

Impact Case Study

UoA 36: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Supporting Post-conflict Reconciliation and Social Inclusion

The research here is concerned with those 'unseen voices' and 'unheard stories' from communities that were less represented by mainstream media. The research has given voice to groups and individuals most affected by the violence and trauma of the recent past. It has reached out to formerly excluded groups and has devised ways of bringing them into the peace process and democratic institutions. The peace process itself has been explored. Researchers have collaborated with groups as diverse as victims of violence and the relatives of victims; ex-prisoners and prison governors; prison teachers, clergy, caterers and others whose daily life and work interacted with the prison service; community relations groups.

Prisons Memory Archive (PMA), an important and internationally admired initiative, was developed by former colleague Cahal McLaughlin assisted by ECR researcher Jolene Mairs (when she was a postgraduate researcher). The PMA and some of the films that were spun out of it (especially Mairs' Unseen Women and Unheard Voices,) have had considerable impact in the process of remembering and reconciliation central to a post conflict culture. Researchers in the Unit have been particularly concerned with the coverage of the peace process – the 'propaganda' of peace (G. McLaughlin, Baker) – and particular emphasis has been on the documentary form and the range of voices and experience that this accesses. Jewesbury and Porter have promoted and contributed to public debate about space and development in post conflict Belfast.