Evaluation of the Sharing Education Programme

Programme Level Summative Evaluation Report (Year 1 – 3)

Final Report

May 2014
# Table of Contents

1  INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF REPORT ................................................................. 1

2  KEY FINDINGS.................................................................................................. 5

2.1  PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE...................................................................... 5

2.2  ADVOCACY STRATEGY/PLAN AND PERFORMANCE ............................... 5

2.3  SEP IMPACT ON SOCIETAL WELL-BEING ............................................... 7

2.4  SEP EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS .................................................................. 11

2.5  SEP VALUE FOR MONEY / ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS ......................... 16

2.6  BENEFITS OF SHARED EDUCATION......................................................... 27

## Appendices

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SEP INTERVENTION MODELS
1 INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF REPORT

RSM McClure Watters (in association with Boyd Associates) was commissioned in 2010, on behalf of the Shared Education Learning Forum (SELF), to undertake an external evaluation of the Sharing Education Programme (SEP).

SEP is a non-governmental intervention that encourages schools in Northern Ireland (NI) to collaborate across sectoral boundaries. The hypothesis underpinning the Programme is that;

“significant, sustained and ‘normalised’ collaborative contact will allow substantive relationships between peers and school communities to evolve across traditional, community divides (Protestant and Catholic) and that interdependencies between schools and real reconciliation effects will result”.

It is important to note that the SEP model does not require reconciliation/community relations to be the subject matter of the mixed classes/contact and the mixed classes that have been developed have undertaken the full range of normal curricular and extra-curricular subjects.

SEP is comprised of three separately managed projects, funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and Atlantic Philanthropies, namely:

- The Fermanagh Trust’s (FT), Shared Education Programme;
- The Queen’s University Belfast’s (QUB), Sharing Education Programme II; and
- The North Eastern Education and Library Board’s (NEELB), Primary Integrating/Enriching Education (PIEE) Project.

The programme’s logic model identifies the following anticipated short-term and long-term outcomes:

Table 1: Short and Long Term Outcomes of SEP Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Benefits of Sharing</td>
<td>Short-term Outcomes: Greater opportunities for cross-sectoral sharing and collaboration. Additional enhanced educational experience obtained through collaboration amongst pupils and teachers beyond current DE policies. Long-term Outcomes: Institutional barriers to continued and/or expanded sharing and collaboration removed at school level and an increased level of sharing is embedded into schools. Reduced incidence of single identity area learning partnerships and cross-sectoral options proposed and explored in planning future education provision (Fermanagh in particular).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal Benefits of Sharing</td>
<td>Short-term Outcomes: Increased number of sustained pupil to pupil cross-community relationships/friendships.</td>
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## Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers leading by example in cross-sectoral relationship building and fully trained to deliver shared education and address any sectarian issues which arise in schools, and be aware of where to source further support.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Long-term Outcomes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive cross-community relationships developed and sustained ‘in’ and ‘out’ of the school setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurable reduction in cultural barriers as perceived by pupils and between school communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased visibility and support for the general concept of cross-community sharing and collaboration amongst school principals, local parents, politicians and communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased demand for openness to cross-community sharing and collaboration across wider NI education system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Economic Benefits of Sharing |
| Long-term Outcomes |
| Demonstrate the sustainability of the three projects in the longer term. |
| Cross-sectoral options explored to help sustain rural schools (Fermanagh). |

It should be noted that there are differences between the nature and extent of sharing between and within each of the three project strands and the focus of each of the intervention models. The distinguishing features of each project are summarised in Appendix 1 for information.

During the 3 Years of the SEP, its activity has encompassed the following:

- 158 schools, which formed 54 school partnerships, over the duration of the programme;
- Approximately 35,800 pupils, over the duration of the programme; and
- Approximately 28,300 hours of shared activity, over the duration of the programme.
The evaluation process incorporated the following key elements of research:

- Administration of a survey of both participating and non-participating (control group) pupils from the schools represented by each project. The survey work includes both a baseline and follow-up surveys;
- Focus groups with principal and teachers participating in shared education activities;
- Case studies of SEP School Partnerships (incorporating further primary research e.g. pupil focus groups, interviews with School Governors/Teachers, observation at shared events etc.); and
- An e-survey of governors within each of the selected case study partnerships.

This Summative Evaluation Report (SER) reflects the findings of fieldwork/analysis carried out from 2010-2013 at a programme wide level. Our research findings, as they relate to each project, are detailed within the SER’s developed for each project. In addition, we have completed 15 case studies of SEP Partnerships, which have been developed and submitted to SELF as 15 stand-alone documents.

Each of the three SEP projects were delivered over a three year period, with the FT and PIEE projects commencing in 2009/2010 and the QUB SEP commencing their programme in 2010/2011. Table 1.2 illustrates the timing of delivery for each of the three projects.

Table 1:2: Timing of SEP Delivery

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>QUB</td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIEE</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
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Table 1.3 overleaf illustrates the timing of RSM McClure Watters reports through the evaluation period of the Programme. The evaluation, which was commissioned in May 2010, involved:

- Development of a Baseline Survey both at a project and a programme level;
- Development of an Orientation Report which provided a summary of programme activities;
- Development of a Formative Evaluation Report (FER) for Year 1 and Year 2; and
- Development of Formative and Summative Evaluation reports at a project and programme level.

N.B. At the time of commissioning, FT and PIEE had largely completed the first year of their projects. An FER1 was not required for the FT project as an independent evaluation of the projects first year had already been commissioned.

\[N.B. \text{Despite the best efforts of the evaluators it proved impossible to create conditions in the schools over a 3 year period for a randomised control trial or a quasi-experimental design. The results of the quantitative analysis must therefore be interpreted in the context of data collected from different pupils within the control and experimental schools where the nature of the intervention was not consistent over time and within school year groups – some schools had very different patterns of sharing. Hence, the analysis cannot claim to be statistically robust in drawing difference between the two types of schools (control and experimental schools) or deducing cause and effect statements. Taking account of these qualifications, we have used the quantitative analysis to supplement the much more substantial body of qualitative work carried out in the schools.}\]
Table 1: SEP Evaluation Reporting Schedule

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<tr>
<td>Orientation Report</td>
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<td>Baseline Reports x3</td>
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<td>1 x Baseline Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIEE FER 1</td>
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<td>PIEE FER 2 (incl 2</td>
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<td>FT FER 2 (incl 2</td>
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<td>QUB FER 1 (incl 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUB FER 2 (incl 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>FER at a Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIEE (Year 3)</td>
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<td>SER FT (incl 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Level SER</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUB SER (incl 4</td>
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The remainder of this SER provides a programme level analysis of the SEP under the following headings:

- Programme Governance;
- Advocacy Strategy / Plan and Performance;
- Impact on Societal Well-Being;
- Educational Benefits; and
- Value for Money/Economic Implications.
2 KEY FINDINGS

2.1 Programme Governance

Based on discussions with key stakeholders and our observations to date, it is clear that there has been a high level of enthusiasm and commitment towards the effective implementation of SEP. The project leads (i.e. FT, QUB and NEELB) have been dedicated to ensuring that their respective programmes are managed effectively where they each demonstrate a detailed working knowledge and understanding of the individual school projects.

It is clear that the Shared Education Learning Forum (SELF) provides a valuable mechanism whereby project leads and key stakeholders can meet on a regular basis to share their experiences of SEP, as well as providing an opportunity for knowledge transfer and the cross-fertilisation of ideas. SELF has also been instrumental in guiding programme evaluation and in developing advocacy activities.

The relationship with Atlantic Philanthropies can be regarded as strong with the Project Leads having a direct line of communication to the funder. The relationship with IFI is less direct, as IFI commissioned DE (i.e. DE/IFI Liaison Team) to act as the management agent of their fund. Consultations with project stakeholders have highlighted that despite differences in interpretation (e.g. in the SEP Logic Model) and approach (e.g. vouching/verification process utilised by QUB) between the DE/IFI Liaison Team and project representatives, these issues were resolved during the early stages of programme implementation and the relationship with the DE/IFI Liaison Team has been working effectively since.

2.2 Advocacy Strategy/Plan and Performance

2.2.1 Overview of Policy Environment

Key developments taking place in the shared education policy environment during the 2010 – 2013 period include:

- Launch of DE’s policy, “Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education” (CRED) (March 2011). The main thrust of this policy is to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, by providing children and young people, in formal and non-formal education settings, with opportunities to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available. The document notes that:

  “the Department also recognises that a number of organisations, including local councils, voluntary and community organisations and philanthropic funders are engaged in this work. It is anticipated that their work will complement and in some cases support the policy objectives”

- The NI Assembly publication of a research paper entitled “Sharing and Collaborating in Education” (September 2011), which highlighted that Northern Ireland’s complex education system, falling rolls, surplus school places and a challenging financial settlement for education are factors that have been highlighted as suggesting a need for greater sharing and collaboration;
• The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister’s draft Programme for Government (2011-2015). Shared Education is referenced Under Priority 4 ‘Building a Strong Shared Community’ to include a commitment to:
  - Establish a Ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education;
  - Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015 and substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015;
  - Substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015; and
  - Significantly progress work on the plan for the Lisanelly Shared Education campus.

• Publication of the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG, February 2013) report on Advancing Shared Education concluded, largely from evidence gathered from the SEP that:

  “Schools that work together in relation to the sharing of resources, expertise and good practice, and that bring their children together to engage in meaningful educational activities, have been shown to produce clear and measurable improvements in outcomes compared to those that do not. Similarly, there is overwhelming evidence internationally that when meaningful and sustained opportunities are provided for children and young people from different backgrounds to learn together then this can result in improved attitudes and relationships (MAG Report, 2013 xvi).”

• The First and Deputy First Ministers (Together: Building a United Community – T:BUC (May 2013)) announced that work on 10 shared education campuses will commence within the next 5 years, offering the potential for shared classes and subjects. T:BUC also adds significant momentum to the PfG commitments on shared education:

  “We believe that creating more opportunities for socially-mixed, shared education, with a view to achieving a full shared education system in Northern Ireland, is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of inter-generational educational underachievement, unemployment, and sectarianism; and improving good relations amongst and for our young people. This must also be considered within the context of the increasing diversity of our society, which is reflected within the school environment. Through this Strategy, we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child’s educational experience.” T:BUC (2013: 48).

• The Education Minister’s (22 October 2013) statement on “Advancing Shared Education” highlights that Shared Education is now central to the Government’s policy on the future delivery of education within NI. The Minister noted that “shared education is one of the most important and sensitive challenges facing civic society”. The Statement also highlighted that central to educational policy, was the need for quality educational provision, and equality of educational achievement. The Minister acknowledged that shared education provides strong educational benefits, builds respect for diversity and good relations, promotes equality, and builds a confident community. The Minister welcomed all of the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Group, in relation to advancing shared education within Northern Ireland’s educational policy. Most notably, the Minister endorsed the mainstreaming of shared education, through legislative and policy reforms.

The above paragraphs highlight that Shared Education has gained increased visibility and acceptance within the local political environment during the 2010-2013 period. Its inclusion in the 2011-2015 PfG and the Education Ministers statement in October 2013, confirms that Shared Education is now central to the NI Executives policy on the future delivery of education.
The SEP, which is the subject of this evaluation, has played a critical role in shaping the policy agenda outlined in this section.

### 2.2.2 Key Observations

During SEP Year 1 – 3, the SELF provided a valuable mechanism whereby advocacy activities could be planned and co-ordinated. The “Sharing Education Learning Forum: Advocacy Plan - Paper Emerging from SELF Away-Day July 2010” (September 2010) also provided a useful strategic framework that outlined the advocacy role and activities of the projects, funders and SELF. It also recognised the ‘advocacy strengths’ of each of the projects and reflected these strengths in the roles/responsibilities allocated to each of the projects.

The type of advocacy activities that were undertaken by SELF/SEP included:

- Development of responses to policy consultations (e.g. the area based planning process);
- Attendance/hosting of conferences;
- Supporting SEP advocacy through additional research activity;
- Commissioning of DVDs, local press articles and radio/TV interviews to discuss the impact and benefits of SEP;
- Holding stakeholder presentations to highlight how Shared Education models contribute to the sustainability of educational provision;
- Attending all major political party conferences in order to maintain the profile of SEP in the political environment; and
- Sustained engagement with political representatives (e.g. meetings were held with members of the Education Committee and the policy advisors of the main political parties, to brief them about the SEP and its achievements to date; and in order to place the concept of sharing education onto the policy agenda).

It is clear that SELF (and the SEP representatives) have made a significant contribution to the discussion/debate around Shared Education policy and practice, which in turn, has led to the adoption of Shared Education as part of Government policy (as highlighted above).

### 2.3 SEP Impact on Societal Well-Being

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation identifies a requirement to determine if:

“Shared education leads to greater tolerance, mutual understanding and inter-relationship through significant, purposeful and regular engagement and interaction in learning; and

It leads to a reduction in barriers between school communities; create greater awareness of the benefits cross-sectoral working and the potential opportunities that sharing and collaboration can create”.


2.3.1 Key Findings

Principal/Teacher Perspectives

Principal and teacher focus groups have highlighted that:

- Principals and teachers have embraced the concept of cross-community sharing and collaboration/partnerships. It is clear that principals and teachers have shown leadership, commitment and drive to the delivery of SEP; and
- All principals and teachers agreed that SEP provided a significant opportunity for pupils to interact and develop friendships with pupils from a different religious background and that it was contributing to the development of tolerance and mutual respect. The programme also allowed pupils to explore any misperceptions they may have about different religions / cultures within their community.

Pupil Perspectives

- The pupil surveys identified that the follow-up intervention group have experienced a higher frequency of contact in a shared class setting than the baseline and control group, therefore contributing to the development of relationships through regular engagement and interaction in learning. 56% (n=1,271, base=2,260) of the 2011 follow-up intervention group and 50% (n=1,121, base=2,258) of the 2012 follow-up intervention group identified that they had experienced contact of six times or more in the last year compared to 37% (n=471, base=1,292) of the baseline intervention group and 7% (n=152, base=2,259) of the control group;
- 25% (n=532, base=2,164) of pupils within the baseline survey reported that they have no friends of a different religion outside of school. This decreased to 21% (n=478) in the 2011 follow up survey and 22% (n=483) in the 2012 follow up survey. The 2012 survey indicated that 12% (n=276) of pupils reported that ‘about half’ their friends were from a different religion compared to 9% (n=190) of baseline intervention group. This indicates that the programme is encouraging cross-community friendships;
- The results of the pupil survey support the views emerging from principals/teachers that the development of tolerance and mutual respect is apparent i.e. 55% (n=1,173, base=2,165) of the baseline group, increasing to 59% (n=1,332, base=2,259) of the 2011 survey group and 62% (n=1,390, base= 2,250) of the 2012 survey group are either ‘not really’ or ‘not at all interested’ in finding out about other people’s religions. The key reason for this response was that ‘religion does not matter’, ‘religion does not make a difference /all people are the same’; and
- The majority of respondents from both the baseline survey (75%, n=1,597, base=2,145), the 2011 follow-up survey (74%, n=1,666, base=2,237) and the 2012 follow-up survey (75%, n=1,674, base=2,232) identified that religion is not important when making friends. This indicates that pupils’ views are less entrenched in terms of religious/community difference.
School Governor and Parent Perspectives

- The majority of principals and teachers across the partnerships reported that parents and governors have been supportive of SEP. A small number of instances were cited where parents were initially reluctant to let their child to participate in shared classes. However, as the programme progressed into Year 2 and Year 3, attitudes shifted and parental support had grown; and
- As an indicator of parental support, pupils were asked to identify whether their parents think that shared classes with pupils from another school who are a different religion are a good idea. 50% (n=1,135, base=2,264) of the 2011 follow-up survey and 50% (n=1,127, base=2,252) of the 2012 follow-up survey reported that 'yes' their parents think that shared classes are a good idea, compared to 4% (n=97) of 2011 survey group and 6% (n=135) of the 2012 survey group who reported 'no'. 46% (n=1,032) of the 2011 survey group and 44% (n=990) of the 2012 survey group pupils stated that they were 'not sure'.

Case Studies Findings

During the evaluation period, 15 case studies were carried out to provide an in-depth qualitative understanding of shared education in practice, namely:

- 5 case studies (4 primary school partnerships and 1 post primary partnership) were conducted in 2011;
- 6 case studies (4 primary school partnerships and 2 post primary partnerships) were conducted in 2012; and
- 4 case studies (4 post primary partnerships) were conducted in 2013.

The following section provides a summary of the key findings from these case studies.

- Principals and teachers across all case study partnerships identified that SEP is enhancing community relations by breaking down cultural barriers between communities and increasing mutual understanding and respect for one another through engaging the local community in a range of SEP related events;
- Principals and teachers agreed that as a result of SEP, pupils have a better understanding / acceptance of different cultures / religions as the programme has promoted discussions about the similarities/differences amongst the different religions. Consultees noted that the younger primary school pupils have no/limited knowledge of any differences amongst one another apart from their different school uniforms/school buildings;
- Principals and Teachers agreed that SEP has broken down barriers and any misconceptions regarding pupils from different school classifications (i.e. grammar, secondary, maintained, controlled, integrated) and children with Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- In terms of other cross-community programmes, some of the partnerships had engaged in other cross-community projects/initiatives prior to SEP e.g. Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) programme and the School’s Community Relations Programme (SCRP), where contact was often limited to one-off events. In the vast majority of cases, consultees cited that the SEP model of sustained regular contact provided the opportunity for pupils to develop friendships in a non-contrived manner;
- Principals and teachers agreed that as the programme progressed it became more normalised and embedded within each of their schools;
• Principals and teachers across all partnerships agreed that pupils developed their social skills and confidence with regards to engaging with other individuals from a different community background; and

• All consultees agreed that pupils have met new friends from a different community background with some friendships extending to outside of school. The programme has also facilitated on-going working relationships between the teachers.

Conclusions

The results of the pupil survey highlight that lower proportions of the 2011 and 2012 survey groups have no friends of a different religion outside of school, when compared to the baseline survey group. In addition, when compared to the baseline, a higher proportion of the 2011 and 2012 survey groups indicated that they were ‘not really’ or ‘not at all interested’ in finding out about other people’s religions, as they suggested that ‘religion does not matter’, ‘religion does not make a difference /all people are the same’. The quantitative data suggests that the SEP has contributed to the development of cross-community relationships, greater tolerance and mutual understanding of different religions.

The qualitative data emanating from teacher focus groups and partnership case studies identifies that principals and teachers view the level and sustained nature of pupil contact delivered by the SEP as being effective in generating cross-community friendships and developing greater tolerance and mutual understanding. Examples of quotations gathered from our fieldwork, which highlight these perspectives include:

“The children are meeting up outside of school. If the foundation is there and they are starting at that age, you hope for it to continue. The longer we work together, the more years they can develop and get to know each other better.” (Teacher)

“There is definitely a change in attitude not only with the children but in the town generally and SEP has played a part in this.” (Principal)

“It helps to promote the school in a different way and breaks down the preconceived ideas about what the schools promote internally.” (Teacher)

“The biggest plus is that they are now starting to forge links with other children and the barriers are starting to be broken down.” (Principal)

“You can see it clearly in the seat they sit on. At the start they would have huddled together in school groups but now they don’t mind they just sit anywhere or they sit beside their new friends.” (Teacher)

“SEP can only do great good. Young people are meeting at a young age i.e. starting in P1. Later on when they attend post-primary school, pupils will meet people they have met through SEP. Children will know each other and respect each other.” (Principal)

“Friendships have definitely grown this year compared to last year. Although they were all in the playground together last year you could see that each school would stay in separate groups but there has been a lot more intermingling this year.” (Teacher)

“Because it was part of a weekly timetable it provides increased opportunities for friendships to be developed. The pupils don’t realise that they are mixing, it is just part of
the school day so it has become more normal for them – so friendships are not forced.” (Teacher)

“They are far more likely to talk to people and break down barriers; they understand where other people are coming from.” (Teacher)

“Children wouldn’t be aware of a difference if they didn’t see the uniform of the other children from our partner school.” (Principal)

“When they [pupils] do meet each other outside of school they don’t see the differences. They would be aware they are from a Catholic/Protestant school, but anything deeper than that I don’t think they have an understanding.” (Teacher)

2.4 SEP Educational Benefits

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation identifies a requirement to determine:

- How (if at all) shared education has improved the quality of education (however measured) for those involved; and
- What additional benefits accrue beyond pre-existing single identity collaboration?

2.4.1 Key Findings

Teacher Perspectives

- Approximately 81 focus group sessions were carried out during 2011 and 116 in 2012 representing 110 principals and 169 teachers and 114 principals and 171 teachers respectively. The focus group sessions indicated that there is overwhelming level of support for shared education, with the vast majority of principals and teachers articulating that SEP has positively impacted upon the quality of education offered to participating pupils;
- The majority of consultees noted that SEP has enriched and broadened the curriculum as it has provided a range of courses for pupils to avail of that otherwise would not be available on a single school basis. The range of additional new courses has also provided pupils with the opportunity to enhance/develop their knowledge and skills in a range of new subject areas. It was also identified that SEP has provided pupils with the opportunity to access specialist expertise, and increased/better quality resources;
- From a teacher’s perspective, consultees also reported that SEP has developed their professional relationships and enhanced their skills through the sharing of ideas and expertise with other participating teachers. Teachers have also been given the opportunity to explore other subject areas of interest; and
- Principals and teachers agreed that SEP provided schools with the opportunity to tailor the programme to suit the needs, interests and aspirations of individual pupils, particularly pupils with Special Educational Needs. In some instances, SEP provided pupils with their first opportunity to interact with pupils from the special/mainstream educational sectors.
Pupil Perspectives

The following table provides a summary of the 2011 and 2012 pupil survey responses with regards to the ‘best things about SEP’.

Table 2:1: Best Things about SEP

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<tr>
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<th>2011 Survey</th>
<th>2012 Survey</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘It has helped me to gain new skills and experiences’</td>
<td>65% (n=1,468)</td>
<td>66% (n=1,469)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I can now do activities that I wouldn’t otherwise have been able to do if there was no shared education’</td>
<td>53% (n=1,179)</td>
<td>46% (n=1,008)</td>
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<td>‘It has helped to make me more confident’</td>
<td>52% (n=1,164)</td>
<td>49% (n=1,081)</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘It has provided me with the opportunity to use resources and facilities (e.g. computers, equipment, play facilities etc.) in other schools and venues/places’</td>
<td>52% (n=1,164)</td>
<td>51% (n=1,125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I can now do activities in other schools and venues/places that I would not have been able to do in my own school’</td>
<td>39% (n=872)</td>
<td>37% (n=826)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It has helped me to gain a certificate/accreditation’</td>
<td>19% (n=423)</td>
<td>21% (n=460)</td>
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Salient points to note are:

- Over half of the pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up surveys identified that SEP enabled them to gain new skills and experiences and has provided the opportunity to use resources and facilities (e.g. computers, equipment, play facilities etc.) in other schools and venues/places;
- Over half of the pupils within the 2011 survey identified that they can do activities that they wouldn’t otherwise have been able to do if there was no shared education and that the programme has made them more confident. Although there has been a slight decline in the proportion of pupil responses against both statements in the 2012 survey, it is encouraging that almost half of the pupils cited that the programme has positively impacted on their confidence and has provided them with more opportunities to engage in new activities;
- Almost two-fifths of pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up survey identified that they were given the opportunity to participate in activities in other schools and venues/places that they would not have been able to do in their own school; and
- Approximately one-fifth of pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up surveys identified that SEP has helped them to gain a certificate/qualification.
Case Studies

Key findings emanating from the 15 case studies that were carried out over the evaluation period (2010-2013) include:

- The principals and teachers representing 4 primary school partnerships identified that SEP linked closely to the NI curriculum to include: Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and the World Around Us (WAU). Subjects such as art and design, drama and dance provided schools with the opportunity to broaden their curriculum and enrich pupil experiences. In addition, teachers felt that the ‘mutual understanding / understanding difference’ element of PDMU enabled better coverage of diversity and discrimination which enhanced the pupil’s educational experience;

- Principals and teachers agreed that as a result of taking part in the SEP the pupils gained a range of curricular and interpersonal skills such as: developing their teamwork and organisational skills;

- Consultees noted that SEP provided a number of educational benefits which they would not have had access to otherwise e.g. curricular educational trips; access to specialist expertise and access to increased/better quality resources;

- Principals and teachers representing the primary school case study partnerships also reported that the joint planning element of SEP was a particular benefit for teachers of small rural schools, as it enabled them to share skill sets/ specialisms that otherwise would not have been available. The planning element of the SEP provided teachers with the opportunity to meet and support each other on a professional level and to discuss curriculum / planning and educational issues relevant to the schools;

- Principals and teachers representing the post primary partnerships reported that the SEP curriculum enrichment courses provided schools with the opportunity to collaborate in order to meet the Department of Education’s requirements, as stipulated in the ‘Costello Report - Future Post-Primary Arrangements in Northern Ireland’ and the Entitlement Framework guidance, for enrichment activities;

- Consultees also noted that SEP allowed the schools to augment the curriculum by providing academic, vocational and personal development courses, as well as enabling pupils to acquire accredited qualifications. The programme has also allowed the schools to provide a wider selection of courses / activities for the pupils to avail of;

- Principals and teachers across all case study partnerships reported that SEP provides pupils with the opportunity to interact and learn from their peers. Pupils have the exposure to other individuals which enables them to develop their social skills, self-esteem and confidence, which will prepare them as they progress into post primary education / third level education / workplace;

- Principals and teachers reported that the accredited courses provided pupils with the opportunity to receive additional UCAS points thereby strengthening their UCAS forms for University;

- Teachers agreed that SEP enabled students to make more informed choices when deciding what course to study at University as the programme provided an opportunity for students to gain insight into what certain courses would entail. The courses on offer also provided pupils with an insight into what career they would like to pursue;

- Principals and teachers agreed that they enjoyed working and learning with other staff members within their partner schools. SEP enabled teachers to share resources, ideas and techniques with one another and build upon their existing skill sets;
Teachers reported that SEP has been beneficial for staff members who are the only teacher within their respective department. SEP has provided them with the opportunity to develop professional and personal relationships with their counterparts in the other schools. It was reported that this will have a positive impact upon the quality of educational provision within the Partnership, and within their respective school;

The external tutors, when used, provided teachers with the opportunity to access expertise and specialist knowledge and share ideas with one another. Teachers also acknowledged that shared classes have provided opportunities for classroom assistants to develop their skills; and

Principals and teachers within 2 case study partnerships made reference to the fact that some pupils may not be high achievers academically, but because SEP is not solely focused on academic subjects, this gives pupils the opportunity to develop their creative skills and enhance their academic development in other subject areas e.g. art and drama.

Conclusions

Feedback from principals and teachers has identified that SEP has positively impacted upon the quality of education offered to participating pupils, through enriching and broadening the curricular offering within each school. As a result, pupils have developed their knowledge/skills in a range of subject areas and learning from their peers in their partner schools.

Examples of quotations gathered from our fieldwork, which highlight these perspectives include:

“SEP linked very well with your curriculum and what topics you were teaching; it can be adjusted to suit, which was a great benefit.” (Principal)

“I feel now that our curriculum provision is outstanding between the schools and I think SEP has played a very significant part in this.” (Principal)

“We were able to add value to the wider pupil experience. We have all realised the importance of the pupil’s enrichment and SEP has allowed that to happen.” (Principal)

“The accredited courses like the first aid, the GAA coaching award and the ECDL are very popular because there is accreditation at the end of it and it means UCAS points for the students.” (Project Coordinator)

“The communication skills are incredible, some of the kids would not have great communication skills but they would be able to get up on stage now and speak.” (Teacher)

“The courses give the pupils a chance to push themselves further and develop independent learning. They also help students to build confidence and self-esteem.” (Principal)

“They have independence in what they are trying to do. The children have developed their thinking skills and personal capabilities whilst on the programme.” (Principal)

“Accessing specialist tutors increases the overall educational experience.” (Teacher)

“We saw children in their partnership pairs and I can certainly see the benefits of computer work, one child learning from the other. It is really interesting to see the less confident or
less academic flourish through peer learning rather than have a teacher stand over them and demonstrate.” (Teacher)

“There are a lot of skills gained, in terms of curricular skills, but also interpersonal skills, how they relate and dialogue – how they talk about their issues which they couldn’t do before.” (Principal)

“Children are growing in confidence through sharing their ideas, you can see them growing in confidence. I mean there is a different teacher in a different school each time – they are getting used to talking to three teachers. This year has been fantastic I have really enjoyed it.” (Teacher)

“The SEP has up skilled teachers. There’s an awful lot that the teachers have picked up on from the external tutors. It is about the teachers sharing ideas.” (Principal)

“I’ve been really challenged from a professional level. I’ve had to think of new ideas and be very creative in my teaching, which is great.” (Teacher)

“Children have benefited by learning together, challenging each other and through competition with other children, which is stimulating…” (Parent)

“SEP gives student’s access to a range of courses that they would not normally get access to within their own school.” (Teacher)

“I find it very beneficial for me as a teacher. I think you fall into a way of teaching and the longer that goes on you just carry on that way. With SEP, it pulls you out of your normal routine and forces you to do something a bit differently. You actually gain from it. It was great working with another teacher from another school and comparing how we taught and what we know. I got loads of ideas from her and I like to think I gave her some ideas also. I was able to take the learning back and do things differently with my own students.” (Teacher)

“I looked forward the challenges of working with students with different abilities than what I was used to.” (Teacher)

“It definitely has up-skilled the teachers. For the first time teachers from post primary schools are teaching in SEN schools. And my teachers are teaching children from a mainstream school. It has been tremendous for capacity building and the sharing of good practice.” (Principal)

Specific examples of educational benefit delivered by SEP include:

**Year 2**

- The FT’s Enniskillen Cluster offered up to 13 courses for Year 13 and 14 pupils (i.e. Key Stage 5) under their Post 16 Personal Development and Skills Programme. A total of 267 post primary school pupils were involved and over 120 pupils achieved ECDL, Life Saving, First Aid and Trampolining Awards. This was an additional programme, which offered pupils the opportunity to study courses that would not have been available in the absence of SEP; and
- The FT’s South Fermanagh Cluster also resulted in tangible educational outputs. This partnership delivered the ‘Reading Intervention Programme’ under SEP. The objectives of the
project include: to improve reading and spelling ages; to align pupils literacy skills with their non-verbal skills; to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum fully in Key Stage 3 and 4; to build and foster cross-community relationships; and to work together as a learning community. An nfer-Nelson (GL assessment) test was carried out at two points, at the start of the course (i.e. baseline) and the second at the end, in order to ascertain the extent to which reading results had improved. All students who took part in a baseline and follow-up test (i.e. 18 pupils), with the exception of one, improved their reading scores, providing evidence that the intervention has resulted in educational benefits. 7 pupils improved their reading scores by 10% or more in the 7 week period, to include one pupil who achieved a 19% increase.

Year 3

- The FT’s Enniskillen Cluster offered up to 19 courses for Year 13 and 14 pupils (i.e. Key Stage 5) under their ‘Post 16 Personal Development and Skills Programme. A total of 440 post primary school pupils were involved and 247 pupils achieved ECDL, Life Saving, Self-Defence, First Aid, Trampolining and Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Again, this was an additional programme, which offered pupils the opportunity to study courses that would not have been available in the absence of SEP; and
- The FT’s South Fermanagh Cluster also resulted in tangible educational outputs. This partnership delivered the ‘Reading Intervention Programme’ under SEP. A Spar (Special Programme in Assisted Reading) Reading Test was carried out at two points, at the start of the course (i.e. baseline) and the second at the end, in order to ascertain the extent to which reading results had improved. A total of 8 out of 13 (62%) pupils improved their reading scores as a result of taking part in the programme. 4 pupils improved their reading age between 7-14%. 3 pupils improved their reading age by 25% or more, whilst 1 pupil improved their reading age by 50%.

2.5 SEP Value for Money / Economic Implications

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation identifies a requirement to determine if sharing education is cost-effective, providing value-for-money, when set alongside existing provision of education.

Key Findings from Primary Research

The findings from teacher focus groups and case studies are consistent in terms of the value for money/economic implications of SEP. A summary of the key findings is provided below.

- The general consensus among the teacher and principal focus group participants was that SEP has offered ‘value for money’ as the programme enabled a significant enhancement of curricular delivery across all partnerships;
- Principals and teachers suggested that SEP provided direct economic benefits, however it was highlighted that it was difficult to quantify the extent of the economic benefits. Principals and teachers noted that SEP offered opportunities for economic savings through the sharing of resources / equipment / facilities, employment of external tutors; and sharing staff training / expertise; and
Our case studies have highlighted that Partnerships have shared the costs of resources, school buses, staff training events and educational trips which has provided a direct cost saving as a result of sharing the costs.

Examples of quotations gathered from our fieldwork, which highlight the above perspectives include:

“We have benefited greatly from it from a small school point of view and the expertise that we are getting week in week out has been fabulous.” (Principal)

“In terms of value, of the skills and building relationships, this divided society has moved from conflict to collaboration and building a long and sustainable peace in the future – that is very hard to put a monetary value on. Certainly the money spent so far has been extremely cost-effective.” (Principal)

“I suppose the key thing would be the sharing of resources, and by that I mean both in terms of physical and human resources – you’re teaching and your professional staff, you are using them across three schools to deliver a common programme.” (Principal)

“Sharing a teacher is cost effective. You offer a subject in both schools at half the cost, as well as sharing machinery, specialist machinery.” (Teacher)

“For subjects that are more specialised, rather than a subject that requires a computer and whiteboard, it is certainly cost-effective.” (Teacher)

“I think SEP was timely. Government policy has changed with regards to schools collaborating and people sharing. You can’t run an A level class with 3 or 4 pupils, if there’s a school down the road that’s running it with 7 or 8, suddenly you’ve got a viable unit there. It makes economic sense to implement this programme across all schools.” (Principal)

“There are discussions taking place at the moment, maybe sharing facilities and resources which in the past wouldn’t have been available.” (Principal)

“We couldn’t give the children the experiences we have given them without SEP. The programme hits so many points and covers so much, it is money very well spent.” (Principal)

“We can share each other’s resources – not just buildings – and you have teaching and physical resources which can be shared which is cost effective. Long-term that is the way education will have to move.” (Principal)

“There is strong agreement that the SEP should be continued but with funding uncertainty, especially over the next few years schools are unsure of how future budgets will be organised.” (Principal)
Key Findings from Benchmarking Activity

In order to inform an assessment of the Value for Money associated with the SEP, the evaluators have benchmarked the activities and costs of the SEP against other programmes delivering cross-sectoral school based activities.

This exercise began by identifying a long list of programmes that had similar components or sought to achieve similar outcomes as SEP. Programmes were identified through various sources, namely:

- International Fund for Ireland (IFI);
- SELF Members;
- Department of Education; and
- Department of Education (DE) / IFI Liaison Team.

Preliminary contact was made with the administrators of the identified programmes in order to determine the availability of detailed information on project activity, outputs/impact and funding. The suitability of each programme as a comparator was assessed in terms of appropriateness / relevance and availability of information.

As part of this process we attempted to obtain data on cross-sectoral based activity delivered by the Area Learning Communities (ALCs)\(^2\). However, the monitoring framework associated with the Department of Education’s Entitlement Framework does not capture data specific to shared/collaborative school activity and consequently, the ALCs do not systematically record expenditure or output data specific to their shared activities.

Our shortlisting process identified the following five (International Fund for Ireland - Sharing In Education Programme funded) projects as suitable benchmarks:

- The NEELB’s “Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship & History” Project (PIRCH);
- The Western Education and Library Board’s (WELBs) “Promoting Reconciliation through a Shared Curriculum Experience” Project;
- The South Eastern Education and Library Board’s (SEELB’s) “Learning to Live Together” Project;
- The Spirit of Enniskillen’s “Sharing Education Together Project”; and
- The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) “Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning Project”.

Tables 2.2 – 2.6 provide further details on each of the shortlisted projects.

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\(^2\) ALCs work together to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils and deliver on the requirements of the Department of Education’s Entitlement Framework (post 14 curriculum).
N.B. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluated the 19 projects involved in the International Fund for Ireland’s Sharing in Education Programme over the period 2010-13, however the final evaluation report\(^3\) did not include an assessment of VFM.

### Table 2:2: Project Overview - Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship & History (PIRCH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group(s) / Activities</th>
<th>Expenditure (£s) &amp; Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project specifically targeted 6 pairs of schools in the NEELB area, with particular focus on years 11 through 14, with one element dedicated to pupils who may be experiencing challenges in their educational attainment. It was a Curriculum based project in History, Citizenship and a third area of choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure (£s) &amp; Duration: £925,635 (incurred over the period April 2011 - December 2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The schools involved in the project were:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Magherafelt High School and St. Pius X College, Magherafelt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coleraine College and St. Joseph’s College, Coleraine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parkhall College and St. Benedict’s College, Randalstown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dunclug College and St. Patrick’s College, Ballymena</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ballymoney High School and Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 – c.980 pupils involved in curriculum based programs and involved in group work for challenging pupils;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^3\) "A Final Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland’s Sharing in Education Programme" The Education and Training Inspectorate, 2013
**Project Overview - Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship & History (PIRCH)**

- Year 2 – c.980 pupils involved in curriculum based programs and involved in group work for challenging pupils; and
- Year 3 – c.980 pupils involved in curriculum based programs and involved in group work for challenging pupils.

2,400 learners were involved in the curriculum based programs and 540 learners were involved in programs dedicated to pupils who are experiencing challenges in their educational attainment. 51 teachers received accredited training. Total number of beneficiaries = **2,940 pupils**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost per beneficiary</th>
<th>Based on information available, the cost per pupil beneficiary is estimated to be <strong>£314.84</strong> (i.e. £925,635 (amount of funding until December 2013) / 2,940 (est. number of beneficiaries until December 2013, excluding teachers)).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Shared Hour/Participant (where applicable)</td>
<td>Based on the information available, the cost per shared hour is estimated to be <strong>£5.83 per shared hour/ participant</strong> (i.e. £925,635 ÷ 54<strong>4</strong> shared hours per participant x 2,940 participants).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2:3: Project Overview - Promoting Reconciliation through a Shared Curriculum Experience Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure (£s) &amp; Duration</th>
<th>£376,226 (April 2011 - December 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group(s) / Activities</th>
<th>The project targeted primary and post primary school pupils, focusing on KS2 in primary schools and Year 8 in post-primary. Key activities involved in the programme included:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- An initial 2 day teacher training course on diversity and community relations and on modelling the lessons and contribute to the programme;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Shared lessons in curricular areas such as citizenship as well as programmes such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) – not all schools were involved in cross community contact; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lessons use drama as a medium to challenge learners thinking and understanding of issues that are raised in each class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sharing approach taken in this project was designed to explore and evaluate the impact of cross-community contact on those areas of the statutory curriculum in primary and post-primary schools which address directly areas of good relations and reconciliation i.e. in primary schools the PDMU and in post-primary schools, Local and Global Citizenship. Pupils from different backgrounds took part in shared, interactive lessons.

This project was entirely classroom based, with pupils taking part in a minimum of six shared classes. Classes lasted 1.5 hours however some schools put two sessions together so pupils experienced a half day of shared classes. Overall, attendance levels were very high at 95%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>The project was delivered to 42 primary and post primary schools in the Limavady, Derry and Strabane District Council areas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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4 Assuming 3 sessions x 6 hours per session x 3 years
Project Overview - Promoting Reconciliation through a Shared Curriculum Experience Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
<th>There have been 2,000 learners involved; of this 527 have been part of the cross community contact programme. Total number of beneficiaries = 2,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost per beneficiary</td>
<td>Based on information available, the cost per beneficiary is estimated to be £188 (i.e. £376,226 / 2,000 beneficiaries for all programme elements until December 2013, excluding parents). However, it should be noted that only 527 (26%) of the 2,000 participants were involved in cross community activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Shared Hour/Participant (where applicable)</td>
<td>Expenditure/hours specific to the cross-community elements of the project were not available from DE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2:4: Project Overview - Learning to Live Together Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Overview - Learning to Live Together Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure (£)/Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group(s) / Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Project Overview - Learning to Live Together Project

Northern Ireland:
- Pupils participated in the project across the whole duration of the project; and
- Each session involved pupils from the two participating schools.

The Learning to Live Together programme provided funding to enable pupils to participate in 10 shared educational days per school year. The pupils spent the whole day together. A school day normally started at 9.00am and finished at 3.00pm.

The pupils were able to participate in a joint residential programme once per year. The average length of a residential programme was three days involving two overnight stays.

An ETI report on ‘Learning to Live Together’ in October 2013 reported pupils were able to improve their knowledge and understanding of the challenges of learning and living together. New friendships were formed and sustained across the range of partner schools and consequently pupils were more confident about their own ability to embrace diversity and had a better understanding of themselves and others. The Inspectors also reported that the pupils benefitted from the out of school settings and through, informal learning experiences. As a result almost all of the pupils demonstrated changes in attitudes and positive thinking within a limited timeframe and developed their understanding of, and appreciation for diversity.

### Location(s)

The project operated in each of the 5 Council areas covered by the SEELB:
- Ards;
- Castlereagh;
- Lisburn;
- Down; and
- North Down.

The following details the 6 school partnerships:
- Nendrum College (Comber) and St Colmcille’s High School (Holywood)
- Forthill College (Lisburn) and St Colm’s High School (Dunmurry)
- Laurelhill College (Lisburn) and St Malachy’s High School (Castlewellan)
- Movilla High School (Newtownards) and St Columbanus College (Bangor)
- Knockbreda High School (Belfast) and St Mary’s High School (Newry)
- Regent House Grammar School (Newtownards) and Assumption Grammar (Ballynahinch)

### No. of beneficiaries

456 learners were involved over the course of the project, as well as 1 teacher from each of the 12 schools. Total number of beneficiaries = 456 pupils

### Cost per beneficiary

Based on information available, the cost per beneficiary is estimated to be: £1,263 (£576,050 / 456 (number of beneficiaries, excluding teachers).

### Cost per Shared Hour (where applicable)

Based on the information available, the cost per shared hour/participant is estimated to be £4.79 (i.e. £576,050 ÷ 264 shared hours per participant\(^5\) x 456 participants).

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\(^5\) Educational Days = (6hrs x 10 days x 2 years) + Residencies = (24 hours x 3 days x 2 years) = 120,384 shared hours
Table 2: Project Overview - Sharing Education Together Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure (£s) &amp; Duration</th>
<th>£579,737 (September 2009 - August 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Target Group(s) / Activities | The project targeted KS4 (Year 11) pupils as well as 6th form pupils. The project also involved a number of young volunteer facilitators from the Explore and Future Voices programmes (Spirit of Enniskillen). The main activities involved with the core ethos of ‘dealing with difference’ were:  
  - Leadership building workshops;  
  - Classes covering key subject and curricular areas covered by 6th form pupils and volunteers.  
  In addition, the programme included:  
  - A Skills Day in each school;  
  - A Joint-Schools Residential; and  
  - An Annual Schools’ Conference.  
  Participants completing the programme gained an OCN accreditation. Events provided the appropriate training and information for mentor development, providing basic skills in teaching methods and communication.  
  The sharing approach of this project focuses on sixth form pupils and teachers with a view to facilitating dialogue and learning with other pupils, both in their own schools and other schools. Spirit of Enniskillen volunteers worked in schools of all backgrounds to develop personal dialogue skills in hundreds of pupils. Following this, pupils were selected to participate in further residencials where they continued to explore differences and build on their potential to lead dialogue on difficult topics with others. |
| Location(s) | Regional (NI wide) |
| No. of beneficiaries | Year 1 – c.2,000 6th form and year 11 pupils;  
  Year 2 – c.2,000 6th form and year 11 pupils;  
  Year 3 – c.2,000 6th form and year 11 pupils; and  
  Year 4 – Project closed due to unforeseen circumstances.  
  Total number of beneficiaries = 6,000 |
| Cost per beneficiary | Based on information available, the cost per beneficiary is estimated to be: £96.62 (i.e. £579,737 (amount of funding until August 2013) / 6,000 (est. number of beneficiaries until August 2013)). |
| Cost per Shared Hour (where applicable) | The number of shared hours associated with the project is not available from DE/IFI. |
### Project Overview - Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure (£s) &amp; Duration</th>
<th>£507,396 (May 2011 - December 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing Classrooms:</strong> Deepening Learning was a shared education initiative, managed and delivered by NICIE and open to all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. SDLC had four strategic objectives:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- To increase awareness of the benefits of cross-sectoral collaboration in terms of ‘deepening’ the learning experience for pupils involved in Area Learning Communities;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- To break down barriers and develop trust between educators on cross-sectoral/cross-community basis;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- To widely disseminate a model for ‘integrating’ pupils taking part in shared classrooms; and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- To create a mechanism to ensure the sustainability of cross-sectoral, shared classrooms and relationship building at a deeper level.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCDL aimed to enrich and deepen learning through developing teachers’ skills for creatively using the range of diversity found in shared classrooms. The project provided professional development for teachers, who, as a result of Entitlement Framework (EF) collaboration arrangements between schools, teach classes comprised of students from different schools. The project offered free professional development/training for teachers who teach (now or in future) classes comprised of students from different schools as part of EF collaboration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants completing the programme gained a formally recognised accreditation, the Certificate in Exploring Skills in SCDL or the Certificate in Additional Facilitator Skills in SCDL. Both have been formally recognised under the auspices of Classrooms Re-Imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT) which is administered by Stranmillis University College and St. Mary’s University College.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of sharing in this project involved both teachers and pupils. Parents of pupils taking part in the project were also involved in a shared information and induction evening. Sharing activities included:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers (including classroom assistants and trainees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Shared professional development training – this included a variety of briefings, workshops, focus groups, conferences and full training days;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- School based coaching and in-class mentoring for classroom teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupils</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Information and induction days for students involved in shared classrooms;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shared outdoor induction and activity based events;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focus groups/discussions for students from different schools to talk about their experiences;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Shared drama workshops; and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Shared cultural trips with partner schools.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Target Group(s) / Activities

| Location(s) | Regional (NI wide) |
Tables 2.2 – 2.6 highlight that the benchmarked interventions represent a diverse range of scale, activity and beneficiaries, as further illustrated below:

- **Geographic Coverage** – for example, the *Sharing Education Together Project* and the *Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning Project* were both delivered across NI, whereas the other projects focussed delivery at a sub-regional/Education and Library Board area level;

- **Approach** - the *Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning Project* is distinct from the other benchmarks, as it focused on building capacity among teachers to facilitate and host shared lessons, workshops and cultural trips. This was achieved through extensive teacher training and mentoring, with accompanying activities for pupils;

- **Participant Numbers** - the *SEELB Learning to Live Together Project* had a total of 456 participants, whereas (for example), 6,000 pupils participated on the *Spirit of Enniskillen’s Sharing Education Together Project*. By way of comparison, SEP involved over 35,000 pupils over a 3 year period; and

- **Shared Hours** – for the two projects that shared hour data could be obtained for, the PIRCH project produced 75% more shared hours that the *Learning to Live Together Project* (i.e. c211,680 shared hours compare to 120,384 shared hours).

The diversity of these projects mean that drawing Value For Money conclusions on a ‘like for like’ basis is not possible. That said, when SEP inputs/outputs are compared to those of the benchmarked interventions (refer to Table 2.7), we note the following:

- The SEPs average cost per participant is lower than that of all but one of the benchmarked projects (i.e. Sharing Education Together). It is also considerably lower than the average cost per participant for 3 of the 5 projects profiled (i.e. representing between 12.5% and 50% of their average cost per participant); and

- While a cost per participant per shared hour figure is not readily available for the PIEE project and QUB projects, the Cost per Participant per Shared Hour for the FT project is considerably lower (50-60% lower) than that profiled for two of the comparator programmes.

N.B. SEP cost per participant data reflects total programme expenditure divided by pupil numbers only, when in fact SEP beneficiaries also included teachers, school governors and parents. Therefore, whilst the above cost effectiveness measures provide a high level indicator of the SEPs cost effectiveness, they underestimate the value for money delivered by the programme.

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6 PIRCH; Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning; and Learning to Live Together
## Table 2:7: Summary Table – VFM Benchmarking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Delivery Organisation</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Cost per Participant</th>
<th>Total Shared Contact Time x Participant numbers (i.e. total shared hours)</th>
<th>Cost per Shared Hour per participant (where available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship &amp; History (PIRCH)</td>
<td>NEELB</td>
<td>£925,635</td>
<td>2,940</td>
<td>£314.84</td>
<td>[3 sessions per project x max 6 hours per session x 3 years] x 2,940 participants = 158,760 hours</td>
<td>£5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Reconciliation through a Shared Curriculum Experience</td>
<td>WELB</td>
<td>£376,226</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>£188.11</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Live Together</td>
<td>SEELB</td>
<td>£576,050</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>£1,263</td>
<td>[Educational Days = (6hrs x 10 days x 2 years) + Residentials = (24 hours x 3 days x 2 years)] x 456 participants = 120,384 shared hours</td>
<td>£4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Education Together</td>
<td>Spirit of Enniskillen</td>
<td>£579,737</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>£96.62</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Classrooms: Deepening Learning</td>
<td>NICIE</td>
<td>£507,396</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>£420.73</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>FT, QUB and PIEE</td>
<td>£5,680,927</td>
<td>35,539</td>
<td>£159.85 (ranging from £130.77 to £230.86 by project)</td>
<td>FT data only: Primary and Post Primary = 786,146 hours</td>
<td>FT only: £2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

As identified above, Teacher/Principal feedback suggests that the SEP has enabled a significant enhancement of curricular delivery across all partnerships whilst offering opportunities for economic savings through the sharing of resources and facilities.

In terms of cost effectiveness, when the SEP is compared to selected comparator projects it produces a cost per participant that is at the lower end of the values produced by those benchmarked projects. When the Cost per Participant per Shared Hour for the FT project is compared to data available from two other projects, it produces a cost per shared hour per participant that is 50-60% lower than the benchmarked projects.

Therefore, based on the above, it is evident that SEP has been cost effective in its delivery and that it has delivered value for money.

2.6 Benefits of Shared Education

The table overleaf collates the key quantitative and qualitative research findings in order to answer the evaluation questions relating to the educational, societal and economic benefits of sharing. A conclusion is also provided against each of the SEP Logic Model outcomes and the extent to which these have been achieved. The findings relate to Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 of the programme.
### Table 2:8: Benefits of Shared Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>SEP Logic Model Outcomes</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Benefits of Sharing</strong></td>
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</table>
| 1. Does sharing education improve the quality of education for those involved? | **Short-term Outcome:** Greater opportunities for cross-sectoral sharing and collaboration. | Achieved | The focus of the SEP has been to encourage schools in NI to collaborate across sectoral boundaries. During the 3 Years of the SEP, its activity has encompassed the following:  
- 158 unique schools, which formed 54 school partnerships, over the duration of the programme;  
- Approximately 35,800 pupils, over the duration of the programme; and  
- Approximately 28,300 hours of shared activity, over the duration of the programme. The above highlight that SEP has created significant opportunities for cross-sectoral sharing and collaboration within schools.  
Based on the quantitative survey of pupils, the follow-up intervention group have experienced a higher frequency of contact in a shared class setting than the baseline and control group, therefore contributing to the development of relationships through regular engagement and interaction in learning. 56% (n=1,271, base=2,260) of the 2011 follow-up intervention group and 50% (n=1,121, base=2,258) of the 2012 follow-up intervention group identified that they had experienced contact of six times or more in the last year compared to 37% (n=471, base=1,292) of the baseline intervention group and 7% (n=152, base=2,259) of the control group. | |
| | **Short-term Outcome:** Additional enhanced educational experience obtained through collaboration amongst pupils and teachers beyond current DE policies | Achieved | 81 focus groups with teachers and principals were carried out during 2011 and 116 in 2012, representing 110 principals and 169 teachers, and 114 principals and 171 teachers, respectively. During these focus group sessions principals and teachers highlighted that:  
- The collaborative links developed through SEP has allowed the schools to enhance their educational provision through: sharing the provision of educational trips; sharing specialist expertise/tutors; and sharing resources;  
- SEP provided the opportunity for teachers from mainly small, rural schools to undertake joint-curricular planning: share specialist skills/knowledge with one another and up-skill from the | |

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7 Please note this figure reflects the total number of pupils involved in shared classes over the 3 Year duration of the programme. However, this figure may include pupils who have been involved in more than one shared class activity, or have been involved in SEP for more than one year.

8 Please note this figure is an estimate based on available monitoring data.
<table>
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<td></td>
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<td>specialist tutors;</td>
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<td>• Because SEP was not solely focused on academic subjects, it gave pupils the opportunity to develop their creative skills and enhance their academic development in other subject areas (e.g. art and drama); and</td>
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<td>• Principals and teachers agreed that SEP provided schools with the opportunity to tailor the programme to suit the needs, interests and aspirations of individual pupils, particularly pupils with Special Educational Needs. In some instances, SEP provided pupils with their first opportunity to interact with pupils from the SEN/mainstream educational sectors.</td>
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<td>Our pupil surveys highlight that:</td>
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<td>• Over half of the pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up surveys identified that SEP enabled them to gain new skills and experiences and has provided the opportunity to use resources and facilities (e.g. computers, equipment, play facilities etc.) in other schools and venues/places;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Over half of the pupils within the 2011 survey identified that they can do activities that they wouldn’t otherwise have been able to do if there was no shared education;</td>
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<td>• Almost two-fifths of pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up survey identified that they were given the opportunity to participate in activities in other schools and venues/places that they would not have been able to do in their own school; and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Approximately one-fifth of pupils within the 2011 and 2012 follow-up surveys identified that SEP has helped them to gain a certificate/qualification.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-term Outcome:</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>SEP aims to breakdown institutional barriers in the education sector and create effective linkages between schools through shared education; and in doing so, contribute towards building good relations between the two main communities.</td>
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<td>Institutional barriers to continued and/or expanded sharing and collaboration removed at school level and an increased level of sharing is embedded into schools.</td>
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<td>Feedback from principal and teacher focus groups indicated that they have embraced the concept of cross-community sharing and collaboration/partnerships. It is clear that principals and teachers have shown leadership, commitment and drive to the delivery of SEP and consequently institutional barriers at a school level have been substantially reduced amongst participating schools.</td>
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<td>Principals and teachers highlighted a number of logistical challenges associated with collaboration (e.g. planning process and monitoring requirements; size of the shared classes and securing tutors; transport costs and reduced sub-cover budget). However, our case study analysis and consultations with</td>
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| **Long-term Outcome:** Reduced incidence of single identity area learning partnerships and cross-sectoral options proposed and explored in planning future education provision. |                                                                                           | Achieved         | Principals and teacher focus groups highlighted that:  
  - They have embraced the concept of cross-community collaboration and are keen to continue collaboration in the future through the sharing of teachers, resources, expertise etc.;  
  - The SEP provided the majority of principals/teachers with the first opportunity to develop their professional relationships on a cross-community basis and to explore the merits of collaboration;  
  - Any gaps or barriers between partner schools generally reduced as the programme progressed; and  
  - Cross sectoral planning/collaboration was seen to be particularly beneficial for small and rural isolated schools.  
  SELF’s lobbying and advocacy work has significantly contributed to progressing government’s position on shared education, which is now cemented in the Programme for Government 2011-2015. The Ministerial Advisory Group on advancing Shared Education (February 2013) and the Education Minister’s (22 October 2013) statement on “Advancing Shared Education” further highlights that Shared Education is now central to the Government’s policy on the future delivery of education within NI. |

| Societal Benefits of Sharing                                                                 |                                                                                           | Achieved         | Based on the quantitative survey of pupils, the follow-up intervention group have experienced a higher frequency of contact in a shared class setting than the baseline and control group, therefore contributing to the development of relationships through regular engagement and interaction in learning.  
  Focus group sessions identified that SEP has initiated attitudinal change, as pupils are more comfortable mixing with one another as a result of regular contact. According to principals and teachers, some pupils developed strong friendship groups as a result of SEP.  
  25% (n=532, base=2,164) of pupils within the baseline survey reported that they have no friends of a different religion outside of school. This decreased to 21% (n=478) in the 2011 follow up survey and 22% (n=483) in the 2012 follow up survey. The 2012 survey indicated that 12% (n=276) of pupils reported that ‘about half’ their friends were from a different religion compared to 9% (n=190) of baseline |

1. What additional benefits accrue beyond pre-existing single identity collaboration?  
2. Does sharing education lead to greater sustained pupil to pupil cross-community relationships /friendships  

**Short-term Outcome:** Increased number of sustained pupil to pupil cross-community relationships /friendships
<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Short-term Outcome:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tolerance, mutual understanding and inter-relationships through significant, purposeful and regular engagement and interaction in learning?</td>
<td>Teachers leading by example in cross-sectoral relationship building and fully trained to deliver shared education and address any sectarian issues which arise in schools, and be aware of where to source further support.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Teachers leading by example in cross-sectoral relationship building: Principals and teachers have shown leadership, commitment and drive to collaborate on a cross-sectoral basis. SEP has equipped principals and teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to engage in cross-sectoral sharing and partnership building. As a result, schools have demonstrated their dedication and willingness to explore future models for collaboration due to their positive SEP experience. Teachers fully trained to deliver shared education: Across each of the 3 SEP projects, teachers were provided diversity and partnering training. Feedback from principals and teachers identified that they feel fully trained to deliver shared education.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Long-term Outcome:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Positive cross-community relationships developed and sustained ‘in’ and ‘out’ of the school setting.</td>
<td>Inter-relationships / Friendships ‘in’ school</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Inter-relationships / Friendships ‘in’ school&lt;br&gt;Principals and teachers within the focus group sessions identified that SEP has provided pupils with the opportunity to interact and develop relationships with each other. Consultees agreed that the frequency of pupil-to-pupil contact and length of time spent in each other’s company were significant influencing factors, in relation to how quickly peer-to-peer relationships formed. Consultees also noted that the majority of pupils were involved in residential which helped to accelerate the relationship-building process. The majority of principals and teachers reported that by the end of Year 1 any anxiety from the pupils had disappeared. As the programme has progressed, pupils have felt more comfortable mixing with one another at shared events. Although this did not automatically equate to every pupil having formed a close one-to-one friendships, the boundaries between the groups had been made substantially more porous in most cases and had been almost completely removed in others. Inter-relationships / Friendships ‘out’ of school&lt;br&gt;25% (n=532, base=2,164) of pupils within the baseline survey reported that they have no friends of a different religion outside of school. This decreased to 21% (n=478) in the 2011 follow up survey and 22% (n=483) in the 2012 follow up survey. The 2012 survey indicated that 12% (n=276) of pupils reported that ‘about half’ their friends were from a different religion compared to 9% (n=190) of baseline intervention group. This indicates that the programme is encouraging cross-community friendships.</td>
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<td>Geographic location has had an impact on the extent of cross-community friendships. Survey data identifies pupils from urban based schools have more cross-community friendships than pupils from rural based schools; pupils from urban based schools spend more time at their friends' houses compared to pupils from rural based schools; and pupils from urban based schools meet their friends of a different religion outside of school (i.e. at the park, sports club etc.) more than pupils from rural based schools. The age of pupils (i.e. primary/post primary) has also impacted quantitative results, as post-primary pupils having more cross-community friendships outside of school than primary school pupils. Principals and teachers also acknowledged that the opportunity for rural based pupils to meet up outside of school is limited due to a poor transport system and the general lack of clubs/societies for pupils to socialise.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Principals and teachers agreed that SEP has gradually become increasingly normalised within the school routine. Some of the teachers noted that the pupils are not fully aware of any differences or barriers with regards to religion, apart from the fact they go to different schools. The majority of the baseline pupils (64%), phase 2 intervention (78%) pupils and phase 3 intervention pupils (77%) agreed that ‘no’ religion is not important when making friends, suggesting that pupils’ views are less entrenched regarding different religious backgrounds. Pupils identified that they are not really interested in finding out about other religions as “religion does not matter”. 52% (n=1,163, base=2,254) of the 2011 follow-up survey and 49% (n=1,090, base=2,241) of the 2012 follow-up survey reported that they ‘like everything’ about shared classes compared to 48% (n=1,091) and 51% (n=1,151) of pupils who ‘do not like everything’ respectively. The reasons impacting on pupil attitudes towards shared classes include: ‘I don’t like travelling to other schools (or venues/places) as it takes too long which reduces time from break or lunch’; ‘I don’t like travelling to other schools (or venues/places) as it takes too long which reduces my time for other school work’; and ‘I don’t like the rules in the other school’. The findings indicate that the barriers are largely related to the logistics of sharing rather than cultural issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Outcome: Measurable reduction in cultural barriers as perceived by pupils and between school communities</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>The majority of principals and teachers across the partnerships reported that parents and governors have been supportive of SEP. A number of instances were cited where parents were initially reluctant to let their child to participate in shared classes. However, as the programme progressed into Year 2 and Year 3, attitudes shifted and parental support had grown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Outcome: Increased visibility and support for the general concept of cross-community</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
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</table>
## Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEP Logic Model Outcomes</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sharing and collaboration amongst school principals, local parents, politicians and communities.</td>
<td>As an indicator of parental support, pupils were asked to identify whether their parents think that shared classes with pupils from another school, who are a different religion, are a good idea. 50% (n=1,135, base=2,264) of the 2011 follow-up survey and 50% (n=1,127, base=2,252) of the 2012 follow-up survey reported that ‘yes’ their parents think that shared classes are a good idea, compared to 4% (n=97) of 2011 survey group and 6% (n=135) of the 2012 survey group who reported ‘no’. 46% (n=1,032) of the 2011 survey group and 44% (n=990) of the 2012 survey group pupils stated that they were ‘not sure’. There has been increased visibility and support for shared education from politicians and communities, representing a significant shift in attitudes (e.g. the Education Minister’s (22 October 2013) statement on “Advancing Shared Education” further). It is evident that there is also positive support for SEP across the religious spectrum, with church leaders openly supporting the programme.</td>
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</table>

## Long-term Outcome: Achieved

Increased demand for openness to cross-community sharing and collaboration across wider NI education system.

## Economic Benefits of Sharing

| 1. Is sharing education cost-effective, providing value-for-money, when set alongside existing provision of education? | Long-term Outcome: Achieved | The general consensus among the teacher and principal focus group participants was that SEP has offered ‘value for money’ as the programme enabled a significant enhancement of curricular delivery across all partnerships. Principals and teachers suggested that SEP provided direct economic benefits, however, it was highlighted that it was difficult to quantify the extent of the economic benefits. Principals and teachers noted that SEP offered opportunities for economic savings, through the sharing of resources/equipment/facilities, employment of external tutors, and sharing staff training / expertise. Our case studies have highlighted that Partnerships have shared the costs of resources, school buses, staff training events and school educational trips, which has provided a direct cost saving. It was noted |

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<td>that the resources had delivered particular value in terms of enriching curricular learning. Principals also noted that economic savings would be generated through reduced community division as pupils have developed a greater understanding of the other community, compared to what would have been the case in the absence of SEP. The principals highlighted a number of long-term economic savings, which would have far reaching (but unquantifiable) positive effects on public expenditure, including: greater community cohesion; reduced levels of segregation; and reduced costs of policing. In addition, when compared to other programmes delivering cross sectoral school based activities, it is evident that SEP has been cost effective in its delivery and that it has delivered value for money.</td>
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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SEP INTERVENTION MODELS
Summary of Intervention Models

There are differences between the nature and extent of sharing between and within each of the three project strands and the focus of each of the intervention models i.e. distinguishing features of each project is as follows:

- The FT project involves primary and post primary (focus on primary) schools and is curricular based. It commenced in September 2009 and was formally completed in June 2012, although activities continue on the ground. The FT’s SEP aims to break down institutional barriers in the education sector and create effective linkages between schools through shared education; and in doing so, contribute to building good relations between the two main communities. A key consideration for the FT’s SEP is the sustainability of rural schools and the opportunities which SEP presents in terms of equipping principals/teachers with the necessary resources, skills and experience in which to engage in cross sectoral collaborations.

- The QUB project involves primary and post primary (focus on post primary) schools across NI and is both curricular and extra-curricular based (focus on curricular). It commenced in September 2010 and ended in June 2013, although activities continue on the ground. The focus of SEP II is to build on the work in SEP I by increasing the scale of activities to multiple strands per partnerships across NI. The role of advocacy work is also regarded as being a prominent feature of SEP II where key learning and benefits emanating from both waves of the programme will provide an evidence base in which to lever change in education policy in NI; and

- The NEELB project focuses solely on primary schools (focus on small schools with enrolments of 105 pupils or less) across the NEELB area and is both curricular and extra-curricular. It commenced in September 2009 and completed in June 2012, although activities continue on the ground. PIEE aims to enhance good community relations by establishing cross community partnerships of primary schools. The focus of the PIEE project is to develop appropriate foundations within each participating school and partnership, in order to support pupil contact. It aims to enhance the quality of pupils’ educational experience and to provide opportunities for pupils, staff, governors and parents to build sustainable relationships through regular contact.