

Department of Education
Londonderry House
21/27 Chichester Street
BELFAST
BT1 4RL

1 June 1982

To: Education and Library Boards,
Governing Bodies,
Managers and Principals of all
Primary and Secondary Schools

THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS

1. Under the Northern Ireland Community Relations Order 1975, the Department of Education has a statutory responsibility for -

"formulating and sponsoring policies for the improvement of community relations".

2. Our educational system has clearly a vital role to play in the task of fostering improved relationships between the two communities in Northern Ireland. Every teacher, every school manager, Board member and trustee, and every educational administrator within the system has a responsibility for helping children to learn to understand and respect each other, and their differing customs and traditions, and of preparing them to live together in harmony in adult life.

3. The Department wishes to emphasise that it is not questioning the right to insist on forms of education in schools which amount to segregation. It considers, however, that this right is coupled with an inescapable duty to ensure that effective measures are taken to ensure that children do not grow up in ignorance, fear or even hatred of those from whom they are educationally segregated.

4. While it is aware that positive work to this end is already going on in schools, the Department of Education is also conscious of the need for continuing and greater effort. It wishes, therefore, to stress the need for all concerned in the education of children to keep this duty constantly in mind.

5. The Department will be promoting discussions on this aspect of the role of the education service in the Department's Summer Schools and the Schools Inspectorate is being asked to concentrate on promoting and encouraging ways of improving community relations in the course of their duties.

6. The Department would also welcome any ideas and/or suggestions for initiatives which you consider might assist in the promotion of improved community relations. Administrative responsibility for community affairs within the Department lies with the

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Telephone: Belfast 32253

to which any comments or suggestions should be forwarded. This Division will ensure that they are processed, involving other Divisions within the Department and the Department's Schools Inspectorate, as necessary.

7. Principals of schools are requested to bring this circular to the attention of individual members of staff. (Additional copies are enclosed for this purpose.)

J H Parkes

J H PARKES
Permanent Secretary

General Lesson.

CHRISTIANS should endeavour, as the Apostle Paul commands them, to live peaceably with all men (Romans, c. 12, v. 18), even with those of a different religious persuasion.

Our SAVIOUR, CHRIST, commanded his Disciples to love one another. He taught them to love even their enemies, to bless those that cursed them, and to pray for those who persecuted them. He himself prayed for his murderers.

Many Men hold erroneous doctrines; but we ought not to hate or persecute them. We ought to hold fast what we are convinced is the truth; but not to treat harshly those who are in error. JESUS CHRIST did not intend his Religion to be forced on men by violent means. He would not allow his Disciples to fight for him.

If any persons treat us unkindly, we must not do the same to them; for Christ and His Apostles have taught us not to return evil for evil. If we would obey CHRIST, we must do to others, not as they do to us, but as we would wish them to do to us.

Quarrelling with our neighbours and abusing them, is not the way to convince them that we are in the right, and they in the wrong. It is more likely to convince them that we have not a Christian spirit.

We ought, by behaving gently and kindly to every one, to show ourselves followers of CHRIST, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. (1 Peter, c. 2, v. 23.)

Issued,

November. 1863.

DUBLIN. PRINTED FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE,
By ALLEN, THOMAS & Co. (Limited).
527. 10000. 4 91.

Issued from 1835 onwards by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland with the requirement:

'that the principles of the Lesson be strictly inculcated in all schools admitted into connexion with them'

EUROPEAN STUDIES (IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN) PROJECT

1. 12-15 PROJECT

The project for 12-15 year old children, which involves 6 schools in each jurisdiction, ie England, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, attempts to encourage pupils in the islands of Ireland and Great Britain to explore, in the context of Europe, both the common roots and the rich diversity of their heritage. History and geography are the main subjects involved and pupils' skills in these subjects will be developed by way of individual and group research as well as project work and will also concentrate on the acquisition of new skills and techniques in the area of information technology.

Co-operation and collaboration between schools in the 3 jurisdictions (for the moment all GB project schools are in England) is at the core of the Project and takes the form of fieldwork, residential experience, exchange visits and communications via, for example, electronic mail.

2. 16-18 NETWORK

A sixth form dimension to the Project was initiated in 1987 by means of a pilot study. This involved linking Catholic and Protestant sixth formers in schools in NI with sixth formers in Belgium linked across their linguistic divide. As with the younger age group, the sixth formers also examined their common heritage in these islands in the context of the European Community of which they are all a part but there are many other important lessons to be learned also, for example, they learn that conflict - local, national, international - need not go on for ever and that men and women of goodwill and determination can abandon conflict and opt for co-operation as exemplified by the EC itself. The students learn that NI is not unique in having divisions, that other areas of Europe also have problems of a similar nature but that these can be resolved by negotiation and compromise. Young people in NI co-operating across our religious divide to attempt to explain the problems and challenges of our society to others find that they have more in common than they know. In July 1987, a residential conference brought together all the participating students in the Irish Institute for European Affairs,

Leuven, Belgium. The students were addressed by officials of the European Commission and Parliament, worked together on different group tasks and visited different locations in Belgium, Luxemburg and West Germany. The conference was a great success.

3. EXTENDED PILOT STUDY: 1988

The pilot study was extended in 1988 to include 2 schools from the Republic of Ireland, 2 schools from Northern Ireland, one school from England and 5 schools from Belgium. The project is attempting to link all 10 schools through an electronic mail network and through the use of a video system. The latter has been used to exchange personal information about the group of students in each school and about the school and its local environment. The focus of study once again is "Conflict and co-operation in Europe in the 20th Century" which was the main topic for discussion in the original pilot.

The extended pilot has confirmed the view that young people from these islands can work together successfully on a study of contemporary problems within the context of Europe and that successful inter-action can be achieved through a mixture of electronic, video and residential contact.

4. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The European Studies Project is led by the Director, Dr Roger Austin, who is a Lecturer on secondment from the University of Ulster. He oversees developments in each of the 3 participating education systems and is assisted by a Field Officer in each region. The 3 Field Officers are serving teachers seconded for the duration of the Project. The Project HQ is in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra, Co Down.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee has been established to oversee both the main 12-15 Project and the 16-18 Extended Pilot Study. Its Chairman is Dr T K Whitaker, a former Permanent Secretary in the Irish Civil Service. Members have been drawn from all 3 jurisdictions and meetings rotate between Dublin, London and Belfast.

EUROPEAN STUDIES (IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN) PROJECT

DESCRIPTION, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY, ULTIMATE PURPOSE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document describes the European Studies (Ireland and Great Britain) Project at four levels. Initially, the project is set in its context. There follows a general description of the project, a definition of aims and methodology and finally, a statement of the educational thinking on which the project is founded. It is important that the philosophy underpinning the project be clearly enunciated, as "European Studies (Ireland and Great Britain)" must be able to "stand alone" as an educational project in its own right, to avoid its being labelled as political. The final section contains a more specific delineation of the aims of the Project and indicates, in general terms, its probable methodology.

2. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

2.1 The islands of Ireland and Great Britain, although relatively small in geographical terms, contain a variety of cultures and identities, deriving from successive waves of immigration and internal migration. The Celts, Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Normans and other European peoples have left their mark as, in more recent times, have immigrants from other parts of the world. Cultural diversity in the archipelago is reflected especially in the variety of languages and dialects - and their associated literatures - including English, itself now an international language, and English literature, which has come to express a world-wide human experience. The complex relationships between peoples and cultures in these islands have caused tension and conflict but they also have been enriching and mutually beneficial - rarely have they been easy or straightforward.

2.2 Historically, the peoples of the archipelago have exerted an influence out of all proportion to the area or population of the islands. From the earliest times, emigrants from the islands have effectively helped to shape world history, for good as well as ill.

2.3 Young people must come to terms with the interwoven cultural strands which are to be found in the two islands and understand the roles played by Ireland and Great Britain in Europe and in the world.

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

3.1 In an effort to encourage pupils in the islands of Ireland and Great Britain to explore both the shared experience and the rich diversity of their heritage, a study project, involving 6 schools in Northern Ireland, 6 in the Republic and 6 in Great Britain will begin in the school year 1986-1987. Specifically designed modules of study will be constructed for the first 3 years of post-primary schooling. The Project, which will mainly relate to history and geography, will develop pupil skills in these subjects by way of individual and group research and project work and will also concentrate on the acquisition of new skills and techniques in the area of information technology. It is hoped that the use, for example, of interactive video and computer mailing will not only enhance the various history and geography projects which should emerge, but will also enable pupils actively to acquire a range of valuable new skills in the handling of sophisticated modern technology.

3.2 An important area of the Project will be co-operation and collaboration between schools in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain. This will take the form of field-work, residential experience, exchange visits and

communication in project work via the various electronic media referred to above.

3.3 The Project will be co-ordinated by a director who will oversee developments in each of the 3 participating educational systems. The Director will be a person with significant interest in the subject matter of the Project and with considerable teaching and school management experience. He/she will be assisted by the appointment of a Field Officer in each area. This person will most likely be a serving teacher who will be seconded for the duration of the project.

3.4. To summarise; the Project will aim, through a programme of active learning and the active acquisition of new skills, to bring pupils in these islands to a deeper understanding of those culturally diverse elements of their heritage, both within the individual islands and in the archipelago as a whole, which unite them and divide them.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The following are the aims which the project will strive to achieve:-

- i. to study the shared experiences and inter-relationships between the islands of Ireland and Great Britain;
- ii. to help pupils to understand and appreciate the political, economic and cultural interaction, past and present, between the islands of Ireland, Great Britain and the wider world;
- iii. to help young people understand the social, cultural, economic and technological opportunities and problems facing society in Ireland, north and south, in Great Britain and in Europe;
- iv. to help pupils achieve a greater understanding of the communities of which they are members and to work for positive and empathetic relations between their own and other communities, so that they may have a more informed understanding of the predicaments and points of view of other cultural groups.

4.2 The Project will be concerned with both the cognitive and affective domains of education. It will present to pupils opportunities of engaging in research and rational enquiry and of presenting the results with clarity and objectivity as well as identifying and examining, in their own and other communities, the positive and negative elements that respectively support and undermine human values and so affect behaviour. These aims will be achieved through:-

- i. engaging pupils in comparative community studies, which will involve historical, geographical and economic materials as well as elements of the new technology;
- ii. facilitating purposeful curricular contact between teachers and pupils in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain through joint field work, residential experience and the new information technology;
- iii. producing teaching materials which involve local, national and international aspects of agreed themes, so that pupils will have opportunities to evaluate critically a variety of sources;
- iv. developing a planned programme of study with the objective of disseminating the programme, materials and expertise to all schools in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain who wish to avail of it and ultimately of providing a model for

international curricular co-operation in Europe and the wider world. To this end, an independent evaluation of the Project will be commissioned to document and present the results of the Project in a widely acceptable academic/educational framework.

5. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

5.1 The ultimate purpose of the Project is to further the personal and social education of pupils by helping them to develop mature relationships within the communities - local, national and international - of which they are members. The Project will foster a critical appreciation of how the community has formed the individual and the responsibility in turn of the individual towards the community. It will be particularly concerned with the identification of bias and prejudice and with the development of understanding and empathy between individuals and groups. The intention therefore is to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and insights to enable them to make judgements with a greater degree of awareness and responsibility, rather than to transmit a received attitude to the history of these islands and their current problems. The Project will operate in a network of schools whose pupils come from a variety of social, economic, cultural and political backgrounds, and will aim at making that network into a co-operative community of learners and teachers in which the varied backgrounds and aspirations of its members will be accepted and respected.

Circular No. 1987/47

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Telephone: Bangor 466311
Ext 2542, 2544, 2521,
2541

To: Principals and Governing Bodies
of All Recognised Schools and
Institutions of Further Education;
HQ Youth Organisations and Youth
Clubs; Community Groups and
Reconciliation Bodies

13 October 1987

Education and Library Boards,)
District Councils, Health and) For information
Social Services Boards and NICED)

CROSS COMMUNITY CONTACT SCHEME

1. The Minister recently announced a new grants scheme aimed at stimulating fresh initiatives designed to promote improved understanding and respect between children and young people from the two communities. A copy of the Minister's Press Release is enclosed for your information (Appendix I).

2. The Department now invites schools, institutions of further education, youth groups and any other organisations involved with children and young people, to submit proposals for consideration under this scheme. A copy of the application form is attached at Appendix II; Appendix III details some potential schemes and useful literature.

3. CRITERIA

Each proposal will be considered on the basis of the extent to which it fulfils the following basic criteria:

- i. that it will result in cross-community contact which will be purposeful and require a genuinely collaborative effort to achieve its aims;
- ii. that the activity proposed will be in addition to activities currently being undertaken;
- iii. that participation will be restricted to young people under 19 years of age; and

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- iv. that the participants are as far as possible mixed, on a religious basis, within the ratio 60:40/40:60.

In examining proposals the Department will give preference to well-planned, on-going and systematic schemes, rather than those of a one-off type; special consideration will also be given to projects involving neighbouring schools, youth clubs or other bodies, either working jointly or in larger groups.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications on Form CPI should describe the activity proposed and give a detailed breakdown of the numbers participating and the estimated costs. An explanation should be included of how the scheme is intended to improve community relations and mutual understanding, and details should be given of relevant current activities as well as any proposals for follow-on work. Where the application is NOT from a recognised school or registered youth club, details should be given of the organisation's aims, current activities, main office bearers and membership.

5. FUNDING

The level of funding for successful applications may be as high as 100% but will be determined on the basis of the merits of individual proposals and the response to the scheme generally. Payment will be conditional upon:

- i. the prior approval of the Department being received in writing before the expenditure is incurred;
- ii. the disclosure at application stage of any other source of statutory funding being sought for the activity; and
- iii. the production of receipts for the expenditure incurred.

6. REPORT

A joint report will be required from participating groups at the end of the project or annually in the case of longer term projects.

7. FUNDING

Applications will be considered on an on-going basis. £0.2m has been allocated to the scheme for 1987/88 and each of the following 2 financial years.

8. The Department will be happy to give assistance where possible if bodies wish, for example, to explore possibilities of establishing cross-community contacts. A number of the statutory and voluntary bodies are also in a position to assist: requests may be made in the first instance to the Department at the above address.



T. JOHNSTON
Assistant Secretary

R.R.

APPENDIX E

qcm mawhinney
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RBS/278/88

1 Mr Holmes
2 Mr Johnston to
return please

cc. *MAKBY*
Mr Parkes
Mr Semple
Mr Holmes
Mr Kirk

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1. This minute records the present state of play on our ideas for stimulating the mounting of a major conference on cultural diversity in Northern Ireland. It takes account of the discussion on 30 June between the Secretary of State and Dr Mawhinney, a further discussion which I had with Dr Mawhinney on 21 July, and meetings which CCRU and DENI officials have had with representatives of the Arts Council, the Ulster Museum, the Folk and Transport Museum, Linenhall Library, BBC and the Institute of Irish Studies.
2. Our main objective is to try to raise the level of public debate about cultural diversity in Northern Ireland. A secondary objective is to produce a soundly-based series of specific proposals for action by the appropriate bodies.
3. Ministers favour holding two conferences - one in Belfast, the other in the North-West. Our thinking is based on developing a mixture of the academic and the popular with the conferences providing the academic highlights and with the popular element including concerts, press contribution, radio and television programmes. Attendance at the conferences would be by invitation; the supporting/complementing events could be open to the public.
4. Given the need for proper planning and to secure the involvement of quality contributors, we think that holding the conferences in early 1989 is the most realistic target, but there could be a build up of events and publicity from the autumn.
5. A group to develop these ideas and to organise the conferences and associated events is being drawn together from the Arts Council, the Museums, the BBC

Secretary's Office
Received 29/7/88
29.7/8

and the two Universities. A key person will be the chairman of the group who would also chair the conferences and perhaps afterwards draw together a report on the proceedings with proposals for action; we need someone who has the time to devote to the task and would command widespread respect; he or she would have to be a good organiser and chairman; obviously we want someone who would take a realistic and sensible view of the issues. One of the names being canvassed is James Hawthorne, but other suggestions would be very welcome.

6. The Institute for Irish Studies at Queen's will probably provide the basic support for this exercise and it is likely that a full-time organiser will be needed for, say, 6 months.
7. The Secretary of State has agreed in principle to provide some financial support and a bid for this purpose had been included in our request for extra money for community relations in 1988/89. The International Fund is a potential source of funds if it decides to develop a community relations programme. We have floated these ideas with some of the charitable trusts and there is a chance that one or two may be willing to contribute to the costs. There is also the possibility that the private sector could be persuaded to contribute generally or to sponsor particular events. It is, I think, essential that Government is not the only financial supporter.
8. The next step is for the organising group to put specific proposals on paper to Government and other potential sources of support. We (ie CCRU and DENI) will continue to keep in close touch with their deliberations whilst encouraging the group, rather than Government, to assume the lead.
9. There are obvious dangers in seeking to open up in this way a wider debate about cultural diversity - we could find ourselves wasting money on events which brought no beneficial results; the whole exercise could be perceived as an Anglo-Irish plot to promote "Irish culture"; it could turn out to be far too academic and fail to grasp the public imagination; the focus could fall too heavily on Government's role and responsibilities; too much party political attention could be attracted, including Sinn Fein sponsorship of Irish language issues etc etc.

R.

10. However, we are reasonably optimistic that a carefully planned programme is possible and that it is capable of advancing the debate about cultural diversity in NI.

RM

R B SPENCE

28 July 1988

/JH

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY RELATIONS HOLIDAY SCHEME

The Department operates a Children's Community Relations Holiday Scheme which pays modest grants to assist groups organising holidays for mixed groups of Protestant and Catholic children.

The aim of the scheme, as with the Cross-Community Contact Scheme, is to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding.

DATA

Since the early 1970s some 30,000 children have taken part in the scheme.

X In 1988/89 110 holidays involving about ⁴⁰⁰⁰400 children will take place in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Europe and America.

Grants are paid at the following rates:

£3 per child per day maintenance costs for both main holidays and reunions.

75% of travel costs subject to a maximum of £10 per child for main holidays and £7 for reunions.

In total, £115,000 has been set aside for holidays in 1988/89.

A major evaluation of the Holiday Scheme was commissioned in 1987 and the results are expected shortly. In addition, several groups have undertaken their own reviews which indicate that joint holidays do produce a change for the better in the attitude of young people who have participated.

TARGETS/POLICY

The target of the scheme is to distribute the limited funds available so that the best return in the form of improved community relations is achieved.

If demand for grants exceeds the funds available, preference is given to those holidays which seem to offer the best return in terms of improving community relations - in other words where the holiday is part of an ongoing contact

programme. As part of this policy, grant has this year been restricted to groups which offer a residential reunion after the main holiday.

CROSS COMMUNITY CONTACT SCHEME

The sole objective of the Contact Scheme is to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding between young people from the 2 sides of the community.

DATA

At August 1988, 243 applications have been received. Approximately 170 of these have been approved of which:-

110 refer to inter-school projects involving 250+ schools

60 refer to inter-club and community groups involving 90+ groups

delete X
A typical number of young people involved in each scheme is approximately 50 (ie 2/school classes) although many are considerably more than this. Upwards of 8,000 young people are therefore currently involved in the cross-community contact scheme.

TARGETS/POLICY AIMS

The obvious target is to involve more young people in cross-community contact. In particular there are (geographic) areas where we would like to encourage greater co-operation, eg Londonderry, Cookstown, Downpatrick, etc. The Grammar School sector is another area which we would wish to concentrate on.

In terms of "improving information" the possible computerisation of data relating to the Contact Scheme is about to be investigated.

As far as assessment is concerned, the Department is constantly refining the Scheme in an effort to achieve maximum value for money in community relations terms. It is still "early days" but professional evaluation of the scheme is a possibility.