

CORK CITY LEARNING FORUM

Report Of Plenary Meeting, 27 May 2003



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PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS:

Richard Langford, CEO City of Cork VEC & Chair of Cork City Learning Forum

Mr Langford welcomed participants to the second plenary meeting of the Cork City Learning Forum. He reminded participants of the background to the Forum, and explained that the working group which had prepared for the establishment of the Forum and developed a draft constitution would cease to exist once the Forum's new Steering Group was elected. He reported that the new regional office of the Dept of Education and Science was anxious to support the work of the Forum.

CORK CITY LEARNING FORUM – DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Presentation by Mary Lenihan, Cork City Partnership

Ms Lenihan presented the key elements of the draft constitution for the Forum, which had been developed by the working group (copy attached). This document sets out the background to and purpose of the Forum, and outlines the membership and operating structures of the Forum.

Members

The membership of the Forum should be broadly based, involving stakeholders from early childhood education, primary and secondary education, tertiary education and training, higher education, providers and learners, community education, trade unions, the private sector, and other relevant public service providers. Members are nominated to the Forum by various representative bodies, networks and relevant service providers, and should report back to their nominating body on the activities of the Forum.

Structures

In general the Forum would meet in plenary session twice each year. However, throughout the year up to three working groups would progress particular items of work and report back to the Forum. A Steering Committee will be formed to

guide and oversee the work of the Forum, to promote the Forum, liaise with other interest groups and assist the City Development Board in monitoring the education actions within the strategy. This Steering Committee will include representatives from education providers, social partners, learners, community sector and others, and membership will change on a rotating basis.

Discussion

Responding to a query about the representation of Higher Education learners on the Steering Committee, the chair stressed the need to balance the size of the Steering Committee with the need for representation. He also commented that other organisations represented on the Committee have learner and student representation. The Steering Committee would commence its term of office in the autumn. For logistical reasons there may be a need in the early stages for the 3 working group chairs to be *additional* to the 11 Steering Committee members.

- **It was agreed that this draft constitution be taken forward and presented to the City Development Board.**

REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

1. Promotion of Lifelong Learning - *Ciarán Lynch, ABLES Literacy Scheme*

Ciarán Lynch reported back on the progress of the Lifelong Learning Working Group, which had focused on two tasks:

i) Cork City of Learning Logo

The purpose of the logo would be to provide a recognisable emblem which could be used by all those involved in learning in the city. It should not be associated with any one type or area of education, but rather would highlight the continuum of learning opportunities which exists. 3rd year graphic design students at CIT had been invited to submit designs and Michelle Dunlea's design had been selected. The logo was then presented to the Forum and Michelle was congratulated for her work. All members of the Forum are encouraged to use the logo in stationary, posters, publicity materials etc. This should not only raise awareness of and promote participation in learning, but also demonstrate the strength of learning in Cork.



ii) Lifelong Learning Festival

The group had prepared a proposal for the establishment of a Cork City Lifelong Learning Festival. This would focus on celebrating and promoting learning, and in particular should target people who may not normally participate in learning. Content should cater for all age groups and interest groups, with a focus on accessibility and fun. Events should take place in the city centre, and in local venues. It is envisaged that the first festival would take place in May 2004 and it was agreed that an organising committee be established to drive the festival forward.

In the discussion which followed the need to draw industry into the festival was highlighted. It was also noted that as the first festival would coincide with Ireland's Presidency of the EU, it could provide an opportunity to link with the Dept of Education and promote the Presidency's thinking on future objectives for education and training.

Next Steps

These two items completed the initial work programme of the Lifelong Learning group. The outgoing group had identified the following key tasks for the next Lifelong Learning group –

- Develop a lifelong learning charter, which could be signed up to by all organisations which use the logo
- Develop a model for an annual award scheme which would celebrate innovation in learning

The Forum endorsed the proposal to set up an organising committee for the festival

2. PARTICIPATION WORKING GROUP

Presentation by Elmarie McCarthy, Cork City Development Board

Faced with a wide range of potential issues to focus on, from participation in pre-school to third level education, the working group chose initially to focus on the participation of adults in further and higher education. Ms McCarthy gave an interim presentation on the survey which the group is conducting, and which should be completed in the autumn. This survey on the recruitment and selection of mature students in higher and further education in Cork City aims to establish baseline information on:

- The level of participation of mature students
- How they apply for places and what alternative entry routes exist
- What links exist between further and higher education
- What policies exist towards the recruitment of mature students and how do institutions seek to promote participation among mature students
- What fees are payable and what financial supports exist

Interviews have been completed and the survey findings are being written up. Some preliminary findings were highlighted (see attached handout) and the report should be finalised in the autumn

Discussion:

In the discussion which followed, a number of points were made regarding:

- The importance of planning learning pathways and making them operational;
- The need to gather information at local level on good practice;
- The need for more assessment dates, as well as more start dates for courses;
- Could the Forum play a role in helping to push for the recognition of part time learning?

- The decline in support for certain access and foundation level courses;
- The need for the National Qualifications Authority to clarify progression routes

The Forum noted the progress of the Working Group and agreed that the final report will be circulated when completed.

3. Economic Aspects of Learning

Presentation by Liam Hogan, Irish Institute of Training & Development

The economic working group had chosen to consider the link between science and Cork's economic progress to date, and the implications of the declining participation rates in science and maths on Cork's future competitiveness and the sustainability of existing industry and employment. The group proposed to organise a conference looking at the role of science in economic development and innovation. This would consider the link between science education and economic success, examine the drift from science, and seek to identify a series of locally "do-able" solutions.

Discussion

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The importance of diversity and the extent to which the Silicon Valley model may have been discredited
- What research has been done concerning what encourages multinational companies to stay
- The need to involve UCC and primary teachers

The Forum endorsed the proposal to organise the conference.

CLOSING REMARKS

Closing the second plenary meeting of the Learning Forum, Mr Langford informed delegates that a report on the meeting would be sent to all those who had been invited to attend the Forum. A report would be sent to the City Development Board, and the process of setting up a new Steering Committee would commence. Those interested in participating in the Lifelong Learning Festival Organising Committee and/or the new Lifelong Learning Working Group were invited to put their names forward. The participation and economic working groups would continue with their work, however membership was still open to those interested in participating.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF DELEGATES ATTENDING FORUM

NAME	ORGANISATION
Bermingham, Marese	Cork Institute of Technology
Biggs, Sheila	N.T.D.I
Broughal, Helen	Mahon Education Network
Bosle, Breda	Southside Education Network
Barrett, Denis	City of Cork V.E.C.
Crowley, Jane	U.C.C.
Cunningham, Willie	Cork Electronics Industry Association
Dorgan, Chris	Cork Chamber of Commerce
Dunlea, Michelle	C.I.T.
Fuller, Sybil	Glandore Residents, Blackrock
Fox, Ger	Linkage
Goggin, Brendan	C.I.T.
Harrington, Patricia	Enable Ireland
Hegarty, Ann	Irish Primary Principals' Network
Hogan, Liam	Irish Institute of Training & Development – Cork Chapter
Kelly, Maria	A.S.T.I
Kelly, Mary	Mayfield Community Education Network
Kelleher, James	Adult Education
Langford, Richard	City of Cork VEC
Lehane, Con	Retired People's Network
Loughry Rebecca	Southern Health Board
Lynch, Ciarán	ABLES Literacy Scheme

Maher, James	CIT Students Union
Maloney, Rosalie	Joint Managerial Board/Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools
Mc Auliffe, Willie	National Association Of Principals and Deputies
McCarthy, Elmarie	Cork City Development Board
McCarthy, Justine	INTO
McDonnell, Liam	C.I.T
White, Geraldine	FAS
Moynihan, Michael	Home School Liaison Cluster – Northside
Murphy, Brendan	Cork Institute of Technology
Nolan, Joan	The Glen Education Network
O'Brien, David	Cork City Learning
O'Dowd, Siobhan	Ballyphehane & Togher CDP
O' Driscoll, Brid	Mayfield Community Education Network
O'Shea, Dan	National Education Welfare Board
O' Shea Geraldine	Dept. of Social & Family Affairs
Purcell, Patricia	Mayfield Community Education Network
Quinlan, Carmel	University College Cork
Ryan, Helen	College of Commerce
Young, John	Churchfield / Gurrabraher Education Network