Globe: All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

For the Project Management Committee

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This report has been authored by

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The project has been overseen by a Project Management Committee. Membership of this Committee across the period of the project has comprised:

Kathryn Bayly, Parenting Skills Unit, HSE.
Marna Bell, Family Policy Unit, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.
Rosie Drysdale, Family Policy Unit, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.
Stephen Falvey, Department of Education and Science.
Aisling Gillen, National Specialist, Family Support, HSE.
Judy Howard, Department of Education and Science.
Walter Johnston, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
Siobhan Mugan, HSE.
Joy Poots, Inner City South Belfast Sure Start (Chair from January 2010).
Marian Quinn, formerly of the Reception and Integration Agency and since May 2007 of Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (chair until December 2009).
Anita Toolan, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform/Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.
Mary Yarr, Inclusion and Diversity Service, Northern Ireland.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Irish society, both North and South, has experienced significant population change in the past two decades. In particular, increased immigration in both parts of the island has changed the ethnic makeup of the populations and presented a new set of social policy and social service challenges for policy makers and professionals. In response to these challenges, a number of individuals from the statutory and voluntary sectors across the island of Ireland came together to initially discuss the potential to develop “home grown, accessible materials to support practitioners in their work with parents” (Globe: All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents 2008a, p. 6) in a supplementary manner, and a set of information for parents. Consultation occurred with a number of other stakeholders working in the area to confirm the need for such resources before a formal project – Globe: All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents – underpinned by a Project Management Committee (PMC) was established.

Originally envisaged as a two year, two phase project, in 2007 a competitive tendering process was initiated for the project. The Irish Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) was commissioned to undertake the first phase, involving the development of a set of three resources to (a) support immigrant/black and minority ethnic (BME) parents in their parenting role, and (b) support the professionals who work with them. The set or resources comprised of:

- A Toolkit developed for practitioners working with immigrant/BME parents, both in a one-to-one and group setting;
- An Information Pack for parents and practitioners containing information on a range of issues; and
- A DVD.

Upon the completion of these resources and reflection on the process which led to their completion, the PMC took the decision to extend the life of the project by a further two years (July 2009 – July 2011), and subsequently by a further six months (to December 2011). After another competitive tendering process, Culturewise Ireland was commissioned to develop and implement a one-day Capacity and Awareness Raising Training (CART) programme aimed at raising the cultural awareness of attending practitioners and promote use of the resources in practice.

BACKGROUND TO, AND AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF, THE EVALUATION

In 2007, the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, was commissioned by the PMC to evaluate Globe: All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents. From 2007 – 2009 a number of interim evaluation reports were submitted to the PMC on the development phase of the project and its resources. In 2009, following the extension of the project, the objectives of the evaluation were revised. These objectives, which underpin this final evaluation report, are as follows:

1. Examine and assess the pilot phase;
2. Examine and assess the uptake and use of the Information Packs by parents and practitioners;
3. Examine and assess the partnership working and development on a multi-sectoral and cross-border basis of the PMC, and more generally in meeting the needs of immigrant parents;
4. Examine and assess the mainstreaming of learning and good practice; and
5. Examine and assess the training/awareness raising and support of practitioners in delivering the programme.
DESIGN AND METHODS

A mixed-methods approach was adopted for this evaluation study:

- A short literature review was undertaken on the themes of partnership working and cross-border activity, mainly in relation to North-South cooperation on the Island of Ireland, but also in relation to transnational interagency collaboration more generally;
- A questionnaire was developed and forwarded to CART participants (excluding students) assessing their use of the resources and the impact of the training on their practice;
- Extensive interviews were undertaken with:
  - Members of the PMC, regarding cross-border and partnership working, on four different occasions;
  - Culturewise, on its experience of delivering the pilot phase;
  - A purposive sample of practitioners, on their use of the project resources and the impact of the CART day on their practice. These were conducted after both the pilot delivery phase and the delivery of the main CART days;
  - Further/higher education course coordinators and lecturers, regarding the mainstreaming work pursued by Culturewise;
- Observations were undertaken of a number of CART days as well as specially designed follow up days with a number of organisations;
- A small amount of documentary analysis of relevant project documentation was undertaken.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this research is the low response rate to the practitioner questionnaire and the impact this had on the sampling strategy for follow-up interviews, which was purposive rather than a representative random one. Other limitations were the absence of parents’ voices in this research. It was anticipated that a small number of interviews would be undertaken with parents about their use of the toolkit. However, interim questionnaire data revealed that practitioners were holding onto the information packs for their own use. Finally, it was hoped to have some descriptive data on the number of downloads of information packs from hosting websites. However, it was not possible for organisations to deliver this data in a timely, consistent manner.

FINDINGS

Findings about the CART day itself

- In total, 1,704 individuals from across the Island of Ireland have benefited from the Globe resources and the CART days;
- 312 Family Support and Community Development professionals received the resources and the CART day;
- 192 Education professionals received the resources and the CART day;
- 186 Health professionals received the resources and the CART day;
- 178 managers or coordinators of organisations and services received the resources and the CART day;
- 427 students (421 of which were in fulltime professional education courses) received the resources and the CART day;
- All aspects of the CART day were positively rated by attendees;
• The top three things CART attendees reported that they would take away from the day were: cultural awareness/competence/confidence; the resources; and general awareness (e.g. of needs, own practice).

**Questionnaire Findings**

• The response rate to the questionnaire was low, with 9% of the 1,238 individuals who received communication about the questionnaire responding. This rises to 11.5% if only those who could reasonably be expected to work directly with parents regularly are included;
• 64% of respondents indicated they had not used the toolkit;
• Of those who did, 18.9% used it with less than half the BME/immigrant parents they work with;
• 17.1% used it with more than half the BME/immigrant parents they work with;
• Despite low levels of use, all aspects of the Toolkit were rated highly by respondents;
• The main reasons for non use were:
  o Not working directly with parents;
  o Not relevant to the work undertaken/not appropriate to use currently;
  o Planning to use it in the future;
• The information packs were used predominantly by professionals for their own use. A small number used them with parents, with less providing them directly to parents;
• The vast majority (90.1%) reported not using the DVD;
• Three quarters of respondents indicated that they faced organisational and workplace barriers in suing the materials. Almost 40% indicated that no further support was needed to use the materials.
• Over 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they are now more aware of issues facing BME/immigrant parents;
• Over 57% agreed or strongly agreed that the Toolkit has helped improved practice with BME/immigrant parents;
• Over 60% agreed or strongly agreed that the Information Pack has helped improved practice with BME/immigrant parents.

**Practitioner Interview Findings**

• Overall, the Toolkit was being used in a supplementary manner by practitioners;
• This use was both directly with parents and by practitioners on their own;
• Use of particular elements of the Toolkit was often dependent on the category of practitioner participating in the research;
• In addition to using it, practitioners viewed it as a reassurance, a credible source of information when particular issues arose;
• While the Information Pack was deemed useful, it could contain more local information. Many practitioners used their own service’s information packs or information available locally;
• All respondents were very positive about the CART day and its impact on practice.
**PMC Partnership and Cross-Border Working Findings**

- Common needs in both jurisdictions and shared vision of practice support for working with BME/immigrant parents were present at the outset of the project;
- A consultation process targeting organisations to populate the PMC was undertaken at the outset. Membership was ultimately governed by voluntarism and willingness to participate;
- Advisory Committee was established to support work of PMC in first phase;
- PMC met regularly and worked intensively in the first phase;
- Challenges at times in getting to a shared understanding of the scope and content of the resources: issues of timeliness and communication were relevant here also;
- Challenges at times in understanding each jurisdiction’s policies and procedures;
- Challenge of maintaining membership throughout the process. PMC worked to address membership gaps;
- PMC engaged in process of reflection after first phase. Aimed to be realistic, clear, honest, open;
- More strategic position taken in the second phase of the project;
- Decision making viewed as consensual;
- Emergence of a core group who drove the project;
- Difficulties in maintaining energy when demands of ‘parent’ organisations increased over second phase;
- Developed an exit focus through mainstreaming the project.

**Mainstreaming Interviews Findings**

- Very positive view of the resources and CART day delivery in Further/Higher Education institutions. Perspectives reveal that the training was professionally run;
- Take up of the training was high in almost all cases;
- Training and resources deemed highly relevant to programmes being delivered;
- Many lecturers interviewed have already begun adapting material into course modules, with others intending to do so in the next academic year.

**DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

**Partnership and Cross-Border Working of the PMC**

When the characteristics and critical success factors of partnership working generally are considered, it is clear from interview findings with PMC members that many of these have been present in the working practices of the PMC. The PMC has been imbued with a sense of realism in achieving its aims and objectives, drawn from its experience of the first phase, and pragmatism regarding its operation in achieving those aims. Cross-border working of the PMC has been a significant contributing factor in the delivery of the project, with core members of the PMC from both parts of the Island driving the project towards its conclusion in a bottom-up manner.
Members have used both the formal PMC structure as well as existing informal networks to achieve the goals of the project.

It is the view of the evaluation team that the PMC has engaged in good partnership practice. While it has experienced difficulties, the PMC has striven to overcome these where possible, while not losing sight of achieving the aims and objectives of the project. It has consistently displayed the characteristics of good partnership practice, and engaged in an honest reflective process regarding its working processes. It is clear that is has been the key and successful driver of the project, supporting the delivery organisations in both phases to complete their work.

**RECOMMENDATION ONE: THE PMC OR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER HOW IT DISSEMINATES THE LEARNING FROM ITS OWN EXPERIENCE OF MANAGING A PROJECT LIKE GLOBE: ALL IRELAND PROGRAMME FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS. THE EVALUATION TEAM IS OF THE VIEW THAT A POTENTIALLY USEFUL NARRATIVE EXISTS TO BE TOLD ABOUT DELIVERING A PROJECT IN CHALLENGING TIMES ON A CROSS-BORDER BASIS. EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO DISSEMINATE THIS SPECIFIC LEARNING NOW THAT THE EVALUATION HAS CONCLUDED.**

*Developing and Implementing the CART Days*

Originally set a target of providing the CART day and disseminating project resources to 1200 individuals, Culturewise ultimately delivered the training to over 1700 people by the end of 2011, drawn from over 130 organisations. Notwithstanding the recruitment strategy of first-come-first-served for enrolment on the CART day, the number of individuals and the different sectors from which they are drawn reflects a concerted effort by Culturewise to reach as many appropriate individuals as possible.

It is clear from the various sources of data that the CART delivered by Culturewise has made attendees more culturally aware, made them more conscious of the needs of immigrant parents and the experiences they have when parenting in a different cultural environment. This is a positive outcome. Furthermore, both the on-the-day evaluation and follow up questionnaire data reveal that attendees have placed great value on possessing a set of resources which they can use as required or when the opportunity arises. Most significantly, the CART day and the resources have made attendees more aware of issues which affect immigrant parents.

The evaluation team is of the view that the work undertaken by Culturewise Ireland to contact and enrol a high number of CART attendees from a wide range of organisations, and to develop and deliver a high standard, positively evaluated Capacity and Awareness-Raising Training Day is laudable and should be commended. Moreover, it is clear that its approach, and additional content in the CART day, have both added value to the project and benefited CART attendees.

**RECOMMENDATION TWO: A VERY HIGH NUMBER OF POTENTIAL FUTURE PROFESSIONALS RECEIVED THE CART DAY AND GLOBE RESOURCES. THE PMC OR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER INITIATING CONTACT AND WORK WITH FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WHO RECEIVED THE CART DAYS AND RESOURCES. ATTEMPTS SHOULD BE MADE TO TRACK THE EXTENSIVE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED THE TRAINING AND RESOURCES TO EXAMINE FUTURE USE IN PRACTICE.**
Meeting the Needs of Professionals who Work with BME/Immigrant Parents

Despite the relatively low numbers using the toolkit, it appears that it is meeting a need, in that components core to the project – Parenting Styles and Parenting in a Diverse Society – are used significantly more than other sections. The qualitative findings further corroborate that the project is meeting a practice need, irrespective of the nature of use. Some practitioners use the Toolkit in a preparatory manner before working with parents; others use it directly with parents, often as a reassurance or guide to ensure that all major issues are addressed. However, all practitioners find it useful. For the most part, it is a supplementary resource, used in tandem with existing work programmes or strategies. It adds to practice. A number of significant suggestions were made to overcome gaps in the Toolkit: the use of vignettes, the updating of material, a specific focus on the early years, information relating to trauma, and including information on cultures.

The extent of non-use of the Toolkit is interesting to note. Questionnaire respondents indicated that it was not being used for a variety of reasons, including: that they were not working directly with BME/immigrant parents; that it was not relevant to their immediate work; or that they were planning to use it in the future. Furthermore, 75% identified workplace or organisational barriers to using the resources. When asked what might support the use of the set of resources overall, the majority (almost 40%) responded ‘nothing’. These findings and their implications must be seen within the context of the significant reduction in funding which statutory and voluntary organisations in both parts of Ireland since this project began. Recent research (Harvey, 2010; 2012) has highlighted the significant number of jobs being lost in the community and voluntary sector as a result of funding cutbacks and resultant service retrenchment, while cuts to public sector organisations, frontline service delivery organisations especially which are heavily represented in the attendance lists of the CART days, have been well documented in recent times. Such cuts place pressure on already stretched services, often require smaller teams of staff to do more with less, and place a toll on professional development and opportunities to reflect on and share learning. The context in which this project was developed is far different from the one in which the learning has been and is to be applied.

In summation, while gaps were identified in both, the Toolkit and Information Pack are valuable resources being used as supplementary supports for practitioners in their work with BME/immigrant parents. Participants in this research place value on them and, in tandem with the learning from the CART days, feel that they enhance their work with these parents.

The evaluation team is of the view that the resources commissioned by the PMC supplement and add value to professional practice with BME/immigrant parents specifically in relation to parenting and diversity. It also has a more general application for practitioners who provide parent support. However, there is potential scope for signposting to additional resources, such as characteristics of different cultures.

**RECOMMENDATION THREE:** IN ANY POTENTIAL REVISIONS TO THE TOOLKIT THE POSSIBILITY OF ADDING SIGNPOSTS TO ONLINE OR HARDCOPY SOURCES OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

**RECOMMENDATION FOUR:** CONSIDER REFINING THE INFORMATION PACK TO REFLECT MORE LOCAL INFORMATION, OR SIGNPOSTING PRACTITIONERS AND PARENTS TO SOURCES OF LOCAL INFORMATION.

The mainstreaming strategy has clearly been one which has worked. In total, 427 students received the CART day and Globe resources, either while on placement in organisations or in full-time education. This represents a significant contribution to current professional education and training courses and future professional practice in Ireland. Moreover, the cataloguing of Globe resources in
these institutions’ libraries and programme resource rooms is another positive indicator, as is the potential to make the toolkit available electronically.

The positive findings from interviews with course coordinators and lecturers corroborate the approach put forward by Culturewise and affirmed by the PMC. All interview participants spoke positively about the provision process of the CART days. More significantly, perhaps, are the findings on the anticipated outcomes of such a mainstreaming approach. Evidence from this research is very positive: all lecturers placed value on the training and the resources and their suitability to the particular programmes to which they were provided. Furthermore, data indicate that elements of the resources are already being incorporated into professional development and other modules in these institutions, while others are planning to do so in the coming academic years.

The evaluation team is of the view that the mainstreaming approach adopted by the PMC and Culturewise is useful and makes a valuable contribution to professional education, and a potentially valuable contribution to future professional practice, in Ireland.

**RECOMMENDATION FIVE:** The provision of an electronic toolkit is a positive, cost-effective development in sustaining the *Globe*. However, it is clear that the resources, in tandem with the CART day, have made the most impact. Any electronic circulation of the toolkit should be done so with consideration for the CART day developed by Culturewise.

**RECOMMENDATION SIX:** In addition to this successful mainstreaming approach, the PMC or member organisations should consider a dissemination plan for the findings of this evaluation and learning from the Globe more generally.

In summation, the *Globe:* All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents has been a worthwhile endeavour which meets the needs of practitioners working to support BME/Immigrant parents.

**RECOMMENDATION SEVEN:** The PMC or member organisations should seek the support of relevant agencies and funding bodies to update the materials as required and continue the delivery of the programme.