

The One Foundation

Minority Children Fund

Evaluation Report

18 February 2009

By Kieran McKeown, Evaluator

Rationale for Fund

- One tenth of the population are non-Irish nationals, two thirds originating from EU25.
- Research published in 2008 shows:
 - Ethnic minorities have a higher risk of unemployment
 - Ethnic minorities are more likely to have felt discrimination
 - School children more likely to be bullied
- Ireland is now a multi-cultural society and there is a challenge to avoid the mistakes of countries like England and France where lack of integration has had costly consequences.

Scope of Fund

- The objective of the Minority Children Fund is to promote the inclusion of ethnic minority children in the mainstream activities and services of the 'child & youth sector', mainly youth and sports organisations.
- Projects must have an integration focus, which excludes projects focused on service provision for minority children only.
- Grants were for current not capital costs and involved two funding streams:
 - Large grants, by invitation only (around €100K)
 - Small grants, by open application (around €20K)

Distribution of Fund

- A total of €526K was distributed.
- There were 3 large grants:
 - ✓ Selected from 7 applications, a success rate of 43%.
 - ✓ Each received an average of €100K, or €285K in total, or 54% of the fund.
- There were 14 small grants:
 - ✓ Selected from 87 applications, a success rate of 16% selected),
 - ✓ Each received an average of €20K, or €241K in total, or 46% of the fund.

Distribution of Fund

- The focus of the 3 large grantees was to develop and implement a strategy for integration.
- The focus of the 14 small grantees varied:
 - 3 were school-based projects
 - 4 developed local integration strategies
 - 5 involved direct youth service provision
 - 2 were in sport and fitness projects

Objectives of the Evaluation

- The evaluation has two objectives:
 - ✓ To assess if the work undertaken through the fund has achieved the aspirations set out in the funding application. This involved comparing with the funding application with the final report of activities.
 - ✓ To draw out the lessons from this work and inform policy and practice on how to include ethnic minority children. This involved reflecting on the findings and drawing out the implications.

Limitations of the Evaluation

- All data is based on self-report.
- No data on service users, or how management, staff and volunteers may have experienced the project.
- There is great variation between projects and this does not lend itself to the systematic assessment of efficiency, effectiveness or value for money.
- It is too early to assess the full impact of the fund, and some projects have still not completed.

Project Implementation

- Most projects (12) have been completed as proposed.
- Some projects (5) have been delayed:
 - Foroige
 - NYCI
 - Irish Traveller Movement
 - Canal Communities
 - The Base
- Delays disproportionately affected large grantees (2) compared to small grantees and, for this reason, implementation of nearly half the fund has been delayed.

Project Impact

- **Impact was measured by:**
 - **Creating opportunities for minority and majority children and young people to integrate**
 - **Raising awareness among service providers of requirements and responsibilities of integration**
- **The overall impact to date is modest but this is likely to improve since all the delayed projects are likely to have a more significant impact in 2009 and 2010.**

Conclusion - 1

- **School-based projects seem to have been the most effective in terms of planning, delivery and impact, especially:**
 - ✓ **Dublin 7 School Completion Programme**
 - ✓ **Chester Beatty Library & Draiocht Arts Centre**
 - ✓ **Irish Traveller Movement (still ongoing)**
- **Schools are a challenging environment to deliver an extra-curricular project.**
- **Schools are a safe, well-ordered, and valued environment with direct access to children from diverse backgrounds.**
- **Primary schools in particular offer access to very young children who are most open to integration.**
- **The schools were 'hand picked' and may not be typical.**

Conclusion - 2

- **Developing a strategy is also an instrument of change which was used by:**
 - ✓ **Foroige, FAI and NYCI**
 - ✓ **Fingal County Childcare Committee, Edmond Rice Centre, and Roscommon Partnership Company**
- **Strategy development involved extensive consultation inside and outside the organisation, providing an opportunity to reflect on:**
 - ✓ **Composition and attitudes of management, staff and volunteers**
 - ✓ **Hear the views of minority parents and children**
 - ✓ **Build alliances with other organisations in the community**
- **Strategy development is not just a means to an end but also contributes to the end itself, which includes changing attitudes and behaviour.**

Conclusion - 3

- There was great variability in the performance of projects involved in youth work:
 - ✓ Foroige and NYCI
 - ✓ County Longford Youth Service, Kerry Diocesan Youth Services, Cavan Centre, The Base, YMCA
- Youth work is traditionally based in disadvantaged areas which may resist integration, while minority children often live elsewhere.
- Youth participation may not be a priority for minority families given the challenges of surviving in a new country, learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture, etc.
- Working with minority children only is not integration, but may be a preparatory stage.
- Doing multicultural youth work requires a skill set that has still to be developed.
- A challenge is to involve minority parents, and minority workers, in the organisation.

Conclusion - 4

- The universality of sport is a potent force for integration and a 'melting pot' for diversity.
 - ✓ FAI
 - ✓ SARI
- One-off events run by SARI have the advantage of offering an introductory taste of sport and an opportunity to encounter diversity.
- Large sporting organisations – including FAI, GAA, IRFU – have huge potential but this depends in integration becoming an issues for all the key departments in the organisation and not just for the section dealing with 'integration' or 'minorities'.
- Funding proposals from large organisations need to show evidence of that different parts of the organisation will be involved in delivery and not confined to the margins.

Conclusion - 5

- Most projects were implemented without recruiting new staff but staff recruitment and retention was a problem for three projects:
 - ✓ Foroige
 - ✓ NYCI
 - ✓ Fingal County Childcare Committee
- This suggests that the skill set required to do this work is relatively scarce, especially at a time of full employment.
- Proposals which require the recruitment of new staff should be given a higher risk-rating in making the decision to fund.

Conclusion - 6

- Large grantees seem to have had proportionately less impact than small grantees, when the size of grant is taken into account.
- This is not easy to explain because the vetting process was more demanding for large grantees.
- Large and small grantees were funded to do broadly similar things and the link between proposed activities and funding appears to have been weak.
- Large organisations may not be as flexible as small organisations in terms of adapting to new initiatives, as suggested by the problems with staff recruitment and retention.
- More attention needs to be given to testing the assumptions on which proposals are based, and the impact of this on the rate of return on the investment.

Conclusion - 7

- The One Foundation adopted a relatively light approach to monitoring implementation of the fund.
- In a number of cases, there was substantial slippage between project proposal and project implementation, albeit for very good reasons.
- All parties, with few exceptions, seem to have adopted a relatively relaxed attitude to delays and other deviations from the proposal, and there was no apparent urgency to find viable or agreed alternatives.
- At the project preparation and appraisal stage, more attention needs to be given to testing the assumptions on which a proposal is based, and how these could affect implementation.
- Contracts might build in an early warning system for dealing with delays or other deviations from the proposal, including the requirement of coming up with a viable and agreed alternative as quickly as possible.

Concluding Comments

1. The investment by the Minority Children Fund has yielded valuable results and insights in how to promote integration.
2. It is not possible to make specific recommendations, but the evaluation has yielded seven quite specific learning points.
3. Integration cannot rely on a one-year, once-off, grant scheme – useful as that has been - but must be part and parcel of all mainstream funding.
4. Ireland can reap substantial benefits by promoting integration, but risks incurring substantial costs if it fails to do so.

Congratulations to ...

**Everyone associated with the
Minority Children Fund**

