

# An interim evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme

June 2012



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The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND



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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Sharing in Education Programme was set up to support the strategic objectives of the International Fund for Ireland<sup>1</sup> (IFI) by providing funding for projects that enable young people<sup>2</sup> to participate in shared education. Since November 2008, the IFI Liaison Team within the Department of Education (DE) has managed the programme; it 'works with providers in education, registered youth organisations and related services to support educational experiences which are shared between young people representative of the two communities.' The Sharing in Education Programme seeks to break down the barriers arising from the historic conflict in Northern Ireland by providing a range of opportunities for young people to learn together and to reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement.

1.2 The International Fund for Ireland has been working for many years to underpin efforts towards peace in Northern Ireland. Its work has made

a significant contribution to the development and maintenance of the infrastructure for co-operation and reconciliation across Ireland. It has invested more than £21m in this area prior to the establishment of the SiEP. The current strategic focus is to target areas of greatest need and to ensure that its work is made sustainable in the longer term. Furthermore, IFI is seeking to share the lessons, experiences and skills acquired over 20 years of peace-building in Northern Ireland, with those tackling the challenges of peace-building in other regions, thus giving something back to the international community.

1.3 The timing of the funding is opportune. Enrolments within the school population are falling and the need for rationalisation within the schools estate provides an opportunity to consider what 'sharing' means beyond just a shared space. The programme, while based on bringing the two main traditions together, widens the discussion of shared education across economic and social divides, including the transition to

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<sup>1</sup> The International Fund for Ireland is an independent international organisation set up by the British and Irish Governments in 1986. The objectives of the Fund are to: promote economic and social advance; encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland; and, support programmes and projects which aim to facilitate the sharing of educational experiences among young people on a cross-sectoral basis.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this report the term 'learner' is used to define the participant in the project whether they are a child, pupil, young person, teacher or staff member or parent.

post-primary education. The work of the projects can build potentially on the curriculum by developing further the cross-curricular skills and capabilities and prepare the learners to develop effectively as individuals, contributors to society, the economy and the environment.

1.4 The Sharing in Education Programme complements fully the work to promote peace and reconciliation which DE has carried out for more than 25 years through such initiatives as the Cross-Community Contact Scheme. The programme encompasses pre-school, primary, post-primary and special education; the promotion of community relations within and between schools; and teacher education. With funding of almost £17 million, it supports 22 projects<sup>3</sup> which aim to facilitate reconciliation for a shared future through the medium of education in order to:

- promote shared education by linking schools representative of the two communities;

- build on community relations within and between schools;
- support cultural outreach amongst young people representative of the differing communities/traditions; and
- address strategic gaps in achieving reconciliation through a cross-community, cross-border approach through education and the related services sector.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Remit of the report

2.1 This interim evaluation report is intended to help guide the work of the projects at this interim stage as the projects plan to sustain and embed the work of reconciliation through shared education beyond the funding provided by IFI. The report recognises the existence of a range of definitions, interpretations and approaches to shared education within Northern Ireland. In essence the differing and

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the 19 projects which the Education and Training Inspectorate are evaluating, three others are subject to a separate evaluation under the auspices of the Shared Education Learning Forum (SELF) group. They are Queen's University Belfast for the Shared Education Programme, the Fermanagh Trust Sharing Education Trust and the North-Eastern Education and Library Board for the Primary Integrating/Enriching Education Project.

<sup>4</sup> In November 2012, DE produced a Strategy for Delivery document for the Sharing in Education Programme. The purpose was to identify strategic gaps and areas where a more targeted intervention would be beneficial in meeting the Fund's strategic aims and objectives. The following were identified: The Revised Curriculum including the priorities of Literacy & Numeracy, the Entitlement Framework/Area Learning Communities, School Leadership and Boards of Governors Non teaching/support staff, Education Other than at School, Looked after Children, Young Offenders, Extended Schools and School Councils.

acceptable definitions are part of the purpose of the overall programme. These differing perspectives reflect the contexts and the starting points of each project and the range of learners involved.

2.2 Throughout the evaluation, the work of each of the projects in promoting shared education is evaluated within the context of the individual project's aims as identified in their initial bid for funding. Indeed throughout the whole process, the facilitators, project managers, departmental officials and members of the inspection team are engaged in shared education on many levels to enhance their own learning of emerging good practice. In this respect there is already a legacy of the programme which will enhance the debate on shared education.

2.3 The interim evaluation report recognises the complexities of promoting shared education experiences within the context of restricted resources. The work of the projects is commendable as a result of their clear focus on the development of skills, attitudes and dispositions acquired by the learners through shared education. The personnel involved have themselves had to consider their attitudes towards prejudices and stereotypes, and to face their own fears of the unknown

in embarking on the promotion of shared education. It also recognises that in being prepared to 'share', the participants have been willing to 'lose' on some things. In extending the work further, it will require a new way of thinking to remove key structural barriers within the education sector.

### 3. Context of the projects

3.1 In reaching a composite evaluation, the inspection team has taken account of the individual contexts and the different starting points of each project. Given the wide variation in the contexts of projects, the reader should not make direct comparisons across them.

3.2 Due to the lateness of appointments of staff, some of the projects are still at an early stage of development, whilst others are at a more developed stage. Some of the projects focus entirely on the shared education experiences of the children, pupils and young people, whereas others focus on the training of teachers to promote effective shared education experiences. There is also variation in the level of funding reflecting the differing size and scope of the projects. More details of the allocations of funding are in Appendix 1.

3.3 Issues have emerged with regard to the recruitment of organisations to the projects given the time constraint of the funding and the competing range of initiatives facing schools. Furthermore, while one of the projects is working with area learning communities (ALCs), the Further Education (FE) sector is not the key focus of any of the projects.

3.4 It is also important to recognise the educational context in which these projects operate and the legacy of a divided society. For example, the existence of separate teacher training colleges and the exemption of the teaching profession from the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 limits the development of shared education amongst teachers. In addition, there is not a joined-up approach to shared education across the government departments.

3.5 During the evaluation, the projects raised the following as potential barriers to the development of their work:

- the lack of time, training and space for teachers to reflect on their own perspectives and feelings;
- the short-term nature of the funding of the projects, including the associated bureaucracy and

the challenge of recruiting schools within constrained time limits;

- the physical distance between schools; and
- the structures of governance within education that continue to reflect the divided society of Northern Ireland.

## 4. Methodology

4.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) were commissioned to carry out an evaluation of 19 of the 22 projects. An initial oral report in September 2011 identified strengths such as: the strong commitment from project leaders and staff to the aims of their projects and the overall aims of the programme; the examples of good communication and comprehensive written information with the few participating organisations which had already begun their work; the strong and positive working relationships between the facilitators and the learners and their teachers; the positive engagement of the learners and their enthusiasm to participate and work with others; and the good or better teaching in the small sample of sessions (10) observed.

- 4.2 The areas identified for improvement included:
- a planned and progressive move from single identity work to a more shared approach to education;
  - the building of capacity amongst the teachers and other staff to sustain the work of the various projects and to deal with more contentious issues; and
  - the planning for sustaining the outcomes of, and learning from, the project beyond its lifetime to the benefit of the learners.
- 4.3 Between January and April 2012, a team of 23 inspectors conducted evaluations of the 19 projects. The interim findings have been reported back in detail to the leadership of each project. A summary of the main findings for each project forms the second part of this report.
- 4.4 During the visits, the inspectors:
- scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the initial funding bids, the progress reports sent by the projects to the IFI Liaison Team within DE, the planning for the individual sessions and the evaluations made by the project leaders, where available;
  - talked, where possible, to principals, teachers, support staff, parents, governors and learners;
  - observed lessons and training sessions;
  - attended training days and conferences hosted by the projects, including a major conference organised by the IFI Liaison Team within DE;
  - held discussions with stakeholders across the educational community;
  - researched the online representation of the projects; and
  - evaluated the quality of the resource materials.
- 4.5 The Inspectors evaluated the work of the individual projects under the three key areas which ETI uses corporately to formulate lines of enquiry in evaluating any educational provision namely; quality of leadership and management; quality of provision for learning; and achievements and standards of learners. Using criterion referenced indicators each section is then evaluated against six performance levels ranging from outstanding to unsatisfactory.

4.6 In developing its evaluation work for this programme, ETI shared its quality indicators with the projects to enable them and the receiving organisations to develop further their capacity for self-evaluation linked to continuous improvement and sustainability. As organisations provide ongoing feedback, these indicators will be adjusted further to customise them as a comprehensive internal self-evaluation tool for organisations involved in reconciliation work beyond the life of this particular programme.

### 5. Summary of Key Findings in June 2012

#### 5.1 *The overall programme*

**The Sharing in Education Programme is making good progress; learners, of all ages, are benefiting from the programme.**

5.1.1 Through the significant funding by IFI, the projects have been able to engage in more in-depth learning with sensitive and controversial issues around peace and reconciliation at a greater pace than would have been possible without that funding. Taking into consideration the advice from the IFI Liaison Team within DE on the applications, and measuring

carefully the possible risks within some of the projects, the IFI-funded programme has encouraged a range of projects to explore new ways of developing shared education. The varied projects allow the learners to explore their own values and beliefs, to learn about the values and beliefs of their counterparts and to consider the principles of inclusive shared education.

5.1.2 A significant strength of the programme is the level of cross-sectoral representation across the formal education sector and including, in one instance, a project in the non-formal sector. There are projects in early years through primary and post-primary education, to initial teacher training and continuous professional development.

5.1.3 At this interim stage of the evaluation, almost all of the projects are working at the expected level at this stage of the programme. A minority of the projects are performing at a better level than expected.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of the interim evaluation report, the conclusion for each of the project reports states whether the project is working at above the level expected, at the level expected or below the level expected.

5.2 *The leadership and management of the programme*

The IFI Liaison Team within DE is providing effective leadership and management.

5.2.1 At all stages of the programme, from the initial applications for funding through to the present, the IFI Liaison Team within DE has managed the selection and monitoring of the projects to match the aims of IFI and to benefit the wide range of learners and their educational improvement. Through regular monitoring reports and accountability meetings, the IFI Liaison Team within DE works flexibly with the leadership of the projects to achieve an acceptable balance between being creative and taking risks to maximise the learning about shared education.

5.2.2 In addition, the IFI Liaison Team within DE has prioritised the need for the projects, and the organisations with which they work, to show clearly how their work can be sustained when the funding comes to an end. The team is reviewing the progress reports from the projects so that they state clearly an evaluation of the progress made in promoting reconciliation through shared education, informed by more rigorous and systematic methods

of quality assurance, including qualitative and quantitative evidence.

5.2.3 The team has been proactive in encouraging collaboration between the projects, including the sharing of resources and expertise without duplication of funding. For example, it has established the Teacher Education Forum which provides opportunities for the projects involved in teacher education to discuss good practice and how to make connections across their work.

5.2.4 As several of the projects involve organisations beyond the formal schools sector, the IFI Liaison Team within DE should continue to increase the collaboration across the projects. In particular as the work involves ALCs, the greater strategic involvement of the ALCs would establish a more effective understanding of the concept and of the practicalities of sharing within and beyond the classroom. Links with the Department of Employment and Learning would promote shared education with the colleges of further education represented within the work of several of the projects.

5.2.5 The team employed to implement and oversee the project is open-minded in its approach and continues to develop an understanding of the programme

and its potential. As the programme has progressed there have been obvious links between projects which the IFI Liaison Team within DE has encouraged the various partners to explore. There are a number of schools which have more than one project running; the evidence is that it is rare for the projects to link together or for the school to review how the projects might work together to the benefit of the learners. Management at all levels needs to consider how to link the shared education projects with other improvement initiatives in order to build more effective communication and mutual understanding within and beyond the classroom.

### 5.3 *The leadership and management of the projects*

The leadership and management of most of the projects are good or better.

5.3.1 The more successful projects have a clear rationale for their work. They articulate clearly to the team and to the schools their vision, how it promotes shared education and how it links to the overall aims of the programme and the main aims of IFI. In a few instances, there are developing links with other shared

education projects to inform their own learning and to benefit the learners.

5.3.2 Where projects have recruited and trained key personnel who understand the remit of the particular project, they effect improvement through careful planning which matches the work to the particular needs of the participating schools. The thoughtful and well-informed facilitators work effectively in a cohesive manner to perform their varying roles, using their skills to provide effective support for the learners.

5.3.3 A few of the projects have begun to explore how they might work together and learn from each other. As the process develops the projects will benefit from the sharing of good practice and in reflecting on how to bring about further improvement in the interest of the learners. For example, given the development of the range of good age-appropriate resources, it is timely to share and learn from each other which resources work best with particular age groups and stages of learning.

5.3.4 The majority of the projects have assessed sufficiently the needs of the organisations with which they work. They respond appropriately and flexibly to the needs of the

participating organisations in order to meet their needs effectively and to challenge their thinking about shared education.

#### 5.4 *The quality of provision for learning*

In most of the projects, the quality of the provision for learners is good or better. The learners understand the purpose and rationale of the project and there are clear links with the aims of shared education.

5.4.1 In good quality planning, the projects use **effective base-lining exercises to assess the stage of understanding of the schools and the learners.** They analyse the information carefully to effect improvements in the development of the projects and in the work with individual organisations. The post-briefing sessions with the teachers and learners inform future planning, for example, the greater involvement of parents and the wider community.

5.4.2 The planned sessions have **clear learning outcomes and associated success criteria which are focused sharply on promoting shared education.** The learning outcomes are linked appropriately to the specific underpinning knowledge, skills and behaviours identified for development.

5.4.3 All of the projects create a **safe space where there is mutual trust.** The learners enjoy being together and talk openly about sensitive and personal issues. As a result of the positive ethos, excellent working relationships and mutual respect between the facilitators and learners, the discussions are open and frank. The facilitators provide very good pastoral care for the learners and involve everyone at his or her stage of understanding and learning. They have an appropriate understanding that teachers need to model the learning process when dealing with sensitive and controversial issues.

5.4.4 The effective methodologies include **an appropriate balance of activities, discussion and reflection to engage the learners actively,** to meet their individual needs and to progress their thinking. The resource materials are challenging and thought-provoking, and, in the best practice, include the development of case study examples, as part of the legacy arrangements for when the programme will finish.

5.4.5 The facilitators recognise and celebrate the success of the learners. They **respond sensitively and appropriately to the questions, discussions, debates and reflections of the learners,** and use these responses to inform more in-depth

learning. They give the learners opportunities to discuss their learning and practice and to apply it to a context which is relevant to them and their communities.

### 5.5 *Achievements and standards*

**In most of the projects, the achievements and standards attained by the learners are good.**

5.5.1 The learners, of all ages, display a sense of enjoyment and participate enthusiastically in the projects. They work well and learn together as they share views and opinions with growing confidence. They **explore their personal attitudes, values and beliefs through the shared education experiences**, including how to make judgements based on evidence.

5.5.2 The learners benefit from the opportunities to talk about their personal beliefs and feelings; they listen to the thoughts and aspirations of others; and they **develop a greater understanding of the shared and differing beliefs of their counterparts**. They develop and demonstrate high levels of maturity, respect and confidence; and they are beginning to think critically and creatively about the practical implications of shared education.

5.5.3 **The learners demonstrate positive and discernible changes in their views** and express their learning in a range of creative ways. They offer thoughtful opinions and demonstrate a good understanding of social, political and cultural issues relating to stereotyping, culture, sectarianism, inclusion and reconciliation. They discuss in depth their thoughts on complex problems facing them and their community.

5.5.4 In the best but less frequent practice, the learners transfer their learning into other curriculum areas in the school or within the home environment; they achieve the targets that they set for themselves. They **recognise and articulate well their improved interpersonal, communication and employability skills**. Where appropriate, they attain external accreditation with an opportunity to progress to the next level.

## 6. *Next steps to embed the learning and sustain the work of the programme*

6.1 **All of the projects have worked hard to reach the present stage of development within the overall programme**. Most of them have worked effectively with the participating organisations to have

- a shared understanding of the remit of the particular project, how it links to the overall Sharing in Education Programme, and to begin the learning process.
- 6.2 The projects and the participating organisations need to plan more strategically to embed the emerging learning from shared education in the life and work of their organisations. For example, **not all of the schools make sufficient use of the development planning process** to include the whole school community, including parents, governors and the wider community in contributing to the project's aims. They need to draw out the lessons learned and the ways of developing further the ownership of shared education at all levels through the school.
- 6.3 Given the time limitations on the funding, **all of the projects need to reflect on their programmes and to plan to progress the learning in the participating organisations from single identity to shared education experiences.** This needs to include a demonstrable increase in the number of shared classes and an emphasis on the opportunities for the learners to learn together.
- 6.4 As part of the sharing and learning process, the facilitators need to reflect on their learning and on what has gone well in order to continue to develop their skills and expertise. **The learning outcomes need to provide progressive challenge for the learners in the final year, including increasing the pace of change** to maximise the value for money as a result of the significant funding by IFI.
- 6.5 There is a variation in the quality assurance processes used across the projects. They use a range of strategies to assess the effectiveness of their work and to inform future planning. They need to **develop and use rigorous and systematic processes which will provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence** to identify and disseminate in a systematic way, effective practice in the management of the programme, in the quality of teaching and learning and in the development of shared education models.
- 6.6 The IFI Liaison Team within DE should continue to support and follow up on the areas for improvement identified in this interim evaluation with the individual projects.



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## PART TWO: THE EVALUATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

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A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	more than 90%
Most	75%-90%
A majority	50%-74%
A significant minority	30%-49%
A minority	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six performance levels as set out below.

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

The following reports on the individual projects are based on the evidence available at the time of the interim evaluation. The final evaluation of each project and their collective impact will reflect the outcomes of the projects on completion and provide a clear evaluation of the overall progress achieved toward meeting the stated aims of the Sharing in Education Programme. In this endeavour, the final report will signal the key factors and actions which have the potential to lead to sustainable reconciliation as a guide to inform and influence further similar actions across schools and organisations.

## The Evaluation of the Belfast Old Firm Alliance Project

### Belfast Community Sports Development Network

#### *Context*

The project receives £271,000.

Project start date: February 2010  
Project end date: November 2012

The project aims to develop good relations through sport for children and young people living in interface areas and divided communities across greater Belfast. It includes primary schools and community partners from across Belfast with coaches provided by the Glasgow 'Old Firm' football clubs of Rangers and Celtic.

The project has engaged 1,120 children and young people in 30 schools and 28 youth/football clubs. In formal and non-formal educational settings, the learners meet and learn together, and form friendships across the sectarian divide, particularly in interface communities. The project provides a safe and supportive environment in which to further community relations and help to foster peace and reconciliation.

#### *Leadership and management*

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The director of the project provides very good leadership; articulating a sound vision for sharing in education and engages very effectively with the schools and community groups in the promotion of the project's aims.

The leadership and management of the programme at individual school level is underdeveloped; only approximately one-fifth of the 40 participating schools are working in partnership to extend the programme into the life and work of the school.

#### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The staff facilitate the workshops effectively within a safe and secure environment that encourages those from both communities to articulate their opinions, feelings and emotions about issues around sectarianism in sport and in communities.

The coaching sessions observed were delivered to a high standard and took good account of the skill and ability levels of all of the learners. The planning, coaching and learning have developed appropriately in helping the learners to form friendships and to gain a better understanding of the values and identities held by their peers from a different community.

The staff use the symbols of the Celtic and Rangers football clubs well to develop discussion and debate among the learners. They link the learning effectively to issues relating to sectarianism within the learners' own communities.

#### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is satisfactory.

The learners respond positively and enthusiastically to both the sports and discussion elements of the project. Their active participation leads to a good level of reflection and debate. In the sessions observed, the learners shared their opinions and feelings in an open manner; they engaged well with each other sharing values and their perceptions about the 'other' community.

The area for improvement is:

- the further involvement of the teachers and management of the schools to work towards sustaining the good work of the project.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.



## The Evaluation of the Building New Communities through Positive Parenting and Reconciliation Project

### South-Eastern Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives €980,000.

Project start date: 1 May 2011  
Project end date: 31 December 2013

The project is a shared initiative of the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) led by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB). It targets schools in areas of social need and interface areas to deliver a highly-structured parenting and reconciliation programme to the parents of pre-school children. Participating schools are paired on a cross-community basis and the project will eventually encompass a total of 40 schools (8 from each ELB area). The parenting aspect of the programme is based on the Incredible Years Parenting Programme. The programme lasts 14 weeks and parents will be offered the opportunity to complete an Open College Network (OCN) level 2 accreditation. The project commenced within the SEELB and Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) in June 2011; it will be rolled out during 2012-13 to the other three ELBs in phase 2.

To date 13 teachers and 13 classroom assistants have been trained in the delivery of the Incredible Years programme for parents. Eighty-four per cent (160 out of 191) of parents have completed the course successfully. Eighty-two per cent obtained the OCN level 2 accreditation.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good.

The timing of the approval of the project and the funding framework resulted in a delay in the commencement of the implementation and recruitment of staff. The constricted timetable led to insufficient consideration of the geography of the pairing of schools and insufficient preparation of the schools taking part. As a result, the project was not included in the schools' development plans. The project board are, however, aware of the factors which have adversely affected elements of the initial roll-out of phase one. They have sought to address these areas of concern for the next phase, for example, in the revised criteria for the next cohort of schools.

The project has not yet achieved its aim for inclusivity as outlined in the original bid as, to date, no integrated, voluntary pre-schools or Irish medium settings have been included in the pilot. The project team are also aware of the need to try to attract more male parents or carers.

There are clear systems in place to monitor the quality of the delivery of the Incredible Years element of the project through first-hand experience. For example, the peer coaching sessions allow the Incredible Years facilitators to reflect on, assess and improve their practice. The monitoring of the reconciliation sessions, on the other hand, relies heavily on written evaluations completed by the participants. It is also difficult to provide a fair indication of added value as the initial baseline experience of settings did not provide sufficient consideration of those participants with previous experience of reconciliation and parenting programmes.

The progress reports to the IFI Liaison Team within DE tend to focus on actions completed with little evidence provided for the evaluative comments. While a range of data is currently being gathered, there is a need to shorten the monitoring loop and to base all evaluations more firmly on first-hand evidence and observations.

The project team has planned improvements for the next phase, based on a range of sources,

including feedback from ETI and their own reflections and evaluations. They demonstrate a commitment to quality improvement at all stages.

### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

The quality of the work observed in all of the sessions observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. The facilitators have established a positive ethos within each group reflecting the excellent working relationships between them and the parents. There is a bond of trust and mutual respect which has led to some very open and honest discussions.

At the start of both the parenting and reconciliation sessions, the group leaders set clear and agreed targets and objectives for the parents. The parents complete written evaluations at the end of each session. The parents rehearse their learning in the group; they practise and apply it in their home environment; and they review their learning within the group. They share the achievements of the practical implementation of ideas through reflections on their homework at the start of the sessions.

### *Achievements and standards*

**The quality of achievements and standards is good.**

The parents participate well in paired, small group and whole-class discussions. Most are highly motivated and engaged and they express differences of opinions freely in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The parents respond effectively to their home learning with the majority completing their written tasks. Many described how they had used some of the strategies successfully. There are clear examples of improvements



in parenting skills and in the behaviours of the children with an increase in the parents' confidence as a result of implementing the strategies learned to date.

During discussion with a focus group, the parents indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the course. They articulated well the learning over the 14 weeks; they demonstrated clearly their knowledge about the theory and the practice, with reference to specific examples such as actions and consequences and proximal praise.

The parents report an increasing awareness that their peers on the other side of the community face similar parenting issues. They also reported that they would not have gone to the other community on their own but felt safe in the context of the group. Growing cross-community relationships are evident through 'text' buddies.

Most of the nursery staff have benefited from the training in the parenting and reconciliation aspects of the programme. Their participation is building the capacity in the sector to sustain the work of the project.

### **The areas for improvement are:**

- a more focused means of monitoring the success of the project based on first-hand, observed evidence; and
- the development of links with other initiatives across the five ELBs to work towards the building of capacity and sustainability beyond the life of the project.

### *Conclusion*

**At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level.** The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Change Makers Project

### Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise (NICE), Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) and Belfast YMCA

#### Context

The project receives £1,134,000.

Project start date: July 2012  
Project end date: June 2013

The Change Makers project currently engages with 10 post-primary schools in the Belfast and Lisburn area and aims to embed community relations within the culture of the participating schools in a more strategic manner. The supporting vision is for schools to develop community relations models in a holistic manner. The aim of the project is to develop the competence, confidence and capacity within teachers and learners to engage and develop understanding with those who may be commonly perceived as from another community background.

There are four main strands to the project: accredited pupil programmes; accredited teacher/staff training; non-accredited pupil programmes; and, non-accredited teacher/staff training.

To date, approximately 1,300 pupils have entered for an Open College Network NI level 1 qualification with a success rate of 85% achieving the qualification. Thirty-two teachers have achieved accreditation in community relations/reconciliation.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding.

Overall, the strategic and operational leadership of the project at all levels is outstanding. Under the highly effective leadership of the project leader, all members of the team work very effectively in a cohesive manner to perform their varying roles.



The high quality input provided by the research assistant plays a key role in quality assuring the work of the team. The leadership of the project uses the qualitative and quantitative evidence provided by the research assistant to identify

and disseminate, in a systematic way, effective practice both in the management of the project and in the development of the quality of the teaching and learning.

The well-conceived planning is linked effectively to the overall strategic aims of the project. The course evaluation sessions include a rigorous scrutiny of the teaching and inform any amendments. The individual teaching sessions observed were adapted well to the individual requirements of each of the schools.

The ongoing development of case study examples supports well the strategies for the third year of the project and forms part of the legacy arrangements beyond the life of the project. The outstanding forward thinking and planning serve well as a model of good practice for the Sharing in Education Programme in general.

### *The provision for learning*

**The provision for learning is very good.**

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to very good with a majority of the lessons being evaluated as outstanding. The detailed planning for lessons is focused clearly on expected learning outcomes and associated success criteria. The planning is linked appropriately to the specific underpinning knowledge, skills and behaviours identified for development through the Change Makers project.

The facilitators use very good open questions, which allow the learners to develop their discussions and to extend their thinking on how particular issues affect them. There is skilful management of the learning throughout the session, including the excellent opportunities for the learners to reflect on what they have learned.

The facilitators use a range of well-produced, high quality resources including information and communication technology, to engage the interest of the learners. The active learning strategies, such as the excellent use of role play, lead to an excellent quality of discussion which is skilfully and subtly managed.

### *Achievements and standards*

**The quality of achievements and standards is very good.**

The learners engage in activities and discussions which extend and change their views discernibly on, for example, stereotyping,

leadership roles, positive discrimination, inclusion and prejudice. The level of discussion and debate is of a high quality and the learners display good self-management. In discussions, the learners use appropriate language to talk about subjects which are, at times, uncomfortable for them.

The range of qualitative and quantitative data, including the analysis of lesson observations and attitudinal questionnaires provides clear evidence of very good improvement in the learners' attitudes and communication skills.

**The area for improvement is:**

- the further development of the mixed identity focus for the project, an area identified by the project and on which it is already working.

### *Conclusion*

**At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is above the expected level. The project is meeting very effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.**

## The Evaluation of the Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers Project

### Stranmillis and St Mary's University Colleges

#### Context

The project receives €839,000.

Project start date: April 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

In Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT), the two colleges provide a range of professional development courses for teachers. The courses support the development of specific curriculum areas such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and Local and Global Citizenship. They also address key issues which have risen to greater prominence in recent years in relation to diversity and inclusion.

Two courses are on offer – **Exploring Skills in CREDIT** which is suitable for teachers who feel they would like to develop basic skills in this area, and **Extending Skills in CREDIT**, a more in-depth course to embed good practice in different educational phases and sectors within Northern Ireland. The key underlying approach is to support the development of the participants' skills and confidence to deal with issues of diversity, inclusion and community cohesion

within the classroom and on a whole-school basis. A critical part of the project is to provide teachers with the opportunity to work across the educational phases so that they raise their awareness of the continuum of education which all learners experience.

Forty teachers have completed the 'Exploring Skills' course and 14 teachers have completed the 'Extending Skills' course.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

There is a clear rationale for, and progression in, the courses which are drawn up and adapted by a team of teaching staff from both universities. The teachers are given practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding, and to develop their skills through discussion, exploration and video and PowerPoint presentation. An appropriate range of experienced facilitators help to extend their theoretical knowledge and to provide practical suggestions for the classroom through an

interesting variety of learning experiences.

The teaching team makes effective use of daily verbal and written evaluations, and of regular contact through the virtual learning environment, to develop and adjust the courses, and adapt them to the

specific needs and requirements of the cohort of teachers. Many of the written evaluations indicate that the pairing of teachers in different phases of education is a successful way of working and of extending the teachers' knowledge.



### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The thorough planning allows the teachers to become an integral part of the process as they begin to help shape and direct the most beneficial way of working for them and their schools. It provides a personalised learning programme which meets effectively the differing needs and experiences of the teachers and of their schools. The teachers reported that, at times, they found the issues and tensions being dealt with challenging; they gain much from the discussions which are led skilfully by the facilitators.

The quality of the work in the sessions observed was always good or very good. There is a good balance of information-giving and active learning. The facilitators equip the teachers with ideas to support the work in their classrooms, and to work with senior leaders and other staff to begin to embed the shared education ideals throughout the school. The teachers appreciate the skilful and interesting manner in which the facilitators raise their awareness of local, regional and national politics. They feel that, as a result of these sessions, and of visits to a range of different cultural centres, their learning and teaching approaches in school will be enhanced.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is very good.

The teachers benefit greatly from their participation in the course through their increased awareness of contemporary approaches to work on mutual understanding and the acquisition of practical ideas for classroom practice. The facilitators support them well in finding approaches which can be implemented in the short- and longer-term. A

significant strength is the realistic approach to planning for their particular school and in the pairing with other schools at a similar stage of development.

The teachers take an active role in the process of discussion and debate. They are enthusiastic about presenting orally their identified way of working, and writing up their assignment, which is a requisite element of the course. Teachers reported that they were unsure about the assessment of their input or indeed the value of the tasks undertaken. They also acknowledge that the skills gained were invaluable when supporting and improving their classroom teaching.

The area for improvement is:

- the placing of the assessment of the written task within a framework of continuing professional development which enables the teachers to build up an individual portfolio reflecting their progression.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is above the expected level. The project is meeting very effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Creative Change Project – Fostering Personal Development and Mutual Understanding through Creativity

### University of Ulster, Coleraine

#### Context

The project receives £389,000.

Project start date: May 2011  
Project end date: December 2011

The Creative Change project, delivered through the School of Education in the University of Ulster at Coleraine, supports cross-community partnerships in ten primary schools in the North Coast Triangle Area, which incorporates the towns of Coleraine, Portrush and Portstewart.

The focus of the project is to support the teaching of PDMU at foundation stage in the primary schools through the development and delivery of a creatively-themed PDMU programme. It provides the participating schools with opportunities to integrate, work together and develop an understanding of, and respect for, diversity within a cross-community context.

The main strands of the project include: the development and delivery of support materials and new resources to enhance teaching and learning in PDMU at the foundation stage; a training programme facilitated by creative experts in art, drama, storytelling and music for teachers and classroom assistants in the participating schools; the involvement of parents and guardians in the learning process through cross-community workshops and

learning sessions; and, the enhancement of the teacher training experience of Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Primary students through their involvement in the project.

Eleven teachers, 13 classroom assistants, 10 principals and 40 PGCE students have been involved in the project to date along with 280 children and 388 parents.

#### *Leadership and Management*

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The project manager provides very effective strategic leadership and draws on his extensive experience in community relations, diversity and reconciliation to guide the project. The enthusiastic team has a shared vision for the implementation and development of the project. The members have clearly defined roles, work very well together and are committed to the delivery of a creative, high quality programme for learners within a cross-community context.

The clear rationale for the project has been shared successfully with the participating schools. All staff have a clear understanding of the core aims of the project, to which they are fully committed. There are very good levels of engagement between the project team, partner schools and parents. In addition, the project is research-lead which informs effectively the planning and implementation.

The project manager works closely with the research team within the School of Education to ensure that a robust system of ongoing monitoring and evaluation is in place, which informs improvement in the quality of the project.

#### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the sessions observed was very good. The project team and the facilitators create a positive, secure environment for learning. The well-planned sessions have a clear focus on intended learning outcomes and a high level of active involvement from the participants.

One of the storytelling sessions observed engaged the learners actively; they were learning from one another and developing their understanding of self-worth and difference. The parents were provided with opportunities to participate in the session and to learn with their children. The session fostered a sense of connecting; the parents, teachers and learners interacted comfortably with each other and developed relationships in an informal cross-community setting.

The facilitators used an excellent range of teaching strategies during the initial development day for teachers, including group and paired work, to engage the teachers in a frank and honest discussion about their own cultural background and traditions. The project manager led the discussion sensitively and skilfully. The explicit agenda around mutual understanding was positively and effectively developed in the session and there was a high quality of engagement, interaction and discussion amongst the teachers.

The project team has developed very good, appropriate resource materials in partnership with the teachers. The creative facilitators provide the teachers with new, practical ideas and a range of valuable approaches to support their work in the classroom.

### *Achievements and Standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The teachers and classroom assistants who participate in the creative facilitator workshops and development days display a sense of enjoyment and participate enthusiastically in the sessions. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the PDMU programme and acquire new skills and practical ideas for classroom practice.

The learners involved in the shared storytelling session engage easily and positively with their peers from their partner school and enjoy learning together. The participation of parents and guardians in the training course on storytelling helps to develop confidence and skills enabling them to be more involved in their children's learning.

The area for improvement is:

- the continuing building of capacity within the participating schools and through the greater involvement of PGCE primary students in the project.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is above the expected level. The project is meeting very effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.



## The Evaluation of the Cultural Learning and Social Skills Project

### ReachAcross

#### Context

The project receives £387,000.

Project start date: June 2010  
Project end date: May 2013

The Cultural Learning and Social Skills (CLASS) project supports learning programmes in shared education throughout primary and post-primary schools (pupils ranging in ages from 10–18) in the North-West region. It draws together some existing stand-alone interventions into a structured programme with a view to having a positive and lasting impact on community relations and social integration. The aim is to provide year-round contact opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds, isolated locations and vulnerable social circumstances and to provide positive alternatives to the various anti-social circumstances and self-harm influences in the area.

The organisation provides an annual programme of events and training to create and develop tangible cross-community reconciliation and shared learning. Three trained workers are responsible for the planning, delivery and evaluation of all aspects of the programme. There are a number of accredited courses and cross-community workshops, including professional training for the teachers of the participating schools.

One hundred and sixty-five learners have completed a level 1 accredited citizenship course. Ninety-seven learners completed an OCN level 2 course.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The project leader and two education officers plan and deliver all of the programmes, including citizenship courses and leadership courses. The planning is detailed and provides opportunities to consult with teachers as part of the process. Teachers and learners report that the sessions are stimulating and well prepared. The leaders adapt and develop aspects of the programme regularly as a result of current evaluation by all of the participants.

The team engaged honestly and rigorously in a process of quality assurance using the quality indicators set out by ETI. The self-evaluation took place mid-way through the process and helped the team to review and adapt aspects of the programme where necessary.

#### The provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The project has given a significant number of learners the opportunity to meet, discuss, and reflect on situations pertinent to them. Learners from the primary and post-primary sectors have worked successfully together.

In the carefully planned sessions the learning intentions are clear and relevant, and there are thoughtful plenary sessions for the learners to reflect on what they have heard and done. There are lively discussions on relevant, current and real topics relating to their local communities. For the older pupils in particular, there is the opportunity to discuss hard-hitting topics in a secure environment.

The leaders relate well with all the age groups and use age-appropriate strategies and materials. They deal sensitively with the learners and engage their interest. The class teachers participate alongside the leaders; they report that they often continue with the work started in the discussion groups in their classrooms.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The young people engage enthusiastically with all aspects of the programmes. In particular, the younger primary school and post-16 pupils enjoy the learning. Both groups reported the benefits of the activities in increasing their understanding of their own community and of other communities.

In the sessions observed, the learners worked well together even when differences of opinions and view were evident. All situations were dealt with in a mature and confident manner, allowing all of the learners to see things from a wider viewpoint.

The area for improvement is:

- the continuing building of the capacity within the participating schools based on the very good work begun through the project.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is above the expected level. The project is meeting very effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.



## The Evaluation of the Distinctive Voices: Collective Choices Project

### Headliners

#### Context

The project receives £230,000.

Project start date: April 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The project provides a programme for primary, post-primary and special schools, in which pupils from differing traditions learn together about their past and about ways of promoting better community relations and shared space. The main aim of the project is to support the learners in understanding better the contentious issues affecting their locality, in voicing their responses to these issues, and in exploring ways of promoting better relations. These themes are linked closely to the PDMU curriculum in primary schools and to the Local and Global Citizenship themes in post-primary schools.

The cross-curricular skills are supported well through the activities, which include extended talking and listening activities, culminating in the production of a radio programme or a short documentary video film. The project seeks to promote positive attitudes and dispositions and a key strength that emerged is the value that

the learners place on working and learning with their peers from a different religious background.

One hundred and thirty young people have been involved in the project with ten becoming ambassadors in their school. Twelve substitute teachers and four classroom assistants have completed the training.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

There is a clear rationale for the implementation of the Distinctive Voices: Collective Choices project in promoting good working relationships among the learners. The co-ordinators

understand well the aims of the Sharing in Education programme and are committed to the delivery of a good quality project. They use the organisation's strengths and expertise in media education adeptly to support the investigation of sensitive and

contentious issues.

The project is well led and has been planned with appropriate care. The schools report high levels of satisfaction with the organisation and facilitation of the project.

The co-ordinators have made a good start to surveying the views of the learners and the teachers, in order to develop further the effectiveness of the project and to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its users. This aspect of self-evaluation needs to continue.



It is appropriate that the co-ordinators are considering the planning for the legacy issues of the project carefully, in collaboration with the schools, to ensure that the good work is extended beyond the funding period. Furthermore, given the positive feedback from its users, Headliners needs to consider ways of widening the appeal of the project to allow more learners to benefit.

### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

The planning for the project is good; it has had a positive impact on the learners' knowledge, understanding and skills. The teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the work and with the facilitation skills of the Headliners team. There is, however, a need to build capacity further amongst the teachers, in order to sustain this good work further.

The appropriate range of teaching approaches engages the learners well in understanding better their local community. The project develops the learners' communication and inter-personal skills, promotes positive values and attitudes and helps them to gain a better understanding of cultural diversity.

The use of ICT and modern media technologies allows the learners to express their views and to exhibit their work. The learners use the technologies with enthusiasm and one school reported looking into the possibility of developing a radio studio in order to continue this work. The learners appreciate the friendly and positive approach of the facilitators and the very good working relationships.

### *Achievements and standards*

**The quality of achievements and standards is good.**

The learners benefit from practical activities that enable them to explore and respond to

issues of conflict which relate closely to their local community. They value learning about the viewpoints of others and how to respond in a thoughtful and more informed way. The teachers reported that the facilitators handled this learning in an appropriate, safe and sensitive manner.

The learners demonstrate high levels of mutual respect and confidence, and the ability to think critically and creatively. They express their opinions in a measured way using appropriate vocabulary which demonstrates a good understanding of the sensitive issues they have explored. They also learn more about themselves, their past and their communities. In discussions, all of the learners expressed their enthusiasm for working alongside those from other traditions to develop a mutual understanding.

**The areas for improvement are:**

- the further integration of the educational benefits of the project across the curriculum; and
- an increase in the uptake of the project across a wider range of schools.

### *Conclusion*

**At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.**

## An Evaluation of the 'Facing our History, Shaping the Future' Project

### The Corrymeela Community

#### Context

The project receives €354,000.

Project start date: June 2010  
Project end date: August 2013

The project provides learning programmes for teachers, student teachers and young people in dealing with sensitive and contentious issues in history. A key aim of the project is to equip teachers and student teachers with the skills and strategies to deal with such matters in the classroom and to provide opportunities for learners to explore them in a safe environment.

A full-time co-ordinator is supported in the delivery of the learning programmes by experienced Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) staff and by local personnel who are familiar with these approaches. The co-ordinator also provides some school-based support for teachers.

The project is centred on an investigation of the events that led to the Holocaust, together with an exploration of more recent examples of prejudice and discrimination. There is a structured approach to learning how to deal with indifference and participation, with a range of strategies to engage learners in formal and informal settings.

The project supports key aspects of the delivery of the statutory history entitlement, including the requirement to explore the causes and consequences of partition, and of Local and Global Citizenship and Personal Development.

It also aims to work directly with young people to facilitate face-to-face contact and dialogue with others from a different community.

Ninety-seven teachers and 66 student teachers have completed training workshops. Six hundred and thirteen pupils have taken part in a residential programme.

#### Leadership and management

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

There is a clear rationale and plan for the implementation of the learning programmes. The organisation, co-ordinator and other personnel understand well the aims and remit of the project and are committed to the delivery of a high quality programme. The co-ordinator has placed an appropriate focus on training teachers and student teachers and in organising residential and school-based sessions for young people. The implementation and embedding of the project in schools which were not previously involved in FHAO programmes are at an early stage and need to proceed at a swifter pace.

The skilled staff are deployed appropriately and work well as a team in the delivery of the training sessions. They introduce the teachers to a wider range of strategies to use in the classroom, including the development of more effective questioning.

Most of the resources were developed by those involved in FHAO in advance of the programme being delivered through Corrymeela. Appropriately, the project has created additional contextualised learning resources. There is a variation in the quality of the resources and their appropriateness to the age groups.

The existing self-evaluation processes need to be developed further in order to realise more fully the potential and the impact of the training programme.



### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The thorough planning enables progression in the development of the participants' knowledge, understanding and skills. The activities are aligned to the objectives of the project and are challenging, thought-provoking and very effective.

The quality of the work in the sessions observed was always good or very good. The open and positive approach of the facilitators results in very good working relationships. There is a good balance between active learning strategies and opportunities for discussion to engage the teachers in extending their thinking about the purpose of history education. An excellent range of strategies develops further the participants' skills and provides them with practical ideas which they can transfer easily to their own settings.

The approaches taken in the sessions for the young people engage them fully in the learning process. The facilitators support well the development of the learners' communication skills, their values and attitudes and their social and political awareness. There are inbuilt and ongoing opportunities to celebrate success for all the participant groups.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The teachers and student teachers who participate in the training sessions acquire new knowledge, understanding and pedagogical skills, linked to the objectives of the project.

In the sessions observed, the learners worked well together and participated enthusiastically in the activities. They demonstrated high levels of maturity, respect and confidence; they think critically and creatively; they also learned more about themselves and about others.

The area for improvement is:

- a more strategic plan for embedding the work of the project in the schools in order to sustain the good work beyond the project's lifetime.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Hand of Friendship Project

### Junior Achievement Ireland

#### Context

The project receives €716,000.

Project start date: June 2010

Project end date: May 2013

The project operates as a cross-border, cross-community project in which approximately each year 400 learners, in the last two years of primary school, take part in workshops to experience shared education. The participating schools are based in counties Armagh, Tyrone, Derry, Down, Monaghan and Louth.

The project aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for children to meet, learn and work together in order to further community relations. Through regular meeting and working together the learners and the teaching staff identify teaching and learning approaches about mutual understanding in the primary curriculum.

The programme has six modules, one of which is classroom-based with five of the modules being held in appropriate venues to facilitate large numbers and the geographical locations of the schools. The programme uses age-appropriate, activity-based, practical materials to explore topics such as identity and friendship, diversity, sectarianism and peace and reconciliation.

Almost 500 learners participated in year two of the project. Twenty teachers and one hundred and six parents were trained as project facilitators.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The director provides very good leadership and management and is well supported by her team. The leadership of the project articulate clearly a vision for sharing in education and engage well with schools in the use of the modules to meet the needs of the learners.

In the second year, three special schools joined the programme. Two members of the project staff gained additional qualifications in special educational needs in order to be better informed about inclusion and the needs of the learners.

The facilitators are trained well in advance of the delivery of the modules and have a shared understanding of the goals of the programme. They are sensitive to the opinions of the learners and are skilful in allowing them to develop their ideas.

The leadership and management at individual school level need to build on the learners' growing respect for difference and early friendships. Through effective strategic planning, a majority of the participating schools have made excellent use of a range of funding streams. The schools have devised educational programmes matched to the learners' needs and abilities. They have overcome barriers of community division to work together in shared activities.

#### The provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The planning, teaching and learning are focused appropriately on helping the learners to get to know one another, to form friendships, and to gain an understanding of the values and identities held by their peers from a different community background. The planned activities are adjusted in the light of feedback; in the

second year of the programme, they now encourage the greater involvement of the parents and teachers.

The staff facilitate the workshops effectively within a safe and secure environment. They encourage the learners to articulate their opinions, feelings and emotions about issues around 'dealing with difference'. In the best practice, the teachers are engaged in facilitating the groups and the plenary sessions.

The quality of the learning in the sessions and school-based lessons observed was always good or very good. The facilitators and teachers use a good balance of drama, art work, games and discussion to progress the learners' thinking on sharing and working together. The learners



respond well to the expectations to work as a team, and are very open to meeting their peers, getting to know them and working collaboratively.

There is an increasing understanding of the importance of the voice of the learner in contributing to the programme. In the sessions observed there were missed opportunities for a greater involvement by the teachers in listening to the learners' responses to the activities and to the shared learning.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The learners display a sense of enjoyment and participate enthusiastically in the activities. They talk readily about themselves and listen well to others with the result that they develop a better understanding of their peers. They engage positively in role-play and have begun to talk about the values needed to promote positive community relationships.

In the sessions observed, including the follow-up lessons in schools, the learners collaborated and planned well together. They shared their opinions and feelings in an open and frank manner; they were encouraged to reflect on how they made judgements based on perceptions. The learners are also reading novels and developing artistic skills associated with the theme of mutual understanding.

The areas for improvement are:

- the further development of the leadership skills of school leaders, including the governors, to link the programme more effectively within the school development plan;
- the more effective use of ICT to support partnerships and to link with other shared education initiatives; and
- the building of the capacity of the staff at a whole-school level to sustain the good work of the project.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Learning to Live Together Project

### South-Eastern Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives £672,000.

Project start date: June 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The Learning to Live Together project supports the promotion of positive community relations for learners in Key Stages (KS) 3 and 4 within 12 participating schools in the South-Eastern Education Board area. It provides opportunities for the learners to share their educational experience, to reflect on their own identity, and to explore, and to reach a better understanding of, the diverse range of identities within Northern Ireland. It also aims to strengthen the links between the partner schools, between those schools and the youth service, and to build capacity within the schools to embed Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) practice more effectively.

The project encourages and supports learners to participate in community relations programmes with their peers in the partner schools. It places a strong emphasis on the core aims and principles of youth work practice namely: personal and social development; promoting acceptance and understanding; testing and challenging values and beliefs; and, active participation in personal growth and positive change.

It provides opportunities to link effectively with key curricular areas such as: Learning for Life and Work, citizenship, personal development, employability and key subject areas such as history, religious studies, English, art, drama



and physical education, although, as yet, these opportunities are not well exploited.

Three hundred pupils, 12 schools and 12 teachers have been involved in residentials with a focus on community relations.

#### *Leadership and management*

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

Due to the effective leadership, the project is making good progress despite the late start. The well-articulated rationale for the project has been shared successfully with the partner schools, their management, and the key participating staff. The project has been responsive to the individual needs of each school and its learners. There is a common understanding between the youth workers, the senior school staff and the teachers concerned of the aims, implementation methodologies and anticipated outcomes of the project.

As part of the project, those youth workers who have not already completed the training are undertaking a qualification at level 3 in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence/Community Relations for Practitioners working with Young People. The impact of this training on the learners will be evaluated as the project progresses.

The experienced senior youth worker has facilitated effective joint planning for the

content and implementation of the project between the youth workers and the teachers. Systematic liaison with the principals and key staff in the schools provides regular opportunities for evaluation and feedback in order to inform each stage of the project.

The intended links between the school development planning process and the embedding of the learning experiences of the youth workers, teachers and learners involved in the project are at an early stage.

An assistant advisory officer and a senior youth worker monitor the planning and implementation of the project in order to ensure the sustainability of the aims and practices beyond its lifetime.

### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

The senior youth worker has planned well to combine the teaching methodologies of the formal and informal sectors to their mutual development and benefit. There is an appropriately strong focus on active learning methods which the learners enjoy, and in which they participate well.

The current overall planning does not take sufficient account of the previous involvement of schools and learners in community relations or associated work. The teachers' planning does not incorporate the key themes of the project. It needs to take greater account of how the skills developed through this project will be embedded and supported across all aspects of the learners' school and social life, and in their preparation for working life.

The quality of the work in the sessions observed was always good or very good. The relationships between the youth workers, the teachers and the learners are positive; the staff work hard to build an atmosphere of trust in which to develop self-esteem and mutual respect. The youth workers and the teachers

deal sensitively with the learners and provide appropriate supportive challenge to stimulate discussion and to enhance understanding.

Almost all of the learners articulate clearly the ways in which their ideas are being challenged and in which their understanding is being developed. There is an appropriate emphasis on working together co-operatively, on solving problems and overcoming difficulties.

### *Achievements and standards*

**The quality of achievements and standards is good.**

Almost all of the learners enjoy and participate enthusiastically in the activities. They speak with clarity and conviction about what they are learning and how their understanding of others has been improved.

Most have gained in confidence and participate more readily in discussion. Almost all are gaining the appropriate language skills and range of vocabulary to articulate their views and to respond to the views of others. Their participation in the sessions has enhanced their empathy, their openness to others and the acceptance and appreciation of difference.

**The areas for improvement are:**

- the further embedding of the work of the project within the planning to work towards sustainability beyond the lifetime of the project; and
- the strengthening of the methodologies of project evaluation to measure effectively the impact of the staff training on the outcomes for the learners.

### *Conclusion*

**At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level.** The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship and History Project

### North-Eastern Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives €1,153,000.

Project start date: April 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship and History Project (PIRCH) supports shared education in 12 post-primary schools in the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). The schools aim to work on a partnership basis, sharing and collaborating in many aspects of school life.

The key features of the project include: a well-informed NEELB project manager who provides clear direction and highly effective support; an inclusion teacher who is employed in each of the schools to work with small groups of pupils who may be experiencing challenges in their educational engagement; a curriculum-based project in history, citizenship and a third subject area which is chosen by the participating schools; externally accredited training for a core team of school staff; and support for the implementation of the project through the provision of resources.

Twelve inclusion teachers have been appointed, one within each of the schools involved. Sixty teachers have received intensive in-service training from NEELB in the areas of community relations, citizenship and history. Over 1,000 young people have been involved in peace and reconciliation or inclusion programmes.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

There is a clear rationale for the programme which has been accepted by the senior leadership team of each of the participating schools. There are high levels of engagement between the project manager and the senior leadership teams within the schools, to guide and support them in the development of programmes that are appropriate for the learners.



The inclusion teachers work well as an integral part of the school staff in supporting the personal and academic development of the learners who are involved in the programme. The very effective use of a website highlights the work of the inclusion teachers both in their school and in conjunction with their partner school.

As part of the curriculum aspect of the programme, the schools have engaged in a wide range of appropriate activities to support and extend their understanding of PIRCH. The majority of the action plans are of a very good quality. A minority of the action plans lack sufficient reference to the monitoring of the programme, particularly through engagement with the learners.

### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the sessions observed ranged from good to outstanding. In the best practice, within the inclusion work, the learners engaged positively in the project, had access to appropriate accreditation, and displayed improved confidence and self-esteem.

Within the best practice in the curricular programmes, the learners are involved in regular ongoing joint activities which are enjoyable and which build on their experiences and previous learning. The teachers and the learners have appropriately high levels of expectation of the progress which they make. The inclusion teachers, facilitators and teachers of curriculum areas deal sensitively with the issues addressed and make very good use of questioning to engage the learners in discussion.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is very good.

The learners display a sense of enjoyment and participate enthusiastically in the activities and programmes. Through both the inclusion and curricular aspects of the programme, the learners develop mutual respect and build positive relationships amongst themselves and with the facilitators.

In the sessions observed, the learners worked well together, and shared views and opinions with growing confidence. They talk with ease about themselves and listen well to others, with the result that they develop a better understanding of their peers.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is above the expected level. The project is meeting very effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Primary Curriculum Partnership Project

### Southern Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives £462,000.

Project start date: October 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The Primary Curriculum Partnership Project (PCCP) is a cross-community schools project focused on partnering primary schools to deliver the PDMU curriculum in shared classrooms. Twelve schools from within the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) area are currently participating in the project; most of the schools have long-established cross-community links.

The project provides a shared training and support structure for staff delivering the more challenging aspects of PDMU; as a consequence of the training, the project aims to equip learners with the skills and personal capabilities to deal with the challenges of living in an increasingly diverse and complex society.

The activities during the first two terms of the project have focused, appropriately, on raising whole-school awareness of the aims and rationale, and on establishing a sound basis upon which to develop joint working practices between the partner schools. Most of the

shared classes and shared PDMU curriculum activities have begun within the third term.

Eighty-seven members of staff and 18 non-teaching staff have been involved in the project to date along with 900 pupils.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The project manager has extensive knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) in general and of the PDMU area of learning in particular. She has a clear vision for the development of the project within the context of the DE policy of Every School a Good School. She uses her knowledge effectively to provide well-focused training, support and guidance based on the needs identified by the schools in their individual self-evaluation audits.

Two members of staff from each school,



including the Principal, have participated in a series of professional development courses; they have, in turn, disseminated the information about the planned programmes to the school governors, teaching and non-teaching staff. All of the participating schools have included

the project within their school development plan and key personnel from the partner schools have worked collaboratively to develop joint action plans to guide their work in the project. In most instances, the schools have demonstrated their full commitment to the project; they have discussed the underpinning aims of the programme and provided detailed information about the shared activities with the parents.

Where necessary, the project manager has provided whole-staff training for individual schools to work towards a shared understanding of the project and its aims. In recent weeks, two newly appointed teacher developers have begun to support the partner schools in the development and delivery of shared activities.

#### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

Those schools which are currently participating in the CRED programme have planned successfully to integrate the delivery of the project through the existing cross-community programme.

In all of the schools, the partner teachers have worked together effectively to plan and develop a series of well-structured joint lessons to support learning across the curriculum, including the effective integration of ICT. They identify clearly the learning intentions for PDMU and cross-curricular themes and provide age-appropriate activities in which the learners develop their self-awareness, begin to recognise similarities and differences in the wider community, and to deepen the relationships with their peers in the partner schools. As the project continues, it will be important for the teachers to focus more specifically on Strand 2 of the PDMU programme as part of the joint learning activities.

There are well-structured procedures in place to evaluate the impact of the project on the learners' attitudes towards joint working with

their peers in the partnering school. At the end of each of the lessons, the teacher developers and partner teachers evaluate the learners' levels of engagement, enjoyment and the interaction with their peers from the partner school and use the outcomes to modify their planning, as necessary.

#### *Achievements and standards*

**The quality of achievements and standards is satisfactory.**

Due to the late start to the project, it has not been possible to observe any of the joint working sessions.

Key stage 2 children involved in a joint art project spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their thoughts and aspirations, about their emotions and what they would like to see happen during the project. They have engaged positively with their peers from their partner school during the joint activities and in the wider community. The quality of the creative art work in these schools was of a high standard.

**The areas for improvement are:**

- the more specific focus on Strand 2 of the PDMU programme as part of the joint learning activities;
- the planned engagement of the parents to support the work of the project and to extend its impact beyond the school; and
- the continued building of the teachers' capacity to implement and sustain the work of the project across the school during and beyond its lifetime.

#### *Conclusion*

**At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision provided by the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.**

## The Evaluation of the Promoting Reconciliation through a Shared Curriculum Experience Project

### Western Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives £414,000.

Project start date: April 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The project aims to explore how a cross-community contact experience impacts on the attitudes of those involved, and contributes to, the process of reconciliation. The Queens University of Belfast are involved in gathering research evidence to evaluate the extent to which the project makes a significant impact on the learners and from this evidence to inform future programmes and policies.

The project team has developed a series of 12 lessons for years 6, 7 and 8 that are closely aligned to the curriculum requirements for PDMU and citizenship. A key aspect of the programme is to provide professional development for teachers to further their skills and confidence in addressing reconciliation issues.

There are currently 27 primary and post-primary schools involved in the project. Ten schools follow the 12-week programme in their own schools and eight schools provide a cross-community contact programme with a class in another school for approximately 50% of the programme. The remaining nine schools are in the control group and follow their own

PDMU and citizenship programmes. These schools will be involved in the programme in year 2. About one-fifth of the 815 learners involved are part of the contact programme, which is well below the number originally planned.

The project is managed by a senior adviser from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service advisor within WELB. The project team consists of three assistant advisory officers who have considerable expertise and experience in the areas of CRED, PDMU, citizenship and community relations work.

#### Leadership and management

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

The clear rationale for the project is based on providing teachers with professional development, linking the contact programme directly to the curriculum and gathering evidence of the impact of the programme on the learners.

The project team supports the teachers very well. The teachers value the initial two-day training course on diversity and community relations, especially the opportunities to model the lessons and to contribute to the programme. The team also provides very helpful and attentive ongoing school-based support to the principals and teachers. The schools involved in the contact group work well together to plan and manage the organisation of providing shared classes.

#### The provision for learning

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

The detailed and progressive lesson plans and resources include challenging and stimulating activities which help to develop the learners' interest and understanding of themselves and others. The resources need to draw on more

localised and contextualised issues to which the learners can relate directly. It is appropriate that the team has added in an additional day for the teachers to come together to share and review their experiences of the project.

The quality of the learning and teaching in the sessions observed was mostly good or very good. The teachers use an appropriate balance of whole-class and group activities to engage the learners in scenarios related to identity and diversity. An effective range of drama strategies challenges the learners' thinking on complex issues and skilfully provides opportunities to discuss and develop ideas, feelings and opinions.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The learners enjoy the range of activities; they offer thoughtful opinions and demonstrate a good understanding of stereotyping, culture, sectarianism, inclusion and reconciliation.

Those in the contact programme talked enthusiastically about meeting new friends and learning more about them.

The learners interact easily and work well together. They participate fully in the drama-based activities and are keen to contribute to whole-class discussions. They talk with ease about themselves and demonstrate a good understanding of age-related cultural similarities and differences. Some of the younger learners in particular show a lack of

awareness of some of the emblems and issues linked to broader cultural and religious diversity.

The areas for improvement are:

- an increase in the number of schools involved, particularly as part of the contact programme;
- the more explicit link between the work of the project and the school's CRED policy and school development plan; and
- the continuing building of the capacity of the teachers to tackle contentious and sensitive issues in the classroom.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.



## The Evaluation of the Reel Frontiers Project

### Cinemagic

#### Context

The project receives £317,000.

Project start date: May 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The main purpose of the project is to support pupils in understanding better a range of sensitive and contentious issues, which affect the communities in Northern Ireland. These issues are introduced through shared viewings of high quality feature films, which are then explored jointly in workshops after the viewing. The themes are linked closely to the Local and Global Citizenship curriculum and allow the pupils to explore their views on issues such as: racism, sectarianism, discrimination and exclusion.

The project is led by two full-time co-ordinators, who are supported in the delivery of the learning programme by other facilitators from Cinemagic.

The cross-curricular skills are supported well through the activities, which include extended writing tasks, as well as talking and listening activities. The project promotes positive attitudes and dispositions and a key strength that emerged is the learners' willingness and enthusiasm for working together.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

There is a clear rationale for the implementation of the Reel Frontiers programme which promotes good relations among the learners. The two lead co-ordinators understand well the aims of the Sharing in Education Programme. They are committed to the delivery of a good quality project, which fuses Cinemagic's strengths and expertise in media education with their established experience in working with learners, and, in this instance, the exploration of diversity.

The project is well led and has been planned with appropriate care and attention. The



co-ordinators have placed an appropriate focus on ensuring that the project has a positive impact on the learners. The schools reported high levels of satisfaction with how the project meets their needs and expectations, and in how they were consulted in the planning process. It is appropriate that planning is started on legacy issues, in collaboration with the schools, to ensure that the good work can extend beyond the funding period

The lead co-ordinators from Cinemagic have made a good start to surveying the views of the learners and teachers, in order to develop further the effectiveness of the project and to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its users.

The work of Reel Frontiers was embedded well through the way in which one of the partnerships grouped five schools in a wider shared education programme that currently operates within the ALC.

### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The planning for the project is good and enables progression in the development of the learners' knowledge, understanding and skills. The teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with the Cinemagic team's facilitation skills. There is, however, a need to build capacity amongst the teachers, in order to maximize the benefits of the project further.

The learners demonstrate a good understanding of cultural diversity and positive attitudes to shared education. They make relevant connections between the issues explored in the films and those that exist in their local community. They make appropriate links between what they learn through the project and the formal school curriculum.

A one-week residential film school allows two pupils from each school to learn a wide range of skills in film-making. They write and produce their own film, which will be screened as part of the annual Cinemagic festival. The learners reported that the lead co-ordinators have a very open and positive approach and that the working relationships are very good.

The teachers reported that the workshop activities engaged the learners' interest. They developed their communication and inter-personal skills well; they promoted positive values and attitudes towards different cultures; and they increased their political and social awareness.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The learners benefit from the wide range of activities which enable them to make informed opinions, which they articulate both orally and in writing. They develop good listening skills in weighing up the viewpoints of others to which they respond in a considered way. It is clear that in all of the partnerships evaluated they increase their knowledge about cultural differences, local traditions and beliefs and about mutual respect.

The learners demonstrate high levels of maturity, respect and confidence; they think critically and creatively; and they use a vocabulary that enables them to demonstrate a good understanding of the sensitive issues. They also learn more about themselves and about others. All of the learners were enthusiastic about working alongside their peers from other schools.

The area for improvement is:

- the further development of teacher involvement in order to sustain the good outputs and shared education experiences and partnerships of the Reel Frontiers project.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning Project

### Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

#### Context

The project receives €702,000.

Project start date: May 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

Through this project, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) aims to 'provide bespoke community/good relations training to meet the needs of educators involved in ALCs with the aim of enabling them to enhance the learning experience of young people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds'. With an increase in the number of KS4 and post-16 courses being provided collaboratively between schools, between schools and the further education sector, and between schools and other training providers, NICIE identified that 'there is clearly a gap in teacher education in terms of developing skills for those working with young people from diverse communities'.

In January 2012, during an initial visit to NICIE the inspection team raised significant concerns regarding the management of the project, in particular the lack of a shared understanding of the project's aims and targets between the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the project manager. Consequently the CEO

undertook a full review of this aspect of the project's management and found that fundamental errors had occurred particularly in regard to version control of documents, the induction process provided for the project manager and the review of the progress of the project.

#### Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory.

The problems identified with the management of the programme in January 2012 were addressed promptly and decisively by the CEO. There have been significant improvements with regard to the leadership and management of the project by the CEO and project manager, including the clarification of the version control of documents and the procedures to monitor progress.

The evidence base used to determine the rationale for the programme was limited. The programme manager consulted with a range of stakeholders, however, there was insufficient systematic consultation with the ALCs regarding



their specific training and development needs. It is timely that NICIE and the project manager have identified the need to undertake extensive

consultation with the ALCs in order to improve the quality and relevance of the project. The uptake by, and retention of, participants from the target group has been low.

As a result of the low uptake of the training by the target group, the offer was extended to include substitute and student teachers and facilitators involved in the 'Together Towards Culture' project. This decision constrains significantly the extent to which the training can be applied in a shared classroom and therefore the extent to which the impact on learning and teaching can be evaluated.

The organisation has designed and implemented a range of strategies, including the allocation of resources for a longitudinal evaluation, to evaluate the quality and the impact of the project. The analysis and interpretation of the outcomes by NICIE do not sufficiently inform future planning or provide adequate feedback on learning and teaching.

### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The quality of the training session observed was very good; it was well-planned, challenging and the pace was brisk. The thought-provoking activities ensured that all of the participants were well motivated and fully engaged throughout the session. In the deployment of the facilitators, the project manager has made good use of their respective expertise in education and in community relations to devise a well-balanced training programme which maximises the benefits to the participants.

However, during the inspection, in discussions with teachers and principals, they indicated that they require further opportunities to deepen the learning within shared classrooms.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards could not be evaluated at this stage.

The very recent completion of the training, coupled with the low uptake by full-time post-primary teachers working in shared classrooms, and the relatively few opportunities for shared learning, do not provide a sufficiently robust evidence base from which to evaluate the quality of achievements and standards at this stage of the evaluation.

The areas for improvement are:

- consultation with the ALCs regarding their specific training and development in order to inform the project planning;
- more rigorous analysis and interpretation of the evaluation data to inform improvement in the quality of the project; and
- an increase in the recruitment and retention rates of post-primary teachers working in shared classrooms within ALCs.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project has not yet achieved the expected level. However, the project is now working towards meeting more effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme, as evidenced by the good quality of the provision for learning.

## The Evaluation of the Sharing Education Together Project

### Spirit of Enniskillen

#### *Context*

The project receives £637,000.

Project start date: September 2009  
Project end date: August 2013

The Sharing Education Together project is carried out in post-primary schools by trained young volunteers. They facilitate 'dealing with difference' and leadership-building workshops, residentials and conferences to fully professional standards. The key underlying approach is to support partnership between teachers, senior and junior pupils, to deliver learning through a balance of fun and serious discussion on the contentious and sensitive issues of the community.

The project has begun to deliver a sharing in education programme for KS 4 pupils. It aims to work with schools and teachers to deliver key areas of the Learning for Life and Work Curriculum in an interactive and participative environment. A critical part of the project is the creation of a joined-up approach in its delivery and facilitation by teams of Spirit of Enniskillen volunteers, sixth-formers and teachers. The main intended outcome is to provide young people with the understanding, awareness and skills to have a positive impact upon a divided society and a fast-changing world.

The project also offers 'third-party' support between schools in local area learning communities and developing shared education activities through the schools' entitlement framework.

Over 3,000 sixth-form pupils and just under 3,000 year 11 pupils have taken part in the project. It has also involved 250 volunteer facilitators who have assisted the Spirit of Enniskillen team in delivering reconciliation programmes.

#### *Leadership and management*

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

There is a clear rationale for the project which is drawn up and adapted by a team of thoughtful and well-informed facilitators with an agreed understanding of how they wish to develop the programme across the key stages within schools. The facilitators work well as a team and provide good support to the volunteers who have been through the leadership programmes and who work on the Together project with them.

The team makes effective use of pre- and post-briefing sessions to develop the programme of activities and to adapt them to the requirements of the individual schools. During the sessions the pairings of experienced and less-experienced facilitators worked well to support the learners and for their mutual personal development.

#### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is good.**

The thorough planning provides progression in developing the relationships; the group discussions between the learners are age-appropriate. The enjoyable activities engage the learners' interest and help them to work together and to solve problems. On occasions, the intended outcomes of the activities could be clearer and the link between the activities and the overall intention of the session more explicit.

The quality of the work in the sessions observed was always good or very good. The facilitators use a good balance of games and discussion to progress the learners' thinking on sharing and working together. Through their positive and open approach, the facilitators build up and sustain mutual respect and positive relationships among the learners, and between the learners and themselves.

The facilitators deal sensitively with the learners; they encourage them to express their opinions and, in most cases, control well those situations in which the learners find it difficult to concentrate or to listen.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The learners display a sense of enjoyment and participate enthusiastically in the activities and programmes. They talk with ease about

growing confidence. They discussed in depth their thoughts on complex problems which faced them and their community and had a better understanding of each other's viewpoint.

The areas for improvement are:

- the more explicit link with the project to the school development plan and the building of the capacity of the staff to sustain the good work of the project beyond its lifetime; and
- the link with other initiatives, in particular with other shared education programmes.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.



themselves and listen well to others with the result that they develop a better understanding of their peers.

In the sessions observed, the learners worked well together, took responsibility for their own learning and shared views and opinions with

## The Evaluation of the Together Through Culture Project

### Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

#### *Context*

The project receives €309,000.

Project start date: August 2011  
Project end date: December 2013

The project works across the education sectors in primary and post-primary schools, mainly in Year 8, and is carried out by trained facilitators. The main aim is to learn about shared names, place names, songs, dances and traditions, and to learn some basic Irish. It is delivered mainly in citizenship or Irish classes, in English, with the exception of Coláiste Feirste, where it is delivered in Irish. The Irish language is the common element in all of the classes.

The project remains behind the initial schedule, but is on course to meet its revised schedule. During the inspection week, some schools were only having their first sessions, resulting in a difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of the programme. Other schools have had two or three sessions. The facilitators have received training, and are benefiting from a stable management arrangements.

#### *Leadership and management*

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

The programme manager has obtained the trust of the partner schools and has managed to develop the programme effectively in the short period of time since taking up the post. Most of the facilitators are not trained teachers. They are enthusiastic and energetic, and have

gained the trust and engagement of the young people and their teachers. All of the teachers and nearly all of the participants are positive about the programme. Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta agrees with the teachers in an informal manner the terms for the delivery of the project. However, key policies such as a code of conduct and safeguarding procedures are not shared. The schools have not had sight of vetting forms.

The cross-community element of the project is underdeveloped. The Irish language forms the main content of the programme; the cross-community content is less effective. Some schools reported that the very nature of the programme was breaking down barriers in itself without the need to discuss prejudice and understanding. The exploration of shared interests and involvement in the Irish language is a key factor in attracting and enthusing learners to respond positively to the project.

#### *The provision for learning*

**The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.**

The teachers receive a programme of lessons, which is helpful, and will assist both facilitators and teachers to develop and inform future planning. All of the teachers are positive about the project and see the potential for further development. The content of the project could align itself more closely with school priorities and with other subjects across the curriculum.

Due to the large number of facilitators, it is difficult to maintain the momentum for, and to assess the effectiveness of, the learning and how well the key messages have been delivered. The planning for the learning programme needs to be more strategic and to take greater account of feedback from the teachers and learners. The materials, including the more effective use of ICT, need to be more accessible to all of the learners.

There is an inconsistency in the quality and use of resources, ranging from poor resources to a combination of multi-media, written, and practical activities which develop and enhance the learning. There were also missed opportunities during the sessions observed to assist the learning by using resources which were more appropriate to the stage of progression. The ongoing training of



the facilitators needs to address the use of resources urgently.

Overall, most of the learners reported that they enjoyed the sessions, that they looked forward to them, and that they had learned something new. There are good practical elements, including singing, which engage the learners' interest. On further investigation, the learning is short-term, and is not always re-enforced appropriately.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

The project has helped the learners to develop a greater understanding of themselves and, to a lesser extent, of other cultures. The learners and the teachers report that they have enjoyed participating in the project and that they have developed a greater knowledge and understanding of the Irish language.

The areas for improvement are:

- the development of the planning for the learning programme across the curriculum through closer collaboration with the schools; and,
- more robust safeguarding procedures.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Welcoming Schools Project

### Southern Education and Library Board

#### Context

The project receives £473,000.

Project start date: February 2012  
Project end date: December 2013

The Welcoming Schools project aims to enable the participating schools to engage effectively in shared education through the development of a 'welcoming' ethos at all levels. The project trains staff in issues related to diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, respect for different cultures and traditions, citizenship and mutual understanding. The learning focuses on developing the knowledge, understanding, expertise, critical thinking skills and attitudes necessary to develop a 'welcoming' school. The strategic aim is to strengthen the quality of CRED in the formal education sector.

The practice of Invitational Education<sup>6</sup> underpins the project. This practice emphasises the importance of using processes as a framework for the



development of a changed ethos and culture within the schools. The project aims to provide in-depth learning so that all members of the school, including the learners, the staff and the parents are enabled to engage with their own and other communities.

The project manager devotes 40% of her time to the project. A school development officer was appointed in January 2012 to work with the staff in each of the eight participating schools. There are currently seven maintained schools and one controlled school in the project.

To date 90 teaching staff, 156 non-teaching staff and over 1,600 pupils have been involved in the project.

#### Leadership and management

**The quality of the leadership and management is good.**

The experienced and enthusiastic project manager works effectively with skilful and well-informed facilitators. Through effective collaboration and discussion, the participating schools use an audit tool to establish a clear baseline from which to develop their action plans to embed a 'welcoming' ethos.

The project makes clear links between the development of a welcoming ethos and whole-school improvement. In addition, there

<sup>6</sup> Purkey, W. and Novak, J. *Fundamentals of Invitational Education*, The International Alliance for Invitational Education. Invitational Education emphasises five key areas to address which include: people, places, policies, programmes and processes.

are strong links between the project and the Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme which is also managed by the SELB.

### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The quality of the training sessions observed was always very good. The facilitators create a learning environment based on mutual respect, interdependence and positive relationships between the participants and themselves. A particular strength of the project is the very good level of pastoral care shown to the participants.

The facilitators plan the sessions with an effective balance between the use of international research, their knowledge and expertise with the local knowledge, and the reflections and experiences of the participants. There are good opportunities to explore ways to develop a range of skills which promote and develop the understanding of effective shared education.

The high quality learning resources and materials engage the participants and support their learning. The wide range of activities gives the participants opportunities to work effectively in pairs, groups and individually.

There are regular opportunities for the participants to discuss the shared learning of the group, to ask questions, make comments and to reflect critically on the issues. The facilitators negotiate the next steps with the participants and deploy creative ways to evaluate the learning, which include reflective journals and visual displays.

At this initial stage, and as identified by the participants, the project requires precise and agreed success criteria with which the staff and schools can evaluate their progress throughout the various stages of the project.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is good.

In the sessions observed, the participants demonstrated good levels of interest, motivation and commitment to the project. They explored effectively their personal attitudes, values and beliefs through the shared educational experiences.

The participants display high levels of responsibility and confidence in making informed decisions within their school contexts and in applying their learning from the project to support whole-school improvement.

The areas for improvement are:

- the more equitable representation amongst participating schools;
- the greater level of planning for progression by the leadership of the project to move beyond single identity work; and
- the development of a more rigorous approach to the self-evaluation at all levels across the school community.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## The Evaluation of the Youth Works Project

### Department of Education

#### Context

The project receives £2,162,000.

Project start date: September 2010  
Project end date: August 2013

The Youth Works project aims to use youth work methods to support young people aged 16 and 17 years to gain recognised qualifications. The project targets young people with no qualifications, who are not currently engaged in education, employment or training.

The project is managed by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI) on behalf of the Department of Education. The YCNI appointed a 'delivery agent', Include Youth, who works in partnership with three youth organisations to deliver the programme. The three youth organisations, which have extensive experience in working with marginalised young people, are: Artillery Youth Centre; North Belfast Alternatives, and Challenge for Youth, which is based in Belfast city centre.

The project aims to help the young people to develop the skills and self-esteem necessary to improve their future training and employability choices. The young people have the choice of a range of qualifications, including Essential Skills courses; they are regularly mentored and involved in a range of group work programmes. A key feature of the project is the delivery of programmes with a strong focus on peace and reconciliation for the young people.

The three core themes of the project are: peace and reconciliation; personal development; and, one-to-one mentoring.

In the first 26-week pilot, which has just concluded, 37 young people were selected on a cross-community basis from the communities of north Belfast. Twenty-five young people completed the programme. Over one-half (53%) of the young people were sign-posted to another level of education, training or employment.

#### Leadership and management

**The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory.**

The different levels in the structure of leadership and management for the project have caused a lack of coherence and instances of unclear communication among staff at most levels. Recently, there has been a review of roles and responsibilities, and a restructuring of the pilot project partnership steering group to focus on more strategic issues. The managers need to continue to improve their internal communication and their relationships with each other and with the staff across the project.

External evaluators have reviewed the pilot project recently. There is a need for regular and appropriate self-evaluation processes, based on relevant data, to review the provision rigorously and to effect improvements. The staff are committed to addressing any areas for improvement in order to provide a quality service for the young people.

The project is making good progress towards its objectives through targeting very vulnerable and challenging young people. The young people are supported well by the staff to engage in a range of appropriate and individualised programmes.

The project delivery staff meet regularly and discuss operational issues; however, they need to evaluate more robustly the quality of the mentoring support. It is essential that the staff have the appropriate skills to support these

vulnerable young people, and to help them address their barriers to learning in order to reach their full potential in the project.

The system of rewards or bonuses for the young people is not applied consistently across the three projects. This disparity has caused difficulties for the staff and the young people. The projects need to develop a common approach to awarding bonuses that is agreed by managers and communicated clearly to all staff and to the young people at the outset of their involvement in the programme.

### *The provision for learning*

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The quality of the sessions observed ranged from satisfactory to very good, with most of the sessions being good or better.

The excellent quality of pastoral care for the young people is a strong feature of the project. The young people work closely with the staff to identify their own learning needs. The staff work hard to ensure that the learners are given appropriate support and advice, which is individualised and valued by the learners.

The Essential Skills provision has improved markedly during the pilot programme. The staff meet regularly to plan for the progress of each learner and to work collaboratively to connect the programme to the learners' interests and other experiences. The learners progress to a good level commensurate with their ability:

60% achieved a literacy qualification; 40% achieved a numeracy qualification; and, 12% completed both successfully.

In the peace and reconciliation aspects of the programme, the young people spent time initially exploring within their own groups their perceptions and opinions of those from differing backgrounds. The contact between the groups increased during the pilot programme; however, due to the short timescale of the 26 weeks of the



project, this aspect of the programme remains underdeveloped. The staff have identified appropriately the need to focus more closely on peace and reconciliation in the next phase of the project.

The staff celebrate the progress and success of the learners during the project. The young people are involved fully in all celebratory events and are keen to share with others the positive outcomes from this project.

### *Achievements and standards*

The quality of achievements and standards is very good.

The learners improve their personal and social skills; in particular, they recognise an increase in self-confidence and motivation. The learners achieve the targets that they set for themselves; they make significant progress with their personal, social and academic targets.

The young people develop a better understanding of themselves and of others. In discussions, they stated they are very well supported and that as a result of the programme have a clearer understanding of their training, employment or educational pathway. They recognise and articulate well the improvement in their interpersonal and employability skills. Almost all of the young people have a clear idea of where they would like to progress to on completion of the project.

The young people work well with the staff, share their views honestly with others and become more confident in their interactions with each other and the staff. They enjoy good relationships with each other and demonstrate the ability to work independently and collaboratively.

The areas for improvement are:

- the clarification of roles and the further building of relationships across the delivery partners, in order to develop a more coherent management structure, that is self-reflective and evaluative; and
- a stronger focus on the peace and reconciliation aspects of the programme, including an earlier introduction in these aspects with the young people.

### *Conclusion*

At this interim point of evaluation, the overall quality of the provision of the project is at the expected level. The project is meeting effectively the overall aims of the Sharing in Education Programme.

## Appendix 1

### Allocation of funding to the projects

Belfast Old Firm Alliance Programme - Belfast Community Sports Development Network	£271,664
Building New Communities Through Positive Parenting & Reconciliation - )	£980,000
Change Makers - NICE/Belfast YMCA/CRIS	£1,134,049
Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity & Inclusion for Teachers - Stranmillis & St Mary's Colleges	£839,589
Creative Change: Fostering Personal Development & Mutual Understanding Through Creativity - University of Ulster	£389,026
Cultural Learning and Social Skills (CLASS) - Reach Across	£387,170
Distinctive Voices Collective Choices - Headliners	£230,101
Facing History and Ourselves - The Corrymeela Community	£353,935
Hand of Friendship - Junior Achievement Ireland	€856,257-£716,881
Learning to Live Together - South-Eastern Education & Library Board	£672,000
Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship & History Project - North-Eastern Education & Library Board	£1,153,000
Primary Curriculum Partnership Project - Southern Education & Library Board	£461,952
Promoting Reconciliation Through A Shared Curriculum Experience - Western Education & Library Board	£414,000
Reel Frontiers - Cinemagic	£317,311
Sharing Classrooms Deepening Learning - NI Council for Integrated Education	£702,790
Sharing Education Together - Spirit of Enniskillen Trust	£637,425
Together Through Culture - Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	£309,800
Welcoming Schools - Southern Education and Library Board	£473,659
Youth Works Programme - DE	£2,162,439





