

## TOOLS FOR DISCERNING ACTION

*'Reimagining racism, sectarianism and capitalism.'*

This is an invitation to take steps to participate, think and act in creating a better more inclusive society.

The menu below provides help for thinking about actions you might take. These actions will help to end racism and sectarianism and to change the way the current economic system works.

The checklist of actions is primarily designed for white middle class people. They are the people who have a key role to play in the current circumstances. It is based on and adapted from the experience of CRAIC, Emma Dabiri and lots of other people who are already taking action.

### **SUMMARY**

**(R.E.S.T.T)** (Reflective Evaluation for Socially Turbulent Times)



to **ACTION.**

The following ideas for getting started concentrate on Racism. This is not intended to exclude action in other areas; there is a lot to be done. Rather it illustrates how racism is currently a key leverage point. That is, taking action here will lead to action in other spheres of society.

The concept for the suggested actions borrows from physical exercise classes. Couch to 5K programmes take you from a zero-starting point to where you can easily jog 5K.

**You can also challenge yourself to take the actions suggested (for 21 to 45 days) to allow a good habit to form.**

In summary, a key starting point is to be more self-aware. It can be particularly useful to check if you have unconscious biases. An important tip is not to be too precious or politically correct not to learn. Learn to ask questions and keep asking. Then begin to live your action. That is, put it into practice with your friends' teams and organisations and continue to learn.

## INTRODUCTION

### **1. The United Nations (UN) says that racism: -**

*“... harms not just the lives of those who endure it but also society as a whole. It deepens mistrust, casting suspicion on all sides and tearing apart the social fabric.*

*Like COVID-19, racism and xenophobia are contagious killers. We need to come together and continue working for the common good”.*

What follows are a sample of the many things that anyone can do to get started in thinking and acting to create a better world for us all.

As an example of an initial step the UN provides a simple 10 question *‘test yourself’* quiz. You can find this at the link below. This is a good way to help you understand what may be your personal starting point.

<https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/test-yourself/what-do-you-know>

### **2. Another simple action that can set your foundation to start is to listen to an inspiring song.**

For example, *‘Rise Up’* by Andra Day from the album, *‘Cheers To The Fall’*. You can hear the song at the link below. The lyrics are in **appendix A**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iwgr IMeEgA>

## THREE CATEGORIES OF ACTIONS

There are 3 broad categories of action included here in this document: -

1. Simple, immediate personal actions.
2. More in-depth personal actions.
3. Direct community based action.

1. Simple, immediate personal actions.

✓ **Sign the Collaboration for Change declaration.**

- **An immediate, simple and useful action is to sign the CfC ‘Declaration for The Common Good’. You can follow the link below. A summary of this states:**

*“We find ourselves at a moment in time when the systems we use to govern, sustain and organise the world no longer support what is best for people or our planet. Small collective actions by the many have the capacity to create the change that builds a more peaceful, just and resilient society.”*

**<https://www.cfctogether.org/declaration>**

✓ **Read a book.**

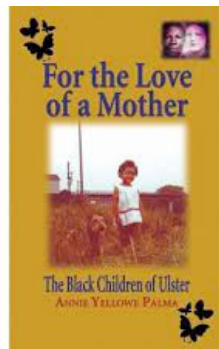
There are lots of good books that help you understand and deal with Racism. (Also you could make a point to read books by black people and not just books about anti-racism.)

The link below to Oxfam contains 25 suggestions for reading.

<https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/tools-to-begin-your-journey-towards-anti-racism/>

Here are some of our recommendations:

- What white people can do next? - Emma Dabiri.
- For the Love of a Mother (The Black Children of Ulster). - Annie Yellowe Palma.

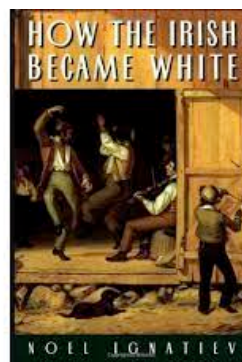


- Annie brings both to life in a lived experience. She demonstrates the impact of racism and sectarianism on her life.

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/love-mother-black-children-Ulster/dp/1909465569/ref=asc\\_df\\_1909465569/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=311043828655&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=11363033919410289348&hvp](https://www.amazon.co.uk/love-mother-black-children-Ulster/dp/1909465569/ref=asc_df_1909465569/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=311043828655&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=11363033919410289348&hvp)

[one=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmidl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9045205&hvtargid=pla-587620601678&psc=1&th=1&psc=1](#)

- Critical race theory and inequality in the labour market. – Eburn Joseph.
- How the Irish Became White.



This book by Noel Ignatiev tells the story of how the oppressed became the oppressors; how the new Irish immigrants in the US achieved acceptance among an initially hostile population only by proving that they could be more brutal in their oppression of African Americans than the nativists.

Noel exposes some interesting truths about how the Irish used labor unions, the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party to help gain and secure their newly found place in the White Republic.

He uncovers the roots of conflict between Irish-Americans & African-Americans & draws a powerful connection between the embracing of white supremacy & Irish "success" in 19th century American society.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Irish-Became-White-Routledge-Classics/dp/0415963095>

➤ **Where Are You Really From?**

Tim Brannigan's extraordinary story of growing up '*black*' in Belfast. Tim lived at the centre of a vicious and prolonged bloody conflict. It is a story of racial prejudice, sectarian tensions and family secrets, and describes in vivid detail Tim's childhood during the turbulent 1970s and 80s.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Where-Are-You-Really-extraordinary/dp/0856408530>

✓ **There are also lots of other good information resources. There are some examples below.**

➤ **A three-minute interview with Toni Morrison.**

Toni asks, what are you without racism? Toni describes, the psychological damage in the 'ism' perpetrator and the subsequent impact on society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2txzMkT5Pc>

➤ **The 1619 project.**

A powerful collection of essays, poetry, fiction, photos, which you can download here

<https://collectionbooks.net/pdf/the-1619-project>

One essay that stands out is Progress by the NYT journalist who started the project.

Here Nikole Hannah-Jones debunks the myth that things have been and continue to get better.

Progress shows how at every point in US history where progressive laws were passed the lives of black people got worse. That is with the embedding of practices ensuring discriminatory access to work, land, housing, education, healthcare, justice.

Listen to talks and podcasts:

### **Susan McEwen: Sustainably Conscious – Join the Coalition**

<https://youtu.be/OY33C1QW67M>

Drawing on her experience in peace-building and reflecting on some of the thinking that has emerged following Black Lives Matters, Susan will introduce the idea of a coalition for conscious sustainable living. Susan McEwen is one of the owners of Yoga and Refill Quarter. Located first in East Belfast, they have recently opened a second combined store on the Lisburn Road bringing a new concept in conscious living to Belfast. Susan has always been involved in nurturing intentional community and worked for many years locally and internationally in peace building initiatives. She brought together people with apparently different and sometimes opposing agendas to explore how they could combine their energy, creating and supporting a vision which everyone felt they could share. This same passion is focussed now to support conscious and sustainable living.

### **Eileen Chan-Hu: Gai Waak: Made in Belfast. Made with Purpose.**

<https://youtu.be/SWPbURLsy90>

Eileen Chan-Hu in her talk explores the concept Gai Waak (plan and purpose). She shares her diverse perspective of living and growing up as a second-generation Chinese in Northern Ireland, making a plan and discovering purpose in life. Eileen is CEO and founder of CRAICNI, an award-winning training and educational social enterprise company which prides itself in investing in diverse trainers to promote diversity. Eileen was the former CEO of Chinese Welfare Association has sat on various Boards including NICVA and the BME subgroup. She was awarded the Chinese Overseas Award in Guangzhou representing UK in 2018 for her work with the Chinese community diaspora in NI. Eileen set up the first International Organisation for Migration NI branch and today continues consultancy in labour exploitation with Robin Brierley Associates. Currently Eileen is a Trustee of New Europeans, Vice Chair of the Migrant and Minority Ethnic Council NI and on the Centenary Forum, Northern Ireland Office

## Nandi Jola: Poetry Saves Lives – The Body is the Battle of our Consciousness

<https://youtu.be/s8O AQOR0XDg>

When you are foreign to the land, one of the drills you learn is how to keep time, waking to check your phone then go back to sleep, in case something has happened, an earthquake, a flood or draught; this becomes our story, the Migrant Story. Nandi Jola, a poet and a Xhosa woman from e Gqeberha, a beautiful place in South Africa takes us on a journey. Nandi Jola is a South African born poet and writer. She is currently studying her MA in Poetry at Queens University Belfast. Nandi is a creative writing facilitator for Ulster University, Books Beyond Boundaries NI. Her debut poetry collection with Doire Press is due in the Spring/Summer of 2022. Her work includes 'The Journey ' a one-woman verse performance that opened the International Literature Festival Dublin in October 2020. She is representing Northern Ireland in Transpoesie Poetry Festival 2021 in Brussels with her poem Entomology. She is Poetry Ireland Ambiguities commissioned poet, a Jukebox which will tour Paris as part of the Centre Culturel Irlandais programme 2022.

## Shared Future News

[Shared Future News](#) is an online publication dedicated to providing news, information, and personal stories on the topics of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and diversity. We publish to an audience interested in the history and politics of Ireland and Northern Ireland. We believe that it is important to spread the news of those working for a shared future in Northern Ireland

<https://sharedfuture.news/category/podcast/wnimtm/>

This list is not exhaustive.



✓ **Form a new cultural awareness habit by: -**

➤ **Taking an unconscious bias test.**

Unconscious bias means judging someone based on their appearance. That might be their age, build, gender or so on. ITV's Tonight programme explored how we judge people on their race, whether we mean to or not.

This test, compiled by Harvard University, shows what our unconscious biases are. But it is by no means an indicator of a person's true beliefs.

To find out what your unconscious biases are [take the test here](#).

<https://www.itv.com/news/2014-12-11/how-to-take-the-unconscious-bias-test>

You can also try: -

- Listening to music, playing games; cook a different dish, watching a movie. Dance.
- Suspending judgements.
- Talking to someone from a different culture.
- Increasing the diversity in your group, team, friends, and lifestyle etc.
- A song you might like is We Are the Ones · Sweet Honey in The Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHsJHZpOJCc>

- You might also find inspiration in the 'Message from the Hopi Elders'.



We have been telling people that this is the eleventh hour, Now you must go back and tell people that this is the hour And there are things to be considered.

Where are you living? What are you doing?

What are your relationships?

Are you in right relation?

Where is your water?

Know your garden.

It's time to speak your truth.

Create your community.

Be good to each other.

And do not look outside yourself for the leader.

This could be a good time!

There is a river flowing now very fast.

It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.

They will try to hold on to the shore.

They will feel they are being torn apart and they will suffer greatly.

Know the river has its destination.

The Elders say we must let go of the shore, and push off into the river, keep our eyes open and our heads above water.

See who is in there with you and celebrate.

At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves.

For the moment we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!

Banish the word "struggle" from your attitude and your vocabulary.

All that you do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we have been waiting for...

## 2. More in-depth personal actions.

### ✓ Interrogate whiteness.

Learn about whiteness. Where does it come from, and why? There is a very good article to begin with at the link below.

<https://whiteawake.org/2018/10/27/roots-deeper-than-whiteness/>

### ✓ Stop being a silent ally.

Feel uncomfortable, educate yourself on the black experience and reach out to the communities of colour. Because, as Lilla Watson said,

*“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”*

Here are [some recommended books, podcasts and organisations](#) to begin your journey towards understanding our experience. The author *Sagal Ali* grew up in the UK and now works for Oxfam Novib in the Netherlands on the [Work in Progress Project](#).

<https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/dear-silent-ally/>

### ✓ Stop the denial.

Stop vehemently denying you are racist.

What makes you immune to centuries of socialisation?

It's a system we've been born into, of which you have no control.

What you **DO** have control over is what you **DO** next.

✓ **Stop trying to be a “good” person.**

Black people do not need your charity or your benevolence and certainly don't need your guilt.

Avoid the compulsion and trope of the white saviour.

✓ **Pull people up on racism.**

✓ **Abandon guilt.**

You are not responsible for what your ancestors did. You are however responsible for what **YOU DO**.

✓ **Finally, recognise as a person, racism is killing you too as a person.**

Systems of inequality and exploitation ultimately destroy everyone.

It's not just about calling yourself an 'ally'.

This is everyone's battle.

### 3. Direct community based action.

- ✓ Joining a local community group is probably the single most effective action.

There are lots of groups that are taking collective action to create the change that builds a more peaceful, inclusive, just and resilient society.

- ❖ You can see an example of such a group in Belfast at the link below.
- ❖ Made by the Build Homes Now campaign and Anaka Women's Collective in partnership with Belfast Film Festival 2021, this beautiful film lays out a vision for an inclusive and sustainable city. The video is about 15 minutes long.
- ❖ To share your ideas and explore the land available to help solve the housing crisis in Belfast, visit a new interactive city map now - [www.takebackthecity.ie](http://www.takebackthecity.ie)

<https://nlb.ie/video/video-2021-12-home-baile>

- ✓ While in those groups look for and create opportunities to:
  - ❖ **Treat people in the way you would like to be treated.**
  - ❖ **Put yourself in *'their'* shoes.**
  - ❖ **Take time to get to know someone.**
  - ❖ **Celebrate your culture and others.**
  - ❖ **Be inclusive.**

## Sectarianism

Sectarianism is all pervasive in our society. This can sometimes be to such an extent that we do not properly see the depth of the roots. There are some tools below that will assist you in understanding sectarianism and which will help us be more inclusive.

There is a link below to a report on sectarianism which also addresses economic issues. It finds that that economic equality **across society** is much more significant than the differential between communities.

The report concludes: *“Since the Good Friday Agreement, there has been little change in the location and nature of poverty and deprivation. This has led to persistent complaints that the ‘peace dividend’ has not reached the most difficult areas.*

*Until now the links between poverty and conflict have been addressed by policy in a largely piecemeal fashion. Yet it is clearly true that poverty and the absence of any prospect of a prosperous future fuels resentment and alienation while sectarian division prevents any meaningful efforts to generate a flourishing economy by deterring investment and driving the flight of talent.*

*Connecting anti-sectarian work with action to prevent and address poverty and deprivation is critical, especially in education, health, security and planning. Policy for a shared future must have a clear economic and social dimension.”*

With the issue of sectarianism contaminating so much of society here, it is difficult to get movement on either Racism or changing the economic system without noticing the sectarian angle. Duncan Morrow’s perspective at the link below is useful in our current context of linking sectarianism with Capitalism.

<https://scopeni.nicva.org/article/the-trouble-with-sectarianism>

This is a link to the report, a review of Northern Ireland. It is written to come to terms with the phenomenon of ‘*sectarian divisiveness*’ as it exists here today, in a spirit of hope and creativity.

Above all, it is designed to move past simply '*understanding the problem*' and instead to suggest positive and practical means whereby real progress might be made in bringing the issue of sectarianism here to successful resolution through reconciliation. The link directly below takes you directly to the report.

[https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/410227/A-Review-Addressing-Sectarianism-in-Northern-Ireland_FINAL.pdf)

In research commissioned by the Equality Coalition, the report's author Dr Robbie McVeigh found that disparities still exist between Protestants and Catholics.

He says that sectarianism "remains institutionalised across Northern Ireland" despite significant improvements in housing, education and the job market, a new report has found.

He raised serious concerns about several disparities, particularly within the demographic make-up of the PSNI.

Dr McVeigh said Northern Ireland is no longer characterised by a Protestant majority and Catholic minority but is now made up of "three minorities" - Protestant, Catholic and a growing number of people who identify as neither. You can find a short summary of the report here.

<https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2020/02/18/news/sectarianism-remains-institutionalised-across-the-north-report-finds-1845125/>

In her six-minute video SIS (School of International Service, AU) professor and senior associate dean, **Carolyn Gallaher** discusses the deep-rooted tensions in Northern Ireland and the recent escalation of unrest and violence on the streets.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEYAT2A\\_dmU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEYAT2A_dmU)

There are also 10 publications available on the Community Relations Council website.

[https://www.community-relations.org.uk/publications?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=Sectarianism&action=search](https://www.community-relations.org.uk/publications?search_api_views_fulltext=Sectarianism&action=search)

### ❖ Interrogating capitalism.

Exploitation and inequality are the operating logic of capitalism, in such an environment not only will racism flourish, but it will also remain a prerequisite. Dr. Jason Hickel<sup>1</sup> defines the economy as: -

*“..ultimately our material relationship with each other and with the rest of the living world. We have to decide whether we want that relationship to be based on extraction and exploitation or on reciprocity and care”.*

The link below is to an hour long debate on economics. As the wealth gap widens and natural resources shrink, it's time to rethink the limits of capitalism & economic growth. Author Jason Hickel, political analyst Anand Giridharadas and former President of Mauritius Ameenah Gurib-Fakim join Doha Debates for a critical conversation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPpLWf2df3Y>

### ❖ Redistributing resources.

Vote for representatives committed to tackling inequality. Redistributing resources may depend on your personal and professional environment, such as mentorship.

Examine your own context and see how redistribution of resources can function within that. People are already thinking about and have begun experiments in new ways to organise ourselves as a society.

Community Wealth Building is an example. People realise change is happening and needed when, five million people<sup>2</sup> became millionaires in 2020 despite the economic damage from the Covid pandemic. The wealth increase of 10<sup>3</sup> men during the pandemic could buy vaccines for all the other people in the world who need them.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jason Hickel is an economic anthropologist, author, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is a Visiting Senior Fellow at the International Inequalities Institute at the London School of Economics, and Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. Jason's research focuses on global inequality, political economy, post-development, and ecological economics, which are the subjects of his two most recent books: *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and its Solutions* (Penguin, 2017), and *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* (Penguin, 2020).

<sup>2</sup><https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57575077>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-55793575>



This is a good time to rethink the nature of relationships between identity groups and with each other as a whole society. You can begin by asking questions like, what would a society look like that was operating on the absolute best picture of what relationships could be? How can we begin to move towards this?

Any *ism*, (e.g., Racism, Sectarianism, Capitalism, Sexism, etc.), can best be understood by looking at it together with the other *isms*. This way we get to see the mechanisms and models, how it works and what you can do about it.

Mary McManus has worked in the Welfare Rights Advice sector in Belfast for over 20 years. In 2020, she completed master's research at Queen's, which looked at the anti-poverty potential of Community Wealth Building, comparing Belfast City Council's economic strategy with that of North Ayrshire and Preston.

Mary is interested in social justice and alternative economics. She is actively engaged in raising awareness of and promoting Community Wealth Building as a means to build back fairer and greener post pandemic. You can read more about her research at the link below.

<http://qpol.qub.ac.uk/community-wealth-building-belfasts-missed-opportunity/>

In the video link below Mary is joined by Professor John Barry from Queen's University Belfast to discuss community wealth building as an alternative approach to local economic development.

<https://www.nvtv.co.uk/shows/belfast-unfiltered-february-17th-2021-community-wealth-building/>

Doing something is better than doing nothing. Part of doing something is doing anything that helps demystify economics.

At the link below you can hear Economist Tony Weekes talk to Noel McGuinness about the wider public benefit of understanding economics.

He says that in a true democracy everyone should feel they have some control over the economy and how it affects them. We need to know what '*the economy*' is and how it can and has been changed.

<https://nearfm.ie/podcast/tag/tony-weekes/>

Community Wealth Building ensures that more equal distribution and ownership of the wealth already in a place is wired into the design of the local economy.

In the current economic climate, we need to build local wealth and keep that wealth circulating in Northern Ireland; ensuring that our collective wealth stays here, to be used in our interests and the interests of our region. A mutual bank for Northern Ireland is essential and complimentary to the CWB approach.

<https://www.adviceni.net/sites/default/files/2022-02/Community-wealth-building-report.pdf>

For more information about these areas and for training in diversity, equality and inclusion, contact us at CRAICNI:

Email: [info@craicni.com](mailto:info@craicni.com)

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram: CRAICNI

**APPENDIX A**

"Rise Up" by Andra Day

You're broken down and tired  
Of living life on a merry go round  
And you can't find the fighter  
But I see it in you so we gonna walk it out  
And move mountains  
We gonna walk it out  
And move mountains

And I'll rise up  
I'll rise like the day  
I'll rise up  
I'll rise unafraid  
I'll rise up  
And I'll do it a thousand times again  
And I'll rise up  
High like the waves  
I'll rise up  
In spite of the ache  
I'll rise up  
And I'll do it a thousand times again  
For you (4x)

When the silence isn't quiet  
And it feels like it's getting hard to breathe  
And I know you feel like dying  
But I promise we'll take the world to its feet  
And move mountains  
Bring it to its feet  
And move mountains

**CHORUS**

All we need, all we need is hope  
And for that we have each other  
And for that we have each other  
And we will rise  
We will rise  
We'll rise, oh, oh  
We'll rise