

# The Wider Horizons Programme Capturing the Learning

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Wallace consulting



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# 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Introduction

**Wallace Consulting** was commissioned by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI, the Fund) to undertake an impact evaluation of the Wider Horizons Programme (WHP, the programme). This document incorporates findings from several comprehensive evaluations previously commissioned by the Fund and Delivery Agents over the lifetime of the programme.<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> It maps the aims of the programme to relevant academic research and current policy direction and provides observations on the work conducted. Learning for subsequent programme and policy development are also presented.

## 1.2 Rationale for Intervention

A combination of perceived political, religious and social differences teamed with the fear of inter-community tensions and violence has led to widespread self-segregation between the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican (CNR) community and the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) community. This is not confined to urban interface areas rather it is a prominent feature of many towns and villages. The problem is particularly acute in rural border areas, where the conflict and historical physical divide between the north and south of Ireland are deemed to have had a deep impact on the social, cultural, and economic connections within and between communities. Levels of mobility are traditionally low and an underlying lack of trust and confidence can undermine efforts to establish a healthy civic society.

A recent report on behalf of Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium<sup>8</sup> draws attention to the interconnectedness of deprivation, segregation and conflict. The authors state that concentrations of 'deprived' households and individuals living in close proximity can create economic and social barriers that disconnect them from their more affluent neighbours. and the positive opportunities and well-being that influence their lives. This is compounded by higher levels of violence, lack of mobility, poverty of hope and lack of private and public investment - all of which have a negative impact beyond the communities and individuals themselves.

Complex problems often require concentration of effort in order to address the underlying systemic issues. As IFI funding draws to a close, it is appropriate to capture learning and share best practice to ensure that the legacy of its longest running programme is sustained into the future.

## 1.3 The Wider Horizons Programme

The IFI was established as an independent international organisation by the British and Irish governments in 1986. With contributions from the United States of America, the

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<sup>1</sup> Trant et al., (2002). Evaluation of the Wider Horizons Programme of the International Fund for Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Trant & McSkeane (1994). Evaluation of the Wider Horizons Programme of the International Fund for Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> Trant et al., (1997). Evaluation of the Integrated Area Partnerships of the Wider Horizons Programme of the International Fund for Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzpatrick, (2008). Evaluation of the Mutual Understanding Interventions on Participants on the International Fund for Ireland's Wider Horizons Programme.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton, (2013). Evaluation of Clanrye Wider Horizons Programme.

<sup>6</sup> KPMG, (2013). Evaluation of Springboard.

<sup>7</sup> McGuckin, (2013). Evaluation of the Tyrone Donegal Partnership wider Horizons Programme.

<sup>8</sup> CMWorks, (2013). Building Sustainable Communities: The Regeneration and Development of Interface Areas.



European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the total resources committed to date amount to £707,000,000/€890,000,000.

The Fund's objectives are to *promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between unionists and nationalists throughout Ireland*. The IFI achieves its objectives via a number of programmes of activity and the WHP is one such area of work.

The WHP brings together groups of young adults aged 18-28 years living in economically and socially disadvantaged areas for training, work experience and personal development. Each individual project aims to have balanced recruitment across the two majority communities in Northern Ireland and those from the south of Ireland (i.e. Dublin and the border counties of Ireland). Elements of the programme usually take place outside the island of Ireland – in Europe, North America and occasionally further afield.

Each project typically lasts 20 weeks and involves a group of 21 young people and in their simplest form have three stages:

- Stage One - vocational training, mutual understanding, conflict resolution and personal development;
- Stage Two - the overseas phase and incorporating training and/or work experience with a further emphasis upon mutual understanding; and
- Stage Three - upon return home individuals complete any qualifications and job search skills.

Over the last 27 years approximately 18,000 young people have participated in the WHP at a cost of around £100m to IFI. The programme is managed by the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland and FAS (now known as SOLAS), the Training and Employment Authority in the south. DEL and FAS also contribute to the cost of the programme through the provision of weekly training allowances to participants. Representatives of DEL, FAS and the Fund Secretariat make up the Programme Review Group which reports regularly to the IFI Board.

WHP is delivered in two ways, via the:

- Integrated Area (IA) approach: Specified organisations have defined geographical remits and deliver a number of projects per year; and
- Open Access: This allows individual community based organisations to apply to run a single project, often in populous geographical regions somewhat distant from the base of the IAs.

## 1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The WHP will close at the end of 2013 due to reduced availabilities of monies. As a result main objective of the WHP evaluation is to measure impact through the life of the programme and to draw out best practice in order to inform and influence the social policy framework.

The evaluation adheres to the following Terms of Reference:

- Update the key findings of the 2008 evaluation and previous pertinent evaluations;
- Highlight the impact of participation in the WHP on young people in terms of improved community relations;
- Compare the progression rates into further training/employability programmes;
- Assess what learning, if any, from the WHP has influenced other training and work experience schemes; and



- Consider how any of the WHP principles could be taken forward in the context of the OFMdfM Together Building a United Community Initiative.

Qualitative and quantitative baseline indicators have been established and the evaluation measures the impact of the programme according to its Logic Model (see Table 1.1 overleaf). It is intended that the evaluation process will provide evidence to shape future interventions. The research methodology comprised of the following:

- **Desk Research:** Review of previous evaluations in relation to the research and policy landscape;
- **Stakeholder Consultations:** Discussions were undertaken with representatives from each of the three IAs, participants and representatives from the Programme Review Group.

## 1.5 Completeness and Availability of Information

For the purposes of this report, we have had to assume that the statistical information provided to us is reliable and complete. The scope of the exercise did not extend to an audit of this data.

## 1.6 Contents of this Document

The remainder of this document contains the following information:

<b>Section Two:</b>	Environmental Context;
<b>Section Three:</b>	Policy Response;
<b>Section Four:</b>	Distilling Wider Horizon's Research;
<b>Section Five:</b>	Programme Appraisal; and
<b>Section Six:</b>	Learning from Wider Horizons.



Table 1.1

**Wider Horizons Programme Logic Model Framework**

Themes & Objectives	Inputs	Longer-Term Outcomes	Short-Term Outcomes	Quantitative Indicators
<b>Good Relations:</b> <i>Encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between unionists and nationalists throughout Ireland</i>	£100m IFI investment  1,238 projects recruiting from disadvantaged areas  18,000 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people play a full and active role in building good relations</li> <li>• An equitable society with respect for diversity and cultural expression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in cross-community community dialogue and participation;</li> <li>• Increase in cross-border dialogue and participation;</li> <li>• Appreciation of other people's backgrounds, beliefs and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment balance: % NIP; % NIC; % RoI</li> <li>• % living in single identity neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Retention rates</li> <li>• Entry/exit index of cross-community friendships</li> <li>• Exit plans for cross-community contact</li> <li>• Entry/exit no cross-border friendships</li> <li>• Entry/exit index of cross-border friendships</li> <li>• No sustained cross-border contact</li> </ul>
<b>Community Cohesion:</b> <i>Promotion of free movement, safety &amp; sharing</i>	Skills of local leaders and statutory agencies  International partnerships and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shared community in which young people are positively engaged and involved as citizens</li> <li>• A united community free from prejudice, hate and intolerance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of positive shared experiences;</li> <li>• WHP contributes to increased mobility;</li> <li>• Reduction of prejudice on a cross-community and cross-border basis;</li> <li>• Increased volunteering and civic engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social distance scale</li> <li>• Self-rated attitudinal improvements relevant to good relations</li> <li>• Post-programme actual/planned cross-border visits</li> </ul>
<b>Economic &amp; Social Advance:</b> <i>Supporting youth employability and personal development</i>	Service Level Agreements with agencies responsible for unemployment benefit payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduction in youth unemployment;</li> <li>• Young people are more prepared for the world of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved youth employability through vocational training and work placements;</li> <li>• Increased youth connectivity to working life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-rated attitudinal improvement relevant to employability</li> <li>• Progress to employment rate</li> <li>• Combined progression to training/employment</li> <li>• % in employment post-WHP</li> <li>• % in training/employment post-WHP</li> </ul>
<b>Community Renewal:</b> <i>Improving quality of life and targeting disadvantage</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased community capacity &amp; stability;</li> <li>• Contributing towards the socio-economic renewal of neighbourhoods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting of deprived young people and areas</li> <li>• Professional development and capacity building for leaders;</li> <li>• Improved understanding of the needs of the unemployed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % U24 years upon entry</li> <li>• % females</li> <li>• % GCSE/Junior Cert NVQ 2 Lower &amp; no qualifications upon entry</li> </ul>



## 2 Environmental Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of young people's attitudes to community relations in Northern Ireland. Reference is also made to the current economic climate in the north and south of Ireland and the impact of increased youth unemployment.

### 2.2 Impact of Division on Young people

Northern Ireland's unsettled history means that many neighbourhoods are characterised by high levels of social and physical segregation according to community background. Research indicates that children can recognise diversity and hold sectarian prejudices from the age of three. **By the age of five or six, a considerable number of children display an awareness of sectarian and paramilitary violence and by the age of ten or eleven many have developed deeply entrenched sectarian opinions.**<sup>9</sup> Family background, school, media, politics, social lives and personal experiences have been identified by young people as contributing to sectarian attitudes.<sup>10</sup>

School uniform is an identifying marker of religion for young people attending segregated schools and can expose them to sectarian attacks. Young people have also reported how sectarianism affects their social interactions, with this leading to 'restricted social spaces' (for example in their choice of venues for meeting friends and undertaking social activities). Many report that, due to community and educational segregation they have had limited opportunities to develop cross-community friendships.<sup>11</sup>

Every year the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey invites 16-year olds from all parts of NI to answer questions about their views on community relations and other social issues. In 2012, 1,210 young people responded. Family was believed to be the greatest influencing factor regarding their views on community relations. However **over one in four respondents also felt that their own views had changed the views of their parents either 'a little' or 'a lot'**. Only 8% of Protestants said they felt unfavourable towards Catholics, whilst 4% of Catholics felt unfavourable towards Protestants. **Twenty-four percent of who those who identified as either Catholic or Protestant had no friends from the other main religious community.**

The 2012 YLT survey took place at a time of tension when daily protests were held against the decision to fly the Union flag on the Belfast City Hall only on certain days and this may have led to a downturn in perceptions of cross-community progress compared to the previous year's results. Despite this backdrop, over half (53%) believed relations between Catholics and Protestants were better now than five years ago and 45% thought relations would be better in five year's time. **Over three in four YLT respondents believed that religion will always make a difference to how people in NI feel about each other.** However, 75% of respondents said they would prefer mixed workplaces, 56% said they would live in mixed neighbourhoods if they had the choice and half said they would prefer to send their children to mixed religion schools.

As in previous years, more than half of the 2012 YLT respondents (61%) had taken part in a cross-community project. There was a general acknowledgement of their value, with

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<sup>9</sup> Connolly, P, Smyth, A and Kelly, B (2002) Too young to notice? The cultural and political awareness of 3–6 year olds in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Community Relations Council.

<sup>10</sup> Sinclair, R, McCole, P and Kelly, B (2004) The views of young people in Northern Ireland on anti-sectarianism, *Child Care in Practice*, 10, 2, 155–166.

<sup>11</sup> Kelly, B (2002) Young people's views on communities and sectarianism, *Child Care in Practice*, 8, 1, 65–72.





over three quarters of respondents stating that if there were more of these activities then relations between different religions would be better. However, **there was a strong sense that cross-community events can sometimes feel awkward because participants are automatically expected to get on with people they don't know.** Despite the perceived importance of cross-community projects, it was reported that access can be limited. Just over one half of respondents agreed that most people would like to have more friends of a different religion, but never have the opportunity and 45% said that there were no facilities in their area where they can meet with people of a different religion.

**Evidence suggests that the sense of fear and anxiety associated with division can restrict mobility.** Studies have been consistent in their finding that residents feel safe in their own community and have reservations about entering areas dominated by the "other community."<sup>12</sup> **There has been a physical border between the north and south of Ireland since 1922.** Although the actual border controls and security checks ceased to exist in the early 1990s, its legacy - evolving from a history of mistrust and lack of communication still endures. In the aftermath of peace some individuals and groups remain reluctant to travel across the jurisdictions. **There is evidence to suggest that the conflict has not only led to human suffering and trauma, it has also inflicted economic damage on the island economy, particularly within the border regions.** Research indicates that religious division and tensions cost the NI taxpayer an additional £1.5bn every year.<sup>13</sup> As well as the increased level of public services needed to support segregated communities, there are also opportunity costs in terms of lost investment, decreased tourism etc.

## 2.3 Impact of Unemployment on Young People

The first decade of post-Belfast Agreement North-South relationship building has been set against a global and national recession with falling employment, rising unemployment, an increase in economic inactivity and low skill-base of the working age population. **Young people (16-24 years) have been hit particularly hard by the crisis** and youth unemployment rates are generally much higher than those for all ages. On a pan-European level, the gap between the youth and the total unemployment rates has increased from the beginning of 2009, so that at the end of 2012 the youth unemployment rate was 2.6 times the total rate.

**Currently in the south of Ireland, 30% of under-25s are unemployed and the figure for Northern Ireland is 24%.** Looking at the NI figures for claimant unemployment,<sup>14</sup> in the period from March 2008 to March 2013, youth unemployment rose from just over 8,000 to around 17,600, more than doubling (+119%). However, overall unemployment rose proportionately even more in the same time period (+166%).

Over the ten years to late 2011, the proportion of 16-24 year olds in Northern Ireland who were not in employment, full-time education or training has been on a general upward trend - representing an increase of 6.4 percentage points or 16,000 young people in ten years.

Today's young people are emerging from their time in education and training into a labour market where opportunities are likely to be restricted for some time to come.

<sup>12</sup> Shirlow, P. and B. Murtagh (2006) *Segregation, violence and the city*, London: Pluto Press

<sup>13</sup> Deloitte, (2007). *Research into the Financial Cost of the Northern Ireland Divide*. Belfast, Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.delni.gov.uk/labour-market-bulletin-24.pdf>



Those living in disadvantaged communities will tend to have even greater problems as fewer skills and lower levels of employability contribute to social exclusion. Low skill levels are a key determinant of poverty and are associated with low pay and poor labour market participation and progression. **Research has identified that substantial economic returns can be gained by improving employability skills.**<sup>15</sup> Communication and problem solving skills and the essential skills of literacy and numeracy are found to secure higher rates of return in the labour market. Raising skill levels for the least skilled has been shown to help them move into work, stay in work and to progress up the career ladder.

Youth unemployment has a profound impact on individuals as well as on society and the economy. Research conducted by the Prince's Trust<sup>16</sup> indicates how NEETs are significantly more likely to feel isolated, whereas almost half of young people on Jobseekers' Allowance do not feel part of their community. FutureYou<sup>17</sup> conducted a study into the impact unemployment can have on young people's finances, their physical and emotional health and wellbeing and their aspirations. Seventy-five percent of those surveyed stated that they felt isolated from society, whilst 85% felt that they don't have enough money to pay for the things they need, often struggling to afford food and utility bills. **The research showed that confidence, self-esteem and motivation can be critically undermined and 60% of respondents were not confident that they would get a job in 2013.** This study concluded that equipping young people with work readiness skills in the broadest sense – including practical and emotional support which builds confidence and emotional resilience is crucial.

## 2.4 Discussion

Northern Ireland and the Border Counties continue to suffer from the legacy of the NI conflict. There are high levels of socio-economic deprivation in some areas and segregated living, schooling and socialising remains commonplace. Where you live greatly impacts upon the friendships which you develop and, the attitudes and beliefs that you hold. Although significant progress has been made, recent tensions and violence revolving around flags, emblems and parade disputes highlight the fragility of peace.

Research indicates that increased opportunities for mixing provides a number of benefits for inter-group relations including, reduced fear of the 'other' community, greater freedom of movement and more cross-community participation. Some of the research examining mixed education environments also indicates that sustained contact can help build trust and can have an indirect positive impact on participant's friends and family.

Youth unemployment risks damaging the longer-term employment prospects for young people as well as having implications for future economic growth and social cohesion. Helping young people to enter and remain in the labour market and to acquire and develop the skills that will pave the way for future employment should be a top priority in boosting confidence and showing that young people have a bright future.

IFI takes a twin-track approach to addressing community division, low levels of cross-border mobility and youth unemployment via the WHP. Based upon contact theory, individuals from different community backgrounds receive sustained support and mentoring cumulating in a mutual learning experience which they are otherwise unlikely

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<sup>15</sup> Ambition 2020, UKCES 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Young People and Their Communities. Prince's Trust, 2010

<sup>17</sup> FutureYou, (2012). Youth Unemployment: The Human Cost.



to access. The following chapters explore how the programme correlates with current policy drivers and its impact against key indicators.



## 3 Policy Response

### 3.1 Introduction

The WHP is embedded in the economic and social policies of the Irish and Northern Irish Governments, aiming to contribute to the regeneration of the most disadvantaged areas through targeted investment and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland. This chapter provides an overview of the relevant policy and operational landscape.

### 3.2 Government Priorities

The NI Executive's **Programme for Government (PfG) 2011 – 2015** identified its core priority as *Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future*. The primary objective over the period is to achieve long term economic growth by improving competitiveness and building a larger and more export-driven private sector. To do this Government will rebuild the labour market in the wake of the global economic downturn and rebalance the economy to improve the wealth and living standards of everyone. Commitment has been made to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation and has an emphasis on supporting young people into employment.

Fine Gael and Labour's **Government for National Recovery 2011-2016** centres on addressing the country's economic problems and getting Ireland working again. The emphasis is upon restoring economic confidence and stability, helping people back to work, protecting the most vulnerable and overhauling the political system, whilst protecting key services.

### 3.3 Employability and the Economy

Growing the economy and job creation is high on the political agenda alongside labour market activation – aimed at preventing the drift into and, reducing long-term unemployment. In both jurisdictions, there is more focus on designing programmes that help people keep close to the labour market through training and education, taking into account current and emerging skills gaps/needs.

The **Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011** aims to enable people to progress up the skills ladder. It emphasises the *need for employability skills*, including team working, problem solving and flexibility and the development of work-based skills, specific to a particular occupation or sector. The **Access to Success Strategy** aims to *increase higher education participation* amongst students from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with disabilities and those with learning disabilities. Although participation rates are much higher than in other parts of the United Kingdom, there remains a gap between those who pursue educational attainment and those who fall out of the structures.

In the south **Action Plan for Jobs** identifies specific measures across a range of sectors with the target of creating 100,000 net new jobs in the period to 2016. The **Pathways to Work** strategy intends to maximise the number of unemployed filling these new jobs. Every unemployed individual and, in particular, those at risk of long-term unemployment will be offered access to employment advice, job search assistance/referral, education, training and work experience. The **National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education** aims to increase participation of students with a disability, mature students



and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including Travellers and other minorities.

The economic crisis has had a severe impact on young people across the island of Ireland and the rest of the EU. Youth training, progression to employment and unemployment among young people continue to present a major challenge. **Pathways to Success** aims to *prevent youth unemployment and to fund activities to enable all young people who are unemployed to access education and training, or prepare for work*. A three tier package of measures is proposed aimed at *prevention*; helping **16-18 years olds, especially those facing barriers**; and *assisting unemployed young people aged 18-24* more generally. To ensure its successful implementation a cross-sectoral **NEET Advisory Group** has been established. Initiatives include a community based access programme to engage and mentor young people using community and voluntary sector organisations, a training allowance for 16 and 17 year olds participating on existing programmes funded by the European Social Fund, an innovation fund to re-engage NEETs and a Community Family Support Programme which will focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged families, to enable young people to re-engage with education, training or employment.

The Irish Government focuses on youth unemployment through the **Youth Employment and Social Investment Packages**. This includes a "Youth Guarantee" aimed at ensuring that young people who are not working or studying receive an offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. The European Council will also reinforce EU efforts to address youth unemployment in a special dedicated "**Youth Employment Initiative**" and will mobilise €6 billion of support in areas with levels of youth unemployment above 25%. At a national level, the Irish Government has pledged to deliver a range of actions to prepare young people for work through education, training and work placement measures.

Table 3.1 (see Appendix 1) illustrates some of the training and employment programmes supporting young people into employment, in addition to non-age specific interventions.

### 3.4 Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Both Governments acknowledge the *complementary relationship between social policy and economic prosperity* and are channelled at increasing access and participation in social and economic life within specific areas and marginalised groups.

The **Shaping Our Future Strategy, 2025**, aims to guide the future development of Northern Ireland to meet the needs of a fast growing region with a population approaching two million. At the heart of the Strategy is the principle of *sustainability, with a strong emphasis on social cohesion and economic progress*. New TSN is a major policy for combating social exclusion and poverty. It aims to tackle social need and exclusion by *targeting efforts and available resources towards people, groups and areas in greatest social need*. In addition the **Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy** for Northern Ireland, **Lifetime Opportunities** is structured around a number of general challenges which include:

- Eliminating poverty;
- Eliminating social exclusion;
- Tackling area based deprivation; and
- Eliminating poverty from rural areas.

In the south, **Towards 2016, the 10-year Framework Social Partnership Agreement** (2006-2015) outlines a vision of a dynamic, internationalised, and



participatory society and economy, with a strong commitment to social justice. The **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion** (NAPinclusion) also uses a life-cycle approach and identifies 12 high level strategic goals to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty. The high level goals focus on:

- Ensuring children reach their true potential;
- Supporting working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation;
- Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living; and
- Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital.

NAPinclusion is complemented by:

- Social inclusion elements of the **National Development Plan 2007-2013: Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All**;
- Area-based working through the County and City Development Boards (CDBs); and
- Extension of the **Social Inclusion Programme** with **Social Inclusion Monitoring** (SIM) groups, representative of local public agencies and local development groups (Area Partnerships, Community Development Programmes) established to improve local co-ordination.

In NI:

- The **Department for Social Development's (DSD) People and Places Strategy** seeks to tackle the complex, multi-dimensional nature of deprivation through developing confident communities, encouraging economic activity, improving social conditions and creating attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the most deprived neighbourhoods; and
- The NI Executive has committed £26m of funding to **Delivering Social Change** signature Projects and an £80million **Social Investment Fund** has been established with the aim of reducing poverty and unemployment. The Fund is intended to be an integrated approach to enhance economic growth, employability and the sustainability of communities.

### 3.5 Community Division

Government recognizes the need to make communities more welcoming and inclusive for everyone and supporting communities to improve good relations and increase mobility. OFMdFM and The Atlantic Philanthropies have embarked on a three year inter-community sharing and good relations programme targeted at ***interfaces and contested spaces***. The programme will provide communities with opportunities to shape and influence how children and youth services are provided, in a way that encourages reconciliation, increases participation in policy making and contributes to better outcomes for children, young people and families. IFI has also allocated £2m towards a range of ***confidence and relationship-building initiatives within and between interface communities*** to help them arrive at a position where residents feel it is safe and appropriate for the walls to come down.

**Together Building a United Community** (United Community) details the following Shared Aim:



*"to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations."*

Importantly, the NI Executive acknowledges *"for our people and neighbourhoods to begin to see the real tangible benefits of better community relations, the desire to address division, intolerance, hate and separation must permeate everything we do. **These benefits are both economic, such as increased tourism and investment opportunities, as well as social, such as an improved quality of life for everyone.**"*

United Community will create 10,000 one year placements in a new "**United Youth Programme**" offering young people in the NEETS category structured employment, work experience, volunteer and leisure opportunities along with a dedicated programme designed to foster good relations and a shared future. This aims to build better community relations, create better citizens and provide employment experience and structured volunteer opportunities, supported by a stipend which will not affect existing benefits. It is intended that the programme will build on other international examples and will potentially include work placement for part of the week, accredited volunteering with a recognised community based organisation. ***Part of the community placement will be in a community not traditionally aligned to their own and good relations based activity (training, learning, sport, leisure etc) will take place within a shared environment.*** At the end of the initiative each participant who has completed the programme will receive an accredited Diploma.

Although not directly related to the objectives and remit of the Fund, the **2005-2010 Racial Equality Strategy** sets out the six shared aims of eliminating racism, equality of protection; equality of service provision; participation; dialogue and capacity building. The Irish Government are finalising a strategy to address the broader issue of integration policy which will build on and be linked with progress already achieved in the areas of social inclusion and anti-racism. A range of strategies are also pursued as part of the **National Action Plan Against Racism** (NPAR).

### 3.6 Increasing Cross-Border Cooperation

The **North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC)** was established under the Good Friday Agreement to co-ordinate activity and exercise certain governmental powers across the whole island of Ireland. The Council takes the form of meetings between ministers from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and is responsible for twelve policy areas. Six of these areas are the responsibility of corresponding **North/South Implementation Bodies**. The North/South Ministerial Council and the Northern Ireland Assembly are "mutually inter-dependent" institutions: one cannot exist without the other.

The Irish Government and the NI Executive remain committed to full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, to include the establishment of the **North/South Consultative Forum**. The focus is on strategic planning and cooperation - demonstrating that the economic and social success of each part of Ireland is advantageous to the other. Conversely, it is recognised that economic and social failure in one part is damaging to the other. The process of reconciliation between the two traditions on the island of Ireland still needs to continue and it is believed that there is a clear role for social partners and the social partnership process in energising the peace process and addressing crucial issues for the island of Ireland over the next ten years, so that a new-shared future can be built and sustained.





### 3.7 Discussion

The WHP is clearly aligned to the objectives of a range of Government Departments and agencies. It specifically supports the commitments set out by both Governments by tackling youth unemployment, up-skilling the working age population and supporting people by developing skills and training. Given the expected shift in the requirements towards higher level skills, the opportunities for people with few qualifications to engage effectively in the labour market will become more limited over the next decade. There is a pressing need therefore to up-skill those currently in employment and re-engage and up-skill the considerable number of individuals without a job that have no or low qualifications. WHP through the provision of transferable and practical work based learning, fulfils a key objective of increasing employability, job readiness and work-based skills.

WHP aims to address low levels of economic growth and employment within areas of deprivation by increasing skills, employability and qualifications. The use of community based facilities and mentoring assists in improving access to learning alongside one-to-one and peer encouragement and motivation.

There have been various policy responses and interventions aimed at addressing issues of division in NI. Many programmes have been resourced from the public purse. However, international funders have also played a significant role in supporting and/or devising strategic activities, including Atlantic Philanthropies, IFI and the EU Peace III funding programme. United Community provides a welcome focus on improving good relations outcomes for young people. However, despite the stream of policy interventions in recent years designed to consolidate the peace and develop NI as a cohesive society, 'there is evidence of a resurgence of sectarian incidents.'<sup>18</sup>

WHP aims to bring young people from different backgrounds together to pursue a journey of exploration outside their respective communities. The objective of which is learn more about self and others and to dispel some of the myths which have developed as a result of social segregation and unrest. The programme focuses upon up-skilling young people in order to realise their employment and career ambitions as a result of in-depth support.

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<sup>18</sup> Todd, J & Ruane, J (2010) *From 'A Shared Future' to 'Cohesion, Sharing and Integration' - An Analysis of Northern Ireland's Policy Framework Documents*. Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.





## 4 Distilling Wider Horizon's Research

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter draws upon the research findings from the IFI commissioned 1994, 1997, 2002 and 2008 evaluations, but more specifically the latter. This document outlines the results of a survey of 140 individuals who had completed the WHP Integrated Areas led projects within the last two years. Questionnaires were also completed by 383 individuals entering WHP and 175 individuals exiting the programme. Quarter-end Managing Agent Reports compiled by DEL and FAS are also utilised, alongside independent evaluations commissioned by Springboard, Tyrone Donegal Partnership and Clanrye Training. Information is presented according to the WHP thematic objectives.

### 4.2 Encouraging Contact, Dialogue and Reconciliation

#### 4.2.1 Cross-Community Friendships

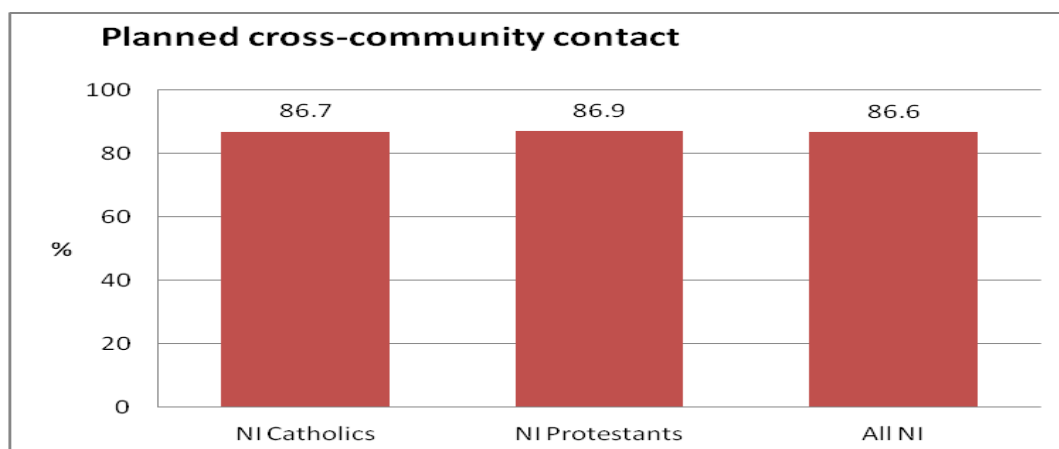
Upon entry to the WHP, 2008 evaluation respondents from NI were asked about the composition of their neighbourhood and the extent to which they had opportunities to mix with people from different community backgrounds. **Seventy-one percent stated that they lived in predominately single identity areas.** However, in contrast to wider population surveys, only 6% stated that they had no cross-community friendships and almost half of the sample stated that they already had close cross-community friendships. **Despite this the level of cross-community friendships was comparatively higher amongst those leaving the WHP in comparison to entry level participants** (Index of +7). This finding is also consistent with the 2002 WHP evaluation.

*"I have mixed with people from different religions, whereas before this programme I don't think I would have."*[2008 IFI evaluation]

*"I live in a republican area and there's no way you'd ever meet Protestants or have a friendship with them, I've learned so much about the troubles that I didn't know and I've made great friendships that will last forever. I never thought I would have Protestant people staying in my house. We are friends for life now."*[2013 Clanrye evaluation]

The 2002 IFI evaluation asked exit respondents whether or not they had any plans to make social contact with people of a different religion. As can be seen in Figure 4.1 planned contact rates were high and were similar for both Protestants and Catholics.

Figure 4.1  
**Exit Group: Planned Cross-Community Contact**



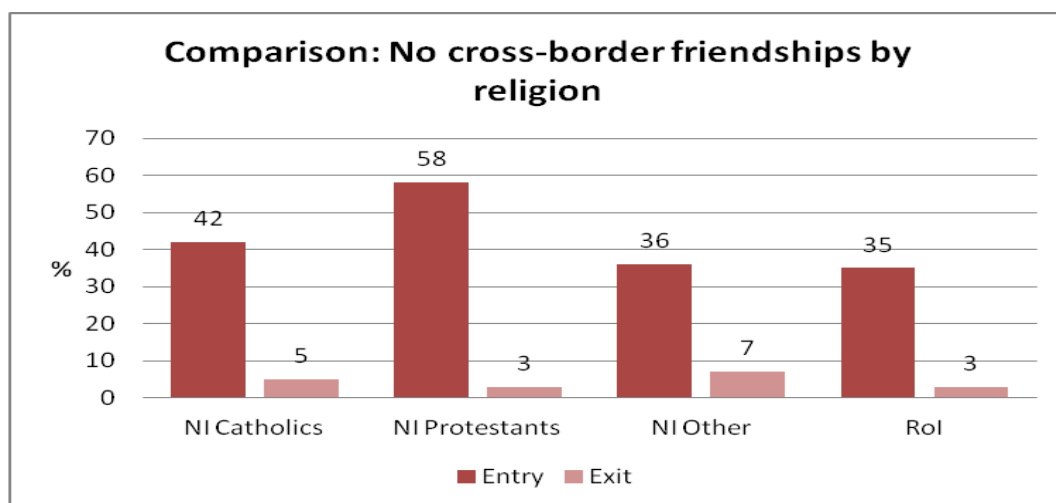
*Source: 2002 Exit Group*

Content analysis has also demonstrated that respondents nearing the end of WHP provided more positive statements about the “other” groups (i.e. NI Protestants, NI Catholics and ROI participants), than those who were just commencing the programme. All three population groups were well-disposed towards each other from the outset. However, the exit groups were more likely to acknowledge their similarities. NI Protestants and Catholics expressed an increase in friendliness towards each other in addition to a mutual appreciation for what was perceived as the fun-loving characteristics of the other.

#### **4.2.2 Cross-Border Friendships**

Upon entry to the WHP, the majority of respondents typically have no cross-border friendships, with participants from RoI and NI Protestants most likely to state this than NI Catholics. Amongst those nearing the end of the WHP, the proportion reporting no cross-border friendships has been considerably less and is particularly marked amongst NI Protestants (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2  
**Entry/Exit Group Comparison: No Cross-Border Friendships by Religion**

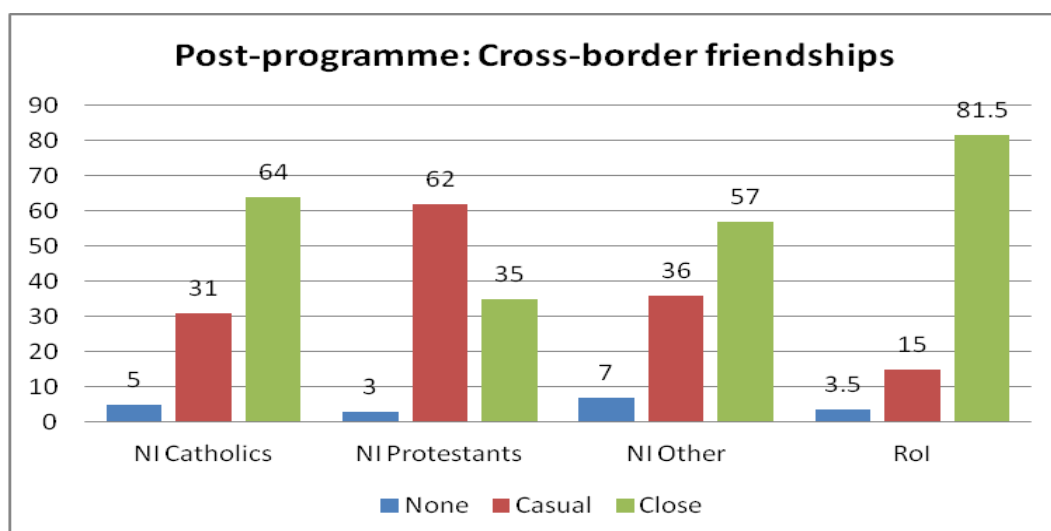


Source: 2008 Entry/Exit

*"I think I was a bit sectarian, but now I've made best friends on this course."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

The sample exiting the WHP was most likely to report close, rather than casual cross-border friendships (64%). However, Figure 4.3 illustrates that NI Protestants were more likely to rate these friendships as casual (62%) rather than close (35%) in contrast to the other groups.

Figure 4.3  
**Post-Programme Cross-Border Friendships by Religion**



Source: 2008 Past Participants

### 4.2.3 Sustained Contact

Table 4.1 illustrates that **86% (n121) of respondents had maintained some sort of contact up to two years post-programme.** Just over half of those questioned (56%;



n78) had maintained contact with people from each of the three groupings (i.e. Protestants and Catholics from NI and participants from the Republic of Ireland (ROI)). Participants living in the RoI were more likely to report that they hadn't kept up contact, or had only kept contact with young people from RoI.

Table 4.1  
**Post-Programme Contact**

Contact* Religion*Location	% Religion*Location				Total %
	NI Catholic	NI Protestant	NI Other/ None	RoI	
N140	48	40	5*	47	-
NI Protestants, Catholics & ROI	60.5	60	40	49	56
NI Protestants & Catholics only	12.5	12.5	0	8.5	11
NI Catholics & ROI only	6.25	5	0	4.25	5
NI Protestants & ROI only	6.25	0	20	0	3
NI Protestant only	2	2.5	0	0	1.5
NI Catholic only	2	2.5	0	0	1.5
ROI only	2	7.5	20	15	8.5
None	8.5	10	20	21.25	13.5

\*Caution sample size  
*Source 2008 – past participants*

There was minimal distinction between NI based Protestants and Catholics with regards to maintaining contact. Overall 81.25% of NI Catholics kept in contact with NI Protestants and 75% maintained contact with young people from RoI. Eighty percent of NI Protestants kept in contact with NI Catholics and 72.5% maintained contact with people based in the RoI. However, young people from the RoI were slightly more likely to keep up contact with Catholics (61.75%) than Protestants (57.5%) in NI.

A 2013 evaluation commissioned by Tyrone Donegal Partnership also affirmed high levels of post-programme contact up to six years post-WHP involvement (average 87% of survey respondents).

## 4.3 Promoting Inclusion, Free Movement and Sharing

### 4.3.1 Prejudice Reduction

The Bogardus Social Distance Scale measures tolerance towards specific groups on a 7 point scale, ranging from "I would like them expelled from my country" (score 7) to "I would be willing to marry/be related by marriage" (score 1). The 2002 and 2008 evaluations compared social distance levels amongst entry and exit groups and consistently found that **exit groups displayed higher tolerance levels for each of the three WHP population groups, than did the entry level groups.**

*"I had never met NI Protestants, I learned a lot about differences and realised we are all just the same."*[2008 IFI evaluation]

As illustrated in Table 4.2, those nearing the end of the WHP showed relatively high levels of tolerance for each of the stimulus groups (extending to a willingness to work



together, be neighbours and have as a close friend). However, it should be noted that **racial tolerance appears to be lower than sectarian tolerance**. Although alleviating racism is not a direct objective of the WHP, concerns regarding racial prejudices amongst respondents were also raised within the 2002 evaluation report.

Table 4.2  
**Exit Group: Bogardus Social Rating Scale**

Respondent	Stimulus Group						Average Score
	Polish	Chinese	Arab	NI Catholic	NI Protestant	RoI	
NI Catholic	3.3	3.0	3.9	1.3	1.9	1.6	2.5
NI Protestant	3.7	3.2	3.7	2	1.2	2.1	2.7
RoI	3.3	3	3.9	1.3	1.9	1.6	2.5

Source: 2008 – Exit Participants

There is evidence that tolerance can persist after the WHP ends. Up to two years after WHP participation, survey respondents agreed that the programme had given them a greater understanding and tolerance of people from different backgrounds, cultures and religions [20% stated “not at all”].

*“Knowing the other side of the story gives you a new perspective.”* [2008 IFI evaluation]

#### 4.3.2 Cross-border Mobility

Table 4.3 indicates that participants commencing the WHP had on average undertaken four cross-border visits within the last six months, with NI Protestants indicating lower levels of mobility.

Table 4.3  
**Programme Entry: Cross-Border Mobility**

Weighted (n)	% Religion*Location				Total %
	NI Catholic	NI Protestant	NI Other/ None	RoI	
Average Cross-Border Visits	4.1	2.6	2.7*	5.4	4.2

\*Caution sample size

Source 2008 – Entry participants

The various WHP evaluations have consistently found that NI Catholics are more likely to have undertaken cross-border visits than NI Protestants before entering the programme. However, over the duration reciprocal trips are made as part of the course and this helps to familiarise participants with the prospect of cross-border travel.

*“Before this I wouldn’t even go out of my own area, never name go down South.”* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

Table 4.4 illustrates the extent to which young people who have left the programme have made/planned cross-border visits since their departure. As can be seen NI Protestants were least likely to have visited/or be planning a visit to RoI, than NI Catholics.



Table 4.4

**Follow-up Cross-Border Mobility**

Cross-border mobility	% Religion*Location				Total %
	NI Catholic	NI Protestant	NI Other/ None	RoI	
N140	48	40	5*	47	-
Undertaken cross-border visit in last 6 months	64.5	50	60	62	59
Plan to visit	17	20	20	6	14
Combined total	81.5	70	80	68	73

\*Caution sample size

Source 2008 – Past participants

**4.3.3 Global Connectivity**

Identified highlights were the **opportunity for travel** (accounting for 36% of the 2008 survey responses), followed by **friendships** (34%) and **experiencing new cultures** (12%). It appears that the opportunity to experience how residents in other countries embrace inter-culturalism has deeply contributed to participants’ understanding and outlook upon the situation at home.

*"The Canadian people are outgoing and straightforward...they're all from different backgrounds."*[2013 Clanrye focus group]

*"My understanding is much greater through meeting new people and different religions and cultures, understanding their perspective. It has made me more open-minded and now I don't judge people."*[2008 IFI evaluation]

The cultural exchange has proven to be **beneficial for many host families also**.

*"They learn as well as the host family does, I have thoroughly enjoyed my experiences with the Programme. I always look forward to sharing my home with another guest. Each and every one has left a lasting impression on my family. I know that most of the kids feel the same they LOVE the experience. As do I!!"* [2013 Clanrye evaluation]

*"We have had some wonderful young people come from Ireland to stay in our home...I see that they are really, really grateful to be here. Most say they would love to stay. They engage with us a lot more than some of the other students. They enjoy going to my kids sporting events and family cook outs, holiday parties and even just the grocery store. I also feel like we make a difference with a lot of them, they open up and share about some things that may have not been so great for them at home. Most of the students really enjoy their work placements as well as the work placements enjoy them. My children and I stay in touch with many of them through Face Book. I really hope we can continue to make a difference."* [2013 Clanrye evaluation]

**4.3.4 Continuing Social Contributions**

One of the key elements of the WHP is developing participants’ realisation of their role within society and the need to actively engage and give back to the local community. Tyrone Donegal Partnership’s 2013 survey of previous participants illustrated that a significant number considered that they had become more active citizens as a result of WHP involvement (averaging 80% of previous respondents over the last six years). For



example, individuals stated that they were involved in volunteering for local youth clubs and community associations and took part in sports coaching and fundraising activities within their communities. One respondent also stated that they had attended the G8 summit for young people.

The recently commissioned IA evaluations highlight familial recognition of change as a result of the programme. For example, family members reported increased confidence and respect for self and others, improved communication skills and ability to function in a group situation. Improvements in cross-community and racial tolerance and understanding were also highlighted.

*"He now understands that it makes the world better to have lots of different people in it."*  
[2013 TDP evaluation]

## 4.4 Supporting Youth Employability

### 4.4.1 Business Sectors Targeted

The breakdown of Business Sectors targeted by the IAs in the provision of specific vocational skills for participants in 2012 is indicated in Table 4.5. Options projects are popular choices as they do not focus on a particular sector and provide flexibility for people who are unsure about their career direction. Over the last five years there has been shift in interest towards community based and multimedia employment.

Table 4.5

#### WHP Business Sector Trends

Sector	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Options/Choices	51%	52%	42%	42%	32%
Multimedia	14%	14%	11%	-	-
Community	28%	28%	25%	19%	12%
Service	0%	3%	18%	12%	20%
IT/Office Administration	7%	3%	4%	19%	12%
Construction	-	-	-	4%	-
Caring	-	-	-	4%	12%
Retail	-	-	-	-	4%
Hospitality	-	-	-	-	8%

Source: DEL/FAS Management Reports

During the discussions with 2013 participants it was apparent that the majority of individuals had been impressed by the quality of the work placement provided and they felt that they would not have been afforded this opportunity at home.

*"There's nothing like this here. When you get home you realise how big an opportunity it was... a whole new way of life. You feel like a proper adult."*[2013 Clanrye focus group]

*"When I went over to Toronto it was different. This was a job I actually wanted to do. I worked in a YMCA facility in the gym. It was based on a hobby."*[2013 Clanrye focus group]



*"I worked in the biggest football academy in Canada. It was amazing. I don't think I would have got that opportunity on my own. It's given me the drive to go back over there to work."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

Table 4.6 illustrates that the proportion of work placements in Europe has marginally increased over the last few years and in 2012 was the most popular destination.

Table 4.6  
**WHP Overseas Destinations**

Phase 2 Destination	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
USA	21%	21%	18%	19%	20%
Europe	41%	38%	39%	38%	40%
South Africa	3%	-	-	4%	4%
Canada	35%	41%	43%	38%	36%

Source: DEL/FAS Management Reports

*"In the likes of America and Canada young people have to do internships. Organisations are used to taking in volunteers, otherwise they wouldn't function. Over here there just isn't that mindset. This programme really invests in people...gives them ideas and inspiration. You see the change...in some cases they'll volunteer extra hours and miss out on recreation time because they feel their employer needs them."* [2013 Clanrye staff]

#### 4.4.2 Personal Development

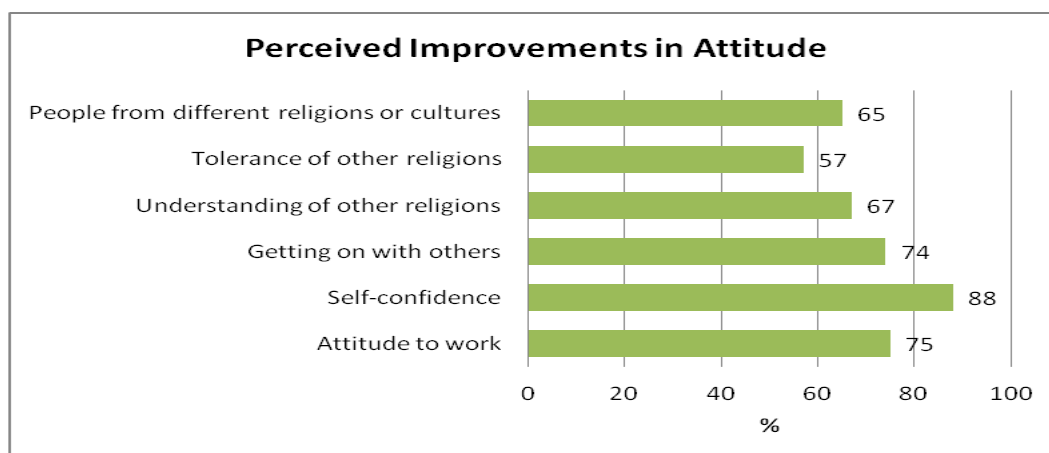
Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority of individuals upon exit feel that their self-confidence, ability to get on with others and their attitudes to work have improved as a result of WHP participation. Although there are self-reported attitudinal improvements with regards to good relations, these are not as pronounced.

*"I had no intention of feeling this way. No intention of ever getting a job. This has changed my life big time, when I saw America and their way of living...I had always thought I wasn't fit for a job."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

*"I never thought I would have got into youth work with my reputation and now I have."* [2008 IFI evaluation]



Figure 4.4  
**Self-reported Attitudinal Improvements**



Source: 2008 Exit-participants

The 2002 IFI evaluation illustrated that willingness to take a job outside their home area was high (91% upon exit). Lack of transport and an unwillingness to leave family and friends were most likely to be cited as obstacles to mobility, as opposed to community relations issues.

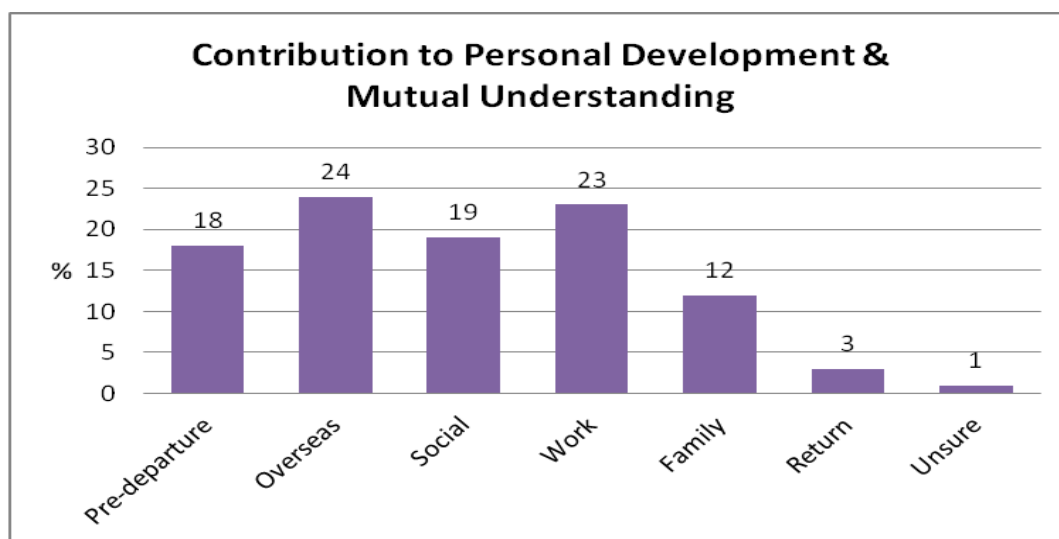
WHP evaluations consistently report that participants feel that they have gained benefits such as **new skills, employment, work experience, meeting others and personal development** as a direct result of involvement. Increased confidence appears to be a core outcome alongside improved communication, teamwork, independence and assertiveness. For many, WHP placements were the first time they had experienced full-time employment and as such participants felt that they had gained sectoral skills as well as an understanding of time-keeping, time-management and how to behave in the workplace.

*"I've learnt new skills that I'll take with me through life. This has helped me find out how to look for, find and do work. I'm more confident in my job search. I'm more experienced...I've been away and lived in a different country. I've now got a reference that I can show an employer."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

Indeed, participants were most likely to report that the **time spent overseas** and specifically the **work placement** contributed greatest to personal development and mutual understanding.

*"Living with my host family was a real eye opener. We are just the same except for our skin colour. It was so great to see and meet so many people from all sorts of cultures."* [2013 Clanrye evaluation]

Figure 4.4  
**Self-reported Attitudinal Improvements**



Source: 2008 Past-participants

#### 4.4.3 Progression

Follow-up is undertaken several months after programme completion in order to determine employment and training outcomes. Table 4.7 indicates that in more recent years the combined progression into employment and training has fallen, although this is likely to be a result of wider economic decline. Similarly, pre-2011 participants were more likely to progress into employment than into training. However, combined progression remains relatively high at 66% for the last recorded statistics.

Table 4.7  
**WHP Progression Trends**

Year	No. Completing WHP	% into Employment on completion	% into Training on completion	Other (applying for jobs or training courses)	Combined Progression into Employment and Training
2008	383	44%	26%	30%	70%
2009	434	45%	26%	28%	72%
2010	429	40%	30%	30%	71%
2011	488	30%	49%	40%	60%
2012	505	30%	36%	32%	66%

Source: DEL/FAS Management Reports

To put these results into context, an illustrative comparison is made between WHP and Training for Success (TfS). It must be noted that TfS is directed at 16/17 year olds only and provides training for learners who have not yet found full-time employment and are not participating in a Programme-Led Apprenticeship. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. Trainees can choose from three options – Skills for Your Life, Skills for Work and Pre-Apprenticeships.



Although the age profile differs from WHP and there is no overseas work placement, DEL suggests that pre-programme attainment levels and personal and social development issues may be similar.

Table 4.8  
**Progression to Employment/Training**

WHP Year End	WHP <sup>19</sup>	TfS Year	TfS – Skills for Your Life	TfS – Skills for Work
2008	70%	2008/09	0%	1%
2009	72%	2009/10	19%	33%
2010	71%	2010/11	34%	37%
2011	60%	2011/12	32%	33%
2012	66%	2012/13	39%	41%

Source: DEL WHP/TfS and Programme Led Apprenticeship Statistical Bulletin August 2013

Table 4.8 illustrates that despite obvious differences in the two programmes, progression to employment or training upon leaving WHP is higher.

#### 4.4.4 Sustained Progression

The 2008 past-participant survey enables a longitudinal comparison of employment outcomes up to two years post-programme. Table 4.9 illustrates that some individuals were in employment immediately prior to WHP entry. However, these jobs are unlikely to be progressive, career orientated posts. Individuals from RoI were more likely to be employed than those from the North and this may reflect recruitment difficulties in some areas.

Table 4.9  
**Entry Employment Status**

Status	Northern Catholic(n)	Northern Protestant(n)	NI Other/ None(n)	RoI(n)	Total(n)
Employed	3	6	0	8	19
Education/ Training	4	5	1	13	23
Unemployed	41 (85.4%)	29 (72.5%)	4 (80%)	26 (55.3%)	98 (70%)

Source: 2008 Evaluation

**Up to two years post-WHP, levels of unemployment remain lower than at entry** across all the groupings –17% at the time of reporting, compared to 70% upon exit (see Table 4.9 and 4.10).

<sup>19</sup> At 13 week follow-up

Table 4.10

**Post-WHP Employment Status**

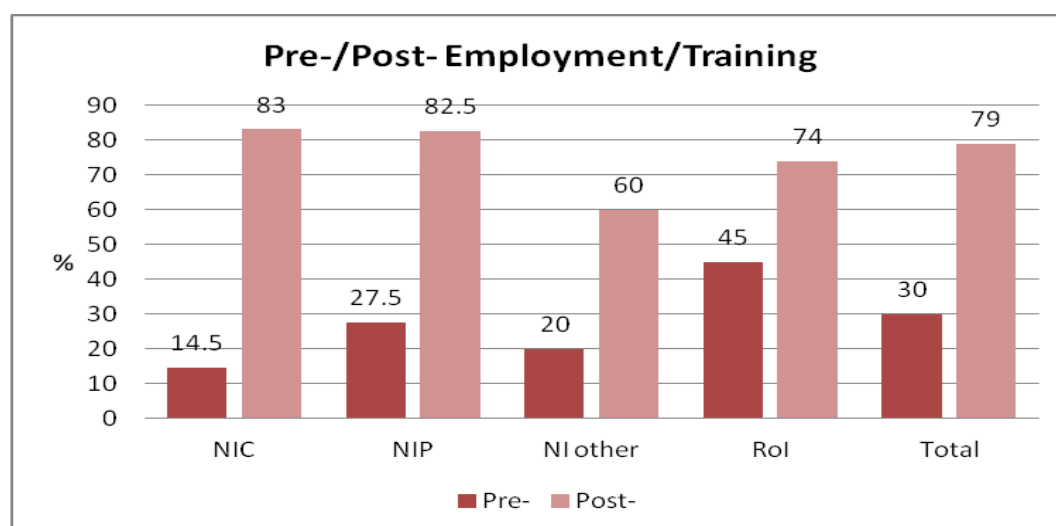
Status	Northern Catholic (n)	Northern Protestant (n)	NI Other/None (n)	RoI (n)	Total (n)
Employed	26	21	1	23	71
Self employed	1				1
Education/ Training	13	12	1	13	23
Sick/Maternity	3		2		5
Unemployed	5 (10.4%)	7 (17.5%)	0	12 (26%)	24 (17%)

Source: 2008 Evaluation Past-participants

Figure 4.4 illustrates that up to two years post-WHP, 79% of those surveyed stated that they were currently in employment or training. This is in comparison to 30% upon entry to the programme.

Figure 4.4

**Pre-/Post- Progression Comparison**



Source: 2008 Evaluation Past-participants

## 4.5 Targeting Disadvantage

### 4.5.1 Geographical Location

In 1988 the IFI Board made a decision to make a more focused contribution to the economic and social regeneration of the most disadvantaged areas in the north of Ireland and the Southern Border Counties through its work programme. A few years later the IA approach was established – focusing upon six locations and linking where possible with other Fund initiatives. The number of IAs over the last five years has been consolidated to three and loosely cover the following regions:

- Belfast/Tallaght via Springboard;
- North & West/Donegal via Tyrone Donegal Partnership; and
- South & East/Louth via Clanrye Training.

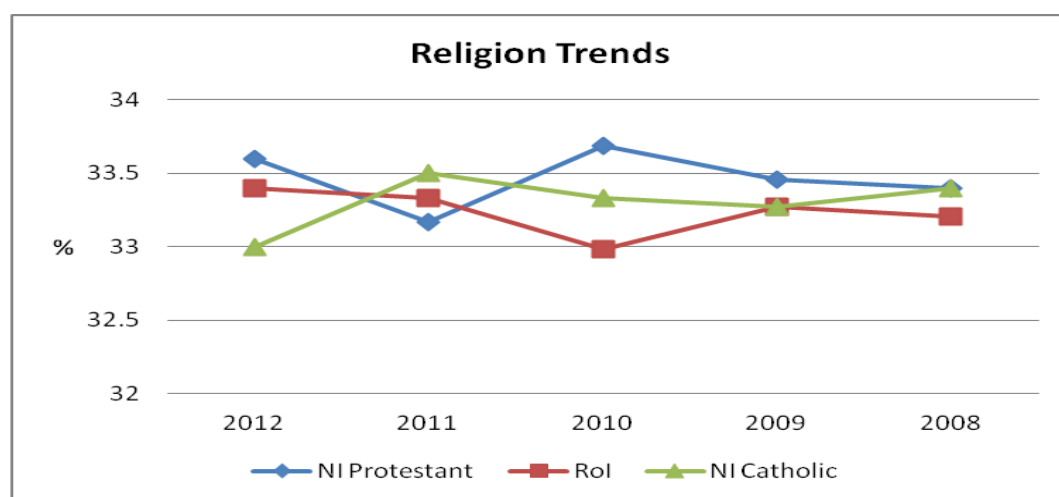


The Londonderry/Donegal, North Belfast/Northside Dublin, East Belfast/Ballymun, Dublin and Portadown/Monaghan IAs no longer exist. However, the current IAs extended their reach to ensure geographical coverage. The parallel established Open Access project structure enables participation and flexibility to meet local needs outside the IA remit. Community based organisations in disadvantaged and religiously divided locations such as Londonderry/Derry and North Antrim/Ballymena have delivered WHP courses locally targeted at unemployed youth.

#### 4.5.2 Religion

The WHP focuses upon achieving a balance between each of its three target groups. Figure 4.5 indicates that this has been achieved, with only minor variations over the last 5 years.

Figure 4.5  
**Religious Balance**



Source: DEL/FAS Managing Agent Reports

Analysis of those who had completed or remained on the programme at the end of Q4 indicates that the retention rate has increased after a dip in 2010. Retention of NI Protestants is comparatively lower than amongst the other two groups. This is aligned to general difficulties in recruiting and retaining members of the Protestant community. Feedback suggests that this corresponds with suspicions surrounding community relations activity and weak community infrastructure.

Table 4.11  
**Retention Rate by Religion**

Group	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
NI Protestant	77%	72%	73%	79%	73%
RoI	86%	85%	83%	80%	73%
NI Catholic	81%	86%	67%	84%	78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>74%</b>

Source: DEL/FAS Managing Agent Reports

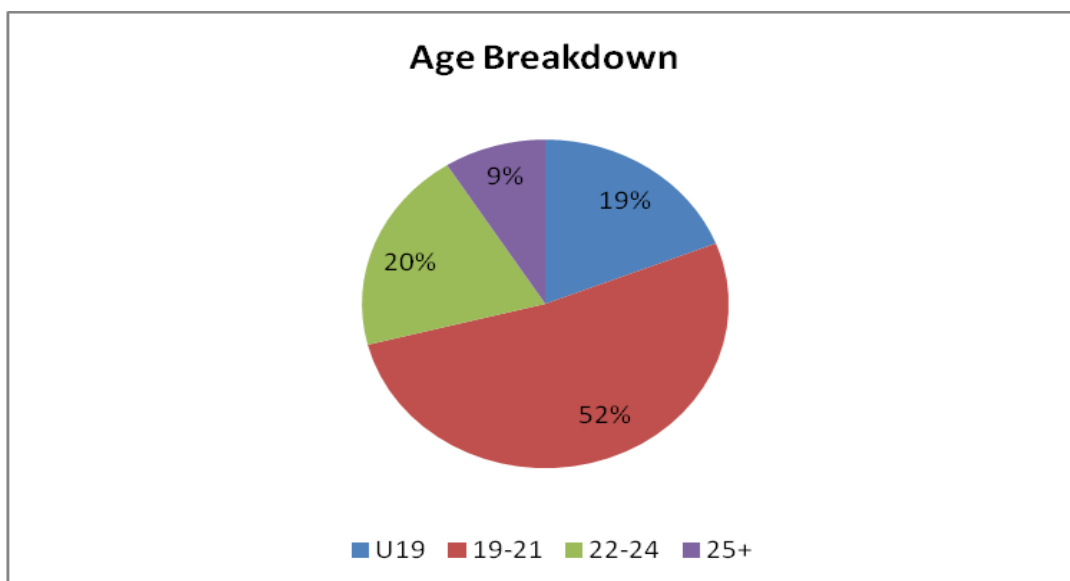
Feedback on retention rates indicates that some participants leave to take up employment. However, the majority of drop-outs are due to the disadvantaged profile of

the target group. Previous legal issues, attitudinal and behaviour problems, poor mental health and lack of commitment to the programme have been cited.

### 4.5.3 Participant Age

Originally there was no upper age limit placed upon the programme. However over time it became focused upon young people up to the age of 28 years. The Managing Agent reports do not submit information on participant age. However, the last WHP evaluation, undertaken in 2008 provides an age breakdown of survey respondents upon entry.

Figure 4.6  
**Participant Age**



Source: 2008 Entry Participants

Initially a greater proportion of participants were aged under 19 years. However, IFI took a strategic decision to focus WHP on young people aged 18-28 years. This was based upon increased initiatives targeting youth unemployment and the higher risks involved in taking this group overseas.

### 4.5.4 Gender

Overall, females have made up 37% of all IA WHP participants over the last five years. This gender imbalance has been consistently identified in each of the WHP evaluations.



Table 4.12

**Gender Trends**

Year End	Total IA Participants	No. Males	No. Female	Utilisation Rate Female %
2012	601	377	224	37%
2011	591	402	189	32%
2010	567	373	194	34%
2009	532	325	207	39%
2008	509	295	214	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>37%</b>

Source: DEL/FAS Managing Agent Reports

A number of *Special Projects* have been developed throughout the WHP lifespan – for example focusing upon women returning to the labour force and people with disabilities.

**4.5.5 Previous (Un)Employment History & Qualifications**

WHP works with young people suffering from social, economic and educational disadvantage. The 2008 programme evaluation illustrated that the programme had successfully recruited young people who were unemployed. Fifty-two percent of respondents had been unemployed in excess of three months and 24% of these had been unemployed for over 12 months. Northern Ireland Catholics were most likely to have been unemployed for longer durations than the other groups.

The 2002 evaluation surveyed 692 people entering the WHP and found that three-quarters of respondents had worked at some stage in their past. More than half of these had two, three or four jobs (almost one-quarter had five or more jobs). As might be expected, younger participants had fewest jobs – on average 3 for those aged 19 years and under. Employment for those with higher qualifications appeared to be slightly more stable. Sixty percent had been employed in unskilled/semi-skilled jobs and 40% had been employed in skilled roles (predominately skilled manual). Eighty-three percent of those with no exams had been employed in unskilled/semi-skilled positions.

Table 4.13 illustrates that the majority of participants have no or low level qualifications. However, this proportion has decreased over the years – potentially a reflection of increasing youth unemployment and employer requirements for work-related experience. It also represents IFI’s acknowledgement that employment deprivation, although linked to educational deprivation can be a result of personal and environmental issues which inhibit job seeking and maintainance.

Table 4.13

**Participant Qualification Trends**

Year	GCSE/Junior Cert NVQ 2 Lower and no Qualifications	A Level/Leaving Cert NVQ 3 or above
2012	58%	42%
2011	67%	33%
2010	72%	28%
2009	71%	29%
2008	68%	32%

Source: DEL/FAS Management Reports



#### 4.5.6 Perceived Value

Participant satisfaction levels are very high. Many participants report that they now have ambitions and goals which they want to achieve, which is also a reflection of increased confidence and self-esteem. The majority of the participant feedback over past evaluations and indeed those commissioned by the IAs within the last year point to transformative and life changing learning experiences via the programme.

*"Before the programme I didn't care about anything, I was just looking for a part-time job and didn't really know about what is going on in the world. I have learned to speak up and speak out and not to let opportunities pass you buy. It has changed my life and my opinion of other people, I don't judge people now."* [2013 Clanrye evaluation]

*"I am more open and willing to learn and I have made some strong friendships. I also learned that trust is a major thing and helping others is very rewarding."* [2008 IFI evaluation]

*"I've a better outlook on things now...I know I'll stick with things more and not just give up when there's a problem."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

*"It was one of the best experiences of my life and now I'm going to travel to Australia with friends I met on the programme."* [2008 IFI evaluation]

*"It has more than matched my expectations. I never thought I would finish the course especially in the first month. This was one of my better decisions in life."* [2008 IFI evaluation]

*"I feel sorry that now people won't be as lucky as me to have gotten this opportunity."* [2013 Clanrye focus group]

## 4.6 Discussion

The independent evaluations conducted on behalf of IFI and the IAs provide a rich source of information regarding the programme's development and progression over the years.

This chapter has highlighted key research findings based upon participant responses which suggest that WHP has succeeded in assisting to develop positive and, in some cases long-lasting, cross-community and cross-border relationships. Unfortunately there are some shortfalls in relation to routine participant monitoring and this, for example makes it difficult to assess the extent to which area-based deprivation has been targeted or age-related outcomes. Similarly, the evaluations have been conducted on a cross-sectional (at entry/exit) basis and therefore individual change cannot be determined.

Likewise comparisons with other mainstream training programmes can only be illustrative, as WHP is unique in its approach. However, the substantially higher progression rates into employment and training mean that the model should be analysed further to understand the determinants of its success.



## 5 Programme Appraisal

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the impact of the programme according to the overarching objectives within the WHP evaluation framework. It utilises findings from previously commissioned IFI research as well as more recent independent evaluations conducted for Springboard, TDP and Clanrye. Output from stakeholder discussions is also incorporated.

### 5.2 Impact: Contact, Dialogue and Reconciliation

Table 5.1  
**Outcomes: Good Relations**

Objective	Long-term Outcomes	Short-term Outcomes
<b>Encouraging contact, dialogue and reconciliation between unionists and nationalists throughout Ireland</b>	<p>Young people play a full and active role in building good relations</p> <p>An equitable society with respect for diversity and cultural expression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in cross-community dialogue and participation;</li> <li>• Increase in cross-border dialogue and participation;</li> <li>• Greater appreciation of other people's backgrounds, beliefs and culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Good relations indicators<sup>20</sup></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 recruitment balance: NIP 33.6%; NIC 33.4%; RoI 33%</li> <li>• 2008 71% living in single identity neighbourhoods</li> <li>• 2012 retention rates: NIP 77%; NIC 81%; RoI 86%</li> <li>• 2008 entry/exit index of cross-community friendships:<sup>21</sup> NIP 81 (+8); NIC 76 (+6)</li> <li>• 2002 exit plans for cross-community contact: NIP 86.9%; NIC 86.7%; RoI 86.6%</li> <li>• 2008 entry/exit no cross-border friendships: NIP 3% (-55%); NIC 5% (-37%); RoI 3% (-32%)</li> <li>• 2008 entry/exit index of cross-border friendships: NIP 66 (+39); NIC 80 (+43); RoI 89 (+43)</li> <li>• 2008 no sustained cross-border contact: NIP 10%; NIC 8.5%; RoI 21.25%</li> </ul>		

The WHP has successfully brought around 18,000 young people from different areas and community backgrounds together, who otherwise are unlikely to have met. Interest from NI Protestants, NI Catholics and RoI residents has been sustained over the years although there have been some recruitment issues relating to each of the three groups at specific times in WHP's history – particularly NI Protestants. Retention rates have also remained high, considering the marginalisation of the target groups. However drop-out rates for Protestants have a tendency to be higher. The fact that certainly in the early years, many people took risks in promoting and supporting Wider Horizons should not be underestimated and the programme still continued to operate on a cross-border and

<sup>20</sup> NIP refers to NI Protestants, NIC refers to NI Catholics and ROI refers to participants from the south of Ireland

<sup>21</sup> Some responses were assigned weighted averages or Indexes. The weighted figure was given an Index of 0 to 100. For example an Index of 0, on cross-community friendships would mean none of the participants had any friends of a different religion, whereas an Index of 100 means all had cross-community friendships. +/- are used to indicate an entry/exit-group change.



cross-community basis throughout times of immense tension, such as during the Drumcree stand-off.

Making new friends and meeting new people is perceived to be an extremely important outcome of the overall programme, **mainly because participants don't usually socialise outside their neighbourhoods and small circle of friends.** The rich diversity of participants' religious and cultural backgrounds is critical to the learning experience and the pre-departure phase provides a strong foundation for preparing to live and work overseas. As the WHP has progressed this element has become strengthened with Delivery Agents offering OCN Levels 1 & 2 accredited modules in areas related to peace-building and good relations. These aim to facilitate the getting to know each other process, exploring own and other communities, examining assumptions and prejudices, dealing with conflict and discussing localised contentious issues.

The majority of participants in the north live in single identity neighbourhoods and typically have few opportunities to interact with the "other community". Wider Horizons has offered a neutral space away from their home environments in order to get to know each other and potentially see beyond the stereotypes that exist.

The 2008 survey showed that levels of cross-community friendships were already reported to be high amongst those entering the programme. Further analysis indicates that **NI Protestants reported the highest levels of cross-community friendships upon exit and the greatest level of change** between the entry and exit groups in comparison to NI Catholics. Overall the vast majority of participants stated that they **intended to keep up these friendships after the programme ended.**

Similarly, NI Protestants were least likely to report having cross-border friendships upon entry to WHP. However, this group again demonstrated the **greatest level of change over the duration, even though friendships were more likely to be rated as being casual.**

The long-term impact of the contact facilitated by the programme can only be assessed some time after the project is over. Here the research indicates that intentions to keep in touch do seem to be put into action and the **majority of participants have kept in contact with people outside of their grouping.** However, participants from RoI were slightly more likely to have only kept local contact, in comparison to NI participants. Some project promoters have developed informal relationships which have helped to maintain contact, with reunions being organised on a number of occasions.

It should also be highlighted that the positive attitudinal and behavioural change which these young people feel they have undergone as a result of WHP, in many cases continues to be disseminated to family and friends within the home environment. Therefore the **impacts have the potential to reach further than the participants themselves.**

#### Summary Impacts: Good Relations

- ✓ More contact between people with different religious and cultural beliefs and backgrounds
- ✓ Increased cross-community and cross-border friendships
- ✓ Relationships maintained post-programme
- ✓ Young people communicate learning to family and friends



### 5.3 Impact: Free Movement, Safety and Sharing

Table 5.2  
**Outcomes: Community Cohesion**

Objective	Long-term Outcomes	Short-term Outcomes
<b>Promotion of free movement, safety and sharing</b>	<p>A shared community in which young people are positively engaged and involved as citizens</p> <p>A united community free from prejudice, hate and intolerance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of positive shared experiences;</li> <li>• WHP contributes to increased cross-border mobility;</li> <li>• Reduction of prejudice on a cross-community and cross-border basis</li> </ul>
<b>Community cohesion indicators</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2008 social distance scale: NIP rates NIC 2 &amp; RoI 2.1; NIC rates NIP 1.9 &amp; RoI 1.6; RoI rates NIP 1.9 &amp; NIC 1.3;</li> <li>• 2008 self-rated improvements: 65% attitude to people from different religions/cultures; 67% understanding of other religions; 57% tolerance of other religions;</li> <li>• 2008 post-programme actual/planned cross-border visits: NIP 70%; NIC 81.5%; RoI 68%</li> </ul>		

The research evidence demonstrates both a **reduction in social distance and self-reported attitudinal changes with regards to understanding and tolerance of different religions and cultures using the Bogardus Social Distance Scale**.<sup>22</sup> Participants are clear that this is a result of the friendships and deepening bonds forged during the programme. There is also evidence of **increased and sustained cross-border mobility** as participants maintain contact with those whom they have met, years after their involvement ends. It is also apparent that the involvement of the RoI participants brings an added dimension as participants realise that ignorance and pre-conceptions exist both sides of the border.

The overseas phase is structured around the culture and history of the host country and a mix of structured cultural workshops and visits are facilitated. Most placements involve staying with a host family working in addition to working alongside with local people. With some exceptions, emersion in family life has been extremely positive and insightful, with a significant proportion of participants maintaining contact with hosts post-programme.

<sup>22</sup> The Bogardus Social Distance Scale measures tolerance towards specific groups on a 7 point scale, ranging from "I would like them expelled from my country" (score 7) to "I would be willing to marry/be related by marriage" (score 1).



During this time, many of the work placements and volunteering activities provide participants with opportunities to give something back to the host country and learn about other people's lives and struggles. For example, working in a school for young people with behavioural problems, a youth centre in a deprived area of Montreal, a homeless shelter in Toronto, a house building project in South Africa or an education programme for young offenders leaving prison. ***This helps to raise awareness of the wider global context, collaborative working and the meaning of citizenship.***

Evidence from the WHP evaluations, DEL, FAS, Delivery agents and participants suggests that ***the overseas element is perhaps the greatest contributor to both good relations and personal development.*** It would appear that the physical distance from the home environment provides the separation and space which enables individuals to re-evaluate historical divisions and their positions on certain issues. Often explaining separate histories to people who are far removed can challenge participants to see things from a new perspective.

***However, the overseas element also helps create cohesion and homogeneity within the group as they come to terms with the demands of living and working in a new environment.*** This is the turning point for many individuals as they now begin to acknowledge more commonalities within their WHP group than difference. This is fostered through the provision of shared leisure and social experiences throughout.

The demographics of the island of Ireland have changed over the years, as new communities are welcomed into towns and villages and there remains a need for continued anti-racism work to challenge myths and prejudices regarding different nationalities and ethnicities. Newcomer communities may also self-segregate or affiliate with one of the traditional communities, adding to the complexity of current segregation patterns. ***Although improving race relations is not a direct objective of the WHP, the evaluation findings have consistently highlighted the existence of racial prejudices across each of the target groups.***

#### Summary Impacts: Community Cohesion

- ✓ Increased cohesion amongst participants;
- ✓ Greater appreciation of different cultures and religions;
- ✓ Increased and sustained cross-border mobility;
- ✓ Participants benefit from new perspectives on historical divisions.

## 5.4 Impact: Youth Employability & Personal Development

Table 5.3

### Outcomes: Economic and Social Advance

Objective	Long-term Outcomes	Short-term Outcomes
<b>Supporting Youth Employability &amp; Personal Development</b>	A reduction in youth unemployment;  Young people are more prepared for the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased self-worth and work related aspirations;</li> <li>• Improved employability through vocational training and work placements.</li> </ul>
Economic and social advance indicators		



- 18,000 young people accessing work placements and developmental opportunities;
- 2008 improvement: 88% confidence; 74% getting on with others; 75% attitude to work;
- 2012 30% progress to employment; 66% progress to training/employment;
- 2008 up to 2 years post-WHP: 58% in employment; 79% in training/employment

The employability dimension, like reconciliation has been prominent from the outset of the programme – setting out to encourage participants to learn new skills through education, training and work experience overseas. Despite the initial diversity of target groups to include managers and entrepreneurs as well as unemployed and disadvantaged young people, **WHP has had considerable success in relation to employment and employability outcomes.**

Independent programme evaluations demonstrate comparably high levels of employment progression amongst past participants up to two years after programme end. The most recent 2008 post-project evaluation reported a 58% employment rate amongst those completing the survey. This correlates with Managing Agent statistics which also indicate that around one third gain employment shortly after leaving the programme and around one third progress to further training opportunities. **Again, suggesting better outcomes than a mainstream training initiative which targets a similar group.**

The WHP has also positively impacted upon attitudes to mobility. For some young people the experience of living and working away from home has impacted upon their job searches – generating a willingness to travel to another town, city or even country for employment. **Repeatedly, evaluators have found that the experience has helped to moderate some of the extreme localism than can be characteristic of disadvantage.**

Through the intense and expert support provided via the Delivery Agents and the increased responsibility placed upon participants within the world of work there is strong evidence that general employability skills have been enhanced. Over the years the research indicates **improved ability to communicate, willingness to take initiative, increased confidence, mobility, motivation, willingness to learn, ability to relate to others, self-discipline and personal presentation.**

The importance of these personal and social competencies shouldn't be underestimated in times of high unemployment. These are the skills that enable you to both sell yourself to a potential employer, interact with those around you and make you better able to stay in employment. Delivery Agents and the young people themselves detail the considerable personal impacts which have occurred over time – particularly in terms of heightened self-esteem and confidence. However, many young people have stated that their whole **attitude to getting a job, self-improvement and actually doing something with their lives has changed, despite the fact that few entered into WHP with this mindset.**

#### **Summary Impacts: Economic and Social Advance**

- ✓ Opportunities to “test” a sector of choice in a safe environment;
- ✓ Better understanding of employer needs and how to act in the workplace;
- ✓ Increased confidence, independence and motivation;
- ✓ Attainment of job search techniques, CV development and interview skills;
- ✓ Relatively higher progression to employment and training than mainstream offerings.



## 5.5 **Impact:** Improving Quality of Life and Tackling Disadvantage

Table 5.3

### **Outcomes: Community renewal**

Objective	Long-term Outcomes	Short-term Outcomes
<b>Improving quality of life and targeting disadvantage</b>	<p>Increased community capacity &amp; stability;</p> <p>Contributing towards the socio-economic renewal of neighbourhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes target marginalised groups and disadvantaged neighbourhoods;</li> <li>• Local organisations are better equipped to deal with the needs of young people who are unemployed.</li> </ul>
<b>Community renewal indicators</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,000 participants;</li> <li>• 1,238 projects recruiting from disadvantaged areas;</li> <li>• £100m investment;</li> <li>• 2008: 81% U24 years upon entry;</li> <li>• 2008-2012 37% female utilisation;</li> <li>• 2012 58% GCSE/Junior Cert NVQ 2 Lower &amp; no qualifications upon entry.</li> </ul>		

The first IA was a partnership between West Belfast and Tallaght Dublin (now formalised as Springboard Opportunities Ltd). This largely developed as a model of good practice for subsequent IAs which combined the expertise, resources and support of both the community and statutory sectors to empower young people and their communities through learning and development. ***The area-based approach has been positively appraised and certainly enables knowledge and networks to be built up over time.*** Additionally using and investing in the leadership development of local Delivery Agents means that contact with participants doesn't necessarily finish at the end of the programme and there is strong evidence that due to the strong bonds established supervisors have stayed in touch with participants on a personal and professional level. The Open Access projects enable a degree of flexibility to recruit outside the established geographical boundaries and to respond to localised contention and conflict.

Although Delivery Agents recruit and work within marginalised areas, individual participant data hasn't been collated at programme level. Therefore, demographic analysis relies upon data contained in Managing Agent reports and previous evaluations.

The most recent participant statistics indicate that ***more males are recruited to the WHP than females*** and this has also been highlighted in the various evaluations. Also the age profile of participants has increased since programme commencement, with a



**focus upon 18-24 year olds.** Although there is evidence to suggest that the Open Access projects attract a more varied age range.

Although, the majority of participants have lower level or no qualifications, the educational profile over the last five years does not suggest severe educational disadvantage. This has been highlighted in an earlier evaluation report which concluded that **educational attainment levels of recruits had risen over time.**

However the challenges associated with the target group should not be underestimated. Indeed there is evidence that Delivery Agents are increasingly supporting young people with **severe personal and emotional issues relating to histories of alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide and family breakdown and neglect.** As such programme content has evolved to incorporate these subjects.

*"The personal histories of young people are frequently marked by poverty, substandard living conditions, literacy and numeracy problems, alcohol abuse in the family, broken relationships between parents, conflict with the law and the prevalence of single parenthood."<sup>23</sup>*

The pre-departure phase is a time when supervisors can get to know participants and to assess their behaviour and intentions with regards to the overseas phase. Early evaluations provide evidence of overseas disruptions and as a result there is now a stronger emphasis upon career planning, preparing for work and reporting on learning.

It appears that the WHP can help to **shake off participants' narrow views of the world and what they can expect to achieve from life.** However, work placements reflect real working conditions with antisocial hours, time-management, responsibilities and direction from supervisors and managers. This can be a culture shock for some unemployed young people whose life up until now has been devoid of structure and routine. However, the programme supports young people to develop a work ethic and importantly provides learning in a safe supportive environment.

**Life skills are also tested,** with host families demanding respect and young people having to learn how to survive on a budget, cooking and cleaning and mixing with people they don't know in an unfamiliar environment. Although many young people had entered Wider Horizons with a degree of excitement at the prospect of travel and meeting new people, there was also anxiety around leaving home for the first time, becoming independent and committing to a job. Hence the need for good quality supports during this time. Indeed, several stakeholders pointed out the benefits of overseas placements in that the distance actually made it harder for participants to just "give up" at the first obstacle.

#### **Summary Impacts: Community Renewal**

- ✓ 18,000 people experiencing different cultures, insights and lifestyles;
- ✓ £100m additional investment within disadvantaged areas;
- ✓ Marginalised and unemployed benefit from training and employment opportunities;
- ✓ Organisations working together to address local issues and improve quality of life.

<sup>23</sup> Morrow, S. (1990). Dead Proud of Myself: A study of participants from Community training workshops in Northern and Southern Ireland on Wider Horizons Projects. Internal document, p14-15.





## 5.6 Discussion

The WHP is expensive and the investment by IFI, FAS and DEL has been significant over the duration of the intervention. The WHP guidelines state that £40.95 per day per person should be adhered to. However, the Managing Agents state that over the last 5 years this rule has been relaxed as costs have risen in relation to flights, training etc. – making a more realistic average cost per head of around £42.00 per day for each trainee.

The cost of an individual participating on the WHP is estimated at £42 per person per day, over 20 weeks this equates to £5,880 per participant. The cost of a young person receiving Job Seekers Allowance for 20 weeks is £1,136. Long term youth unemployment costs taxpayers £3,500 - £5,500 per year as reported in the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment. The report also suggests that the scarring effects will lead to a further cost of £1,500 - £2,500 per year per person, at least until that person is in their 30s (and quite possibly beyond).

When one considers that the costs to the tax payer of long term youth unemployment per person per year are potentially £8,000, it can be surmised that investing in the WHP represents relatively good value for money. Similarly, when a participant progresses to employment, this also generates increased economic activity within the local economy.

In addition, there are also softer non-monetary outcomes which further enhance the value for money of the programme. These include improved good relations, motivation, an increase in confidence, team building and communication skills. There are also social benefits for the local community in which they live.

Within any evaluation, it's tempting to think of impacts in terms of numbers or statistics detailing a movement towards employment or other training opportunities. However, ***it should always be at the forefront of any decision-makers mind that these reflect and represent life stories and journeys of some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised young people within society.*** These are people who maybe don't have the best start in life, have complex lives and relationships, don't feel good about themselves and after consistent knockbacks can start to give up on the future. However, it not just these young people's future that is affected and in a new era focused on social inclusion, mutual respect, equity and cohesion there needs to be acknowledgement of the value of providing targeted social investment.





## 6 Learning from Wider Horizons

### 6.1 Introduction

The current evaluation's focus upon establishing the impact of the WHP has provided an opportunity to distil the research and learning collected over the programme's long history. The aims of which are closely linked with the initiation of IFI, whereas its origins can be found in the Agreement between the British and Irish Governments that established the Fund in 1986. This chapter discusses the learning that may be gleaned from WHP, before exploring how the WHP principles could be taken forward in the context of the OFMdfM Together Building a United Community Initiative.

### 6.2 Leaving a Legacy

*"IFI should be commended for their vision. People forget what it was like...they took risks at a very difficult time. They should know they've been responsible for changing people's lives. It's not easy to actually change someone's life."* [WHP Delivery Agent]

WHP has been described as a unique and an innovative intervention, predominately through the determination that **reconciliation should incorporate both social and economic dimensions**. However, despite being a fore-runner in its field, much of the programme's strategic direction has evolved and been refined over time. With regards to promoting good relations and reconciliation, it has dramatically developed from adopting tentative methods to a much more confident and explicit approach based upon local expertise. **Despite its long history, those involved in WHP feel that it is very much still relevant and needed.**

Managing Agents and Delivery Agents feel that their own operational practice has evolved as a direct result of the programme. For example, DEL's Training for Success mainstreams health, social and personal development modules into an accredited training programme for 16/17 year olds. This acknowledges that young people are not only dealing with unemployment but complex barriers which inhibit obtaining and sustaining employment. FAS also adopt this holistic approach when working with young people in the Community Training Centres in recognition that there is a need for social and life skills training for this group.

The IAs have accumulated substantial knowledge, networks and experience throughout programme and offer a variety of challenging programmes to unemployed youth. Youth leadership programmes, achievement awards, graduate programmes, peace-building exchange networks have arisen from the expertise and insights derived from Wider Horizons.

### 6.3 Underlying Principles

The core elements of the approach are presented below and summarised in Figure 6.1 overleaf:

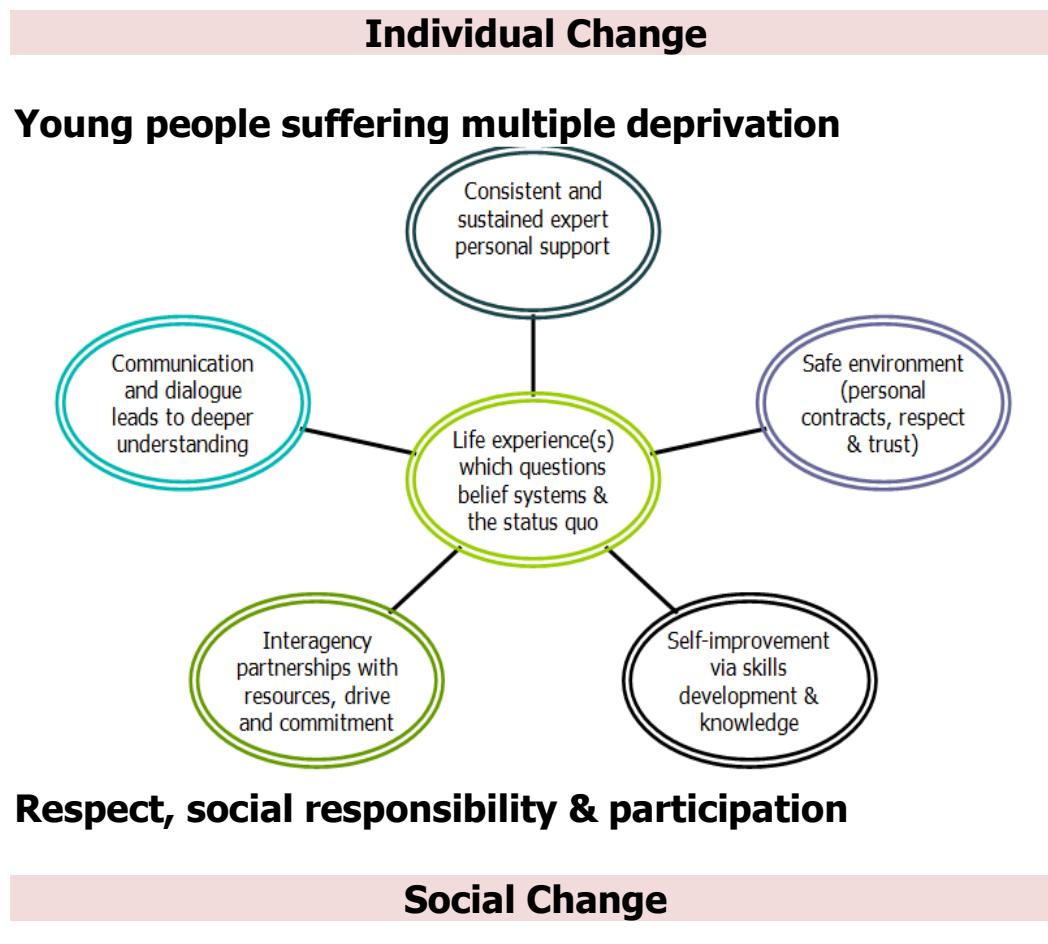
- **A Framework for Intervention:** Providing opportunities to meet in order to develop an understanding of people from different religious/cultural backgrounds and geographical regions is at the core of the WHP. **However, over the years it has become recognised that "contact" alone, is not enough to achieve reconciliation.** Although WHP is flexible in nature, with project promoters



delivering bespoke programme content, the pre-departure phase activities clearly focus upon increasing vocational skills, diversity, conflict resolution, team-building and personal development. Rather than adopting a classroom-based approach, workshops, role plays, study visits, group work and discussions encourage participants to informally mix and get to know themselves and others. The programme provides a framework within which beliefs and stereotypes can be directly examined and challenged in a safe and respectful environment. Practically, procedures and ground-rules are thoroughly worked out and understood by all so that a common code of conduct is agreed.

- **Considered Targeting:** Although WHP has had several target groups the main focus from the 1990s onwards has been on disadvantaged young people (18-28 years). Whilst flexibility has at times led to individuals with higher education levels completing the programme, there has always been caution regarding concentrating too narrowly on any one criterion of disadvantage, such as area based deprivation levels. ***Rather a balanced view of personal, educational, economic and work related disadvantage has been adopted.*** This is in recognition that some individuals have achieved qualifications, but have lost their way and motivation due to long periods of unemployment and personal circumstances.
- **Transformative Learning:** Promotion of cultural awareness and respect runs throughout the three phases of the programme, to include the overseas work placement and return phase. Although there are modules and accreditations aimed at promoting good relations, ***much of the learning is experiential – indirectly derived from meeting new people and being in situations which serve to challenge existing assumptions and views of the world.*** Personal development and self-progression is considered to be a contributor (and perhaps pre-cursor) to relationship-building between different cultures and backgrounds.
- **Forging a Shared Purpose:** Exposure to so many cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles has a bonding effect on participants and they start to support and rely on one another. They begin to realise how similar they are and how they have the same issues and problems. Very often multi-cultural exposure puts their own conflicts and pressures into perspective. ***Participants undertake shared activities and are perceived and treated by others as a group – instigating a common identity.***
- **Social Investment:** The WHP invests in communities as well as individuals. The programme focuses upon a number of disadvantaged geographical areas and acts as a catalyst in encouraging good relations through economic and social regeneration. This has essentially meant that cross-sectoral partnership working is a necessary ingredient and has allowed project content to evolve to meet local needs. It has indicated a willingness from IFI and the Managing Agents to provide ***long-term grassroots investment*** and crucially a willingness to ***let community groups take the initiative in determining how projects should be developed and delivered*** to meet the overarching aims of the programme. An area based approach allows groups to build up expertise, plan in advance and employ staff who are well qualified and experienced. It also enables the use of role models through past participants (and staff who are often past participants) and increases the likelihood that contacts are sustained.

Figure 6.1  
WHP Theory of Change



## 6.4 Implications for the United Youth Programme

*"[United Youth] is possibly one of the most important programmes...if it's not done properly it's a massive lost opportunity. Political structures and infrastructures are there but we need to build a social peace that's real in the community. There's a genuine feeling that peace hasn't made a difference to their lives."* [WHP Delivery Agent]

The United Community initiative is operating in a challenging political and socio-economic context. Although, we are in a time of relative peace, sectarian attitudes and behaviour remains rife. The 2<sup>nd</sup> NI Peace Monitoring Report notes that the Northern Ireland peace process has had its most difficult year for a decade. At the centre of this have been the recent flags dispute and loyalist protests – ensuring that any progression towards a cohesive and united community is not taken for granted. However, the report states that disturbances were not on the scale of those seen in the 1980s or 90s and have not led to any suspension of the political institutions.

***There is an increased impetus to deliver on good relations policy objectives*** and it is understood that the Strategic Investment Board and departments are involved in a series of design meetings with departments that will be responsible for delivering the Together: Building a United Community strategic headline projects, to include the United



Youth programme. ***This approach is welcomed as it acknowledges the interdependence of the ability to promote good relations and achieving economic, social, community and physical regeneration outcomes.*** As such the proactive encouragement of good relations needs to not only infiltrate the core work of OFMdFM, but be embedded within each government department and agency. Indeed, DEL has recognised how personal circumstances can impact upon young people's employability and now proactively address these through Training for Success. ***It is recommended that cultural awareness and understanding is formally built into this process and extended to other programmes which help prepare for working life.***

The outcomes of the WHP have been considered to be positive by DEL, FAS and IFI and there is an ongoing desire and commitment to build upon the progress made. Based upon the underlying WHP principles, the following considerations are presented to assist with related programme development:

#### **6.4.1 Peace and Reconciliation**

- Reconciliation, although a long-term process, has to be at the core of the United Youth Programme. This programme must be person-orientated, with a major emphasis upon learning, sharing and developing and strengthening relationships. As with the WHP, increasing employability and personal development should be the means by which United Youth achieves its reconciliation aim;
- A broad view of good relations should be taken, encompassing all attitudes that have a bearing on discrimination, prejudice and intolerance to include cross-community relations and any/all of the applicable S75 groups that present as relevant. This is perceived to be necessary in order to adequately prepare participants for leaving the confines of their home environment and experiencing a range of cultures and life styles. Racism has been identified as a particular challenge and one which United Youth should also aim to address;
- It is critical that good relations training and discussion is pitched at the right level. This is a complex and difficult area of work and requires expertise and sensitivity. If people are to change their attitudes and behaviour towards others they need to be challenged by knowledge and experiences that will lead them to reassess what they believe to be the truth; and
- The inclusion of participants from the south of Ireland has been extremely beneficial, as they have their own views and perspectives on the conflict and their curiosity about cross-community relationships has enabled difficult discussions to take place naturally. It should also be noted that Delivery Agents have found quite hardened attitudes amongst some young people from the south, despite never having crossed the border. These attitudes and behaviours can impinge on peace and stability in the north.

#### **6.4.2 Recruiting those who will Benefit Most**

- United Youth will target NEETS. Discussions with stakeholders highlight that this group presents a greater range of deeply rooted psychological issues and unsettled life histories. In comparison to ten years ago, there appears to be higher incidences of mental ill health, people affected by suicide within their family or circle of friends, drug and alcohol misuse, eating disorders and depression. Self-confidence and self-esteem is typically low, there may be a tradition of inter-generational unemployment and a lack of positive role models within the young person's life. There may also be numeracy and literacy problems and potentially learning difficulties. These needs will have an impact upon the frequency and depths of supports required and the



- pace of the programme. A holistic approach to personal development must be undertaken and the programme will need to have enough flexibility to meet the social needs of the client group;
- Delivery Agents on the WHP work closely with local community groups and representatives and an assessment process takes place before assigning an individual to a project. United Youth should not be a single format programme. For example, Springboard deliver a Directions programme for young people who need intense levels of support and would not be ready to enter a structured work placement. Their Options programme targets those with personal and social issues, yet also have the ability to sustain training and a period of placement in their chosen career field, whilst the Skills programme provides young people with accredited training and work placement within a specific skills area; and
  - United Youth may wish to also include young people who have obtained qualifications/skills but do not have the opportunity to use them (employment deprived) as they do not have experience or require re-skilling to match labour market needs. Above all there needs to be connectivity and referral mechanisms between existing/planned initiatives for this age group under Delivering Social Change to ensure additionality.

#### **6.4.3 Measuring Outcomes**

- It must be recognised that targeting disadvantage brings practical challenges in terms of recruitment, management and risk, particularly if an overseas element is to be considered. Similarly if disadvantage is to be addressed then for some, success may need to be measured in terms other than certified training and job outcomes, rather demonstrating that people have moved onto a different stage in their lives. Due regard should be given to achieving positive employment outcomes. However, a careful balance should be maintained to ensure that promoting good relations and equality is at the heart of the work.

#### **6.4.4 High Quality Opportunities**

- Although one of the positive aspects of the WHP has been the provision of opportunities that have satisfied participant hopes and aspirations, where possible projects should match identified labour market needs and employment opportunities. Certainly, pre-employment training and work placements should not lose sight of this very important issue at a time of heightened youth unemployment; and
- Similarly given the need to increase qualifications and up-skill, further sign-posting to training and higher education should play an important role in any intervention. The challenge is to raise aspirations and skill levels so that upon completion individuals are on a pathway leading to worthwhile qualifications and quality employment.

#### **6.4.5 Home or Away?**

- Wider Horizons "At Home" projects were offered since 1992. However, they have been slow to develop. There is a general feeling that there needs to be an initial draw for young people - something that is different from the plethora of activities on offer. However, with WHP the destination and duration of overseas activity has differed. For example, short trips to Europe can be targeted more towards understanding and reconciliation, rather than structured work placements whereby language barriers could become an obstacle for young people already suffering from literacy problems and related insecurities;
- The intensive monitoring and supports required during the overseas placement should not be underestimated. Many of the participants have never travelled outside



their own neighbourhoods to any great extent. They have fears about coping with homesickness, strange food, fear of flying, fear of living independently or with another family. There are also severe risks regarding young people's behaviour once away. However, given appropriate encouragement being able to overcome these concerns can provide a strong sense of achievement and recognition of one's strength and abilities. Physical distance also means that it is not as easy to "give up", participants recognise that they have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity and as such appear more ready to commit and see it through. It is considered that in the case of Wider Horizons the group overseas experience was central to and, accelerated, transformational learning.

#### **6.4.6 Fresh Ideas**

- There is always a danger in becoming formulaic. Adopting a grassroots area- based approach would provide connectivity to residents and local groups can help combat this. However, it is important that there is flexibility to try out new things and to ensure that there is the ability to respond to tensions and unrest within specific neighbourhoods and across critical themes (e.g. WHP did this through "special" projects); and
- The United Youth Programme should also consider that some individuals, such as females may have barriers to take-up (e.g. in relation to benefit dependency and in accessing affordable childcare provision). The WHP overcame benefits related issues through an agreement with the relevant government agencies that payments would not be affected during and upon return from the overseas phase. One unique project targeting single parents, provided crèche facilities throughout the training and the overseas phase, to enable children to accompany their primary care giver. This provided, predominately mothers to meet people, achieve qualifications and work experience and importantly provided an opportunity to see how childcare issues could be managed.

#### **6.4.7 Sustaining the Benefits**

- The 12 month United Youth programme could provide an excellent opportunity to add value, extend and build upon the WHP process. With Wider Horizons the return phase has been the most difficult element to perfect. Historically, attendance has been lower on the return phase and Delivery Agents have found it difficult to retain participants. However, over the years this has developed into a more structured approach whereby individuals finish qualifications, work on their CVs and interview skills and undertake job searches. Localised work placements have also been organised as part of a longer return phase;
- The overseas phase has been found to increase understanding on a global level, helping to build social responsibility and cooperative working as an active member of society. Delivery Agents consider it to be more than "volunteering". OFMdfM will want the increased social awareness and participation to continue upon return. The provision of quality localised work experience placements, therefore could be a component part of the return phase;
- It is suggested that networks of socially motivated employers are established on an all-island basis, linked to United Youth recruitment areas. Additionally, consideration could be given to continuing the "host family" experience at home as it would be hoped that young people would be working outside their own neighbourhoods. For example, this process has worked very well for Tyrone Donegal Partnership in the past and has helped young people live and experience other communities and traditions first hand in a family setting; and



- It must be stressed that although different groups and agencies may be involved in aspects of United Youth delivery, this has to be a group experience and the friendships and bonds established need to be maintained, nurtured and developed further. It is critical that there is continuity. Therefore, joint study visits, recreation and leisure and job search skills should continue in order to cement relationships. It is recommended that there is emphasis upon developing a ripple effect within the host communities and amongst individuals.

#### **6.4.8 Connectivity**

- Much of the earlier criticism of the WHP was that much of the experience, learning and expertise was scattered throughout the programme as Delivery Agents operated in isolation from one another. It is suggested that a network is established in order that partners can come together and share ideas and insights and importantly forge relationships. The support of community driven knowledge-sharing, networking and lobbying should be built into the programme. This is what will build confident communities, serve to shift political opinion and encourage other neighbourhoods and partners to get involved.



# APPENDIX 1



Table 3.1

**Illustrative Training and Employment Opportunities**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b><i>Republic of Ireland</i></b>	
<b>JobBridge</b>	National Internship Scheme providing work experience placements for a 6 or 9 month period. It aims to break the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed people wishing to learn new skills. Up to 8,500 work experience placements provided in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Interns will receive an allowance of €50 per week on top of their existing social welfare entitlement.
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	Market-led workplace and classroom, educational and training programme for unemployed people (16+ years) aimed at developing skills to meet the needs of industry and the labour market. On successful completion of an apprenticeship, a FETAC Advanced Certificate is awarded.
<b>National Traineeship programme</b>	Occupational skills development programme which combines formal training with FÁS and workplace coaching with an employer. The programme is aimed at clients who will enter occupations that entail significant skills requirements which are best acquired through a combination of alternating periods of on and off the job training. Traineeships are aimed at new labour market entrants and unemployed persons. The minimum age for participation on a Traineeship programme is the statutory school leaving age of 16 years.
<b>Labour Market Education &amp; Training Fund (Momentum)</b>	Provides skills training for up to 6,500 long-term unemployed. One of the four strands of this Fund is specifically designed for U25s in order to provide a solid foundation for gaining employment and/or continuing in further education and training in order to progress into employment. However, young people can also participate in the other three strands which are based on clusters of occupations chosen because the skills are associated with relatively good employment opportunities.
<b>Community Training Centres (CTCs)</b>	Community based training for early school leavers no formal or incomplete qualifications as part of the national Youthreach programme. Clients are primarily aged between 16–21 years and learners will develop individualised learning plans and participate in personal, social and vocational skills training and development. Progression within <b>Youthreach</b> focuses on education, training and employment pathways. Many Centres also support former participants in the early stages of employment.
<b>Local Training Initiatives (LTIs)</b>	Provide flexible opportunities for marginalised learners who are unable to participate in other FÁS training interventions for personal, social or geographic reasons. These are primarily targeted towards U35s, with no formal qualifications or incomplete secondary level qualifications although anyone who is unemployed and over the age of 16, at any level of literacy, is eligible to participate.
<b><i>Northern Ireland</i></b>	
<b>Training for Success</b>	Designed for 16 to 18 year olds (up to 24 years for those who need additional support) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. This provides young people with relevant qualifications as well as the required personal and behavioural skills to



	progress into work.
<b>Steps to Work (StW)</b>	Assists the unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. The focus throughout the delivery of all provision is on finding a job. Anyone over 18 years old (or lone parents aged 16 years old or over) who is not working (or working less than 16 hours each week) is eligible for StW. Participants can be claiming benefit or not working and not claiming benefit.
<b>First Start</b>	Work based placement available to 18-24 year olds in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for a minimum of 26 weeks. Job opportunities attract financial support for the first 26 weeks of employment and should, where possible, be permanent jobs. However, temporary jobs may be considered for financial support, provided the jobs are for at least 26 weeks duration. The employer offering the job opportunity will be the direct employer of the young person/s.
<b>Apprenticeships NI</b>	This has no upper age limit and offers apprenticeships in many occupational areas. Participants earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain their apprenticeship. Off the job training, usually on a day release basis with a training supplier, ensures apprenticeships receive training towards recognised qualifications.
<b>Bridge to Employment</b>	Pre-employment training programme that helps over 18s to find a job if they are unemployed - whatever their experience of work. To be eligible they need to be unemployed or work under 16 hours a week. The programme provides suitable training and upon successful completion trainees will be interviewed by the company with a view to being offered employment.