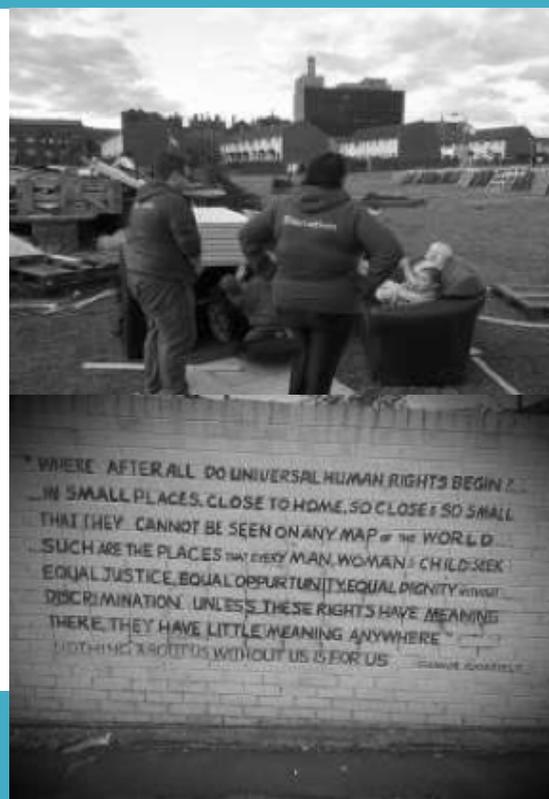


# NI Alternatives

Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) looks to address how low-level crime and anti-social behaviour affect the lives of vulnerable people living within the most disadvantaged communities across Northern Ireland. NIA's approach to restorative justice looks to mend broken relationships between offenders, victims and their communities.

NIA was originally conceived in 2000 as a community response to the absence of grassroots engagement with the formal justice system in working-class unionist areas. It was also promoted as an alternative to brutalisation – through punishment attacks and exclusions – of the (mainly young) perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour by local paramilitary organisations.



## Impacts and Successes

Funding has been secured from the **Rank Foundation** to run a three-year pilot project within North Belfast secondary schools. This will assist develop NIA's work across the education sector

NIA's **Mediation and Community Support Service** deals with local issues concerning anti-social behaviour, hate crime, and neighbourhood disputes on behalf of the **NI Housing Executive**

A service level agreement has been developed in collaboration with the **Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations** to facilitate work with **voluntary social landlords**

Key contracts for **family support hub** development and support services have been secured from Belfast Outcomes Group, which build upon the models of intensive and holistic support already funded by **The BIG Lottery**

## Sustainable Practices

Prior to receiving official endorsement from the NI Executive, NIA has had the capacity to deliver effective services dealing with victim support, intensive youth support, family support, preventative group work programmes, restorative adult practices, mediation, restorative school support and anti-racism/anti-sectarianism training. NIA has also developed a suite of programmes based on models of restorative justice that are now available to the wider market. Managed as a social enterprise, these activities represent a way to guarantee the future viability of NIA and include:

- **An education-based restorative justice programme** offers training to teaching staff and students in post-primary education
- **CRYSP (Community Restorative Youth Support Programme)** is an intensive youth support product delivered to youth workers, community workers, the probation agency and children's homes across NI
- **Mentoring programmes** offer restorative justice peer-mentoring at the grassroots level
- Bespoke training and consultancy on restorative justice is delivered to all client groups on an ad hoc basis

Due to the success of the work in the Shankill area and requests from other communities for similar initiatives, NIA has evolved as a potential option to support the development of new strategic restorative justice initiatives at the grassroots level across Northern Ireland

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