# Attitudes to Difference

## Young people's attitudes to, and experiences of contact with people from different minority ethnic and migrant communities in Northern Ireland

**NCB NI and ARK YLT**

NCB's vision is a society in which all children and young people are valued and their rights are respected.

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# Executive summary

The Attitudes to Differences project was initiated by NCB NI because of existing gaps in research on relations between young people born and raised in Northern Ireland who have a white Irish or British ethnic identity and those from minority ethnic communities – whether they were born in Northern Ireland or are newly arrived.

The **overall aim** of the research was to investigate in some depth the attitudes and experiences of young people in relation to minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. It was expected that information would inform what, if any, interventions are needed in order to build cohesion between different groups in Northern Irish society for the future.

## Research methodology

The research used a variety of methods to elicit the views of young people:

- the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey, sent to all 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland, which resulted in 955 responses
- whole-school surveys of seven post-primary schools in Northern Ireland, which resulted in a total of 3,800 pupils' responses
- Talkshops in the seven schools with groups of 20 students, which was facilitated by young researchers
- one-to-one interviews with students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## Key findings

### *Ethnic identity and background of respondents*

Young people in Northern Ireland use a number of different markers to describe ethnic identity. These are:

- place of belonging/origin
- language
- culture
- size of the group
- food and dress
- religious background
- family origins.

These markers of identity can be used alone or in combination.

The young people in the Talkshops did not consider Irish Travellers to be a minority ethnic group.

Young people in Northern Ireland confuse ethnic identity with religious and national identity. This is particularly the case with younger participants. Older young people had a better understanding of the concept of ethnic

identity and could therefore differentiate more easily between national, ethnic and religious identity.

Only 58 per cent of young people who said that English was not their first language considered themselves to be part of a minority ethnic group.

### *Contact and friendship patterns*

According to the YLT survey, young people from Northern Ireland are most likely to have contact with members of the Chinese, Polish, Black African or Caribbean communities, as opposed to members of the South Asian or Portuguese communities or those from other European countries. Also, 12 per cent of young people reported having contact with members of the Irish Travelling community.

Nineteen per cent of YLT respondents have no contact with members of any minority ethnic group, while 37 per cent indicate that they have no friends from any minority ethnic group.

When participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that there was little chance of them becoming friends with people of different races and cultures unless they attended the same school, a difference was noted in responses. Respondents aged 16 and over tended to disagree with the statement more than those who were younger (41 per cent and 37 per cent respectively, $p<0.000$), which would suggest that older young people have slightly more opportunities to meet people from other ethnic backgrounds, for example through part-time work, than their younger counterparts.

Young people in Northern Ireland are three times more likely to make contact with members of minority ethnic groups in school than through social events or through work. Schools therefore have an important role to play in shaping attitudes and encouraging positive relationships between pupils from minority ethnic groups and migrants and those from Northern Ireland.

Contact alone, however, does not mean that positive relationships and friendships will automatically result. Rather, it is the quality of that contact that is vitally important.

The NCB school survey revealed that those attending the planned integrated school[1] appeared to have more positive attitudes towards minority ethnic groups than the other schools that took part in this research.

Young men were more likely than young women to meet members of other minority ethnic groups through sports clubs.

Despite higher levels of contact through sports, young men were also more likely to express a dislike of people from minority ethnic groups. Nine per cent of young males compared to 6 per cent of young females said they felt

[1] Planned integrated schools are school which are deliberately mixed in terms of the two main Christian denominations in NI. They allocate places on the following basis: 40% Protestant; 40% Catholic and 20% other faiths/none.

unfavourable or very unfavourable towards people from minority ethnic groups.

In the school with the highest proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some respondents quite openly made negative comments about minority ethnic groups during the Talkshops. These findings are ironic and would seem to contest Tajfel's contact theory. Hence it is not enough to expect contact alone to result in positive attitudes towards a peer group from a minority ethnic background.

### *Experience of xenophobic bullying*

Young people from minority ethnic groups are significantly more likely to have personally experienced and witnessed racist attacks and bullying. Of the young people who reported that they had been bullied in school, about half of respondents belonging to minority ethnic groups said they had experienced bullying in the previous two months, compared with less than one-third of respondents who did not belong to a minority ethnic group.

Males were marginally more likely than females to be affected by xenophobic bullying and harassment.

According to young people racism is not replacing sectarianism in Northern Ireland: their belief is that sectarianism has not gone away and that both racism and sectarianism are prevalent in the population.

### *Influencing factors*

Similar patterns were recorded among the NCB school survey respondents and the YLT respondents in terms of factors that influence young people's opinions.

For the NCB school survey respondents, the family and school (approximately 30 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) have the greatest influence on opinions in relation to minority ethnic groups, followed by friends (approximately 12 per cent), the media (approximately 8 per cent) and the church or place of worship (approximately 10 per cent).

For YLT respondents, the family (over 30 per cent for both males and females) and friends (approximately 17 per cent) are the main sources of influence, with school and the media coming third and fourth respectively.

Family and school are generally associated with more positive views towards minority ethnic groups, whereas young people whose main sources of information are the media and friends hold the most negative views**.**

### *A future in Northern Ireland – staying or leaving?*

Young people from minority ethnic groups are twice as likely to leave Northern Ireland than those who are white British or Irish. However, for all groups over one-third are unsure about whether they will stay or leave.

 

The main reasons for wanting to leave include studying, seeking better job opportunities or a better future in general. Only very small numbers in either category cite the Troubles[2] as a reason for leaving Northern Ireland.

### *Young people's views on inward migration and race relations*

Young people demonstrated an ambivalence towards those from minority ethnic backgrounds. On the one hand, different cultures and traditions are seen as interesting, even entertaining or novel. On the other, there is the perception that competition for employment is due to the arrival of minority ethnic groups and there is a distrust of those seen as 'different'. This ambivalence may be due to a number of reasons, including lack of opportunity for young people to discuss the issues explored in this study and/or misinformation.

There were significant differences between the views of respondents who were members of minority groups and those who were not in responses to all statements in the NCB school survey. These statements related to attitudes towards foreign workers, the value of cultural diversity, fear and mistrust of other races and the potential for friendships to develop outside of school.

For example, 68 per cent of all respondents agreed that there was a lot of hatred towards foreign workers in Northern Ireland, whereas only 47 per cent of those from minority groups felt that there was a lot of hatred towards foreign workers (NCB school survey).

When asked about their opinions of recent terror attacks, 44 per cent of those with a white Irish or British ethnic identity thought that these attacks were the cause of fear of other races as opposed to only 26 per cent of those from minority backgrounds.

## Implications for policy and practice

Education has a key role to play in enabling young people to explore ethnic identity. Schools need to create safe and secure environments where attitudes to difference can be explored honestly. This research confirms the need for setting aside curriculum time for subjects such as Learning for Life and Work (LLW).

The Department of Education (DE) need to consider teacher training policies and their potential for enhancing teachers' ability to address issues such as cultural awareness and racism.

The youth service, both statutory and voluntary, also has a key role to play in providing meaningful contact between different groups. Initiatives such as JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence) need to be built upon and what is learned must be shared.

[2] The Northern Irish political conflict.

The Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) needs to continue its work. Future work should explore what skills and resources are needed to ensure that all pupils benefit from the changing demographic landscape.

Young people need clear and accurate messages so that they are not confused by misinformation about minority ethnic groups and migration. The media have a significant role to play here. However, a public education campaign is also needed which should involve the statutory, community and voluntary sectors but which should be convened by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).

There is a need for leadership at both the political and community levels to promote better relations between different groups. In particular, the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) should continue to take the lead in coordinating strategies across government, which aim to achieve a more inclusive and cohesive society.

As many young people are involved in sporting and cultural activities, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) have an important role to play in encouraging truly shared experiences for all young people.

Churches and faith organisations need to work more closely together at all levels to foster better understanding between different faith groups. The leadership in such organisations also need to model best practice.

## Conclusion

It is clear from this research that young people need more information regarding people from different groups, both minority ethnic groups and migrants. They also need time and space to explore sensitive issues such as attitudes to difference, racism and migration. It is also clear that schools want to understand and meet the needs of all of their pupils, both indigenous and migrants.

Northern Ireland now has the opportunity to equip future generations with the knowledge and skills they need to live together peacefully. NCB and ARK (Action Research Knowledge) trust that this research will be used effectively so as to contribute to this goal in order that we all celebrate diversity.

 

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# Introduction

This research study was conducted by NCB Northern Ireland and ARK Northern Ireland. It was funded by the OFMDFM. The project was supported by a cross-departmental team from the DE and OFMDFM. The fieldwork was conducted in the autumn and winter of 2008.

NCB's vision is a society in which all children and young people are valued and their rights respected. We are dedicated to advancing their health and well-being across every aspects of their lives, and aim to achieve this through: reducing inequalities in childhood, ensuring children and young people have a strong voice in all matters that affect their lives, promoting positive images, enhancing health and well-being, and encouraging positive and supportive family and other environments.

As a membership and infrastructure support agency, participation and partnership are at the heart of everything NCB deliver. NCB host the many single-issue or single client groups, networks, fora, councils and partnership programmes that operate under our charitable status, and also provide essential information on policy, research and best practice across the sector as a whole. NCB reach, support and inform those working with and on behalf of children, their families and carers and, through our young members' scheme – Young NCB – children and young people themselves.

Working from an evidence-informed perspective and whether influencing policy, practice and service developments or undertaking high-quality research, NCB work collaboratively to ensure the best possible outcomes for all. For further information, visit www.ncb.org.uk

ARK is a joint initiative by Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster, the two universities in Northern Ireland. ARK's mission is to make social and political information on Northern Ireland available to the widest possible audience. One of ARK's empirical research projects is Young Life and Times (YLT), an annual study of 16-year-olds. The YLT study comprises a large-scale postal survey, and also involves qualitative follow-up projects, which often directly involve 16-year-olds in the design of the study and the data collection and analysis (for more information, see www.ark.ac.uk/ylt).

NCB and ARK have previously worked together successfully on research projects on school bullying and community relations. For the Attitudes to Difference project, the two organisations teamed up again to collect information on young people's attitudes to, experiences of and contact with, people from minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.

## Research aims and objectives

The Attitudes to Differences project was initiated by NCB because of existing gaps in research on relations between young people born and raised in Northern Ireland who have a white Irish or British ethnic identity and those from minority ethnic communities – whether they were born in

Northern Ireland or are newly arrived. NCB felt that it was particularly important to elicit young people's current views in order to gain some insight into community relations between those from Northern Ireland and those who are newly arrived. In addition, this information will inform what, if any, interventions are needed in order to build cohesion between different groups in our society for the future.

The **overall aim** of the proposed research was to investigate in some depth the attitudes and experiences of 16-year-olds in relation to minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland.

The following **objectives** were identified for the research project, using the 2008 YLT survey.

- To gather the views of a large sample of 16-year-olds living in Northern Ireland on their attitudes to and experience of people from different minority ethnic groups and the quality of community or 'ethnic' relations in Northern Ireland, using structured postal questionnaires.
- To gather the views of a large number of post-primary school pupils regarding their attitudes to, and experience of, contact with people from different minority ethnic groups and the quality of community or 'ethnic' relations in Northern Ireland, by administering structured questionnaires to pupils in schools known to have a larger-than-average minority ethnic composition. One way of measuring this is through the numbers of pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). Relevant questions asked in the 2008 YLT survey were to be replicated in the NCB school survey to allow for comparisons to be made.
- To explore in more depth the attitudes, experiences and behaviours of a smaller sample of young people about relationships between majority and minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, through interactive group discussions (Talkshops).
- To explore the views and experiences of a group of teenagers from minority ethnic groups about living in Northern Ireland, their assessment of 'race' relations and what they would wish to see changed, using interviews.
- To enhance the relevance of the research by training and supporting 10 young people, including some from minority ethnic groups, as peer researchers to work alongside the adult research team.
- To analyse the data, including, where appropriate, comparative analysis of the responses of young people from different minority ethnic/migrant groups, and report the findings within an up-to-date policy and research review, including a young person's summary of the research.
- To produce a teaching resource based on the findings, to be made available online through ARK in schools.
- To work with policy-makers and service providers in Northern Ireland to take forward the key messages coming from the young people.

# Policy context and literature review

## Population changes

In recent years there has been a rapid change in the make-up of the population of Northern Ireland, through inward migration of workers both from the rest of the UK and elsewhere and the arrival of some asylum seekers and refugees.

This can be seen as a result of the more favourable climate in Northern Ireland, both politically and economically. With the cessation of open socio-religious conflict from the mid-1990s, Northern Ireland has, until recently, experienced an ongoing decline in unemployment rates. Fostered by the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' in the Irish Republic, IT and technology-based industries have established their European centres on the island of Ireland, taking advantage of government incentives, the relatively low pay compared to the rest of Europe and the largely well-educated, English-speaking workforce in both parts of Ireland. It is useful to note, however, that given the downturn in global economic activity and recession in both the UK and Ireland, the pattern of migration may change post-2009.

When the European Union (EU) was extended in 2004, the UK was one of the few countries that granted citizens from most new EU member states (almost) unconditional access to their labour market. The availability of jobs that could not be filled by people living in the UK and the favourable conditions created for citizens from the EU accession states (known as the A8[3]) to work in the UK has resulted in a dramatic increase in inward migration to the UK since 2004. Eastern European countries have provided a large pool of well-qualified workers, as citizens from the accession countries do not need work permits, can travel freely and willingly take lesser-paid jobs that companies struggled to fill before. So attractive was this prospect that recruitment agencies were specially set up to attract migrant workers from the new A8 member states. In addition, the NHS and other employers have also been recruiting directly from countries such as the Philippines and Poland.

Northern Ireland has experienced inward migration similar to that taking place in other parts of the UK. Interestingly, from September 2002 to October 2003 – that is, prior to the recent EU extension – six out of the top 10 applicant countries for work permits in Northern Ireland were A8 states (Jarman 2004).

According to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), which produces migration reports for Northern Ireland each year, the population of Northern Ireland increased by 9,800 due to migration during the year 2006–07 (NISRA 2007a). This increase is similar to that of the previous year and, importantly, for the second year in succession was

[3] A8 countries are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. They joined the EU in 2004. A2 countries are Romania and Bulgaria. They joined the EU in 2007.

'larger than natural growth' (NISRA 2007a, p.1). However, these figures refer to the flow of migrants as opposed to the number of migrants who live here at any given time (also known as stock figures). NISRA estimates that the stock figure for A8 migrants alone was approximately 30,000 at the end of 2007 (NISRA 2007b).

In addition to the NISRA statistics, there are a number of options available for quantifying the number of migrants in the population. Depending on the source of information used, estimates for migration to Northern Ireland vary between 14,000 (Health Card registrations) 15,000 (Worker Registration Scheme) and 16,000 (number of National Insurance applications received) (DSD 2006). Across the different schemes, it appears that Polish, Lithuanian and Slovakian migrants/applicants comprised the majority of applicants. Similar to the problems faced in Great Britain, the authors of the NISRA report reflect on some limitations to accurately measuring inward migration to Northern Ireland (National Statistics Centre for Demography 2005). This suggests the actual number of migrants living in Northern Ireland is likely to be considerably higher.

In addition to migrant workers, others come to Northern Ireland as asylum seekers or refugees. The Refugee Action Group (RAG) estimates that there are now around 2,000 refugees living in Northern Ireland (RAG 2007). It is currently very difficult to obtain numbers for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland as they tend to be counted as a whole UK number. However, other research has indicated that at any given time 100 asylum seekers, at least 60 of whom are children, are being supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)[4] in Northern Ireland (Geraghty and others forthcoming).

This recent rapid population change has implications not just for the labour market, but also for service providers. Migrants and their families need appropriate housing, they will at least occasionally need to access the Health Service and they are obliged to send their children to schools or will need childcare provision if their children are younger.

However, the lack of ethnic monitoring by statutory bodies (despite the S75 duty – see below) has been highlighted several times (see, for example, SHSSB and others undated). This means not only that it is impossible to measure impact but also that there is likely to be an underinvestment in services targeted at minority ethnic groups (SHSSB and others undated).

## Attitudes to people from minority ethnic groups

These substantial population changes, which have taken place in a relatively short period of time, pose considerable challenges to community cohesion in Northern Ireland, especially at a time when the country is still trying to come to terms with its sectarian and violent past. While communities in large settlements in Great Britain have been exposed to inward migration for a long time, the conflict in Northern Ireland resulted in a relatively small

[4] Funded by the Home Office via the UK Borders Agency (UKBA).

number of foreign nationals migrating to Northern Ireland up until the end of the 1990s.

It seems reasonable to assume that the welcome which members of minority ethnic communities and migrant workers receive in Northern Ireland (whether they have lived here for generations or whether they are newly arrived in Northern Ireland) will contribute to their general health and well-being. Research suggests that Northern Ireland is not a very welcoming country. Belfast has been described as the 'Hate Capital of Europe' (see Gilligan and Lloyd 2006), and Borooah and Mangan (2007) suggest that Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of bigoted people in the Western world, with 19 per cent of Northern Irish respondents saying that they did not want foreign workers to be their next-door neighbours compared to 11 per cent of respondents from other participating countries. Indeed, a survey undertaken by the Institute of Conflict Research (ICR) among migrant workers in Northern Ireland in 2004 (Bell, Jarman and Lefebvre 2004) showed that over half of survey respondents (51 per cent) had experienced some kind of discrimination: 30 per cent had been verbally abused; 23 per cent had experienced perceived discrimination; 19 per cent had been harassed; and 8 per cent had been physically assaulted. Nineteen per cent of respondents admitted to not feeling secure in their own homes. Similarly, Animate and others highlighted that migrant workers in Northern Ireland faced racism at both a social and an institutional level (Animate and others 2007). Another report also highlights that one-fifth of migrant workers experienced discrimination because of 'their country of origin' (NHSSB and NICEM 2007).

These figures are supported by the Prison Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) statistics of racially motivated hate crime in recent years. Records show that 976 incidents took place in 2007/08 (PSNI 2008). This figure is actually down from the previous year (1,047 in 2006/07). However, while there is a decrease, it is still of concern that in absolute figures there were still almost 1,000 hate-related incidents reported in Northern Ireland. Examples such as the recent violence following the football match between Northern Ireland and Poland and the attacks on four Hungarian women in the Village area of south Belfast do not indicate an improvement in relations between the settled white population and newcomers (*Belfast Telegraph* 17.04.09). Indeed, it could be argued that such events are indicators of tensions within community relations.

The Children's Law Centre and Save the Children have also highlighted that 'cultural diversity is not generally respected or valued in Northern Ireland' (2008, p.13). They point to actions such as harassment, discrimination, stereotyping and institutional racism as evidence of this.

Since the end of the 1990s, more attention has been given to the circumstances in which minority ethnic communities live in Northern Ireland. This can be seen as a direct result of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the Northern Ireland Act, 1998, specifically Section 75 (S75) of this Act, which provides the legal framework for the provision of equality of opportunity for people living in Northern Ireland, including for people of different racial groups. Despite this legal framework, Connolly and Keenan (2000a) found that the perception was still common that the number of

people from minority ethnic groups living in Northern Ireland was so small that their problems were of little relevance. Interestingly, Irwin and Dunn (1997) found that a majority of participants in their research even felt that the Northern Ireland Peace Process would actually make matters worse for minority ethnic communities. Only 58 per cent of respondents thought that race relation legislation would help to stop racial discrimination.

Unfortunately, some recent Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) and YLT statistics confirm Irwin and Dunn's predictions. This is despite over a decade having passed since the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and since the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 (which came into force in January 2000) were enacted. In particular, S75 (2) of the latter requires public authorities 'to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group'.

From 2005 to 2008, the NILT surveys included questions on attitudes to minority ethnic communities. People recognise that there is prejudice, with over 90 per cent of respondents saying that they believed there was at least a little prejudice in relation to minority ethnic groups. However, opinion was divided on the extent to which this prejudice exists. The most recent (2008) survey found that 44 per cent of respondents thought that there was a lot of prejudice against people from minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, but a further 49 per cent believed there was a little prejudice.

Around one in three NILT respondents conceded that they **themselves** were a little prejudiced towards minority ethnic communities. Thus, compared to 1994, when this question was also asked, prejudice levels had trebled, as shown in Table 1.

***Table 1: Respondents saying they themselves are in relation to people from minority ethnic communities***

| | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1994*** | **2005** | **2006** | **2007** |
| Very prejudiced | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| A little prejudiced | 10 | 24 | 23 | 32 |
| Not at all prejudiced | 88 | 73 | 75 | 66 |
| Don't know | <1 | <1 | 1 | 0 |

* In 1994 the term 'different race' was used.

Source: ARK, 2008a and 2008b

Connolly and Keenan (2000a) found similar evidence of increasing prejudice towards minority ethnic communities, while Gilligan and Lloyd (2006) report that there was no significant difference in prejudice levels according to gender and social class.

Prejudice levels toward new migrants from Eastern Europe seem particularly high. In 2006, NILT respondents were asked whether they agreed with the UK government's decision not to place restrictions on immigration from the A8 countries. The results show that over seven in 10 respondents (73 per cent) felt that the UK should have placed restrictions on immigration, which was the approach taken by most other established EU member states. On the other hand, a vast majority of NILT respondents welcomed the fact that citizens from other EU countries were free to live and work in Northern Ireland, although this proportion decreased slightly in each survey year (76 per cent in 2005, 73 per cent in 2006, 68 per cent in 2007). These contrasting opinions indicate that many people in Northern Ireland hold conflicting views on the issue of inward migration, depending on the country of origin of the migrants.

## Attitudes among young people to minority ethnic groups

Attitudes among 16-year-olds towards people from minority ethnic communities were interrogated from 2004 to 2007 by the YLT surveys (www.ark.ac.uk/ylt). In both the 2004 and 2005 YLT surveys, respondents were asked to estimate the actual percentage of people from a minority ethnic community currently living in Northern Ireland. Although, as stated above, actual figures are difficult to establish, over half of 16-year-olds in each survey year estimated the proportion to be over 6 per cent, with approximately 15 per cent in each survey saying the proportion of people from minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland was above 20 per cent. This overestimation (based on sources already mentioned) could be due to a number of factors: it could indicate how ill-informed young people in Northern Ireland are about the scale of inward migration as a result of skewed media reports; it could be due to a perceived threat (for example, a pressure on available employment); or it could be due to the fact that inward migration is a relatively new phenomenon in Northern Ireland and minority ethnic groups living here are regarded as a novelty.

In the 2007 YLT survey, 12 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement: 'In relation to colour and ethnicity I prefer to stick to people of my own kind.' Males were almost three times as likely as females to agree (19 per cent and 7 per cent respectively). The figure of 12 per cent compares with 29 per cent of adult NILT 2007 survey respondents who agreed with the statement. This could indicate that young people are more open to meeting and associating with those who are 'different' in terms of their ethnicity and colour.

Other research has also highlighted young people's attitudes to and experiences of people from different minority ethnic backgrounds. For example, Save the Children conducted research with children from minority ethnic groups in 2004. Many of the young people involved in this study had experienced racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on a regular basis (Save the Children 2004). Fear of such prejudiced behaviour influenced the choices the young people made when they were deciding how to use their leisure time and 'whether to engage in extra-curricular school activities'. The children in this study felt that often the negative actions of other young

people were not challenged and in effect were condoned by adults (Save the Children 2004).

More recently, the DE found that older children felt that a pupil's race or skin colour could make them 'more likely' to be bullied: 61 per cent of Year 9 pupils thought this as opposed to 46 per cent of Year 6 pupils (DE 2007). Furthermore, the same research highlighted concerns about bullying on the grounds of ethnicity (among others) and the need to change attitudes among young people in Northern Ireland (DE 2007).

In terms of creating an environment where newly arrived minority ethnic children can be welcomed, some research has stressed the need for adequate resources and an element of choice in relationships: 'What most people welcome is … to be able to exercise the choice of … getting to know people better' (JRF 2008, p.6).

In addition, both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) have stressed the need for greater efforts by schools to address bullying, including racist bullying (UNCRC 2008, NICCY 2008).

## Policy initiatives

Various bodies have implemented a range of policy initiatives in the recent past in an attempt to address sectarianism and racism and some of these initiatives relate specifically to young people.

In April 2009 the DE published a policy document *Supporting newcomer pupils* as part of the Every School a Good School series. The emphasis of the policy is to enable young people to access the curriculum and 'partake in every aspect of school life' (DE 2009, p.1).

Prior to this development there had been some criticism that the DE had failed to take the opportunity offered by the revision of the Religious Education syllabus to address the issues of prejudice, stereotyping and racism by delegating responsibility for the new syllabus to a group that was comprised solely of representatives from the four main Christian denominations (Children's Law Centre and Save the Children 2008).

In addition to this policy, in 2007 the DE established the IDS which is a regional support service that aims to provide 'a consistent level of support and specialist advice … to all … schools' in supporting and promoting the inclusion of newcomer pupils (DE 2009, p.2). The IDS provides an interpreting and translating service and has produced a toolkit for diversity in primary schools. The IDS policy emphasises the role the Service has in promoting inclusion through anti-racism work, attitudinal work and intercultural learning. A recent evaluation of the Provision to Support Newcomer Pupils highlighted the relative success the IDS has had in enabling newcomer pupils to become part of the school, via English language acquisition (ETI 2009). Some areas were highlighted for improvement, such as the means of assessing and tracking the progress of such pupils as well as disseminating good practice within and across schools

(ETI 2009). However, much of the current focus of the work is on EAL, with the emphasis on enabling young people to access the curriculum and on information transfer to parents. The ETI report indicated that only 'a small number' (that is, less than 10 per cent) of schools indicated an increase in participation levels by newcomer families in school and community activity (ETI 2009). While the IDS are still relatively new and the newcomer policy newer still, unless these gaps are addressed, their impact may be limited.

Since 2007 pupils in second level schools have been engaged in the LLW programme as part of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum.[5] Part of this programme focuses on diversity, inclusion, equality and social justice in the local and global citizenship sub-section. Within these sub-sections pupils are encouraged to explore their attitudes towards and opinions on a range of topics, including sectarianism, racism, identity and human rights (among others) as well as the role of the media. A recent evaluation of the pilot of the citizenship part of the LLW (which ran from 2002–2007) highlighted the following strengths of the programme: the understanding gained of the core concepts such as diversity and inclusion and the 'associated change in pupils' reported confidence, attitudes … and behaviours in relation to citizenship issues' (University of Ulster 2009, p.11). Limitations that were identified included the need to secure greater buy-in from senior management, the need for a whole-school approach to citizenship, the need to enhance the 'pupil voice' within the school, the need for anti-racist policies and their explicit implementation, embedding the 'citizenship' topics in other subject areas and in the life of the school, and the need for ongoing professional development in order for teaching staff to feel fully confident and competent in facilitating discussion on citizenship topics (University of Ulster 2009).

Linked to this part of the Revised Curriculum is the Global Dimension in Schools, an initiative which is part of the Department for International Development (DFID). This seeks to enhance the Revised Curriculum across both the primary and secondary sectors. It emphasises, among other things, that 'care should be taken not to "exoticise" other cultures and minority ethnic groups' (www.globaldimension.org.uk).

The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People states that it applies to 'all children and young people in Northern Ireland' (OFMDFM 2006, forward). It also indicates that 'the racial equality action implementation plan will include specific actions aimed at minority ethnic children and young people' (OFMDFM 2006, p.76). The First Annual Implementation Plan for the Racial Equality Strategy states that one of its actions is:

> To ensure that the rights and needs of minority ethnic children and young people are reflected in the implementation of the children and young people's strategy (OFMDFM 2006, p.39).

The outcome measure from the Racial Equality Implementation Plan relating to this issue is that 'the implementation of the children and young people's

[5] This is the latest curriculum following on from EMU (Education for Mutual Understanding) introduced in 1990.

strategy takes account of the identified needs of minority ethnic children and young people' (OFMDFM 2006, p.39).

Each of these strategies and action plans, therefore, cross-references the other. What is less clear, though, is how the action points and the indicators from both are joined up when addressing the needs and rights of minority ethnic children.

The *Racial Equality Strategy* (2005–2010) does, however, highlight incidents of racism against young people from minority ethnic groups, the need for EAL support, the issue of children interpreting for adults and the need to support young people from minority ethnic groups in relation to training and employment (OFMDFM 2005a), while the *Shared Future* strategy focused both on sectarianism and racism (OFMDFM 2005b).

The regional family and parenting strategy *Families Matter* does take cognisance of race, religious belief, background and circumstances, in that its opening paragraph mentions all of these aspects of identity and the government's 'determination to improve the life chances' of all children (DHSSPS 2009, p.6). However, beyond this there is very limited mention of minority ethnic groups and no mention at all of migrant families.

The Youth Service, building on the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence (EDI), established the JEDI project in 1998. This project's vision is to enable both young people and youth organisations to 'be at ease with difference, acknowledge one another as equals and promote improved relations between all' (www.jedini.com). JEDI sees diversity as encompassing a wide variety of aspects of identity, including ethnicity and religion. It is a partnership between statutory and voluntary youth work organisations.

The work of the Community Relations Council (CRC) has historically focused on anti-sectarian work, but now it encompasses cultural diversity work too.

Work is also currently underway on a new strategy – the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration – which will address the issues of community relations and racial equality, and will unify anti-sectarian and anti-racism policies (OFMDFM 2009). In addition, the DE is reviewing their community relations policy (response to Assembly question 26.05.09).

# Research design and methodology

The initial idea for the Attitudes to Difference project stemmed from recognition of the fact that Northern Irish society has undergone major change in the past decade, which included increased inward migration. Although some of the effects of these migration processes are easily recognisable in everyday life in Northern Ireland, little is known about the experiences of young people growing up in a more ethnically diverse Northern Ireland. However, in previous YLT surveys undertaken by ARK, some of the issues faced by both the indigenous population (such as fear of being unable to get jobs or houses) and the migrant and minority ethnic populations (such as difficulties in accessing health and educational services and being exposed to racial abuse) were highlighted in young people's comments, and many 16-year-olds had suggested that further research should be conducted among young people on these issues.

The project was designed to build on a successful participatory model of research with children and young people employed by NCB and ARK in the recent past (Ewart and others 2004, Schubotz and others 2006). This mixed-methods approach of investigating issues relevant to young people brings together the advantages of a cross-sectional attitudinal survey based on a large random sample of 16-year-olds, with the benefits of more specific school-based research project, which involves an anonymous survey questionnaire, interactive focus group discussions – or 'Talkshops' – and individual interviews with young people. Both NCB and ARK operate under an ethos that is fundamentally child- and young people-centred. During the research project this is reflected in the involvement of peer researchers in the research process (which is discussed below). All of the research instruments are available on request from NCB NI.

## 2008 YLT survey

The fieldwork for the 2008 YLT survey was conducted in December 2008 and January 2009. The survey contained a set of questions asking respondents about their attitudes towards and experiences of contact with young people from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The annual YLT survey uses the Child Benefit Register as a sample frame. In the past, every 16-year-old living in Northern Ireland who was registered for Child Benefit and who celebrates his or her birthday in February of the survey year was invited to take part in the YLT survey. In order to increase the total number of people from minority ethnic communities completing the YLT survey and hence making statistical analyses meaningful, in 2008 the sample was essentially doubled by also inviting participation from every Northern Irish Child Benefit recipient born in March 1992.

In planning the Attitudes to Difference project, it was anticipated that the fieldwork for the 2008 YLT survey would be undertaken in the months of August and September, as in previous years. However, due to new data security regulations which were put in place when the government lost discs containing the address and account details of Child Benefit recipients at the

end of 2007, the YLT team had to reapply to gain access to the address files for the YLT survey, and this delayed the fieldwork considerably. Furthermore, YLT was only granted permission to use a dataset that was already over one year out of date, which increased the inaccuracy of the data and the likelihood of non-response.

In total, 4,154 16-year-olds born in February and March of 1992 were on the Child Benefit Register in October 2007. These were the eligible respondents for the 2008 YLT survey. A postal methodology was employed, and the options of completing the survey online or by telephone were also made available. Subsequently, contact was made by letter to improve the response rates.

The response rate of 23 per cent is well below response rates for previous YLT surveys, but again this can be explained (at least partially) by the very unfortunate timing of the fieldwork, which took place over the 2008 Christmas period and the inaccuracy of the potentially out-of-date addressee data file. Importantly, however, a comparison of YLT background variables (school attended, gender, religious affiliation, national identity, proxy of socioeconomic status) shows that the sample completing the 2008 YLT survey does not differ significantly from previous YLT samples, which leads to the conclusion that the drop in response rate does not affect one particular group of respondents but rather applies to the whole cross-section. The main background variables of the 2008 YLT survey are displayed in Table 2 below.

***Table 2: 2008 YLT survey: sample characteristics***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 40% |
| | Female | 60% |
| School type attended | Planned integrated | 5% |
| | Grammar | 49% |
| | Secondary | 42% |
| | Other | 4% |
| Area respondent lives in | Big city and its outskirts and suburbs | 20% |
| | Small city or town | 40% |
| | A country village | 17% |
| | A farm or house in the country | 22% |
| Family financial background | Well-off | 24% |
| | Average | 56% |
| | Not well-off | 16% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Caring responsibility (home) | Home | 9% |
| | Outside of home | 18% |
| Long-standing illness or disability | Yes | 10% |
| | No | 90% |
| Religious identity | Catholic | 43% |
| | Protestant | 40% |
| | None | 16% |
| National identity | British | 24% |
| | Irish | 40% |
| | Northern Irish | 29% |
| | Ulster | 4% |
| | Other | 2% |

## NCB school survey

The NCB school survey partially replicated the questions asked in the 2008 YLT survey. The purpose of the school survey was to build on the YLT survey in a number of ways: to widen the distribution and show trends across a larger age range; and to show patterns across school type, geography and EAL numbers.

NCB NI distributed the surveys to all pupils attending the seven schools taking part in the Attitudes to Difference project. Some respondents were only 11 years old, hence the questions were adapted to suit this age group. The questionnaire was piloted with a sample of young people. Translated versions of the survey questionnaire were provided in Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese – the three most commonly spoken languages of pupils with EAL. By providing foreign language questionnaires, NCB NI increased participation in the study among young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. A passive consent policy was operated, that is pupils were given the opportunity to opt out of completing the survey.

Schools for this project were selected based on a purposive sample, using a maximum-difference principle in order to reflect the character of the divided Northern Irish education system. Hence schools with a high intake of minority ethnic pupils and those with a low intake of these pupils were included in the sample. One way of measuring the population of minority ethnic pupils in a school is by using the available school statistics on enrolled pupils with EAL. Other variables were also taken into account, such as management type (planned integrated, Catholic maintained and state-controlled, academically selective grammar schools and non-selective

secondary schools, single-sex and co-educational schools) and geography so as to include both urban and rural schools. Initially eight schools agreed to take part, but one school (a single sex boys' grammar) withdrew from the project in January 2009 due to other commitments. It was not possible to find a replacement within the timescale of the project.

Initial letters were sent out to the selected schools in early September 2008. These letters included general information about the research project, including information about the opportunity to nominate young researchers to participate in the research. Interested pupils had to complete a brief application form, which was attached to the letters together with a project information sheet. The characteristics of the school sample are displayed in Table 3.

***Table 3: Characteristics of attitudes to difference: school sample***

| | School type | Co-ed or SS* | No. and age of students*** | EAL** students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School 1 | Grammar controlled | Co-ed | Over 1,000 (11–18) | <1% |
| School 2 | Controlled integrated | Co-ed | Under 500 (11–16) | 13% |
| School 3 | Secondary controlled | Co-ed | 500–1,000 (11–18) | <1% |
| School 4 | Secondary controlled | Co-ed | 500–1,000 (11–16) | 4% |
| School 5 | Secondary Catholic maintained | Co-ed | 500–1,000 (11–18) | 3% |
| School 6 | Secondary Catholic maintained | SS girls | 500–1,000 (11–18) | 5% |
| School 7 | Secondary Catholic maintained | Co-ed | 500–1,000 (11-18) | 17% |

* **Co-ed**ucational or **s**ingle **s**ex
** EAL: **E**nglish as an **a**dditional **l**anguage
*** The exact number of pupils is kept confidential to protect the anonymity of the schools.

According to the enrolment statistics provided by the schools' principals, 5,170 pupils were available to complete the NCB school survey in the seven schools that agreed to participate. Among those, 249 (4.8 per cent) pupils were recorded in the school census as having EAL. However, it became clear during the project that actual numbers diverged from these figures, perhaps due to the fact that the school census, which is administered by the DE each autumn, becomes out-of-date during the school year or because only those who need support with English are recorded (that is those for whom

English is not a first language but who nevertheless have a good command of it are not counted in EAL figures). A total of 275 respondents (7 per cent) said that English was not their first language.

A total of 3,981 pupils completed the NCB school survey, which is a response rate of 77 per cent, of whom 56 per cent were female and 44 per cent were male.

The NCB school survey respondents ranged in age from 11 to 18 years. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) were from secondary schools, while nearly half (46 per cent) were from the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) area. Table 4 summarises the characteristics of the respondents to the NCB school survey.

***Table 4: Summary of characteristics of NCB school survey respondents***

| **Gender** | **%** |
|---|---|
| Male | 44 |
| Female | 56 |
| **Age group** | |
| Under 16 | 76 |
| 16+ | 24 |
| **School management type** | |
| Secondary | 64 |
| Grammar | 28 |
| Planned integrated | 8 |
| **Education and Library Board (ELB) area** | |
| Belfast ELB | 12 |
| North Eastern ELB | 15 |
| South Eastern ELB | 9 |
| Southern ELB | 46 |
| Western ELB | 18 |

## Talkshops

Interactive, participatory group discussions, named 'Talkshops' by NCB, were conducted with approximately 20 Year 11 or Year 12 pupils in each of the participating schools.

The purpose of the Talkshops was to elicit more in-depth information on pupils' attitudes to and experiences of contact with people from other minority ethnic communities and, by doing so, help explain the findings of the 2008 YLT survey and the NCB school survey.

Talkshops are designed to create a safe environment for young people to share their views on potentially sensitive topics as well as to stimulate debate on the relevant issues. Talkshops employ creative tools and include large and small group activities (see Sinclair, McCole and Kelly 2004). The activities used during the Talkshops included a discussion on definitions, a 'Grafitti Wall' and a 'Walking Decisions'[6] exercise. Each Talkshop started with an explanation of the aims and objectives of the research project and established the ground rules, which cover agreements on confidentiality, openness and truthfulness, participation in the research and whatever else the participants deem to be important. Talkshops lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and were co-facilitated by two senior and two young researchers, with the young researchers taking the lead and the senior researchers supporting, if necessary.

## Interviews with young people from minority ethnic groups

NCB specifically requested that pupils from minority ethnic groups would take part in the Talkshops. These young people were interviewed on a one-to-one basis by young researchers at the end of the Talkshop.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather a unique perspective from young people from minority ethnic backgrounds with regard to their experience of living in Northern Ireland, their assessment of 'race relations' and what, if anything, they would like to see change.

Interviews lasted for about 10 and 15 minutes and seven of these were conducted in the participating schools. At the data analysis workshop the team decided that further interviews should be conducted with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Five additional interviews subsequently took place. This gave a total of 12 one-to-one interviews with young people from minority ethnic groups.

[6] Walking Decisions – young people were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a range of positive and negative statements. Different points of the room were designated Agree or Disagree and the young people had to walk to the appropriate point in response to the statements. The Grafitti Wall was where young people posted comments on the walls of the room in relation to the topics explored.

## Involving peer researchers

In previous research undertaken jointly by NCB and ARK, the involvement of peer researchers ensured a young people-centred approach to the projects. Among other benefits, peer researchers contribute to:

- a better rapport with participants during the research
- the use of appropriate language during the fieldwork and dissemination
- better insight into the views of participants.

Young researchers themselves also benefit from participatory research. They acquire new skills, enhance their personal development and generally develop a sense that they have contributed to social policy information in an important subject area.

During the Attitudes to Difference project, participating schools were invited to nominate young people who would participate in a two-day young researcher training course held on two Saturdays, one in October and the other in November 2008. Twenty young people from six schools applied to become peer researchers and were invited to attend the course. The first day involved basic research training during which participants learned about research methodologies, discussed ethical issues and the principle of confidentiality. At the start of the first training day participants also received an information pack with further details on the Attitudes to Difference project and what would be expected of young researchers as well as a summary of information on social research methods. During the second training day, the young researchers helped to develop and pilot the specific Talkshop activities and practised their interview skills. All young people who completed both training days received a certificate of achievement.

Based on the needs of the project and individual performance on the two training days, 10 young people (and two reserve candidates) were selected to work alongside the senior researchers during the data collection and analysis stages as well as the dissemination of findings of the research project stage. These young people signed a contract which outlined the young researchers' role in the research project, their duties and details of how and when they would be reimbursed. Young researchers worked in pairs and were treated as full members of the research team.

When qualitative data collection in the schools was completed, young researchers took part in a data analysis day. Together with the full-time research staff, they were given the opportunity to review the outcomes of the project and share their views and experiences. These discussions were co-facilitated by the two young people who had been the reserve candidates on the project, again ensuring a young-people focus in these discussions. At the end of this day young people volunteered for specific roles in the writing up and dissemination of the results. Young researchers were also asked to comment on their own roles in the project and make suggestions on how the contribution of peer researchers could be optimised and enhanced in future research projects.

Feedback from the young researchers regarding the Talkshop sessions indicated that on occasions the strength of feelings expressed by the participants had surprised them:

> It was evident that the pupils had strong opinions on Irish Travellers […] however, were less opinionated on ethnic minorities as a whole …
>
> The thing that personally shocked me most about the negative views of the pupils is that among the group of pupils were actually people from different ethnic minorities. This showed that obviously these people had no impact on the other pupils, and maybe meant that all the pupils didn't mix or know each other very well.

On the other hand, on some occasions the young researchers were surprised by the apparent lack of opinions. This made the job of facilitating the discussion more challenging for the peer researchers:

> The response from the [school name] pupils was less than I anticipated: they weren't very forthcoming and the young researchers did not pursue or extract the information needed.
>
> People were less willing to express their views in x school than we would be in [our school].
>
> … everyone might have had strong opinions, but weren't as used to expressing them as other people may be …
>
> I thought the school generally seemed quite sheltered from the idea and meaning of ethnic minorities. The majority of pupils did not show any understanding or great interest in [the topic] …

One young person felt that Talkshop participants expressed opinions that they felt were expected or gave politically correct opinions to the statements:

> I believe that the pupils were just saying what is correct to say …

Some of the young researchers commented on how living in different areas or how going to a different type of school might affect the opinions of participants:

> I think as my school is more in a city, the views were different as we see people (from) minority ethnic groups on a day-to-day basis and as we have more in our school.
>
> My school is integrated and that makes a great difference.
>
> In my own school there are over a hundred pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds whereas in [this] school there was only 39 pupils from an ethnic minority.

In relation to the training provided prior to undertaking the research the young people were largely positive. The majority indicated that they both

enjoyed and learned a lot at the training. They enjoyed thinking about and voicing their own opinions and hearing those of others:

> It was very good; it was interesting and was a great experience.
>
> [The training helped] make people more self-aware of their own opinions and understanding young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.
>
> I think the peer researchers had a big role in the research, as we got to actually conduct the talk shops, which was a big involvement.
>
> [The project] helps develop a person's self-confidence and move away from being shy. It's easier to work with people of the same age.
>
> I think that the adults and young people worked well together and have had equal participation in the research.

Some of the young researchers made some suggestions for improvements to the training process. For example, one young person would like more preparation for running the Talkshop sessions and more clarification on the expectations regarding the recording of the notes for the discussion at the Talkshops. Another indicated that more time would have been useful to enable more exploration of the issues during the Talkshops.

**Summary of the methodology**

1. NCB school survey: 7 post-primary schools, including those from the grammar, secondary, controlled, maintained and integrated sectors. At least one school from each EAL area. Schools with high and low numbers of EAL pupils were included. A total of 3,981 surveys were returned (a 77 per cent response rate).

2.YLT survey: distributed throughout Northern Ireland using the Child Benefit Register to include those born in February and March 1992. Total number of surveys returned was 941 (a 23 per cent response rate).

3. Talkshops: an average of 20 pupils per school participated.

4. Individual interviews: 12 one-to-one interviews were conducted with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

5. Involvement and training of 12 young researchers.

# Research findings and analysis

## Ethnic identity and background of young people

Ethnic identity is a notion which is difficult to conceptualise because, unlike religious or national identities, it is made up of a combination of other markers of identity. What markers contribute to someone's ethnic identity will depend on the regional and cultural context in which this person lives and associated centuries-long complex historical developments. Some of the markers that impact on the notion of ethnic identity include nationality, religion, language, skin colour or cultural and family heritage. Ethnic identity is also not just influenced by how **we** see ourselves, but also by how **other** people – or groups of people – see **us**. Due to this complexity and multidimensionality, the concept of ethnic identity is notoriously difficult to conceptualise. Consequently, the project team spent significant amounts of time designing questions that would help us to identify groups of children of migrant workers and minority ethnic communities. The difficulty associated with the precise definition of minority ethnic groups and how others perceive themselves has policy and practice implications.

Interestingly, the Children (NI) Order 1995 refers to a child's racial origins, religious persuasion and cultural and linguistic background (Article 26 c) and places a duty on authorities making decisions on children's behalf to have due regard to each of these aspects of identity.

In 2005 YLT decided to change a census-based question on ethnic identity to a format that uses free self-identification. This decision was based on the realisation that the census-based differentiation of minority ethnic groups used in Northern Ireland did not work and did not take account of the multidimensional complexity of ethnic identity described above. The census categories partially overlapped and, at the same time, concealed some significant differences, for example those based on the different languages spoken by people with the same skin colour. This meant, for example, that YLT had been unable to determine how many respondents were children of migrant workers from other parts of Europe; however, we knew that young people with a non-UK or non-Irish background would probably have experiences of living in Northern Ireland that would be distinctive from young people who have lived in NI all their lives.

In relation to this, the new open question format on ethnic identity has a number of advantages. First, it increases our understanding of how young people see themselves in relation to their ethnicity and, secondly, it allows nuances in ethnic identity to emerge. However, on the downside, the open question format also significantly increases the proportion of non-responses to this question. Furthermore, significant proportions of respondents simply equate ethnic identity with religious identity, which is a reflection of the dynamics of the divided Northern Irish society. In previous YLT surveys up to 25 per cent of respondents self-identified as Catholics or Protestants when asked what they thought their ethnic identity was. Although this in itself is an interesting discovery in relation to reaching an understanding of

ethnicity in Northern Ireland, in the Attitudes to Difference project, religious identity was **not** the area of interest. The research team, therefore, had to find a question format which allowed them to group respondents in categories that reflected the complexity of ethnic identity while at the same time giving respondents the freedom to self-identify. The decision was to use a combination of open self-identification and closed questions through which we could collect specific information on nationality and the language spoken by respondents.

In terms of closed questions we identified three categories of minority ethnic groups that we were concerned with, namely:

- People living here who are **not white**, regardless of their nationality and whether they were born in the UK or in Ireland (for example, people who identify as Black Africans or Chinese).
- **Regardless of their skin colour**, people who were not born in the British Isles and whose nationality is not Irish or British, but who moved to Northern Ireland to live or find work (for example, people from Poland or Lithuania).
- Irish Travellers.

During the Talkshops the young people also discussed the definition of 'minority ethnic group'. Although there were many suggestions, at no point did any of the young people include Irish Travellers in their definition.

While it was highlighted by the researchers that Irish Travellers were included within the official definition of minority ethnic group (Race Relations (NI) Order 1997), some of the participants disagreed with this, stating that they should not be included as they are from Ireland. This research did not aim to uncover in-depth attitudes towards the Irish Travelling community per se*;* nevertheless, it is still interesting to note that there was general consensus among all schools that Irish Travellers did not constitute a minority ethnic group. The young people's opinion regarding Travellers is not entirely unusual as there is no consensus on the island of Ireland regarding the ethnic status of Travellers. In the Republic of Ireland, Travellers are seen as having a distinct cultural identity but they are not formally designated as a minority **ethnic** group:

> The Government's view is that Travellers do not constitute a distinct group from the population as a whole in terms of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin (Houses of the Oireachta, Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub-committee on Human Rights: 11.03.2004:4).

For some Talkshop participants, being part of a minority ethnic group was to do with being from a different place (that is, other than Ireland or the UK), a different race or culture, for example:

> A group of people usually from different countries and backgrounds who are not the normal Caucasian and Irish or British in Northern Ireland.
>
> Any cultural group which considers itself divorced from the majority.

> Groups of people of different races and cultures coming to live in a country that they don't originate from.

For others it was to do with language:

> People who speak a language uncommon in the country they inhabit.

The word 'minority' was interpreted as meaning a few or a small number, as opposed to being a minority in terms of power:

> Minority – a small concentration
>
> Ethnic minorities are a small group of people within a large society that belong to the same culture, religion etc.

For some participants, people from minority ethnic groups were felt to be different in terms of dress, diet and language:

> Their dress sense, what they eat, the way they talk (are) ways that you can tell if a person is from a different minority group, because colour of the skin may not be noticeable.

Almost 98 per cent of respondents to the NCB school survey were white, while less than half a per cent were black and the remaining 1.5 per cent were Asian. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the white population.

***Table 5: To which of the groups below would you say you belong (white population)?***

| | **Count** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| **White** | | |
| British | 842 | 22 |
| Irish | 911 | 24 |
| Northern Irish | 1,923 | 50 |
| Irish Traveller | 7 | <1 |
| Polish | 84 | 2 |
| Lithuanian | 19 | <1 |
| Portuguese | 13 | <1 |
| Romanian | 3 | <1 |
| Other white background | 42 | 1 |
| **Sub-total white** | **3,844** | **100** |

Source: NCB school survey

Half (50 per cent) of the white respondents to the NCB school survey chose to identify as Northern Irish. As could be expected, pupils in schools with a predominantly Catholic intake were much more likely to identify as Irish; however, even in these schools between 25 and 40 per cent of pupils identified as Northern Irish. A majority of pupils in all schools under state-controlled management, and therefore with a predominantly Protestant intake, identified as Northern Irish (at least 52 per cent and up to 65 per cent), while pupils in the planned integrated school were also most likely to identify as Northern Irish (43 per cent).

The highest proportions of white pupils who did not fall into these three main categories were Polish (2 per cent), followed by Lithuanian and Portuguese (<1 per cent each).

Ninety-three per cent of respondents to the NCB school survey said that English was their first language, 4 per cent said it was not and 3 per cent said that they spoke two or more languages, including English.

One of the significant findings in relation to the concept of ethnic identity in Northern Ireland is that around one in five respondents who identified as white British, white Irish or white Northern Irish also thought they belonged to a minority group. This is evidence of the overlap of religious and national identity with ethnic identity in Northern Ireland. Within these groups, younger respondents were more likely to feel they belonged to a minority group.

One possible explanation for this finding lies in the above-explained complexity of the notion of ethnic identity. It is conceivable that older respondents to the NCB study had a better understanding of what comprises ethnic identity and were therefore more likely to differentiate between national, religious and ethnic identity.

Within this context it is particularly noticeable that those identifying as British were more likely than those identifying as Irish to say that they belonged to a minority group. Although this is not directly the subject of this report, it is certainly worth noting that this finding could be related to how young people who identify as British feel about their place in Northern Irish society. Some of the open comments received from respondents to the NCB school survey clearly show how respondents confuse socio-religious belonging in Northern Ireland with their ethnic identity:

> I'm fine with different cultures and ethnic and racial groups and so are most people at this school. It’s not the foreigners people have a problem with it’s the Catholics in the country that most people have a problem with (15-year-old female).

In terms of language as a marker for ethnic identity, the NCB school survey found that only 58 per cent of respondents who said English was not their first language and only 55 per cent of those who said they spoke more than one language felt they belonged to a minority group. This may be considered to be surprising, but perhaps it is also a reflection of a wider

European or international identity or the equating of the term 'ethnic minority' with race or skin colour.

In contrast 19 per cent of those who said their first language was English also indicated that they were part of a minority group. Respondents aged 16 and over who said their first language was English were less likely to say they were a member of a minority group than their younger counterparts (13 per cent and 21 per cent respectively).

As Table 6 shows, in total 38 respondents (4 per cent) to the 2008 YLT had a minority ethnic background. A further 25 respondents said they did not know whether they belonged to any of these groups. All other respondents said they belonged to none of these groups or did not respond to this question.

***Table 6: 2008 YLT respondents with a minority ethnic background***

| | N |
|---|---|
| Black African Caribbean | 4 |
| Chinese | 6 |
| South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi) | 2 |
| Irish Traveller | 3 |
| Portuguese | 3 |
| Polish | 10 |
| Bulgarian | 1 |
| Romanian | 2 |
| Other Eastern European | 2 |
| Other group | 1 |
| Mixed ethnic | 4 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

When asked, in an open question, what ethnic group they considered they belonged to, the vast majority of YLT respondents identified as 'white' or 'Caucasian' or 'white' in combination with their national or religious identity, that is Irish, British or Northern Irish and Catholic, Protestant or Christian. Only 17 respondents identified as members of another group which, for the purposes of this project, we would consider as a minority ethnic group. This means that some of the respondents with Eastern European (including Polish) or Portuguese backgrounds identified as white or white European or Catholic. Similarly, some of the Chinese respondents said that they

considered themselves to be British or Irish. This again highlights the limitations of using just an open question to determine ethnic identity.

The UK census and other ethnic monitoring schemes talks of 'ethnic origin', rather than 'ethnic identity', which adds another interesting dimension to this issue and recognises the impact of family on culture and lifestyles, especially on second generation immigrants for whom language, place of birth, nationality or even race/skin colour may no longer be relevant.

**Key findings – ethnic identity and background of respondents**

Young people in Northern Ireland use a number of different markers to describe ethnic identity. These are:
- place of belonging/origin
- language
- culture
- size of the group
- food and dress
- religious background
- family origins.

These markers of identity can be used alone or in combination.

The young people in the Talkshops did not consider Irish Travellers to be a minority ethnic group.

Young people in Northern Ireland confuse ethnic identity with religious and national identity. This is particularly the case with younger participants. Older young people had a better understanding of the concept of ethnic identity and could therefore differentiate more easily between national, ethnic and religious identity.

Only 58 per cent of young people who said that English was not their first language considered themselves to be part of a minority ethnic group.

## Living in Northern Ireland: the experience of young people with minority ethnic backgrounds

This section will discuss the current experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland under the following headings: contact and friendship patterns; their experience of xenophobic bullying; influencing factors; and whether or not young people from minority ethnic groups see their future in Northern Ireland.

### *Experiences of contact and friendship patterns*

A number of questions were asked in both the NCB school survey and the 2008 YLT survey to establish the level of existing contact and friendship between different minority ethnic groups. The assumption here is that

higher levels of contact will most likely be related to more positive experiences of difference.

One of the most useful theoretical notions in relation to this is that of social categorisation developed by the social psychologist Henri Tajfel (1982). According to his theory, people divide the social world they live in into two categories: 'us' and 'them' – **ingroups** and **outgroups**. Tajfel and his followers argue that people do this because they are 'cognitive misers' by nature, that is, they can only consume a limited amount of information and therefore have to be selective in what information they deal with and absorb. As a consequence of this process, people develop social identities which distinguish them from others. According to this theory, the desire to enhance good feelings about the groups people belong to (ingroups) is intrinsic to human nature in order to ensure positive feelings about ourselves. At the same time, groups that people do not feel they belong to (outgroups) are then seen more negatively. These negative feelings, stereotypes and prejudices often arise without any contact with members of the ***other*** groups. Following Tajfel's theory, increased contact between outgroups will lead to a greater understanding between them, provided this contact is meaningful and is based on equal status and on terms of non-threat (Rogers 1951, 1969). The importance of the quality of the contact has been echoed by researchers investigating the impact of policies such as Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) in Northern Ireland (see, for example, Dunn and Morgan 2001). More recently, Hewstone and others (2008) also found that increased contact between different groups can promote better relations between them.

Hence, the 2008 YLT survey asked a range of questions exploring the following: the extent of contact young people have with people from minority ethnic groups; how contact was made with people from these groups; and how many friends, if any, respondents had with people from minority ethnic groups. At the start of the YLT survey, respondents were asked to self-identify their ethnic group and to state whether or not they believed they belonged to a minority ethnic group. (The problems with self-identification were discussed above.) In order to make sure that we did not measure cross-community contact, that is relations between Catholics and Protestants, in the Attitude to Difference project, we provided YLT respondents with a definition of minority ethnic communities (as previously outlined in the methodology section) and asked them to respond to our questions with this definition in mind.

We then asked YLT respondents:

- whether they belonged to a number of minority ethnic groups
- whether they had any contact, or were friends with, people who belonged to these groups
- if they did, how they made contact with people from these groups.

Table 7 below shows the extent of contact that YLT respondents said they had with people from these minority ethnic groups. The Table is ordered by the extent of contact reported for each group. As can be seen, approximately one in five respondents (19 per cent) reported that they had had no contact with any of these groups. Most contact was reported with

people of Chinese origin, closely followed by Polish and – maybe somewhat surprisingly – people of Black African or Caribbean descent. Twelve per cent of respondents reported having had contact with Irish Travellers. Ten per cent said they had contact with people belonging to groups not listed here, for example Western Europeans, such as Spanish, French or Italians; Australians, other Asian groups or South Africans.

***Table 7: Have you had any contact (that is, anything more than just a greeting) with someone from these groups?***

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 373 | 41 |
| Polish | 346 | 38 |
| Black African or Caribbean | 343 | 38 |
| South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi) | 208 | 23 |
| Irish Traveller | 114 | 12 |
| Portuguese | 108 | 12 |
| Mixed ethnic group | 107 | 12 |
| Filipino | 83 | 9 |
| Romanian | 71 | 8 |
| Other Eastern European | 71 | 8 |
| Bulgarian | 35 | 4 |
| Other group | 95 | 10 |
| Don't know | 55 | 6 |
| None of these groups | 176 | 19 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

The ways in which YLT respondents said they came in contact with people from these groups is listed in Table 8. Again, YLT allowed for multiple responses rather than just asking for the main way of coming into contact. The Table shows that contact with other students at school far outnumbers any other form of contact (with 80 per cent choosing this option). In fact, respondents were three times more likely to meet other young people from minority ethnic groups at their school than to meet them through the other most commonly stated ways of making contact (that is, going out – 27 per cent or part-time work – 25 per cent). More than one-third of respondents (37 per cent) had made contact through their involvement in inter-school or

youth and community projects and sports clubs. The breakdown for each of these categories is shown below.

***Table 8: How have you come in contact with people from other ethnic backgrounds?***

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Other students at school | 399 | 80 |
| When going out (for example, to a cinema or club) | 133 | 27 |
| Through my part-time job | 127 | 25 |
| In my neighbourhood | 89 | 18 |
| Through a sports club I attend | 80 | 16 |
| In a shop or restaurant | 67 | 14 |
| Staff at school | 65 | 13 |
| Through a youth or community project | 64 | 13 |
| Through my parents' work or social life | 53 | 11 |
| As part of my family | 44 | 9 |
| As part of inter-school projects | 40 | 8 |
| Travelling to school | 24 | 5 |
| Other | 43 | 9 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

In both the 2008 YLT survey and the NCB school survey, levels of meaningful and accidental contact, for example in schools, youth projects or sports clubs, were also investigated. In the YLT survey, 13 per cent of respondents said they met or played sports with people from other ethnic groups very often, 31 per cent said they did sometimes, 32 per cent said rarely and 21 per cent said they never did this. Table 9 compares these responses to those in the NCB school survey.

***Table 9: How often respondents say they meet or play sports with people from other ethnic groups***

| | % | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2008 YLT survey** | **NCB school survey All respondents** | **NCB school survey 16-year-olds only** |
| Very often | 13 | 14 | 12 |
| Sometimes | 31 | 29 | 28 |
| Rarely | 32 | 27 | 27 |
| Never | 21 | 21 | 26 |
| Don't know | 2 | 8 | 7 |

Sources: 2008 YLT survey, NCB school survey

The Table shows that the extent of contact found in both surveys is very similar. According to Tajfel's and Rogers' theories, we would expect a positive relationship between the level of contact and the level of friendship and liking of people from other ethnic groups.

***Table 10: Respondents' proportion of friends from same ethnic background and their like or dislike of people from other ethnic backgrounds by frequency of meeting with people who belong to a different cultural or racial group than respondent***

| | % | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Very often** | **Sometimes** | **Rarely** | **Never** | **Don't know** |
| **About how many of your friends would you say belong to the same cultural or racial group as you do or come from the same country?** | | | | | |
| All | 18 | 21 | 33 | 58 | 33 |
| Most | 56 | 64 | 57 | 31 | 49 |
| Half | 11 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Less than half | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| None | 1 | <1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Don't know | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 12 |

| How much do you like or dislike people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living here? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Like a lot | 33 | 25 | 15 | 10 | 13 |
| Like a bit | 20 | 26 | 22 | 17 | 19 |
| Neither like or dislike | 29 | 33 | 41 | 34 | 40 |
| Dislike a bit | 6 | 6 | 12 | 17 | 5 |
| Dislike a lot | 4 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 4 |
| Don't know | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 19 |

Source: NCB school survey

Table 10 shows that there is indeed a direct correlation between the frequency with which respondents to the NCB school survey socialise with people from other ethnic backgrounds and the number of friends they have from other ethnic backgrounds. Those who said they 'never' met or played sports with people from other ethnic backgrounds were over three times as likely as those who did this 'very often' to have the same ethnic background as all their friends (58 per cent and 18 per cent respectively). Although this may be a rather obvious relationship, it cannot automatically be expected that respondents with no or little contact with people from other ethnic groups also have a greater dislike of these people. However, this is what the second half of Table 10 suggests. Nearly one in three (30 per cent) respondents who never met or played sports with people from other minority ethnic groups said they disliked people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living in Northern Ireland compared to around one in 10 respondents who 'very often' or 'sometimes' met or played sports with people from other ethnic backgrounds. Thus these survey results empirically verify Tajfel's theory.

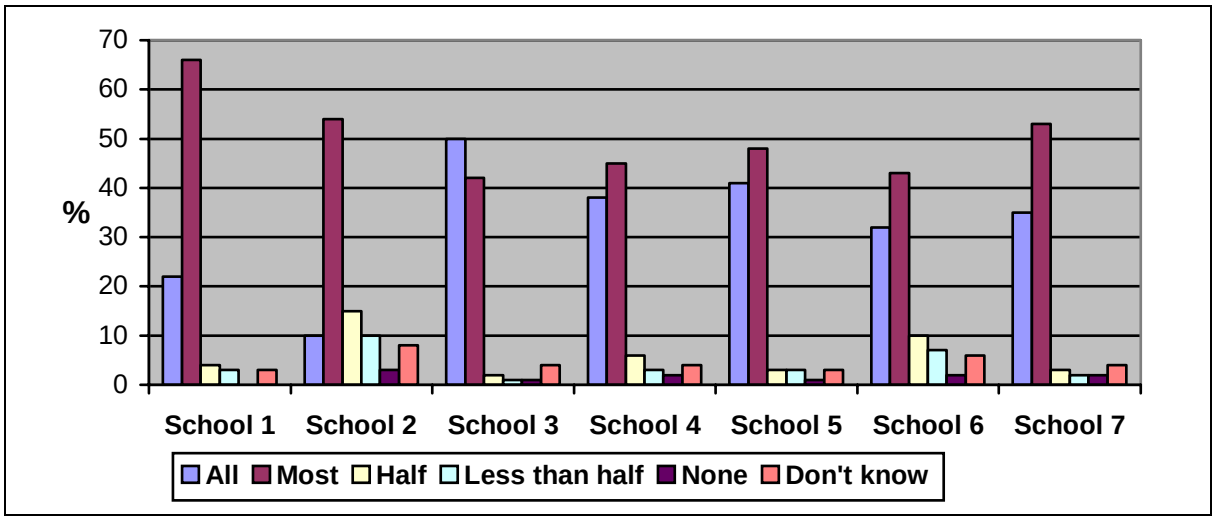
An interesting dimension to this finding is that one-quarter of males (25 per cent) who said they 'very often' or 'sometimes' met or played sports with people from other minority ethnic groups also said they disliked ('a lot' or 'a bit') people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living in Northern Ireland, whereas this figure was only 11 per cent for females.

The NCB school survey found that while males were significantly more likely ($p<0.000$) than females to meet or play sports with people from other ethnic backgrounds, they were also significantly more likely ($p<0.000$) than females to express a dislike of people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living in Northern Ireland. Perhaps these findings relate to the type of contact that those involved in sports teams have, that is competitive contact. There was no significant difference between males and females in relation to the proportion of friends they had with the same ethnic background as themselves.

Above we have already discussed the relationship between socialising with people from minority ethnic groups and inter-ethnic friendship patterns. Figure 1 shows that inter-ethnic friendships are significantly related to the population mix in the school attended. This would suggest that the pattern of EAL figures has a role to play in the formation of friendships between students from different ethnic backgrounds. In other words, schools with higher numbers of pupils with EAL provide an opportunity for young people from Northern Ireland to meet and make friends with their peers from different cultural or racial groups. This does not mean, however, that young people in schools with high EAL numbers take up such opportunities.

For example, Figure 1 below shows two contrasting situations in schools with very high EAL numbers. On the one hand, school 2 (which is a planned integrated school) shows a relatively high level of diversity in terms of friendships, whereas in school 7 (a Catholic maintained school) there is relatively much less diversity.[7]

***Figure 1: About how many of your friends would you say belong to the same cultural or racial group as you do or come from the same country? (by school attended)***




Source: NCB school survey

Table 11, which is based on the data collected in the NCB school survey, shows that members of minority groups and those who do not speak English as their main language were significantly less likely to say that all their friends were of the same ethnic background as themselves.

[7] School 1: Grammar controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 2: Controlled integrated, co-ed, high EAL
School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 4: Secondary controlled, co-ed, medium EAL
School 5: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, low EAL
School 6: Secondary Catholic maintained, single sex girls, medium EAL
School 7: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, very high EAL

***Table 11: Respondents' proportion of friends from same ethnic background, by background and language spoken***

| | % | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Member of minority group | | Self-identified member of minority group | | English main language spoken | | |
| | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Two or more languages |
| **All** | 35 | 7 | 31 | 33 | 34 | 10 | 10 |
| **Most** | 54 | 39 | 45 | 54 | 53 | 40 | 47 |
| **Half** | 4 | 15 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 17 |
| **Less than half** | 3 | 19 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 20 | 11 |
| **None** | 1 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 |
| **Don't know** | 3 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| **Other** | <1 | 1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | 1 | <1 |

Source: NCB school survey

The 2008 YLT survey also collected information on inter-ethnic friendships. This information is summarised in Table 12 below. The most common response from YLT respondents was that they had no friends from minority ethnic groups (with 37 per cent stating this). Of those who did report having friends from minority ethnic groups, the most common groups identified were Chinese (23 per cent), Black African or Caribbean (20 per cent) and South Asian (14 per cent).

***Table 12: Respondents who say they have friends from different ethnic groups***

| Ethnic group | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 168 | 23 |
| Black African or Caribbean | 146 | 20 |
| South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi) | 100 | 14 |
| Polish | 81 | 11 |
| Mixed ethnic group | 72 | 10 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Filipino | 38 | 5 |
| Portuguese | 30 | 4 |
| Other Eastern European | 30 | 4 |
| Irish Traveller | 23 | 3 |
| Romanian | 17 | 2 |
| Bulgarian | 9 | 1 |
| Other group | 46 | 6 |
| Don't know | 40 | 6 |
| None of these groups | 270 | 37 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

The findings of the 2008 YLT survey also correspond quite well to those of the NCB school survey. Similarly to the NCB study, there is clear evidence that contact through meetings and sport are related to the proportion of friends respondents have from different ethnic backgrounds. Among YLT respondents, 74 per cent of 16-year olds who said they never met or played sports with people from other backgrounds said that 'all' their friends were of the same race or ethnic origin as themselves. This compares to just 2 per cent of those who very often met or played sports with people from other ethnic backgrounds.

Respondents to the NCB school survey were very divided in their opinions on opportunities to become friends with people from different ethnic backgrounds outside school:

> There is little chance of being able to become friends with people of different races and cultures unless they attend the same school.

Three in 10 respondents (30 per cent) agreed that this was difficult, while almost four in 10 (38 per cent) disagreed. Respondents aged 16 and over tended to disagree more than those who were younger (41 per cent and 37 per cent respectively, $p<0.000$) which would suggest that they have slightly more opportunities to meet people from other ethnic backgrounds, for example through part-time work, than their younger counterparts.

During the Talkshops, responses to this statement were varied. Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) in school 3 and over half (55 per cent) in school 4 agreed that there is little chance of being able to become friends with people of different races and cultures unless they attend the same school.[8]

[8] School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 4: Secondary controlled, co-ed, medium EAL

During the Talkshop discussions, participants provided the following reasons for agreeing with the statement:

- the fact that most of the respondents spent a large part of their time at school
- that clubs they are involved in are not very diverse
- the existence of language barriers
- that the number of people from minority ethnic groups was small in some areas
- that members of minority ethnic groups tended to stick together, rather than become friends with young people from Northern Ireland.

In other schools over three-quarters (for example 78 per cent in school 6) disagreed.[9] Some young people who disagreed tended to do so because they met people from different minority ethnic groups through work, either as colleagues or customers in shops. Other participants pointed out that making friends with a young person from a minority ethnic background was a choice that depended on the type of person they are. In other words, the basis of the friendship was not dependent on ethnicity:

> You can't judge first – get to know them first.
>
> Outside school you do have chance to mix with them but it's your choice.

Some survey respondents indicated that Northern Irish society was now more diverse and therefore there is plenty of opportunity to make friends with people from different ethnic backgrounds:

> They're everywhere, you can't avoid them – I don't mean that in a bad way.

Those who were unsure highlighted the fact that there might be other places to meet outside of school, but 'inside school is easier'.

When considering the relationship between the number of EAL pupils and friendship patterns of students, one could assume that a higher number of EAL pupils equates to greater opportunities for contact and hence better relationships (Tajfel's theory), which indeed is what the YLT survey results appear to indicate (see below). However, the qualitative work in this research seems to challenge Taijfel's theory. In one of the schools where there was a substantial population of minority ethnic pupils, participants displayed very negative attitudes during the Talkshops. One of the young researchers commented:

> The thing that personally shocked me most about the negative views of the pupils is that among the group of pupils were actually people from different ethnic minorities.

[9] School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 4: Secondary controlled, co-ed, medium EAL
School 6: Secondary Catholic maintained, single sex girls, medium EAL

More contact with minority ethnic groups does not therefore necessarily equate to better relationships. Rather, it is the quality of that contact that is perhaps more important as is the element of choice that the young people have in relation to that contact, as the JRF (2008) found. In addition, there may be important differences across the types of schools. One of the young researchers from an integrated school felt that her school approached issues of diversity very differently to the one where she conducted the Talkshop:

> I believe that the pupils were just saying what is 'correct' to say … My school is integrated and that makes a great difference.

There were only seven schools in this study, and clearly investigating the influence of school type on opinions would require a much larger study than this piece of research.

Generally, it was not the case that the young people formed or did not form friendships on the basis of ethnicity. They became friends because of mutual interests and positive interaction:

> It is just as easy to make friends with them as anybody else.
>
> Religion and nationality have no bearing on a person's personality, so there's no reason not to be friends.

YLT respondents were asked to position themselves in relation to two questions. The first question asked how favourable they felt towards people from minority ethnic groups. (This is the equivalent question to the NCB study's question on liking people from minority ethnic groups.) Again, Table 13 clearly shows a statistically significant ($p>0.000$) relationship between frequent contact and positive attitudes towards those from minority ethnic groups. No respondents who said they 'very often' socialised with minority ethnic groups felt unfavourable towards these groups compared to 15 per cent of respondents who never socialised with people from different racial or cultural groups.

Similarly, 83 per cent of YLT respondents who very often socialised with people belonging to different cultural or racial groups disagreed that they would prefer to stick to people of their own kind. This compared with 44 per cent of respondents who never socialised with people from different ethnic groups.

***Table 13: Respondents' proportion of friends from same ethnic background and their like or dislike of people from other ethnic backgrounds by frequency of meeting with people who belong to a different cultural or racial group than respondent***

| | Frequency of meeting<br>% | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Don't know |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **About how many of your friends would you say are the same race or ethnic origin as you?** | | | | | |
| **All** | 2 | 21 | 47 | 74 | 25 |
| **Most** | 80 | 70 | 48 | 17 | 55 |
| **Half** | 10 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| **Less than half** | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| **None** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| **Don't know** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| **Other** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **How favourable or unfavourable do you feel about people from minority ethnic groups?** | | | | | |
| **Very favourable** | 29 | 17 | 11 | 7 | 5 |
| **Favourable** | 27 | 30 | 18 | 8 | 37 |
| **Neither favourable nor unfavourable** | 40 | 44 | 55 | 56 | 37 |
| **Unfavourable** | 0 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 5 |
| **Very unfavourable** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | |
| **Don't know** | 3 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 16 |
| **How much do you agree or disagree with the statement, 'In relation to colour and ethnicity, I prefer to stick with people of my own kind'?** | | | | | |
| **Strongly agree** | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| **Agree** | 4 | 4 | 10 | 17 | 5 |
| **Neither agree nor disagree** | 13 | 18 | 26 | 32 | 25 |
| **Disagree** | 31 | 31 | 30 | 25 | 20 |
| **Strongly disagree** | 52 | 44 | 31 | 19 | 45 |
| **Don't know** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

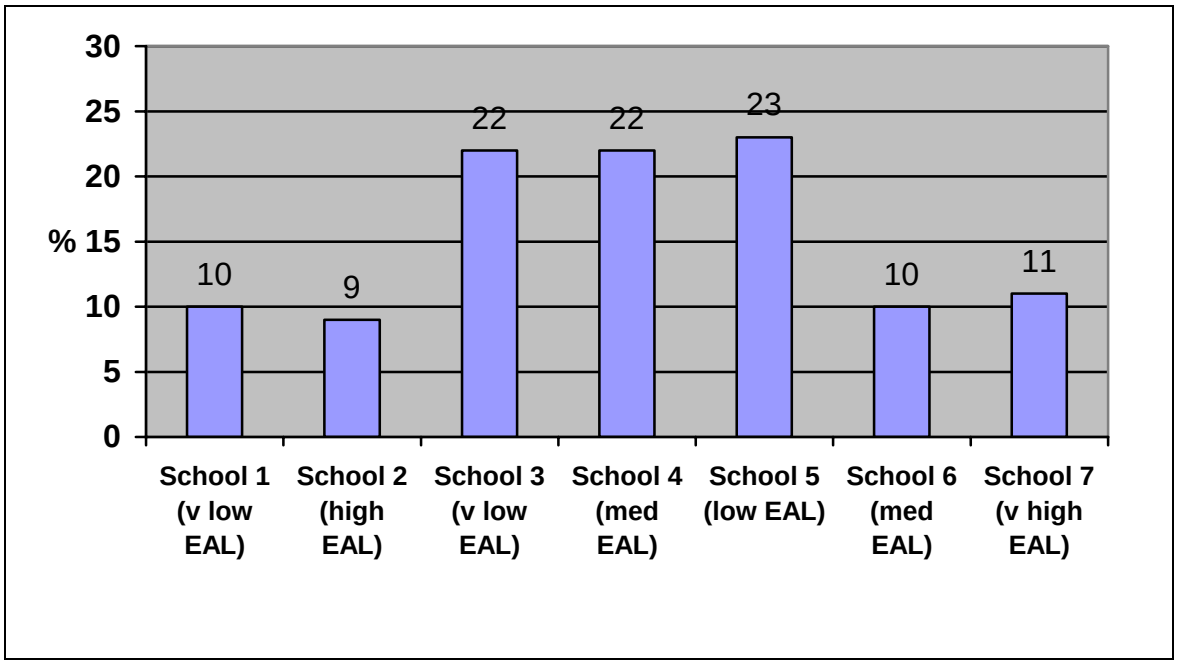
From the NCB school survey we reported the interesting finding that although males were more likely than females to socialise with people from minority ethnic groups, they tended to hold more negative views. Similar results can be reported from the 2008 YLT survey. While 50 per cent of males compared with 40 per cent of females reported having contact with other ethnic groups through meetings or sport, males in the YLT survey also held more negative views about minority ethnic groups. Nine per cent of all males compared to 6 per cent of all females said they felt unfavourable or very unfavourable towards minority ethnic groups. At the other end of the scale, 29 per cent of males compared to 39 per cent of females felt favourable.

The majority of both males (56 per cent) and females (70 per cent) disagreed with the statement: 'In relation to colour and ethnicity, I would prefer to stick to people of my own kind.' Catholics in the YLT survey were significantly more likely than Protestants to say that they felt favourable towards minority ethnic groups ($p<0.011$) and significantly less likely to agree that they preferred to stick to people of their own kind ($p<0.000$). Within each of the three categories of religious background – Catholic, Protestant and no religion – female respondents held more favourable views than their male counterparts. Males with no religious background were most likely to feel favourable towards minority ethnic groups (35 per cent), while Protestant males felt most unfavourable (14 per cent). Among females, those with no religion also felt most favourable towards minority ethnic groups (49 per cent) and Catholic and Protestant females felt least favourable (32 per cent). However, the only statistically significant difference was among males of different religious backgrounds and their views on whether or not they would prefer to stick to people of their own kind. Protestant males were significantly more likely to agree with this statement than their non-religious and Catholic counterparts (24 per cent; 12 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

YLT found significant differences in attitudes towards different ethnic groups between the school types that respondents attended. Those attending planned integrated schools were least likely to say that they felt unfavourable towards people from minority ethnic backgrounds (2 per cent, compared to 7 per cent of grammar school students and 8 per cent of secondary school students). Similarly, respondents attending planned integrated schools were least likely to agree that they preferred to stick with people of their own kind (8 per cent, compared to grammar: 11 per cent and secondary: 12 per cent) and least likely to say that all of their friends were of the same ethnic background as them (24 per cent, compared to grammar: 37 per cent and secondary: 42 per cent). Students attending schools with an exclusively or mainly Protestant intake held less favourable views towards minority ethnic groups than students in mainly Catholic schools and in schools with a mixed religious intake. However, those attending schools with a mainly Catholic intake were most likely to say that all their friends were from the same ethnic background as they were (46 per cent) compared to 36 per cent in mainly Protestant schools and 21 per cent in schools with a mixed religious intake.

Respondents attending planned integrated schools and mixed religious intake schools were much more likely than those in segregated schools to say that school was the most important factor that influenced how they felt about people from other ethnic backgrounds. However, the NCB school survey shows that significant differences exist between individual schools **within** a particular sector regarding pupils' 'liking' of people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living in Northern Ireland. As Figure 2 shows, the extent of dislike reported was not related to the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups attending these schools, as might have been expected. Schools 2 and 7 are the schools with the highest proportion of EAL pupils, yet an average of 10 per cent of their pupils say they disliked people from other ethnic minority groups, whereas school 1 has low EAL numbers and also had 10 per cent of pupils who said they disliked people from other ethnic minority groups. It is also interesting to note that respondents in the only grammar school in the sample were significantly less likely than those in all other schools to say that school was the main influencing factor on their views of people from other ethnic groups living in Northern Ireland (9 per cent compared to 24 per cent or more in other schools). These grammar school pupils identified church and their families as their main influencing factors.

***Figure 2: Proportion of respondents (by school attended) who said they disliked people from other ethnic backgrounds living in Northern Ireland a lot or a little***




Source: NCB school survey

**Key findings – contact and friendship patterns**

Young people from Northern Ireland are most likely to have contact with members of the Chinese, Polish, Black African or Caribbean communities, as opposed to those from South Asia, Portugal and other European countries. Also, only 12 per cent of young people reported having contact with members of the Irish Travelling community.

Nineteen per cent of YLT respondents have no contact with members of any minority ethnic group, while 37 per cent indicate that they have no friends from any minority ethnic group.

There was a difference noted in responses when participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *At the moment I feel there is little chance of being able to become friends with people of different races and religions unless they attend your school*. Respondents aged 16 and over tended to disagree with the statement more than those who were younger (41 per cent and 37 per cent respectively, $p<0.000$) which would suggest that older young people have slightly more opportunities to meet people from other ethnic backgrounds, for example through part-time work, than their younger counterparts have.

Young people in Northern Ireland are three times more likely to make contact with members of minority ethnic groups in school than through social events or through work. Schools therefore have an important role to play in shaping attitudes and encouraging positive relationships between pupils from minority ethnic groups and migrants and those from Northern Ireland.

Contact alone, however, does not mean that positive relationships and friendships will automatically result. Rather, it is the quality of that contact that is vitally important.

Those attending the planned integrated school appeared to have more positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities than the other schools in this research.

Young men were more likely to meet members of other ethnic groups through sports clubs than young women. However, despite these higher levels of contact through sports, young men were also more likely to express a dislike of people from minority ethnic groups. Nine per cent of young males compared to 6 per cent of young females said they felt unfavourable or very unfavourable towards minority ethnic groups.

In the school with the highest proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some respondents were quite open in terms of negative comments they made about minority ethnic groups during the Talkshops. These findings are ironic and would seem to contest Tajfel's contact theory. It is clear that it is not enough to expect contact alone to result in positive attitudes towards the peer group.

### *Experience of xenophobic bullying*

Respondents in both the 2008 YLT survey and in the NCB school survey were asked whether they personally had been subjected to xenophobic bullying and whether they had taken part in such bullying. Tables 14 to 16 compare the reported experiences of young people identifying as belonging to minority ethnic groups with those of the respondents who do not belong to minority ethnic groups.

***Table 14: Experience of xenophobia, by ethnic group (YLT survey)***

| | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Member of minority ethnic group** | | **Self-identifies as belonging to a minority ethnic group** | |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Have any of your friends called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Sometimes | 18 | 9 | 15 | 9 |
| Only once or twice | 22 | 18 | 24 | 19 |
| Never | 56 | 68 | 57 | 67 |
| **And how about you? Have you ever called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 0 | <1 | 1 | <1 |
| Sometimes | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Only once or twice | 17 | 7 | 13 | 7 |
| Never | 83 | 90 | 83 | 90 |
| **Respondents saying they…** | | | | |
| Have witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school | 59 | 33 | 40 | 34 |
| Have themselves been a victim of racist bullying or harassment in their school | 29 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| Know someone personally who has been the victim of | 41 | 18 | 21 | 18 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| racist harassment or assault outside of school | | | | |
| Have themselves been a victim of racist harassment or assault outside of school | 17 | 2 | 8 | 3 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

The main finding in Table 14 is that YLT respondents belonging to minority ethnic groups – whether by our definition or self-identified – were significantly more likely than their counterparts to have been exposed to racist bullying or harassment both in their school and outside of school. They were about twice as likely to have witnessed racist bullying or attacks in school (59 per cent and 33 per cent respectively) and in their neighbourhood (41 per cent and 18 per cent respectively), but over seven times more likely to have been victims themselves in school (29 per cent and 4 per cent respectively) and over eight times more likely to have been victims outside of school (17 per cent and 2 per cent respectively).

The 2008 YLT survey also included general questions on experiences of school bullying. While there was no statistical difference between respondents who were members of minority ethnic groups or self-identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group and their counterparts in relation to lifetime experience of school bullying, the results show that those who belonged to minority ethnic groups or thought that they did were more likely to have experienced school bullying in the past two months (p=005). Among those who were ever bullied in school and who self-identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group, 42 per cent had also experienced school bullying in the past two months. This compares with just 27 per cent of respondents who did not self-identify as belonging to a minority ethnic group. The findings are similar whether they are based on respondents' actual belonging to minority ethnic groups as defined by the survey or by self-identification. Here the data show that half (50 per cent) of respondents belonging to minority ethnic groups who said they had been bullied in school also experienced bullying in the previous two months, compared with 28 per cent of respondents who did not belong to minority ethnic groups. These figures compare with statistics from the DE which reveal that 43 per cent of Year 6 and 29 per cent of Year 9 pupils have been bullied while 22 per cent in both year groups admitted to bullying other pupils in the previous two months (DE 2007).

Interestingly, those belonging to minority ethnic groups were also somewhat more likely to say that they took part in bullying other students, both in terms of xenophobic bullying and school bullying generally; however, statistically these differences were insignificant.

The NCB school survey also asked whether respondents were exposed to, or participated in, xenophobic name calling and bullying. Table 15 shows that respondents' experiences compare well with those of YLT respondents – if anything, the proportion of young people reporting that they were victims of xenophobic bullying and harassment was slightly higher than in the 2008 YLT survey.

***Table 15: Experience of xenophobia, by minority group (NCB school survey)***

| | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Member of minority group | | Self-identifies as belonging to a minority group | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| **Have any of your friends called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 19 | 7 | 9 | 7 |
| Sometimes | 19 | 15 | 17 | 15 |
| Only once or twice | 17 | 24 | 23 | 24 |
| Never | 39 | 50 | 44 | 50 |
| **And how about you? Have you ever called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Sometimes | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Only once or twice | 19 | 15 | 19 | 15 |
| Never | 68 | 75 | 67 | 76 |
| **Respondents saying they…** | | | | |
| Have witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school | 51 | 38 | 44 | 38 |
| Have themselves been a victim of racist bullying or harassment in their school | 31 | 8 | 15 | 8 |
| Know someone personally who has been the victim of racist harassment or assault outside of school | 43 | 25 | 32 | 25 |
| Have themselves been a victim of racist harassment or assault outside of school | 24 | 7 | 13 | 7 |

Source: NCB school survey

Looking only at 16-year-olds who completed the NCB school survey (N=452; Table 16), this finding is confirmed. Again 16-year-old respondents belonging to minority groups were eight times more likely than their counterparts to say that they were racially bullied or harassed in school and outside of school.

***Table 16: Experience of xenophobia, by minority group (NCB school survey, 16-year-olds only)***

| | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Member of minority group** | | **Self-identifies as belonging to a minority group** | |
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Have any of your friends called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 13 | 8 | 12 | 8 |
| Sometimes | 32 | 15 | 23 | 15 |
| Only once or twice | 29 | 25 | 23 | 25 |
| Never | 26 | 49 | 42 | 48 |
| **And how about you? Have you ever called someone names to their face because of their colour or ethnic origin?** | | | | |
| Often | 6* | <1* | 1* | 1 |
| Sometimes | 3* | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| Only once or twice | 13* | 15 | 22 | 13 |
| Never | 77 | 77 | 68 | 78 |
| **Respondents saying they…** | | | | |
| Have witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school | 68 | 35 | 48 | 36 |
| Have themselves been a victim of racist bullying or harassment in their school | 42 | 5 | 15 | 6 |
| Know someone personally who has been the victim of racist harassment or assault outside of school | 58 | 20 | 36 | 20 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have themselves been a victim of racist harassment or assault outside of school | 32 | 4 | 12 | 5 |

Source: NCB school survey

* Cell count below 5

Generally speaking, reported differences between males and females, both in terms of personal experience and in relation to friends, were only marginal. Not unexpectedly, males were somewhat more likely to report personal experiences of racist bullying and harassment than females. For example, in the NCB school survey, 22 per cent of females with minority backgrounds reported experiences of racist bullying outside school compared to 26 per cent of their male counterparts.

During the one-to-one interviews conducted with young people from minority ethnic background interviewees were asked if they had ever personally experienced or witnessed racist attacks, bullying or assaults. Three out of the 12 respondents stated that they had direct personal experience of racist behaviour or remarks, another four had witnessed such events, while one other respondent stated that she had heard racist remarks being made to others living in the same neighbourhood. Hence 66 per cent of young people from minority ethnic groups interviewed had either experienced or witnessed racial bullying:

> Once I went to the swimming pool and one Irish girl called me all sorts of things because I am Polish … and told me to go back to my country.
>
> I have witnessed a racist attack. It was in P6. Two boys were being picked on by about six people and they said 'go back home' and cursed at them.

Furthermore, during the one-to-one interviews several of the young people, who had moved to Northern Ireland in the recent past, said that they felt safer in their countries of origin than they did in Northern Ireland due to racism.

During the Talkshops held in the schools the issue of racism was explored with the young people by asking their opinions on the following statement: 'The sectarian hatred is now being directed towards minority ethnic communities, especially foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.'

Some of this discussion related to incidents that the young people had witnessed, but more of it was related to their own assessment of the situation in Northern Ireland.

Some of the young people who disagreed with the above statement pointed to the fact that local politicians could not get on or that sectarianism was still present in NI society. Other respondents disagreed because they drew a distinction between sectarianism and racism. In other words, it was not

possible to say racism had replaced sectarianism, as they were two different things.

Some people who agreed with the statement qualified their answers, indicating that those who acted in a racist manner towards others actively made a choice to do so:

> There is still a lot of bitterness from the Troubles – and just by choice it's the ethnic minorities [who are being targeted].

Other participants were unsure because racism was something they were relatively unaware of:

> I haven't heard about minority ethnic group hatred – more about sectarianism.

The issues of racism and sectarianism were further explored as young people in the Talkshops discussed the statement: 'I think people should be able to get on, no matter what religion/race they are.'

There was almost unanimous agreement with this statement from two of the schools (5 and 6).[10] However, it is interesting to note that in school 7, with the highest number of EAL, a number of pupils were unsure about this statement and were unable to agree or disagree. Across all of the schools very few participants disagreed.

Some of those who agreed said that, while people should be able to get on, the reality was quite different. They said:

> We should be able to get on but there's not enough effort being made to integrate minority ethnic groups into Ireland and make them feel welcome.

Others indicated that getting on with others required some effort, people had to work at it and that it was important to at least give people a chance to try to get on. Some respondents said that those with 'closed minds' would not be able to get on with those from different groups.

Some of those who disagreed felt that it was only natural that everyone wouldn't always agree with everyone else, and that the differences between people made it difficult for them to get on. Others pointed to the fact that as there is still disagreement between people from Northern Ireland it was unlikely that people from different racial groups would get on well:

> Catholics and Protestants can't get on so why should people from other countries be able to.

> All Irish people are white and they can't even get on.

Others felt that 'everyone should have their own opinion' and therefore it was unrealistic to expect everyone to get on all of the time.

[10] School 5: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, low EAL
School 6: Secondary Catholic maintained, single-sex, medium EAL

Some respondents who disagreed felt that getting on well with others was more dependent on people's personalities rather than their culture:

> It shouldn't matter about your culture, it's more about their personality.

**Key findings – experience of xenophobic bullying**

Young people from minority ethnic groups are significantly more likely to have personally experienced and witnessed racist attacks and bullying. Of the young people who reported that they had been bullied in school, about half of respondents belonging to minority ethnic groups said they had experienced bullying in the previous two months, compared with less than one-third of respondents who did not belong to minority ethnic groups.

Males were marginally more likely than females to be affected by xenophobic bullying and harassment.

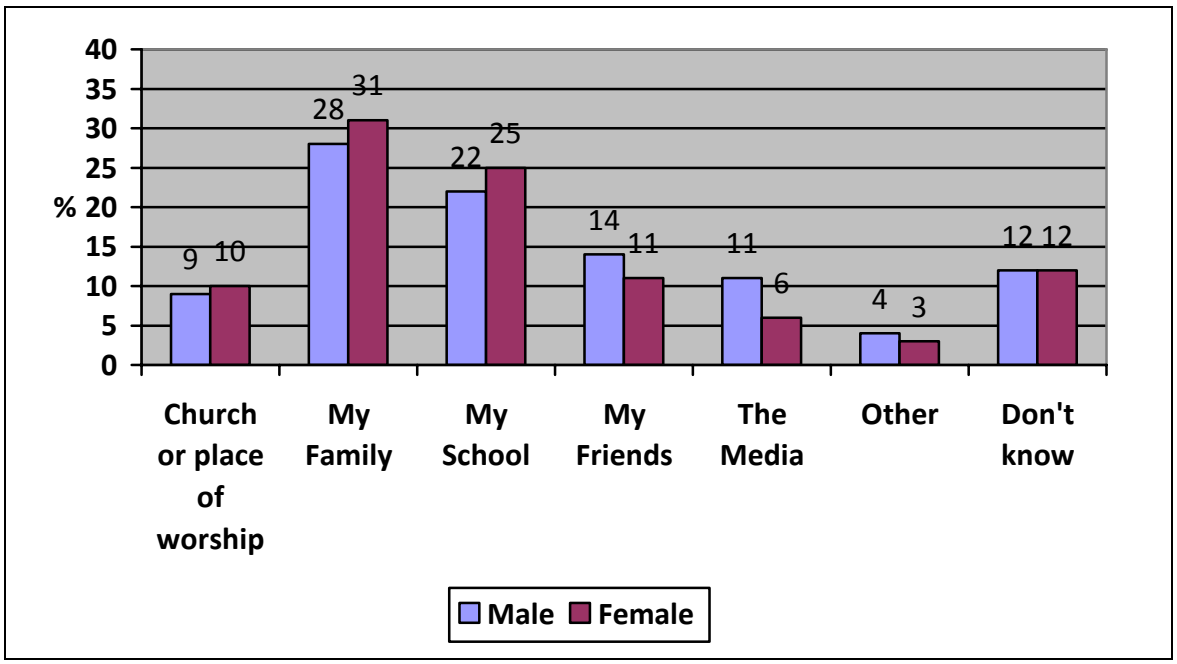
According to young people racism is not replacing sectarianism in Northern Ireland: sectarianism has not gone away and racism is also prevalent in the population.

### *Influencing factors*

It is interesting to investigate what young males and females identify as the main influencing factors on their views of people from different ethnic groups. Figure 3 shows that males and females both identify their family and school as their main influencing factor. However, the proportion of females saying they were mainly influenced by their family and school is higher than males. Males were more likely than females to identify the media or their friends as their main influencing factor.

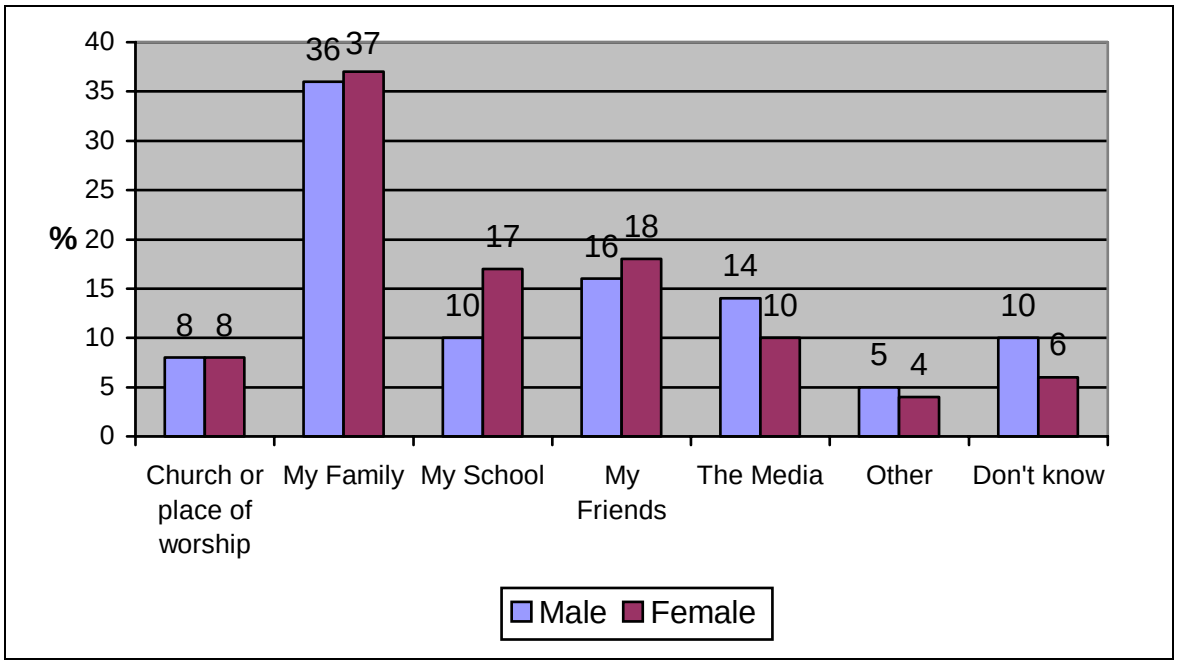
 

***Figure 3: Main influencing factors on respondents' views of people from ethnic groups and other countries living in Northern Ireland, by gender (NCB school survey)***




Source: NCB school survey

***Figure 4: Main influencing factors on respondents' views of people from ethnic groups and other countries living in Northern Ireland, by gender (2008 YLT survey)***

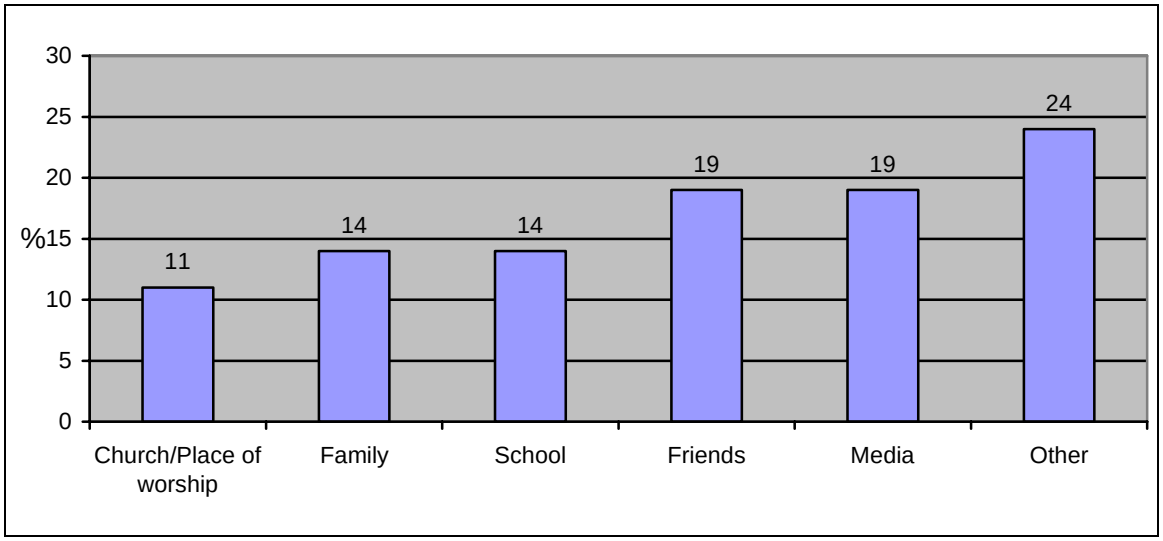



Source: 2008 YLT survey

This is significant, in that we found that respondents who said that the main influences on how they felt about people from minority ethnic groups were the media or their friends were most likely to hold negative attitudes

towards these groups and most likely to say they disliked people from other racial or cultural groups and people from other countries living in Northern Ireland (19 per cent each). The media and friends were most strongly related to a dislike of people from other ethnic backgrounds, as Figure 5 shows.

***Figure 5: Respondents saying they dislike (a little or a lot) people from other racial or cultural groups or from other countries living in Northern Ireland, by self-identified source of main influence of views***[11]




Source: NCB school survey

In the Talkshops, the young people also mentioned the influence of the media. When responding to the statement: 'People are very wary of other races because of the terrorism in mainland UK', several pupils who agreed with the statement referred to the influence of the media:

> The media tells you to be scared.
>
> It's because of the news … [T]he media makes us feel intimidated.

**Key findings – influencing factors**

In terms of influencing factors, similar patterns were recorded between the NCB school survey respondents and the YLT respondents.

For the NCB respondents, the family and school (approximately 30 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) have the greatest influence on young people's opinions in relation to minority ethnic groups followed by friends (approximately 12 per cent), the media (approximately 8 per cent) and the church or place of worship (approximately 10 per cent).

[11] Other responses which influenced respondents' views included the young people's own experiences of working or going to school with members of minority ethnic groups; their 'own feelings' or 'own views'; a combination of the influences listed or none of them.

For YLT respondents the family (over 30 per cent for both males and females) and friends (approximately 17 per cent) are the main sources of influence, with school and the media coming third and fourth.

Family and school are generally associated with more positive views towards minority ethnic groups whereas young people whose main sources of information are the media and friends hold the most negative views.

### *A future in Northern Ireland – staying or leaving?*

The YLT survey collects a range of other background variables, which provide some insight into the situation of migrant workers and minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. These variables give insights, among others, into the family's financial background, caring responsibilities, experiences in school and mental health, and whether 16-year-olds with a minority ethnic background intend to stay in Northern Ireland or not. The latter question is one of the most timely questions as policy-makers wonder about the impact of the economic crisis on migration movements to and from Northern Ireland and the UK.

YLT asked respondents:

- whether they planned to leave Northern Ireland
- if they did, what the reasons for this were
- whether they would consider ever coming back to Northern Ireland to live.

The results of the YLT survey show that of the respondents who identified with any of the minority ethnic groups listed in Table 7, 59 per cent said they would leave Northern Ireland. Only 7 per cent said they would stay, and 34 per cent said they were unsure. Compared to this, of respondents who did not belong to any of the groups in Table 7, 46 per cent said they would stay in Northern Ireland, 27 per cent said they would leave and 35 per cent said they were unsure. Table 17 displays these findings and also shows the main reasons why respondents thought they would leave.

***Table 17: YLT respondents' intention to leave Northern Ireland and come back, by ethnic group***

| | **Member of minority ethnic group** | | **Self-identifies as belonging to a minority ethnic group** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Do you think you will you stay in Northern Ireland or will you leave at some point?** | | | | |

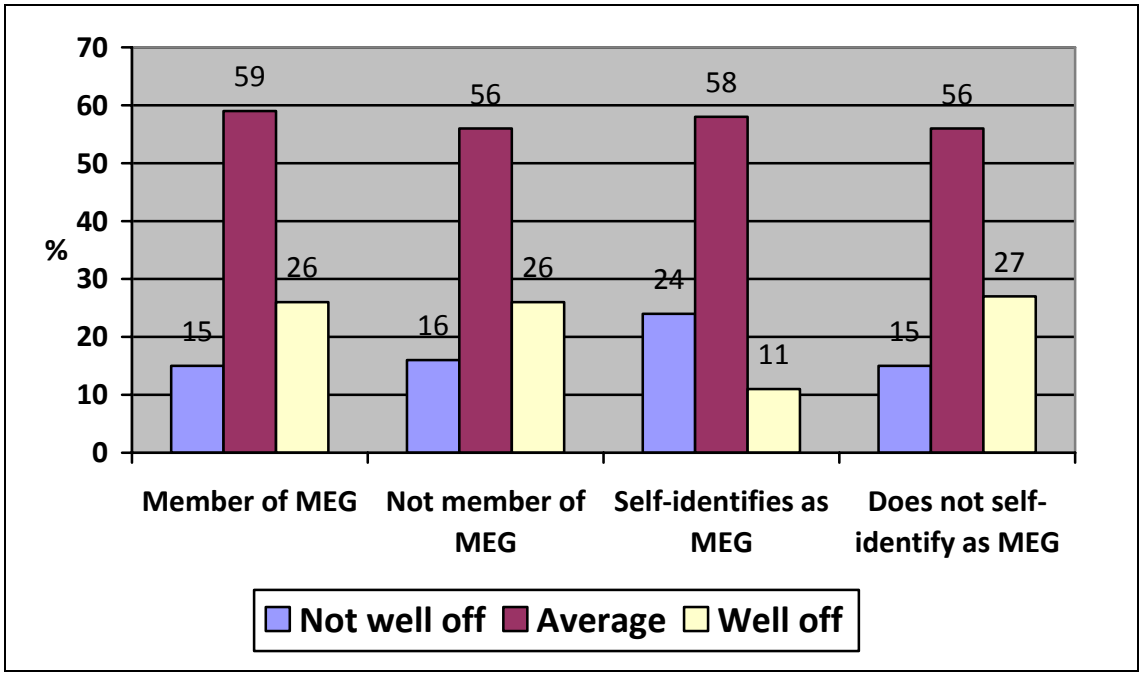
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leave | 59 | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| Stay | 7 | 46 | 51 | 47 |
| Don't know | 34 | 35 | 23 | 44 |
| **Respondents saying they would leave for the following reasons:** | | | | |
| Better job prospects elsewhere | 24 | 37 | 47 | 36 |
| Because of the Troubles | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| To seek a better future in general | 35 | 43 | 32 | 43 |
| Because of a relationship | 0 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| To go to college/university | 47 | 54 | 45 | 56 |
| Other | 29 | 16 | 16 | 19 |
| Don't know | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| **And would you ever come back to live?** | | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 52 | 60 | 50 |
| No | 12 | 8 | 4 | 9 |
| Don't know | 56 | 41 | 36 | 41 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

Table 17 shows that while respondents from minority ethnic groups were more likely to say they would leave Northern Ireland and much less likely to say that they would come back, it is noticeable that over half were unsure about their plans. In terms of the reasons why they would leave, respondents from minority ethnic groups and indigenous young people indicated that they were likely to go to college and university elsewhere, or would leave to seek better job prospects or a better future in general. It is interesting to note that there is no significant difference between the aspirations of the two groups.

Related to this issue of employment is the question on the family's financial background. Looking at the 'objective' measure of actual minority ethnic belonging, young people from minority ethnic groups did not differ in their assessment of their family's financial well-being from those who said they did not belong to any minority group.

***Figure 6: Family financial background, by ethnic group***




Source: 2008 YLT survey
*MEG = minority ethnic group

**Key findings – a future in Northern Ireland – staying or leaving?**

Young people from minority ethnic groups are twice as likely to intend to leave Northern Ireland than those who are white British or Irish. However, in both groups over one-third are unsure about whether they will stay or leave.

The main reasons for wanting to leave include studying, seeking better job opportunities or a better future in general. Only very small numbers in either category cite the Troubles as a reason for wanting to leaving Northern Ireland.

## Young people's views on migrant workers, inward migration and race relations

This section explores young people's attitudes and opinions on inward migration, migrant workers and race relations. It will also compare the views of young people from different groups.

### *Young people's views on migrant workers and inward migration*

In the NCB school survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements about migrant workers. Table 18 summarises the responses to these statements.

***Table 18: Proportion of respondents agreeing with statements (NCB school survey)***

| % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Disagree** | **Don't know** |
| **There is a lot of hatred towards foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.** | | | |
| 68 | 15 | 6 | 11 |
| **It is not fair that a lot of jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by people from other countries.** | | | |
| 51 | 23 | 18 | 7 |

Source: NCB school survey

The 2008 YLT survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with five similar – but not identical – statements. Table 19 displays the results of two of these (the other three are discussed below in the section on race relations), which again correspond to the results of the NCB school survey. A direct comparison with the NCB school survey is not advisable as the wording of the text of the questions varied noticeably.

***Table 19: Proportion of respondents agreeing with statements (YLT survey)***

| % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Disagree** | **Don't know** |
| **The sectarian hatred is now directed towards minority ethnic communities, especially foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.** | | | |
| 66 | 16 | 11 | 7 |
| **A lot of local jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by other ethnic groups, which is unfair to locals.** | | | |
| 47 | 24 | 28 | 1 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

Generally there is an awareness among young people in Northern Ireland about the negative attitude towards migrant workers. For example, over two-thirds of respondents in the NCB school survey (68 per cent) agreed that there is a lot of hatred towards foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.

Over two-thirds of respondents in the YLT survey also agreed with a similar statement: 'The sectarian hatred is now directed towards minority ethnic communities, especially foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.'

Indeed, one of the most contentious issues to emerge in the Talkshops was that of the employment of migrant workers. The young people were asked for their opinions on the following statement: 'A lot of local jobs are being taken by other ethnic groups, which is unfair to locals.'

> When I try to get a job there's people with different accents there e.g. in McDonald's or KFC.

This was also reflected in the responses to the NCB school survey. Over half (51 per cent) of respondents agreed with the statement that 'It was not fair that a lot of jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by people from other countries.' Slightly less than half (47 per cent) of the YLT participants agreed with the statement 'A lot of local jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by other ethnic groups, which is unfair to locals.'

Arguably, in these times of greater economic insecurity and rising unemployment, this proportion of young people might be higher than it would have been otherwise. Interestingly, in the NCB school survey, respondents who were aged 16 or above who, as could be argued, were more likely to be in a job or to seek employment in the near future, were significantly less likely than their younger counterparts to agree with this statement (47 per cent and 53 per cent, $p<0.000$).

These views were echoed by the participants in the Talkshops and during the completion of the Graffiti walls when they were asked to list the disadvantages of living in a multi-ethnic society. In three schools (schools 3, 4 and 5) a majority agreed with the statement. Indeed, in one of these schools (3), 95 per cent of Talkshop participants agreed with it. On the other hand, in two other schools (schools 1 and 7) the majority disagreed with the statement. Overall, opinions seemed to be fairly divided.[12]

Some Talkshop participants expressed concerns that a large number of local people were competing for fewer jobs and that those from minority ethnic groups would work for lower wages. They were also concerned about the current economic situation and felt that local jobs should be for local people. The following quotes exemplify this:

[12] School 1: Grammar controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 4: Secondary controlled, co-ed, medium EAL
School 5: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, low EAL
School 7: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, very high EAL

> … they apply for everything and there are people on the dole here who can't get jobs.
>
> The country's heading into a recession and employment rising so I don't think we should be bringing foreigners in.

However, other people felt that:

> We live in a globalised economy so you should be able to move to work.

Participants who disagreed did so for a wide variety of reasons, such as the qualifications and skills held by members of minority ethnic groups, the fact that local people will not do some of the jobs on offer or a belief that the statement was just a stereotype. They said:

> … they do the jobs that no one else would do, the lower paid jobs.
>
> People from minority ethnic groups are harder working and more reliable.

Those who were undecided felt that ethnicity had little to do with who was offered the job – it would go to the best candidate.

Additionally, young people in the Talkshops were asked for their opinions on the statement 'All the foreigners should get out of Northern Ireland and go back to where they come from.'

Responses to this statement indicated almost unanimous opinions. In school 7 all of the participants disagreed with the statement, while in three others (schools 2, 5 and 6) over 80 per cent disagreed. On the other hand, a significant minority (one-fifth) in school 3 agreed with the statement.[13]

Some participants who disagreed felt that people had the right to look for work and build a life anywhere. Other respondents said that it would be really boring without 'foreigners' or pointed to the contribution that migrant workers make to the economy and society.

However, some people qualified their answers, indicating that only those migrants who were actually making a contribution to the economy should be allowed to stay. They said: 'The ones who don't work should go home.'

Participants who agreed gave reasons such as having a 'dislike' or even a fear of foreigners. Other respondents held a perception that jobs were unsafe due to the presence of migrant workers or that Ireland is too small to cope with inward migration.

[13] School 2: Controlled integrated, co-ed, high EAL
School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 5: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, low EAL
School 6: Secondary Catholic maintained, single sex girls, medium EAL
School 7: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, very high EAL

Respondents who were unsure also cited fears about the labour market and the negative impact of 'trouble makers'. Others indicated that in any group there are a variety of people, some of who are 'nice' and some of who are 'nasty'.

Migration for economic purposes was also explored further in the Talkshops, with participants being asked their opinions on the following statement: 'I think we should understand that those from different minority ethnic communities are not as well off as ourselves and need help to find jobs and support in this country to provide enough money for their family.'

Responses to this statement were very mixed. While at least half of the participants in three schools (2, 3 and 6) agreed with it, there were also significant minorities in schools 4 and 5 who were unsure.[14]

Those who agreed with this statement did so for a variety of reasons: some felt that as people from Northern Ireland have gone in search of work elsewhere in the world and have been helped, it is now their turn to help others, or that as living in Northern Ireland is a new experience anyone would need help with it. Those who disagreed felt that some people come here in order to claim benefits, not to work. Some questioned why migrants could not find work in their home country. Others disagreed, pointing out that not every minority ethnic worker is poor and to suggest that this is the case is misleading:

> It's their problem if people go out and work in our country then why can't they do that in their own country.
>
> It's kind of patronising to put them all in that category, that they're all poor.

During the Talkshops the young people also discussed working with people who were 'different'. They were asked for their opinions on the following statement: 'I don't mind working alongside people of different race and religions.'

At first glance responses to this statement were very positive. In two schools there was unanimous agreement (schools 5 and 6), while even school 3, which had the smallest proportion agreeing, had three-quarters of its participants in this category. On the other hand, in three schools (2, 3 and 4) a significant minority (over one-fifth) indicated that they disagreed.

The young people who agreed indicated that they did so for a variety of reasons. Some participants cited good communication. Others said that they actually knew some people from different minority ethnic backgrounds and therefore had experience of working with them. Others felt that there is

[14] School 2: Controlled integrated, co-ed, high EAL
School 3: Secondary controlled, co-ed, very low EAL
School 4: Secondary controlled, co-ed, medium EAL
School 5: Secondary Catholic maintained, co-ed, low EAL
School 6: Secondary Catholic maintained, single sex girls, medium EAL

a need to get to know different people or that there is a need to get along with work colleagues:

> I do work with people from Eastern Europe and they are lovely people so they are.

Those who were unsure indicated that it 'depends on who you are' and highlighted difficulties that might arise due to the 'language barrier'.

Those who disagreed gave reasons such as the fear of people feeling excluded if they were in the minority. Others simply stated they did not want to work with those from different cultures, while some felt that the resistance to working with people from different religions came from such people themselves:

> Different cultures – don't want to work with them.

> Some religions are ignorant – they don't want to talk to you.

***Young people's views on race relations***

***Table 20: Proportion of respondents agreeing with statements (NCB school survey)***

| % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Disagree** | **Don't know** |
| **There's a lot to be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds.** | | | |
| 60 | 19 | 10 | 11 |
| **People are afraid of other races because of the recent terrorist attacks in London.** | | | |
| 43 | 20 | 14 | 24 |

Source: NCB school survey

***Table 21: Proportion of respondents agreeing with statements (YLT survey)***

| % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Disagree** | **Don't know** |
| **There's a lot to be learned from other religions. It's fascinating, not intimidating.** | | | |
| 56 | 28 | 12 | 4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **People are very wary of other races because of the terrorism in mainland UK.** | | | |
| 62 | 19 | 13 | 6 |
| **At the moment I feel there is little chance of being able to become friends with people of different races and religions unless they attend the same school.** | | | |
| 41 | 19 | 37 | 4 |

Source: 2008 YLT survey

During the Talkshops young people demonstrated an ambivalence in their attitudes to minority ethnic groups. On the one hand, there was a fair degree of suspicion, fear and hostility expressed (especially in relation to perceived competition for employment from minority ethnic groups), as discussed above, but on the other hand, the young respondents expressed an interest and curiosity in learning about other cultures. This is evident in the responses to the statement 'There's a lot to be learned from other races and religions. It's fascinating, not intimidating.'

Participants' responses to this statement indicated very strong opinions and very positive attitudes towards people from different minority ethnic groups. In some schools (2 and 6), of those who had an opinion, there was unanimous agreement with this statement, while in five of the schools no one disagreed with the statement (in some schools some participants were unsure). Similarly, in the NCB school survey, six out of 10 (60 per cent) respondents agreed that there's a lot to be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds, while 56 per cent of the YLT participants agreed that 'there's a lot to be learned from other religions. It's fascinating, not intimidating.'

Some respondents in the Talkshops indicated that there were several aspects to other people's race or religion that can be explored, for example, food, dress, traditions, language, festivals or important calendar dates.

The minority who disagreed did so for reasons that included the fact that they thought the statement was patronising, that every religion had its negative side or that sometimes it is difficult to learn more due to language barriers:

> It's a real patronising statement to say you can learn from minority ethnic groups because you can learn from anyone.

Those who were undecided felt that they had little experience of learning about other cultures or perceived some religions to be fairly exclusive:

> I haven't learned about other cultures.

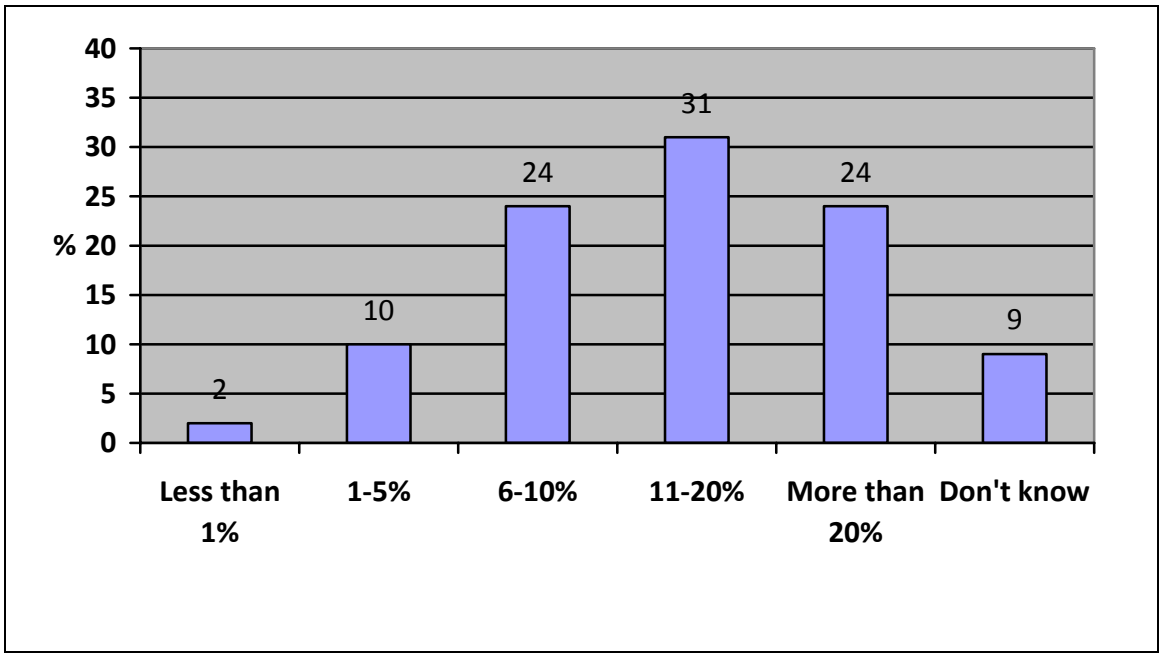
> Some people, like Muslims aren't interested in our religion – you just have to be Muslim.

This ambivalence may be due to a number of factors, for example the influence of the media, family, friends and school or the misinformation printed by some media. It may also be due to young people still working through their own true opinions (which, indeed, may be conflicting), as some respondents had not previously had the opportunity to think about and discuss how they felt about those from minority ethnic groups.

An interesting question that was asked in previous YLT surveys and was repeated again in 2008 is the one that asks respondents to estimate the proportion of minority ethnic groups living in Northern Ireland. Figure 7 shows the results of this question from the 2008 YLT survey. The figure shows that only approximately one in 10 respondents accurately estimates the proportion of minority ethnic groups living in Northern Ireland. About one-quarter (24 per cent) of respondents grossly over-exaggerate the numbers, saying that more than one in five people in Northern Ireland belongs to a minority ethnic group.

***Figure 7: Among the figures below, which one, in your opinion, comes closest to the actual percentage of people from minority ethnic groups currently living in Northern Ireland?***




Source: 2008 YLT survey

Nearly one-third of respondents believe that the proportion is between 11 and 20 per cent, which is, without a doubt, much higher than the actual figure. As already discussed in the literature review above, the perception of much higher than realistic numbers can be seen as evidence for a heightened awareness for which a number of explanations can be offered, for example a perceived threat (such as pressure on available employment or housing, as seen above) or the novelty of minority ethnic groups living here as inward migration is a relatively new phenomenon in Northern Ireland or a response to skewed media representation.

As previously discussed, the media is one influencing factor in terms of forming young people's opinions of minority ethnic groups and is associated

with negative perceptions. If information is not being relayed accurately via the media, negative perceptions are reinforced.

### *Comparing the views of young people from different groups*

As could be expected, there were significant differences between respondents who were members of minority ethnic groups and those who were not, as Table 22 shows. A number of findings are interesting here. The first one is that young people belonging to minority groups themselves are much less likely than those identifying as white (Irish, British or Northern Irish) to agree that hatred is directed towards foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland (47 per cent and 70 per cent agreeing respectively). This is confirmed by looking at the findings according to the language mainly spoken by respondents. Again, those whose main language is not English and those who speak more than one main language are much less likely to think that foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland experience hatred than those who speak English. This is despite the finding presented above that minority ethnic groups are much more likely to be exposed to racial abuse and bullying both inside and outside of school. This is interesting in that it suggests that the perception among young people of the extent of hatred directed towards foreign workers is not reflected in the views of people from minority groups.

The second interesting, but much more expected, finding from the NCB school survey is that young people belonging to minority groups are much more likely to disagree that it is unfair that jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by people from other countries. Only 14 per cent of respondents with minority backgrounds and 19 per cent of those whose first language is not English or who speak at least two main languages agreed with this statement. This was significantly different ($p<0.000$) from the views expressed by respondents whose main language is English and who do not belong to a minority group. Over half of these (54 per cent) agreed that it was unfair that jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by people from other countries.

As Table 22 shows, respondents were much closer in their views with regard to the possibility of making friends from other ethnic groups outside school. Respondents from minority groups were much more likely to agree (73 per cent) that a lot can be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds than white (Irish, British or Northern Irish) respondents, although nearly six in 10 (59 per cent) of these respondents also agreed. Over four in 10 (44 per cent) respondents whose main language was English and who identified as white (Irish, British or Northern Irish) agreed that people are afraid of other races because of recent terror attacks, but only one-quarter of those from minority backgrounds also agreed.

***Table 22: Responses to statements by ethnic belonging***

| | | % | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Minority group | | Is English your first or main language? | | |
| | | No | Yes | Yes | No | I have two or more main languages |
| **There is a lot of hatred towards foreign workers coming into Northern Ireland.** | Agree | 70 | 47 | 70 | 47 | 42 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 15 | 19 | 15 | 18 | 25 |
| | Disagree | 6 | 12 | 6 | 11 | 11 |
| | Don't know | 10 | 22 | 10 | 24 | 22 |
| **It is not fair that a lot of jobs in Northern Ireland are taken by people from other countries.** | Agree | 54 | 14 | 54 | 19 | 19 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 23 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 26 |
| | Disagree | 16 | 53 | 16 | 50 | 44 |
| | Don't know | 7 | 12 | 7 | 10 | 11 |
| **There's a lot to be learned from people with other cultures and backgrounds.** | Agree | 59 | 73 | 60 | 62 | 76 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 19 | 13 | 19 | 19 | 14 |
| | Disagree | 10 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 4 |
| | Don't know | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 6 |
| **People are afraid of other races because of the recent terrorist attacks in London.** | Agree | 44 | 26 | 44 | 25 | 31 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 20 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 24 |
| | Disagree | 13 | 19 | 14 | 19 | 14 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Don't know | 23 | 35 | 23 | 37 | 31 |
| **There is little chance of being able to become friends with people of different races and cultures unless they attend the same school.** | Agree | 30 | 27 | 30 | 30 | 23 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 20 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 22 |
| | Disagree | 38 | 40 | 38 | 33 | 42 |
| | Don't know | 12 | 16 | 12 | 18 | 13 |

Source: NCB school survey

**Key findings – young people's views on inward migration and race relations**

Young people demonstrated an ambivalence towards those with minority ethnic backgrounds. On the one hand, different cultures and traditions are seen as interesting, even entertaining or novel. On the other, there is the perception that competition for employment is due to the arrival of those from minority ethnic groups. There is also a distrust of those seen as 'different'. This ambivalence may be due to a number of reasons: lack of opportunity to discuss the issues explored in this study and/or misinformation.

There were significant differences between the views of respondents who were members of minority ethnic groups and those who were not across all of the statements in the NCB school survey. These statements related to attitudes towards foreign workers, the value of cultural diversity, fear and mistrust of other races and the potential for friendships to develop outside of school. For example, 68 per cent of all respondents agreed that there was a lot of hatred towards foreign workers in Northern Ireland, whereas only 47 per cent of those from minority groups felt that there was a lot of hatred towards foreign workers (NCB school survey).

When asked about their opinions of recent terror attacks, 44 per cent of white (Irish, British or Northern Irish) thought that these attacks were the cause of fear of other races as opposed to only 26 per cent of those from minority backgrounds.

# Implications for policy and practice

At an international meeting in 2001 Kofi Annan[15] noted:

> None of us is born intolerant of those who differ from us. Intolerance is taught and can be untaught … But in this area, as in others, prevention is better than cure. We must work to prevent intolerance from taking hold in the next generation. We must build on the open-mindedness of young people, and ensure that their minds remain open.

This research focused on the views of young people in different post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. We can use it as a litmus test for the views of generations in the future but we must use it wisely, considering the whole picture and ensuring that we reflect on effective policy and practice implications.

The research has highlighted key themes as follows.

**Ethnic identity and the role of educators**

Ethnic identity is a complex issue. In particular, this research confirms that people in Northern Ireland, as in some other parts of the world, tend to equate ethnic identity with religious identity.

There is a need to explore the definitions of ethnicity in the classroom and the staffroom which should inform the wider public debate about the important indicators that we should use to capture appropriate and relevant information. It was clear when conducting this research that the commonly used indicator of ethnicity – EAL[16] – did not always correspond to actually identifying minority ethnic groups. In some cases a non-indigenous pupil may not actually require support with English and hence will not be classified as EAL; nevertheless, that same individual may still require support with integration. The timing of collecting the information is also important, with schools currently providing information each October. Because there is no mechanism to update the census during the year, if and when other EAL children arrive, the extra resources that are required to meet the needs of these children may not be available until the following school year. There is no doubt that this is a fluid population and hence new approaches may be required to ensure that fixed collection times do not disadvantage schools and students; at the same time, the DE will want the most up-to-date data to ensure effective planning.

During the fieldwork for this research, it was clear that some students were able to engage more effectively with the Talkshop discussions on minority ethnic groups, and some peer researchers remarked on the differences between schools in terms of students' ability to discuss the issue and their

[15] Kofi Annan's message to the Institute for International Education, New York, 27 November 2001.

[16] English as an Additional Language- defined by Department of Education as children who do not have the English skills to participate in the curriculum.

openness to respond to key statements. Fundamentally, education is about learning, hence our schools need to create environments that facilitate debate and learning about their peer group. This research clearly demonstrates that it is not enough to have minority ethnic students in the school; this fact in itself does not imply that the school values diversity. More proactive approaches need to be made to ensure that students have the opportunity to:

- explore difference with their peer group
- understand other cultures
- respect and celebrate diversity.

The Learning for Life and Work (LLW) curriculum currently delivered to Key Stage 3 pupils includes topics on diversity, inclusion, racism and sectarianism. This research on attitudes to difference confirms the need for curriculum time to study subjects such as LLW. It is essential for students to be able to openly discuss societal issues and to understand the strengths of diversity.

A future evaluation of LLW should consider:

- the extent to which it enables young people to have the time and space to explore their attitudes towards minority ethnic groups and migrant workers
- the difference it makes to young people's attitudes to these groups.

In addition, the DE should examine its policy regarding the training of teachers to address issues such as cultural awareness, racism and respecting difference.

Schools should continue to embrace the opportunities provided by globalisation and the expansion of the EU. The European Commission supports a number of programmes which relate to the issue of integration, for example the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and especially Commenius, and which seek to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and educational staff about the diversity of European cultures, languages and values. It helps young people to acquire the basic life skills and competences necessary for their personal development, for future employment and for active citizenship.

Other local programmes of support for schools include the Community Relations in Schools project and the Global Dimension in Schools NI programme. According to published materials, the Global Dimension in Schools programme supports all teachers in NI to deliver the NI curriculum by incorporating global perspectives into their learning areas. This teaching resource provides global perspectives linked to curriculum modules so that young people can understand their local context versus the global perspective. It could be argued that this type of resource, if used effectively, could benefit both indigenous and newcomer pupils, providing an enriching educational experience for all. Any future evaluation of this support programme should involve both practitioners and students to determine its impact.

This research report also indicates the role of the voluntary sector in terms of influence, with 50 per cent of young males having contact with ethnic minority groups outside school. With the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA),[17] and the subsuming of the Youth Council, it is particularly important that the approaches, processes and skills of the youth professionals involved in various innovative community relations programmes such as JEDI are not lost. Evaluations of positive community relations programmes should remain current, with lessons learned recorded and used to develop new youth programmes.

This research advocates positive intervention in terms of:

- dissemination of knowledge and skills when working with minority ethnic groups
- integration of ethnic minorities – not assimilation.

It is only with effective knowledge and real integration that young people in Northern Ireland will be able to reap the rewards of a changing society.

The IDS is the regional response to service delivery for newcomer pupils and is leading the way in terms of providing valuable resources to schools. This Service needs to continue and future evaluations should reflect on how children from minority ethnic groups are coping with school over and above their attainment levels. The IDS should also explore what skills and resources are needed to ensure that all pupils benefit from the changing demographic landscape.

**Clear, accurate messages**

This research clearly identifies confusion and ambivalence towards newcomers among the young people involved. Both positive and negative messages were recorded; however, the negative messages were often associated with employment and services and often originated from the media. Accurate news stories and positive media campaigns are needed to provide clear messages for young people in Northern Ireland.

The media should positively showcase the contributions that migrant workers are making to the economic growth in Northern Ireland. In addition, there is a need for a public education campaign about minority ethnic communities and migrant workers in Northern Ireland. Such a campaign should publish accurate information on the numbers of people in each of these groups, on the reasons why people come to Northern Ireland and on the contribution they make to the local economy and society. The campaign needs to use the popular media to challenge the misinformation that exists about these groups in Northern Ireland.

The public education campaign should be a partnership between statutory and NGO agencies across Northern Ireland, but the Equality Commission should be the convening body.

[17] ESA is the new education authority, which will replace the five ELBs and be fully operational in 2010.

It is also important that schools and the voluntary sector encourage newcomers to raise their profile and get their voices heard. Teaching resources for schools should focus on individual case studies about young people and why they came to Northern Ireland, hence attaching a real person to an issue, which would encourage young people to see beyond stereotypes and rhetoric. In addition, students could be encouraged to critically evaluate the media stories about minority ethnic groups as part of the LLW curriculum; this in itself would provide invaluable resources for opening the debate further.

**Leadership**

Political and community leaders can set an example to all communities across Northern Ireland to promote an equal, tolerant and anti-racist society. This means being careful to use inclusive and non-discriminatory language, to challenge racist assumptions and to correct misinformation when opportunities arise.

Politicians at all levels of government should support statutory bodies and NGOs' efforts in their work to combat racism and prejudice towards migrants.

The OFMDFM should continue to lead the way in coordinating the activities of various strategies such as the Racial Equality Strategy, the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young and the forthcoming Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration in relation to activities designed to address racism and prejudice towards migrant children. Areas not devolved (for example criminal justice and immigration) also need to be monitored by OFMDFM so that the current activities in these areas reflect what is happening in Northern Ireland and complement local efforts.

Given that many young people meet members of minority ethnic groups through sports and leisure activities, DCAL need to take steps to address racism and prejudice towards migrant children. A proactive approach is required which could include diversity training of funded groups. In addition, DCAL could also work at a community level with both minority ethnic groups and the local indigenous population to encourage more shared artistic programmes and projects such as the shared Samhain/Diwali festival held in the autumn in north Belfast.

Churches and other non-Christian faith organisations should work more closely together at all levels to foster better understanding between different faith groups.

The leadership of these church and faith groups need to model best practice and encourage more appreciation for and tolerance towards difference based on religion.

# Conclusion

The Attitudes to Difference project has provided contemporary information about young people's attitudes to, and experiences of, contact with people from different minority ethnic and migrant communities in Northern Ireland.

This was a timely project with clear policy and practice implications. After many years of conflict, this is a time for Northern Ireland to work hard and equip future generations with the knowledge and skills they need to live together peacefully. It is clear from this project that the young people involved need more information and more time to unpick these sensitive issues. It is also clear that schools want to understand the needs of their pupils, whether indigenous or migrant. NCB and ARK trust that the information contained in this report can be used effectively to improve services and help others to celebrate diversity.

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