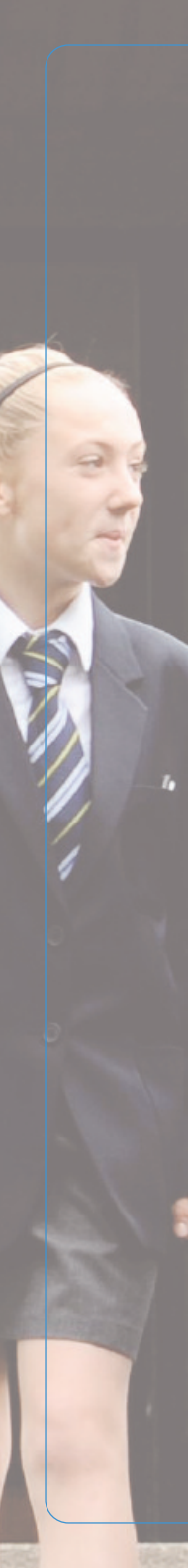




# Community Engagement in Education Project

**ief**  
INTEGRATED  
EDUCATION FUND



Our education system is facing a number of challenges over the next few years which could potentially lead to significant changes in how schools are planned, funded, managed and structured. It is crucial that each child receives the best education possible as schools react to severe budget cuts. This presents challenges, particularly in areas where there are a large number of small schools that are below the Department of Education's sustainable enrolment criteria.

### **Community Awareness & Engagement**

This context presents real opportunities for local communities, local people, and their schools to do things differently; to imagine how education might be delivered differently in their area in the best interests of the children, both today and into their future. In many areas this could involve exploring greater degrees of sharing both within and between schools.

The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) is working with Rural Community Network (RCN), and a number of regional and local partners to develop a series of events across Northern Ireland during 2011/2012 to contribute to a wider discussion on the

future shape of our education system. The purpose of these events is to raise awareness of the wider set of challenges facing education and the levels of sharing communities might be open to.

The events will be held across Northern Ireland and will be chaired by William Crawley and organised with a number of local partners in each area. A regional event will be held at the end of 2012 to bring together participants from the community discussions to reflect and engage with the issues in greater depth. A concluding conference is planned for late 2012.

## Outcomes

There are four potential outcomes expected from this project:

- Local people and communities making sense of their connection to education in their area;
- Local communities developing innovative solutions to ensuring good quality education in their area;
- Modelling involvement of local people and communities in educational planning; and
- Holding to account politicians and the education system in a context of significant change.

One of the key goals of this project is to provide parents and communities with greater access to information about the changes in education that directly affect them, their children, and their communities. The Integrated Education Fund has developed an online resource that provides answers to many frequent questions about the structure, history, and challenges within our education system. This can be accessed at [www.ief.org.uk/community](http://www.ief.org.uk/community)

## Possible Next Steps

The key goal of the Community Engagement in Education Project is to place local people at the centre of the debate on the future of education in their areas.

## How you can get involved

1. Find out about the schools in your area using the websites for the Department of Education, the Education & Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.
2. Set up a meeting with your local MLAs and councillors to hear their views on education, the challenges they see for local schools and the possibilities for the future. You can find out who your local MLAs are at [www.nicva.org/policy/assembly-monitor](http://www.nicva.org/policy/assembly-monitor).
3. Organise a discussion with interested parents and the wider community including young people to explore the kind of education people want. This could feed into the forthcoming area-based planning process.

If you are considering organising a community discussion, or would like more information regarding funding opportunities through our Community Engagement in Education (CEE) grants, then please contact the IEF for advice and support.





## Timetable of Events

LOCATION	VENUE	DATE (6.30 pm – 9.30 pm)
Dungannon Down	Corick House, Clogher Millbrook Lodge Hotel, Ballynahinch	17 November 2011 26 January 2012
Strabane	Derg Valley Care	23 February 2012
Armagh	City Hotel, Armagh	28 February 2012
Ballymena	The Braid, Ballymena	22 March 2012
Coleraine	Sandel Centre, Coleraine	29 March 2012
Belfast	venue t.b.c.	14 June 2012

Please contact the team for information about the venues for the events or if you would like any further information.

Karin Eyben –  
Public Affairs Manager  
Email: [Karin@ief.org.uk](mailto:Karin@ief.org.uk)

Chris Jenkins –  
Community Engagement Officer  
Email: [Chris@ief.org.uk](mailto:Chris@ief.org.uk)

Integrated Education Fund  
41-43 University Street  
Belfast  
BT7 1FY  
T: 028 9033 0031  
F: 028 9033 0061  
W: [www.ief.org.uk/grants/cee](http://www.ief.org.uk/grants/cee)



The IEF is accepted as a charity by the Inland Revenue under Reference XR52574.