Trusting GRACE:

The development of trust indicators from the Good Relations and Collaborative Education (GRACE) model of schools-based peacebuilding

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research report presents indicators of trust in education-based peacebuilding. The indicators have been derived from a synthesis of literature from academic, policy and NGO sources, together with primary research from a case study of Community Relations in Schools (CRIS). The key themes and practical take-away of the research is captured in the Trust Indicators Framework (TIF). The ten indicators in the TIF are not intended to be prescriptive or an exhaustive list, but instead a useful starting point for recording trust that is implemented as part of a wider monitoring and evaluation process.

Summarised, the key findings are:

- Trust is an integral part of the development of good relations, peacebuilding and reconciliation
- Trust is often demonstrated through gradual, 'small' attitudinal and behavioural changes, that are not always easily recognised or appreciated
- Contextually attuned facilitators play a critical role in creating safe, informal spaces for the development of inter-group trustbuilding
- Trust is modelled by significant others – these individuals are often important in an individual's decision to engage with peacebuilding interventions
- Feeling cared for incentivises feelings of trust
- A perception that others are competent, credible and keep their word strengthens and maintains trust
- Self-discovery and feeling 'known' is an important antecedent to positive relationships and an indicator of trustbuilding
- Open and respectful conversations on sensitive topics indicate trust
- Feeling secure to ask for help and responding to need demonstrates trust
- Feeling trusted rather than trusting others is an often neglected but important metric of trust
- Trust relations are indicated and maintained through the investment of time or other resources – providing a sense that the relationship is valued

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1984, Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) is a peacebuilding charity that supports school-based approaches to fostering reconciliation in Northern Ireland. CRIS aims to address the multi-layered and deep-rooted divisions left by a legacy of ethno- political conflict that remain at both a grassroots level and within the education system itself. From 2009, CRIS has purposely utilised a 'whole schools' approach to peace education. While pupil-to-pupil contact remains a main area of activity, CRIS's programmes have been expanding intentionally to build systemic capacity by: supporting parents and carers to become active participants in 'everyday' forms of peacebuilding; nurturing cross-sector/community partnerships among school leaders; and by building multi-sector locality-based collaboration and educational networks.

Deep reflection on the learning garnered over decades has led CRIS to refine its approach - codifying this model as *Good Relations and Collaborative Education (GRACE*). GRACE guides CRIS's peacebuilding which is currently rooted in seven localities, all of whom are deeply impacted by the legacy of the conflict. Throughout 2021-2022 CRIS worked with over 70 schools, with its programmes impacting more than 1100 children, and nearly 200 teachers and principals. GRACE seeks to enable changes within attitudes, cultures and structures, at multiple levels: pupil, parent, family, teacher, school, community and institutional levels. CRIS's programme activity takes a whole-school approach but targets activities towards three sets of key stakeholders: Children, Parents/ Carers and School Leaders (Principals and Teachers). GRACE is increasingly recognised as an example of good practice in supporting effective school collaboration and sharing. In 2021, CRIS was invited to join the Mainstreaming Shared Education Stakeholder Reference Group, a consultative group of 'expert practitioners' brought together to help inform how the Department of Education should embed Shared Education across all schools in Northern Ireland. This consultation directly fed into the Department of Education's development of the "Mainstreaming Shared Education Strategy" (DE, 2022) which acts as a guide toward achieving best practice in delivering the twin goals of educational attainment and good relations.

In 2021, CRIS and Coventry University's *Centre for Peace Trust and Social Relations (CTPSR)* formed a research partnership with the aim to build an evidence base to underpin the GRACE model and to strengthen CRIS's Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning. To this end, research was designed to include a literature review, and qualitative and quantitative research using a small purposeful sampling of school stakeholders. The objective was to better understand and identify reconciliaton indicators – particularly as they pertain to trust and linked to the first three stages of GRACE where reconciliation operates on an intra-school and inter-school basis, and by embedding at family/community levels. The critical role of trust in peace and reconciliation is widely acknowledged (Butzlaff & Messinger-Zimmer, 2020; Rice et al., 2021; Wong, 2016), but the specific indicators of trust are not well articulated or captured in policy and practice metrics (Stanton, 2021), nor specifically in education-based contexts. Thus while the research aims to inform and create a Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) indicator toolkit for CRIS, to maximise the organisation's impact, it is hoped that it will also make a contribution to wider discussions being held among statutory education providers in Northern Ireland (primarily when assessing implementation of Shared Education) concerning how to measure and assess reconciliation aims (ETI, 2018).

POLICY CONTEXT

Educational initiatives which encouraged schools to bring children together to mend social division have operated in Northern Ireland since the early days of conflict in the 1970s. By the early 1980s, informal inter-school contact began to receive official encouragement around the developing concept of Educational for Mutual Understanding (EMU) (Richardson, 2011:89). At the same time, the first Integrated Schools were also established by parents (for example, Lagan College in 1981) and over subsequent years continued to grow, albeit at a slow pace.

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 Act established a statutory and legal framework to ensure that EMU and Cultural Heritage would become a compulsory part of the statutory curriculum as Educational (Cross-Curricular) Themes. This included: promoting respect for self and others; understanding and respecting cultural diversity; improved relationships between children from different traditions; and positive conflict resolution approaches (Smith and Robinson, 1996). Contact between pupils across and between schools remained optional, but for schools that wished to engage in contact, funds were available to support joint visits, facilitated contact sessions and other activities to promote positive interaction. At the height of the conflict, however, contact was still perceived as risky for many.

With the arrival of ceasefires, The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and power-sharing, a new peace-time era emerged. From 2007, this change was reflected in a new revised curriculum in Northern Ireland. Areas of the curriculum such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) for children in primary schools, and Local and Global Citizenship, as part of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) for those in post-primary education, could be perceived as a form of peace education. Each included skills and concepts designed to promote respect for differences and improve social cohesion, increase emotional literacy, develop skills in listening, conflict resolution and problem-solving; and by developing democratic citizenship through learning to understand, respect and accept a diversity of identities and beliefs.

Over the next several years, it can be argued that the government's perspective on community relations began to shift. Previous funds available to support inter-school pupil-to-pupil contact schemes such as the Schools Community Relations Programme (which had been running since 1987) were wound down in 2010. Following this, the Department of Education's (DE) new *Community Relations Equality and Diversity in Education* (CRED) policy was developed. CRED maintained that there was an important role that both formal and informal education had to play equipping children for an increasingly diverse society, in particular aligning itself to those aspects of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act (Section 75) which were designed to ensure social equality and protection from discrimination. To do so, DE called for schools to better incorporate community relations into their own school ethos and to build internal capacity.

In terms of inter-school contact, CRED advocated its support for "meaningful interaction between pupils" (DE, 2011:29) to acquire both the skills and abilities needed to engage positively and "build relationships with others from different backgrounds" (ibid) but again carried no statutory obligation requiring it. CRED also encouraged better collaboration between the range of educational sectors and managing authorities.

As the longest period of uninterrupted power-sharing progressed (2007-2017), new social policies emerged such as *Together Building a United Community* or T:BUC (The Executive Office, 2013). T:BUC was designed to progress good community relations and sharing across a range of areas including housing; children and young people; promoting safer communities and increased respect for a diversity of cultural expression. Several headline actions in T:BUC were aimed at using schools

to further reconciliation, for example by: rolling out a 'Buddy Scheme' in public Nurseries and Primary schools, and by the development of new 'shared educational campuses' where children may each attend their own school but share resources such as sports facilities and, participate in shared school & class activities. Such initiatives were examples of 'Shared Education,' approaches which highlighted school-based collaboration for the dual purpose of improved *educational attainment* and *reconciliation outcomes*. Shared Education, initially set up as a Queen's University pilot research project, was adopted in 2015 into policy (Sharing Works, 2015) for wider development across Northern Ireland.

The Sharing Works (2015) policy set out how schools and teachers could each find common ground for collaboration for example, in targeted school improvement, and by sharing resources and expertise areas across established school partnerships. Pupils were encouraged to benefit from shared lessons but retain a sense of belonging to their own school. Once again, schools are not required or mandated to provide pupil-to-pupil contact. The Department of Education and the Education Authority are, however, placed under duty to "encourage, facilitate, and promote Shared Education (DE, 2022: 2) under the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. Additionally, further inter-school collaboration is supported through the Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework which requires schools at post-primary level to share facilities, courses and classes to enable all pupils to have equal access to a range of examination subjects.

While educational initiatives aimed to promote reconciliation have operated (voluntarily and latterly with the encouragement of government) for the last fifty years, those seeking to understand the impact of school-based peacebuilding have found it challenging to measure reconciliation outcomes. Indeed, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has found that "Across the sector, there is a limited consensus and understanding of what is meant by reconciliation outcomes" (ETI, 2018:19). The same report called for greater clarification around key terminology, for example, not only of 'reconciliation' (ibid: 25) but how such 'reconciliation outcomes' might be evaluated and measured (ibid: 30). While this is not a unique dilemma for school-based peacebuilding, given the attempt to mainstream Shared Education more widely across Northern Ireland, the lack of clarity or assessment criteria could be considered a hindering dilemma.

Finally, at the time of writing, all recent progression toward new policies to support school-based peacebuilding or any educational transformation find themselves stalled as the Northern Ireland Power-sharing Executive is not sitting. However, just prior to its dissolution in February 2022, the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 was passed; this provided for increased levels of support for new provisions for Integrated Education. The Integrated Sector has, in the view of its supporters, grown too slowly over the last forty years; they suggest that the problem lies in a previous lack of dedicated governmental financial investment, necessitating new legislation.

Across the years, through the height of violent political conflict right up to the current post-conflict era, schools have been involved in peacebuilding initiatives. Policies have emerged, often replicating what was first tried and tested by schools' voluntary efforts to promote community cohesion and greater sharing. Increasingly, there is desire, confidence and interest among schools and community relations practitioners to find the appropriate mechanisms to both articulate and measure the outcomes and impact of school-based 'reconciliation' and the integral metric of trust. By doing so, both community relations and peace education will benefit in practice and policy terms.

METHODOLOGY

This research comprised two phases. Phase 1 involved secondary research in the form of a review of existing literature. Phase 2 involved primary data collection from CRIS stakeholders via interviews and a small-scale survey.

Phase 1 – Secondary data

The review of the literature concentrated on indicators of trust in education-based peacebuilding initiatives, primarily engaging with academic sources, with supplementary insights from practice based reports/grey literature. The review broadly followed a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) approach. Inter-disciplinary and education-focused peer-reviewed databases were searched using combinations of key terms, with a supplementary targeted search for academic papers (i.e. google scholar; article reference lists) and grey literature/practitioner/specialist outlets, capturing evidence published between 2011-2022. This date range enabled a manageable search within the project timeframe and broadly aligned with relevant government policy around shared education (The Executive Office, 2013; Department of Education, 2015).

Main Sources

The literature was captured utilising a well-established multi-disciplinary database (*Science Direct*), as well as two education focused databases (*Education Source* and *ERIC*). After a scoping and search term test exercise across these databases to ensure we returned both relevant and manageable results, search terms included various combinations including: trust; inter-school; shared education; programme; peace/peacebuilding; social cohesion; reconciliation; collaboration; post-conflict.

Coding process

In total, 1859 records were mined. We read the title and/or abstracts of these records, and after removing duplicates and those deemed not relevant, we identified 38 for further review. From this, we further refined the sample (by re-reading the abstract and/or scanning the full document) to 15 records for full analysis. These 15 sources were then read and coded by two members of the research team, informed by prior study using a REA approach (Edwards et al., 2021; Innes et al., 2018). We coded the articles for: *Reference details*; *Discipline*; *Main Theme(s)*; *Theoretical framework/basis*; *Research methods*; *Country of data collection*; *Demographics of sample*; *Overall findings*; *Specific Trust Indicators; Particular resonance with project*; *Papers cited that appear relevant*. Additional supplementary literature was included where relevant, for example foundational trust theory.

The completed coding was then reviewed by the two researchers and through a process of constant comparison and reflection, thematic connections between results were made, facilitating a set of inductively derived tentative themes (Lewis et al., 2010) that captured the fundamental issues across the individual coding of sources. Final themes were reviewed, revised and agreed upon across the two members of the research team to ensure validity.

Phase 2 – Primary case study data

The primary data entailed six in-depth semi-structured interviews carried out by Dr Rice, with teachers with experience of various CRIS programmes. The interviews asked individuals to reflect on their shared education experience and engagement with teachers, parents, children and CRIS as part of the various CRIS programmes, seeking to inductively gather definitions of trust, information on trustbuilding processes and what works well, indicators and facilitators of trust, as well as related issues such as barriers to trust. The interviews were all audio-recorded, anonymised and then transcribed in full. As with the literature review, the interview data was coded inductively by the two researchers and organised into themes on an iterative basis.

A small scale pilot survey was also sent out to teachers and parents, with statements about trust informed by the literature review asked via a series of open and closed questions. Twenty-three responses were received, mainly from teachers, and quantitative findings from this are included in the subsequent sections, where applicable.

THEMATIC FINDINGS: FACILITATORS AND INDICATORS OF TRUST

This report works off the basis of a well-established definition of trust as: *the willingness to be vulnerable to another actor or entity, based on positive expectations of their behaviour or intentions* (Mayer et al., 1995). The review findings, built around this understanding, are presented below under thematic headings comprising facilitators and indicators of trust derived as a result of the combined phase 1 and phase 2 data. The focus on facilitators and indicators reflects the understanding that building trust and maintaining trust are inter-related and can positively reinforce each other in a virtuous cycle (Soranio and Wilkinson, 2009). As such, these themes, dealt with separately below for clarity, are in reality often intersecting.

Feeling safe

Feeling safe emerged as an important factor across the literature that facilitates the willingness to be vulnerable to another individual. Seemingly 'small' acts in education settings such as greeting families at the door of a school (Khalfaoui et al. 2020) are considered to build up trust between teachers and participant families, to instill a sense of security and act as a catalyst for trust: "families feel loved and protected…They feel they can confide in you and talk to you more and more. And they feel more reassured, more secure" (interviewee, cited in Khalfaoui et al. 2020). Similarly, security is the critical element of intergroup trust derived by Kappmeier et al., (2021) in their study of peacebuilding in Moldova. Here, security is considered critical in its own right and as a thread underpinning the four other factors (competence, integrity, compassion, and compatibility), with security defined as: "the sense of risk of harm from the other group, physically or psychologically" (p.113).

It will not be surprising that the legacy of violent conflict which claimed the lives of more than 3600 people in Northern Ireland over a 30 year period has left its toll. Research suggests that 39% of the population experienced a traumatic event that was related to the Troubles (O'Neill and Hamber, 2018). Interviewees reflected that for some, the fear of safety and security linked to participation in contact programmes can act as a barrier to involvement:

> "Safety would be a big issue, [people] maybe wouldn't feel safe and secure travelling from their own area to that other area, with just my reassurance, if you know what I mean. So, I think it's a lot to do with security and personal attitudes, and maybe just unfortunately the past." (T6)

Trust Modelling

An important way of addressing concerns about safety that was identified as salient in the primary data was the role of trust modelling. The role of vocal insider-advocates can significantly boost the profile of peace contact programmes. Equally, several interviewees reflected that sometimes vocal family members, spouses or other individuals who do not approve of peacebuilding can also influence and pressure more vulnerable programme members not to participate, acting as 'spoilers':

> “A barrier sometimes can just be a difficult parent…who’s telling all the other parents not to get involved, and that’s before they come in through the door. … If you get a parent who’s very opinionated, that affects the vulnerable parents, and then they go, oh, maybe I shouldn’t” (T4).

As such, positive modelling was identified by interviewees as evident across several sets of relationships: children from inter-school programmes paired together as ‘Buddies’ modelled trust to their parents; Teachers, Classroom Assistants and Parent Workers modelling for the children and parents alike; and CRIS staff modelling ‘facilitative leadership’ to teachers in order to foster communication, trust and openness across the separated education system.

For example, one interviewee described how parents can sometimes be cautious to get involved in inter-school peacebuilding but feel compelled when they see their children displaying positive attitudes and behaviours:

> “you’ll not get a better role model, because children are so brutally honest, and they’ll tell you what they like, and they don’t like…I thought, it’s one thing getting teachers from this school to go, but there is no way [parents will get involved], you’ll get a token gesture of three or four parents, and from memory I think we had 18 parents that day out of 30. It was during the day when obviously parents were working as well, but there was just a real desire, and I think the key thing again there was the children had been doing these sessions, these ‘Buddy Up’ sessions, and they had been obviously going home and talking about them, and so loving them. So, I think parents then thought, let’s find out what this all about here. Our children are clearly loving this. Our children clearly feel very comfortable going to another school in a predominantly Catholic area. So, I think a lot of parents were like, well, we better do this too” (T3).

For teachers who can feel a lack of confidence in either expanding their peacebuilding work to children, or who are unsure of how to address the legacy of conflict and its continued impact, modelling from CRIS facilitators builds capacity and empowers them to become a role model for change.

> “I felt equipped, because I’d seen that programme run out [by CRIS]. I felt so much more confident that I could actually do that, whereas before I was like, I can’t discuss these things with my children, you know, it’s a grey area and I don’t feel equipped. I don’t have the experience, or the knowledge, or even the vocab, you know, even the words that you use on how to put these, whereas that had all been put in place for me, and it was there. I mean, that’s on the lessons again this year, you know, so like for the second year” (T3).

Similarly for children, CRIS facilitators model tolerance and interest in their work with groups of children, gradually progressing from non-contentious discussion to gentle probing of identity and difference:

> "whatever was shared in the session would kind of stay within the session. I think the children knew that whatever was said, it was a safe opening on a space. So, he [CRIS facilitator] continually tweaked, sort of reminding them that what was said was acceptable, and I think all of the CRIS people over the years have always made a very good point that there's no kind of real/wrong answer" (T2).

Likewise, teachers play an important role in modelling trustworthiness and a climate of safety to the children:

> "I think kids then naturally, if they see you at ease with another adult, you know, they will look to you as an adult, is this okay, is this safe, and I'm standing back and I'm joking with her [partner teacher], and with the [CRIS] facilitators, you know, that sets the scene right from the get-go. So, I think that is really important". (T3)

Informality

Important in building this sense of safety and a climate where trust can be cultivated is an informal environment (Rice et al., 2021). The case study data indicated that safety and psychological security was fostered by the process-driven approach to contact programmes which emphasise the importance of hospitality and welcome, taking time to build group cohesion and create a safe space for dialogue. Informal activities such as songs, games and icebreakers, as well as group-forming activities such as 'contracting' (rules for engagement), for example, are established early-on as part of CRIS programmes, creating an environment of safety for participants. The case study found that programme participants felt comfortable when they were eased into activities gently. Parents were offered cups of tea before beginning programmes, ice-breakers were played and songs sang with children prior to any formal programme. The gradual and paced disclosure serves to ease anxieties:

> "Every year, we started off really, really simple. It's things like just a coffee morning…Never would you get into the nitty gritty of the whole, you know, mixing of communities. It was cups of coffee, building up a rapport, allowing parents to build up a bit of a rapport, seeing what they have in common…straight away they realised, my goodness, we actually have a lot in common here, you know, we like the same types of things." (T4)

Care and Benevolence

Accordingly, a sense of care or 'benevolence' towards others is a foundation of trust (Mayer et al., 1995); feelings rather than solely a rational cognitive assessment, have a strong bearing on perceptions of trustworthiness and trustbuilding (Baer and Colquitt, 2018; Rice and Taylor, 2020). Such sentiments are reflected in study of community schools in disadvantaged areas of the USA (Mayger and Hochbein, 2021) where care has identified as a key element building of trust and social capital within these communities and specifically between schools and families.

The primary case study data illustrated the importance of actions of care and benevolence in building trust. This was evident in relationships between CRIS staff and teachers, and between teachers themselves. Participants recounted that they felt CRIS staff were kind, approachable and welcoming in programmes and trainings with adults and children alike. Taking an interest in each participant made them feel cared for, valued and welcome. For example one teacher explained:

> "[CRIS] they're also very friendly and kind…. I just always get that real sense of the CRIS team, whoever is representing them, they're warm, and friendly, and they're kind, and they're interested. They'll also come over and have a chit chat before it starts, you know, at lunchtime. …[T]he CRIS team always make the effort to come over and sit with you for a good 20 minutes, and have a bit of craic, and that's, I think, also all part of it too". (T2)

Thus it was not only the process but the facilitators themselves who were credited as creating a sense of care and safety:

70%

(A Lot) "I care about the welfare of others I have met through CRIS programmes."

> "it's all about the people and their personalities. They reassure you. They make you feel confident in opening up …they would make you feel secure and safe and, you know, what you're going ahead with, and whatever you're dealing with at the time. I would have to say it's about the people that work for CRIS. They just have a way about them" (T6)

Self-Discovery

A relatively under-acknowledged dimension of trust in the existing literature, but that appeared strongly in the case study data, concerned self-discovery and self-knowledge, and appears to flow from a sense of safety.

Trust Indicator

"I feel like I know myself better", "I feel I can be my true self"

Teachers reported that they watched their students be given space to investigate and question their own beliefs and assumptions about themselves in CRIS programmes (such as 'Buddy Up' and 'Knowing me, knowing you'): "there's a lot about learning about yourself as well as well as learning about others" (T1). Research on relationship building argues that positive relationships both flow from and create a context for, self-discovery and self-actualization (Morgan Roberts, 2007). Morgan Roberts explains that:

> "identity enhancement may be a powerful mechanism for transforming relationships from a state of damaging disconnection to one of growth-enhancing connection… When individuals experience a sense of being known and understood, they may also be encouraged to experiment with new identities, a critical component of self-discovery and self-actualization" (Morgan Roberts, 2007, p.30-34).

This has a specific impact on trust: "As people experience themselves as being known, understood, and affirmed, they are more likely to build trust" (Morgan Roberts, 2007, p34). Self-knowledge enables experimentation with 'enhanced' identities, and new perspectives both on one's own attitudes, behaviours and experiences, and that of others (Morgan-Roberts, 2007). Research shows that relationships with others are ultimately the vehicle through which we define and understand ourselves (Kim and Park, 2021). For example, in community-based arts work focused on peaceful co-existence of divided groups of young people, successful interventions have involved using arts methods for: "(a) looking at the familiar self from a new perspective, (b) understanding others by defining myself, and (c) developing We through coordination and reconciliation" (Kim and Park, 2021, p.1).

This self-focus bears out in CRIS practice when children are encouraged to go beyond longstanding assumptions or unchallenged mental scripts: "the majority of the classes that I teach still seem to have this real, this is us, this is what we're like" (T2). Gently, children are facilitated to think about what it really means to *be* them:

> "I think some kids actually found it quite hard to say who they were…we found religion wasn't a major part of it…it was quite interesting to see the shift in the mindset there…what kind of stood out about those sessions" (T5).

This self-discovery is not confined to child-child relationships, but is also built into teacher-teacher interactions. The result is that individuals feel truly known, with common statements being: "I feel like they know me" (T2), and; "it's kind of like you know that when you trust someone that you can be yourself" (T3).

74%

(A Lot) "I feel I can be myself with those I have met through CRIS programmes."

Open conversations

Following on from the theme of knowing oneself was the progression to really knowing others, a key pathway to this is open conversation, which is critical to the development of trusting relationships. This is evident in the ability of partner teachers to discuss potential engagement problems or practical issues candidly:

> "we got better at being able to work through those problems as well and I think that came from just being able to be honest with each other and just saying, 'No, that's not going to work with my class at the moment, it isn't going to work, let's not do that… And I think that honesty allowed us to build that element of trust." (T4).

Further, open conversation, freely asking questions about differences and being "willing to engage with sensitive issues in mixed company" has proved important in post-primary shared education programmes in Northern Ireland (Hughes, 2014, p.198) and has been specifically noted as important for teachers leading such programmes (Gallagher, 2020; Hughes and Loader, 2021). This echoes research on Jewish-Arab relations that adopted the Northern Ireland shared education model in one area of Israel, where open conversations demonstrated the "ability to overcome the rift" (Payes, 2018) and "look the conflict in the eye" (interviewee cited in Payes, 2018). Indeed, research into the role of communication in building trust between divided groups, as a gradual and progressive process culminating in these open conversations supports this finding (Rice et al., 2021). Open conversations are in this sense an indicator of trust and a vehicle through which greater knowledge is derived about 'other' groups, myths are dispelled and where common ground is unveiled (Hughes, 2014; Kappmeier et al., 2021; Mayer and Kochbein, 2021; McMurray and Niens, 2012; Rice et al., 2021).

This approach of self-other discovery therefore has a direct impact on the trustbuilding process with others:

Trust Indicator

"I feel like I really know them"

"[open conversation] that's taken trust, but it's also been building trust. And for our kids, especially whenever I worked through the flags and symbols curriculum, we found that, for us, a lot of children didn't really know much about flags or the symbols. They knew there was something different about the two different communities, but they couldn't really put their finger on it. And I suppose what we were trying to do was to help educate the kids to know what the differences were and to be able to get them a forum to be able to ask questions. (T5)"

Examples of this issue from the case study data included observations about inter-communal dialogue sessions held and facilitated by CRIS as part of year-long inter-school parent programmes. Particularly highlighted by interviewees were sessions held over a 3-day residential programme which comes at the year's culmination. Parental engagement is viewed as integral to the CRIS model of practice, to reinforce and anchor the messages of friendship, empathy, cultural awareness, and mutual understanding in their children's programmes in school, and to create friendships among the parents themselves. Facilitated by CRIS staff, dialogue includes topics perceived as sensitive and contentious such as identity, religion and nationality and linked to cultural symbols, flag and emblems. A teacher on the residential observed the impact of the experience on parents:

Trust Indicator

"I feel I can talk openly, even about things that we are likely to have different opinions on"

"A huge, very important session…one of those workshops is emblems and flags… parents have come out of them, they've been tearful, they've been emotional, and they have said it was the best experience of their life… …it's an opportunity for these people to open up to each other, and to share their difficulties growing up, maybe things that have happened, somebody was killed, somebody came in and raided their house…I couldn't believe the first year of it how people were just coming out of it and got so much out of it…one parent referenced it as the counselling… Now, you can only do that when you've built up a trust…So, to me that's where CRIS, whatever way they deliver it, whatever way they do it, that's where they're pivotal to how it all works" (T4).

Indeed, among children, the case study found that in such in CRIS programmes, once trust was established through open conversations, a space was cultivated to explore and express identities beyond the common cultural and religious binaries in Northern Ireland:

"The identity side of it has really brought up sort of controversial areas about gender identity. It's opened areas that we maybe wouldn't have been confident talking about only for these areas sort of highlighting it, and bringing it up, and giving us a chance to move on, and talk about other areas. So, it's been a great introduction, even to branch out to things I wouldn't have expected it to lead to" (T6).

78%

(A Lot) "I feel I have increased positive perceptions of other communities different than my own."

70%

(A Lot) "I feel that those I interact with through CRIS understand my views and beliefs, even when they are different to theirs."

48%

(A Lot) "I have learned that I have things in common with those I previously thought of as different."

Asking for help

As relationships progress to a deep sense of trust, individuals become increasingly comfortable to be vulnerable. A third of the studies reviewed included 'asking for help' from others as an indicator of the existence of trust. This applied both to participants in education-based peacebuilding initiatives, such as and primarily parents, but also children, as well as teachers involved in the initiatives. The willingness to ask for help epitomises a key foundation of trust - the willingness to be vulnerable to another person or entity (Mayer et al., 1995). Vulnerability by its nature involves a degree of risk or a 'leap of faith' (Mollering, 2006) and in the backdrop of what can be a contentious or conflicted local environment, the review revealed it must be precipitated by feeling safe.

In terms of teachers and education professionals, trusting their counterpart was demonstrated through asking them for advice on issues and problems and being confident that not only would advice be supplied, but it would be done so sensitively and empathetically. Academics writing about Northern Ireland reflect that in the context of a separated education system, teachers working closely together, for example, by sharing resources and asking each other for support can be an important indication of trust that crosses ethno-national allegiances (Duffy and Gallagher, 2017). These interactions are progressive in that they start in a professional context but may eventually stray into the personal arena and go beyond the boundaries of an education programme, into personal life: "I now know these people not only as my professional colleagues but also my friends and feel that I can lift the phone at any time" (interviewee cited in Boorah and Knox, 2013). Similarly, in Payes' (2014) study of shared learning in separate Jewish and Arab schools, one Jewish principal said: "A. [her Arab partner] is my anchor. I call him whenever fear or doubts arise, and just talking with him calms me down." Such responses demonstrate 'high trust' (Lewicki et al., 1998), trust that is not contextually-dependent or bounded to a particular situation, but that which permeates interpersonal relations more widely. Indeed, when ethnic identities, for example, are salient in intergroup relations, trust becomes specific to certain situations (Hughes et al., 2011). Going beyond these boundaries was reflected in child-child relationships when they interacted outside of a programme context and/or on social media (Duffy and Gallagher, 2017; Hughes, 2014). Similarly, asking for help beyond a particular programme, for example, practical assistance in other areas of family life, was an important indicator of participant trust in facilitators and schools in other literature, such as a study of Roma and migrant families in Spain (Khalfaoui et al. 2020).

The case study featured several stories of the importance of teachers from different religious background working closely with their partner schools describing how they knew that trust had been established. For some this was built over decades and manifested itself in addressing common needs such as mental health concerns during Covid lockdowns, or having honest discussions on shared lesson planning:

Trust Indicator

"I can ask for help and feel confident they will try to, without judgement"

> "[T]o let your guard down, to show your vulnerable side means that you trust somebody because you know they're not going to go away and go, wow, she's obviously an awful teacher. With both those girls [Partner Teachers in the CRIS Inter-school Programme] if they walked in here now, I could, straight away, say, oh, wait to you hear what I did, or I'm really struggling with this, you know, I can't seem to find anything to do with this topic, or share some resources, and I think knowing that you can ask for help, because I guess it's a human trait, is that none of us really want to admit that we need help. But I think if you have those people in your life where you feel, particularly professionally, where you can lift a phone, or a send an email and say, I actually really need help with this, I'm doing this new topic and I haven't a clue what I'm doing, then you know you trust them" (T3).

Reliable practical and tangible support

Providing necessary practical and tangible support across particular identified areas of need facilitates trust-building (Wong 2016). CRIS staff were viewed as being readily available for help and support: "You just always get the impression that there's somebody there at the end of the phone, or the end of the email, and they will get back to you as soon as possible" (T2). Addressing needs beyond the classroom has proved important in building trust in other contexts, e.g., transport, medical concerns (Mayger and Hochbein, 2021). The case study data illustrated that interviewees found targeted resources and shared parent programmes built upon commonly identified interests:

> "There was crocheting, photography. Some of the things they did actually, I just thought they were amazing. As a mum, if you weren't working, to have that on your doorstep absolutely free, like right down to your driving theory. So, you would have done a questionnaire with parents, sussed out what they wanted to do, and the parent worker was able to help facilitate a lot of that". (T4)

Felt Trust

Another indicator of trust in this context, which appears relatively nascent in the wider trust literature pertaining to education-based settings, is the concept of felt trust (c.f. Chiu and Chiang, 2019; Nerstad et al., 2018). Felt trust focuses on how feeling trusted *by* another, rather than solely feeling trust *in* another, is important. It is perceived through being given autonomy over tasks, being empowered and able to co-lead, components proving important in the establishment of trust across education-based peacebuilding in a number of studies crossing contexts and continents, such as: Hughes' (2014) study in Northern Ireland, Khalfaoui et al (2020) on Roma families in Spain, and Magyer and Hochbein's (2021) study of community schools in America. Feeling trusted appears to be reciprocal in that when one feels trusted by someone, they are more likely to trust that someone back and the 'virtuous circle' of trust (Soranio and Wilkinson, 2009) is strengthened. What we are encapsulating in this review as felt trust appears strongly linked to feeling valued, for example, feeling one's input and ideas are valued and that one is considered competent enough to contribute acts as a precursor to felt trust. In this sense, various components of trustworthiness are likely at work (i.e. competence and integrity). By contrast, when key stakeholders i.e. parents are excluded from decision-making, evidence suggests trust is eroded. Case study review of post-conflict education initiatives has found that, for example, a lack of transparency eroded parental trust in educational institutions (Gallagher et al., 2018).

Leadership and facilitation is evidently important in the development of felt trust by participants in education-based peacebuilding initiatives. For example, in Major and Hochbein's (2021) study of community schools in the USA, school coordinators were considered to be a "critical nexus" (p.94) between the school, partners, and parents, in the development of trusting relationships and indeed of wider social capital. The importance of 'mid-range leadership' in peacebuilding (c.f. Lederach, 1997; Stanton, 2021) and in trustbuilding in particular is well established (c.f. Rice et al., 2021).

Case study data strongly evidenced the importance of CRIS as a 'critical nexus' between programme stakeholders. CRIS facilitators move back and forth between partner schools not only to facilitate work between them, but to establish and nurture their relationships and partnerships. CRIS staff act as conduit between schools, setting targets, ideas and plans for their shared work together, with support tailoring depending on individual school needs:

Trust Indicator

"I feel trusted"

> "our relationship with them [CRIS] has changed. In those early days, we were probably far more dependent on them, and as time has gone by and we've grown in confidence, it's been more a partnership in the sense that we're working together to the extent now where it's really – we know they're there if we need them but we're able to do all of that on our own as well" (T4).

Thus facilitators serve to motivate and empower teachers and the children: 'We [the class] want to do a good job for [CRIS facilitator] Neídín' (T1). This is particularly salient as schools now have a statutory duty to engage in Shared Education. Reports have found some teachers lack confidence in teaching issues deemed 'contentious' and in these areas, feel ill-equipped and anxious to engage (ETI, 2018). Case study teachers cited new confidence to participate and lead in Shared Education after working with CRIS for a time period. In many respects this acts as added value to the mainstreaming of Shared Education as CRIS facilitators are modelling and supporting teachers to take on coordination roles:

> "They're [CRIS Facilitators] just delighted to know that what they're pushing for is happening and continuing, because they don't want it, I suppose, to be something that happens while they're there and then just vanishes. So, they have been fantastic and said anything that you want, or anything we can get you, just shout us…I don't think I would feel as confident taking on the shared education, the co-ordinator role, without them around and having their details. They've inspired me to be honest to take it on, just seeing how enthusiastic they are about it". (T6)

74%

(A Lot) "I feel I am trusted by those I have met through CRIS programmes"

79%

(A Lot) "I feel I can trust those I have met through CRIS programmes."

Commitment of time, resources and social interaction

Past study asserts that reciprocal trust, particularly reciprocal trust that relies heavily on feelings of care, requires time to develop (Blomqvist and Cook, 2018; Korsgaard, 2018). There was recognition across case study participants that trust building was an investment, requiring intentional time and effort. The importance of time is reflected in past study of teachers' views on building trust with teachers across the divide in Northern Ireland shared education (Gallagher et al., 2020) and in peacebuilding more widely (Rice et al., 2021; Stanton, 2021). While Covid-19 brought difficulties, an unexpected benefit of online CRIS children's sessions for one teacher meant that the pace of contact was slowed naturally. Videos could be made of each other and exchanged, letter writing was

introduced, and they communicated from the safety of their own classroom. One interviewee (T1) felt the pace decreased natural anxieties that children may have had.

While such studies locate time as a facilitator of trust, it was clear that participants involved in CRIS programmes also considered an investment of time as reflective of trust formed. For example, setting aside training days, allocating budgets, and investing 'free-time' in peacebuilding initiatives indicates a commitment of the highly valued resource of time to the relationship, or even in other ways such as funding. Trust is both built and exemplified in being dedicated to keeping contact alive: "just always trying to have something to be working towards, like if they get one bit of work done, we're always looking for what's the next thing we want to do and trying to not let things drop off" (T1). Materially, investment is also demonstrated through sharing resources or costs:

Trust Indicator

"I willingly make time for this relationship, or invest in it in other ways"

> "if somebody has resources that the other school can't afford, you know, it's about sharing even those resources and buying things. Each school would buy something, and then share it, to split the cost" (T6).

Teachers reported that CRIS facilitators made expectations clear about the need to invest time in the programme relationships, exemplifying past research that boundaries and expectation management is important for building trust (Weibel et al., 2016):

> "It was kind of like, listen, this is not going to be a huge amount of work for you guys, we're here to facilitate this, you know, we want to link. They were, right from the word go, I knew that their big thing was, we want to link you guys up, and we want you to have a really open relationship, a really good strong, you know, I got that from the get-go, and basically, I knew if you're entering into this, you're entering into building a relationship with these people. So, if you don't think you can do that, leave now type thing, but it was very gently put across, but it was very clearly put across" (T3).

The importance of time for building relationships gradually among children was also highlighted. For example, one teacher used the metaphor of step-by-step educational development to describe mutual understanding and relationship building among children:

Trust Indicator

"I feel our relationship is valued"

> "The same way a child comes to me in P7, and I'm asking them to do long multiplication with multiple step problems, they can't do that without the basic building blocks of maths to be able to get to there. And I think we see the same with this that the kids need the foundation to follow those aspects of understanding controversial issues that aren't necessarily named that way, but by the time they get to it they go, 'Oh, we've talked a bit like this before and I know what that is, we've talked about something similar.' It's about those stepping-stones and foundations that build towards the bigger issues whenever we need to get there." (T5).

Another teacher described their relationship with their partner teacher and school in a similar fashion:

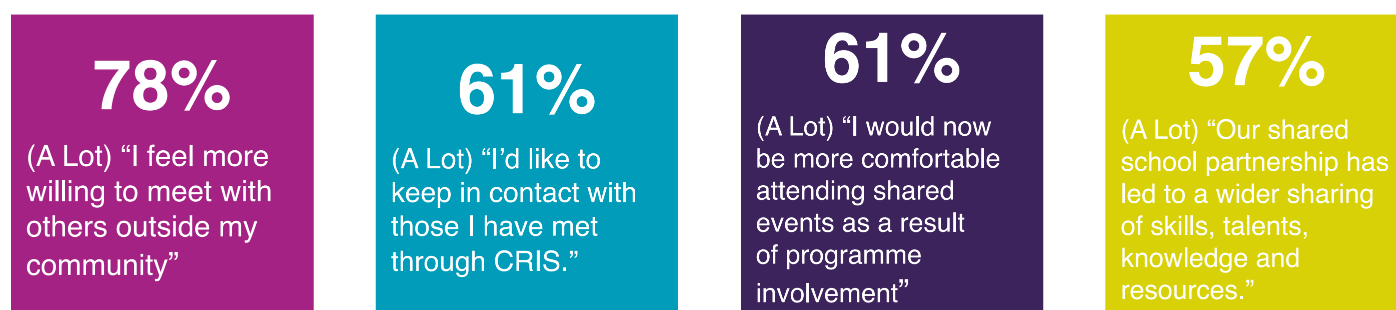
> "It's like a domino effect. You can't just do something in isolation. You have to have foundations…and then the little springboards from that… That's very much a school now that I feel, you know, I can totally trust those guys" (T3).

The case study found a desire to continue friendships and working together was sparked by the CRIS programmes for children, teachers and parents. Stories shared during the research recounted that after participation, children were excited to share 'gaming' platforms together and find each other on social media; partner teachers began to text each other, relying on each other for advice or support, or by working together to create a shared vision for Shared Education. Further, when successful, open conversation that appreciates difference and reveals common ground, together with felt trust, can instil the development of shared social action and solidarity as another indicator of trust and bridging capital (Hughes et al., 2011; McMurray and Niens, 2012). This solidarity can be demonstrated around a community issue such as at the Corrymeela peace events that parents attended with CRIS, or even through "participating in cultural traditions associated with the other group" (Hughes, 2014). This often indicates the formation of friendships outside a particular programme or shared education initiative (Hughes, 2014). It was highlighted that some parents remained in contact with each other after such inter-school residential programmes together (T6). For children, teachers reported spillovers into social plans outside of the programmes, demonstrating extended personal disclosure and a sense of security in the relationship:

> "there was a couple of them who had just also, in a vague way, written down, will you come to the Ardoyne or, you know, would you like to come and see where we live, and again, yes, there is, therefore, an element of extending a little bit of trust there with, I guess, the implied implication that if you come over, we'll look after you" (T2).

Teachers also demonstrated a progression to thinking of their relationship as a solid partnership built on shared values of education:

> "it's about what our partnership found and got and grew out of Shared Education. So it's about the 'we' statements that were a lot more common than the 'us' statements or the 'I' statements" (T4).



Competency, Credibility and Integrity

An important reason why individuals devote time and other resources to a relationship is a perception that the other is competent, credible and operates with integrity. These qualities are often linked and yet are distinct. For teacher participants, it was important that CRIS staff be viewed as competent professionals. CRIS were considered to have "done their research" (T2) to develop content and approached that are evidence-based and contextually appropriate:

> “[We can say] Look, we’re not feeling the full controversial issue thing – we don’t know where to go with it, have you any ideas?’ They had maybe a resource already made, this was around flags and symbols, which we decided to use for our P6, P7 curriculum, which worked really well. And again, I think that gave us something that was concrete, that was a resource already made that we knew was well researched and well trialled, and that gave us confidence to go into those sessions” (T5).

This particularly creates buy-in when peace curriculum and CRIS resources were viewed as complementary to the established education curriculum.

Trust Indicator

“I know they will keep their word”

Credibility and integrity were discussed primarily in relation to authenticity and suitability of individual CRIS affiliates, especially about staff viewed as essential to the programme. For example, one school partnership involved a ‘Shared Parent Worker’ that partnered with CRIS staff as part of parent peace programmes. It was recognised that this individual, perceived as a gentle grandmotherly figure who had a good sense of the issues on the ground, and who was always fair, was a key trust broker within the parent programme:

> “What I clearly observed was how everybody had a huge respect for [the Parent Worker], and maybe the fact she was a much older lady…So, the moment you have a huge amount of respect for somebody, you can kind of work with them, and they’ll want to do their best to help you….She always knew the language to use. If something arose in the community, she wouldn’t just bulldoze in, but she would very discretely know when would be appropriate to address it if it was necessary…when you work with cross-community you have to be very careful with your language. You have to be really careful that you don’t say something that can offend”. (T4)

CRIS’s model of practice GRACE (Good Relations and Collaborative Education) emphasizes the strengths of taking a whole school approach to peacebuilding. This encourages the inclusion and involvement all members of school community as all are viewed as important to increase credibility and sustainability of the programme. Similarly, teachers interviewed for the case study also recognised classroom assistants as an untapped resource who can be an important asset to peace programmes. As they often live in the local areas near the schools, they are a link to the community with an understanding of localised histories and conflict dynamics.

83%

(A Lot) “I believe I can rely on those I interact with through CRIS.”

78%

(A Lot) “I believe that those I have met through CRIS will keep their word.”

70%

(A Lot) “Our shared school partnership work has included many in school such as pupils, teachers, classroom assistants, Principals, and Parents.”

CONCLUSION: THE TRUST INDICATORS FRAMEWORK (TIF)

The Trust Indicators Framework (TIF) was developed through a combination of analysis of existing international literature on trust in education-based peacebuilding initiatives, and primary qualitative data gathered from CRIS stakeholders (mainly teachers). CRIS practitioners know that a key element of peacebuilding work is building trust, but that trust is often unspoken or evident only in seemingly 'small', low key everyday behaviours that are not always recognised. The ambition of the TIF is to enable CRIS practitioners to tangibly capture the trust built in the relationships they facilitate, in order that the scenarios and strategies that work to do so can be replicated, and 'trust journeys' can be duly recognised, evaluated and celebrated.

The below ten indicators in the TIF are not intended to be prescriptive or an exhaustive list, but instead a useful starting point for recording trust that is implemented as part of a wider monitoring and evaluation process. Indeed, trust is dynamic and rarely static in contexts affected by conflict (Stanton, 2021); that said, the presence of several or all of the TIF indicators, would suggest that the relationship under review is more resilient and 'futureproof' than those with none or few evident indicators.

The practitioner using the TIF should think about the relationship, or matrix of relationships, they would like to review, e.g., child-child; parent-parent; parent-CRIS practitioner; teacher-teacher; teacher-CRIS practitioner. Equally, the TIF can be administered to both parties in a relationship, where comparison can be revealing of synergy or mismatch and therefore inform future plans and interventions. As with the indicators, the example behaviours are not exhaustive and will be more or less evident depending on the relationship under review; for example, the trust behaviours between two children will look very different to that of two teachers. Additionally, while the indicators are separated and broken down in the framework for ease of use, it may be that they at times overlap in practice. Lastly, acknowledging the reinforcing nature of trustworthiness (signals that one *can* be trusted) and actual trust (one i*s currently* trusted) (Mayer et al., 1995), indicators of each are included in the TIF. The TIF should be read from left to right.

THE TRUST INDICATORS FRAMEWORK (TIF)

Trust indicator	Why does this matter?	**Example behaviour** [Thinking about the relationship(s) you have developed as part of the CRIS programme…..]	Additional emergent indicators/notes
'I feel like I know myself better'	Self-knowledge enables experimentation with 'enhanced' identities, and new perspectives both on one's own attitudes, behaviours and experiences, and that of others (Morgan-Roberts, 2007). Our relationships with others are ultimately the vehicle through which we define and understand ourselves (Kim and Park, 2021).	√ Individual talks about having new self- knowledge √ Individual demonstrates openness to constructive change in self-thinking, e.g., broader or more astute perspective on how their experiences have informed their views and behaviour	
'I feel I can be my true self '	Linked to the above indicator, people are most likely to strongly trust others when they feel they can be their authentic self without judgement (Khalfaoui et al. 2020).	√ Individual talks about feeling 'known' √ Individual doesn't seem overly formal or guarded in communication √ Individual doesn't feel they need to hide important aspects of themselves	
'I feel like I really know them'	A sense that one 'really' knows another enables a relationship where each can be vulnerable and transparent, critical facets of trust (Mayer et al., 1995).	√ Individual feels they know the other party on more than a superficial level e.g., their values, different parts of their personality √ Individual feels the person is their authentic self around them	
'I feel cared about'	A perception of care and that someone has our best interests at heart is an important reason why we deem someone 'trustworthy'; feelings rather than solely rational thinking have a strong bearing on trust (Baer and Colquitt, 2018; Rice and Taylor, 2020).	√ Individual feels that their wellbeing and interests are cared about by the other √ Acts of care are reported (and reciprocated) √ Person feels safe and reassured in the other's company/ by their actions	

'I know they will keep their word'	Keeping one's word demonstrates integrity and instills confidence about a relationship (Mayer et al., 1995; Mayger and Hochbein, 2021).	√ Person keeps promises √ Person does what they say
'I feel I can talk openly, even about things that we are likely to have different opinions on'	The willingness to speak openly, particularly on a sensitive or contested topic, is a significant trust milestone that indicates a relationship of safety and respect of another's values and experiences (Kappmeier et al., 2021; Rice et al., 2021).	√ Everyday personal conversations are evident √ Sensitive topics can be discussed without friction or conflict that ends the interaction - some 'common ground' or acceptance of different views is evident
'I can ask for help and feel confident they will try to, without judgement'	Asking for help suggests a willingness to be vulnerable to another person – critical to the existence of trust (Mayer et al., 1995), and being responsive to these requests enables a relationship of trust (Payes, 2018; Wong, 2016).	√ A willingness to assist is evident/assistance is provided in the relationship e.g., emotional/social support, physical resources
'I feel trusted'	Trust is not one-directional but impacted by our perception of the other's view of the relationship (Korsgaard, 2018). Feeling trusted strengthens one's trust in another and the overall relationship and is associated with feelings of empowerment (Chiu and Chiang, 2019; Mayger and Hochbein, 2021).	√ Articulated 'felt trust' where individual expresses they are trusted by another √ Considered risk taking in relationship e.g., confident to make decisions that may impact on the relationship or interaction
'I willingly make time for this relationship, or invest in it in other ways'	Trust requires investment from both parties to be built and sustained. Time is a resource critical to trust (Gallagher et al., 2020), while the exchange or sharing of other resources is also instrumental (Coyle-Shapiro and Diehl, 2018).	√ A record of shared interactions with each other in various scenarios e.g., social meet ups, joint contribution to community or work related initiatives. √ Resource (e.g., time, money, IP) sharing √ An articulated sense of union around some issue or activity e.g., 'we statements' rather than 'I statements'
'I feel our relationship is valued'	Related to the reciprocal nature of felt trust and relationship resource investment, trust is enabled and maintained when individuals feel that the relationship is valued by the other party, via for example explicit expressions or behavioural signals of commitment (Korsgaard, 2018).	√ Acts of commitment are reported √ Partner is responsive to the other's needs √ Person considers the other to be a reliable partner with a desire to maintain the relationship

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Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR), Coventry University

Drawing on a strong track record of research in integrated peacebuilding, trust and social and community relations, the Centre exemplifies Coventry University's long-standing commitment to research that makes a strong impact on society and on the security and quality of life of ordinary people worldwide.

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations is distinctive both in terms of the research undertaken and the approaches used. It is a truly multi-disciplinary Centre and by drawing from academic disciplines, knowledge and skills across the social sciences and beyond, we tackle many of the most critical and sensitive contemporary challenges facing society. Our reputation for working holistically and unfettered by disciplinary boundaries has already attracted world-leading scholars to visit and establish collaborations.

The multi-disciplinary nature of our research is captured in our seven research themes: Migration, Displacement and Belonging; Security and Resilience; Peace and Conflict; Governance, Leadership and Trust; Inclusion, Equality and Sustainability; Faith and Peaceful Relations; and Social Movements and Contentious Politics. Many of our high-calibre research projects span multiple research themes and contribute to an interdisciplinary research environment with collaboration across the Centre and beyond.

Community Relations in Schools (CRIS)

Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) is a multi-disciplinary, education charity specifically established to support and promote greater sharing, understanding and reconciliation for all. We work with all ages and backgrounds across both formal and informal settings promoting the unique location and potential of the whole school community to become agents of grassroots peacebuilding.

CRIS Mission:
'To inspire and equip whole school communities as powerful catalysts for peace and reconciliation'

CRIS Vision:
An inclusive and dynamic society, built on respect and trust, where all children and young people can reach their true potential.

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