
21 June 2008
DAY OF PRIVATE REFLECTION

EVALUATION REPORT

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The views expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect the personal views of all members of Healing Through Remembering

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by 'Healing Through Remembering' (HTR) to evaluate the process and response to a "Day of Private Reflection" held on the 21 June 2008. This is the second such day and follows a previous Day of Private Reflection on the same date in 2007.
- 1.2 HTR is a cross community organisation with membership from a broad range of organisations which encompasses most, if not all, of the main political constituencies in Northern Ireland. The membership encompasses individuals, churches, ex-prisoners groups, ex-security force groups and a broad range of all shades of nationalist and unionist views. While most of its membership is based in Northern Ireland it has members in the Republic of Ireland (ROI), the United Kingdom and internationally.

Brief Description of the Organisation

- 1.3 HTR evolved from discussions following the publication of a report 'All Truth is Bitter'. This report, which built on a wide scale consultation in Northern Ireland, looked at the value and limitations of truth recovery in Northern Ireland. The basis of the report was a widespread consultation following a joint invitation, by Victim Support Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, to Dr Alex Boraine, the then Deputy Chair (1999) of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission to visit Northern Ireland.
- 1.4 'All Truth is Bitter' revealed that there was a consensus that the issues of dealing with the past needed further discussion and consultation. From this a number of individuals came together to form the Board of HTR.

Background to the Day of Private Reflection

- 1.5 In the early days of its inception HTR's Board undertook a consultation which asked:

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

- 1.6 Consultation was to both individuals and relevant organisations to gather responses from as wide a diversity of people as possible. This resulted in the publication of the 'Healing through Remembering Report (2002).'¹
- 1.7 The report outlined six recommendations, one of which was the establishment of a Day of Reflection to "serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland."

¹ Information on the consultation process and the report are available on www.healingthroughremembering.org

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 This evaluation sets out to look at different components of the Day of Private Reflection (DoPR).

These are:

- The processes which led to the development of the first Day of Private Reflection in June 2007;
- The preparation for and the activities in and around the Day itself in 2008, reflecting particularly on the recommendations of the previous evaluation report prepared after the 2007 Day of Private Reflection;
- The response to the Day from a variety of individuals and groups. These include some of those who were involved in the Day in a variety of ways and some of those who had, for various reasons, not participated. In reality this meant that consultation could encompass any individual or organisation in Northern Ireland and beyond; and
- The Consultative Group on the Past (Eames/Bradley) had recently commented on the DoPR in their final report and recommended support for the Day which it felt should be renamed a 'Day of Reflection and Reconciliation'. In light of this, questions were asked as to the validity of their recommendations and how these might impact on HTR's continued promotion of a day of 'private' reflection.

2.2 The report seeks to review the 2008 DoPR but equally it aims to inform the forthcoming DoPR on the 21st of June 2009.

2.3 At an early stage it became clear that given the wide range of stakeholders identified that the evaluation would, because of scope and timescale, only be able to "dip into" any of the main groups, namely:

- Board members;
- Staff;
- those involved in consultations about the DoPR;
- those involved in the Day itself, in whatever form;
- those who chose not to be involved; and
- those who had some awareness but did not feel it involved them or did not feel it was, as one individual put it, "*for them.*"

These consultations were a combination of formal interviews, telephone discussions and 'opportunistic discussions' i.e. where opportunities arose to discuss this matter in other contexts.

The evaluation process focused on developing new contacts beyond those who were approached as part of the previous evaluation.

2.4 A number of different people contributed to the discussions, some in an official capacity as representatives of their organisations and some as individuals. Many, because they were talking in an informal capacity, wished not to be named. Others, for personal reasons, chose to remain anonymous.

Those interviewed included:

- a member of the Indian community;
- a senior trade unionist;
- a senior member of the Equality Unit of a Government Department;
- two representatives of the Community relations Unit in OFM/DFM;
- a retired Senior Civil Servant;
- the Chief Executive of Carers NI;
- the Project Manager of Alzheimer's Association;
- the Policy Officer of Help the Aged;
- the Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council;
- the Community Relations Manager in Belfast City Council;
- a representative of the Travellers' Community;
- a Community Relations Officer from a District Council;
- the Director of Zero-8-Teen Community Group, Craigavon;
- a member of the GAA;
- a school principle;
- the Chief Executive of Groundwork NI;
- a representative of a charity campaigning on disability issues;
- the Manager of the Old Library Trust;
- the Co-ordinator of the Ashford Centre;
- a representative of the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Training Unit;
- the Arts Development Officer for Derry City Council;
- a representative of the Orange Order;
- members of the Loyalist Community;
- a senior representative of a Youth Organisation;
- a representative of Intercomm;
- a representative of Mount Vernon Community House;
- the Chief Executive of a major private sector company; and
- a representative of an ex-prisoner's group.

2.5 Discussions also took place with members of the Day of Private Reflection Sub Group, including the Chair.

2.6 Written materials were examined as part of the process. These included:

- minutes of meetings of both HTR and the Day of Reflection Sub Group;
- DoPR related correspondence and requests for guidance;
- feedback from organisations on the Day of Private Reflection;

- feedback on the consultation process;
- Day of Private *Reflection Discussion Paper and Proposal* ²; and
- *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection* ³.

2.7 The evaluator is grateful to all of those who expressed views on the Day of Private Reflection (DoPR).

² Research reports commissioned by Healing Through Remembering

³ Ibid

3. BACKGROUND TO THE DAY OF REFLECTION INITIATIVE

3.1 The Day of Private Reflection was developed from the recommendations of the *'Healing through Remembering Report 2002'*. The recommendations in the report identified the principles upon which such a day could take place. The day was to:

"Provide an opportunity for people to remember the events of the past in a non-confrontational, dignified and respectful manner."

It further outlined that while the emphasis was on private individual reflection that it should also contribute towards:

"Ensuring a collective and public dimension whereupon many – sometimes from opposing perspectives – would be remembering and commemorated on the same day."

3.2 As part of the overall process of developing different areas of work HTR evolved a system of Sub Groups to deal with different aspects of its work. These were:

- Storytelling;
- Living Memorial Museum;
- Truth, Recovery and Acknowledgement;
- Network of Commemoration and Remembering Projects; and
- Day of Reflection.

3.3 These Sub Groups are tasked with taking forward the various strands of work identified by the HTR Report.

3.4 While there is still ongoing discussion within HTR about whether the Day of Reflection should be a collective civic event or not. The HTR Report recommended that the Day initially begin as a day of 'private' reflection and that this could be reviewed in the future.

3.5 The Day of Reflection Sub Group currently has 14 members. The Sub Group consists of a wide range of individuals who have specific interests or backgrounds in:

- education;
- ex-prisoners;
- faith groups;
- interested individuals;

- promoting peace building;
- statutory sector;
- trade unions;
- voluntary sector; and
- victim/survivor groups;

A full list of the Sub Group members is included in Appendix 1.

Initial Research informing the Day of Reflection Initiative

- 3.6 To further develop thinking around the potential for such a day, HTR engaged in a number of projects and consultations.
- 3.7 In order to inform further thinking about the potential for a Day of Reflection the Sub Group commissioned a research report which would draw on international examples of days of reflection and remembrance. This was aimed at helping the Sub Group to widen their thinking and learn lessons from other societies emerging from conflict that had, or had attempted to hold, a Day of Reflection or a Day of Remembrance.
- 3.8 The resulting report entitled *'International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection'*⁴ (Ensor and Salvadó) was published in January 2006. The key recommendations from the report are below.
- 3.9 **Consultation:** There was a need for an inclusive consultation process. The process should take place over time and gradually to ensure that a wide range of individuals and organisations are part of the debate on what a Day of Reflection might involve.
- 3.10 **Choosing a date:** Choosing the right date is an important part of establishing a Day of Reflection. People will look at previous events that took place on the day/date chosen and depending on what other events occurred, some individuals, groups or constituencies may feel uncomfortable with the date. Their reservations should be considered and acknowledged.
- 3.11 **Civil Society and Politics:** A Day of Reflection should be a community based initiative but also be part of wider social and political processes. The report found that unilaterally initiated days without support from communities were generally lacking in legitimacy.
- 3.12 **Ways of Commemorating:** There are different ways of commemorating on Days of Reflection or Days of Remembrance. Consideration should be given to creative activities throughout the consultation process and in the organisation's internal deliberations.

⁴ Available at www.healingthroughremembering.org

3.13 **One day a year:** While there is generally one day set aside for remembrance/reflection, consideration should also be given to ways of promoting reflection throughout the year.

3.14 **The Way Forward:** The final and overarching recommendation of the report was that the development of a day of reflection should be approached from:

“A long-term, consultative and strategic perspective.”

and that

“The Day of Reflection should be a process that is given time and allowed room to develop.”

3.15 In April 2005 the Day of Reflection Sub Group took the decision, based on the international research and ongoing local consultation, to focus specifically on a single Day of Reflection.

3.16 Initial consultation suggested that there was considerable support for the idea of a Day of Reflection. However, in the period between the initial recommendations and subsequent consultation there were a range of developments which may have impacted on initial thinking in the different constituencies.

3.17 These included:

- shifts in voting patterns;
- suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- continuing sectarian incidents; and
- Other Days of Reflection – particularly in Sinn Féin led Council areas.

3.18 Given these changes the Sub Group agreed to undertake further consultation and a scoping study which would reflect more current views. In the course of further discussion the Sub Group agreed that the scoping study should also focus on the practical steps which would make the Day of Reflection a reality.

3.19 The final report ‘*A Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study*’ (Montgomery, P 2006) was published in September 2006⁵. The Report was based on ongoing discussions within the HTR Sub Group and 23 structured interviews with individuals representing organisations who had been identified as potential participants across a broad cross-section of perspectives and sectors.

3.20 Most of the major political parties were represented in this part of the consultation. This included the experiences of both Councillors and the Chief Executive of Fermanagh District Council who had previously explored the idea of a Day of Reflection within the Fermanagh area.

3.21 Findings from the Scoping Study were diverse. However key themes did emerge. These included:

⁵ Available at www.healingthroughremembering.org

- a broad consensus that there was unmet need concerning the legacy of the conflict;
- interviewees were split almost 50-50 on whether a Day of Reflection was appropriate **at this time**;
- if a Day of Reflection were to take place almost two-thirds felt it should have a public element of reflection;
- the importance of the support of political parties; and
- the need for a broad based structure to co-ordinate activity.

No consensus was reached on the need for the extent and depth of consultation and public debate needed to take the concept forward.

3.22 Based on the findings the key recommendations were that a phased approach with appropriate time to take stock between phases be developed.

3.23 The 4 phases proposed were:

- initialise a debate on the Day of Reflection;
- development of core principles or a charter for a Day of Reflection;
- consultation with a wide constituency on the core principles; and
- planning and implementation of a Day of Reflection.

3.24 There was considerable emphasis placed on continued debate, consultation and the seeking of views at each phase of the process.

3.25 The recommendations resulted in further discussion within the Sub Group and continued dialogue with external organisations and individuals. From this, and based on themes emerging from the Scoping Study, it was agreed that a Day of Reflection should take place.

3.26 It should be noted that at this stage in the discussions there was a considerable range of opinion within the Sub Group. The process of debate, accommodating of, often very diverse views and the concerns that such an initiative raised were the cause of much discussion and difficulty for the participants in reaching consensus.

3.27 It is to the credit of all members of the Sub Group that they managed to work through this process and reach a consensus. Even those less sure of some of the direction taken continued to support the Sub Group and inform discussion so that the Day of Reflection should take place.

3.28 All members of the Sub Group were also particularly clear that the process, while often difficult, was valuable. They were also clear that the support of staff within HTR was highly valued.

- 3.29 There were various debates, dilemmas and concerns that the Sub Group faced. Significant among these were the following:
- the sensitivities around holding such a day at all;
 - concerns about how this might be viewed by individuals and organisations involved with those most affected by the conflict; and
 - the potential of resurrecting memories to either have negative effects on individuals personal well-being or a negative effect on wider community relations.
- 3.30 Additionally, HTR struggled with being the promoters and drivers of such an event. The core of HTR's work is informing debate and facilitating others to engage in debate rather than implementing projects. This was further complicated by the fact that this type of event could potentially have negative outcomes.
- 3.31 However, notwithstanding these dilemmas and having reached a decision to have a Day of Reflection, the Sub Group moved on very quickly to publishing '*A Day of Private Reflection – Discussion Paper and Proposal*'. This outlined the debates and dilemmas already identified within the organisation and included both the rationale for, and concerns about going forward.

Response to Initial Research informing the Day of Reflection Initiative

- 3.32 The journey of developing and considering the potential for such a day was necessarily a long and involved process.
- 3.33 Feedback from individuals and organisations involved consulted by HTR during this period was very positive. There was general consensus that they felt they were listened to and that staff and members of HTR had been proactive and sensitive in their approach.
- 3.34 Even among those who had doubts or strong resistance to such a day, there was agreement on welcoming the opportunity to be part of the debate and it was felt that contributions had not only been listened to but responded to appropriately.
- 3.35 Internally, staff, the Sub Group and the wider HTR family expended high amounts of time and commitment in ensuring that those involved were well informed and that all views were considered. Their attention to the sensitivities around a Day of Reflection is to be commended.
- 3.36 The research commissioned to help inform both internal re-thinking and to help stimulate wider debate was invaluable. In particular at an early stage the *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection* proved to be a focus of much information for consideration. The report on international research remains a valuable tool for consideration of Days of Reflection and other remembrance processes both within Northern Ireland and in other countries emerging from conflict.
- 3.37 The report entitled, '*A Day of Reflection: a Scoping Study*' helped to progress the debate. This was important in helping the Sub Group to reach the decision to promote a Day of Private Reflection.

- 3.38 It is difficult to identify and quantify the level of other engagement and debate that went on in the community. This is largely because as well as formal consultation a considerable amount of informal contact was made with individuals and organisations. In addition, HTR and Sub Group members were able to feed back comment from their own organisations and personal contacts. However, it is clear that this was an important part of the overall process.
- 3.39 It should also be noted that HTR gave the consultation adequate time to ensure proper debate, feedback and deliberation. In particular, the decision to revisit the initial consultation process, in light of the changes in the political landscape and in the wider community, is to be commended.
- 3.40 In all, the process of arriving at the decision to undertake this Day of Reflection was given the time and treated with the measured thinking that was needed to make informed decisions on such a sensitive and potentially divisive initiative.
- 3.41 The Discussion Paper and Proposal – *'A Day of Private Reflection'* (September 2006) was produced to encourage debate and comment on the Day which was set for 21 June 2007.
- 3.42 Research revealed that no day in the recent history of Northern Ireland is without memories or significant events for individuals, families and communities. Not one day in the year had escaped at least one individual being killed.
- 3.43 The decision to hold the day on the 21 June followed considerable debate. The 21 June is the longest day of the year and so has a significance of being at the balance between winter and summer.
- 3.44 HTR was particularly sensitive to families who had lost loved ones on this date throughout the conflict. Efforts were made to make contact with all of these families to discuss the Day of Private Reflection with them. This was done through identifying and contacting appropriate intermediaries who knew the families. This took considerable time, effort and sensitivity and all but one of the families was contacted. (This was because they had emigrated.)

Evaluation of Day of Reflection 21 June 2007

- 3.45 The evaluation of the 2007 DoPR found that the build-up to, and development of, the Day was well-balanced and carefully considered. As with all HTR's work, the hallmarks were ongoing consultation, dialogue, and sensitivity to people's needs.
- 3.46 HTR and the Sub Group were commended on their commitment to inclusivity; the evaluation, however, indicated that there were some gaps in its engagement – for example, with older people. This required the Sub Group to ensure that further work was set within as broad a context as possible.
- 3.47 More detail of the pre-planning consultation and engagement with groups and individuals is outlined in the previous evaluation of the Day of Private Reflection 2007.⁶

⁶ Blake J (2008) 21 June 2007 Day of Private Reflection Evaluation Report, Belfast: Healing Through Remembering

4. ANALYSIS OF PROMOTION OF THE DAY OF PRIVATE REFLECTION 2008

4.1 The report on the 2007 DoPR indicated that there was considerable support for this initiative and in response to this, HTR decided to promote a DoPR again in 2008. This was to be similar in approach to the previous DoPR and draw on the learnings of the previous year.

4.2 As with the previous DoPR, the purpose of the day was set out as an

“opportunity for all of us to:

- acknowledge the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict;*
- remember the men, women and children who on a daily basis live with the consequences of the conflict;*
- reflect on our attitudes that have the potential for a negative impact on others and society;*
- reflect on what more each of us might have done or might still do to uphold and enhance all other people’s right to life and quality of life; and*
- make a personal commitment that as we begin to move forward as a society, such loss should never be allowed to happen again.”*

4.3 The purpose was underpinned by a series of principles and values. The Day of Private Reflection was to be approached in an inclusive and sensitive manner which:

- respected differing views, political aspirations and perspectives on the conflict;
- recognised and accepted that there are diverse views on a Day of Reflection and that not everyone can or will feel able to participate;
- encouraged a positive and respectful way of reflecting on our past;
- promoted support and is a source of strength to those who have been most adversely affected by the conflict; and
- reached out to people in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, and beyond

4.4 The impact and outcomes of the 2008 DoPR will now be explored in the context of developing learning to inform future promotion of this initiative.

4.5 It should be noted at this stage that the DoPR was promoted by HTR in the context of having considerably less funding available for the 2008 initiative than for the previous year. There was also less staff in the organisation which also limited the opportunities to promote the DoPR.

It is therefore inappropriate to draw direct comparisons between the initiatives in the different years.

Information

- 4.6 The processes and outcomes of the DoPR 2008 will now be considered.
- 4.7 To support the development of the initiative a number different types of publicity materials were developed. These included leaflets, postcards and bookmarks. These formed an integral part of the promotion of the Day of Private Reflection. These were widely distributed and gave clear, succinct messages about the Day. These are of a high standard and reflect the importance given to the Day of Private Reflection.
- 4.8 A number of people interviewed as part of this evaluation commented on the materials noting that they portrayed a sensitive reflective image which presented the initiative in a positive and sensitive manner.
- 4.9 Information was sent out to individuals and groups on the HTR contacts database. This ensured that the Day of Private Reflection information was received by a considerable number of recipients reflecting the diversity of Northern Ireland society and key contacts in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. This included:
- Churches;
 - Community Organisations;
 - District Councils;
 - Ex-Combatants Groups;
 - Ex-Prisoners Groups;
 - Government Departments;
 - Non-Departmental Government Bodies;
 - Political parties across the Island of Ireland;
 - Registered Charities;
 - Security Force Organisations;
 - Trade Unions; and
 - Victim and Survivor Groups.
- 4.10 In addition HTR had negotiated with a major community network organisation which would allow the DoPR promotional materials to be sent out to members and other contacts on its mailing list.
- 4.11 Unfortunately due to a misunderstanding about process this mail-out did not occur. This was not the fault of either organisation but due to a third party who did not compile the information in sufficient time to facilitate distribution in the timescales needed.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4.12 HTR should pursue this process again as part of its dissemination process for the DoPR.
- 4.13 HTR should explore the possibility of using other networks to promote the DoPR.
- 4.14 General discussion with individuals and organisations in the wider community indicated that awareness of the Day of Private Reflection and/or its significance to people was patchy.

- 4.15 Discussions with members of Minority Ethnic Organisations reflected that they had some knowledge of the event. However there was still limited understanding as to how the initiative would affect them or why they should participate.
- 4.16 There is still a sense from the discussions with external individuals and organisations that the process has limited publicity and many have not heard about the day or are vague about its purpose and so do not support or partake in this.
- 4.17 There is also a general consensus, albeit based on a limited number of interviews, that this is something which holds a greater resonance for the Nationalist rather than the Unionist community. The feeling is that the Unionist community is already focused on remembrance – indeed the diverse elements of the Unionist community often mark the same historical anniversaries in many different ways. The wider Nationalist community, however, does not appear to have the same collective ownership of commemorative days.
- 4.18 However there also appears to be less resistance to the idea of a DoPR from within elements of Unionism and Loyalism than in previous years. For example, within Loyalism there is a willingness to circulate information which would not have been there in the past.
- 4.19 Feedback largely indicated that there was little confusion between this initiative and the recommendations in Consultative Group on the Past report as most of those interviewed had little knowledge of Consultative Group on the Past or saw it as largely irrelevant.
- 4.20 As with the previous DoPR there is a concern from many in the public arena that they are not sure how they should get involved in the initiative. This is still an issue that HTR needs to address.
- 4.21 One suggestion is that HTR needs to get its own members to be more high profile in promoting the DoPR and therefore lead by example. This further “stepping up to the mark” could also create much more publicity about the DoPR.
- 4.22 One feedback interview indicated negative views of HTR concerning its engagement in previous years. The specific incident has been shared with HTR but will not be detailed here because of sensitivities around confidentiality. However the fact that the evaluation missed this last year indicates a need for in depth feedback on the initiative throughout the build up to and period following the Day.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4.23 HTR needs to carry out a detailed reflective analysis of its contacts and profile with key public bodies to gauge their attitudes to the organisation and how these might affect participation and promotion of a DoPR.

Website

4.24 A separate website has been developed for the Day of Private Reflection. This had a two-fold effect. It ensured that all information was available in one key location. Further, it created a “distance” from HTR. This was a deliberate decision with the intent that at some time in the future, the Day of Private Reflection could be a distinct entity in its own right (if it is to continue).

Individual Support

4.25 The Sub Group also set up a free-phone telephone helpline for the week around the 21 June. This was to provide personal support to individuals. This ensured that if the Day of Private Reflection triggered any emotional difficulties or promoted a need to talk that individuals could be signposted to appropriate support services. These included victims/survivors groups, social services and the Samaritans. The phone line was staffed by individuals with significant previous experience of dealing with people in distress.

Media

4.26 There was coverage in the press in the months coming up to the Day of Private Reflection. This was largely in the local press and was a response to letters sent by the Sub Group. Again there is a sense that this was less than in the previous year. This reflects the limited resources that HTR had to promote the DoPR this year both in terms of finances and personnel.

4.27 The Day of Private Reflection was publicly launched in March 2008. This received some media attention. Examples of media coverage include local and regional newspapers and the coverage was both initiated by papers and/or the published letters from HTR. This generated a considerable number of enquiries about the Day to the organisation.

4.28 While the level of media activity, either before or on the day is difficult to quantify, it is clear that there was considerable publicity. However it was generally accepted that there was less publicity than last year. As mentioned before this was due to HTR’s limited financial and personnel resources.

4.29 Discussions with members of the Sub Group and other individuals with a knowledge of the media, would indicate that media input was positive and helped promote the Day.

4.30 A number of people commented on the positive nature of the imagery used to promote the DoPR. This imagery is now widely recognised throughout the community.

5. THE DAY OF PRIVATE REFLECTION – REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 There was a range of different events and opportunities created by organisations and individuals for people to partake in on the Day of Private Reflection in 2008.
- 5.2 In some cases space was created within buildings to allow people a quiet room in which to reflect. This happened in a large number of organisations including many local Councils and church buildings.
- 5.3 Use of the rooms was varied with some being used quite frequently while others were used only intermittently. Thus it is difficult to gauge the extent of the impact of the Day of Private Reflection in numerical terms.
- 5.4 This was the most common means of reflection or access to reflection provided in offices and/or public buildings.
- 5.5 A considerable number of churches opened their doors during the day or at specific times. It is difficult to assess how many people took up the opportunity but those organising reported significant numbers.
- 5.6 Comments were left either in localities where reflection was taking place, on the Day of Reflection website or posted to HTR. Comments were largely positive. Individuals indicated that this was a unique opportunity to reflect on both personal circumstances and wider issues around the conflict.
- 5.7 There were a number of other activities on the day. Again they are too numerous to detail. The following examples indicate the range of organisations involved and activities that took place:
 - PSNI Police College staff read poems to trainees and then invited them to reflect on the DoPR.
 - The Community Relations Forum in Glengormley issued an open invitation to the public to drop-in to the Barron Hall for a chat or to reflect privately.
 - Carrickfergus Council and the Carrickfergus Journey in Understanding group set a room aside for private reflection and provided an audio visual display.
 - Irish School of Ecumenics, Dublin created a "Space for Reflection" on Thursday, 19 June from lunchtime till 7pm.
 - Derry City Council circulated information throughout its offices, outreach offices, community centres and museums.
 - St. Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (London) was open from 11am to 3pm for people to come and reflect in private and stillness. The centre also held a Centering Meditation from 1:15 - 1:45 pm on Friday June 20th that was dedicated to the Day.
 - RUC George Cross Foundation had their garden open for the Day of Private Reflection from 11:00am to 4:00pm.

- Oakgrove Integrated College held an assembly to mark the Day of Private Reflection and remember those lost in the conflict.
 - An organisation which describes itself as 'for victims of state violence' promoted the Day and organised a reflection activity for its members.
- 5.8 On the 21 June 2008 Dr Yael Danieli – clinical psychologist and world-renowned traumatologist based in New York City – visited the HTR office in Belfast and met with Board members, DoR Sub Group members and staff, who discussed the initiative with her. ⁷
- 5.9 It is impossible to gauge the level of input into the Day of Private Reflection as activities were widespread across Northern Ireland and beyond and HTR did not actively seek feedback.
- 5.10 However, the list of people who sent in messages of support, the feedback on the website and materials sent to HTR all point to a high level of interest and activity.
- 5.11 What is particularly significant is that the interest and support for the Day of Private Reflection came from across the community and was embraced by groups and individuals from both of the main traditions. This is contrary to perceptions as noted in section 4.17.
- 5.12 Again, without identifying individuals or organisations, it is important to note that the Day of Private Reflection created positive responses from across all shades of opinion in Northern Ireland. What was clear was that some groups and individuals were reluctant to publicly affirm their activities.
- 5.13 Events and opportunities to reflect were developed in communities and organisations that would often be seen as “in opposition” to each other.
- 5.14 Most of the events identified took place in Northern Ireland with further events, to a limited level, taking place in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain and elsewhere.
- 5.15 The Day of Private Reflection was intended as an opportunity for all those affected by the conflict and therefore had a wider context than Northern Ireland. This meant that the task of promoting the Day of Reflection had to give consideration to those affected by the conflict in other places – particularly the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.
- 5.16 However, those interviewed as part of this evaluation were clear that if the Day is to be inclusive then it must respond to all of those affected by the conflict. As noted throughout this report there are a diversity of opinions about the Day of Private Reflection, its appropriateness and its value.
- 5.17 HTR needs to consider ways in which the importance of the Day of Private Reflection can be promoted more widely in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

⁷ Dr Danieli is an internationally renowned specialist in the treatment of trauma victims and victims of mass disasters. She is the co-founder and Director of the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children; Founding President of the International Network for Holocaust and Genocide Survivors and their Friends; and Co-founder, past-President, Senior United Nations Representative of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

5.18 So many different activities or opportunities were promoted and supported by this event that it is impossible to give a response to the breadth of the activity. It is especially important to note that as a Private Day, the effect on individuals can never truly be gauged. However, the fact that a significant number and range of people developed ways to reflect, and commented on it, would indicate a continued “hunger” for reflection time as identified in the previous evaluation.

6. PARTICIPATION IN THE DAY – FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Many individuals and organisations did not feel the need for such a day. Others recognised the need for such a day but did not feel it was appropriate for them to take part. These views largely mirror those identified in the previous evaluation.
- 6.2 HTR and the Day of Reflection Sub Group have always recognised and respected people's choice in this matter. This is consistently referred to throughout the material regarding this initiative.
- 6.3 As part of the sensitivity to the wide range of opinions this evaluation was tasked to ensure that the views and opinions of those negative or unsure about the value of the Day be included in the report.

Education

- 6.4 For some the particular day was not practical. This was the feedback from some in education who felt that the time of year was not ideal. This was either end of term or in the middle of exams. However, many schools did take part and had activities such as a minute's silence, while others highlighted the day at assembly. This was particularly pertinent as the DoPR in 2008 fell on a Saturday.

Other Remembrance Occasions

- 6.5 A major concern voiced, even among those who were not opposed to the Day of Private Reflection, was that there were already a number of remembrance days. Concerns ranged from the view that there were already enough days of remembrance and so why have another, to a concern that a "new day" might dilute or take away from other days which already existed. However this may be an indication of people's difficulty in separating 'remembrance' and 'reflection' as two different processes. This is an issue which HTR is aware of and is continually seeking to address.
- 6.6 Among some there was a view that as a society we need to look forward and not back so days such as this are not of particular value.

Concerns

- 6.7 For some, there was a sense that the development of such a day was inappropriate. Feedback suggested that the day could be viewed as an opportunity for perpetrators of violence to be seen in a positive light.
- 6.8 A further concern was raised that a day such as this could be "hijacked". In particular, examples were cited of other days of remembrance which had on different occasions been perceived as led by one political party or group within our society.
- 6.9 These concerns hindered the Day of Private Reflection as many were suspicious following what they saw as divisive initiatives in the past.
- 6.10 These concerns and anxieties will, as HTR has clearly recognised, always be an issue when any society emerging from conflict begins to reflect on its past. HTR was aware of these difficulties and therefore emphasised the importance of marking the Day in a respectful and sensitive manner.

- 6.11 However there was also a suggestion that the DoPR could be positively linked to other initiatives. Many organisations and groups in NI are engaged in shared past projects and this would perhaps be an appropriate place to promote the DoPR.
- 6.12 In addition there have been indications of a change in attitude from some organisations who, while not proactively supporting the initiative, now view it as non-threatening and would be happy to circulate information on the Day without comment.

7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS EVALUATION AND HTR'S RESPONSE TO THESE

7.1 A number of recommendations were outlined in the previous evaluation. These will now be considered.

7.2 The process of engagement with a range of groups and individuals was seen as an inclusive and thoughtful model of consultation and engaged a wide range of groups and individuals with HTR regarding the DoPR.

It was therefore recommended that, where appropriate, the process be promoted as a model of inclusive debate and deliberation. HTRs resultant publications should highlight the process and be used as a model of good practice to promote debate and provide support to others emerging from conflict situations.

7.3 This process has now been widely promoted by HTR through the publication and circulation of the previous evaluation report. An example of the dissemination of the report is that it was widely quoted in the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past.

7.4 HTR contacted a considerable number of groups and individuals regarding the DoPR and this ensured that promotion of the event was widespread. It was identified that there are a number of networks in the community who could also be engaged in supporting and/or promoting the DoPR and so widen the process even further.

It was therefore recommended that consideration of how to access the key special interest groups and Community Fora Organisations in Northern Ireland may help to ensure that there is wider awareness of and support for the Day of Private Reflection.

7.5 The previous evaluation found that some of the organisations were more responsive to a DoPR and that the responses from others were mixed, for example, many individual church congregations took part but there was not the same commitment from church bodies.

It was therefore recommended that the Sub Group should review all of its key contacts and assess how beneficial this contact proved in promoting the Day of Private Reflection. These reviews should form the basis of further discussions to improve the level of their support for the initiative.

7.6 HTR has begun a process of reviewing the impact and influence of its contacts in promoting the DoPR and has now begun a focus on parent organisations as well as specific contacts. This process was hampered for the 2008 DoPR due to lack of resources, but is more focused for the upcoming DoPR in 2009. HTR should continue to review this as part of each evaluation.

7.7 The previous evaluation found that many organisations and individuals would like guidance on what they could do on the day.

It was suggested that the Sub Group further support organisations and individuals to explore ways in which to take part in the Day of Private Reflection.

7.8 The process of developing, promoting and reviewing a Day of Private Reflection is important. HTR are striving to be non-directive as this challenges the notion of privacy. However it is intended to review this again.

7.9 Some organisations felt that initial discussions were not followed up and that there was a need for further dialogue beyond the Day of Reflection.

It was therefore recommended that HTR need to consider ways of maintaining contact with and improving dialogue with organisations beyond the immediate consultation on the Day of Private Reflection.

7.10 HTR has used this information to begin a re-evaluation of the organisation and how they interface with different constituencies in the public arena.

7.11 In order to ensure that learning informs the future development of the Day of Private Reflection the evaluation process needs to begin much earlier in the annual cycle.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Day of Private Reflection proved to be a positive experience for many people. This has been indicated by both feedback received and evaluation interviews.
- 8.2 The process of consultation, dissemination and support was handled sensitively. At all stages HTR promoted transparency and inclusion in its processes and engagement.
- 8.3 A Day of Private Reflection was always likely to have a wide range of responses - both positive and negative. However, the evaluation identified that there was considerable support for an opportunity to reflect on the past.
- 8.4 The positive messages from the Day of Private Reflection were that:
- the research and initial debate were important in shaping the process and consultation;
 - the consultation was inclusive; and
 - the promotion of the Day itself was handled very sensitively.
- 8.5 The overall consensus from those who took part in the 2008 day is that the Day of Private Reflection should be undertaken again. In addition many who would previously have been resistant are now happy to publicise the DoPR among their contacts.
- 8.6 Most of the individuals and organisations who had not been part of or did not know about the Day felt that they would like to contribute to any future days. Many Network Support Organisations indicated that they would be happy to promote the Day among their members.
- 8.7 Issues still exist for initiatives such a Day of Reflection. These include concerns raised that such a day is not important or relevant as other remembrance days already exist. A Day of Reflection raises concerns among those who feel that as victims of the conflict they are being as one individual put it *"asked to share a platform with perpetrators."*
- 8.8 The second DoPR proved to be a positive experience for a number of people and reiterated the need for a non-contentious Day of Reflection. HTR recognise that the impact of the Day was limited largely due to financial restraints. *In order to further promote the Day HTR will need to access appropriate funding and support; this must be addressed sensitively by funders to ensure that the Day remains private and inclusive.*
- 8.9 The main message from the evaluation was that there was an eagerness to engage in such a Day of Private Reflection.
- 8.10 Specific issues for the DoPR in 2009 have been identified. Sensitivity to the fact that it is Father's Day will need to be considered as this may create emotional resonance for individuals. They may need support to work through this.

- 8.11 The 2009 DoPR falls on a Sunday and weekday organisations such as schools and employers may need to be “guided” regarding input before the day.
- 8.12 Bearing in mind these considerations and responding to the recommendations in the report the DoPR should go ahead in 2009 as it is increasingly seen as positive by many and non-threatening by others.

Summary

- 1 This report was commissioned by 'Healing Through Remembering' (HTR) to evaluate the process and response to a "*Day of Private Reflection*" (DoPR) held on the 21 June 2008. This is the second such Day and follows a previous Day of Private Reflection on the same date in 2007.
- 2 The report seeks to review the 2008 DoPR but equally it aims to inform the forthcoming DoPR on the 21st of June 2009.
- 3 The Day of Private Reflection was underpinned by a series of agreed principles and values which ensured that the Day was approached in an inclusive and sensitive manner.
- 4 There continues to be a general positive attitude about the DoPR initiative and many in the community welcome this as an opportunity to reflect on the past.
- 5 There are opportunities to promote the DoPR through networks and umbrella organisations across NI and beyond.
- 6 There is still a sense that the DoPR has a stronger resonance among the Nationalist community than the Unionist community.
- 7 However, there is a move to more positive engagement from parts of the Unionist community who would have been previously less open to the idea of a Day of Private Reflection.
- 8 HTR could explore the potential for the DoPR to be linked to other initiatives which deal with the past, that are currently taking place amongst communities and organisations.
- 9 As with the previous DoPR there is a concern from many in the public arena that they are not sure how to get involved in the initiative. This is still an issue that HTR needs to address.
- 10 In 2009 HTR must take into consideration sensitivities around the fact that the Day of Private Reflection falls on a Sunday and also coincides with Fathers' Day.
- 11 Bearing in mind these considerations and responding to the recommendations in the report the DoPR should take place in 2009 as it is increasingly seen as positive by many and non-threatening by others.

Appendix 1

MEMBERS OF THE 2008 DAY OF REFLECTION SUB GROUP

Seán Coll is Community Victim Support Officer with the "Victim and Survivor Matters" Programme of the Western Health and Social Care Trust based in Enniskillen. He is Chair of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Reflection Sub Group and member of the Project Board. Living in County Cavan, he has worked in Fermanagh and Tyrone for nearly 20 years.

Kevin Cooper has been a press photographer for over 25 years. A trade union activist and Civic Forum member, he is interested in news and current affairs, freedom of expression, equality, human rights, truth, peace and reconciliation. He grew up in East Belfast and is now living north of the city. Kevin is the former Vice Chair of the Sub Group.

Michael Culbert is Regional Development Worker for the Republican ex- prisoners' association Coiste na nIarchimí. Also a member of the EHSSB Trauma Advisory Panel and Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre management, Michael worked fulltime as a counsellor in North Belfast for six years.

Harold Good, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, 2001 - 2002, has served congregations in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the USA. He is currently Chair of the Advice Services Alliance and formerly a member of the NI Human Rights Commission, Director of the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle and Chair of NIACRO. In September 2005, he was one of two independent witnesses to the decommissioning of the weapons of the IRA.

Maura Kiely is the founder of the Cross Group which has been in existence for 31 years.

Alastair Kilgore worked as a teacher in East Belfast. He is a member of the Corrymeela Community and has helped host families and individuals severely traumatised by the Troubles.

Heather Kilgore is a former general practitioner who worked in East Belfast. She is a member of the Corrymeela Community and has helped host families and individuals severely traumatised by the Troubles.

Nichola Lynagh is a professional development officer for the Regional Training Unit. Previous to this position she worked as a community relations officer within the integrated education sector.

Michaela Mackin is Director of the Funding & Development Programme with the Community Relations Council. Since 1999, Michaela has been responsible for the management of financial resources and developmental support for groups working with victims and survivors of the Troubles.

Frances McCandless is Director of Policy at NICVA, the umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector. She has worked in the sector in Northern Ireland and elsewhere for 16 years.

Tommy McCay is a retired primary school teacher with over 35 years experience in education. He has been a full time voluntary member of the Columba Community of Prayer and Reconciliation in Derry and Donegal for over 25 years.

Kevin Mullan is a native of Omagh. He has worked in the North West since the 1970s in a community and priestly role.

Trevor Ringland is a solicitor in Belfast. He is chairman of the One Small Step Campaign, which promotes a shared future where people work together constructively for their mutual benefit. He is also a trustee of the RUC George Cross Foundation and an independent member of the Policing Board.

Bernice Swift is Project Manager with Fírinne working on behalf of victims of State Violence throughout County Fermanagh. Through her campaigning work on victim's issues, Bernice was introduced to the political arena and is now also an elected Councillor on Fermanagh District Council.

Appendix 2

Healing Through Remembering Board Members 2008

Marie Breen Smyth is currently Reader in International Politics in Aberystwyth University and the founder of the Cost of the Troubles Study which, in partnership with victims, examined the impact of the Troubles on the population of Northern Ireland

Seán Coll is Community Victim Support Officer with the Western Health & Social Care Trust, based in Enniskillen. He is Chair of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Reflection Sub Group. Living in County Cavan, he has worked in Fermanagh and Tyrone for over 15 years.

Claire Hackett has been working in the fields of conflict resolution and dealing with the past at Falls Community Council for the last nine years. She helped to set up the Dúchas oral history archive and is currently the research co-ordinator of the Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium which has recently been developed from grassroots republican and loyalist interface work. She is chair of the Storytelling Sub Group of Healing Through Remembering.

Brandon Hamber is the Chairperson of the Healing Through Remembering Initiative. He is Director of INCORE, a United Nations Research Centre for the Study of Conflict at the University of Ulster and a Senior Lecturer. Prior to moving to Northern Ireland, he co-ordinated the Transition and Reconciliation Unit at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is a Board member of the South African-based Khulumani Victim Support Group. He has written extensively on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and on the psychological implications of political violence, transitional justice and reconciliation in various contexts. In addition to his work in South Africa and Northern Ireland he has participated in peace, transitional justice and reconciliation initiatives and projects in Liberia, Mozambique, the Basque Country and Sierra Leone, among others.

Alan McBride is the Co-ordinator of the WAVE Trauma Centre, (Belfast branch), a Victims and Survivors Organisation providing care for those affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Dawn Purvis is leader of the Progressive Unionist Party and Assembly Member for East Belfast.

Geraldine Smyth O.P. is an ecumenical theologian from Belfast, working in both Dublin and Belfast as Senior Lecturer at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin. She holds a Ph.D. in theology from Trinity College Dublin (1993) and an honorary doctorate from Queens University Belfast (2003) for service to reconciliation and public life. She has written widely in this field as well as lecturing at home and abroad, and chairs the International Advisory Group of INCORE, University of Ulster. She is also a registered psychotherapist.

Alan Wardle is Project Development Manager for Shankill Stress and Trauma Group in Belfast. He has participated in international training delivery programmes, in both Kosovo and Croatia, delivering conflict management theories as well as mediation models.

Oliver Wilkinson is the Chief Executive Officer of the Share Centre in Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh. He was previously CEO of Victim Support Northern Ireland and has worked within the criminal justice system, with people affected by ordinary criminal activity and also with people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Appendix 3

Healing Through Remembering Staff Members 2008

Kate Turner was the Project Coordinator (now the Director) of Healing Through Remembering. She has been with the organisation since its inception in 1999, and has over twenty years experience in the voluntary sector.

Claire Smith has been the Administrative Assistant with Healing Through Remembering since March 2008.



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