

# Building for the Future Working Group

## Advice Paper

### 1. Introduction

This is the second advice paper to be presented to the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors by the Victims and Survivors Forum Working Group on Building for the Future (BFF). It reflects the work of the Group over the last six months. It aims to highlight key issues and observations that emerged during reflection on presentations and literature on the role of formal and non-formal education in dealing with the impact of the enduring legacy of the Troubles on children and young people and their role in building a better and shared future.

Members of the Forum are united in expressing commitment that the violence of the past must never happen again. Education is a policy area which offers a direct route by which to address those issues which have separated us and continue to separate us. The paper provides advice and recommendations for the consideration of the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.

### 2. Background

In the first Advice Paper presented to the Commissioner in March 2013, the main themes were:

- The trans-generational impact of conflict related trauma;
- The Troubles and suicide;
- The enduring impact of the conflict on children and young people.

Since the presentation of the first Advice Paper, the Commission has initiated the Better Future Research Project that has drawn on the advice of the Working Group. This will be a 15-month independent study including a closer investigation into the link between the trans generational legacy of the Troubles and the increasing rates of suicide in Northern Ireland in the past decade. The study will continue the Working Group's consideration of the conflict's impact on young people. This will be undertaken through an exploration of the relationship between the affect of the Trouble's legacy on the social, economic and political life of Northern Ireland and the extent to

which they have impacted on children and young people's mental health and social wellbeing. The study will also complement the analysis in the paper relating the impact of the conflict's legacy in the early years development of children and young people.

The themes of the group's work plan for the last six months and of this Advice Paper for emerged during the preparation of the first paper and were identified in it. They are:

- Together Building a United Community
- Primary and Secondary Education

During the past six months, presentations were made to Working Group members by individuals with extensive experience of the Northern Ireland Education System and knowledge of peace building and the Together Building a United Community policy:

- Noreen Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Walker Ewart, Former Managing Inspector for Youth, Diversity, Culture, Arts and Leisure, Education and Training Inspectorate;
- Professor Tony Gallagher, Pro Vice Chancellor, Queen's University, Belfast;
- Professor Brandon Hamber, Director, International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE), University of Ulster.

The main aims and objectives of the Building for the Future Working Group were as follows:

- Consider the role and potential role of education in building for the future and helping young people to deal more effectively with growing up with the experience of the continuing impact of the Troubles in Northern Ireland
- Examine the development of the Together Building a United Community policy and consider where policy needs to progress.
- Produce a briefing paper to inform the Commissioner of the findings of the Working Group and report to the Forum Plenary.

### **3. Discussion: Schools and Teacher Education**

As with wider society, teachers and pupils still live with the legacy of violent conflict and of division. Periodically the education system has reflected on the purposes of education in such a society. With changing times and circumstances, questions of purpose, relevance and effectiveness must be revisited if the needs of young people and of wider society are to be addressed. In these conversations, victims and survivors have a distinct and valuable contribution to make. This discussion outlines some of the key issues for education in Northern Ireland as seen by the Building for the Future Working Group of the Victims and Survivors Forum.

Although, there has been a fall in residential segregation between 2001 and 2011, Northern Ireland is still a highly segregated society. Members of the Working Group noted that segregation is still particularly evident in housing, sport and education. In education, a range of policy objectives lead, whether deliberately or incidentally, to the preservation of structures which divide communities rather than bringing them together. In the course of the Troubles, a number of approaches have been taken to reduce the impact of separate schooling on community division. The impact of these initiatives is open to question.

Schools comprising the Primary and Secondary Education systems in Northern Ireland are diverse and generally reflect wider societal divisions. Young people are often divided by perceived academic ability, gender and religion. It caters for more than 330,000 young people. Broadly, schools belong to one of a number of management types or sectors:

- Controlled schools (non-denominational but mainly attended by pupils from the Protestant community);
- Maintained schools (Roman Catholic or other);
- Voluntary grammar schools;
- Integrated schools;
- Irish medium schools;
- Independent schools.

The vast majority of young people in Northern Ireland are educated in schools that draw predominantly from the Protestant or Roman Catholic community. Only 7% of young people are educated in Integrated Schools. This is despite many integrated schools being oversubscribed and a consistently high level of support for integrated education in public surveys. The growth of the sector

appears to have plateaued in the face of falling overall pupil numbers, rationalisation of the schools estate and a concern not to cause “disturbance to the status quo”<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of academic achievement, girls continue to out-perform boys and Catholics continue to out-perform Protestants. Those not receiving free school meal entitlement outperform those who are. Grammar schools out-perform non-grammar schools. This layering of differentials creates a compound effect so that at one end of the attainment gap the success rate for Catholic girls not on free school meals at A Level (grades A\*-E) is 66.2%, while at this same level the success rate for Protestant boys on free school meals is 13.4%. The causes of this disparity in achievement are currently the subject of a number of research initiatives and are diverse and complex. The consequence is that Northern Ireland has the longest tail of underachievement and the largest gap between high achievers and low achievers in any of the OECD countries.

Research conducted in 2002<sup>2</sup> found that of children aged 3 in Northern Ireland, 5% identified as either Catholic or Protestant. By the age of 6 that had risen to 34%. Similarly, 1% of 3 year olds made sectarian remarks and this had risen to 15% at age 6. There is no suggestion that separate schooling causes sectarianism but this research may suggest that separate schooling reinforces separate identities and perpetuates separate community affiliations. These findings also suggest that to address issues of sectarianism, early intervention and repeated interventions are necessary.

Northern Ireland spends approximately 30% more per capita on education than anywhere else in the UK and yet, due to inefficiencies in the system, it also spends less per pupil. There are some 85,000 unfilled school places across Northern Ireland. It has been estimated that duplication within the system costs an additional £300M per year.

It is clear that separate or segregated education represents a significant economic cost to the economy in addition to any potential social cost. The Working Group takes the view that policies and practices which maintain separate educational provision should be kept under review. Serious and focussed attention should be paid by the Department of Education to

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<sup>1</sup> Education Reform in Northern Ireland - a Human Rights Review (NIHRC)

<sup>2</sup> Connolly, P., Smith, A. & Kelly, B. (2002) Too Young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Community Relations Council.

minimising the negative economic and social consequences of a divided education system for communities, schools and children and young people. Many members of the group felt that denominational schools should be more of an exception rather than, as at present, the rule.

### **Teacher Education**

Initial teacher education is provided locally by Stranmillis and St Mary's University Colleges, the University of Ulster, Queen's University and the Open University. St Mary's is predominantly attended by Roman Catholics, and Stranmillis, predominantly by Protestants. However, it should be noted that approximately 20% of Stranmillis students are Catholic. University based teacher training is mixed.

Members of the Working Group noted that it is highly likely that teachers will have attended segregated schools and may have been trained in segregated teacher education institutions. If teachers are to be role models for pupils and are to lead in the implementation of Shared Education (see below) and the delivery of programmes of citizenship and mutual understanding, it seems necessary that teacher education should, as a central aspect, involve, at least, shared courses particularly between St Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges. The Group takes the view that as far as possible teachers ought to be educated together.

## **Educational Policy Responses to the Troubles in Northern Ireland**

In education, policy responses to community division and conflict have fallen broadly into four strands:

1. Contact programmes;
2. The Curriculum;
3. Integrated Education;
4. Shared Education.

### ***Contact programmes***

From the 1970's on, efforts were made to provide young people with opportunities to meet with pupils across the community divide. Initially these were voluntary activities but later they became policy. Some work was inspirational but in most cases, principals and teachers did not have the confidence to address sensitive and controversial issues. Many young people had pleasant experiences that had little impact. In practice, as well as in theory, questions remain about the effectiveness of contact alone as a means of addressing community division.

### ***The Curriculum***

The second strand also emerged in the 1970's and involved attempts to address issues of division and conflict through the curriculum. These included the development of common curricula and textbooks. Religious Education and History were the obvious components of the existing curriculum for attention. Two cross-curricular themes, Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage (CH) were formally introduced in 1989. They aimed to foster:

- Respect for self and others and the building of relationships;
- Understanding of conflict
- Appreciation of interdependence;
- Cultural understanding.

The new Revised Curriculum became statutory in 2007 and it aims to develop young people as individuals, contributors to society, the economy and the environment. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) replaced EMU in Primary schools. In terms of mutual understanding, PDMU involves learning about:

- Initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships;

- Human rights and social responsibility;
- Causes of conflict and appropriate responses;
- Valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity;
- Playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

Following evaluations of EMU, CH and extensive piloting and training, Local and Global Citizenship (LGC) was introduced as part of Learning for Life and Work at post-primary level.

Citizenship is build around four pairs of concepts:

- Diversity and Inclusion;
- Equality and Social Justice;
- Human Rights and Social Responsibility;
- Democracy and Active Participation.

These are to be investigated in local and global contexts using an inquiry-based approach along with active and participatory learning methodologies.

During the Curriculum Review process, rather than being a subject in its own right, LGC was subsumed into Learning for Life and Work. This has led to a number of negative consequences:

- LGC is not available as a GCSE;
- LGC is not available as a main subject in initial teacher education;
- LGC has a low status in many schools;
- Learning for Life and Work is often seen as one subject area and teachers may be required to teach all four strands (Employability, Home Economics, Local and Global Citizenship and Personal Development) despite a lack of training, expertise or even interest
- No clear professional cohort of cohort of self-identified citizenship teachers has emerged to offer mutual support and define professional standards.

Often, those teachers who have had training in LGC are not timetabled to teach it and those who do teach it have little or no training. In some of the recent literature it is clear that teachers' interest, commitment or conceptual understanding of LGC is weak. Teachers themselves often express the view that they have neither the skills nor the confidence to teach LGC, particularly the sensitive and controversial aspects.

Additionally, partly as a result of long delayed local government reform, the ELBs now are experiencing reduced staffing levels and low morale. School support has focused increasingly on school improvement and raising standards in numeracy and literacy often to the exclusion of other areas. Consequently, ELB in-service support for PDMU and LGC has all but ceased. These new subjects are particularly vulnerable to reducing standards and low status particularly as they have not been routinely inspected. It seems inevitable that the quality of teaching in these areas will continue to decline.

While PDMU and LGC are legally required elements of the Northern Curriculum, there are significant problems that hamper the effectiveness of these areas in practice.

Some feel that there are inherent and self-limiting weaknesses in the curriculum-based approach. No matter how good the curriculum or textbook, it is the interaction between the teacher and the pupils that really matters. Yet, for most pupils, their school and classrooms are populated by others from the same community background. Inevitably, there is an absent voice, a missing perspective. Teachers may try to take on that role but often, without training, they cannot or will not.

### ***Integrated Education***

Initially, the integrated education movement was led by highly motivated parents but gained only rhetorical support from Government. The first integrated school, Lagan College, opened in 1981. The 1989 Education Reform Order brought more significant recognition and support from Government. The Department of Education has a statutory responsibility to promote integrated education but growth of the sector has now plateaued. Some are uncomfortable with the wider adoption of integrated education, as it may be perceived as a threat to parental choice and the erosion of rights to faith based education.

Research and opinion polls consistently show a strong demand for integrated schools from parents. While some 500 pupils are refused admission to integrated schools annually because of a lack of capacity, many who express support, do not ultimately send their children to integrated schools. This may be because a whole range of reasons for example, they have no local integrated option, family tradition, or concern about academic achievement.

Some see Integrated Education as the way forward in Northern Ireland while others believe that it will remain a small but important sector within the education system.

### ***Shared Education***

The Department of Education defines Shared Education as “the organisation and delivery of education so that it:

- Meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- Involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- Delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion”.

The Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) comprised of 19 projects funded by the International Fund for Ireland, through the Department of Education, and in some cases with additional funding from Atlantic Philanthropies. It aimed 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.

Some examples of Shared Education merely involved pupils from two schools sitting in the same classroom and little else. Others exemplified more effective practice by promoting safe spaces for young people in which to build trusting relationships and discuss difficult and sensitive issues.

The biggest challenges for schools involved in SiEP have been identified as timetabling, movement between schools and school culture or school rules (for example, one school may allow makeup while the partner school does not).

Shared Education side steps arguments about integrated versus separate schooling and potentially offers a way forward for all schools in a scenario where integrated education remains a small sector.

Shared Education has received significant support in the Programme for Government and from the Ministerial Working Group on Shared Education. Shared Education may open the possibility of dealing with the difficult issues in ways that have proved illusive in the past, but this is likely only to happen if the Department of Education makes a commitment to making it happen.

The recent evaluation of the Sharing in Education programme conducted by ETI made a number of important observations and recommendations which are seen by the Working Group as essential to Shared Education.

1. The interests of young people rather than institutions ought to be at the centre of efforts to improve educational provision;
2. Shared education is not an event or a series of lessons but, rather a process in which to embed a whole school approach to prepare young people better for life and work;
3. A definition of Shared Education is offered arising from the experience of SiEP (emphasis is theirs):

“Shared Education involves young people from **diverse** backgrounds learning together, enabling them to recognise and value diversity and develop higher levels of **mutual understanding**. It refers to methodologies and environments where pupils interact by sharing, building on and widening one another’s knowledge, skills and experiences and beginning to **reconcile** differences to promote a shared future. Shared education is more than just a shared space.”

The ETI definition places diversity, mutual understanding and reconciliation at the heart of Shared Education. Currently, Shared Education may encompass partnerships between schools within the same sector. Yet currently, there is no requirement that partnerships should be established across the community divide. In some cases, perhaps because of distance, cross community partnerships are difficult or impractical to establish or sustain. However, the

BFF Working Group recommends that where ever possible, partnerships should be established on a cross community basis and that meaningful incentives should be provided to schools to establish and maintain them.

The ETI Report also asserts that Shared Education is not just about shared space. It requires planned, active and considered interventions to ensure that it is a positive learning experience for all pupils and teachers. Again, the Working Group recommends that guidance and resources are made available to schools to foster positive relationships and address issues related to dealing with the past, building for a better and shared future and reconciliation.

### **Education, Victims and Survivors**

In recent times there have been a number of initiatives to enable former paramilitaries, former combatants and former prisoners to relate to pupils in school settings the story of how they came to be involved in violence, the impact of prison and the contribution they are now making to society. Of course, initiatives of this kind are often challenging and must be handled sensitively but they can be an important element in helping young people to understand the recent past.

However, it should be noted that in general, it is much less common for victims, survivors or former members of the security forces to participate in educational activities of this kind. The BFF Group believes it is important that young people are exposed to a wide range of experiences, including those of victims, survivors and former members of the security forces, if they are to develop a balanced understanding of the nature of division in Northern Ireland and of the impact of violence on society.

One group member said, “I feel it is important that victims and survivors share their stories with children, not in a ‘heroic’ way, but in a factual way. How family life was before, immediately afterwards, and now. We never want this to happen again and a demonstration that victims who were hurt and different

paramilitaries can sit together, share their story and respect each other is a strong positive message”.

In the previous advice paper, the Working Group noted that communication and a culture of silence represent key mechanisms that potentially cause the transmission of trauma across generations impacted by the conflict. Members recommended the development of practical guidance for victims and survivors to assist them in managing their conversation about the traumatic impact of the Troubles with young members of their immediate family. A further positive development would be the creation of resources for use in schools and non formal educational settings to:

- Raise awareness of the transgenerational transmission of trauma and practical approaches that address the culture of silence;
- Enable young people to develop greater emotional resilience and place a stronger focus on issues related to mental health.

In the previous advice paper, the alarming rise in suicide rates and causal connections to the conflict were noted and further research recommended. The Group further recommends that steps are taken to ensure that suicide awareness is made a required element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

## **Conclusions**

While education cannot be asked or expected to solve the problems of a divided society in Northern Ireland living with the legacy of the past, it is incumbent on decision makers to give due regard to the role of education in dealing with the past and building for the future. The costs of not helping our young people to deal with the past will fall to those young people and on wider society. These costs may well include on going segregation and renewed violence. Other costs are likely to arise from policing, youth justice, unemployment and so on.

The Victims and Survivors Forum recommends that the Commission for Victims and Survivors liaise with relevant Government Departments as a matter of priority to:

- Ensure that legislation, policies and practices which maintain separate educational provision are kept under review. Serious and focussed attention should be paid by the Department of Education to minimising the negative economic and social consequences of a divided education system for communities, schools and children and young people;
- Ensure that the arrangements for teacher education should be kept under review. The Group takes the view that teachers ought to be educated together as far as possible. This may be achieved through a robust shared education model where all student teachers regularly move between institutions as part of their core training rather than as a peripheral or voluntary activity. Another option is the rationalisation of teacher education provision to reduce the number of institutions, to increase contact, to make more efficient use of resources and to address the current over supply of teachers;
- Keep the curriculum under review to ensure that the legacy of the Troubles, issues of division and building for a better and shared future are addressed adequately and are acknowledged to be high priority themes for education in the context of a Northern Ireland transitioning to a more peaceful and stable society;
- Ensure that suicide awareness is made a required element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- Ensure that Shared Education, PDMU and Local and Global Citizenship are adequately supported through effective and agreed preservice and inservice teacher education; the allocation of appropriate budgets, staff, resources

and time within schools. The ETI should keep under review their arrangements for reporting on these areas.

- Move away from the current model of schooling based on religious denomination to a position where denominational schools are more of an exception rather than, as at present, the rule. Where that is not possible, cross community Shared Education initiatives should be implemented.
- ensure that shared education partnerships are not normally be established between schools drawing from the same religious background.. It is preferable that partnerships are established between schools which are predominantly Protestant and predominantly Catholic;
- Develop teaching and learning resources to:
  - Raise awareness of the transgenerational transmission of trauma and practical approaches that address the culture of silence;
  - Help young people develop greater emotional resilience and offer a stronger focus on issues related to mental health and suicide in schools.

To be effective, new resources need to be supported by teacher training. A formal process should be established to bring together key stakeholders, including teachers, to develop high quality resources and training programmes for teachers to support effective use of the resources;

- Schools and the wider education system should move towards a context where there are regular, widespread and appropriately facilitated opportunities for young people to discuss issues related to the legacy of the past, and building for a better future. Priority ought to be given by the Department of Education, schools, initial teacher education institutions and inservice training providers to ensuring that teachers are trained and equipped to make best use of existing curricular opportunities;

- The ETI should monitor and report on the effectiveness of the allocated funds to support the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy in schools. In order to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the impact of the work of community relations projects, ETI should also be involved in the evaluation of projects funded by OFMdfM.

## **4. Discussion: Shared Future**

Following a long consultation process A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland was published in March 2005. It was followed by the Shared Future Triennial Action plan 2006 identifying obligations in a number of areas. Priority areas included shared education, and ensuring that a voice is given to victims.

After a period during which the devolved institutions were suspended, they were restored in May 2007 and OFMdFM committed to the development of a new strategy integrating Race and Community Relations policies. Together Building a United Community (TBUC) was published in May 2013. The TBUC strategy provides a long-term strategic framework to support the development of improved community relations through a vision to deliver a shared and better future in the years ahead and it important focus for consideration for the Better Future Working Group.

### **Commentary on Victims and Survivors**

The TBUC strategy contains comparatively few references to victims and survivors of the conflict in Northern Ireland and yet there is no other constituency that deserves a peaceful and reconciled society in Northern Ireland more than those who suffered most during the decades of the Troubles.

### **The BFF Working Group welcomes the initiatives and commitments contained in the TBUC Strategy**

One of the strategy's key priorities is to improve the lives of children and young people given the acknowledged long-standing barriers that prevent our young people from coexisting in a shared and tolerant society. The barriers identified in the strategy include sectarianism and the segregated nature of

our housing and education system as well as the physical divisions and 'invisible lines of separation' which prevent our young people from enjoying meaningful shared experiences with one another.

### **Inter-generational Impacts**

The Working Group welcomes the TBUC strategy's recognition of the enduring intergenerational impact of the conflict on the lives of children and young people. The profound impact of the Troubles on the lives of generations of individuals and families is of course a perennial concern for the Commission for Victims and Survivors and the Victims and Survivors Forum. Research undertaken during the CNA (Comprehensive Needs Assessment) highlighted the potential psychological impact of the transgenerational legacy of the Troubles on generations of young people.

We therefore welcome the strategy's recognition that 'the legacy of the Troubles here continues to impact on the everyday lives of our people' and the importance of focussing on a more inter-generational approach to building good relations'.

### **Education**

Flowing from the key focus on children and young people the TBUC strategy contains a shared aim 'to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.'

Significantly, the roles of children and young people and our education system are recognised within the strategy as two important contributors in building a united and shared society in NI. The strategy highlights the enduring impact of segregation and sectarianism on the lives of children and young people living in different communities throughout NI. The commitments to enhance the quality and extent of shared education and to create ten shared educational

campuses are particularly welcome. However, a review of legislation and regulations relating to school collaboration and shared management would help to facilitate more meaningful sharing. Schools, particularly those based on shared campuses should be incentivised to pilot models for shared management of schools which may in time have a wider application across the system.

### **Teacher Training**

TBUC makes some limited commitments to ‘provide more opportunities for sharing within teacher training’ referring also to the already initiated two-stage Study of Teacher Education infrastructure.’

Tony Gallagher’s presentation to the Working Group highlighted some of the on going structural barriers that need to be addressed to ensure meaningful sharing in teacher training. The issue in itself is very heavily politicised and has been for many years. Strong political leadership is required by DUP and Sinn Fein to ensure that while universities may be best placed to provide teacher training, they provide it in a shared and equitable teaching environment for all.

### **Early Years**

The TBUC strategy highlights the early years development of children as a critically important phase for interventions in countering the regeneration of sectarian attitudes and opinions and beliefs that can further shape the rest of their lives. The Strategy also places a primacy on the role of parents and grandparents particularly during the pre-nursery period. Equally, the strategy emphasises the key role of nursery and primary school education in teaching practical ways that can support good relations.

## **Better Future Research Project (Early Years)**

Part of the Better Future Project undertaken by the Commission this year will conduct a literature review that will examine the impact of the conflict's legacy on the early years development of children. Findings from the literature review and wider report will support the Commission's advice to mitigate the impact of the legacy of the Troubles on the early years development of children inside and outside the education setting.

Commission and Forum need to keep under review the implementation of the key programmes and initiatives contained within the TBUC strategy. There is a need to monitor how it effectively acknowledges and addresses the structural barriers perpetuating sectarianism and segregation in a society emerging from four decades of conflict.

## **Conclusions**

The Working Group welcomes the publication of the TBUC strategy as long-term strategic framework to support the development of improved community relations. In particular the Working Group welcomes:

- The commitment to enhance the quality and extent of shared education;
- The commitment to provide more opportunities for sharing within teacher education;
- The commitment to create ten shared educational campuses;
- The recognition of the early years as a critically important phase for interventions to counter sectarian attitudes and beliefs.

However, a review of legislation and regulations relating to school collaboration and shared management would help to facilitate more meaningful sharing. Schools, particularly those based on shared campuses should be incentivised to pilot models for shared management of schools which may in time have a wider application across the system.

It will be important for the Commission and Forum to keep under review the implementation of the key programmes and initiatives contained within the TBUC strategy and monitor how effectively it acknowledges and addresses the structural barriers perpetuating sectarianism and segregation in a society.

## **Advice and future work**

Having considered and discussed relevant literature and presentations over recent months, the Building for the Future Working Group wish to put forward the following advice/recommendations. These relate to future work and research, the operation of the Forum and actions to be considered by the Commission.

### **Future work / Research**

1. The Better Future Research Project recommendation will make a significant contribution to our understanding of the enduring impact of the conflict on young people in Northern Ireland. CVS should raise awareness and implement the findings/recommendations that emerge from the report.
2. Further work could be conducted with individuals and agencies working within the non-formal education sector e.g. youth-based organisations working with children and young people. This would improve awareness of the types of initiatives currently employed by this sector in addressing how legacy issues are still affecting the lives of young people today.

### **The Operation of the Forum**

1. The Working Group recommends the establishment of ad hoc small specialist editorial groups to offer critical advice on papers produced by the Forum or Working Groups. The groups would be composed of individuals with expertise in the area being examined and would offer their professional assessment of advanced drafts of documents to be submitted to the Commission. The groups would be established as required and for a limited period.
2. The Commission and Forum should keep under review the implementation of the key programmes and initiatives contained within the TBUC strategy and monitor how effectively it acknowledges and

addresses the structural barriers perpetuating sectarianism and segregation in a society.

### **Actions to be considered by the Commission**

The Victims and Survivors Forum recommends that the Commission for Victims and Survivors liaise with relevant Government Departments to ensure that the following issues are addressed as a matter of priority:

1. Legislation, policies and practices which maintain separate educational provision are kept under review;
2. Priority is given to minimising the negative economic and social consequences of a divided education system for communities, schools and children and young people;
3. Arrangements for teacher education are kept under review and that teachers are, as far as possible educated in mixed environments;
4. Keep the curriculum under review to ensure that the legacy of the Troubles, issues of division and building for a better and shared future are addressed as a high priority;
5. Suicide awareness is made a required element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
6. Shared Education, PDMU and Local and Global Citizenship are adequately supported through preservice and inservice teacher education, the allocation of appropriate budgets, staff, resources and time within schools and that the ETI keep under review their arrangements for reporting on these areas.
7. In Shared Education, partnerships are not normally established between schools drawing from the same community background but rather between schools which are predominantly Protestant and predominantly Catholic;
8. High quality teaching and learning resources are developed to:
  - Raise awareness of the transgenerational transmission of trauma and practical approaches that address the culture of silence;

- Help young people develop greater emotional resilience and offer a stronger focus on issues related to mental health and suicide in schools;
9. Schools and the wider education system move towards a context where there are mainstreamed opportunities for all young people to discuss issues related to the legacy of the past, and building for a better future;
  10. The ETI should monitor and report on the effectiveness of the allocated funds to support the Community Relations Equality and Diversity policy in schools. In order to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the impact of the work of community relations projects, ETI should also be involved in the evaluation of projects funded by OFMdFM.
  11. Initiate a review of legislation and regulations relating to school collaboration and shared management to facilitate more meaningful sharing and establish pilot programmes for shared management of schools.