



Early School Leavers

Forum Report No. 24

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Abbreviations	vii
Foreword	ix
Section I Introduction: Setting the Context	3
Section II Legislative and Policy Overview	19
Section III Statistical Profile of School Leavers, 1997-2001	31
Section IV Policy Initiatives for those at-risk of Early School Leaving	41
Section V Non-Formal and Labour Market Provision for Early School Leavers	61
Section VI Mechanisms for Improved Services Delivery	79
Annex 1 References	91
Annex 2 Project Team's Terms of Reference	99
Annex 3 List of Submissions and Consultations	101
Annex 4 Summary of Written Submissions	103
Annex 5 Department of Education and Science Initiatives	109
Annex 6 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences	113
Annex 7 Key Tasks of the Educational Welfare Service	115
Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Forum	117
Membership of the Forum	119
List of Forum Publications	123

List of Tables

	<i>Page</i>
Table 3.1 Qualification Levels of School Leavers, 1996-1999	31
Table 3.2 Economic Status of School Leavers, 1997-1999	34
Table 3.3 Economic Status by Qualification Level, 1997-1999	34
Table 3.4 Economic Status and Gender of School Leavers with No Qualifications, 1997-1999 (%)	35
Table 3.5 Youth Unemployment Rates in Ireland and the EU 15	36
Table 3.6 Sectors where School Leavers with full-time jobs were Working, 1997-1999 (%)	37
Table 4.1 Early Childhood Education Provision, 1997 - 2001	42
Table 4.2 Government Spending on Education, 1995 - 1999	48
Table 5.1 Take-up of Places on Youthreach	66
Table 5.2 Participation in Further Education by Gender, 2001	71

List of Figures

	<i>Page</i>
Figure 1.1 Systems Approach to Early School Leaving	9
Figure 1.2 Diagrammatic Summary of Project Team’s Recommendations	12
Figure 3.1 Qualification Levels of School Leavers by Gender (%)	33
Figure 3.2 Adult and Youth Unemployment Rates (ILO), 1997-2001	36
Figure 5.1 Non-Formal Provision for Early School Leavers	62
Figure 6.1 A Framework for Addressing Early School Leaving	82

List of Boxes

		<i>Page</i>
Box 1.1	Achievements in the NESF's Six Priority Areas 1997-2001	4
Box 1.2	Priority Groups in the 1997 Report	6
Box 1.3	Summary of Project Team's Recommendations	13
Box 2.1	Features of Lifelong Learning	20
Box 2.2	Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage	21
Box 2.3	Main Features of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000	23
Box 4.1	Pre-School Provision, 1997 - 2001	42
Box 4.2	Anomalies in Early Education/Pre-School Childcare Provision	43
Box 4.3	Primary Schooling, 1997 - 2001	45
Box 4.4	Early School Leaving and Special Classes	49
Box 4.5	Post-Primary Education, 1997 - 2001	52
Box 4.6	Comments by Early School Leavers on Reasons for Leaving School	53
Box 4.7	Pathways through Education	54
Box 4.8	Multiple Intelligences Curriculum and Assessment Project (UCC)	56
Box 4.9	Establishing the Educational Welfare Service	58
Box 5.1	Current Challenges in Youth Work	64
Box 5.3	Youthreach 1997 - 2001	66
Box 5.4	Second Chance Education, 1997 - 2001	69
Box 5.5	Employment and Work, 1997 - 2001	73
Box 6.1	Foróige Challenge 2000	83
Box 6.2	Integrated Supports for the Families of Very Young Children with High Levels of Absenteeism in Jobstown	84

Abbreviations

ACTE	Advisory Committee on Traveller Education
ADM	Area Development Management
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CE	Community Employment
CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education
CHIU	Conference of Heads of Irish Universities
CORI	Conference of Religious in Ireland
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
CTW	Community Training Workshop
DES	Department of Education and Science
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DHC	Department of Health and Children
DIT	Dublin Institute of Technology
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DSCFA	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer
EWS	Educational Welfare Service
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
IAS	Integrated Assessment Scheme
IATSE	Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
ISP	Integrated Services Process
JCSP	Junior Certificate School Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LES	Local Employment Service
MI	Multiple Intelligences
NALC	National Adult Learning Council
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy

NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NYWAC	National Youth Work Advisory Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate Course
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
SEP	Special Education Project
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
STTC	Senior Traveller Training Centre
UCC	University College Cork
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee
VPT	Vocational Preparation and Training
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

Foreword

This latest Report by the Forum begins with a review of progress in relation to the recommendations of its 1997 Report on *Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment*, (Report No. 11). It then examines, in particular, the policy impact of these and their relevance in the context of the major changes since then in the labour market and their policy implications for addressing early school leaving.

While welcoming the notable achievements made over the years in raising the retention of students to completion of Senior Cycle, the number of early school leavers (i.e. those who leave school with no qualifications) remains unchanged since 1997. Although, they represent only a relatively small group for policy purposes (circa 3,400) the economic and social consequences are very real, both for the individuals themselves and for society as a whole. This is all the more urgent given the increasingly key role that education has now come to play in our knowledge-based economy.

A wide range of positive measures has been introduced to address early school leaving and the wider but related issue of educational disadvantage. But, these in themselves will not suffice and, to be effective, must be complemented with a more multi-dimensional approach to address in a more focused way the root causes of early school leaving. This is where the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* is particularly important and programmes such as RAPID can also play a significant role.

The recommendations in this Report, which was prepared by a Project Team drawn from the Forum's membership organisations, cover a wide range of detailed and actionable policy issues. Their effective implementation will require the active support and involvement of all stake-holders including young people, parents, teachers, schools, the social partners and the wider community at large.

Looking to the future, now is a particularly opportune time to strengthen policies and our resolve to tackle this issue more decisively. A key development in this regard is the new National Educational Welfare Service. The Committee on Educational Disadvantage and its wider Consultative Forum will also provide an opportunity to give greater priority focus to early school leaving.

A draft of this Report was considered at a Plenary Session of the Forum which was held on the 12th of December last. This included, not only the Forum's Members, but also a wide range of invited guests and feedback was very positive. In the light of these discussions, the Report was subsequently amended to take into account these discussions and the amended final version attached is now submitted for consideration by Government.

Section I

Introduction: Setting the Context

Introduction: Setting the Context

Introduction

- 1.1 In 1997 the Forum produced a Report on Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment (NESF, 1997) which is generally acknowledged to have had a significant influence on the development of education policy in this area. The aim of this present Report is to evaluate follow-up and the policy impact of its 1997 recommendations and, in light of this, to amend or add to these recommendations.

- 1.2 The main focus of the 1997 Report was (i) on ‘prevention’ or halting the flow into early school leaving and (ii) ‘cure’ or tackling the stock of young unemployed. For analysis purposes, a conceptual model of pathways and transitions was used to identify crisis points such as the transition from home to school and from primary into second-level education. This first Section outlines the main issues and developments and is divided into eight parts:
 - Overview of Main Changes since 1997;
 - Identifying the Problem;
 - Framework for Analysis;
 - Project Methodology;
 - Outline of the Report;
 - Summary of the present Report’s Recommendations;
 - Exchequer Implications; and
 - Acknowledgements.

Overview of Main Changes since 1997

- 1.3 As already mentioned, the Forum’s 1997 Report succeeded in pushing the issue of early school leaving up the policy agenda. Many of its recommendations have been implemented and its six inter-related priority actions are presented in Box 1.1 below, along with an outline of progress made since then.

Box 1.1	
ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE NESF'S SIX PRIORITY AREAS, 1997-2001	
1997 Recommendations:	2001 Follow-up:
<p>Priority 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To eliminate early school leaving within the next 5 years, especially a 20 per cent reduction in numbers leaving before completion of Junior Cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Numbers have remained relatively unchanged.
<p>Priority 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To involve all who have left school early in Youthreach. ● To increase Youthreach places for those with no qualifications by 1,000 and FÁS mainstream training places by 100. ● To provide childcare costs for lone parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. 2,240 extra places in Youthreach. ● Yes. ● Childcare available since 1998 but only to maximum of £50 per week.
<p>Priority 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce a pilot scheme for 18-21 year olds who have already left school and mainstream (2,800 extra places). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) outlined in White Paper (see Priority 4) and FÁS initiative (subsumed into National Employment Action Plan).
<p>Priority 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct second chance education to the most disadvantaged. ● Cover childcare costs. ● Improve literacy/numeracy options. ● Develop outreach mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BTEI when implemented will target most disadvantaged. ● Childcare provided (see Priority 2). ● €93.45m in NDP targeted at adult literacy. ● BTEI when implemented will provide outreach.
<p>Priority 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish Interdepartmental Working Group to oversee implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group established and recommended that various Government Departments should take on board the recommendations with a view to their implementation.
<p>Priority 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop 'whole community'/local area approach to delivery of education and training services on a partnership basis and actively involving parents, schools, community groups and employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This underpins the 2001 School Completion Programme but more emphasis on links between formal and informal sector needed (see 1.4 below).

- 1.4 Despite the progress highlighted above, and commitments made by successive Governments, the key priority to eliminate early school leaving has still not been realised. Indeed, the issue is becoming more complex as the marginalisation of those leaving school with no qualifications is increased. The Government's Working Group mentioned in Box 1.1 agreed with all the Forum's recommendations with the exception of (i) the target of eliminating early school leaving within a five-year time-scale, which was seen as too optimistic, and (ii) that provision for 18-21 year olds would be better tackled through a *special measures* approach rather than through *Community Employment (CE)* and *Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)*. This was implemented and later subsumed into the National Employment Action Plan.
- 1.5 Since the Forum's last Report was published in 1997, three main factors have influenced the development of policy:
- First, there has been increased policy attention given to educational disadvantage, in recognition of the role that education plays in providing human capital for the 'knowledge economy'. Programmes have been developed to tackle disadvantage at all levels of the formal schooling system and to address disparities between areas, schools and individuals.
 - Second, recent policy changes are, for the most part, geared towards increasing retention levels to completion of the Leaving Certificate (currently at around 82 per cent) which is seen as the primary indicator of successful educational outcome. Programmes have been designed with the specific aim of encouraging retention (e.g. *Stay in School Retention Initiative*, *8-15 Early School Leavers' Initiative*), as have curricular changes introduced at both Junior and Senior Cycles. The Team's concern, however, is that these approaches may not address the root cause of inequalities in education which arise at a much earlier age. The appropriateness of delivery systems to particular groups/individuals is also not addressed nor is the recognition of alternatives to Senior Cycle such as vocational training which is a significant part of post-Junior Cycle schooling in other EU countries.
 - Finally, the labour market now is quite different to that in 1997. As a result of the upturn in the economy from the mid-1990s onwards (see Section III), there has been a greater pull of young people from the formal education system to paid work. There has also been a marked increase in part-time job opportunities. A number of studies carried out with second-level students (Morgan, 2000; Redmond and Butler, 2000) found that large percentages of students were working part-time, even during examination years. For example, one study showed that 51 per cent of the sample were in employment and 58 per cent of those were doing Leaving Certificate (Morgan, 2000). Aside from the need to protect young people in part-time work and for the proper enforcement of the Protection of Young Persons

(Employment) Act 1996¹ and for the appointment of labour inspectors to follow up on poor employment practice, there is increasing concern also that part-time work can lead to an early exit from the formal schooling process, particularly by those at risk of early school leaving.

1.6 The Team’s analysis of the levelling-off in retention rates and, as a corollary, the slow progress made in tackling the number of early school leavers, centres on four factors. These are:

- Young people have been pulled prematurely into the buoyant labour market, as noted above.
- The benefits of initiatives that have been introduced to tackle early school leaving are not yet evident.
- Conversely, policy responses to educational disadvantage have made little or no difference to those who will leave school early anyway.
- At a more fundamental level, inequalities within society are being reproduced in the education system and more radical approaches are needed if these are to be addressed.

1.7 A key recommendation of the Team is that objective evaluation of the cumulative effect of the programmes introduced, on a longitudinal basis, is now needed to identify more precisely why more progress in tackling early school leaving has not been achieved.

Identifying the Problem

Targeting Early School Leavers

1.8 The 1997 Report set out the key target groups where interventions should be aimed (see Box 1.2). The emphasis was on Priority Groups A, B and C.

Box 1.2	
PRIORITY GROUPS IN THE 1997 REPORT	
Priority Group A	Pre-school, primary level and post-primary level children up to Junior Certificate
Priority Group B	15-18 year olds who have left school with no qualifications
Priority Group C	18-21 year olds who have left school with no qualifications
Priority Group D	Those who left with Junior Cycle qualifications only

1. The Act applies to young employees under 18 years of age and contains restrictions on hours of work and minimum rest requirements.

1.9 This Report maintains the focus on the above priority groups, in particular, Priority Groups A and B which include school leavers who:

- do not make the transfer from primary to second-level,
- drop out before sitting the Junior Certificate, or
- leave school immediately after Junior Certificate without any effective examination results (i.e. less than 5 passes which is the minimum recognised by potential training providers and/or employers).

Causes of Early School Leaving

1.10 The causes of early school leaving vary, depending on one's perception of whether it is as a result of individual failure or of system failure. Generally, it is possible to look at early school leaving in one of three ways:

- The deficit model labels young people who leave the formal education system as soon as they are legally able to do so – and sometimes before that – as drop-outs to reflect some personal failure. The problem is seen to lie, therefore, with the individual young person:

“the term drop-out clearly places the blame for non-completion on the student ... the very use of either term already implies a difference in the remedies that will be adopted to tackle the problem of early school leavers” (Blaug, 2001).

Factors which contribute to the decision to leave in this approach might include under-achievement and low academic performance, poor self-esteem and experiences of bullying.

- The *'push-out'* model puts the blame on the institutional make-up of the school and how it is organised to deliver. In this approach the main contributory factors include school type, curriculum, disciplinary procedures, and pupil-teacher interactions. In reality, both the first and second models combine so that school leavers both drop out and are pushed out in what might be called *“a mutual process of rejection”* (Blaug, 2001). This leads to chronic truancy and an inability by the school to engage with 'disinterested' and 'de-motivated' students. The factors, both within the school system itself and the individual and his/her background, when combined lead to an alienation from school. These can include drug and alcohol abuse, problems within the home (including the cumulative effects, from one generation to the next, of educational disadvantage).
- The *'rational'* choice model addresses the *costs* and *benefits* associated with continued participation (see Erikson and Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 1996; Smyth, 1999a). Early school leaving is seen as a choice on the part of the student which is made on the basis of the direct costs associated with

schooling as well as income foregone while at school. In areas of disadvantage and high unemployment, young people and their parents may not see much benefit in staying on in school and may opt for the immediacy of accessible but low-paid employment.

- 1.11 In the rural context a range of other issues impact on early school leaving. These include the lack of sufficient numbers to avail of programmes and lack of choice regarding subjects on offer. It may also be difficult for rural schools to access non-traditional programmes such as the *Junior Certificate School Programme*. Rural transport is also a key concern. For example, the school transport scheme is applied rigidly and transport is only provided to the nearest school irrespective of the needs of the pupil. Transport is also identified as a specific problem for *Youthreach*. Similarly, non-formal provision may be harder to access, requiring greater levels of outreach. Both the White Paper on Rural Development (Government of Ireland, 1999a) and the Commission on School Accommodation (2001a; 2001b) refer to the need for the geographical dispersal of education and improved facilities in rural areas.

Consequences of Early School Leaving

- 1.12 The economic consequences of early school leaving are manifested at both individual and societal levels. For the individual, there is the increased likelihood of long-term unemployment, low-skilled and poorly-paid employment and social and economic marginalisation. Findings from a number of studies on the relationship between labour market earnings and initial education conclude that an additional year of schooling is likely to yield an annual ‘rate of return’ for individuals of 8-10 per cent (OECD, 2001a). Conversely, calculations of the lifetime social and economic costs of a cohort of early school leavers in both Canada and Australia (Conference Board of Canada, 1992; King, 1999) showed their significance in relation to matters such as health, crime and social cohesion.
- 1.13 Education has a key role to play in the acquisition of social capital and of access to career opportunities and life chances. The consequences of early school leaving relate, therefore, to failure to access these life chances and social exclusion (Cullen, 2000). There are also social losses associated with early departure from a system which instils civic and social responsibility. The level of cultural capital is also significant; parents with higher levels of education will have a better understanding of the benefits of education and be more equipped to help their children. The better-off have more to lose by not staying in the education system as they risk social demotion while the more marginalised often do not recognise its intrinsic value. In 1997 a young person whose father was in the higher professional category was seven times more likely to attend higher education (McCormack and Archer, 1998). This differential has now been reduced to four times.

Framework for Analysis

1.14 The Team presents, as its framework for analysis, a systems approach to the issue of early school leaving to highlight the range of factors that affect a student's decision to participate in formal education (see Figure 1.1). Such a multi-dimensional, integrated framework is needed since early school leaving is closely connected with the young person's family and community and also with how education provision is organised and delivered. Variables that affect participation in the education system are grouped into five categories:

- Individual;
- Family;
- School;
- Community; and
- Further education, training and work.

Figure 1.1 SYSTEMS APPROACH TO EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING	
System Category	Possible Variables
Individual	Learning difficulties, literacy and numeracy difficulties, self-esteem and confidence issues, bullying, etc.
Family	Behavioural difficulties, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, attitudes of parents to schooling, parents' confidence in their own and their child's ability, parents' previous experience of education and education level achieved, ethnic/cultural identity, role of extended family, level of financial resources, unemployment, etc.
School	School ethos, funding, discipline procedures, management and planning, pupil selection and streaming, entrance testing, teachers, teacher/pupil ratios, teacher expectations, pupil participation in school planning, integration of initiatives available, parental involvement, co-education, etc.
Community	Community infrastructure, availability of out-of school supports, locally-based facilities and resources rural/urban dimensions, etc.
Further Education, Training and Work	Levels of unemployment, local labour market, school-to-work transitions, in-work training/education opportunities, etc.

1.15 The Team’s concern is that current policy responses to early school leaving do not fully incorporate the above multi-dimensional approach. A range of Government Departments and Agencies deliver initiatives and programmes designed to address disadvantage but these are often without adequate reference to each other. A more integrated approach is, therefore, needed to better support young people at risk and to reduce fragmentation in the structure and delivery of these support services. We return to this in Section VI.

Project Methodology

1.16 The Project Team on Early School Leaving was established in July 2001. Its Terms of Reference are presented in Annex 2. The Team was drawn from the range of organisations that are represented in the Forum’s membership and included:

Marian Brattman, National Youth Council of Ireland
Patrick Burke, EAPN
Deputy Ulick Burke, T.D.
Annette Dolan, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Aidan Farrell, Department of Education and Science
Constance Hanniffy, General Council of County Councils
Josephine Henry, National Youth Council of Ireland
Jennifer Lloyd, Blanchardstown Youth Service
Noel Kelly, Northside Partnership
Deputy Michael Kitt, T.D.
Louise O’Reilly, Community Workers Co-op
Kevin Reid, IBEC
Sr. Eithne Woulfe, CORI
Forum Secretariat: Sarah Craig.

1.17 The Team sought public submissions through advertisement in the national press. Twenty-eight responses were received and recommendations from these are interspersed throughout the Report. A list of those who made submissions is contained in Annex 3 and a summary of issues raised is presented in Annex 4.

1.18 The Team met with a range of key organisations and individuals involved in the provision of services to those at-risk of early school leaving or who have already left formal schooling. It also consulted with policy-makers and most importantly, with early school leavers themselves. A list of those consulted is also included in Annex 3.

Outline of the Report

1.19 The structure of the Report is as follows:

- **Section II** outlines recent developments in policy.
- **Section III** presents an update of the statistical profile of early school leavers.
- **Section IV** looks at in-school provision for those at risk of early school leaving and assesses the contribution of preventative measures to reducing the rate of early school leaving.
- **Section V** provides an overview of the non-formal sector, in particular, the *Youthreach* programme to assist those who have already left the formal education system. Sections IV and V correspond to the ‘prevention and cure’ analysis in the 1997 Report and progress in relation to its recommendations is assessed.
- Finally, **Section VI** presents a framework for improved services delivery.

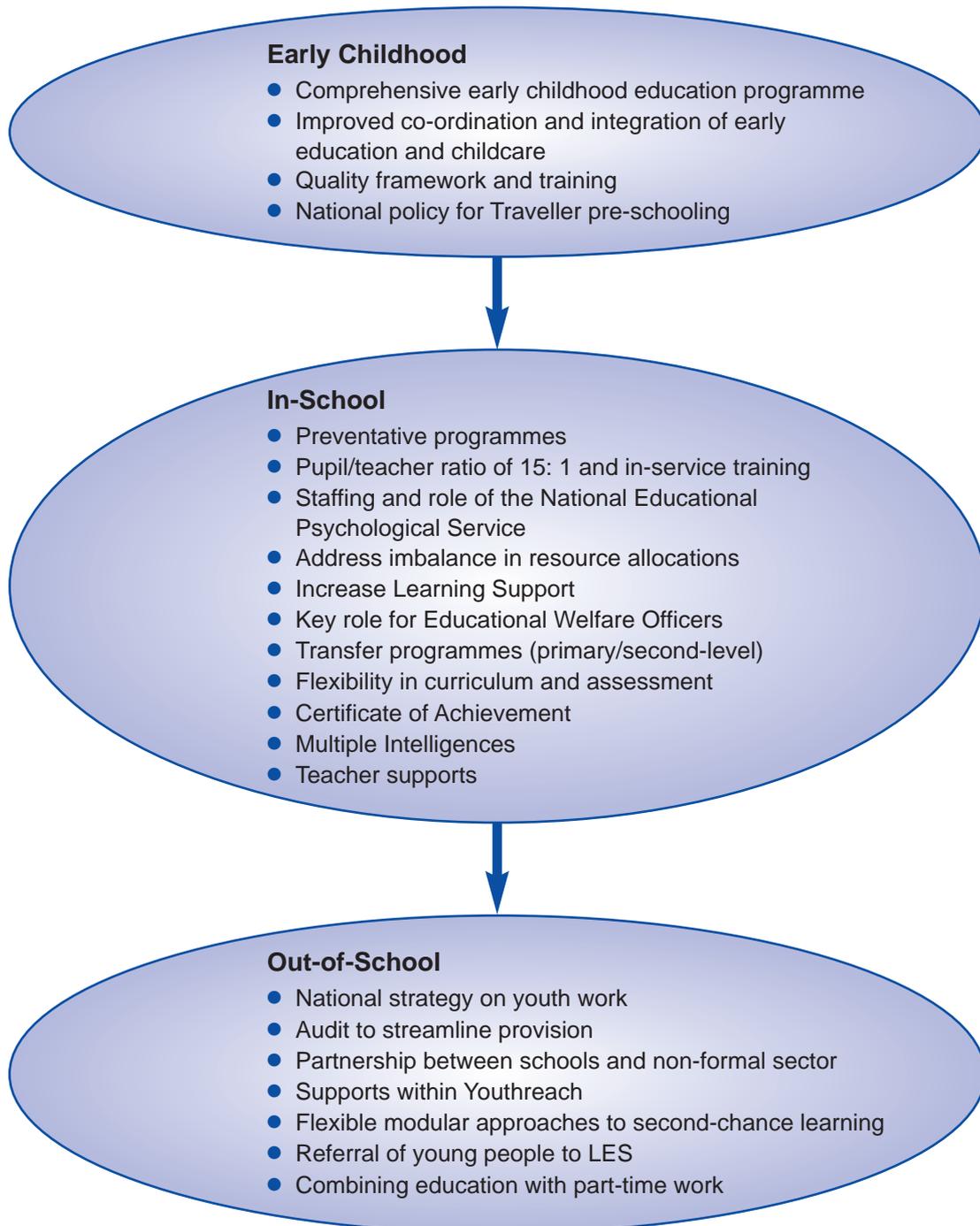
Summary of Recommendations

1.20 A list of main recommendations is presented in summary format in Box 1.3 below. The organisations in brackets after each recommendation are those which the Project Team feel should have responsibility for progressing the recommendation. A diagrammatic summary of the recommendations is presented in Figure 1.2. At the outset, the Team wishes to emphasise that the effectiveness of its recommendations would be considerably enhanced if all policy measures and programmes were underpinned by the following overarching considerations:

- the ‘whole child’ approach should be a central feature of policy;
- intervention at an early stage is vital in tackling educational disadvantage;
- lifelong learning should have as one of its core concerns the needs of early school leavers and be reflected at all stages in the education process;
- the diverse needs of ethnic minorities – including Travellers – should be met in an integrated way and an intercultural, anti-racism approach should be central to education policy;
- children with special needs should be a key target group;
- a systematic and structured programme of benchmarking and monitoring of results and of regular policy evaluation should be developed and published;

- partnership models, particularly between the formal and non-formal sectors, should be further developed;
- a more clearly articulated vision, with support and targets for its implementation and delivery at local level should be developed; and
- more effective co-ordination and integration should be developed.

Figure 1.2: Diagrammatic Summary of Project Team’s Recommendations



Box 1.3**SUMMARY OF PROJECT TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

(The number references are to corresponding paragraphs in the Report)

	Pre-School Provision
4.7	Building on international models of good practice, a more comprehensive early childhood education programme should be developed for disadvantaged children. [DES/DJELR]
4.8-4.10	The National Childcare Management Committee should now be established to provide more strategic policy direction to early childhood care and education. In addition, the newly-established Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) should help to provide greater co-ordination between quality early childhood care and education provision at local level. [CECDE/DJELR/DES]
4.12	The CECDE should also work in tandem with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) to establish a quality framework for training early years workers. [CECDE/NQAI]
4.13	A national policy on Traveller pre-schooling now needs to be put in place. [DES]
	In-School Provision
	<i>Primary Level</i>
4.22	The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) should draw up guidelines for, and support the delivery of preventative programmes at primary level which would address, <i>inter alia</i>, under-achievement by boys. [NEPS]
	<i>Primary and Post-Primary Level</i>
4.19-4.20	Class size rather than Pupil/Teacher Ratio should be used to allocate teachers; a maximum class size of 15: 1 should apply in all Designated Disadvantaged Schools, at both primary and post-primary levels. This should be accompanied by in-service training on teaching methodologies appropriate to smaller classes. [DES]
4.21	More training places for educational psychologists should be made available to address the staff shortfall in the National Educational Psychological Service. In the interim, psychologists in private practice should be accessible to schools and financially assisted by the Department. [DES]
4.24	The current imbalance in budget allocations should be addressed in favour

	of post-primary, and more particularly, primary level to improve quality of provision for students at risk. [DES]
4.28	The number of Learning Support teachers at primary and post-primary levels should be increased. Supports for students with learning difficulties should be transferable from primary to post-primary level. [DES]
4.29-4.31, 4.35	The work by the NCCA should be drawn on to design innovative Transfer Programmes and should be delivered locally. At post-primary level, school systems (including induction, timetabling, curriculum and disciplinary procedures) should be more responsive to student needs. Specific regard should be given to Travellers. The EWOs, when in place, should assist with transfer, together with designated school staff. [DES/NCCA/Schools/NEWB]
4.30	<i>Social, Political and Health Education (SPHE)</i> and <i>Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)</i> Programmes should be implemented in all classes at both primary and post-primary levels and staff should be assigned in each school for this purpose. [DES]
	<i>Post-Primary Education</i>
4.43	Flexibility in assessment should be introduced at both Junior and Senior Cycles, drawing on elements of good practice within the <i>Junior Certificate School Programme</i> and the <i>Leaving Certificate Applied</i> . [DES/NCCA]
4.49	In tandem, assessment at second level should be recorded in a standardised ‘Certificate of Achievement’ and awarded to all students on completion of formal schooling to certify academic/non-academic achievements. [DES/Schools]
4.51	Linked to the above, a small number of schools from the <i>School Completion Programme</i> should be selected to participate in a pilot initiative to further test the Multiple Intelligences approach, its connection with community-based initiatives and its usefulness to school retention. [DES]
4.53	Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) should be drawn from a range of disciplines and be assigned a leadership role in issues relating to school retention. [NEWB/DES]
6.23	Schools who take students on the recommendation of the EWOs after September of each year should have access to capitation grants for these students. [DES]
	Out-of-School and Labour Market Provision
	<i>Youth Work</i>
5.10	To streamline existing provision, a national strategy should be developed

	for the non-formal sector and its role in relation to early school leaving. As a first step, a comprehensive audit of provision should be made of all preventative measures. [Youth Work Sector/DES/DJELR/DETE/DHC]
5.11	Local Committees to be set up under the Youth Work Act, 2001 should have a strand that deals specifically with early school leavers and foster partnerships between the formal and non-formal sectors. [DES/Youth Work Sector/VECs]
	<i>Youthreach</i>
5.20	The counselling and psychological service should be mainstreamed into <i>Youthreach</i> so that the needs of participants can be more adequately met. [DES]
5.20	To improve progression both within and from <i>Youthreach</i>, commitments should be given to accelerate the rolling out of the Advocacy programme and to resource its outreach dimension. [FÁS]
5.21	Specific provision for young people under 15 years who are presently in <i>Youthreach</i> should be developed. [DES/NEWB]
	<i>Second Chance Education</i>
5.32	Work being undertaken by the NQAI on a qualifications framework should include flexible modular approaches with accreditation for competences acquired in work by those with no qualifications. [NQAI]
	<i>Young People and the Labour Market</i>
5.36	Within schools, the Local Employment Service should be proactively promoted as a point of referral for young people who are leaving school with no qualifications. [DES/FÁS/NEWB]
5.42	To accommodate students who wish to combine school and work, in the short-term, the <i>Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)</i> should be made available on a part-time basis. [DES]
5.41- 5.42	In tandem, the Standing Committee on the Labour Market should include, as part of its remit, consideration of ways to combine part-time education and work, drawing on the experience of the pilot 'Linking Education to the Workplace' initiative. [DETE]
	<i>Mechanisms to Improve Services Delivery</i>
6.14	Family support services at local level should be developed and greater links should be fostered between them and other local initiatives such as the <i>Home School Community Liaison Scheme</i> on issues relating to educational disadvantage. [DES, DSCFA/DHC]
6.18- 6.19	A system of formal tracking of pupils should be developed. Preparation of the Primary Pupil Data-base should be expedited. [NEWB/DES]

	Modules on educational disadvantage should be an integral part of pre-service and in-service training of teachers at both primary and second-level. In addition, opportunities for joint training with youth workers should be encouraged. [DES/Third Level Colleges/Youth Work Sector]
6.20	Consideration should be given to mentoring for teachers within all schools, building on the experience of the Support Teacher Project which is available on a limited basis at primary level. [DES]
6.20	Teachers should be facilitated to take up secondment and sabbatical opportunities to benefit from different working practices. [DES]
6.28	The ‘collegiate’ model for schools which was proposed by the Post-Primary Review Body in Northern Ireland should be piloted in a small number of areas. [DES]
6.30	A greater regional presence by the Department of Education and Science should be developed to interface between central policy and local delivery. [DES]

Exchequer Implications

1.21 The Team acknowledges that a detailed costing of its proposals is needed. However, it was not possible to do this as this would depend on *when* and *how* its proposals are implemented. In some cases, the cost to the Exchequer is minimal and involves merely a re-ordering of existing priorities. In others, greater resource commitments are required. The benefits, both in the short as well as the long-term would, however, outweigh the costs to the Exchequer. The economic and social returns would accrue not only for the individuals concerned but also to our society as a whole.

Acknowledgements

1.22 The Project Team would like to thank all of those who contributed to the Report. It is very grateful to those who made written submissions and to those who took the time to meet the Team. In particular the Team would like to thank Dr. Emer Smyth of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) whose advice and expertise greatly assisted the work. It would also like to thank Professor Áine Hyland of University College Cork for her encouraging and helpful response to an earlier draft of the Report that was discussed at the Forum’s Plenary Session in December last. Finally, the Team wishes to record its thanks to the Department of Education and Science for information and assistance throughout the Project, including an update of progress made since 1997.

Section II

Legislative and Policy Overview

Legislative and Policy Overview

Introduction

2.1 Over the last twenty years significant progress has been achieved and this needs to be acknowledged. For example, retention levels to Senior Cycle have increased from 60 per cent to almost 82 per cent since 1980. This compares favourably with other OECD countries. However, under-representation of poorer socio-economic groups is still evident and policy has not, to date, been able to successfully address this. This Section presents an overview of developments since 1997 under the following headings:

- Policy Direction and Focus;
- Legislative Developments;
- Developments for Specific Target Groups; and
- Policy Gaps and Issues.

Policy Direction and Focus

2.2 In the five years since 1997, a range of policy documents have been published setting out Government commitments to tackling educational disadvantage and early school leaving. For example, the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (PPF) (Government of Ireland, 2000) places a strong emphasis on participation in and benefit from education and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (Government of Ireland, 1997) also identified early school leaving as a priority in tackling educational disadvantage. The recently published NAPS Review (Government of Ireland, 2002) continues to focus on educational disadvantage as a key target area. The *National Development Plan 2000-2006* (Government of Ireland, 1999b) also provides for investment over the period of the Plan to be concentrated, among other things, on prevention of early school leaving.

2.3 One of the main changes at policy level, and one which is fully supported by the Project Team, is that resources are now more targeted at educational disadvantage. For example, two Department of Education and Science strategy documents, the *New Deal – A Plan for Educational Opportunity* (Department of Education and Science, 1999a) and *Giving Children an Even Break – By Tackling Disadvantage* (Department of Education and Science, 2001a) set out comprehensive approaches to tackling educational disadvantage. From now on, resources will be allocated to over 2,300 schools over the next three years, according to the scale of disadvantage in each school. This will be defined on the basis of research by the Education Research Centre which identified levels of

concentration of disadvantaged pupils in each primary school. This effectively marks a shift from targeting schools in Disadvantaged Areas to targeting individual ‘at-risk’ pupils. This poses major challenges within the education sector if it is to be effectively applied, not least of which is the resource implications.

- 2.4 In relation to curriculum development, new programmes in the formal sector have been introduced to cater for those whose needs are not met under the ‘traditional’ curriculum in both Junior and Senior Cycles. These include the *Junior Certificate School Programme* and the *Leaving Certificate Applied*. Details of these changes are set out in Section IV.
- 2.5 Another policy development is the promotion of lifelong learning. This is receiving priority at European level, with the submission last year of the European Commission’s Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2001) which, *inter alia*, highlights that the scale of current economic and social change in Europe will require a fundamentally new approach to education and training.
- 2.6 A recent Irish Report on lifelong learning (Department of Education and Science, 2001b) concluded that a ‘cradle to grave’ approach requires a seamless interface between levels, facilitating access by all and progression, flexibility and support services such as guidance and childcare. From a labour market perspective, lifelong learning can play a key role in raising performance/productivity levels (IBEC/Conference of Head of Irish Universities (CHIU), 1999) and competitiveness. Features of lifelong learning which are of relevance to this Report are set out in Box 2.1 below.

Box 2.1

FEATURES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

- Providing a skilled workforce and promoting competitiveness
- Addressing unemployment, poverty and social exclusion
- Addressing inter-generational poverty
- Strengthening individuals, families and communities
- Supporting democracy.

Source: Department of Education and Science.

- 2.7 Despite commitment by Government to the lifelong learning approach, mainly in the context of the White Paper on Adult Education ‘*Learning for Life*’ (Department of Education and Science, 2000a), this has not yet happened and the Task Force on Lifelong Learning, established by Government has still not

reported. The Project Team wishes to emphasise that major investment will be required at all levels of the education system if the rhetoric of lifelong learning is to become a reality. Moreover, the Team stresses the importance of the approach being applied, not only to adults but to everyone, particularly those with no formal qualifications and for whom accreditation is important (see Section V).

- 2.8 The need for improved and more integrated links between the voluntary and statutory sectors, namely through links between schools, youth, community and welfare services, out-of-school education and training has also been recognised for policy purposes (see, for example, Government of Ireland, 1997; Government of Ireland, 2000; *Local Development Social Inclusion Programme*, 2000). The Project Team is also pleased to note that, in many respects, locally-based initiatives by the Integrated Services Process (ISP), the Area-based Partnerships and the RAPID and CLÁR Programmes¹ have been developing the ‘whole community’ approach (*viz.* a local area approach involving co-operation between education/training providers), which was advocated in the Forum’s 1997 Report. One particular initiative that was successful in networking the formal and non-formal sectors is the Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage which was funded by the Combat Poverty Agency. The main features of this Programme are identified in Box 2.2 below.

Box 2.2

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMME ON EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

This Programme operated from 1997-2000 in four areas – Drogheda, Killinarden, Tralee and Tuam. Personnel from a variety of formal and non-formal educational sectors came together in new local networks to research, plan and develop co-ordinated, integrated responses to educational disadvantage. Many innovative collaborative programmes were established. These included:

- The establishment of a module on educational disadvantage by St. Patrick’s College of Education, Drumcondra in association with Killinarden Education Network;
- The establishment of a Resource Bank in Tuam that enabled network members to access materials which may be of support to them in their work; and
- The development of programmes by three of the networks to facilitate the transfer of students from primary to second-level.

In spite of positive feedback, this initiative has not been mainstreamed. The Killinarden network is the only one of the four that is still operational.

Source: Combat Poverty Agency, 2000.

1. RAPID – Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development – is a National Development Plan (NDP) initiative which focuses on disadvantaged urban communities and aims to develop an integrated focus across social inclusion measures. CLÁR is the rural equivalent.

2.9 Significant policy changes are also taking place in the non-formal sector. The most important and encouraging development there centres on the drawing up by the Department of Education and Science – in consultation with those involved in the non-formal sector – of the first National Youth Work Development Plan, for the period 2002 – 2006, as part of the commitments under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. The National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NWyAC) is also to be established on a statutory footing under the Youth Work Act, 2001 and will have both statutory and voluntary representation. These developments will put priorities in youth work on a more strategic level and will provide a much-needed framework for the development of the sector as a whole.

Legislative Developments

2.10 To support much of the policy changes identified above a number of key legislative changes have taken place in recent years. These include the enactment of the Education Act, 1998, which provides for the establishment of an Educational Disadvantage Committee to advise the Minister on policies and strategies to combat educational disadvantage² and for greater participation by students and parents in their own/their child's education³.

2.11 The National Qualifications Act, 1999 established a National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). The main task of the NQAI is to develop a national framework for all qualifications in the State and to set the overall standards for non-university education and training awards at further and higher levels. The significance of the NQAI to early school leaving is its role in facilitating access, transfer and progression for all learners, including those who have special needs and in the maintenance and improvement of standards.

2.12 The Act also provides for the setting up of the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), which will be responsible for training/further education awards. This will be an important development for early school leavers, as it is the awards of that Council rather than the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) that are more likely to be immediately relevant to the needs of those who leave school early.

2.13 Also of significance to early school leaving is the raising of the compulsory school leaving age to 16 years and the establishment of a National Educational Welfare Service under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The main features of this Act are set out in Box 2.3 below. One of its principal provisions is a more

2. In December last, the Minister for Education and Science announced the setting up of the Committee and a larger Consultative Forum on Educational Disadvantage.

3. Section 29 of the 1998 Act provides the right for parents to appeal to the Department of Education and Science in respect of expulsions, suspensions or refusals to enrol.

systematic approach to tackling non-attendance at school which was a key concern of the 1997 Report and which is clearly associated with early school leaving (Boldt and Devine, 1998). For example, research on school factors and academic and personal/social development among pupils (Smyth, 1999a) found that working class pupils and pupils in predominantly working-class schools have a higher absenteeism rate and remain at greater risk of dropping out of full-time second level education than their middle-class counterparts.

Box 2.3

MAIN FEATURES OF THE EDUCATION (WELFARE) ACT, 2000

- The raising of the school-leaving age to 16 years or completion of three years post-primary education, whichever comes later.
- The establishment of a National Educational Welfare Board and an Educational Welfare Service.
- The appointment of Educational Welfare Officers.
- Registering children outside the recognised school system and assessing the adequacy of such education on an ongoing basis.
- Setting out procedures governing school attendance and expulsion.
- Specific provision for continuing education and training of 16 and 17 year olds who leave school early to take up employment.
- Engagement of employers in the educational welfare of young people.
- Co-operation and co-ordination between various agencies in keeping with the 'whole school approach'.
- Sharing of information between relevant bodies on young people who have school attendance problems.

Source: Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

2.14 The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established in May 2001 and the provisions of the Act will be commenced on or before July 2002. Its main objectives cover school attendance, addressing the needs of 16 and 17 year olds who leave school early and the education of all children to a minimum standard. Central to these objectives is enhancing the understanding of the positive contribution that education can make. This could have a significant impact on the education experiences of many currently disadvantaged young people. Issues around the establishment of the Educational Welfare Service are discussed in Section IV.

Developments for Specific Target Groups

2.15 Two new issues have very much come to the fore in the debate about early school leaving since the Forum's 1997 Report. These are:

- the increasing demand for diversity and interculturalism at all levels of education⁴; and
- the education of children with special needs.

Both of these issues are discussed briefly below.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

2.16 Government policy on intercultural education is set out in the National Children’s Strategy (2000) and an intercultural approach is encouraged in the Revised Primary Curriculum (1999). Much of the impetus for change can be attributed to the dramatic increase in immigrants and asylum-seekers in recent years and the related debate about culturally-appropriate education (e.g. National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2000; Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE), 2001). However, there have been on-going calls for a more diverse curriculum which would recognise and integrate ethnic groups within the education system (e.g. Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995; IATSE, 2001).

2.17 While there have been some changes at policy level, concerns have been expressed that implementation has been slow (e.g. Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), 1998). IATSE’s recent report (2001) also concluded:

“...while there are many encouraging statements from the Department of Education and Science and other Governmental and national representative bodies, practical progress can be very slow. There does not appear to be a clear perception of what is required in relation to inculcating the attitudes and values associated with intercultural education. Many so-called initiatives remain simply statements of intent”.

2.18 The Team welcomes the recent initiative by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to look at interculturalism in the curriculum. Guidelines for the fuller integration of Travellers into the education system have also been prepared and are under review by the Department of Education and Science. The Team urges that these be given priority and implemented as soon as possible.

2.19 The importance of cultural diversity from an early stage in the individual’s formal schooling has been highlighted in the literature (e.g. Deegan, 1999). Research shows that children of four years of age have already internalised stereotyped gender roles and racial bias, and that anti-bias education needs to take place before that (Murray, 1999). In the absence of a comprehensive early

4. Travellers were included in the 1997 Report, but since then the needs of ethnic minorities have grown in importance due to the increase in numbers over the last five years.

childhood education programme, the Team welcomes the establishment by Pavee Point of 'Éist', a new Early Years Network for trainers and practitioners, which is concerned with diversity in early childhood care, education and training (see Murray and O'Doherty, 2001). It also acknowledges that interculturalism is now a feature of the *Social, Political and Health Education* (SPHE) Programme. Further efforts are needed, however, to ensure that diversity becomes an integral feature at all levels of our education system (see Section IV).

Children with Special Needs

- 2.20 For children with special needs, there is a clear link between their learning difficulties, the inadequacy in State provision and levels of drop-out. A number of high-profile legal cases in recent years have brought these issues to the fore, particularly in relation to autism, which is one of a number of special needs conditions. A survey of students with Asperger Syndrome – a form of autism – showed that at second level, the school drop-out rate for this group is about 50 per cent (O'Brien, 1997). The Minister for Education and Science established a special Task Force in October 2000 to examine current responses to the educational needs of students with autism and to make recommendations for the development of services in this area. The Task Force presented its findings in mid-November 2001 (Task Force on Autism, 2001). The report covers the full spectrum of provision, from pre-school to adulthood, and is under consideration by the Minister at present.
- 2.21 Many students with special needs struggle through primary education and may encounter enormous difficulties when they reach second level. Issues also arise about assessment (see Section IV). The Team welcomes, therefore, the recent announcement on the establishment of a high-level group within the Department of Education and Science to undertake a review of services at second-level for those with special needs.
- 2.22 In 1998, as part of the Government's *New Deal*, a major initiative for integrated education for children with special needs was announced. This included the introduction of a formalised system of special teaching and childcare support. A National Council on Special Education was announced in 2001. While individual responses have been developed, following on from the Sinnott Case and others, the Team's view is that these services should be available as a matter of right and not as individual Court judgements come to light and force changes on the system. Moreover, the Team urges that the forthcoming Children's Disability (Education) Bill, which is designed to copper fasten the rights of special needs children to education, should be enacted promptly and consultation should be undertaken with key interest groups on future provision needs in this area.
- 2.23 A number of other issues also arise on education provision for children with

special needs and their mainstreaming into ‘standard’ schools. For example, little attention has been given to the transition from school to work for these children or indeed their transfer from one level of schooling to another (at present, provision for children with special needs is mostly at primary level). Nor has there been much consideration of the need for a cohort of teachers with appropriate qualifications (see Expert Group on the Allocation of Teachers to Second-Level Schools, 2001). There has also been no discussion about the appropriateness of applying a minimum education standard to those with special needs. The issue of curricular guidelines is addressed in the Report of the Task Force on Autism (mentioned above). The NCCA (NCCA, 1999b) undertook extensive consultations on this and national curriculum guidelines for students with mild, moderate and profound learning disabilities will be available to schools shortly. The Team hopes that, when put in place, these guidelines will greatly improve service delivery for these students.

Policy Gaps and Issues

2.24 Despite recognition of the problems that exist for marginalised young people and substantial investment in educational disadvantage, the Team’s concern is that responses at policy level have not yet succeeded in adequately addressing the problem of early school leaving. There are three key factors that are contributing to this. These are:

- Current Government funding for educational disadvantage needs to be targeted more towards the most disadvantaged groups within the population. This will require increased investment in communities where levels of poverty and inequality are highest.
- A core concern of the 1997 Report was that greater emphasis should be placed on tackling disadvantage at its earliest stage in the individual’s schooling. This still remains the case. The Team’s view is that many of the initiatives currently geared towards addressing early school leaving are focused at second-level, indeed at Senior Cycle but this is too late. Those who are at-risk begin to disengage from the system as early as primary level (see Finneran, 2000) and it has long been recognised that the transfer from primary to second-level is a key point where drop-out occurs. Strengthened and continuing early intervention and assessment of educational needs is required at primary, but more especially at pre-primary levels.
- Increased attention needs to be given to the multi-dimensional nature of early school leaving. Educational provision has a key role to play in tackling disadvantage but this alone will not be sufficient in providing solutions to the associated complexities of poverty and disadvantage. Better access to local services and a more adequately-resourced

infrastructure of housing, health, welfare and local development are key requirements. In short what is needed, therefore, is a coming together of the main delivery agencies to focus in a more holistic way on the needs of children and young people.

- 2.25 The implications of these policy issues and ways of addressing them are considered in more detail in the following Sections of the Report. The recently-established Educational Disadvantage Committee and its larger consultative Forum could play a key influential role in keeping education policy issues and developments under on-going review as well as monitoring to ensure that policy changes are successfully implemented.

Section III

Statistical Profile of School Leavers, 1997-2001

Statistical Profile of School Leavers, 1997-2001

Introduction

3.1 This Section provides an update of the statistical profile of early school leavers. The key concern in 1997 was the increase in youth unemployment as a percentage of the then overall unemployment rate. The current concern is that young people with no educational qualifications are being attracted into the labour market, often on low pay and poor conditions. This Section presents an overview of changes as follows:

- Profile of Early School Leavers;
- Youth Unemployment 1997-2001;
- Employment Experiences of Young School Leavers; and
- Overview of Issues.

Profile of Early School Leavers

Extent of Early School Leaving

3.2 The 1997 Report highlighted that the number leaving school with no qualifications fell from 10 to 4 per cent of the cohort over the period 1980-1996. In 1999, the year for which most up-to-date statistics are available, almost 13,000 young people left before completion of the Leaving Certificate, of whom 2,400 or 3.2 per cent left with no formal qualifications. The 1997 Report also estimated that approximately 1,000 students do not transfer from primary to second level schooling; while data are still not available on this, the assumption is that this is still the case.

3.3 Table 3.1 shows that retention levels up to Leaving Certificate have levelled off at around 82 per cent and that there is now a consistent 3 per cent who leave without any qualifications. While the data show a significant percentage drop of nearly 20 per cent between 1996 and 1999 for those leaving without a qualification, it is important to emphasise that, in *absolute* terms, there has been a small increase. This group is even more marginalised now than in the past because of – what was termed in the 1997 Report – ‘qualifications inflation’ and there is no evidence that this has changed over time (Hannan and Doyle, 2000).

Table 3.1: Qualification Levels of School Leavers, 1996-1999 (%)

Level of Attainment	1996	1997	1998	1999
No Qualifications	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.2
Junior Certificate	15.2	16.3	15.5	15.3
Leaving Certificate	80.8	80.0	81.0	81.6

Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

- 3.4 Comparatively, our participation rates are high relative to most OECD countries (OECD, 2001b)¹, but they drop below 90 per cent before the compulsory school leaving age in countries such as Spain, Turkey and New Zealand (the compulsory school leaving age varies in OECD countries from 14 to 18 years). In Japan, Korea, Finland and Sweden, more than 93 per cent of all 17 year olds are still enrolled even though the compulsory school leaving age is below that. In fact, in Sweden, 95 per cent of all 18 year olds are still enrolled in secondary education.

Gender Differentials and Early School Leaving

- 3.5 There are significant gender differences in school participation and early school leaving. Previously, the issues centred on the needs of young women with poor educational qualifications and the 1997 Report drew particular attention to teenage mothers. Supports are still needed to enable young mothers to remain at school, particularly in relation to childcare (see NESF, 2001).
- 3.6 However, there is now increasing attention being given to the educational ‘under-achievement’ of boys and young men (see Hearn, 1998, Owens, 2000). The Katharine Howard Foundation (Cleary *et al.*, 2002, forthcoming) commissioned research on marginalisation among young men which highlighted the serious consequences of failure within the education system and how under-achievement contributed to a spiral of exclusion among the sample which led to homelessness. Research undertaken for the NCCA (Morgan, 1998) also highlighted achievement differentials between boys and girls, with more boys than girls failing to achieve 5 D grades in the Junior Certificate examination.
- 3.7 One submission the Team received stressed the differences between boys and girls as follows:

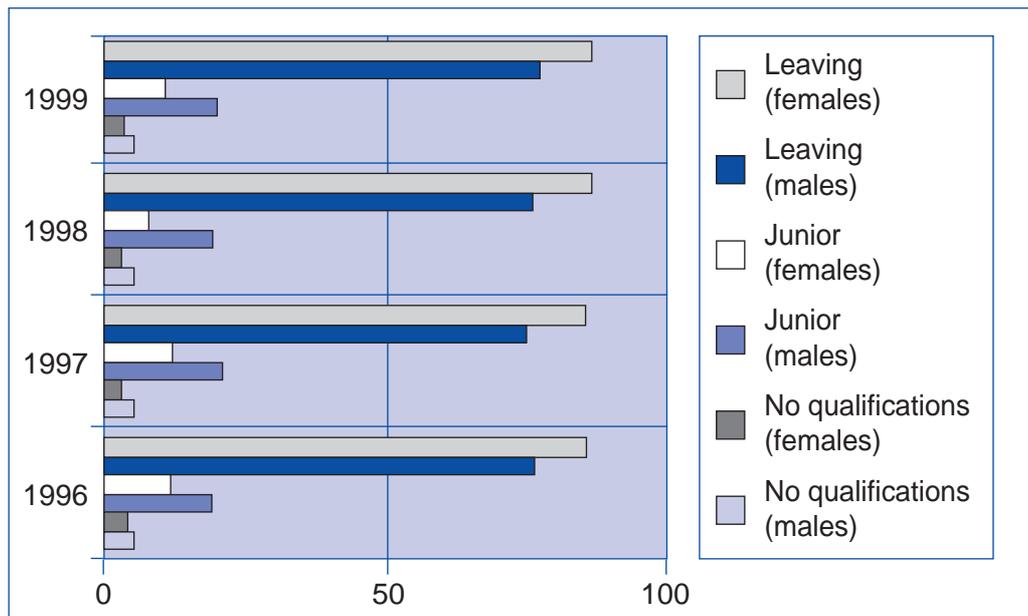
“... I have been struck by the ease with which girls acquire skills in reading and writing while boys can experience great difficulty with the visual recall necessary in learning how to read. ... In school, children of both sexes are taught in exactly the same way, with boys lagging behind girls in academic achievement. This leads to a

1. Data are not directly comparable as education systems vary greatly across countries.

slow erosion of self-esteem and ultimately contributes to the decision to drop out of the school system”.

- 3.8 Findings from the most recent School Leavers Survey (see Figure 3.1) show that more males completed Junior Certificate before leaving than females and also that more left with no qualifications than females. In 1999, 4.1 per cent of males relative to 2.5 per cent of females left school without qualifications.

Figure 3.1: Qualification Levels of School Leavers by Gender (%)



Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

- 3.9 This concern and the findings noted above highlight the need to explore the educational experiences of boys at primary level in more detail (see also Hayes and Kernan, 2001) and the Team welcomes the work being undertaken by the NCCA in this regard.

Early School Leaving and Socio-Economic Background

- 3.10 Studies have shown that a higher proportion of those leaving school early to take up jobs come from semi-skilled and unskilled manual backgrounds. For example, the percentage of students from the Unskilled Manual group, who left with no qualifications (9.1 per cent) contrasts with less than 1 per cent from the Higher Professional, Lower Professional and Salaried Employees groups. This point was raised in many of the submissions received by the Team:

“What is most disturbing in the available research is the extent to which social class of origin is so strongly related to the participation and performance of a child within the Irish education system ... [There are] substantial class differentials ... despite the overall increase in participation rates”.

3.11 Socio-economic differences are also evident among those who left school having completed the Junior Certificate. Just over 25 per cent of the Unskilled Manual group left after completing this level of education, while the figures for the Employers and Managers, Higher Professional and Lower Professional categories were 8.2, 7.7 and 5.6 per cent, respectively.

Economic Status of Early School Leavers

3.12 The most recent School Leavers Survey (McCoy and Williams, 2000) shows a substantial increase in the numbers in work, a fall in those unemployed and a relatively stable number who classified themselves as students (see Table 3.2.). It will also be noted that the numbers emigrating have reduced dramatically due to the upturn in the economy in that period.

Table 3.2: Economic Status of School Leavers 1997-1999

	1997	1998	1999
	%	%	%
Employed	41.1	47.2	48.4
Unemployed	10.5	7.6	5.9
Student	43.0	39.1	42.7
Unavailable for work	2.2	2.6	2.8
Emigrated	3.2	3.5	0.2

Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

3.13 When the level of qualifications is taken into account (see Table 3.3 below), a marked difference can be seen between those who left school with some qualifications and those who left without any.

Table 3.3: Economic Status by Qualification level 1997-1999

	No Qualifications			Junior Certificate			Leaving Certificate		
	%			%			%		
	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
Employed	35.7	44.8	49.7	64.4	68.4	73.6	29.9	33.8	35.4
Unemployed	53.4	41.6	41.4	20.7	17.8	11.7	5.6	3.7	3.4
Student	2.2	0.5	2.4	10.2	8.5	10.6	59.3	56.5	59.0

Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

3.14 Of those who completed the Leaving Certificate in 1999, almost 60 per cent were students while for those who left with no qualifications the figure is only 2.4 per

cent. Over 40 per cent of those who left with no qualifications were unemployed in 1999 compared to just 3.4 per cent of those who completed Senior Cycle. Almost 50 per cent who left with no qualifications were in employment and this has been increasing over the last number of years. Just over one-third of those with the Leaving Certificate are in employment because three-fifths of that group go on to third-level education.

- 3.15 When gender is also taken into account (see Table 3.4), of those who leave school with no qualifications, more males than females are employed, there is a higher rate of unemployment among the female group and significantly more females are students.

Table 3.4: Economic Status and Gender of School Leavers with No Qualifications 1997-1999 (%)

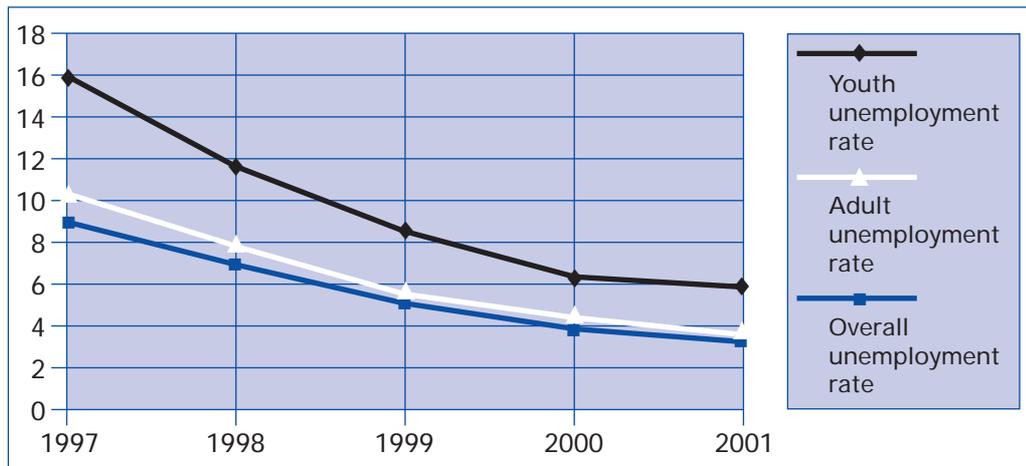
	Employment			Unemployment			Student		
	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
Males	39.9	48.1	55.8	52.3	43.0	39.2	1.9	0.8	0.7
Females	28.6	38.9	39.8	58.0	39.0	44.3	2.7	0.0	5.5

Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

Youth Unemployment, 1997-2001

- 3.16 Since the 1997 Report was published, the profile of youth unemployment, and unemployment generally has changed dramatically. From the mid-nineties onwards, Ireland had one of the highest economic growth rates in the developed world. One of the most significant achievements over the last seven years has been the fall in the unemployment rate. Figure 3.2 below shows the adult and youth unemployment picture for the period 1997-2001. The data show a continual decline in youth unemployment rates over these years, falling from 16 per cent in 1997 to around 6 per cent in 2001.

Figure 3.2: Adult and Youth Unemployment Rates (ILO), 1997-2001



Source: Central Statistics Office, Labour Force Survey 1997, Quarterly National Household Survey, 1998-2000 (Q2), 2001(Q1).

Youth Unemployment: A Comparative View

3.17 The 1997 Report compared the Irish numbers unemployed in the 15-24 years age group and the youth unemployment rates with the EU 12. In 1995, the most recent year for which data were then available, there was a drop in the Irish youth unemployment rate from 23.3 per cent to 19.1 per cent. The average rate in the EU 12, over the same period, fell from 22 per cent to 21.4 per cent.

3.18 The most recent figures from Eurostat (Table 3.5) show that the Irish rates compare very favourably with those of the European Union, but this is now expected to change with the recent economic downturn.

Table 3.5: Youth Unemployment Rates in Ireland and the EU 15

Year	1999	2000	2001
	%	%	%
Ireland	9.2	7.4	7.0
EU 15	17.8	15.6	15.3

Source: Eurostat, 2001; Central Statistics Office, 2001.

Employment Experiences of Early School Leavers

Educational Attainment and Employment

3.19 The consequences of early school leaving are striking when the distribution of school leavers across type of employment is looked at (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Sectors where School Leavers have Full-time Jobs, 1997-1999

Sector	No Qualifications		Junior Cert		Leaving Cert		Total	
	1997	1999	1997	1999	1997	1999	1997	1999
	%		%		%		%	
Industry	44.3	47.4	47.8	55.4	38.1	38.9	38.1	38.4
Banking	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.2	5.1	9.5	4.8	10.6
Personal Services	19.8	20.7	17.0	16.1	16.8	15.7	16.0	16.3
Professional Services	0.0	1.1	1.5	1.8	4.3	2.9	6.0	3.6

Source: McCoy and Williams, 2000.

3.20 As could be expected, levels of entry into higher profession jobs are higher among more qualified leavers. For example, almost 10 per cent of the Leaving Certificate group enter the Banking sector, relative to only 1 per cent of those with Junior Certificate. Of those without qualifications, none were working in the Banking sector. In the Industrial sector, those without qualifications account for 47 per cent compared with 39 per cent who have the Leaving Certificate.

3.21 Research (O'Shea and Williams, 2001) found the highest incidence in the employment of early school leavers in the Manufacturing Sector (especially Traditional Manufacturing) and the Hotel/Restaurant/Personal Services sector. The majority of these jobs were in unskilled or semi-skilled areas. Any change in the current economic climate will very likely result in this category of worker being the most likely to lose his/her position.

Earnings

3.22 Educational attainment is also strongly linked with earnings. Recent figures for school leavers (McCoy and Williams, 2000) illustrate that those who left school unqualified receive an average hourly income of €5.75, this rises to €6.07 for those who leave after Junior Certificate. Those who left school having completed the Leaving Certificate earned €6.13 per hour on average. This has implications in the longer term, as those without qualifications often find it difficult to progress to better paid positions.

Overview of Issues

3.23 There has been a levelling off in retention at Senior Cycle and there is a persistent 3 per cent of the school population for whom the education system is

failing as they leave with no qualifications. There is a strong association between gender, social class and educational attainment, with males faring badly by comparison with their female counterparts and an over-representation of the unskilled and manual groups among those leaving with no qualifications. The consequences for those involved are not favourable; more are unemployed, employed in low skilled jobs and earn less, on average, than those with higher qualifications.

- 3.24 The lack of data continues to be a difficulty as it is still not possible to determine actual rates of drop-out between primary and second level. In addition, although the Post-Primary Pupil Data-base of the Department of Education and Science can now provide information on those who have left at the end of the school year, it does not offer any details on socio-economic or family background, which would be helpful for policy purposes. We discuss the issue of data and tracking in the final Section of the Report.

Section IV

Policy Initiatives for those at-risk of Early School Leaving

Policy Initiatives for those at-risk of Early School Leaving

Introduction

4.1 The Forum's 1997 Report emphasised the importance of preventative measures and submitted priorities for action in relation to pre-school, primary and post-primary education. The Team's view is that this is still crucial in any strategy to eliminate early school leaving. This Section provides an overview of follow-up on the 1997 recommendations, developments and current provision by education level and concludes by setting out some issues in relation to the National Educational Welfare Service. The Section is divided as follows:

- Pre-school Provision;
- Primary Education;
- Post-Primary Education; and
- The National Educational Welfare Service.

Pre-school Provision

4.2 The term 'pre-school' applies to both early education and childcare but traditionally, the two operate quite separately and a number of Departments have responsibility for their provision. Box 4.1 overleaf presents, in summary, the main recommendations of the Forum's Report in this area and progress since then.

Developments and Current Provision

4.3 As noted in Section I above, the need for early intervention was an important aspect of the 1997 Report and continues to be one of the key areas for development. A longitudinal evaluation of the Rutland Street Project (Kellaghan and Greaney, 1993) linked participation in the Project with higher levels of retention at post-primary level, indicating the longer-term benefits of early education to addressing educational disadvantage. Similar long-term outcomes for early education have been recorded internationally (e.g. National Research Council, 2001). The NAPS also identified pre-school education as one of the strategies necessary to achieve the overall objective of reducing educational disadvantage. However, most measures to date, designed to tackle educational disadvantage are at primary and post-primary levels. At present, there is a low level of formal provision of early childhood education (Hayes, O'Flaherty and Kernan, 1997).

Box 4.1 PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION, 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Early Start</i> (see Annex 5) should form a model provision which would in time be made available in all areas; developing greater links with primary level schemes, targeting of the most disadvantaged children through outreach mechanisms, support and encouragement for parents, development of a standard curriculum with the flexibility to be adapted to local conditions and the maintenance of adult/child ratios at appropriately low levels. ● An evaluation of provision for Traveller children should be carried out and a national policy on Traveller pre-schooling should be developed. 	<p>2001 Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No change in provision under <i>Early Start</i>. An evaluation of the programme in 1997 showed mixed results. ● Not done.

4.4 Current levels of early education provision and changes since 1997 are outlined in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Early Childhood Education Provision, 1997 - 2001

Provision	Locations		Coverage
	1997	2001	
Early Start	40	40	1,680 places
Rutland St. Project	1	1	95 children
Traveller Pre-schools	56	52	400 children

4.5 It will be noted from the above that, with the exception of the Traveller pre-schools, where there has been a reduction in the number of locations, there has been no change in the number of children participating in pre-school education since the 1997 Report was produced.

4.6 In 1997, emphasis was placed on the need to extend the *Early Start* Programme. Since then, an evaluation of that Programme was undertaken (Ryan *et al*, 1998) and highlighted that its main benefit was in relation to school readiness but that the Programme performed poorly in relation to improving cognitive skills of the children who participated.

4.7 Since 1997, three major policy documents, published by three different Government Departments, have contributed to a shift in thinking about early

education: these are the National Childcare Strategy (1999), the National Children's Strategy (2000) and the White Paper on Early Childhood Education (1999) '*Ready to Learn*' (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). All three share the view that care and education are inextricably linked elements in a child's holistic development. The Team **recommends** that this perspective should form the basis for the development of a more comprehensive quality early childhood education programme for all disadvantaged children. This should build on the successes of international experience in countries like New Zealand, for example, where the '*Te Whariki*' early childhood curriculum is in place since 1996. Any future developments need to be supported by schools as well as the community-based pre-school sector¹. The Team also urges that the Department of Education and Science should review and improve links between pre-school settings and primary schools.

- 4.8 Recent developments in pursuance of the objectives set in the Government's White Paper, include the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education² (CECDE) which was established, on a three-year basis, to develop a quality framework for early years services. At local level, County Childcare Committees are also being established with assistance from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to co-ordinate early years provision. That Department has also established a National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee and its function is, for the most part, to oversee National Development Plan spending on increasing the supply of childcare places. There is, however, no national structure to oversee developments at county level or to provide strategic direction and the Team **recommends** that the National Childcare Management Committee, which was outlined in the National Childcare Strategy (1999), should be put in place for this purpose.
- 4.9 Poor linkage between early education and childcare services has also led to incoherence in how pre-school services are planned and anomalies have arisen as a consequence. Some of these are highlighted in Box 4.2 below.
- 4.10 Without a commitment to better co-ordination between early education and childcare these anomalies will remain. The Team **recommends** that the CECDE should provide a useful role in this area and should address the issue of quality provision as a priority.

1. Community pre-school playgroups are currently being resourced under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

2. St. Patrick's College Drumcondra and the Dublin Institute of Technology have been appointed to establish this Centre and to develop and support the provision of quality early childhood education.

Box 4.2

ANOMALIES IN EARLY EDUCATION/PRE-SCHOOL CHILDCARE PROVISION

- Pre-school Services Regulations were introduced in 1997 covering services for children aged 0-6 years. However, Junior and Senior Infant classes are exempt.
- After-school care is funded and provided by a range of Government Departments (including Education and Science, Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Health and Children) but there is no agreed standard or curriculum.
- Children of the same age and developmental stage can be in very different settings, depending on whether they are at school or in childcare.

Source: Consultations by the Project Team.

4.11 The Team also draws attention to the issue of staffing in early education facilities. The Report of the National Forum for Early Childhood Education (1998) noted that current arrangements for staffing are inadequate to meet the needs of children attending pre-schools. In the submissions made to the Team, staff training was highlighted as one of the key requisites for the development of quality early childhood care and education:

“training for providers needs to be expanded rapidly in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability. Furthermore, progression of training needs to be put in place”.

4.12 Greater attention also needs to be given to opportunities for joint training of teachers and childcare workers³. The National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is at present examining training needs. However, the Team **recommends** that the National Qualifications Authority (NQAI) in conjunction with the new CECDE should undertake this task as part of the quality framework mentioned above, so that early years training is incorporated into a wider national qualifications framework.

4.13 With regard to Traveller pre-school education, the Monitoring Committee of the Task Force on the Travelling Community (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2000) expressed concern at the lack of progress in the development of an integrated pre-school service. The Team **recommends** that this should be one of the functions of the new CECDE so that a national policy on Traveller pre-schooling, which was recommended by the Forum in 1997, can become a reality. For this purpose, Traveller interests need to be represented in the Centre’s work.

3. This is particularly important in the Irish context, given that the entry to formal primary schooling (usually at 4 years) is much earlier than in most other European countries. As a consequence, most early education takes place in a school setting.

Primary Education

Developments and Current Provision

4.14 Follow up on the recommendations in the Forum's 1997 Report in relation to primary schooling is set out in Box 4.3 below. Main achievements include reductions in the pupil/teacher ratios (PTRs) in Disadvantaged Areas and the establishment of a psychological service, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). We discuss both of these developments under the sub-heading '*Issues relevant to both Primary and Post-Primary Education*' below.

Box 4.3	
PRIMARY SCHOOLING 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reduction in the pupil/teacher ratio to 15:1 in primary schools serving Disadvantaged Areas. ● Continuous monitoring and analysis of ways to tackle educational disadvantage, particularly in rural areas. ● Provision for alleviating the direct costs of schooling for pupils from disadvantaged families. ● Devising plans to address the special needs of Traveller children with clear objectives and targets for their achievement. ● Initial teacher training and in-service training to include perspective of youth workers and parents. ● Early assessment of children with reading and numeracy difficulties, suitable standardised tests for Ireland should be produced and disseminated. ● Development and resourcing of the Psychological Service at primary and second level. ● Development and resourcing the role of sport in education. 	<p>2001 Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes it is working in Breaking the Cycle schools (Junior classes). ● Not done. ● Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowances increased. ● No but School Development Planning Initiative states that school plans should incorporate this. ● Not done. ● Not done. ● Yes. NEPS established in 1999. ● Primary School Sports Initiative launched in 2002.

4.15 Since 1997 a range of programmes have been enhanced or initiated by the Department of Education and Science to address educational disadvantage at primary level and to improve opportunities for children likely to be at-risk of early school leaving (see Annex 5). The *Home School Community Liaison Scheme*

(HSCL) in particular provides a valuable link between the home and the school which is crucial in addressing educational needs. The *8-15 Early School Leavers' Initiative* (Annex 5) has also provided an opportunity to develop both in-school and out-of-school supports for young people and co-operation between statutory and voluntary providers.

- 4.16 While such programmes are attractive to schools as they provide additional resources, the lack of effective co-ordination between programmes has, however, resulted in greater administrative and other difficulties at the school level. For example, each programme requires the allocation of a teacher's time to co-ordinate the work, often without reference to other initiatives within the school. In addition, schools often require capital funding to support some of these programmes. The recent rationalisation and amalgamation of the *8-15 Year Olds Early School Leavers' Initiative* with the *Stay in School Retention Initiative* into the new *School Completion Programme* is a welcome development in this respect but greater levels of co-ordination are still needed between programmes (see also Section VI).
- 4.17 As noted in Section II, a policy shift from schools-based interventions to a focus on the individual at-risk student has taken place through the introduction of *Giving Children an Even Break* (Department of Education and Science, 2001a), the New Programme for pupils in Primary Schools, but it is still too early to gauge its effect. Our consultations, however, highlighted a high level of dissatisfaction with the 'dilution of resources' across a greater number of schools. Concerns were also raised about the actual level of resources provided. The Team agrees on the need to target individual disadvantage but its key concern is that resources should not be spread so thinly as to be ineffective.

Curriculum Change

- 4.18 Since 1997, curriculum changes have been introduced by way of the new *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), which will be phased in over a three to five-year period. The revised Curriculum seeks to build on the key principles of the 1971 Curriculum including the child-centred philosophy and improved structure, content and approach. It emphasises 13 elements including success in learning, inclusiveness, assessment and individuality (NCCA, 1999b). While it is still too early to assess its impact, the enhanced focus on the individual child and his/her learning capacities will be a key issue in the prevention of early school leaving. Extensive in-service training for teachers on the Curriculum has also provided an opportunity to review teaching practice and methodologies.

Issues Relevant to both Primary and Post-Primary Education

Pupil/Teacher Ratios

- 4.19 Much debate has taken place internationally on the effectiveness of reducing

Pupil/Teacher Ratios (PTRs) (e.g. Finn *et al.*, 2001; Iacovou, 2001). The research suggests that after aged 8, lowering PTRs makes no difference to academic performance. While the Team accepts this argument in relation to academic achievement, its view is that in Disadvantaged Areas, lower class size can benefit weaker students through increased socialisation and one-to-one support and should be continued. It **recommends**, in line with the research on this subject (e.g. Ehrenberg *et al.*, 2001), that any reduction in PTRs should be combined with the development of innovative approaches for teachers to encourage them to adapt their teaching styles to a smaller group. The Team also **recommends** that a distinction should be made between class size and PTR as resource teachers are often counted when determining PTRs when, in fact, these teachers should be provided on an ex-quota basis.

- 4.20 At present, where *Breaking the Cycle* is located, a PTR of 15: 1 is now the norm in the Junior Classes. However, in *Giving Children an Even Break*, a PTR of 20: 1 is proposed for Junior classes and 29: 1 in Senior classes. However, the Project Team **recommends** that a class size of 15: 1 should be implemented in all classes in Designated Disadvantaged Schools at both primary and post-primary level and that teachers should be encouraged to adapt their teaching methodologies to reflect the smaller class size.

National Educational Psychological Service

- 4.21 The Team also welcomes the establishment of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). However, the Service presently has a difficulty in recruiting staff because there is an insufficient number of graduates qualifying in educational psychology to meet current needs. As a result, assessment and regular reviews are not always available and schools and community groups sometimes have to engage private consultants, often at very high cost. To address the staffing shortage in the NEPS, more educational psychologists are needed and the Team **recommends** that more third-level training places should be made available. In the interim, it **recommends** that psychologists in private practice should be accessible to schools at a reduced cost, which would be assisted financially by the Department of Education and Science. This would enable the Service to meet the target set in the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* that all schools will have access to its services by the end of 2004.
- 4.22 When the NEPS was established in 1999, it was given a role in relation to preventative education. However, its work to-date has mainly focused on assessment, which was to make up only one-third of its workload. The Team's **recommendation** is that the NEPS should play an important role in the development of guidelines for preventative programmes, particularly to address the needs of those groups who are currently not benefiting fully from education, i.e. lower socio-economic groups and boys who are under-achieving (see also Section III).

Funding Allocations

4.23 Despite their fundamental importance and pivotal role for later on, primary and post-primary education continue to be under-funded (see Table 4.2) compared with the third-level sector. Primary schools play the biggest role in tackling educational disadvantage, yet the figures show that, on a *per capita* basis, expenditure at third-level is still over twice that at primary-level. Commentators (e.g. McCormack and Archer, 1998) highlight that the cost to the State of educating a third-level student is more than double that of educating an early school leaver.

Table 4.2: Government Per Capita Spending on Education, 1995-1999

	Level of Education		
	Primary €	Post Primary €	Tertiary €
1995	1,809	2,825	4,762
1999	2,413 (1,093m)	3,682 (1,015m)	5,079 (840m)

Source: NESF, 1997, Archer, 2000.
 Figures in brackets represent total allocations.

4.24 The Team strongly **recommends** that such a disproportionate imbalance should be reviewed with a view to devoting relatively more resources at post-primary but more particularly, at primary level, so that more students at risk can benefit and that the quality of provision can be further enhanced. This is all the more opportune given the recent decline in numbers who are going on to third-level education.

Assessment Needs and Learning Supports

4.25 Since 1997, changes have been implemented in the Department’s Learning Support Service, previously the Remedial Service. With effect from September 1999, the Learning Support Teacher (Remedial) Service has been extended to all primary and second-level schools with a PTR of 10: 1 or above. Schools with lower PTRs can also apply for a Learning Support teacher where they can demonstrate the need. The number of Learning Support (remedial) teachers in the primary system has increased from 1,242 in 1997 to 1,485 at present.

4.26 Notwithstanding these improvements, students with learning difficulties and special education needs may go through the primary school system undetected, due to inadequate assessment as the Service is under-resourced. These students are at a very high risk of dropping out and behavioural difficulties often emerge which compound the problems faced.

- 4.27 When learning needs are not sufficiently addressed at primary level, they result in greater difficulties, particularly in the transfer and follow-through to second level. One study that highlighted the difficulties for students with learning support needs is summarised in Box 4.4.

Box 4.4

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND SPECIAL CLASSES

Three primary schools in north Dublin were asked to examine their roll books and list the children who participated in special classes at primary level and who had transferred to post-primary level during the period 1995-2000. The total number who participated over the five years was 67.

The secondary schools that these children transferred to were then asked to examine their roll books and identify who was still at school. Out of 67, 54 children transferred, 7 left the area and 6 failed to transfer. As of March 2000 when the survey was undertaken, 26 were still in school. None of the group who transferred completed the Junior Certificate. Only 4 of the 12 who transferred in 1997 were attending. The average time spent at second level by those who left was 1 year 8 months.

Source: Northside Partnership, 2000.

- 4.28 These findings illustrate the importance of special needs assessment, better resourced learning support and more effective follow-through in learning support from primary to second level. The Team, therefore, **recommends** that the number of Learning Support teachers should continue to increase and that their allocation should be directed towards areas of greatest need rather than on the basis of enrolments (as was also recommended in the Report of the Expert Group on the Allocation of Teachers to Second-Level Schools, 2001). To facilitate this, the number of training places for learning support should be increased. The Team also **recommends** that learning supports should move with the individual student from primary to post-primary school and that communication between both levels should be improved. Formalised links should be developed between primary and post-primary Learning Support teachers. To enhance the work at schools level, the current range of learning support methodologies should be examined⁴ with a view to identifying good practice and funding should be provided for equipment and resources. In particular, the learning needs of boys should be addressed, in conjunction with the NEPS (see above).

Transfer from Primary to Second-Level

- 4.29 Transition points across the education system were highlighted in the 1997

4. Some work on this has already been undertaken by the Education Research Centre (Shiel, Morgan and Larney, 1998).

Report. Those from primary to second level were particularly identified as a ‘traumatic experience for children’. Transfer – as it is now termed – continues to represent a key concern with regard to early school leaving. The Team is concerned that the attrition from primary to second level continues unabated since 1997, when it was estimated that approximately 1,000 students per year failed to transfer.

4.30 The Team welcomes the work that the NCCA is doing in this area and **recommends** that its findings be drawn on in the design of innovative Transfer Programmes. A recent publication by the NCCA in relation to the Junior Cycle Review (NCCA, 2002) sets out the issues to be addressed in the context of School Development Planning; key issues include curriculum overload and overlap, curriculum planning and transfer from primary school, all of which affect the student as he/she moves from one level of education to the other. In this regard, the Team considers that greater emphasis should be given to the *Social, Personal and Health Education* (SPHE) and the *Civic, Social and Political Education* (CSPE) Programmes, as these provide a grounding in issues relating to relationships, bullying, drug and alcohol abuse. The Team **recommends** that these should be provided in **all** schools, at both primary and post-primary level and that staff should be assigned to ensure that it happens. This is all the more important with the changes in the Primary Curriculum which may make it difficult for at-risk students to move from a child-centred to a subject-driven approach. Finally, the Team urges that more formalised links should be developed between both primary and post-primary schools.

4.31 The Team considers that for Transfer Programmes, to be successful, more innovative responses are required on the part of the school. What is needed is a re-focusing of schools’ institutional make-up so that their culture and ethos become much more student-friendly. This means that school procedures such as time allocation, curriculum and discipline codes need to be reviewed for their appropriateness to new entrants (see also Section VI). Consideration should also be given, as part of any initiatives designed to assist with transfer, to the introduction of an optional additional ‘transition’ year in First Year in which literacy, numeracy and interpersonal skills of students, including self-esteem and confidence would be developed (see also below).

Diversity and Interculturalism

4.32 The lack of data on the participation by ethnic minorities in education makes it difficult to plan and evaluate policies. There are an estimated 5,000 primary-age Traveller children, of whom 4,560 attend school (4,300 in ordinary classes and 260 in special classes). At second-level, there are 1,165 Traveller children attending school. Primary schools, in some areas in particular, have seen dramatic changes in their ethnic profile in recent years as a result of increased

numbers of asylum seekers and refugees. For example, the National Consultative Committee on Interculturalism and Racism (2000) estimates that one-fifth of the student population of one school in Tallaght is drawn from minority ethnic groups.

- 4.33 Some of the issues facing both Travellers and ethnic minorities in mainstream education include discrimination and segregation. This is further compounded by their relatively low socio-economic status. More emphasis is needed on intercultural and anti-racism approaches to the curriculum. Arising from its consultations, and while welcoming the allocation of additional teaching posts at both primary and second levels, the Team stresses the need to develop guidelines for School Plans on how best to integrate minority groups, devise appropriate teaching plans and introduce intercultural texts that reflect a range of cultures and perspectives.
- 4.34 Since 1997, when interculturalism was not a particular feature of second level schooling, a number of changes have taken place. An Advisory Committee on Traveller Education (ACTE) was established in 1998 and a national co-ordinator for Traveller education was appointed. This has helped to improve the delivery of services. The Team welcomes the availability of the Visiting Teacher Service (see Annex 5) at second-level (the number of posts in the Service is now 40) but the number needs to be monitored as the proportion of Travellers in second-level schools increases.
- 4.35 A recent Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) Seminar on 'Promoting Inclusion for Travellers in Schools' highlighted the need to address issues such as Traveller mobility, school attendance, teaching methodology and involvement of Traveller parents in their children's education. The Report of the Monitoring Committee on the Implementation of the Task Force on Travellers (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2000) also highlighted gaps in the support framework which include special arrangements to assist Travellers to make the transfer from primary to post-primary school. The Team **recommends** that these arrangements should be put in place and considered in the context of Transfer Programmes discussed above.
- 4.36 For other ethnic minorities, no strategy is in place at present to deal with intercultural issues at second-level. For these groups, there is no access to free third-level education which may well have a bearing on retention rates at second-level. While foreign nationals receive language and resource teacher supports (mostly with regard to language issues) these supports are not integrated. The work underway in the NCCA on interculturalism should considerably benefit the future direction of policy and practice in this area.

Post-Primary Education

4.37 Much of the emphasis in the 1997 Report was in relation to curricular changes which are outlined in Box 4.5 below.

Box 4.5	
POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At Junior Certificate level, assessment systems should reflect the overall objectives of the curriculum. ● Schools must have the necessary resources to offer the new Vocational Leaving Certificate programmes; these should have equal status with the standard Leaving Certificate programme. ● Options at both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate level should be gender-proofed to provide equal opportunities and equality of outcomes for both male and female pupils. ● The abolition of examination fees for disadvantaged families. ● Any scheme for disadvantaged schools should be weighted initially in favour of the Junior Cycle. ● The Department of Education should carry out an evaluation of the impact of the abolition of third level fees on take-up from Disadvantaged Areas and 500 places should be allocated for students from these Areas. 	<p>2001 Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. In <i>Junior Certificate School Programme</i>. ● Not available in all schools. ● Inequality of outcomes still exists. ● Yes, in 1998. ● In part only. ● Not done.

Developments and Current Provision

4.38 As at primary level, a range of programmes has been put in place to address educational disadvantage (see Annex 5). As highlighted earlier, linkages are also needed between programmes at this level. The most recent initiative, the *School Completion Programme* offers potential for a more concerted effort as it provides flexibility for schools to develop more effective strategies, like tracking, out-of-school support and outreach, family support, mentoring, staff development and parental involvement. In this regard, the Team wishes to emphasise that the success of school-based preventative programmes will also be influenced by their ability to link successfully with non-formal providers (see Section V).

4.39 At post-primary level, many young people experience alienation from school. Much of the research with early school leavers (Boldt, 1997; Leonard, 1998;

Boldt, 2000) focuses on the lack of 'respect' which young people say they experience at this level. Box 4.6 below presents some of the comments made by a group of early school leavers to the Team during the course of its work.

Box 4.6

COMMENTS BY EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS ON REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

The main points raised by early school leavers were:

- The importance of the relationship with the teacher and the feeling that teachers didn't really want them to be in their classes.
- Many felt they made the decision to leave before they were thrown out.
- Other schools in the area knew their 'track record' and wouldn't take them.
- The perception that they couldn't ask for help and weren't treated with 'respect' by the teachers.
- Class size of 30 plus pupils meant that they couldn't get specific help if they needed it.
- Some had negative experiences of streaming on the basis of entrance exams – some were put in with '*a crowd of messers*' and knew they would never learn anything or were in the higher streams and were not able to keep up.
- Some felt that the previous troublesome behaviour of older brothers/sisters in the school militated against them being treated fairly.
- Most felt that nine subjects were too many to deal with.
- Even in First Year, students felt exam pressure.

Source: Consultations by the Project Team.

4.40 These comments highlight in particular the role that teachers can play in improving retention (see Section VI) and also the need for smaller classes at second level (see above).

4.41 Complementary to more effective Transfer Programmes, is the need to enhance the self-esteem and self-worth of young people (especially young males) in First Year of post-primary school. One pilot programme which was specifically designed to improve self-esteem and confidence among post-primary pupils with a view to preventing early school leaving is presented in summary in Box 4.7.

Box 4.7

PATHWAYS THROUGH EDUCATION

This project was designed and managed by the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Dublin Schools Business Partnership and funded under EU Youthstart. The main aim was to develop innovative group psychological programmes which could be delivered to First Year post-primary students in order to raise their self-esteem, motivation and confidence with the ultimate objective of preventing early school leaving. In addition, the project worked with teachers and parents and attempted to impact on school systems. Peer mentoring also formed part of the work of the project.

The project was targeted at three inner-city schools in Dublin and ran from 1998 to 2000. A team of two educational psychologists and one psychotherapist delivered a personal development programme, combined with psychological supports for all First Year students in the three schools. The benefits of the programme included the focus at classroom level, on self-esteem, confidence and motivation. The programme has been carried on through the *Stay in School Retention Initiative* budget but has not been mainstreamed. The main outcomes of the project were improved levels of self-esteem among First Year students and improved pupil and teacher support structures within schools.

Source: Centre for Social and Educational Research, 2000.

- 4.42 The Team considers that guidance and counselling are also crucial from an early stage at second level. One of the submissions highlighted the valuable role that counselling can play for those at risk of early school leaving:

“Families and schools need access to an appropriate adolescent service which is locally-based and which covers the 12-18 age group. Often due to waiting lists and the age cut off of 16 years (for Child Guidance Services), a service is not available”.

More investment is needed in this type of service as a preventative measure for those at risk of early school leaving.

Curriculum and Assessment

- 4.43 Potential early school leavers are unlikely to be motivated by a certification system based solely on terminal assessment (NCCA, 1999c). The Team **recommends** that further consideration should, therefore, be given to more flexible methods of teaching and assessment. This would result ultimately in a welcome shift away from examination to more continuous assessment. This approach is partly reflected in the *Junior Certificate School Programme* (JCSP), introduced in 1996 and now operational in 139 schools. This involves a more flexible approach and is particularly targeted at students who are at risk of leaving school early. Students receive both State certification for subjects taken in the Junior Certificate examination and a school-assessment student profile.

- 4.44 Currently all schools in the *School Completion Programme* have access to this Programme. It is difficult, however, for smaller schools to offer *JCSP* because a quota of 25 students is required. Particular attention should be given to these smaller schools, especially those in rural areas where flexibility may be needed in delivering the Programme. A detailed review of the *JCSP* is being undertaken by the NCCA which will, when completed later this year, inform future development of the Programme.
- 4.45 Other policy initiatives which have been designed, in part, to raise retention rates include the *Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)* which operates in 228 schools and the *Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)* which is available in 484 schools. The *LCA* is a modular programme for Senior Cycle students whose needs/aptitudes are not adequately catered for in the 'traditional' Leaving Certificate. From the perspective of most disadvantaged students, the *LCA* is designed specifically to cater for the diversity of participants' needs and it is discussed in more detail below.
- 4.46 While the experience of *LCA* has been positive to date, in its consultations the Team noted that information about the Programme is limited: for example, there is no profile of *LCA* students available nor systematic information about how schools deliver the Programme. In addition, because *LCA* modules do not count as points for university, young people who take this route exclude themselves from direct entry to third-level education (except through a Post-Leaving Certificate course, but this allows entry to Institutes of Technology only). The main problem, therefore, is that access to third-level education is limited. As working class students are predominantly represented in the *LCA*, this further compounds the difficulties they already face in going on to third-level. The Team welcomes the Millennium Fund initiatives which are supported by the Area Partnerships as a means of improving access to third-level for those from Disadvantaged Areas.
- 4.47 In the Team's consultations, concern was raised about the potential development of a two-tiered or 'tracked' system within the Senior Cycle where participation in alternative programmes is a perceived admission of an inability to cope with the 'established' Leaving Certificate. The perception of the *LCA* programme by employers also needs to be tested, as in the labour market up to recently there was no difficulty in recruitment by employers from *LCA* classes but this may change with the economic downturn. In the short term, the Team considers that a detailed independent evaluation of *LCA* is needed to:
- assess the impact of the Programme on retention rates to Senior Cycle in Disadvantaged Areas;
 - examine progression routes to further education and training; and
 - explore parental and employer attitudes to the qualifications received.

- 4.48 An internal evaluation of the *LCA* was undertaken by the Inspectorate within the Department of Education and Science (Department of Education and Science, 2000b). This evaluation concluded that the Programme was having a positive impact on students and that it should continue to be developed and refined in schools. The Team is strongly of the view that the independent evaluation proposed above should also be undertaken to inform future developments.
- 4.49 In the longer term, consideration needs to be given to more radical approaches to assessment and certification. In this context, the Team considers that the flexibility which is currently applied in the *JCSP* should now also be applied at Senior Cycle. This would allow for a greater degree of choice on the part of the individual student on his/her learning path and for the recognition of non-academic achievements. The Team **recommends** that each student should be entitled to a 'Certificate of Achievement' which would be awarded on exit from the post-primary system, regardless of the point at which someone leaves. This Certificate would be a further advance on the present School Report which is to be enhanced under provisions in the Education Act, 1998. It would be awarded on the basis of time attended and would list achievements in a range of academic and non-academic areas, as well as identify core competencies. Non-academic achievements that could be assessed might include attendance, punctuality and interpersonal skills, all of which would be of benefit in employment.

A Multiple Intelligences Approach

- 4.50 Linked to the above broadening out of assessment is the parallel need for formal recognition of non-academic skills that the individual student can acquire but which are not equated with intelligence. The Team explored the application of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory to teaching as one possible approach to this. Annex 6 sets out the features of the Multiple Intelligences theory and Box 4.8 below presents a summary of the work undertaken in this area at University College Cork.
- 4.51 The Team **recommends** that this approach needs to be tested further with a view to incorporating the learning into mainstream education, particularly for those at risk of early school leaving. A small number of schools from the *School Completion Programme* should be selected to participate in a pilot project which would undertake this.

Box 4.8

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES (MI) CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PROJECT (UCC)

This research project was established to examine the application of the theory of MI to Curriculum and Assessment with particular reference to:

- Civic, Social and Political Education in second-level schools,
- The primary/second level transition stage,
- Transition Year in second-level.

The project provided training courses for teachers on the features of the MI approach, the design of materials/resource packs for teachers and information seminars. Approaches were developed to activate different intelligences including visual/spatial, inter-personal and musical.

The significance of the MI approach is that it allows students to develop and demonstrate their abilities in a variety of ways and that it broadens assessment beyond tests of logical/mathematical and linguistic ability. The success of the approach is that it was very supportive and allowed for affirmation of success on the part of the individual student on the basis of his/her own skills – learning became more accessible. It also led teachers to challenge their assumptions in relation to learning.

Source: Hyland, 2000.

The National Educational Welfare Service

4.52 The issue of truancy featured strongly in the 1997 Report and the recommendations centred on the need for tracking drop-outs as well as sharing information between community and youth organisations. An advocacy role was also recommended for the proposed Educational Welfare Officers who are soon to be appointed. Despite an on-going need for tracking (see Section VI), this has not yet been implemented. The Team welcomes the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and the development of an Educational Welfare Service (EWS) through which the Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) will be deployed. Annex 7 presents the Project Team's views on the key tasks that the Service might address when in place. In Box 4.9 below the Team also highlights issues which should be taken into account when the EWOs are appointed.

Box 4.9

ESTABLISHING THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICE (EWS)

In the establishment of the EWS the following should be considered:

- EWOs should be drawn from a broad base of disciplines including youth work, residential care work, social work and education and should apply a range of methodologies to their work.
- The EWS should liaise at a local level with the range of agencies that have a role with young people.
- Sufficient numbers need to be appointed (on the basis that there are 4,200 schools) and flexibility applied to deployment of officers in areas of dispersed population as well as in major urban areas.
- Comprehensive induction and on-going training and support is required for the officers on educational disadvantage and school retention issues.
- The NEWB should commission research on early school leaving and on education participation of children and young people.
- A range of resources should be at the disposal of the EWOs, including a panel of tutors for those out of school, access to *Youthreach* and to alternative placements. In addition, greater emphasis will need to be given to resources for assessment.
- A range of Government Departments (as specified in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000) should be appointed at an early stage and should proactively engage with the EWS to remove blockages that may arise at local level.

4.53 The Team recognises that the role to be played by the Educational Welfare Service, when established, will be central to addressing early school leaving. It **recommends**, therefore, that the EWOs should be given a strong leadership role at local level in relation to co-ordination of existing programmes and in providing valuable links between schools in relation to issues such as transfer from primary to second-level.

Section V

Non-Formal and Labour Market Provision for Early School Leavers

Non-Formal and Labour Market Provision for Early School Leavers

Introduction

5.1 In this Section, we examine measures in the non-formal sector that are, for the most part, delivered at local community level and which provide services to early school leavers as well as supporting those at risk of early school leaving¹. Approaches which incorporate formal and non-formal sectors working together are also considered. The 1997 Report and its recommendations are examined, current provision is presented and priorities for further action are identified. The Section is divided into four sub-Sections:

- Overview of Non-Formal Provision;
- Youthreach;
- Second-Chance Education; and
- Young People and the Labour Market.

Overview of Non-Formal Provision

5.2 Categorising the range of measures provided in a non-formal context is difficult given that of their nature, projects tend to be locally-led, needs-driven and operate at the level of the local community or school catchment area. Fleming and Murphy (2000) in their analysis of measures designed to prevent early school leaving refer to the complexities of provision in the non-formal sector:

“This group of interventions covers a large number of projects, networks and activities. It operates as a catchall phrase for measures that do not directly operate from the Department of Education and Science and do not have a national mandate. Some receive their funding from the Department or are provided with some other resource by the State. Other groups parcel a number of measures under the one heading”.

5.3 In recent years a plethora of initiatives has been put in place in the local context, funded by various Government Departments and agencies, as well as through the

1. The EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2001) draws a distinction between formal, informal and non-formal learning. We use the term ‘non-formal’ to refer to the range of initiatives that are supported alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and which may be provided in the workplace or through non-governmental organisations and groups.

community and voluntary sector. In urban areas, in particular, the Young People’s Facilities and Services Fund through the Local Drugs Task Forces has invested in a whole range of locally-based projects. (Murphy (2000) presents, in diagrammatic form, a useful overview of Government-funded initiatives on disadvantage for children/young people). For the purposes of this Report, the Team categorises non-formal provision (see Figure 5.1) in line with the systems framework identified in Section I. This is not comprehensive but it gives an idea at least of the extent and breadth of provision.

Figure 5.1

Non-Formal Provision for Early School Leavers

Community-Based

Individual	School	Family	Further Education/Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breakfast clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After school clubs / home-work clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parenting programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills development and training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alternative schools e.g St. Vincent’s Trust Special Education Programme² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barnardos Family Support Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LINE Projects³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transfer programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health Board funded programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local Employment Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summer projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literacy and numeracy programmes 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Projects for socially excluded groups e.g. lone parents, Travellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School-community links programmes 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drugs Task Force Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth Encounter 		

Source: Forum Secretariat

2. The St. Vincent’s Trust Special Education Project (SEP) is a unique example of a six-year alternative programme – the only other such programmes are the Youth Encounter Projects which were set up in 1977.

3. Department of Education and Science funded projects bringing together the community, State Agencies and relevant Government Departments to assist young people aged 8-18 years who have dropped out of the system.

- 5.4 While investment in the non-formal sector is to be welcomed, the main problem is that so many initiatives have been developed with similar target groups in mind and little attempt made to co-ordinate or integrate with existing provision. One submission described the non-formal sector as follows:

“there are dozens [of] programmes around the country, very often working in isolation. Many do wonderful work, but some do not. There are virtually no supports for them, or monitoring of their work or accountability. Most feel aggrieved about the lack of support, and rightly. But many also stoutly resist being brought into any external framework”.

This highlights the need for greater levels of accountability as well as the development of quality assurance within the non-formal sector.

Youth Work Provision

- 5.5 Much of the work in the non-formal sector in relation to early school leaving is organised through the youth work sector which, *inter alia*, assists and enhances the personal and social development of young people. Over 50 youth organisations operate here with a combined membership of over 500,000 young people and serve 250,000 others. Over 40,000 voluntary adult youth leaders are involved as the main educators, with support from approximately 1,000 full-time staff. In addition, there is a network of Youth Information Centres around the country, providing information to young people on youth-related topics.
- 5.6 Each organisation has its own philosophy, programme and structures, but all have the following common characteristics:
- An active model of learning – ‘learning by doing’;
 - Involvement on a voluntary basis;
 - Beneficial and enjoyable experiences;
 - A partnership approach between youth leaders and young people;
 - A community context;
 - A recognition of inequalities in the lives of young people; and
 - Active participation of young people in the processes of decision-making, planning, organisation and evaluation.
- 5.7 In addition to the work of youth organisations, there is a growing number of independently managed, community-based youth projects. These projects are not affiliated to national youth organisations and are, in the main, funded by Government Departments or agencies other than the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education and Science. Some of these are covered in Figure 5.1 above.

5.8 The work of the youth sector has become more complex and demanding with Ireland's rapidly changing socio-economic environment. Those consulted suggested that there is now a substantial core of young people who are alienated from statutory and voluntary services. For example, the EU-funded Recite II Edge Cities education initiative in Blanchardstown was set up to specifically target early school leavers who were not accessing existing programmes operating in the area. This initiative has identified what it considers a new client group which represents a 'pre-group' i.e. young people who need intensive support prior to being integrated into a group setting. Some of the challenges facing staff who work with these individuals are presented in Box 5.1. These challenges require one-to-one interventions over an extended period of time.

Box 5.1

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN YOUTH WORK

- Sustaining participation and attendance;
- Maintaining an inter-agency approach to addressing the needs of the individual;
- Building up the self-confidence of the individual;
- Dealing with external influences such as family / peer pressure, drugs, etc. which impact on the life situation of the individual;
- Building individuals skills in order to be able to participate at group level;
- Identifying progressional routes for the participants; and
- Ensuring that other relevant supports i.e. family support, allowances etc, are available for the individual.

Source: Local consultations by the Project Team.

5.9 The youth work sector offers significant potential and this was acknowledged in the 1997 Report as well as in the literature on early school leaving (see, for example, Rourke, 1999; Boldt and Devine, 1998). More consideration has now been given by this sector to working with schools to develop a more co-ordinated response. The Team's view is that all existing community-based youth programmes for early school leavers should be linked in effectively with schools and programmes like *Youthreach* to ensure progression and access to systems of accreditation. However, a number of difficulties persist. These include:

- The complementarity between formal and non-formal education has not been well documented;
- Good practice in the non-formal sector varies from project to project;
- Because of the range of initiatives, in some areas, duplication and overlap can result while in others there may belittle provision of services; and

- Much of the work is developed on a pilot basis and is never mainstreamed.
- 5.10 The Team considers that a rationalisation of non-formal provision for young people is needed and, for this purpose, it **recommends** that a national strategy for the non-formal sector's role in relation to early school leaving should be developed. As a first step, a comprehensive audit of provision should be undertaken on preventative measures for young people. The Team also urges that the National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC), mentioned in Section II, should seek to ensure co-ordination of the planning and delivery of youth work services by the different Government Departments and between the relevant statutory agencies/Departments and the voluntary youth work providers. The Team also urges that the Youth Work Act, 2001 should be implemented as soon as possible and that the Local Committees proposed in the Act should be set up as a matter of priority to encourage and promote coordination and partnership between the youth sector and statutory agencies at local level in issues relating to early school leaving.
- 5.11 Once these Youth Work Committees are established, they should prepare their Local Plans so as to bring together the main service providers. The Team **recommends** that these Local Plans should have a strand that deals specifically with early school leavers, with a particular focus on developing partnerships between the formal and non-formal sectors.

Youthreach

- 5.12 Mainstream provision for early school leavers in a non-formal context centres on the *Youthreach* Programme which caters for young people aged 15-20 years who have left school early. This Programme is delivered at 150 workshops and centres around the country in the following four settings:
- VEC *Youthreach* Centres;
 - FÁS Community Training Workshops (CTWs);
 - Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) and
 - Justice Workshops for young offenders.
- 5.13 There is variation in the approaches taken in each setting and providers are encouraged to reflect both the local environment and the composition of their participant group.
- 5.14 The Programme is targeted, in large part, towards those early school leavers with no qualifications; 70 per cent of participants have no qualifications and the balance has Junior Certificate only. Within *Youthreach*, a number of Centres target specific groups e.g. lone parents. Much of the focus of the 1997 Report in

relation to ‘curative’ interventions for those who left school centred on this Programme. Its main recommendations in relation to *Youthreach* and developments since then are presented in Box 5.3 below.

Box 5.3	
YOUTHREACH 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase participants in Youthreach (1,000 places) by 1998 and FÁS mainstream training (100 places) and greater levels of flexibility in the delivery of the programme; ● Difficulties with accommodation should be addressed; ● Cluster health, counselling and guidance around the programme; ● Provision of certification, childcare and progression options. 	<p>2001 Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. Places increased and flexibility introduced. ● Not done in VEC Centres; refurbishment carried out in CTWs. ● Not done. ● NCVA Certification/FÁS Integrated Assessment System (IAS) introduced in 1997/1999 and childcare introduced in 1998. Progression is still a difficulty.

Developments and Current Provision

5.15 *Youthreach* was expanded – in line with the Forum’s recommendations and following the Mid-Term Review of EU Structural Funds – from 3,975 places in 1997 to 4,975 in 1998. A further 725 places were redeployed to Youthreach progression options within the FÁS system. Current take-up of *Youthreach* places is 6,043 (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Take-up of Places on Youthreach

Education		FÁS		Total
Youthreach	2,183	Early School Leavers	1,865	4,048
Travellers	661	Bridging Measures	1,334	1,995
Total	2,844	Total	3,199	6,043

Source: Youthreach, 2000.

5.16 While workshops generally do not have a difficulty in relation to numbers, the VEC Centres often do because the quota of places is full. To address this, the Team urges that consideration should now be given to having a variable number of places in Centres to respond to changing demands from year to year.

- 5.17 As noted in Box 5.3 above, certification was also introduced – FÁS Integrated Assessment System (IAS) and National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) Foundation Level in 1997 and Level 1 certification in 1999. Childcare provision to a maximum of £50 per week was a significant development in 1999. The Team urges, however, that this should be upped in line with current market prices (see also NESF, 2001) and that childcare should continue to occupy a central aspect of the Programme as it facilitates access and participation.
- 5.18 There has been least development in relation to the integration and better co-ordination of services between Youthreach and other youth support services which was recommended in 1997. Particular difficulties attach to referral across service boundaries. For example, practitioners report significant problems regarding the availability of appropriate psychological services. Integration and co-ordination of Youthreach with schools and other agencies is discussed in Section VI. The Team considers that greater levels of outreach should be built into the Programme to improve co-ordination at local level between Youthreach and other service-providers as well as to work intensively with those young people who do not attend and are in danger of opting out of the Programme. The Team’s view is that the Advocates (see below) assigned to the Programme should play this role.
- 5.19 In our consultations, progression from *Youthreach* to mainstream training and on to employment, which was recommended in 1997, continues to be a weakness of the Programme. A range of options has, over time, been developed to improve the opportunity for progression. These include access to the *Leaving Certificate Applied*, Centre-based progression for specific groups⁴ and flexible arrangements to support young people in Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs). FÁS has also developed specific measures for progression which includes a ‘bridging’ measure of specially designed modules which assist the early school leaver to gain access to mainstream training and the ‘Gateway’ programme which is a short-term appraisal programme aimed at those who lack motivation to enter programmes like *Youthreach*.
- 5.20 The Team wishes to draw attention to three key priorities in *Youthreach* which were noted in the Consultative Document produced about the Programme (Youthreach, 2000) and which need to be enhanced/further supported. These are:
- The need for an integrated approach to teaching literacy skills (Youthreach, 2000). Most CTWs have developed a strategy for literacy provision and training has also been provided for some staff to improve the way literacy is taught. However, an anomaly exists as VEC *Youthreach* Centres receive substantially less funding for literacy work than do the CTWs. This anomaly should be removed.

4. e.g. the Clare progression programme is targeted specifically at lone parents.

- Counselling and psychological services have been put in place for participants to deal with personal difficulties/issues. In a survey of VEC Youthreach Centres, 88 per cent of Centre managers referred to the need for counselling and 66 per cent highlighted the need for psychological support. Key reasons for support include substance abuse and severe emotional/behavioural difficulties including offending, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour (Youthreach, 2000). A new measure for counselling, guidance and psychological services was initiated in 1998 to support in-service training in front-line counselling skills for staff, co-ordination of services, dissemination of good practice and evaluation. However, the counselling service is still operated as little more than a pilot initiative and needs to be more readily available and accessible to all *Youthreach* participants. Provision is also needed for greater levels of family support to be incorporated into the measure (see also Section VI). Furthermore, some participants have needs which ought to be met in other ways, for example, through the mental health service. The Team **recommends** that the counselling and psychological service should be mainstreamed into the Programme.
- The Advocacy Programme supports participants' referral, progression and placement options both within and from *Youthreach*. The Advocates are regionally-based, and provide services to *Youthreach* Centres/Workshops. Initially developed as a pilot programme which was supported by the ESE, under the EU Innovatory Programme, it involves intensive one-to-one work with the young people as well as outreach mechanisms for those in danger of dropping out. However, the Programme is not yet consistently available across Centres/Workshops. The Team **recommends** that the rolling out by FÁS of this Programme should be accelerated and its outreach dimension should be adequately resourced.

5.21 A new area of concern for the Team is the participation in *Youthreach* of young people under 15 years. Some of these have specific behavioural difficulties and their participation in *Youthreach* is not always most appropriate, given that the Programme has been developed for an older cohort. The Project Team **recommends**, therefore, that an individualised approach that assesses the needs of each young person should be developed. The role of the youth work sector in providing for this group should also be explored. The EWOs when appointed will also have a key role to play in relation to this group.

5.22 *Youthreach* is undergoing significant change to reflect the changes in the social and economic context in which it operates. The Consultative Reports which were prepared on the future of the Programme (Youthreach, 2000, Griffin and Harper, 2001) are being considered by the Departments concerned. The Team supports the direction outlined in these Reports, and urges that their implementation be resourced, given that demands are likely to be increased

when the compulsory school leaving age is increased to 16 years. In particular, it urges that staff training and support should be continued and that within VEC *Youthreach* Centres, permanent contracts for part-time staff should be considered.

Second Chance Education

5.23 A summary of the follow-up on the Forum's 1997 recommendations is presented in Box 5.4 below.

Box 5.4	
SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A pilot programme should be introduced targeting those aged between 18 – 21 years who are early school leavers with no qualifications which would include access to more Community Employment (an additional 750 places), Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) (an additional 300 places) and Specific Skills Training (SST) (100 places). ● Agencies involved in delivery of second chance education should review their access procedures. ● Resources for second chance education should be targeted at the most disadvantaged. ● Sufficient VTOS places should be allotted for lone parents, adult dependants, recipients of disability payments and the long-term unemployed. ● Better co-ordination of service provision at local level, including the working together of youth services and educational facilities like <i>Youthreach</i>. 	<p>2001 Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) will provide for 18-21 year olds. CE focus changed significantly so no longer relevant. FÁS programme introduced but subsumed into National Employment Action Plan. ● Yes, through the BTEI. ● To some extent through target groups identified for the BTEI. ● Yes, through the BTEI. ● Not done.

Developments and Current Provision

5.24 The main recommendations in the Forum's 1997 Report with regard to second chance education have been addressed in the White Paper on Adult Education (Department of Education and Science, 2000a). This White Paper provides a framework for second chance and further education provision under four pillars:

- a National Adult Literacy Programme (see below),
- a Back to Education Initiative (BTEI),
- an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Basic Skills programme for adults, and
- increased flexibility and improved organisational structures for self-funded adult education in schools.

5.25 In addition, programmes such as the *Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme* (VTOS), now provide childcare to support the participation of parents with children who wish to take up second chance opportunities.

5.26 Further education and training opportunities specifically for those who leave school with no qualifications are important because, at present, they do not take up second chance education and those who are most successful in school are more likely to participate in further/continuing education. Recent research (McCoy and Williams, 2000) shows, for example, that of those who left school with no qualifications in 1999, 81.5 per cent had not participated on any programme of vocational education and training⁵. This contrasts starkly with the 9.3 per cent of those with Leaving Certificate (4+ Cs) who did not participate.

National Adult Literacy Programme

5.27 Provision for adult literacy has been substantially increased from a base of €1.06m in 1997 to €16.47m in 2002. However, there is still a huge unmet demand for literacy provision, especially among those who have left school early with no qualifications. At the same time and related to this, the Team emphasises the continuing need for the expansion of literacy provision in the workplace and the acquisition of more basic skills levels in work-based training (see below).

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

5.28 The overall objective of the BTEI is to increase the participation of adults in a range of flexible learning opportunities. This is planned on a phased basis from 32,000 per annum at present to 52,000 per annum by the end of 2006. This is to be achieved through a major expansion of part-time options under VTOS, *Youthreach* and PLC courses. Current participation rates are presented in Table 5.2 below.

5. This includes participation in VPT/PLC courses, State-sponsored training programmes (FÁS, Youthreach, CERT, etc) and third level courses.

Table 5.2: Participation in Further Education by Gender, 2001

Programme	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total Nos.
Adult Literacy	38	62	18,862
VTOS	34	66	5,305
PLC	28	72	25,518
Self-funded	28	72	147,000

Source: Department of Education and Science.

5.29 The Department of Education and Science recently announced the first part of this expansion. (Ten per cent of the annual increase provided under the BTEI will be allocated on an on-going basis exclusively for the development of community education). The Team's view is that:

- the BTEI should target, as a priority, adults and young early school leavers who left school with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy skills;
- programmes run under the BTEI should be accessible and relevant to those who are educationally disadvantaged in terms of course content, delivery, assessment methods and supports offered; and
- special attention should be given to early school leavers who are at present difficult to re-engage due to their recent negative experiences of the formal education system.

5.30 For these purposes, the Team considers that imaginative approaches to working with young people – using models which have been tested by the non-formal sector – through media such as leisure/sports and community arts should be developed to bring young people into a learning environment. This should be done in conjunction with the Youth Services, where some work is already underway, and should be supported by the community-based allocation in the BTEI.

Flexible Provision

5.31 With regard to the 10 per cent of places in the BTEI that are allocated to the community education sector, discussions are due to take place with relevant interests shortly to determine how these places will be provided. While this initiative needs to be implemented speedily, more consideration needs to be given to outreach and flexible provision and to greater involvement by the non-formal sector in its delivery.

5.32 In this regard, the Team welcomes the announcement that Community Education Facilitators are to be put in place in VECs throughout the country

and that a National Adult Learning Council is soon to be established. The Team suggests that the issues for consideration by this Council should include factors which motivate individuals to take up second chance education; allowances or tax incentives for participation by disadvantaged groups and accreditation. (Preventative models should also be put in place, including the involvement of parents in community-based adult education, as parental involvement in education can have a positive impact on retention of children in school).

- 5.33 In the accreditation of second chance education, the Team **recommends** that what is now required is a shift towards modularised learning which is set at the pace of the individual participant. Core competencies which are acquired by the individual in the course of his/her employment should be credited (the Certificate of Achievement model noted in Section IV could also be extended to non-formal provision) and work-based learning should be enhanced so that the point of entry is set at an appropriate level to attract those with minimal or no qualifications. In this context, more consideration should be given to accreditation of prior experiential learning which credits individuals for competencies received while ‘on the job’.
- 5.34 Research shows that a cumulative building up of qualifications by designated education routes can overcome the disadvantages of early leaving of formal schooling (see Denny, Harmon and O’Connell, 2000). The NQAI’s Discussion Document on a National Framework of Qualifications (NQAI, 2001) acknowledges that “*it should be possible for learners to receive recognition for their learning achievements in units far smaller than awards*”. The Team recommends that this should be very much part of the new Qualifications Framework and that consideration should be given to delivery that is based on a partnership basis between the formal and non-formal sectors.

Young People and the Labour Market

- 5.35 The main recommendations of the Forum’s 1997 Report in relation to employment and work and the 2001 position are outlined in Box 5.5 below. These need to be considered in the context of a very different labour market to that which was operating in 1997.

Developments and Current Provision

- 5.36 In 1997, the NESF Report focused on increasing access to CE and VTOS for 18-21 year olds. However, the policy focus of CE has changed significantly as an active labour market measure and its suitability to early school leavers and other group is to be further reviewed. With the dramatic improvements in the labour market, resulting in an all-time low youth unemployment figure (see Section III), the Team’s concern at this stage is that the economic downturn will impact

Box 5.5	
EMPLOYMENT AND WORK 1997 - 2001	
<p>1997 Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Business and Education Links Programme run by IBEC should be built on and strengthened in schools serving Disadvantaged Areas; ● Employers should review their recruitment policies with regard to employing young people with no qualifications; ● A national policy on vocational education and training should be developed to raise the productivity of the workforce and to equip the educationally disadvantaged. 	<p>2001 Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programme is on-going. ● Yes mainly due to upturn in labour market; ● Yes. Through White Paper on Adult Education/BTEI and FÁS introduced a programme for 18-21 year olds which was subsumed into the National Employment Action Plan.

most severely on those unqualified school leavers. In this regard, the Team considers that there are two groups within the young early school leaver population whose needs will require particular attention:

- those with no qualifications and who are unemployed (having perhaps completed *Youthreach*); and
- those with no qualifications who are in low-paid, low-skilled jobs and who require second-chance education opportunities or in-work skills development to progress.

5.37 For the first group, there is potentially a range of active labour market programmes and initial vocational training initiatives. These include Vocational Preparation and Training (VPT), Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Specific Skills Training. Traineeships, in particular, offer potential to the unqualified leaver to experience formal training but the numbers are still insufficient (2,000) when compared with the total number of apprenticeships that are on offer (20,000) and should be increased. In addition, there is still a lack of continuity between education and training systems for the unqualified school leaver and access to many of the programmes is restricted because of lack of qualifications. The Project Team **recommends** that the role of the Local Employment Service should be more proactively promoted within schools and at local community levels so that young people who leave school with no qualifications can be picked up and referred on by the Service at the earliest opportunity.

- 5.38 Greater tracking and monitoring of young early school leavers also needs to be undertaken by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in conjunction with FÁS and the Local Employment Service. The Team welcomes the work of the Standing Committee on the Labour Market, under the aegis of that Department, which is currently reviewing labour market provision. It urges that part of the Committee's remit should include an examination of the particular needs of early school leavers as part of a labour market strategy. In implementing its *Statement of Strategy (2002-2005)*, FÁS should also have regard for and give priority to the needs of this group as their opportunities are often confined to *Youthreach*. The Team's view is that training provision for young early school leavers should be based on a continuum of choices, so that *Youthreach* is not seen as the only option, and that progression should be actively encouraged.
- 5.39 For the second group – those in low-paid employment – acquisition of core skills is the main priority. As noted in Section I, many young people have been attracted out of school early with little or no qualifications to take up low paid and unskilled jobs. Section III highlighted the risk of those involved ending up with poor long-term economic prospects. Section III also noted that the principal barriers to the employment of early school leavers by employers, as surveyed by the ESRI (O'Shea and Williams, 2001), focused on poor education and skills levels. One of the key findings is the negative opinion of employers to the pre-employment training that the early school leavers had – over 50 per cent of those surveyed felt that it was 'poor'.
- 5.40 A recent study of transitions from education to work in European countries (ESRI, 2001) highlighted the range of roles that employers play in education/training and the importance of their involvement in developing opportunities for young labour market participants. The 'dual system', where there is strong linkage between work and education/training provides a very good model for employer/provider co-operation in the delivery of education and training. In Germany and Denmark, in particular, on-the-job education is an integral part of the vocational education system. In other OECD countries including the United Kingdom, Portugal and Australia participation in part-time education accounts for two or more years of school duration (OECD, 2001b).
- 5.41 In the submissions received by the Team, much attention was given to the need to develop 'earn and learn' policies so that young early school leavers can combine education with participation in the labour market. The Team considered incentives to encourage young people's continued participation in education, including the payment of an allowance for those over 16 years to remain in school to complete the Senior Cycle. It concluded that this would be too costly, as the allowance would have to be sufficiently high to compensate for loss of income foregone while at school.

- 5.42 An approach that would allow those of post-compulsory schooling age to work part-time and to continue with education was also considered. This currently operates in Flanders in Belgium and a pilot initiative; '*Linking Education to the Workplace*' is underway in the Tallaght, Northside and Clondalkin Partnership Areas. This initiative, which applies to a small number of students with Junior Certificate, is facilitating participants to work part-time while sitting the *Leaving Certificate Applied*. The initiative has the cooperation and support of local employers, education providers and the local community.
- 5.43 The Team's view is that greater flexibility on where and how education is delivered could enhance the potential of such initiatives. As a first step, it **recommends** that the *LCA* should be extended more widely so that students can undertake it on a part-time basis while at work. Consideration should also be given to delivering the *LCA* in community-settings. The Team also **recommends** that an examination of the longer-term implications of combining education with part-time work is needed. It recommends that the Standing Committee on the Labour Market should undertake this examination.
- 5.44 Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, an education and training plan has to be drawn up for 16 and 17 year olds that have left school and are in employment. This means that employers may not employ young people (i.e. 16 and 17 year olds) unless they have a certificate, which is issued by the NEWB. There is no obligation, however, on the young person to register with the NEWB. There is a danger, therefore, that those who leave school and who do not take up employment can effectively be invisible until they reach 18 years when they become eligible for social welfare. Investment in tracking is, therefore, vital for this group (see Section VI).
- 5.45 This approach by the NEWB for 16 and 17 year olds in work will offer potential for partnerships between employers and providers of education/training. However, it is not clear whether training/education will take place in-work or out-of work nor whose responsibility it will be to pay for training. The Team urges, therefore, that consultations should take place between the Department of Education and Science, the National Educational Welfare Board and IBEC to agree an approach to meeting the needs of these young people.

Section VI

Mechanisms for
Improved
Services Delivery

Mechanisms for Improved Services Delivery

Introduction

6.1 The emphasis in this final Section is on the mechanisms that are needed for improved delivery of services to those at risk of early school leaving. It is divided into six sub-Sections as follows:

- Overall Assessment of Progress 1997-2001;
- The 'Whole Child' Approach;
- Parental Involvement and Support;
- Schools and Learning;
- Co-ordination and Integration; and
- Local Delivery Issues.

Overall Assessment of Progress 1997-2001

6.2 Although progress has been made on many policy issues that were identified in the Forum's 1997 Report, more consolidated action is still needed on a range of levels. While this Report focuses, for the most part, on reform from *within* education (see Sections IV and V), it also recommends some systemic changes to address weaknesses in the delivery of services and, in a more fundamental way, the contribution that education is making to the lives of young people in Ireland today. Now is an opportune time, given the continuing demographic dividend, to give greater support to these changes.

6.3 Our current education system is based on a number of assumptions which include the notion that all children get support with their schooling from parents, that they have sufficient material comfort, that they have breakfast in the morning before they leave for school and that they have space and support to do their homework. However, the experience of community providers and organisations like the Saint Vincent de Paul confirms that some children often go hungry to school and do not have somewhere to do their homework. Indeed, the growth in breakfast and homework clubs in recent years provides evidence of these needs. The assumptions made, therefore, about the education system need to be reviewed in certain instances.

6.4 Section III highlighted that, while there has been increased participation in education over the last twenty years, there are still approximately 2,400 who leave school annually with no qualifications and that roughly 1,000 more do not transfer from primary level. The Team considers that meeting more effectively the needs of this small number of young people is manageable and now an achievable target.

The ‘Whole Child’ Approach

6.5 In the consultations and in the submissions received much attention was given to the need to reformulate education policy using the individual student’s needs as the starting point. The Team agrees and recommends that a ‘whole child’ approach should be used as a central principle of education policy.

6.6 The ‘whole child’ approach builds on and complements the ‘whole community’ approach that was set out in the 1997 Report but places more emphasis on the needs and rights of the young person. Throughout the present Report, the Team’s analysis highlighted that no one intervention will be sufficient. The Team invokes and emphasises that the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* Article 28, which specifically identifies the child’s right to an education and the National Children’s Strategy (2000) which outlines the whole child perspective, should underpin the development of public policy.

6.7 The proposed framework for the development of this ‘whole child’ approach is set out in Figure 6.1 below. This framework identifies the broad spectrum of interventions that are required – which have been highlighted in earlier Sections of the Report – at the level of the individual, family, school and broader community. It also acknowledges the inter-connection between an individual’s decision to leave school early and the range of other factors which have a bearing on his/her life. As a consequence, more ‘joined-up’ delivery of services is required.

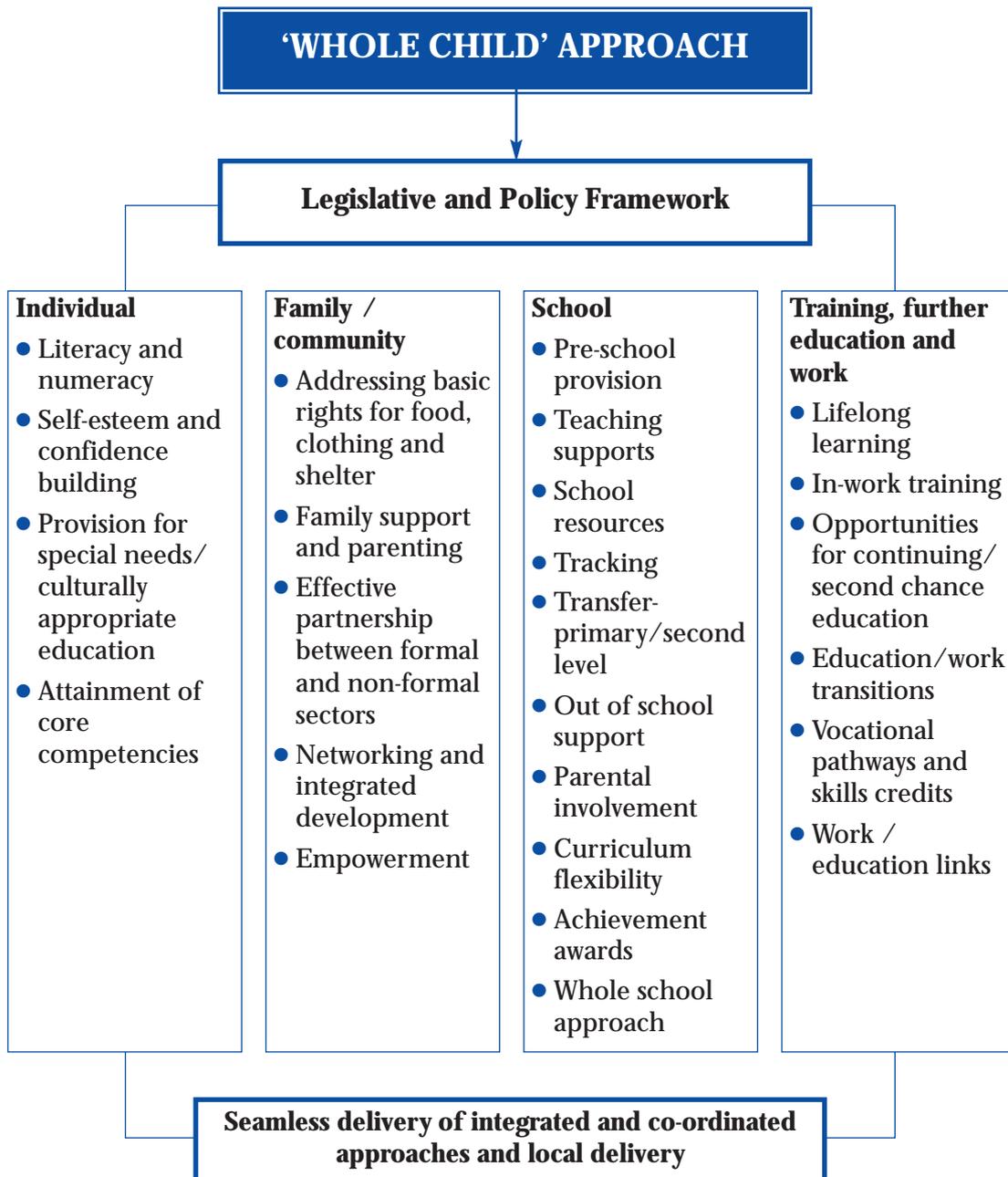
Consultation with Young People

6.8 As part of the ‘whole child’ approach, more attention should be given to the needs of children and young people. One of the goals of the National Children’s Strategy (2000) is that:

“Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity”.

6.9 Our consultations highlighted that much of the work put in place over the last number of years has been done without full regard to the needs of young people. Few opportunities have been provided for engaging with young people – and in particular, early school leavers – on the issues which have affected them in

Figure 6.1: A Framework for Addressing Early School Leaving



their life choices, despite the fact that research clearly identifies the benefits of young people’s involvement in public decision-making (e.g. Boldt, 1998b; O’Leary, 2001). In this regard, the Team welcomes the development of student councils under the Education Act, 1998. It also welcomes the representation by young people on the proposed Youth Work Committees (see Section V) to be established under the new Youth Work Act, 2001 (see Sections II and V).

6.10 Under this legislation, 25 per cent of the representatives on the proposed Youth Work Committees will be young people. Special attention is also to be paid to young people from the Traveller Community. The issue of participation in decision-making has also been raised in the preparation of the National Youth Work Development Plan. In the implementation of the National Children's Strategy, the County and City Development Boards are to consult with young people in the formulation of their plans at local level. However, the extent to which these structures will succeed in actively engaging with disadvantaged students remains to be seen and monitored.

6.11 Foróige has undertaken some work with disadvantaged young people to encourage their participation in decision-making (see Box 6.1), and the Team's view is that this should be built on, as should the work carried out under the EU Youthstart which was detailed in the 1997 Report.

Box 6.1

FORÓIGE CHALLENGE 2000

Foróige Challenge 2000 is an initiative that seeks to promote respectful and trusting relationships between young people. It also seeks to help young people to contribute to the community and to build self-confidence through achievement and encouragement. As part of this initiative, Foróige conducted extensive research with the range of people with whom the organisation works.

Examples of how the challenge has been put in place include:

In Waterford: Foróige launched their *Citizens of the New Millennium* programme to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to be contributing citizens and leaders within the community. The programme involves young people:

- investigating and identifying the type of society they want to see develop in the new millennium,
- discussing ideas with current stakeholders in Waterford, eg. politicians, religious, Gardaí, schools, etc.,
- identifying and acting on issues of concern to them,
- presenting their findings to stakeholders, and
- setting up a pilot forum where they can make a contribution in partnership with agencies such as the Corporation and the VECs.

In Galway: The focus is on training for members and leaders. A training weekend involved a series of workshops and discussions on the themes from the research, such as respect, trust, listening, etc. and gave many of the participants their first real experience of dealing directly with such issues. The workshops helped participants to draw up a "Charter of Rights" for their own Club/Project, based on the themes they had studied.

Source: Foróige, 2000.

Parental Involvement and Support

6.12 Throughout our consultations, the need for greater parental and family involvement in schools and in the education process was particularly highlighted. The Team concluded that investment is needed in family support to help the parents of those most marginalised young people to work with the school to overcome barriers to their educational development. An example of integrated supports for families with children showing high levels of absenteeism in Jobstown in Dublin is set out in Box 6.2.

Box 6.2

INTEGRATED SUPPORTS FOR THE FAMILIES OF VERY YOUNG CHILDREN WITH HIGH LEVELS OF ABSENTEEISM IN JOBSTOWN

In Jobstown, school absenteeism in Junior and Senior Infants was highlighted as a priority. It was considered essential to deliver supports to families of these children as a preventative measure. A committee was formed with representation from the school, Department of Education and Science, Health Board, FÁS, Family Support Service and residents of Jobstown.

The project centred on the identification of very young children with high levels of absenteeism. Profiles were developed of the children and their families were visited by the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator. A range of individually-designed interventions were developed and progress and barriers monitored over a period of six months.

The main lessons from the project included:

- information held by schools regarding family/home circumstances is essential to the development of specific targeted services to families;
- school absenteeism at primary level often indicates difficulties for students much later on and needs to be tackled at an early stage; and
- the HSCL Co-ordinator has a key role to play in the development of school and family profiles which can be used to ensure that supports are provided for those families.

Source: Integrated Services Process, 2001.

6.13 This project highlights the need for involvement by professionals from a range of agencies to address the needs of young people and their families. The *Home School Community Liaison Scheme* currently provides a valuable link between education providers and the community. The Team's view is that flexibility needs to be applied to this and other programmes and that the future development of integrated school/community responses should be locally-based and as responsive as possible to the specific needs in each area.

6.14 Research has shown that in some cases, intensive family support is required if the

needs of those at-risk of leaving school early are to be addressed (e.g. Gilligan, 1995; Gilligan, 1998; Ryan, 2000). The Team endorses the recommendation of the NESF's Report on Lone Parents (NESF, 2001) on the need for family services workers to work with families in stress and to liaise with the range of delivery agencies (including schools) on their behalf. It **recommends** that existing family support services should be enhanced and that greater links should be developed at local level with *Home School Community Liaison* and other initiatives.

Schools and Learning

6.15 Throughout the Report and in other research (e.g. Smyth, 1999b) the role of the school is acknowledged as critical to the retention/drop-out of at-risk students. In addition to the range of issues highlighted in previous Sections, the Team supports action across primary and post-primary levels on the way schools are organised. These issues are discussed briefly here.

Organisation, Planning and Evaluation

6.16 Research has shown that school organisation and process have an impact on pupil achievement (e.g. Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Smyth, 1999b). In the Irish context, streaming, has been associated with higher drop-out rates among pupils (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). The Team's consultations with early school leavers also confirmed this (see Section IV).

6.17 At school level the issue of strategic planning is also core to addressing early school leaving. The Team welcomes the extension of the *School Development Planning Initiative* to primary level and its continuation in post-primary schools. Enhancement of the whole school approach to planning is needed to ensure, as far as possible, that measures geared towards improving retention are integral to the school's plan. Associated with this is the need for objective evaluation at schools level of the combined benefits of interventions that have been developed in recent years. This will also improve accountability on the part of the school and help to ensure quality provision.

Tracking and Monitoring

6.18 The lack of adequate tracking mechanisms is still a major weakness in the elimination of early school leaving. While the Post-Primary Pupil Data-base provides information on participation at the end of a school year, this is in many cases too late. Educational Welfare Officers, when appointed, must have access to good information to be able to track students at risk. The Team, therefore, **recommends** that the National Educational Welfare Service should play a central role in developing a tracking mechanism in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science as a matter of urgency. In addition, the Primary Pupil Data-base which is being developed by the Department should be expedited.

Teaching

- 6.19 Research with early school leavers (e.g. Boldt, 1997) has shown that teachers can have a significant bearing on retention rates. The Team's consultations with early school leavers (see Section IV) also confirmed this. But better support is needed both for the teaching profession, for the environment in which they operate and for the methodologies employed to develop and enhance their involvement in the elimination of early school leaving. The Team **recommends** that modules on social and educational disadvantage should be incorporated into teacher training and that more opportunities should be developed for joint training with youth workers to improve the potential for partnership between the two sectors.
- 6.20 Within schools, teachers also need support in dealing with students who exhibit difficult behaviour. While the *Support Teacher Project* is welcome (see Annex 5), it is only available in 48 schools and so the Team **recommends** that consideration should be given to its expansion. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to use a range of methodologies within the classroom and should be supported to experience other working practices which could also be applied in the education context. The Team **recommends**, that more secondment and sabbatical opportunities should be introduced to facilitate this.
- 6.21 The Team considered the proposal that teachers in disadvantaged schools should be paid an additional allowance. It decided not to recommend this approach on the basis that it would be divisive and would lead to inequities between teachers.

School Funding

- 6.22 The current system of grants for schools is based on levels of enrollment and is provided to each school on a capitation basis. There is a dis-incentive, therefore, on the part of Principals to make known to the Department that pupils have left or have been expelled/suspended. In many cases students remain on the books long after they consider themselves to have left (see for example, Holland, 1999). The Team's view is that the National Educational Welfare Service, when in place, should alleviate this as EWOs and schools will, through the tracking system noted earlier, be able to identify those at-risk at a much earlier stage.
- 6.23 A related issue concerns those schools who accept students on to their rolls after September, in some cases, because they have not been accepted into other schools or would have been referred by the EWOs when appointed. However, at that stage, no capitation funding is provided to those schools. The Team **recommends** that greater flexibility should be applied in relation to the way payment is made for these students and that capitation grants should be paid.

Co-ordination and Integration

- 6.24 Throughout the Report the need for co-ordination was highlighted so that the range of initiatives that have been put in place do not duplicate each other and that resources are better targeted where they are most needed. Such co-ordination is required at both *intra*-Departmental and *inter*-Departmental levels. At *intra*-Departmental level, for example, all the programmes – *Early Start*, *Home School Community Liaison*, *8-15 Early School Leavers’ Initiative*, *Stay in School Retention Initiative* and the *School Completion Programme* have national co-ordinators who have recently begun to work together to provide linkages across programmes. This is a welcome development that should be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure that a more cohesive approach is developed. In developing this approach, the Team’s view is that out-of-school programmes such as *Youthreach* should also be included.
- 6.25 The Team considers that a ‘whole child’ approach is not feasible, however, without greater coherence and a more integrated delivery. One submission highlighted the lack of integration and co-ordination in the delivery of education services:
- “we have a concern about the extent to which the structural arrangements within which initiatives operate, can give rise to a lack of co-ordination and integration ... which [are] essential to ensure continuity of learning experiences for the young person in the home, the school and the community”.*
- 6.26 The Team considered that a number of developments offer potential at a cross-agency level, to integrate the work that is taking place in relation to the elimination of early school leaving. Firstly, County Development Boards through their Strategic Policy Committees play a central role, at county level, in bringing together local government, local development agencies, State agencies and social partners as well as the community and voluntary sector. The County Development Boards are, at present, in the process of finalising their ten-year Strategies which include specific actions in education.
- 6.27 The Integrated Service Process (ISP) noted above and in Section II also provided a more coherent approach to addressing educational disadvantage. The external evaluators of the ISP (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2000) highlighted that early school leaving is the responsibility of a wide range of statutory agencies and a holistic approach needs to be adopted if a more sustained positive impact is to be made. The rolling out of the ISP in the RAPID and CLÁR programmes provides an important opportunity for the involvement and participation of all stakeholders including parents, pupils and community organisations and this should be taken into account and acted on by the Department of Education and Science.

Local Delivery Issues

- 6.28 At the schools level there are few opportunities at present to exchange good practice or to develop links to improve the delivery of education. Schools operate as single entities and often have no contact with other education providers in the locality. In Northern Ireland a recent Report to the Department of Education by the Post-Primary Review Body (Byrne, 2001) proposed a radical departure in terms of the organisation of schools in a locality. This proposal centres on the development of collegiate structures which would bring together all of the schools in a locality, so that instead of seeing schools as individual institutions, the total resources of the area are pooled and young people would have access to a wider range of facilities and services. This approach would remove existing territoriality and allow for greater local ownership of resources. The Team **recommends** that a pilot project should be established to test the feasibility of this approach in a small number of areas.
- 6.29 A review of the Department of Education and Science's operations, systems and staffing needs by Mr. Seán Cromien (Department of Education and Science, 2000c) highlighted the structural difficulties, which hamper that Department's ability to engage with local initiatives and partnership bodies and "*the absence of a local presence for the Department around the country*". The Team agrees that a greater regional presence of the Department is required to improve co-ordination between educational institutions and services, ensure the complementarity of local initiatives to tackle disadvantage and to represent the Department at local level on such bodies as the Area Partnerships, RAPID Area Implementation Teams, Drugs Task Forces etc. The Team welcomes the recent development of a regional representative structure by the Department to interface between central policy and local community levels. However, it urges that the structure should also be given a role in identifying policy gaps and issues, rather than simply serving as a representative delivery mechanism.
- 6.30 The Team revisited the issue of regionalised bodies for the delivery of education that had been raised in the White Paper on Education (Government of Ireland, 1995) and which has been the focus of much debate (e.g. National Education Convention, 1994). It supports the view that what is needed is a more regionalised role for the Department of Education and Science which would include "*a need for greater awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of local and regional communities in order to improve the quality, equality, efficiency, relevance and flexibility of delivery of all educational services*" (White Paper, 1995). The Team **recommends** that a greater regional presence should be developed by the Department so as to interface, more effectively, between central policy and local delivery at school/community levels.

Annexes

Annex 1

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Annex 2

Project Team's Terms of Reference

In 1997, the NESF published its Report on *Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment*. Given its concern with issues of social exclusion and the recognized link between it and educational disadvantage and given significant developments in the education area in the last number of years, a new Project Team has been established.

The main objectives of the Project Team are to:

- revisit the 1997 report on Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment, given changes in policy and in the economic climate/labour market;
- reexamine the 1997 recommendations, the extent to which they have been implemented and whether they are still relevant;
- reassess the effectiveness of targeted interventions at all education levels and how they impact on early school leaving;
- collect and collate information on early school leaving in the context of lifelong learning and the current education policy debate; and
- identify a broad policy vision for the education system with regard to tackling early school leaving and educational disadvantage and agree specific recommendations which will work towards achieving this in the short to medium-term.

July 2001

Annex 3

List of Submissions and Consultations

Submissions Received:

Area-Based Partnerships Education Co-ordinators Working Group
Ballyfermot URBAN II
Women in the Home
Irish Family Planning Association
Catholic Youth Care
Tallaght Partnership
Irish Mental Patient's Educational and Representative Organisation (IMPERO)
National Youth Council of Ireland
Northside Partnership
Inner City Organisations Network (ICON)
IPPA the Early Childhood Organisation
Dublin Employment Pact
Teachers Union of Ireland
Collinstown Park Community College
The Life Centre
Combat Poverty Agency
OPEN
CORI
Community Workers Co-op
Roscommon Area Partnership
Mary Ainscough
Marie Hainsworth, Holywell Trust Support Agency
Joan Lahiff, Parent
Mary Forrest, Teen Counselling Service
Liam Ryder, Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools
Alison O'Neil, Galway Travellers Support Group
Marian Naughton, Educational Psychologist
Des McKernan, Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland

Consultations Undertaken:

Mr. Neil Haran	Independent Consultant
Dr. Tony Crooks	ADM Ltd
Mr. Aidan Savage	Schools Completion Programme
Dr. Dermot Stokes	Youthreach
Mr. Guss O’Connell	Youthreach
Mr. Gerry Griffin	Youthreach
Dr. Ann- Louise Gilligan	St. Patrick’s College Drumcondra/ National Educational Welfare Board
Dr. Ted Fleming	NUI Maynooth
Mr. John Doyle	Killinarden Education Network
Mr. Anthony Creevey	Youthreach Killinarden
Ms. Karen Burke	KEEP
Ms. Lorraine Lyons	Killinarden Community School
Dr. Tommy Cooke	Dublin Institute of Technology
Dr. Philip O’Connell	ESRI
Dr. Emer Smyth	ESRI
Dr. Selina McCoy	ESRI
Mr. Stephen McCarthy	NCCA
Ms. Maura Grant	Department of Education and Science
Ms. Bernie Judge	ADM
Ms. Ann Moroney	Blakestown Community School
Fr. Sean Healy	CORI
Ms. Noirín Hayes	Dublin Institute of Technology
Ms. Berni Brady	Áontas
Ms. Anne Looney	NCCA
Mr. John Hammond	NCCA
Ms. Frances Leahy	NCCA
Mr. Paul Doyle	National Educational Welfare Service
Mr. Eugene Forde	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Ms. Noelle Spring	Katharine Howard Foundation Blanchardstown Youth Service

Annex 4

Summary of Written Submissions

Introduction

The Team agreed at its first meeting that it would seek written submissions from interested organisations and individuals on the issue of early school leaving. A call for submissions went out in August with a closing date for receipt of submissions in September. A total of 27 submissions were received. The following is a brief summary of the main points raised in the submissions.

General Issues

Those making submissions were asked to identify main policy issues and concerns with regard to early school leaving. The main issues highlighted were:

- Financial disincentives exist in full-time education and adequate financial supports are needed to address this.
- Family situations are key in the support of young people at risk. In particular, parental attitudes to schooling are a key factor in early school leaving. Very often there is a lack of support at home to complete homework.
- Gender differences in participation in education – boys experiencing more learning difficulties leading to erosion of self-esteem, etc. Also, young mothers need to be supported to continue in school.
- Quality of teaching is most important – in areas of disadvantage the demands on teachers for counselling and guidance is far greater than the norm. Diversity within the classroom poses significant challenges to teachers – mainstreaming pupils with disabilities, increased numbers of children of asylum seekers and Travellers in second level schools.
- Success of Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied, Junior Certificate School Programme has been good but Leaving Certificate Applied students are now leaving in first year to take up employment, thereby reducing numbers and teacher allocations are then not sufficient. In addition, part-time jobs and week-end work have a detrimental effect on school attendance as does heavy consumption of alcohol.
- Lack of evaluation of new initiatives and no mechanism whereby successful initiatives can be mainstreamed or no forum where models of good practice can be shared.

- No one agency can meet all the needs of young people at risk. There must be collaboration between parents, pupils and voluntary and statutory agencies to encourage and motivate young people to stay in school, to enable parents to support young people in their school work and to encourage school staff to engage in new ways with troublesome pupils and their families.

Changes Needed

Those who made submissions were asked to identify the changes needed to address early school leaving. The following responses were given:

- Local flexible responses on a range of levels – a life long learning approach.
- Childcare provision for those young mothers in full-time education.
- Address over-centralised nature of the Department of Education and Science.
- Remove financial disincentives for those returning to education – introduce a system of educational grants on a par with funding received by third level students for low income families.
- Quality early childhood care and education: well-trained staff, expansion of training and progression levels in training (cf. Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)) and support for programmes for quality improvement.
- Setting targets for the achievement of literacy, numeracy and social skills and redesign of remedial teaching.
- Provide alternatives to the academic curriculum e.g. certification for schooling completed and a minimum level of competency for entry to a job/trade.
- Extra provision for teachers in disadvantaged areas including reduction in class contact hours, additional allowance to teachers in areas of disadvantage and an intensive programme of training for teachers dealing with disadvantaged pupils. In addition clerical assistance should be available to schools to record and monitor school attendance and a HSCL person should be appointed to all schools where attendance problems are identified. There should also be an expansion in the network of school attendance officers.
- Provide guidance counselling as part of the curriculum at both Junior and Senior Cycles in all post primary schools. Ex quota ratio for Guidance Counsellors in schools should be lowered from 500:1 to 250:1 and open it to all pupils, not just those in 6th Year.
- Counselling before expulsion, a statutory mechanism for finding an alternative place and advocacy for students independent of school and parents. In addition, an appropriate adolescent services which is locally-based and services 12-18 year olds should be established.

- Early intervention, particularly at pre-school and early primary levels.
- School admissions policies need to be addressed, as some schools do not open their doors to all pupils even those in the local area and then public schools have to accept all difficult children.
- Enhance Youthreach and HSCL and provide more resources.
- Special units for children with specific difficulties should be available in all schools.
- The provision of school and community-based parenting programmes with a special focus on the importance of regular school attendance, homework and parents getting involved in their children's and their own education should be developed.
- Develop a national tracking system.
- Flexibility at all levels of the education system is required. Not all children are academically minded and this needs to be recognised at the earliest stages of education.

Other issues included:

- The Department of Education and Science must review their definition of 'free education'. The cost of sending children to school has been spiraling in recent times and more incentives are required to reducing these costs for families on lower incomes so that they can afford to keep their children in formal education.
- Additional funding through local partnerships for educational purposes should be implemented immediately.
- An Addiction Counsellor should be shared among schools in areas where there is a known drug problem.
- Paying teachers for the supervision of after-school activities must be considered.
- A greater number of playgrounds, facilities and activities for young people need to be resourced.
- Closer policing of the Young Persons Employment legislation is required by appointing more inspectors.
- Reform of the Senior Cycle curriculum needs to continue.
- Review the issue of rolling suspensions, particularly in areas of high economic and social disadvantage.
- Review the issue of bullying at school and how it impacts on the educational opportunities of students who are considered to be marginalised in the system. Demand the introduction of the CSPE (Civic, Social and Personal Education)

at primary level as discriminatory attitudes and opinions can already be formed at this stage.

- Bonus payments should be paid to teachers with the relevant qualifications to teach in schools designated to be disadvantaged as these schools are finding it difficult to recruit experienced teachers.
- All teachers should be offered training on how to deal with diversity, racism, and difference among school students.

Mechanisms

With regard to the mechanisms that are needed to address early school leaving, the submissions identified a range of proposals which included:

- Setting up an Education Task Force.
- Conditions for receipt of public funding by schools should be a non-selective admissions policy, comprehensive education and provision to the local community.
- After 16 years allow opportunities for young people to earn and learn.
- Outreach mechanisms for Youthreach and a pre-Youthreach programme for 12-16 year olds.
- A mechanism to mainstream successful initiatives.
- Effective parenting courses and homework/study groups for children should be made available through the Department of Education and Science, Department of Health and Children and the Health Boards.
- Youth workers as mediators between young people, parents, school staff, Gardaí and others. Youth services should set up a network of after school/homework/recreational clubs.
- All students at second level should have a personal tutor/coach who should be available for a certain number of hours within the school year.
- The curriculum should provide activities which include sport, drama, music, art, etc.
- The capitation grant needs to be looked at and its effect on the reporting of early school leaving by schools and their referral on to alternative education or training programmes.

Responsibility

Submissions included comments about whose responsibility it should be to address early school leaving. Almost all of the submissions stressed that this should lie solely with the Department of Education and Science. One other suggestion was that:

- A collaborative framework between teachers/principals parents and boards of management should be set up.

Good Practice

Areas of good practice identified included:

- Community After School Project in the Inner City Integrated Services Project.
- Monitoring Committee to support and monitor first year students entering Larkin College.
- Establishment of an attendance office to ensure that contact made with parents of absentees on a daily basis.
- Youth Support and Training Network, Clondalkin, and Teen Counselling, Clondalkin.
- Daybreak Programme (for under 16s), based in Donegal Youth Service.
- Life Centre – an alternative system for young people (12-16 years) who have dropped out of school.

Needs of Specific Groups

The following issues were raised in relation to special needs and inter-culturalism:

- Lack of culturally appropriate reading material for all children in schools. Inter-cultural texts should be introduced.
- Anti-racist and anti-discrimination training for teachers and implementation of an inter-cultural approach to education are needed.
- Development of a remedial teaching system in schools that is less stigmatising.
- Positive discrimination towards Travellers to access teacher training courses.
- A tracking system should be established to see how Traveller children and young people with special needs are progressing through the education system.
- An independent review of how resources are being used for Travellers in the education system.
- Empowerment of Traveller parents to engage with and influence the education system. There is a need for a Traveller branch of the National Parent's Council.

Annex 5

Department of Education and Science Initiatives

Early Start	This Pre-school Programme for children aged 3 to 4 who are most at risk in areas of social disadvantage aims to enhance their overall development and prevent school failure and offset the effects of social disadvantage.
Rutland Street Project	This Project caters for 95 pupils aged 3-5 and includes a pre-school centre, a special staff teaching allocation, classroom assistants, secretarial services and cooks, and school meals.
Breaking the Cycle (Primary)	This Scheme aims to effect improvements in attainment, attendance and participation for the pupils identified in the targeted schools. It was introduced in 1996. The overall aim is to support each participating school in developing strategies to break the social mould of educational disadvantage.
Home-School Community Liaison Scheme	Began in 1990/1991. A co-ordinator is assigned to school or group of schools in Disadvantaged Areas to work with school staff, parents and relevant community agencies to promote active participation of targeted pupils in the learning process, and promote co-operation between home, school and community. The Scheme operates in 225 primary schools. In 1999 it was offered to all designated disadvantaged schools. Evaluations of the operation and outcomes of the Scheme have been very favourable, particularly in regard to addressing educational disadvantage (Boldt et al, 1998).
8-15 year olds Early School Leavers' Initiative (ESLI)	<p>Established in 1998/1999 to develop and implement policies to tackle early school leaving by children aged 8-15 in selected urban and rural areas of disadvantage. It was extended to 2002. There are currently 17 Projects and this is to be increased to 47. The Initiative involves pilot projects to test models of integrated, area-based co-ordination of services for young people at risk of early school leaving. Models of good practice are to be developed with a view to their integration into mainstream policy and practice.</p> <p>In-school activities include homework support, learning support, transfer programmes, personal development, peer and adult mentoring, adapted curricula, meal provision, innovative activities focused on identified needs, formal and non-formal education combining to support targeted</p>

<p>Stay in School Retention Initiative</p>	<p>pupils; while out-of-school activities include after-school clubs, Ccommunity-based activities, sports, music/dance/drama, home visits, structured holiday provision and educational excursions. A full-time Project Co-ordinator oversees the Initiative.</p> <p>This is aimed at keeping pupils in school up to the completion of Leaving Certificate. It was launched in 1999 and continued in 2001. At the core of the Initiative is a multi-annual written retention plan or agreement drawn up between the school and the Department, with the requirement that the school as driver of the initiative operates on a multi-agency basis and establishes cross-community links in delivering on its commitments. Examples of measures which might be included in a school plan are: systematic tracking of absences with follow up action; additional teaching hours targeted at pupils at risk of leaving the system; after hours initiatives (including home-work club); significantly enhanced home/school and community outreach provision; induction programmes for 1st year pupils; sport and leisure clubs; individual support with numeracy and literacy.</p>
<p>School Completion Programme</p>	<p>Established in 2001 to bring together the Stay in School Initiative and the 8-15 ESLI. Work will include same-day tracking, after-school, family support, staff development, literacy and numeracy.</p>
<p>Special Needs Students</p>	<p>The Education Act, 1998 provides that the admissions policy of schools must specifically cover students with disabilities and special education needs. School plans must ensure that the objectives of equality of access and participation are met.</p>
<p>Traveller Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre School ● Primary ● Second Level 	<p>Pre-school facilities (in addition to Health Board grants in some areas for Child-Care Assistants and health and hygiene facilities).</p> <p>There are 4,300 Travellers in ordinary classes and 260 in special classes and 3 special primary schools for Travellers (in Dublin); 465 resource teachers based on a pupil teacher ratio of 14:1 work with Traveller children in 375 primary schools. Capitation grants are also paid. The Guidelines for Primary Schools indicate that school policies need to be formulated on the arrangements for the education of the children of the Travelling community.</p> <p>A capitation grant is paid to help schools in the outreach necessary for children and families to successfully participate in the life of the school. In this way it is expected to increase the numbers attending second-level schools, which</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Junior Traveller Training Centres ● Senior Traveller Training Centres ● Visiting Teachers Service 	<p>presently stands at 1,165.</p> <p>Ex-quota hours are allowed per Traveller child enrolled.</p> <p>149 students participated in 7 Junior Traveller Training Centres in 2000.</p> <p>A network of 30 Senior Traveller Training Workshops provides a programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience for 769 Travellers annually in the 15+ age group. A National Coordinator promotes and monitors the development of the network. New guidance/counselling/psychological service and child care supports were introduced in 1998.</p> <p>42 visiting teachers continued to deliver a nationwide service in 2001.</p> <p>The National Education Officer for Travellers promotes and oversee the implementation of the education service (involves identifying the needs of Travellers in the region, assisting in planning and establishment of education provision, consultation with Traveller families and ensuring optimal use of existing educational facilities).</p>
<p>Children at Risk</p>	<p>Five Youth Encounter projects cater for up to 125 young people who have become involved in minor delinquency or are at risk and have become alienated from the mainstream system. The Department of Education and Science also supports 3 Line projects <i>Phoenix</i>, <i>City Motor Sports</i> and <i>Carlina</i>. These projects bring together the community, State agencies and relevant Government Departments, to provide a direct and immediate response for young people from 8-18 years who have dropped out of the system due to disruptive behaviour or habitual non-attendance. Other residential options are provided for disturbed children and young offenders.</p>
<p>Disadvantaged Areas School Scheme</p>	<p>Established in 1984. Inclusion in the Scheme entitles the school to an extra £30 per pupil capitation grant (management costs, the purchase of books, materials and equipment and on the development of home-school links). Additional finance is available for book rental schemes. Schools are entitled to additional staffing. A maximum class size of 29 pupils applies to all such schools. Indicators to determine inclusion of schools in place since 1990 e.g. medical card, type of housing and receipt of unemployment assistance. 316 schools currently qualify for this Scheme; schools are concentrated mainly in Dublin; only 2 per cent of designated disadvantaged schools are in rural areas.</p>
<p>Support Teacher Project</p>	<p>Began as the Teacher Counsellor Scheme in 1995 as a response to calls from school principals in Dublin for help in dealing with incidents of disruptive behaviour. This</p>

<p>National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)</p>	<p>initiative aims to co-ordinate a whole school approach in designing and implementing strategies and good practice to help prevent disruptive behaviour. The Support teacher typically targets the most disruptive twelve to fifteen pupils in the school and teaches or counsels them individually or in small groups.</p> <p>Educational psychologists work with allocated schools identifying early learning difficulties, compiling needs assessments for children with emotional and/or behavioural problems and offering individual therapy for children. The NEPS, which was established in September 1999, will be developed over a five-year period and will eventually have a staff of 200 psychologists. Currently there are 82 psychologists employed in the Service. Its objective is to provide services to students in all first and second level schools and in other centres supported by the Department of Education and Science. The Service is seriously understaffed. In June 2001 the Minister for Education and Science announced funding for assessment services from suitably qualified private practitioners, pending the recruitment of the full complement of psychologists to NEPS. The Service largely dealt with schools, which were designated as disadvantaged, thus some schools have difficulties in accessing the service and may have pupils whose families would not be able to afford a private psychological assessment.</p>
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Annex 6

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI)

In 1983, Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist at Harvard University, published his book *Frames of Mind*, re-igniting the worldwide debate on the nature of human intelligence. Gardner says that the book was the result of his attempts to re-conceptualise human thought “*in a way that was broader and more comprehensive than that which was then accepted in cognitive studies*” (Gardner, 1993b:xi). The arrival upon the scene of the concept of multiple intelligences was but one of the fruits of years of research by Gardner and others in *Project Zero* at Harvard.

This large-scale research project had been established at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1967, its main founder being the philosopher Nelson Goodman. Goodman was particularly interested in the way children represented their understandings in the arts, and he believed that arts learning should be studied as a serious cognitive activity. At the outset, he suggested that since what was known already about children’s understandings within the arts was close to zero, the Project should reflect this in its title – hence *Project Zero*. The Research focus has broadened over the years, examining teaching, learning and assessment processes – with particular emphasis on thinking and understanding – in American schools.

Features of MI theory

In his original (1983) elaboration of MI theory, Gardner proposed that all humans have at least seven identifiable intelligences – he later (in 1997) added an eighth. The eight intelligences are as follows (in each instance, examples of occupations – “end states” – which would embody the relevant intelligence in action, are suggested):

- *Linguistic Intelligence* allows individuals to communicate and make sense of the world through language (poets, journalists, writers, orators);
- *Logical-mathematical Intelligence* enables individuals to use and appreciate abstract relations (scientists, mathematicians, philosophers);
- *Musical Intelligence* allows people to create, communicate, and understand meanings made out of sound (singers, musicians, composers);
- *Spatial Intelligence* makes it possible for people to perceive visual or spatial information, to transform this information, and to recreate visual images from memory (architects, engineers, sculptors);
- *Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence* allows individuals to use all or part of the body to create products or solve problems (craftspeople, dancers, surgeons, athletes, choreographers);

- *Interpersonal Intelligence* enables individuals to recognise and make distinctions about others' feelings and intentions (parents, teachers, politicians, psychologists, sales people);
- *Intrapersonal Intelligence* helps individuals to distinguish among their own feelings, to build accurate mental models of themselves, and to draw on these models to make decisions about their lives (difficult to observe in specific occupations, but relevant to most);
- *Naturalist Intelligence* allows people to distinguish among, classify, be sensitive to, and use features of the environment (farmers, gardeners, botanists, florists, geologists, archaeologists).

(Condensed from Veenema, Hetland and Chalfen, 1997)

The eight areas represent as comprehensively as possible the range of intelligent human functioning. While each is identified as a discrete intelligence, each also interacts with others in complex ways to produce the richness of human behaviour and achievement. Ordinary human functioning requires such interaction. It should be further added that many people would exhibit a highly-developed intelligence, not perhaps in their occupation, but in pastimes, interests, hobbies, in personal projects, or in social and personal relationships.

Source: Hyland, 2000

Annex 7

Key Tasks of the Educational Welfare Service

The Project Team considers that the key tasks of the Educational Welfare Service at a local level should be as follows:

1. Looking after the educational welfare of all under 16s, of those up to the age of 18 and enrolled in school and early school leavers.
2. Encouraging good school attendance with both support measures and also using the legislative provision when and where necessary.
3. Linking young people with difficulties to support agencies.
4. Working with both primary and post-primary schools in developing positive retention plans and encouraging greater links between both levels.
5. Keeping records of early school leavers and charting their progress.
6. Providing education and training plans to young people who leave school early.
7. Identifying issues in educational provision which affect school attendance and liaising with the Department of Education and Science in meeting the needs identified.
8. Strong leadership in relation to issues that emerge regarding retention.
9. Designing and developing effective Transfer Programmes for those moving from primary to post-primary level.
10. Referring students to schools and ensuring that capitation funding is provided to those schools for those referred, regardless of the time of year.

Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Forum

1. The main task of the Forum will be:
 - to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified, especially those concerned with the achievement of equality and social inclusion;
 - to do so through consideration of reports prepared by teams comprising the social partners, with appropriate expertise and representatives of relevant Departments and agencies and its own Secretariat;
 - with reports to be published by the Forum with such comments as may be considered appropriate; and
 - to ensure that the teams compiling such reports take account of the experience of implementing bodies and customers/clients, including regional variations in such experience.
2. The Forum may consider such policy issues on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.
3. Membership of the Forum will comprise representatives from the following four strands:
 - the Oireachtas;
 - employer, trade unions and farm organisations;
 - the voluntary and community sector; and
 - central government, local government and independents.
4. The terms of office of members will be for an initial period of at least two years during which alternates may be nominated. Casual vacancies will be filled by the nominating body or the Government as appropriate and members so appointed shall hold office until the expiry of the current term of office of all members. Retiring members will be eligible for re-appointment.
5. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Forum will be appointed by the Government.
6. The Forum will decide on its own internal structures and working arrangements.

7. The Forum will be under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach and funded through a Grant-in-Aid which will be part of the overall Estimate for that Department. The Annual Accounts of the Forum will be submitted for audit to the Comptroller and Auditor General.
8. Finally, the staffing and conditions of employment of the Forum's Secretariat will be subject to the approval of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Membership of the Forum

Independent Chairperson:

Maureen Gaffney

Deputy Chairperson:

Mary Doyle

(i) Oireachtas

Fianna Fáil:

Noel Ahern T.D.
Seán Haughey T.D.
Beverley Cooper-Flynn T.D.
Michael Kitt T.D.
Senator Margaret Cox
Senator Paschal Mooney

Fine Gael:

Gerry Reynolds T.D.
Paul McGrath T.D.
Bill Timmins T.D.
Senator Mary Jackman
Senator Therese Ridge

Labour:

Derek McDowell T.D.
Senator Joe Costello

Progressive Democrats:

Senator Jim Gibbons

Independents:

Michael Lowry T.D.

(ii) Employer/Trade Unions/Farm Organisations

(a) Employer/Business Organisations:

IBEC:

Jackie Harrison
Aileen O'Donoghue

Small Firms Association:

Pat Delaney

Construction Industry Federation:

Mirette Corboy

Chambers of Commerce/Tourist Industry
/Exporters Association:

Carmel Mulroy

(b) Trade Unions:

Eamonn Devoy
Blair Horan
Jerry Shanahan
Manus O'Riordan
Paula Carey

(c) *Agricultural/Farming Organisations:*

Irish Farmers Association:	Betty Murphy
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association:	Pat O'Rourke
Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society:	Seamus O'Donoghue
Macra na Feirme:	Eileen Doyle
Irish Country Womens Association:	Breda Raggett

(iii) Community and Voluntary Sector

<i>Womens Organisations:</i>	Gráinne Healy Susan McNaughton Joanna McMinn
<i>Unemployed:</i>	Eric Conroy Joan Condon Mary Murphy
<i>Disadvantaged:</i>	Joe Gallagher Frances Byrne Janice Ransom
<i>Youth:</i>	Valerie Duffy
<i>Older People:</i>	Paddy Donegan
<i>Disability:</i>	John Dolan
<i>Environment:</i>	Jeanne Meldon
<i>Others:</i>	Fr. Seán Healy Audry Deane

(iv) Central Government, Local Government and Independents

(a) Central Government

Secretary-General, Department of Finance
Secretary-General, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Secretary-General, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Secretary-General, Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
Secretary-General, Department of the Environment and Local Government

(b) Local Government

<i>General Council of County Councils:</i>	Councillor Constance Hanniffy Councillor Tom Kelleher Councillor Patsy Treanor
<i>Association of Municipal Authorities:</i>	Councillor Tadhg Curtis

County and City Managers Association: Donal O'Donoghue

(c) Independents

Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, National University of Ireland, Galway

Ms. Marian Vickers, Northside Partnership

Ms. Helen Johnston, Surg Equipment Ltd.

Mr. Niall Fitzduff, Rural Communities Network

Ms. Noreen Kearney, Trinity College, Dublin

Secretariat

Director:

Seán Ó hÉigeartaigh

Policy Analysts:

David Silke

Laurence Bond

Sarah Craig

Executive Secretary:

Paula Hennelly

Forum Publications

(i) Forum Reports

<i>Report No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.	<i>Negotiations on a Successor Agreement to the PESP</i>	November 1993
2.	<i>National Development Plan 1994 – 1999</i>	November 1993
3.	<i>Commission on Social Welfare – Outstanding Recommendations</i>	January 1994
4.	<i>Ending Long-term Unemployment</i>	June 1994
5.	<i>Income Maintenance Strategies</i>	July 1994
6.	<i>Quality Delivery of Social Services</i>	February 1995
7.	<i>Jobs Potential of Services Sector</i>	January 1996
8.	<i>First Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	June 1995
9.	<i>Jobs Potential of Work Sharing</i>	January 1996
10.	<i>Equality Proofing Issues</i>	February 1996
11.	<i>Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment</i>	January 1997
12.	<i>Rural Renewal – Combating Social Exclusion</i>	March 1997
13.	<i>Unemployment Statistics</i>	May 1997
14.	<i>Self-Employment, Enterprise and Social Inclusion</i>	October 1997
15.	<i>Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 1997
16.	<i>A Framework for Partnership – Enriching Strategic Consensus through Participation</i>	December 1997
17.	<i>Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Local Employment Service</i>	March 2000
18.	<i>Social and Affordable Housing and Accommodation: Building the Future</i>	September 2000
19.	<i>Alleviating Labour Shortages</i>	November 2000
20.	<i>Lone Parents</i>	July 2001
21.	<i>Third Period Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 2001
22.	<i>Re-integration of Prisoners</i>	January 2002
23.	<i>A Strategic Framework for Equality Issues</i>	March 2002
24.	<i>Early School Leavers</i>	March 2002

(ii) Forum Opinions

<i>Opinion No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.	<i>Interim Report of the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment</i>	March 1995
2.	<i>The National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	January 1996
3.	<i>Long-term Unemployment Initiatives</i>	April 1996
4.	<i>Post PCW Negotiations – A New Deal?</i>	August 1996
5.	<i>Employment Equality Bill</i>	December 1996
6.	<i>Pensions Policy Issues</i>	October 1997
7.	<i>Local Development Issues</i>	October 1999
8.	<i>The National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	August 2000

(iii) Forum Opinions under the Monitoring Procedures of Partnership 2000

<i>Opinion No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.	<i>Development of the Equality Provisions</i>	November 1997
2.	<i>Targeted Employment and Training Measures</i>	November 1997

