

## NATIONAL EVALUATION OF POST-16 CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM THE SECOND YEAR OF DEVELOPMENT

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### *Introduction*

This paper summarises key research findings from the second year of a three year evaluation of the post-16 citizenship development projects<sup>1</sup> undertaken by the NFER. It is based upon interviews with 228 individuals across the Round 1 and Round 2 projects,<sup>2</sup> and upon management information (MI) data supplied to the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) by the projects. The evaluation aims to:

- ♦ Assess the extent to which the development projects were progressing in line with their action plans, and were working towards their own objectives.
- ♦ Identify the conditions necessary for the success of post-16 citizenship.
- ♦ Identify the forms of citizenship provision that appear the most effective.
- ♦ Examine the apparent impact of involvement in post-16 citizenship on young people's knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **Key Recommendations**

The second year of the evaluation has provided evidence that the projects are developing a range of innovative approaches to active citizenship. From this evidence base it is possible to identify and summarise those factors that appear to underlie the most successful provision. The projects appear to be most successful where there is:

#### **Management factors**

- ♦ A flexible, yet rigorous, framework which recognises that projects are developing citizenship programmes in a wide variety of ways, from taught to more active approaches, according to the specific needs and circumstances of their organisations, staff and young people.
- ♦ Sufficient funding for local management of projects to be effective, including support for relevant agencies to act as brokers of information between pre- and post-16 citizenship providers.
- ♦ Encouragement of local networking and dialogue between those developing citizenship programmes, without establishing an imperative.

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<sup>1</sup> For full background information on the development projects, see page 3 of this summary.

<sup>2</sup> Round 1 is the term used to describe the first cohort of development projects, which began developing post-16 citizenship in September 2001. Round 2 projects were those that began working with young people to develop post-16 citizenship more recently, in September 2002.

## Institution-level factors

- ♦ A clear definition of what citizenship means, and what the programme seeks to achieve.
- ♦ Senior management support and a supportive organisational ethos.
- ♦ Sufficient time for staff to develop aims and objectives, teaching and learning strategies, assessment approaches and preferred outcomes.
- ♦ Sufficient funding, especially if citizenship is to be introduced on a wider scale with large numbers of young people.
- ♦ Dedicated and enthusiastic staff (these need not be specialists, but ideally should be willing volunteers). They would act as 'champions' to promote citizenship to staff and students.
- ♦ Appropriate and sufficient staff development and training opportunities.
- ♦ The tailoring of citizenship to the needs, skills, interests and experiences of young people.

## Learning context-level factors

- ♦ Dedicated and enthusiastic staff, with the skills to facilitate as well as teach.
- ♦ A dedicated time slot for citizenship (whether as a discrete course, a module within a programme, or a specific project). The integration of citizenship into a wider tutorial scheme was generally regarded to have been a less effective approach, although there was one example of successful provision in this respect.
- ♦ An emphasis on combining knowledge, understanding and skills with practical action - what is termed a 'political literacy in action' approach, apposed to a narrower political knowledge approach.
- ♦ Involvement and participation of young people in decisions about their learning, and the development of a student voice.
- ♦ A focus upon critically active forms of learning, including discussion, debate, dialogue and reflection. The best examples were where young people were helped to think, reflect and take action.

- ♦ The use of a variety of experiential learning approaches, including project work, drama, role play, art, photography and exhibition work.
- ♦ The use of varied and interesting resources, ideally with relevance to the interests and experiences of young people.
- ♦ Links with the wider community through off site visits, the use of external speakers, and giving young people responsibility for working and negotiating with external partners.
- ♦ The involvement of young people in active participation in large-scale assemblies such as youth fora and student parliaments.
- ♦ Assessment strategies that are effective and realistic, based upon the needs, skills and capabilities of the young people.

## Background

Citizenship education has been at the centre of a major debate and review over the past decade. The review centred on the work of the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, set up in 1997 and chaired by Professor (now Sir) Bernard Crick. The final report of the advisory group<sup>3</sup> recommended that citizenship education be developed around three separate but interrelated strands: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. Citizenship has since become a statutory component of the National Curriculum at key stages 3 to 4. In 1999, a separate Advisory Group on Citizenship for 16-19 Year Olds in Education and Training was established, also chaired by Professor Crick. It reported in 2000<sup>4</sup> and recommended that citizenship should become an entitlement for all young people aged 16-19. The report recommended that citizenship should be recognised as a key life skill

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<sup>3</sup> QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY (1998). *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools: Final Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, 22 September 1998*. London: QCA.

<sup>4</sup> FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL (2000). *Citizenship for 16-19 Year Olds in Education and Training. Report of the Advisory Group to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment*. Coventry: FEFC.

alongside the six key skills already identified. The post-16 report built upon the principles of the pre-16 report, whilst recognising the specific context of post-16 education and training and the need for skills development and 'active citizenship' opportunities.

### **The Development Projects**

A three year developmental phase of post-16 citizenship began in September 2001, when a first round of pilot projects began exploring ways of delivering citizenship in organisations providing education and training to 16-19 year olds. In September 2002, a new group of pilot projects began a second wave of development. The Round 1 projects consisted of 11 consortia, each with a Consortium-level Project Manager (CLPM) overseeing the development of a range of programmes across partner organisations. The Round 2 projects were organised rather differently, with no CLPM, but a Project Manager within each individual organisation. According to MI data, organisations involved in developing post-16 citizenship included 35 school sixth forms (24 Round 1, 11 Round 2), 30 FE colleges (14 Round 1, 16 Round 2), 15 voluntary organisations (13 Round 1, 2 Round 2), 15 training providers (nine Round 1, six Round 2), nine sixth form colleges (six Round 1, three Round 2) and five 'other' organisations (four Round 1, one Round 2).

### **Methodology**

The evaluation adopts a largely qualitative methodology based upon the following research methods:

- ♦ In-depth strategic interviews conducted with 11 CLPMs across the 11 Round 1 consortia between October and December 2002, and with nine LSDA consultants across the 10 Round 2 consortia between March and May 2003.<sup>5</sup>
- ♦ In-depth interviews with operational staff and young people across 21 case-study organisations (one per consortium). These included discussions with citizenship coordinators/organisation-level project managers (20), staff delivering or facilitating programmes (24), young people (138) and, where relevant, external partners (2). These

interviews were conducted between March and June 2003.

- ♦ Analysis of data received from the consortia up to August 2003 through their termly management information (MI) returns to the LSDA, which provided details of young people's participation rates, action plans, and progress.

### **The Findings**

#### **Participation**

At the end of the academic year 2002-2003, the reported number of core participants across the Round 1 projects was 5,860 and across the Round 2 projects, was 3,043. The number of young people participating in Round 1 projects had increased substantially from 1,127 in the first year. This rise was accounted for, partly by more projects making returns in year two, and partly by some genuine increases in the numbers of young people catered for. Data received from the projects continued to be patchy, especially for Round 1 projects. Indeed, such large numbers of young people were unaccounted for by their sex (2,288) or their ethnicity (2,357), that it was not possible to make any meaningful comment on the characteristics of those involved. It appeared to be the case, however, that the majority were level 3 learners. The data for Round 2 projects was more comprehensive, and suggested that approximately 56 per cent of the young people were female and 44 per cent male. Around eight tenths appeared to be white, whilst the single largest category of learners (approximately half) was reported to be working at level 3, as would be expected in a post-16 project.

#### **Management and status of citizenship**

The input of LSDA consultants and CLPMs was generally welcomed by project staff, and in many cases the consultants and CLPMs reported sharing a positive working relationship. Factors that interviewees felt would help the overall management of the projects to run even more smoothly included:

- ♦ An agreement as to the respective roles of CLPMs and consultants, or anyone that might replace them in the future, realistically matched to available funding. Should they be regarded as administrators or developers?

<sup>5</sup> One Consultant oversaw two consortia.

- ♦ A consideration of the impact of reduced central management next year (through the removal of CLPMs). It may be necessary to have designated individuals whose sole responsibility is to help projects monitor their programmes if there is to be an ongoing requirement for self-evaluation.
- ♦ The encouragement of networking and coordination across projects without establishing an imperative. Round 1 organisations appeared to be more effective in cross-project cooperation, but it was not clear whether this was due to the input of a CLPM or the fact that they had been developing links and relationships for longer than the Round 2 organisations.
- ♦ There is no evidence that either the Round 1 or Round 2 model of development was preferable. The relative effectiveness of each approach appeared to be dependent upon individual circumstances and personalities.

There was a fairly high level of senior management support for post-16 citizenship within the case-study organisations. However, the following factors were also considered crucial to ensuring that post-16 citizenship had high status. They were not always in place across the projects at this stage:

- ♦ A 'champion' to promote the importance of citizenship to staff and young people.
- ♦ Genuine enthusiasm on the part of delivery staff, and a desire to work in partnership with young people. This was felt by most interviewees to outweigh the need for specific expertise or knowledge.
- ♦ Ring-fenced time for coordinators to plan and organise, and for deliverers to develop their understanding of citizenship and to design interesting programmes. Lack of real time remains an issue across many of the projects at present.
- ♦ Good opportunities for staff development and training. This was a fairly underdeveloped area across the projects at present, with most organisations undertaking informal development activities, rather than providing formal training courses.

#### Definition and understanding of citizenship

There was a high level of awareness of the Citizenship Advisory Group reports, which are generally regarded as the key guidance on developing citizenship, across the case-study organisations. However, most organisations indicated that they had chosen to cover only one or two of the three strands of political literacy, community involvement and social and moral responsibility outlined in these reports. The main reason they gave was that:

- ♦ specific strands were felt most appropriate to the needs of their particular young people.
- ♦ Their programmes were too short (only a few weeks long in some instances) for all three strands successfully to be covered.

The message is that there is currently no single, simple or unified view of what constitutes post-16 citizenship. However, this was not considered problematic by most interviewees. Indeed, practitioners welcomed having the flexibility to interpret citizenship in such a manner as suited their organisations, young people and individual circumstances, and many had done so to good effect.

The majority of interviewees felt that the political literacy strand was the weakest element of their programmes. However, it was clear that the projects had actually developed programmes that were far more balanced in their approach to this strand than they realised. Many programmes sought to raise young people's awareness of general issues affecting them, including drugs, sex, health and inequality. By attempting to approach these issues from a 'political' rather than a 'personal' angle, the projects were helping young people to become politically literate (albeit not by developing a knowledge of government systems or processes). This finding suggests the importance of:

- ♦ A re-enforcement of the definition of citizenship (in particular the political literacy strand) linked, where possible, to real, practical case studies.<sup>6</sup>
- ♦ The need for a flexible, yet rigorous, framework for viewing post-16 citizenship developments.

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<sup>6</sup> The work currently being undertaken by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will be extremely valuable in this respect.

## Integration of citizenship and approaches to development

The programmes that were under development across the case-study organisations can be broken down into two broad categories:

- ♦ those that adopted a primarily classroom-based taught approach, often with 'active' elements (thirteen organisations)
- ♦ those that could be described as experiential learning/participation programmes with no formal taught element (eight organisations).

Those in the former group were normally integrated into an existing programme structure (for example A/S Level General Studies, or a wider tutorial programme), and were most common in schools, FE colleges and sixth form colleges. Those in the latter category tended to be either stand-alone activities, or integrated seamlessly into the wider ethos of the organisation. Organisations favouring this latter approach were youth work and voluntary organisations and some schools.

It was clear from interviews with young people that experiential learning programmes and discrete taught courses were the most popular, and also helped young people to develop the most comprehensive understanding of what citizenship meant. The greatest levels of negativity and poorest citizenship learning experiences were apparent where citizenship had been integrated into wider tutorial programmes. It is important to recognise that this finding reflects the nature of the case-study tutorial programmes (where young people felt that they did not understand how citizenship issues fitted with their wider programmes, that the learning approach adopted was uninteresting, and that staff were sometimes not highly motivated). It should not be taken to imply that the tutorial cannot provide a basis for effective citizenship provision. Indeed, there was one example of a successful approach to citizenship through a tutorial programme, which hinged around young people developing an explicit understanding of what citizenship means, the use of interesting and interactive learning techniques, and student representation within the college. These findings have the following implications:

- ♦ Organisations with large numbers of students, such as FE and sixth form colleges, generally felt that, in the absence of large-scale funding, the only way to reach a substantial number of their students was to introduce citizenship into their tutorial programmes. Small, or specialist, organisations such as youth work organisations or special schools, were in the best position to develop programmes that were responsive to the needs and interests of their young people, due to their high staff: young person ratio.
- ♦ There are issues about the replicability of these latter responsive programmes with large numbers of young people, should post-16 citizenship be rolled out nationally. It is a cause of some concern that the programmes that attempted to reach the largest numbers of young people, through tutorial schemes, appeared to have had less success in engaging young people than other types of programme, as outlined above. Given that the tutorial will be a preferred option for many FE and sixth form colleges in developing citizenship in the future, it will be important to pay close attention to course content and learning approach across such programmes to ensure that they are as effective as possible.

The integration of citizenship into the wider community tended to be underdeveloped, with little reported interaction with national citizenship organisations, and some of the larger organisations reporting that they found it difficult to find suitable opportunities for community linking and activities for all their young people. A small number of case-study organisations, however, demonstrated that links with the wider community need not just be seen in these terms. They showed how new partnerships could be forged with long-standing partner organisations based upon the political aspects of their role, or could be developed with the organisations that provided services to the organisation, by giving young people responsibility for negotiating issues with them. In some cases, the organisation itself was seen as the 'community' within which young people were encouraged to take an active role. This suggests that:

- ♦ There may be some need for a re-enforcement of the meaning of community

involvement, and some case-study examples of it being achieved in an imaginative way, which makes best use of existing contexts and resources.

Whilst virtually all interviewees saw the issue of integration between pre- and post-16 developments as important, especially in the longer term, very few practical links had yet been made. The main reasons appeared to be that there was a lack of understanding, on the part of non-school providers, of how schools operated, and what they sought to achieve at pre-16. Interviewees indicated that there may be a need for an individual or agency to act as a broker between schools and post-16 organisations in future to assist with:

- ♦ the development of local citizenship networking groups
- ♦ the provision of baseline data from schools to post-16 providers on students' experiences and understanding of citizenship issues
- ♦ independent guidance on the development of post-16 citizenship programmes, which takes into account the baseline of pre-16 activity.

### Teaching and Learning

A variety of teaching, learning and facilitation approaches had been developed across the projects. Case-study evidence suggests that the most successful approaches included the following features:

- ♦ A negotiation of key issues of interest with the young people.
- ♦ The development of a critically reflective learning environment, with scope for discussion and debate.
- ♦ The use of a variety of experiential learning experiences, including project work, drama, role play, art, photography and exhibition work.
- ♦ The use of varied and interesting resources, ideally related to, or growing out of, current events (whether local or national) which have relevance for young people.
- ♦ Facilitation of activities based on the active involvement of young people rather than the teaching of knowledge, understanding and skills.

- ♦ Links with the wider community through off site visits, the use of external speakers, and the allocation of responsibility to young people for working and negotiating with external partners.
- ♦ Involving young people in active participation in large-scale assemblies such as youth fora and student parliaments.

### Aims and Outcomes

Most programmes' aims were concerned with discovering the most appropriate ways of facilitating post-16 citizenship, and seeking the best possible experiences and outcomes for their young people. Few had yet established rigorous systems for monitoring or evaluating effectiveness, and hence the following reported outcomes are based upon the judgements of practitioners and upon the views of the young people themselves, rather than on any 'hard' evidence of impact. Round 2 projects generally felt that it was too early for them to comment on outcomes. However, Round 1 practitioners reported a number positive impacts, as outlined below.

- ♦ The development of technical, social and life skills.
- ♦ Increased knowledge of political, social and democratic issues.
- ♦ Increased awareness, on the part of young people, of their ability to contribute to society, influence decision making and affect change.
- ♦ Increased maturity, self-esteem and responsibility among young people involved in the projects.

Young peoples' expectations were reported to include a wish to: develop new knowledge and understanding; develop new skills; raise awareness of citizenship and gain qualifications. A minority of young people had no particular expectations of their programmes. In spite of reported concerns about a lack of political literacy across the projects, all the young people that identified a wish to develop new knowledge and understanding demonstrated that they had done so at some level. Active citizenship skills were also clearly being developed, and young people reported successes in raising awareness of citizenship and related issues within their organisations and the wider community. There was little evidence yet of

young people gaining qualifications or certificates, but this was mainly a reflection of the timing of the interviews, which took place between April and June 2003.

## **Conclusion**

The pilot development projects have made considerable progress in addressing and providing answers to the key challenges involved in developing citizenship programmes for young people involved in a variety of education, training and work-based routes. It is hoped that the lessons learnt will prove invaluable not only for any planned national roll-out of post-16 citizenship but also for the development of pre-16 citizenship. In a climate of growing discussion about, and planning for, provision not just 16-19 but increasingly 14-19, it is vital that the outcomes of the development phase are applied as widely as possible. Indeed, it is hoped that there are still further valuable lessons to emerge as the projects enter their third (Round 1) and second (Round 2) years of development.

## **Additional Information**

*Copies of the full report (RR507) - priced £4.95 - are available by writing to DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.*

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