

FUND Focus



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

The newsletter of the
International Fund for Ireland
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Shared Education

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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Fund Focus, the new look newsletter of the International Fund for Ireland. Each edition of Fund Focus will report on the progress of the Fund within a critical area, provide expert insight and capture some of the real-life experiences of those involved in funded projects.

The first edition of Fund Focus takes a closer look at how peace building can and should be supported within the classroom and the shared education activities being delivered by the Fund.

We are thankful to Colin Knox, Professor of Comparative Public Policy at the University of Ulster, who examines the potential for shared education to improve schools and promote reconciliation. It is a compelling and powerful argument worthy of reflection.

The International Fund for Ireland continues to drive the shared education agenda. Our Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP), funded in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, is working to remove the barriers which arise from the fact that, for the most part, education in Northern Ireland remains segregated.

Due to conclude in December 2013, the SiEP has helped provide a range of opportunities for young people to learn together and reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement.

Managed by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, the programme encompasses pre-school, primary, post-primary and special education; the promotion of community relations within and between schools; and teacher education.

The programme supports a range of innovative projects that are bringing together literally thousands of children and creating new models of partnerships between schools.

Two of which are featured in this edition of Fund Focus: Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in

Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT) and the Welcoming Schools Project.

A shared future must include opportunities for shared education and the challenge of embedding peace requires a direct interaction at school level.

The SiEP has placed proven and curricula-compliant approaches within easy reach for policy makers.

It is time to look at how these available tools can be deployed beyond December 2013 to help build a shared future.

Adrian Johnston
Dr Adrian Johnston
CHAIRMAN

International Fund for Ireland commits £1.2m/€1.4m toward peace building projects

In November 2012, the International Fund for Ireland approved financial assistance to support reconciliation and integration projects which are working towards achieving a shared and sustainable future for all on the island of Ireland.

This latest funding package includes £885,412 for the Fund's Peace Walls Programme which was launched in January 2012. This tranche of funding will go towards an initiative in Belfast and two in Londonderry/Derry which will deliver a range of confidence and relationship building measures within and between interface communities, aimed at helping local residents to move to a position where they feel it is safe and appropriate for the removal of Peace Walls to commence.

Commenting on the announcement, Dr Adrian Johnston Chairman of the Fund, said: "This funding is a strategic investment in communities and organisations that are working hard to secure a lasting peace. Despite much progress, a legacy of fear and mistrust still exists in many communities and that carries the risk of instability and violence."

He added: "Real and positive community transformation has occurred in recent years, but much more work is still required in order to deliver a truly



peaceful and shared society. We are grateful for the support of our generous international donors who have helped to positively impact on the lives of very many individuals and communities throughout the island of Ireland."

Details of this latest funding are available at the International Fund for Ireland website:
www.internationalfundforireland.com

ABOVE: Fund Chairman Dr Adrian Johnston (centre-left) is pictured with Rachel Duffy; Siobhan Doherty and Barney McGuigan from Reach Across. The cross-community organisation for young people, based in the Londonderry/Derry, gave a presentation at the Fund Board Meeting in November 2012.



The future lies in shared education

Greater cross-community school collaboration can support improved education achievement and underpin reconciliation efforts, says **Professor Colin Knox, University of Ulster**.

Shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to co-ordinated timetabling and pupils taking classes across a network of schools. Shared education is distinct from Integrated Education which involves the removal of sectoral differentiation in favour of unitary common schools.

Shared education has the potential to contribute to school improvement and access to opportunity; encourage more effective use of resources; and promote social cohesion through the achievement of a shared and better society. The focus of shared education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences.

What's wrong with the current system?

In her recent report (2012), the Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate argued that, although the education system across Northern Ireland achieves good value, its outcomes are too variable. Too many children are failing to fulfil their potential. To address this, the Chief Inspector suggested that the quality of leadership and management across all school sectors, and particularly post-primary schools, needed to be improved.

Northern Ireland Education Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, responded to these challenges in a recent statement to the Assembly entitled Putting Pupils First: Improving Outcomes; Improving Opportunities (6th November 2012). He intends, inter alia, to: support continuing professional development of teachers;

reward principals who undertake leadership roles in under-performing schools; create mobility in the profession; and, enhance the professional standard of teachers. All of these measures are aimed at raising educational standards.

How can shared education help to address these problems?

If we see shared education as a mechanism whereby schools which are educationally stronger are incentivised to collaborate with schools which are marginally weaker, then there is research evidence to suggest that there are key areas of improvement across schools in: teaching and learning; pupils' behaviour; and education achievement. As a consequence, shared education will result in: a wider curriculum choice for pupils across the schools involved; promote the Entitlement Framework; encourage pupil mobility between schools through shared classes; and support collaborative staff development activities.

Maintaining a focus on raising educational outcomes through stronger-weak school collaboration, means that all schools, regardless of pupils' backgrounds, have the opportunity to improve. Research also suggests this type of collaboration is more effective where leadership is strong and supportive of collaboration.

Since schools which are currently competing for the same pupils are unlikely to want to collaborate (because they are from the same managing authority) then, by default, the collaborative partnerships will be cross-community. This, in turn, will have significant reconciliation benefits for students and society in the medium

term. In short, shared education can complement the Minister's agenda on improving education standards.



TOP: A student from the Fund supported Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth (KEY Start) Programme.
ABOVE: Pupils from St Mary's PS Aughnacloy and Fivemiletown PS team together during a Sharing and Learning Fair at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre.



Colin Knox is Professor of Comparative Public Policy at the University of Ulster. He worked extensively on the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland and is involved in public sector reform programmes in developing countries (Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Russia and China).

Leading reconciliation from the classroom

CREDIT (Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers) is a project jointly run by teacher training colleges Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College.



The core aim of the project is to provide in-service courses for teachers across Northern Ireland in nursery, primary, and post-primary schools to help them develop awareness and practical skills in dealing with division, diversity, inclusion, community relations and reconciliation in the classroom and throughout the schools in which they work.

The project offers two different courses:

Exploring skills in CREDIT: This is a three-day course for teachers who want to develop basic skills in this area. It is also suitable for teachers who have trained outside Northern Ireland or who have not had the opportunity to explore these areas of practice. The course enables teachers to look at the whole area of diversity and mutual understanding, and has a workshop on controversial issues. It also helps develop a curriculum to address sectarianism, racism and bias while providing practical options for contact, sharing and collaboration between schools.

Extending skills in CREDIT: This is a more in-depth five-day course which helps teachers to embed best practice into their own schools and classes. The course includes visits to the local community, developing a culturally diverse ethos for a school, collaboration between schools and re-imagining how classrooms should operate.

According to Lisa McKenzie, Deputy Director of CREDIT, the courses help educators support the development of specific curriculum areas such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding; and Local and Global Citizenship. It also addresses key issues which have arisen in recent years - with the influx of immigrants mainly from Europe - in relation to diversity and inclusion. To date 84 teachers have taken part in the courses. They have come from throughout Northern Ireland and from all sectors of education. CREDIT courses have been delivered to a further 42 teachers as part of other Fund Sharing in Education Programme projects.

ABOVE LEFT: George Cullen, St Jarlath's Primary School; Raquel McKee, course participant; Dr Patricia Eaton, Project Director, Stranmillis College; Fiona McDonald Principal at Drumnamoe Primary School

Pupils gather for Welcoming Schools Fair

In November 2012, primary and post-primary schools from across Northern Ireland gathered at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island to share their experiences from the first year of the Welcoming Schools Project.

The three-year project is funded by the International Fund for Ireland, managed by the Southern Education and Library Board and co-ordinated by 18 participating schools.

It aims to develop a welcoming ethos within schools and an atmosphere built on the principles of inclusivity, respect for others and an embracing of diversity within their own school culture.

The project focuses on whole school support for developing a welcoming schools agenda and supports work with parents and the whole school community.

It also supports schools taking proactive steps to make them a more welcoming place for all pupils regardless of religion, race or creed with the eventual aim of increasing the diversity and mix within the pupil intake.

The Welcoming Schools Project forms part of the Fund's Sharing in Education Programme which aims to enable young people to participate in shared education on a cross-sectoral basis.



ABOVE: Pictured at the Welcoming Schools Learning Fair are pupils from Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan with Jayne Simms, Welcoming Schools Project Manager and David Bell, Department of Education.



Corrymeela Community – Leaving a Legacy Programme

Two visionary peacemakers were remembered in October 2012 at the unveiling of an enhanced major peace and reconciliation centre in Ballycastle. Named after the founders of the Corrymeela Community, Ray and Kathleen Davey, the Davey Village, a new accommodation block, was officially opened by: (L-R): Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, Leader of Corrymeela Community; First Minister Peter Robinson MLA; Alison Curry, daughter of Ray and Kathleen Davey; deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA; and Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland.

Learning and Educating Together Programme – Building Bridges Programme

Students and teachers from across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland unveiled a stunning piece of collaborative artwork during a celebration event at the City Hotel Londonderry/Derry in September 2012. The unique artwork of hand-made bunting was created by more

than 600 students aged 12-13 who participated in the Learning and Educating Together (LET) Programme which is managed by Young Enterprise Northern Ireland and Junior Achievement Ireland. The programme brings together young people from Unionist and Nationalist backgrounds and both sides of the border to develop personal and business skills and promote mutual understanding.



Louth Community Men's Shed – Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme

David Graham OBE (right), Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland, performed the official opening of the Cooley Men's Shed in County Louth with (L-R): John Evoy, CEO National Men's Sheds Association; Eva Beirne, project coordinator; Michael Boyle, Shed member; and Leinster Rugby players David and Rob Kearney. More than 200 guests attended the official opening of the Cooley Men's Shed, marking the third Men's Shed in County Louth and the final phase of this highly successful cross-community initiative.



All Saints Caring Association – Community Based Economic & Social Regeneration Programme

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland joins Cannon Maze, Cllr. Kevin Campbell, Mayor of Derry City Council and Rev. Malcolm Ferry, Chair of All Saints Caring Association for a tour of the construction site for the new

Stewart Memorial Community Hall. The £750,000 cross-community peace and reconciliation venue will enable the group to accommodate community activities for the area including drop-in schemes, training courses and community relations programmes.





Riverine Autumn School 2012 – Leaving a Legacy Programme

The inaugural Riverine Autumn School 2012, a weeklong diverse programme of highly interesting free admission events, was formally launched in October 2012. The Riverine Autumn School is funded by the International Fund for

Ireland as part of its overall commitment to the Reconciliation through the Riverine Project. Pictured at the launch are left to right: Cllr. Dan Kelly, Strabane District Council; Charlene Logue representing the Co-chairperson of the Riverine Forum; Winston Patterson, Board Member, International Fund for Ireland; and Mayor of Donegal, Cllr. Frank McBrearty.

Launch of e3 Facility – Pre-2006 Programme

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland joined with (L-R): Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Principal and Chief Executive of Belfast Metropolitan College; Dr Stephen Farry, Employment and Learning Minister; and Richard O'Rawe, Belfast Metropolitan College Chairperson for the official opening of the new state-of-the art e3 (enterprise, employability and economic development) building in West Belfast in September 2012. The e3 facility will enhance the employability skills of its students, stimulate enterprise and support economic development.



Barron Hall – Community Based Economic & Social Regeneration Programme

David Graham OBE (right), Board Member of the International Fund for Ireland joined with (L-R): Kathy Wolff, Coordinator Community Relations Forum; Alderman Victor Robinson, Mayor of Newtownabbey Borough Council; and Seamus Kelly, Chair of Community Relations Forum for the

reopening of the historic Barron Hall in Glengormley two years after it was severely damaged in an arson attack. Renovation of the peace building and reconciliation hub was supported by the Fund and the Newtownabbey Borough Council through the EU PEACE III Programme.



Graduations – Community Leadership Programme

Over 50 community leaders from voluntary and community organisations across Northern Ireland and the six southern border counties graduated on Friday 6 July 2012 from the University of Ulster with a Certificate in Management Practice, funded by the International Fund for Ireland's Community Leadership Programme, managed by NICVA. The ceremony was held in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.