Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Ulster

Unit of Assessment: 25 Education

Title of case study: Educating For Pluralism, Human Rights and Democracy

1. Summary of the impact

UNESCO Centre research has impacted on education policy, locally and globally, attracting research grants of more than £6 m in the last decade. Three significant research impacts are: statutory inclusion of Local and Global Citizenship in the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) for all schools from 2007; research on 'conflict sensitive' education that provided the conceptual framework for the 2011 UNESCO Education Global Monitoring Report and has been used by UNICEF to secure funding addressing peace-building and education in conflict affected countries; and a rights-based indicators framework now used by the Northern Ireland Executive to monitor implementation of children's policies.

2. Underpinning research

Citizenship

Research into Education for Mutual Understanding (cross curricular theme, NIC 1991-2007 provided a critique that underlined the need for a stronger curriculum focus on human rights, civic responsibility, justice and democracy, particularly in the context of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In a key article Smith (2003) argued for the inclusion of an inquiry based approach to citizenship education that is defined in terms of citizens' rights and responsibilities rather than their national identities. Research that developed a conceptual framework for inquiry related to pluralism, human rights and democracy in a conflict-affected society (Smith 2003) was the basis for Education for Local and Global Citizenship, which became a statutory requirement for all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland from 2007. The research was funded by the Nuffield Foundation, Northern Ireland Department of Education (DENI) and the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

Conflict

Research, initially in a report for the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) (Smith and Vaux, 2003) and a publication by Smith (2005) was central to the development of the concept of conflict sensitive education which has now become a priority for donors and international development agencies. Smith then became a contributing author (2010) to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2011) on education and conflict and co-authored new research for UNICEF on the role of education in peace-building (Novell and Smith, 2011). UNICEF explicitly referenced Smith's 2005 definition of conflict sensitive education in an October 2011 proposal on education and peace-building. This was used as the basis for a $150m. initiative funded by the Government of the Netherlands over a four year period (2012-15), in 14 conflict affected countries (Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, occupied Palestinian territories, Yemen and Pakistan).

Rights

Finally, a £1.4m. grant from Atlantic Philanthropies (2011-15) has enabled the UNESCO Centre to develop a rights based approach to monitoring services for children and young people in Ireland and Northern Ireland. This led to funding (£75,000) from the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) tasking the Centre with developing a rights-based Indicators Framework for children's policy across all government departments. In 2013, rights' informed research carried out on behalf of the Integrated Education Fund on education policy in Northern Ireland (Hansson et al, 2013) has impacted on policy recommendations contained within a Government appointed

Ministerial Advisory Group report on the future of the education system in Northern Ireland, which have been accepted by the Northern Ireland Minister for Education, John O'Dowd MLA (22 October 2013, Northern Ireland Assembly).

Key Researchers for research period 1998-2013: Professor Alan Smith (1985 -), Dr Alan McCully (1995 -), Dr Una O'Connor (2000 -), Dr Ulf Hansson (2011-), Dr Ulrike Niens (2002-09), Dr Carmel Gallagher (2009-11), Dr Alison Montgomery (2005-08), Marina Monteith (2010-), Dr John McCord (2010-12), Christine Smith Ellison (2010-)

3. References to the research

The underpinning research with regard to this case study comprise two constituent parts, research relating to citizenship education and research relating to education and peace-building:

1. Smith, A. (2003) Citizenship Education in Northern Ireland: beyond national identity? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 33, No.1, pp.15-31 (Included in RAE 2008, 64 Citations, Google Scholar) DOI:10.1080/0305764032000064631

2. Smith, A. and Vaux, T. (2003) *Education, Conflict and International Development*. London, UK Department for International Development (DFID). (127 citations, Google Scholar) http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/sd29.pdf

3. Smith, A. (2005) Education in the 21st Century: Conflict, Reconstruction and Reconciliation. *Compare*, Journal of the British Association for International and Comparative Education, Vol. 36, No. 4, December 2005, pp.373-391. (Included in RAE 2008, 39 Citations, Google Scholar) http://www.fe.hku.hk/cerc/Seminars/ASmith-handout.pdf DOI: 10.1080/03057920500331397

4. Smith, A. (2010) The influence of education on conflict and peace-building, paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011, The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, Paris: UNESCO. URL: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/image0019/001913/191338e.pdfs/

5. Novelli, M. and Smith, A. (2011) *The Role of Education in Peace-building. A synthesis report of findings from Lebanon, Nepal and Sierra Leone.* New York: UNICEF. http://www.educationandtransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/EEPCT_PeacebuildingSynthesisReport.pdf

6. Hansson, U., O'Connor U. and McCord, J. (2013) *Integrated Education: A Review of Policy and Research Evidence,* Belfast, Integrated Education Fund. http://www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk/pdfs/pdfs_unesco_centre_publications/2013_02_21_int_ed-a_review_of_the_evidence_1999_to_2012-review_of_policy_and_research_evidence-full_report_jan_2013.pdf

4. Details of the impact

The impact of the research is not merely educational but integral to the building of a stable society in Northern Ireland. As a result of this work the international aspect of the research has grown in recent years. This has created a virtuous circle, where experience gained internationally has been used to influence and impact on government policy in Northern Ireland in 2013.

1. **Citizenship and Conflict**
   - By bringing forward research and evidence to show that reform of parts of the NIC could be an integral part of building a stable and shared society, including research commissioned by DENI on interschool links and evaluations of Education for Mutual Understanding, the UNESCO Centre has been central to curriculum reform in Northern Ireland. As a consequence this has had a direct impact on the 329,000 children and young people currently enrolled in schools in Northern Ireland and almost 20,000 teachers: (See section 5, source 3).

   - Working in partnership with the CCEA and those tasked with formulating education policy ensured that the framework developed by the UNESCO Centre researchers (Smith, McCully, O'Connor, Gallagher), both in approach (inquiry based) and in terms of core concepts; Diversity and Inclusion, Equality and Social Justice, Democracy and Active

Participation, and Human Rights and Social Responsibility, was included and developed in the revised curriculum. Dr Carmel Gallagher, former head of curriculum development at the CCEA states that, ***'the statutory requirements informed by the UNESCO Centre became a central element of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum Framework, which remains in place today.*** (See section 5, source 2 and Section 5, source 1).

- Research carried out for the 2011 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report exploring education and conflict has been recognised as **'*achieving a global policy impact. This is reflected in the very positive reform of governments and aid agencies around the world to the GMR'*** (See Section 5, source 5).

- The concept of conflict sensitive education first referenced in Smith's 2005 Compare article is referenced and accepted as UNICEFs understanding of the term in an October 2011 proposal to the Dutch Government in relation to education and peace-building, **'*Conflict Sensitive Education – systemic analysis and delivery of education systems from a conflict perspective as a routine part of educational planning and practice. (Source: Adapted from Alan Smith's article Education in the twenty-first century: Conflict, Reconstruction and Reconciliation, Compare Vol. 35, No. 4, December 2005, pp. 373– 391'*** (See Section 5, source 6, page 4).

- Research for UNICEF (Novelli and Smith, 2011) has led to a major global initiative (€120 m programme in 14 countries) to highlight the importance of education as a central part of working in conflict affected societies. Corien Sips of the Dutch Government, commenting on the impact of the research, stated that, ***'The interesting study of Mario Novelli and Alan Smith about Education and Peace-building was used as a building block for the new programme'*** (See section 5, source 4).

- Children in conflict affected countries where aid donors have prioritised conflict sensitive education directly benefit from UNESCO Centre research (See section 5, source 7)

2. Rights

- Rights informed research carried out on behalf of the Integrated Education Fund in Northern Ireland (Hansson et al., 2013) has provoked a major debate on the future direction of education policy in and has been recognised as critical in, **'*informing policy makers and influencers in Washington, London, Brussels and Dublin. Crucially, this research made an important contribution to a major Northern Ireland government report, Advancing Shared Education, published in 2013'*** (See section 5, source 9 and section 5 source 8).

- Research on embedding a rights' based approach to children and young people's well-being in Northern Ireland and Ireland, with particular regard to UNESCO Centre experience in the field of education has led to OFMdFM asking the Centre to build a child's rights indicators framework for policy making across all government departments. The framework has been acknowledged as a critical policy lever by the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Peter Robinson MLA**: '*The exercise provides us with an opportunity to take a critical look at the state of children's lives, using the Child Rights Indicator Framework which we are developing with the UNESCO Centre. The Framework will provide an evidence base not just for the report but also for assessing progress on the Executive's 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People and for informing policy development in relation to children and young people over the longer term'* (Northern Ireland Assembly, 19 April 2013)** (See section 5, source 10).

Thus, the UNESCO Centre's research on education, conflict and children's rights exemplifies the strategic approach of UOA25 generally with regard to impact. The unit recognises that the specific challenges of NI provide an important context for development and research on these issues. Over time, a sound research base has enabled the unit to directly influence policy and practice in NI as indicated above. In turn, this has created the confidence and expertise to apply

this learning successfully to other conflict affected societies in Europe, Asia and Africa.

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5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. CCEA and University of Ulster deliver report to assist teaching of citizenship: http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/newsroom/press/2006/press_280306.asp

2. Testimonial from Chief Executive/Registrar, General Teaching Council Northern Ireland, and former head of curriculum development at the Northern Ireland Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

3. Evaluation of the Pilot Introduction of Education for Local and Global Citizenship into the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum, CCEA 2009: http://www.welb-cass.org/downloads/28/267_25_UU%20Evaluation%20Summary%20Report.pdf

4. Interview with Senior Policy Advisor, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://ethioharmonyschools.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/interview-with-corien-sips-of-the-dutch-ministry-of-foreign-affairs/

5. Testimonial from Executive Director of the Overseas Development Institute and former director and lead author of UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

6. Proposal on Peace building and Education, Presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Netherlands. Presented by Education Section, UNICEF New York. October 2011 http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/UNICEF_Proposals_-_PEACE_-_final.pdf (see page 4). Corroborating contact available from Head of Education and Research Division.

7. UNICEF Peace-building, Education and Advocacy Programme – Goals and Outcomes: http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_65480.html. Corroborating Contact available from Senior Education Advisor.

8. 'Executive Slammed Over Failure to Support Integrated Education', *Belfast Telegraph,* Thursday 21st February 2013

9. Testimonial from the Integrated Education Fund (Northern Ireland) acknowledging and outlining UNESCO Centre contribution to policy change

10. Northern Ireland First Minister, Northern Ireland Assembly, 19 April 2013. http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Answer-Book/2013/130419.pdf WA2