
Integrated Education Fund

20th Anniversary 1992 - 2012

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I'm delighted to be able to congratulate the Integrated Education Fund on reaching its twentieth birthday. The anniversary represents twenty years of providing vital support and encouragement to those parents and schools who want to see children being educated together in Northern Ireland.

The number of integrated schools has grown impressively over the years and the IEF has always steadfastly supported their work. I have followed the progress in shared schooling with great interest and it has been an honour to assist my good friend, The Baroness May Blood, who has worked tirelessly for the cause with unstinting passion and commitment. For my own part, I was delighted to make a contribution through the Northern Ireland Fund for Reconciliation when it was able to help the IEF reach out to all schools, non-integrated as well as integrated, by supporting important cross community school projects involving pupils, teachers and parents.

For more than thirty years campaigners have been working towards a more integrated, shared and inclusive education system; for twenty years the IEF has been underpinning this campaigning with grant making and advice. This commemorative booklet will introduce you to just a few of the many people who have been involved in or impacted by the work of the IEF, and invites you to share their reflections on the Fund's journey. I am aware that the work of the Fund has only been made possible thanks to the support and generosity of so many individuals and organisations who have given their time, money and expertise over the past two decades. These pages are testimony to the progress such supporters have nurtured – there can be no better acknowledgement.

In looking back over the past twenty years, I'm aware that the job is not yet done and the need for the Fund is perhaps greater today than ever before. This is because I am encouraged by what the future holds. The progress that Northern Ireland has been able to make in recent years creates the opportunity to build a truly shared and better society for all its citizens.

I thank you all for playing your part and wish the organisation and all those involved in its work continuing success.

The story of the Integrated Education Fund

What we do

Our primary aim is to meet parental demand by supporting initiatives that will help integrated education develop and prosper. In the case of new integrated schools the Fund has bridged the gap between founding a school and securing full government funding and support; in some cases this support has been needed for many years.

We also help with the process of transformation for existing schools moving towards integrated status, and through our grant programme Increasing Places in Integrated Schools (IPIS) we have boosted the availability of integrated education in response to demand. The number of pupils in integrated schools is now well over 21,000.

Beyond this, the Fund reaches out to all schools through our grants programme, Promoting a Culture of Trust (PACT). PACT sponsors meaningful sharing between schools of different management types on cultural and sporting projects exploring diversity and collaboration. The IEF also funds and helps to facilitate civic discussion, exploring ways of delivering education and giving parents and communities a voice in the future of their area.

The IEF has commissioned research which underpins our work by demonstrating a widespread desire for more integrated school places and greater levels of meaningful sharing for our young people. Taking its cue from popular demand, the Fund acts as a channel for advocacy and campaigning, maintaining dialogue with politicians and civic bodies and working to keep the issue of integration in the public eye.

In order to support this activity, the IEF embraces a fundraising strategy supported by its volunteers and Campaign Council. Support has been received from many individuals, businesses and other charitable foundations over the last 20 years – too many to name here, but each one has contributed to the work of the Fund. The IEF, and the integrated schools in Northern Ireland, will always be extremely grateful for this support.

Some Facts and Figures

The year 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Integrated Education Fund (IEF). These few pages, while not a definitive history of the IEF, briefly outline the 'what, why and when', some of the challenges that have been faced, and some of the successes.

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Between 1981 and the IEF's first year, 1992, pioneering parents and others, supported by a number of charitable bodies, had already established 18 integrated schools attended by 3,408 pupils.

By 1998, when the IEF launched its first ten-year Development and Fundraising Campaign, there were 43 integrated schools with 11,910 pupils.

By 2012, the total number of integrated schools had reached 62, providing places from pre-school to post-16, for over 21,000 children.

Pioneers of the Integrated Education Fund

In commemorating this 20th anniversary, special mention must be made of the IEF's founding bodies and founding trustees (or governors, as they were known then).

Founding Bodies

EC Structural Fund
Department of Education
Nuffield Foundation
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

Founding Trustees

Jonathan Bardon (Chair)
David Clement (Treasurer)
Fionnuala Cook
Anne Odling-Smee
Alan Smith
Anthony Tomei

Throughout the 1980s, there had been, of necessity, a fairly ad hoc approach to securing funding for parents groups and schools, with individual applications being made to various funders. The Nuffield Foundation then brought together a group of seven other trusts and foundations to provide a pool of £500,000 and create a co-ordinated approach to providing financial support to the integrated schools in the years prior to the IEF being established. Many were to continue to be firm supporters and even financial contributors to the wider Integrated Education Movement as well as the IEF for many years; some even to the present day.



Key Funding Group, pre 1992

Nuffield Foundation
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Wates Foundation
John Paul Getty

Hayward Foundation
Buttle Trust
Sir Halley Stewart Trust
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

History of Integrated Education



A single education system was proposed in Northern Ireland as long ago as the 1920s and, indeed, at least twice in the nineteenth century for the whole of Ireland. It is not a new idea yet it still has the power to polarise opinion.

The proposal in the 1920s, from Lord Londonderry, the new Northern Ireland's first Education Minister, came in the aftermath of a war for independence and subsequent civil war in Ireland. However, both the Catholic and Protestant Churches campaigned for separate education and his proposal was rejected.

In the 1970s, a group of parents calling themselves All Children Together (ACT) began lobbying the Churches and the Government to take the initiative in educating Protestant and Catholic children together. At that time, religious segregation of school children was almost complete. Practically all Catholic children attended Catholic schools. State schools were de facto Protestant. This separation of Catholic and Protestant also largely mirrored the division between Nationalist and Unionist, and ACT's campaign began against a background of what was to become the decades of violence perpetrated by extremists from both sides known euphemistically as 'The Troubles'.

ACT took the view that if Catholic and Protestant children were educated together, side by side, in the same classrooms, they would have the opportunity not only to learn together but to learn about each other. Another Education Minister, Basil McIvor, then put forward a Shared School Plan and in 1978 the Dunleath Act made it possible for the boards of existing schools to become integrated, to transform into schools likely to be attended by pupils of differing religious affiliations or cultural traditions. However, no existing schools chose to transform.

The habits and patterns established over many decades which maintain Northern Ireland's segregated education system proved to be deeply entrenched.

Campaigning continued. The concept of integrated education developed and it was realised how important it would be to bring together not only pupils in roughly equal numbers from both Protestant and Catholic traditions, but also staff and governors to create truly shared schools. All traditions and cultures would be valued and celebrated in the curriculum and in the life of the school. And, by understanding and respecting whatever differences there were, and recognising what was held in common, fear and mistrust would diminish and a shared future would be a possibility.

It was not until 1981 that the first planned, integrated school was established and then it was not a transformed existing school but a new fledgling, Lagan College. The school was established by parents, with a three-year grant of £ 15,000 per year from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and whatever other funds they could raise.

During the next 11 years, 17 more integrated schools opened, and there were plans for others. Demand from parents was high – as more schools succeeded, confidence grew. However, the parents setting up the schools were still entirely dependent on charitable grants, loans and even their own resources, until the schools proved themselves viable in the eyes of the Department of Education (DE) and became eligible for government funding – this process could take three or more years.

Small charitable trusts and groups to support local integrated schools grew up in a number of areas to help meet the need: Belfast, North Armagh, North Coast, South Ulster, the Western Area and, later, around the Foyle. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) was established in 1989 by some of the schools to act as a co-ordinating body.



An important milestone came when the 1989 Education Reform Order placed a statutory duty on the Department of Education to “encourage and facilitate integrated education”.

The Order enabled recurrent funding to be given to new integrated schools from ‘Day One’ if they met DE’s enrolment and growth criteria. Under the 1989 Order, DE was also given powers to fund a development body for integrated education and in 1991 NICIE became core funded by DE to assist the development of planned integrated education in Northern Ireland and provide practical support and advice to integrated schools and parents groups.

However, no provision was made in the Order for capital development costs to be grant aided by Government until viability and growth had been demonstrated, again after three to four years, and this is still the case today.

Why the Integrated Education Fund was established

It was the absence of capital funding, as well as the other unmet financial needs of the integrated schools that led directly to the establishment of the IEF in 1992. The IEF would try and bridge the gap between what was actually needed to support the development of the schools and what was available from government.

Crucially, both politically and financially, the IEF was to be an independent body able to work closely with parents groups, schools and NICIE to set its agenda and direct funds, from its own resources or from other donors, to projects which would increase the number of integrated schools and school places available.

Before 1992, integrated schools' basic capital needs were being met by loans from banks, with the requisite security provided by 'letters of comfort' from the various trusts and foundations. The IEF's founding bodies provided the Fund with £2,375,000 which enabled it to take on the guarantees for seven loans worth a total of approximately £1 million. The IEF was then in a position to use the interest from the balance of the funding to run the first grant programme. Development grants were made to new initiatives in integrated education and to cover such things as the running costs of schools not yet approved by DE and aspects of capital programmes such as interest payments and professional fees that DE did not fund.

The Board of Trustees met several times a year to consider grant applications and allocate funding, and was supported administratively by NICIE so that no paid staff were required.

The Fund continued to receive further donations from a number of trusts and foundations, as well as administering grants from the European Union for specific integrated education projects. A constructive working relationship with officials in DE enabled the Fund to secure two major contributions from the Department in 1994 and 1995 - each for £1 million - with the restriction that they should be used to provide interest free loans to assist with DE-approved capital schemes. However, despite the significance of these contributions, it quickly became clear that the capital base of the Fund was insufficient to meet the demand required to bridge the funding gap for the capital development of new schools between the period of receiving DE approval and receiving DE capital funding.

The Fund therefore took the decision to use its capital base as a gearing mechanism to secure a loan facility of up to £2.1m through a Club Bank arrangement involving a consortium of local banks - NICIE would take out the loans and the IEF would provide the deposit and the guarantees. Of course there were downsides: it put restrictions on the use of the capital base and limited the ability of the Fund to generate income for grant making purposes, and also kept the risks of the capital development of the schools squarely with NICIE and the IEF. However, the loan facility was of huge benefit to the schools and also enabled the IEF to look beyond the demands of capital build and consider other important issues such as the growing demand and need for pre-school provision and the needs of more established schools for financial support to expand their resources and develop the educational experience they could offer. And a new and growing need for funding came from non-integrated schools wishing to transform to integrated status.

The Fund's ability to become more strategic and look to the future soon, however, faced enormous challenges. Just as the change in government policy and DE's approach in the late 80s and early 90s was largely more favourable, the mid 90s saw something of a reversal. The overall poor state of the school infrastructure in Northern Ireland and increased financial pressures on education budgets meant government policy moved firmly in favour of transformation and against new school start-ups. The IEF, whilst supportive of transformation as one route to integration, was concerned that another route was effectively being closed. In 1996 the enrolment number needed to qualify for recurrent funding for a new integrated school was increased from 60 to 100 pupils in a school's first year and the religious balance criteria was changed so that a school needed to have at least 30%, not the previous 25%, of whichever was the minority community within the school. All this served to make the establishment of new integrated schools more difficult and increased the chances that government would reject parents groups' development proposals. The decision by DE to reject not one, but four, development proposals for new integrated schools during a very short space of time rocked the IEF, triggered its fundraising drive and, ultimately, led to its work with non integrated schools, its community engagement work and its advocacy campaign. For the Fund's response to this massive rejection was to take on the task of finding the money to fund each school without any government support, as independent schools.

This was at a time when Northern Ireland was at a critical point in its 'peace process' as negotiations intensified leading up to the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The irony was that while politicians were discussing the possibility of sharing government, the government were refusing to support proposals for children to share schools.

The Good Friday Agreement recognised the role of integrated education in the reconciliation process. It also committed all the political parties to "partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands" - the IEF wanted no less for Northern Ireland's children.

By 1998, the same year that the Agreement was signed, the IEF had taken on its first staff (albeit just one part-time Chief Executive and a full-time Administrator), devised a campaigning strategy for the next ten years, and launched its first Development and Fundraising Campaign.



The independent schools came at a heavy price. Almost £4.5 million over the space of four years was invested, never to be returned. The Fund's capital base was reduced to critical levels and financial support could no longer be guaranteed to any future new school start-ups, let alone to the needs of the more established schools. However, the IEF's position and financial risk-taking were vindicated when all of the four schools, by then successfully established, eventually received approval for funding by DE.

After this difficult period, successful lobbying brought about a reduction in the viability criteria for the approval of new integrated primary schools in 2000, and second-level schools in 2001. The enrolment criteria were changed again in 2004, reducing the number of first-year pupils required for second level colleges to 50 and for primary schools to 12; this assisted the biggest single annual increase in integrated schools ever. These were crucial changes as, before a school is up and running, it can be difficult to reach the necessary numbers, but once it is running the difficulty is usually that there are not enough places to meet the demand. Such changes to the 'rules', sometimes supportive of integrated education, and sometimes not, have been part of the IEF's experience since it was established and have made formulating a coherent, long-term development strategy challenging.

The advocacy and fundraising campaigns have also had significant and positive impacts on the work of the Fund, increasing understanding both at home and abroad of the educational, societal and economic benefits of integrated education and attracting influential supporters and donors.

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In terms of fundraising, a 'major gifts' approach, together with opportunities to 'match fund', have found favour with individual and corporate donors, as well as other trusts and foundations. For example, in 1999/00 the IEF secured an offer of £2 million in matched funding from a philanthropic organisation to which the Department of Education responded with a grant of £750,000. More recently, in 2009/10 donors agreed to kick start the IEF's current campaign, Towards Tomorrow Together, with a challenge fund of up to £2.65 million over a three year period, conditional on the IEF raising £1.25 million over the same period. The response to date has been a truly collective effort from supporters, volunteers, trustees and staff to ensure this opportunity is grasped.

Since the IEF was established, it has invested over £17 million in grants to schools and groups - over £14 million of this was after 1998 when fundraising began in earnest. The IEF has also contributed to the leverage of in excess of £75 million of government funding for integrated education since 1998. Through its grant making to parents groups, pre-schools, new schools and transforming schools, as well as existing integrated schools, it has helped the number of children in integrated education to grow from 3,408 in 18 schools to over 21,000 in 62 schools by 2012.

In addition, over 13,000 children in hundreds of schools of all management types have been supported in their cross community activities with grants totalling almost £1 million. This aspect of IEF grant-making is significant, fulfilling an outreach function to schools and communities who wish to work together with other schools in their area to promote cross-community trust and understanding.



One key aspect of the IEF's experience which has remained consistent is the role of parents in driving forward the growth of the schools. All integrated schools have been started by parents, not by government. As the number of schools grew, however, the challenges they were facing also grew. Over a number of years, much of Northern Ireland's schools estate had become run down; falling rolls and changing demographics together with a policy of providing 'one school for each side' in many areas had led to thousands of empty desks (currently quoted by the Education Minister as 85,000); in addition, the recession required savage cuts in the education budget.

Four integrated schools, which had been government-funded, closed when changing demographics led to falling rolls. Two schools, which had been funded independently by the IEF and a number of donors, had to take the difficult decision to close as they were faced with little or no chance of ever becoming fully funded by government. The loss of these schools was very sad for the families involved, for the wider community and for the IEF. More recently, the Club Bank itself fell victim to the recession.

A hitherto little used criterion for assessing development proposals for new schools was increasingly being wielded by a cash-strapped Department of Education – the effect that opening a new integrated school, or transforming an existing non-integrated school to integrated status would have on other schools in an area. Despite the fact that DE have a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education, this did not mean that it would approve proposals for new integrated schools at the expense of other established schools in the area. Many parents who wanted their children to experience an integrated education were given no option but to send them to existing non-integrated schools.

The growth in the number of integrated schools slowed considerably and even the increase in the number of places, as many schools were capped to prevent growth. Grants alone would no longer be enough to enable growth. And whilst surveys, polls and research showed that there was widespread support for educating children together, the vested interests of some of education's stakeholders were exerting a disproportionate influence on maintaining the status quo.

Harnessing the sheer power of numbers of those supporting integrated education, and winning over the hearts and minds of those who were, as yet, undecided became crucial activities for the IEF. Equally important, however, was listening to those not in favour, both to find common ground and to discover if other viable ways of educating children together could be identified in addition to the integrated model.

One of the successes of the advocacy campaign is that it has established and maintained the issue of integrated education at the centre of the political debate on structural reform of the education system. Three of the five main political party leaders have now stated that a single, integrated system is the preferred education model for Northern Ireland.

Another success is that it has taken the debate into the community about how best to address the unsustainability of the Northern Ireland education system through community engagement events, public debate, and a grant programme specifically for supporting conversations at a community level about the way forward. Different communities may have different 'solutions', but when the conversations are inclusive the focus can be on all the children and young people in an area and all the schools, and not just 'my young people' or 'my school'.

The most successful aspect of the IEF has been, and is, its ability to adapt to change. As the needs of what was a small handful of schools became the needs of the growing Integrated Education Movement, the IEF recognised that the range and complexity of the challenges being faced were also growing. From a Board of 6 trustees and no staff it has sought to access, (through a larger Board of 10 members, dedicated groups of volunteers in various locations, a worldwide network of donors and supporters and a staff of 14), the expertise, specialist knowledge, 'person hours' and passionate commitment necessary to grow integrated education.

While many stages during the development of integrated education have had significance, each was a stepping stone on a journey rather than a destination – the journey is toward a society based on mutual respect, understanding and peace, not the inequalities, mistrust and violence of the past.

The Integrated Education Fund is delighted that some of those taking the journey have been willing to share in this commemorative publication their personal reflections on the contribution the IEF has made.



Integrated Primary Schools

Acorn Integrated Primary School
All Children's Controlled Integrated Primary School
Annsborough Controlled Integrated Primary School
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School
Ballymoney Model Controlled Integrated Primary School
Bangor Central Controlled Integrated Primary School
Braidside Integrated Primary School
Bridge Integrated Primary School
Carhill Controlled Integrated Primary School
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School
Cedar Integrated Primary School
Cliffonville Integrated Primary School
Corran Integrated Primary School
Cranmore Integrated Primary School
Crumlin Controlled Integrated Primary School
Drumlins Integrated Primary School
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School
Forge Controlled Integrated Primary School
Fort Hill Controlled Integrated Primary School
Glencraig Controlled Integrated Primary School
Glengormley Controlled Integrated Primary School
Groarty Controlled Integrated Primary School
Hazelwood Integrated Primary School
Kilbroney Controlled Integrated Primary School
Kircubbin Controlled Integrated Primary School
Lough View Integrated Primary School
Maine Integrated Primary School
Mill Strand Integrated Primary School
Millennium Integrated Primary School
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School
Oakwood Integrated Primary School
Omagh Integrated Primary School
Phoenix Integrated Primary School
Portadown Integrated Primary School
Portaferry Controlled Integrated Primary School
Rathenraw Controlled Integrated Primary School
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School
Round Tower Controlled Integrated Primary School
Rowandale Integrated Primary School
Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School
Spires Integrated Primary School
Windmill Integrated Primary School

Integrated Colleges

Blackwater Integrated College
Brownlow Controlled Integrated College
Crumlin Controlled Integrated College
Drumragh Integrated College
Erne Integrated College
Fort Hill Controlled Integrated College
Hazelwood Integrated College
Integrated College Dungannon
Lagan College
Malone Integrated College
New-Bridge Integrated College
North Coast Integrated College
Oakgrove Integrated College
Parkhall Controlled Integrated College
Priory Controlled Integrated College
Shimna Integrated College
Slemish Integrated College
Sperrin Integrated College
Strangford Integrated College
Ulidia Integrated College



Until I was approached to help the Integrated Education Fund, about ten years ago, I had honestly had the idea that integrated schools were mainly for those living in leafy suburbs, not for people like me. But I soon met many young people from my own community who were attending schools like Hazelwood and Malone Integrated Colleges and when I witnessed the positive influence in their lives, integrated education became one of my greatest passions. I now chair the Fund's Campaign Council, working to make integration, not separation, the norm in Northern Ireland's education system.

Integrated education is essentially a community and grassroots initiative with, historically, relatively little political support. It shows what can be achieved by a committed, visionary and brave group of people who want a better future for their children and society at large. I am proud and honoured to raise funds to support these people.

As the IEF celebrates its 20th anniversary, I am pleased not only to congratulate the organisation on its achievements but also to reflect on how rewarding and fulfilling working with the Fund has been for me.

Advancing the cause of integrated education requires a twin-track strategy of fundraising and campaigning. You need funds to develop and support the work on the ground, and you also have to try and change the system and government policy.

In laying the foundations for the future I am certain that integrated education will play a pivotal role. I know that we need schools which address the challenges of a changing world, and which bring people together to forge a new, shared future.

Let's make this the norm and let us reform our separate system into one based on inclusion and integration. It can be done. There was a time not that long ago that relative peace in Northern Ireland seemed a dream - but look how far we have come.

Thanks are due to the people interviewed for this commemorative booklet, and to the schools and colleges which facilitated the work.

Photography was by Declan Roughan, design by Ciaran Hurson, and the story of the Integrated Education Fund was documented by Janine Turner.

Integrated schools could not have developed and the IEF could not have started without the support of many people and organisations. The continuing involvement of international philanthropic bodies, together with that of countless individuals, businesses and other organisations, has made a huge impact on integrated education.

Thank you to all those who have given time, support, funds, or a voice to the campaign for integrated education over the decades. The campaign will continue until it is no longer needed.



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