed Values:

- a) The project will recognise and appreciate the fact that diversity of opinion, belief, skills, experience and community background exists among the Board. This will be regarded as a strength.
- b) Board membership will be monitored to ensure a balance in the gender, religious belief, political opinion and social status of members.
- c) There will be respect for the fact that decision-making processes benefit from hearing and accommodating diversity of opinion.
- d) Board membership will be on an individual basis. While it is understood ratification may be sought from employers (or organisations with which an individual is involved) for participation in the project, no organisation has the capacity to replace an individual board member.
- e) There will be a commitment to fair and equitable ways of working and access to decision-making structures and processes.
- f) There will be recognition that being part of a team brings both rights and responsibilities; consultation and empowerment being matched by loyalty and co-operation.
- g) There will be recognition and commitment to work being carried out in a trustworthy, responsible and competent manner and with integrity, honesty and courtesy.

(B) Project Board and staff

Project Board

Seán Coll
Pat Conway
Will Glendinning
Harold Good
Maureen Hetherington
Alan McBride
Eilish McCabe
Roy McClelland (Chairperson)
Jackie McMullan
Micháela Mackin

Kevin Mullan
Rodney Murphy
Cathy Nelis
David Nicholl
Tom Sheridan
Marie Smyth
Martin Snoddon
Dave Wall
Oliver Wilkinson

Consultants

Alex Boraine
Brandon Hamber
Kate Turner

Researcher

(March – May 2002)
Alex Tennant

(C) Project Board short biographies

As stated in the Report (*Chapter Two and Three*), it was agreed by Board members that they all represented themselves and not any specific organisations or groups during the course of this project. It was acknowledged that, although the Board was from a broad spectrum of society, it could not claim to represent every voice in and outside of Northern Ireland with a stake in conflicts of the past.

Seán Coll

Mr Seán Coll is currently the Community Support Fieldworker with the Victims Programme of Sperrin Lakeland Health & Social Care Trust. He is also Chair of the Board of Directors of Victim Support Northern Ireland. He lives in Co Cavan but has worked in Fermanagh and Tyrone for the past ten years.

Pat Conway

Mr Pat Conway is currently Director of Development and Communications of the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). He previously initiated and managed the Base 2 Project (this project provided a crisis intervention service for those subject to paramilitary threat).

Will Glendinning

Mr Will Glendinning is former Chief Executive of Community Relations Council, now working as a consultant on cultural diversity, community relations and transition from conflict. Will was also an Alliance Party councillor for a West Belfast ward in the Belfast City Council, 1977 to 1987 and from 1982 to 1986, he was an elected member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the early 1970s he served in the UDR in Co. Armagh.

Harold Good

Rev Harold Good, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, 2001 – 2002, has served congregations in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and the USA. Currently a member of the NI Human Rights Commission, he is a former director of the Corrymeela Centre Ballycastle, Chairman of NIACRO and one-time prison chaplain at HMP Crumlin Road.

Maureen Hetherington

Ms Maureen Hetherington was a founder member and former chair of An Crann/The Tree, an organisation set up to help people tell and hear the stories of the troubles. After the three-year plan, she then set up (in collaboration with Holywell Trust) Towards Understanding and Healing, an organisation that facilitates 'positive encounter dialogue groups' between all those involved in and affected, directly and indirectly, by the conflict.

Alan McBride

Mr Alan McBride currently works as a Youth Worker with the WAVE Trauma Centre, (an organisation that works with victims of conflict). He is also the victims representative on the Northern Ireland Civic Forum. Alan was a pig butcher when he lost his wife Sharon and father in law Desmond in a bomb during 1993. He has been involved in a number of cross community projects with the YMCA challenging sectarianism among young people.

Eilish McCabe

Ms Eilish McCabe is a founder member of Relatives For Justice, a human rights group working for truth and justice. Eilish is from Aughnacloy on the border with Co Monaghan. Her youngest brother was shot dead by the security forces.

Roy McClelland

Professor Roy McClelland of the Department of Mental Health, QUB is Assistant Head of the School of Medicine, QUB. He is also a Consultant Psychiatrist at Belfast City Hospital Trust. He is Chairman of the Irish Association of Suicidology and a trustee for the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation.

Jackie McMullan

Mr Jackie McMullan is a former republican prisoner and is currently working for Coiste na n-Iarchimí.

Micháela Mackin

Ms Micháela Mackin, is Director of the Funding Development Programme with the Community Relations Council. Her preceding work with the Council as Victims Group Officer from August 1999 to July 2000 involved the administration and development of the Victim Support Grant Scheme. This small grant-aiding scheme supported many new and established groups working within the victims sector.

Kevin Mullan

Fr Kevin Mullan was ordained in 1971 and he has served in the Diocese of Derry at Pennyburn, Galliagh, Limavady and Castlefin. In 1991 he returned to minister in his hometown of Omagh.

Rodney Murphy

Constable Rodney Murphy is a serving police officer with over 15 years experience in police welfare work.

Cathy Nelis

Ms Cathy Nelis is co-ordinator with Cúnamh, a community led support project aimed at developing and providing mechanisms of emotional support for victims/survivors of the conflict.

David Nicholl

Mr David Nicholl is a loyalist community worker from Londonderry and works within the Protestant/Unionist community as a fundraiser for various community groups within the city and district. He is a former member of the Ulster Democratic Party Talks Team and Chairman of the Ulster Community Action Network, (UCAN), which examines human rights abuses inflicted on the Protestant Community.

Thomas Sheridan

Mr Tom Sheridan is currently employed as an office manager. He is a former member of the U.D.R. (Awarded Bronze Cross For Gallantry for trying to save an injured man after a gun and bomb attack in West Belfast.) He has been working part-time for the last five years as Project Manager for Positive Action, a victim support group in North Down working for both current and past members of the security forces.

Marie Smyth

Dr Marie Smyth is Chief Executive of the Belfast-based Institute for Conflict Research, formerly The Cost of the Troubles Study, and in the School of Policy Studies at the University of Ulster. She has researched and written on, among other things, the impact of the Troubles on the population, on children, human service and housing professionals; and informal justice in the post conflict period.

Martin Snoddon

Mr Martin Snoddon is the Centre Director of the Multi-Agency Resource Centre, a group with a vision to alleviate conflict related trauma. Martin is a former combatant in the N.I. conflict and had been a political prisoner for 15 years, 1975-1990.

Dave Wall

Mr Dave Wall was previously Chief Executive of NIACRO. He has extensive experience in the voluntary sector, having previously worked in the Belfast Law Centre and Citizens Advice Bureaux. In 1998 he was appointed as a Commissioner with the Sentence Review Commission.

Oliver Wilkinson

Mr Oliver Wilkinson is Chief Executive Officer of Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI). He has worked within the criminal justice system, with people involved in and affected by ordinary criminal activity and also with people affected by our conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

(D) Staff and Consultant short biographies

Alex Boraine

Independent Consultant

Dr Alex Boraine is the former Deputy Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He is President of the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), dividing his time between New York and South Africa. ICTJ works in an advisory capacity in a number of countries including Indonesia, the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda.

Brandon Hamber

Independent Facilitator

Mr Brandon Hamber worked for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in South Africa. Now based in Belfast he is an Associate of Democratic Dialogue and was a Fellow in the School of Psychology at Queen's University. He works as an independent consultant to the Healing Through Remembering Project.

Kate Turner

Project Co-ordinator

Ms Kate Turner is a free-lance organiser in the voluntary sector. She has been involved in this work since the first visit of Dr Boraine in February 1999. She works as an independent consultant to the Healing Through Remembering Project.

Alex Tennant

Researcher

Ms Alex Tennant is an independent researcher, and is currently completing a PhD on how the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland has been addressed since the Agreement of 1998. She worked as a researcher for the HTR project from March – May 2002.

(E) Submission form

Submission Form

The *Healing Through Remembering Project* is undertaking a consultation process on how people should remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. This is no small task but it is important that all communities and groups views are reflected. The purpose of the consultation is to produce a document outlining a range of options for dealing with the past and truth recovery, to be submitted to the various governments by March 2002.

Your Details:

Name:
Organisation (if appropriate)
Address:
Tel:
E-mail:

Do you want your name OMITTED from the list of contributors in the project report? Yes/No
If YES then how do you wish to be identified? eg "Shopkeeper during the 1970s" eg "Wife shot dead in 19...."
I wish to be identified as:

Healing Through Remembering
Unit 4 River's Edge

15 Ravenhill Road
Belfast BT6 8DN
T: 028 9073 9601
F: 028 9073 9602
E: info@healingthroughremembering.org
W: www.healingthroughremembering.org

A P P E N D I X

Principal Question: How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?

Sub questions:

What should be remembered?

What form could the remembering take? For example, individual processes, community processes (e.g. storytelling, art exhibitions, etc.) and/or national strategies such as truth commissions and/or inquiries and/or trials in the courts, etc.

What could be the hurdles to such processes?

What could be the implications and consequences of such processes?

Have you attached further sheets?

Yes/No

If yes how many?

(F) Individuals and organisations participating in the consultation process

Groups and individuals contacted

Representatives of the following groups met with members of the HTR Project for discussion and/or updating during the course of the project:

Alliance Party	Long March
Apprentice Boys	Mediation Network
An Crann/The Tree	NI Council Ethnic Minorities
Ballymore Open Centre	Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition
Blind Centre NI	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations with responsibility for children and armed conflict (New York) - Olara Otunnu
Boston College	
Breaking the Silence	
British Irish Secretariat	Omagh Academy
British Medical Association	Omagh Churches Forum
Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana (William Kofi Ahadzie)	Orange Order
Christian Brothers School, Omagh	Pat Finucane Centre
Civic Forum	Police Ombudsman
Committee for the Administration of Justice	Presbyterian Church in Ireland Peace and Peacemaking Committee
Community Relations Council	Relatives for Justice
Derry City Council	RUC Colleague Support Group
Democratic Unionist Party	Shared City Initiative
Edgehill Theological College (Peace and Reconciliation Project)	SDLP
Embassy of the United States of America	Sinn Féin
ExPac	To Reflect and Trust, Derry
FAIR	Tullyalley District & Development Groups
Fírinne	Transitional Justice, University of Ulster
Fountain/Wapping Lane Association	Ulster Unionist Party
Holywell Trust	Victims’ Unit, OFMDFM
Holos Project	Victims’ Liason Unit, NIO
INCORE	VSNI
Irish School of Ecumenics	Warrington Peace Centre
	West Tyrone Voice

(G) Facilitations carried out by Board Members or Consultants

Facilitations were carried out with these organisations at the request of the organisation:

Children's Law Centre
Community Dialogue
Corrymeela
Cúnamh
Democratic Dialogue
FACT
Family Trauma Centre
LIVE Programme Glencree
NIACRO
Rural Network
SDAHW Group
WAVE
WAVE Youth
Youth Initiatives

(H) Those Interviewed

Sir Ken Bloomfield
Most Rev Sean Brady
Prof Brice Dickson and Mr Tom Donnelly
Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop
Right Rev Robin Eames
Ms Loretta Lynch
Ms Inez McCormack
Dr Duncan Morrow
Prof Bill Rolston

(J) Submissions received

Named Individuals

These individuals gave permission on their submission form for their names to be used:

Reggie Askew, Corrymeela Community
Elizabeth & Harvey Bicker, Civic Forum
Ursula Birthistle, University of Ulster
David Boyd
Dominic Bryan
Seán Coll, Victim Support Chair & HTR Board member
Pat Conway
Kevin Cooper
A Dunlop (Miss)
Eileen Cairnduff
John Cleary
Marie Veronica Connolly. "One of the many victims that the troubles created"
Jo Dover, The Tim Parry Jonathan Ball Trust
Ivan Flack. "41 year old retired Police Officer"
Pat Gallagher. "Father was shot"

A P P E N D I X

Will Glendinning
Rev Harold Good, Methodist President and HTR Board member
Angela Heffron. "My older brother was shot dead"
Maureen Hetherington, HTR Board member
Trevor Holmes
Lord Hylton
Patricia Jamshidi, Bahá'í Council for NI
Saoirse Johnston
Raman Kapur (Dr), Director Threshold and Course Director School of Psychology, QUB
Maise Lavery, Wave
Caitlin Leffel, Amherst College
Stephen McAuley
Alan McBride, WAVE & HTR Board member
Eilish McCabe
Brendan McAllister, Mediation Network
Terence McCaughey
Simon McClay, WAVE
Seán McColgan
Roger McGinty (Dr), NI Life and Times Survey
James McKeever
Aileen McKinley DWWC
Richard McLernon & Elizabeth Groves
Edward McLaughlin
Sean Mackle, School of Arts and Design UU
Lillian Maguire (Mrs), "Husband murdered 1976"
Dr S Mannion, Museum
Norman Montgomery
Paddy Mooney
Kevin Mullan
Rodney Murphy, HTR Board member
Yvonne Naylor, Corrymeela & Irish School of Ecumenics
David Nicholl, HTR Board member
David O'Donnell
Mary O'Kane, WAVE
Mark Pilling, Ucan
Aly Renwick, "Author of Hidden Wounds - The problems of NI veterans in Civvy Street"
John and Rita Restorick
Hugh S Rowan
W H Rutherford, Corrymeela Community
Ann Service,
Lisa Scully-O'Grady
Tom Sheridan
Marie Smyth
Colin Thompson
Dave Wall, HTR Board member
Margaret Ward
Jeanette Warke, Shared City Project
Ron Weiner
Oliver Wilkinson

Individuals names withheld

These individuals chose to withhold their names, but used a sentence to describe themselves in their submission. Below is the way the individuals described themselves:

A combatant who went to war – rather than one to whom the war came.
Anon (identity unknown)
Anon (identity unknown)
Anon (name requested withheld)
Anonymous (name requested withheld)
Completely Innocent Person of the Troubles
Daughter of Paul and Dorothy Nelson, killed at La Mon - February 1978
Father of an English soldier killed by P[rovisional] IRA
Father of Murdered RUC son shot by PIRA
From an Innocent Victim's widow
Innocent Victim murdered 1972
Name withheld for fear of attack from your murderous board

Organisations

Names of organisations who made a submission and agreed on their submission form to have their name listed:

An Crann/The Tree	PAIN
Breaking the Silence	Presbyterian Church in Ireland Peace and Peacemaking Committee
Coiste na n-Irchimí	PSNI
Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ)	Relatives for Justice
Community Relations Council (CRC)	Smashing Times Theatre
Cúnamh	South East Fermanagh Foundation, Victims Group
FACT	STEER Mental Health
FAIR	Tek2
Family Trauma Centre	Tyrone Community Dialogue
Fitzroy Presbyterian Church	WAVE
Irish Council of Churches	WAVE Youth
NIACRO	Youth Initiatives
Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association	
NUS-USI Student Movement	

Groups

Names of groups who made a submission and agreed on their submission form to have their name listed:

A family of one of the disappeared
Sixth formers Christian Brothers School Omagh
Sixth formers Omagh Academy

N O T E S

N O T E S

N O T E S



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info@healingthroughremembering.org
website:
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