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# **The BELONG Programme**

## **An Early Implementation Evaluation Report**

(Report 1 of 3 in the evaluation of the programme)

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July 2011



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CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE



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# About the Child and Family Research Centre

The Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC) at the National University of Ireland, Galway was established in 2001 as a policy unit and expanded into a Centre, launched by President McAleese, in 2007. The CFRC is a partnership between the Health Service Executive (HSE) and NUI Galway. In 2008, it was awarded the first UNESCO chair for the Republic of Ireland on the theme of 'Children, Youth and Civic Engagement'. It is widely recognised as being at the forefront of research, education and training in Family Support theory and practice. It engages in research, evaluation and service design relating to practice, policy and interventions in the lives of children. All research undertaken by the CFRC is strongly connected to applied work for children and families, and relevant to a broad range of stakeholders, including service users, policy-makers, politicians, service managers and front-line staff.

The CFRC is strongly concerned with best practice and engaged in the evaluation and delivery of interventions that are altering child welfare services and the market for research on children in Ireland. Through its partnership with the HSE, the CFRC is at the heart of policy, research and evaluation activities that inform the delivery system for child health and welfare, and is engaged in a range of assessments of new and internationally tested interventions and initiatives aimed at targeting social and economic disadvantage among children and families. The CFRC has expanded in response to need in the practice world and is closely aligned with the Atlantic Philanthropies' programme of investment in sites and services to improve outcomes for children in Ireland in the domains of physical and mental health, education and community connectedness.

Across all its teaching, research and education activities, the CFRC's strong links to practice and expertise in the training and support of professionals engaged in service delivery has considerable value for the project proposed. Much of the CFRC's current portfolio of contracted work involves assisting services in designing interventions that are needs-based, flexible, accessible and delivered in partnership. In particular, the CFRC has extensive research and evaluation experience with complex community initiatives involving a broad range of stakeholders and agencies.

For further information, please see [www.childandfamilyresearch.ie](http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie)

# Acknowledgements

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- **Community representatives, parents and young people** – who gave of their time to talk to the research team about their experiences of BELONG.
- **Expert Advisory Group** – for help with and feedback on all things related to the evaluation.
- **BELONG's Board of Management** – which acted as a sounding board for the development of the Evaluation Plan and for feedback on this report.
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- **Israel Hontivalla and Paul Pope, Programme Managers of BELONG (former and current, respectively)** – for their advice and guidance.

# 1. Evaluating the BELONG Programme

This report documents the early implementation phase of the BELONG Programme and forms the first report of 3 in the overall evaluation of the BELONG Programme. The overarching aim of this chapter is to provide a context for the report. Therefore, the first section offers a summary of the background to and objectives of the BELONG Programme. The second section supplies information on the overall evaluation plan for the programme, while the third section places this Early Implementation Report in the context of the agreed outputs from the overall evaluation process.

## The BELONG Programme: Background and Objectives

BELONG is a family support programme dedicated to promoting a sense of BELONGing among Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)<sup>1</sup> children and young people in the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), Southern Area of Northern Ireland. The service is targeted at children, young people and their families who have been identified by professionals in the health, education and community sectors as being in need of additional support. The service is aimed at BME children aged 7-12 years and is part of an overall strategy for 0-18 year-old BME children and young people in the area.

The strategy to realise the overarching outcome of the BELONG Programme – to promote a sense of BELONGing – is achieved through the following set of more specific outcomes:

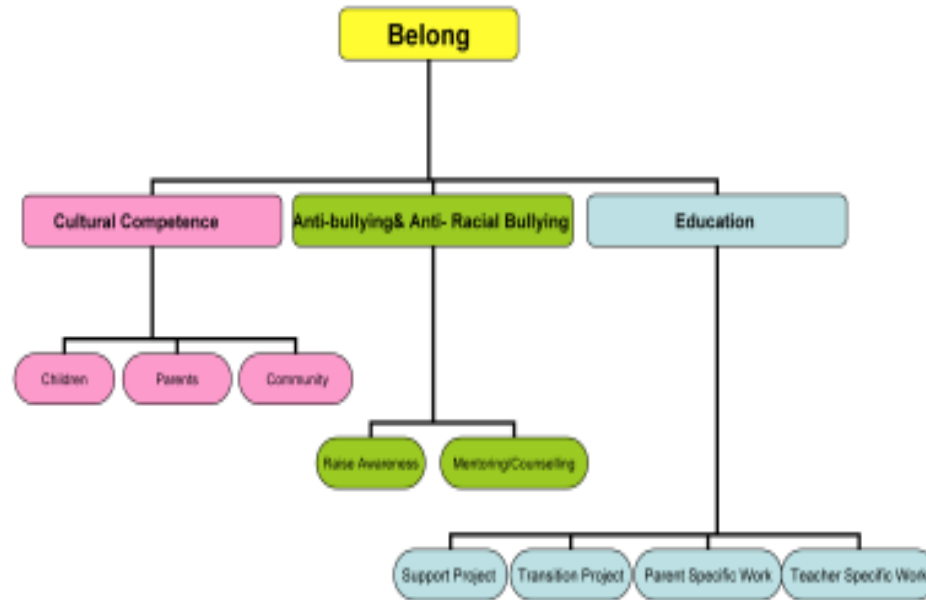
- **To increase cultural confidence and competence:** In order to have a sense of BELONGing to the wider community, it is important to be confident in one's own cultural identity and to be aware of others. But also, in relation to the wider environment, in order for children to have a sense of BELONGing, their environment and the services within it (in particular school and play/leisure activities through clubs and other social groups) must reflect the culture of all BME groups and address their needs appropriately.
- **To increase participation in clubs and schools:** As a means of increasing BELONGing, BME children and young people need to participate equally with peers from the dominant culture.
- **To increase educational achievement of Traveller children:** Children cannot have a sense of BELONGing if they are not in school and achieving in school.
- **To reduce bullying and racial bullying:** Being bullied because of one's ethnic background will obviously reduce one's sense of BELONGing to the wider community.
- **To increase resilience:** Being able to deal effectively and positively with the variety of exclusionary actions by individuals and institutions is critical to children having a sense of BELONGing.

The BELONG Programme is made up of 3 separate sub-programmes – the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme, the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racial Bullying Programme, and the Education Programme. As shown in Figure 1, each sub-programme is accompanied by a number of interventions, aimed at achieving the respective aims of the 3 sub-programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Black and Minority Ethnic' is used as an umbrella term to refer to all children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Irish Traveller children and children from European migrant families as well as Chinese and Asian children.

**Figure 1: Core sub-programmes and interventions within the BELONG Programme**



## Overall Evaluation of BELONG

In May 2010, an evaluation plan for the BELONG Programme, developed by the Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC), NUI Galway, in conjunction with the BELONG Team, was accepted by the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) at a meeting convened in Belfast. The plan delineated a process by which the CFRC would conduct a comprehensive formative and summative evaluation of the BELONG Programme. In particular, the objectives of the evaluation were:

- to establish the extent to which the intended medium-term outcomes of the programme have been achieved;
- to establish the extent to which the intended outcomes of the interventions within the overall programme have been achieved;
- to establish the relative contribution of individual interventions to the overall programme outcomes;
- to establish factors underpinning programme/intervention success or otherwise;
- to establish factors facilitating or constraining the implementation of the programme/intervention.

The plan set out details of a dual evaluation strategy, encompassing a programme-level and intervention-level evaluation. A key part of the programme-level evaluation will be a focus on the systemic level, which will examine what the BELONG Programme achieved for children and parents. This will require attention to programme-level outcomes, the relationship to intervention-level outcomes and to the added value that emerges from the full range of BELONG activities. For the intervention-level evaluation, each of the 3 BELONG sub-programmes has a set of core interventions, as shown in Figure 1. The evaluation is currently investigating (in conjunction with the Programme Team) how each of these interventions is working on their own terms.

## Early Implementation Report

In line with good evaluation practice, it was agreed from the outset that the findings of the evaluation of the BELONG Programme would not just be presented in a final report upon



completion of the programme in 2012. Instead, the Evaluation Team agreed to provide 3 separate evaluation outputs:

- Starting in reverse chronological order, the last of these will be a **Final Evaluation Report** in June 2012. This will present an analysis of thematic-based findings emanating from the intervention-level evaluation. This strategy will ensure that the core learning from the BELONG Programme is collated and reported on appropriately.
- Prior to the final report, an **Interim Report** will be produced by September 2011. This report will capture the first set of findings gathered from the intervention-level activities, as well as offering detailed commentary on the programme development to date.
- Prior to both these reports, it was agreed that an **Early Implementation Report** would be provided to BELONG by the Evaluation Team by April 2011. It is this report that is the focus of this document. The overall aim of this report is to investigate and document the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the BELONG Programme up to March 2011 and in doing so, to provide formative information and clear recommendations for the continuing development of the programme.

## Methodology for the Early Implementation Report

Considering the overall aim of the Early Implementation Report, the Evaluation Team used the following methods of data collection to specifically address early implementation both at the programme and intervention level (see *Table 1 for summary of sources and methods*):

### A. Programme Level

- A report baselining the extent and nature of the policy landscape for BME children in Northern Ireland (see *Appendix 1*).
- Stakeholders' views on BELONG's impact on BME policy development in Northern Ireland (see *Chapter 2*).
- Stakeholders' observations on the early implementation of the BELONG model and areas for further development (see *Chapter 2*).

### B. Intervention Level

- A review of the interventions that have occurred within the 3 sub-programmes of BELONG to date (see *Chapter 3*).
- Focus group interviews with staff on their perceptions of the early implementation phase (see *Chapter 3*).
- BELONG Staff and Board Planning Day, Dundalk – January 2011 (see *Chapter 3*).

**Table 1: Sources and methods of data collection for BELONG's Early Implementation Report at both programme and intervention level**

Level of evaluation	Source of data	No. of participants	Methods of data collection
Programme level	1. Literature/Policy documents	<i>not applicable</i>	Literature review
	2. Stakeholders ( <i>views on BELONG's impact on policy</i> )	5	One-to-one interviews and Telephone interviews
	3. Stakeholders ( <i>observations on development of BELONG's model</i> )	5	
Intervention level	1. BELONG Team ( <i>information on interventions</i> )	<i>not applicable</i>	One-to-one discussions
	2. BELONG Team ( <i>views on early implementation</i> )	5	Focus group
	3. Planning Day, January 2011	12	Focus group
<b>Total no. of participants</b>		<b>27</b>	

## Structure of Report

Following this introduction, the evaluation report consists of 3 further chapters, dealing with the following areas:

- **Chapter 2** baselines the existing policy landscape for BME children in Northern Ireland and presents data from key stakeholders in BELONG on their perceptions of BELONG's impact to date on policy development for BME children in Northern Ireland. The discussion concludes with observations from key stakeholders on the strengths and weaknesses of the early implementation of the BELONG model.
- **Chapter 3** examines early implementation at the intervention level. In the first section, data gathered from the BELONG staff team on their perceptions of the early implementation phase is presented. In the second section, data baselining the nature of services available for the BME Community prior to BELONG is presented. In the third section, each of the 3 sub-programmes is taken separately, with information on each programme and what it set out to do, the nature of the implementation and the key learning on each.
- **Chapter 4** discusses the key findings from the early implementation data, offering formative guidance and recommendations to the BELONG Board, Operational Management Team and Staff Team regarding the future direction of the BELONG Programme.

## 2. Early Implementation at Programme Level

In the Evaluation Plan for BELONG, the CFRC Team described a four-pronged approach to the evaluation at programme level, focusing on the following areas:

- an assessment of the medium-term outcomes;
- the BELONGing Index;
- policy landscape and service change;
- a description of the development of the BELONG model.

Given the nature of this Early Implementation Report, it is not planned to comment on the assessment of the medium-term-outcomes or the results from the BELONGing Index; these will be covered in detail in the Interim Report in September 2011. For the purposes of the present report, this discussion will focus on the latter two areas – policy landscape and service change, and the development of the BELONG model.

### Policy Landscape and Service Change

From the outset, the BELONG Programme set out to instigate change at a number of levels – the individual level of the child, for the young person and the family, at community level and at service and policy level. To investigate the process to date by which the BELONG Programme has interacted with and led to change in policy on and the delivery of services to BME children and families, the Evaluation Team has examined two main areas. The first task undertaken was to document and baseline the existing policy landscape for BME children in Northern Ireland. The second task involved interviewing a set of key stakeholders involved with BELONG to gauge their views on BELONG's impact on policy development for BME children to date. Information on both of these areas is now provided.

### Policy Landscape for BME Children – A Baseline

A detailed analysis of core policy documents has been completed by the Evaluation Team as a means of baselining the extent and nature of the policy landscape for BME children in Northern Ireland (*see Appendix 1 for full details*). First, the data describes the international context relevant to BME children and their families, while also examining the European Union (EU) Directives that apply in this regard. The core legislative and policy setting in Northern Ireland is outlined, with some mention of the political developments that have impacted on their progress. It concludes by examining the 3 key themes of rights, empowerment and participation of BME children and their families.

The Evaluation Team found that in Northern Ireland, policy and practice relating to BME children cuts across diverse sectors, including, among others, Human Rights, Childcare Law, Racial Equality Law, law in relation to asylum seekers and separated children, and Immigration Law. This has the effect that BME children's rights can often be seen in a fragmented way. Therefore, a core finding emerging from the baselining exercise is that it is clear that a myriad of policies exist, but they are not cross-referenced against poverty, disability or other disadvantages. As suggested by one BELONG Board Member, this has the effect that disadvantaged BME children are '*just not at the party*' unless they are specifically targeted with purposefully designed interventions.

This policy landscape section will be revisited in both the Interim and Final Evaluation Reports to see if BELONG has made any inroads into bringing about a more joined-up way of thinking in policy and legislative terms for the needs of BME children and their families.

## Stakeholders' Views on BELONG's Impact on BME Policy Development

In addition to baselining the extent and nature of the policy landscape for BME children in Northern Ireland, the Evaluation Team also conducted a series of one-to-one interviews with 5 members of BELONG's Board. The data were collected to assess the perceptions that stakeholders had on how effective BELONG has been in influencing BME policy since the programme began.

## Key Aspirations in relation to BME Legislation, Policy and Practice

When the Board members were asked what they saw as the key aspirations BELONG had in relation to BME legislation, policy and practice, the following set of common points emerged from the discussions:

- Gain representation on the Board from key personnel within Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Department of Education and voluntary agencies.
- Identify current services to the BME communities.
- Influence positively current and upcoming legislation and policy for enhanced outcomes for BME children and their families by identifying where upcoming policy is deficient and by outlining appropriate changes.
- Enhance community cohesion and take an integrated approach by working across all BME communities and service providers.
- Ensure that policies are cross-referenced.

## What has BELONG Achieved so far?

In reviewing this early phase of BELONG's implementation, the following achievements were cited by interviewees from the BELONG Board:

- **Establishment of the BELONG Board:** The establishment of a Board that represents members of the local BME Community, the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. In specific terms, the organisations involved are the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP), Wah Hep Chinese Community Association, Children's Services Planning (which is the Northern Ireland-wide interagency planning process, lead by the Health and Social Care Board), Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), Department of Education (DE) and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT).
- **Organic development of the BELONG Programme:** Once funding for BELONG was secured, the decision was taken by the Board to publicly launch the programme in May 2009. This decision was based on two considerations. Firstly, the need for services for the BME Community had been empirically proven prior to that by the research conducted for the Board by Queen's University, Belfast. It was therefore imperative that interventions, albeit on a small scale, would begin immediately. Secondly, the Board opted for an organic development of the BELONG Programme, as distinct from a more programmatic model of development. With the latter, all components of the model, such as staffing, would have to be at an optimal level before the programme would start. Given the need for services, this was not an option for the BELONG Board. Therefore, despite the inherent '*suck it and see difficulties*' associated with the organic development of the programme, it was very much a strength of the BELONG process, ensuring that need began to be met immediately.
- **Representation on Southern Area Children and Young People's Services Planning Committee:** The BELONG Programme works from the perspective that influencing policy for BME children is best placed within a process for *all* children, because all children have a right to all supports and services and the needs of vulnerable BME children can be addressed from within that process. BELONG Board members are on the Southern Area Children and Young People's Services Planning Committee, which means that BELONG is in a position to be able to influence what agencies do together when they are planning and commissioning services through children's services planning. There is evidence of strong leadership and support from within the Health and Social Care Board (which manages children's services planning) for the programme's aims.
- **Representation to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM):** Through their participation on the Children Services Planning Committee, BELONG has an impact on making sure that the indicators for the OFMDFM Action Plan

in relation to *Our Children – Our Pledge 2008-2011* works on two levels: at the level of the statutory agencies and at the OFMDFM level. The next Action Plan covering the years 2011-2014 is currently being prepared.

- **Mapping of services, statutory and voluntary agencies working with BME children:** BELONG has successfully carried out a mapping exercise and identified a wide range of voluntary, community, statutory agencies and Government departments that are stakeholders in relation to policy for BME children and their families. This is a resource for others working with BME communities and for the members of the communities.
- **Creation of strong communication network:** BELONG has developed strong links with many of the groups representing BME communities. Through personal contact and through the BELONG Programme's website, there has been widespread dissemination to actual and potential stakeholders throughout the region.
- **Creation of consultation process for children and BME Consultative Forum:** BELONG has created a consultation process for engaging with children, their parents and the BME communities, thereby enabling them to make informed input to policy, such as the Bill of Rights and Education for Everyone. A particularly successful part of the process was the consultation and advocacy work with children to give their input into the consultation for the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Bill. As one participant noted, *'It is unusual for children to input into the consultation process in such a strong way. I have never seen anything that was so good. Usually children are not facilitated to understand the concepts involved and [they] get marginalised. The way in which the consultation was carried out was influenced by STEP and was based on values'*. The children were invited to visit Stormont to make their presentation; however, this had to be subsequently cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. The BME Consultative Forum has now been established and is involved when submissions to legislation and policy are being prepared.
- **Southern Area Action for Travellers (SAAT):** BELONG is a member of SAAT, which is a multiagency, multisectoral alliance, including Travellers, committed to promoting social inclusion, health, education and well-being of Travellers in, or visiting, the Southern area of Northern Ireland. The collective aim of the alliance is to work together at strategic and operational levels to coordinate and maximise appropriate actions with Travellers, which will improve health, education, accommodation and quality of life outcomes. BELONG is also a member of the Newry and Mourne, Armagh and Craigavon Travellers Support Groups. In relation to Coalisland and Dungannon, BELONG has regular meetings with the Community Development and Health Worker, An Tearmann, with responsibility for Travellers.
- **Partnership working:** BELONG has engaged successfully with a host of groups and agencies in its catchment area. This process has created an increased awareness among the BELONG Team of the needs of the BME communities. It has also served to publicise among other organisations and groups the help available from BELONG.
- **Responsive to need:** In the early implementation stage, the numbers requesting a service from BELONG grew quickly and reinforced the evidence for the need of the service. Being responsive to need, BELONG created new links with many organisations and stronger links with others, including the Migrant Community.
- **Media coverage:** BELONG instigated a media campaign across 9 sites and 3 press releases were made. Good links have now been developed between BELONG and the local newspapers.
- **Submissions made by BELONG to upcoming legislation and policies:** In addition to these achievements for BELONG, Board members interviewed also identified areas in which BELONG had made submissions in relation to the needs of BME children and their families. These include the following:
  - **Health:** BELONG has fed into reviews by the Children Services Planning process and argued successfully that subgroups on ethnicity and disability should be retained at a regional level so that they have both a regional remit and in addition the findings can be passed down to local level. The new Northern Ireland-wide Strategic Children's Services Planning Network, in which BELONG is represented, was established in January 2011 and has a subgroup on BME children.
  - **Education:** The draft Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) Policy is concerned with community relations and racial equality. It

proposes a new racial equality strategy for educating children and young people to develop self-respect, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination. The CRED will also contribute to the development of an enhanced anti-bullying strategy. BELONG has fed into the consultation process, which finished in November 2010. One issue identified by BELONG is that there should be mandatory reporting by schools of bullying and incidents of racial harassment. Also, through work with the Equality Commission, BELONG has been involved in developing the new Traveller Action Plan.

- **Child Poverty Strategy:** The draft Child Poverty Strategy is currently out for consultation and BELONG has made submissions to it. On a recent fact-finding visit to Northern Ireland, the Commission on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/GBR/4) stated that the new strategy *'is a particular concern in Northern Ireland, where over 20 per cent of children reportedly live in persistent poverty. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that the Government's strategy is not sufficiently targeted at those groups of children in most severe poverty and that the standard of living of Traveller children is particularly poor'*.
- **Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration:** Social cohesion is challenged by migration and social diversity, and can be addressed by working on the underlying causes and by building communities' resilience. Developing a sense of BELONGing and a commitment to a shared future are also vital in progressing towards social cohesion. The Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Bill (CSI), which was out for consultation, is now closed. The CSI advocates an interagency approach. It does not propose to replace the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland, but instead proposes a framework for delivery of aspects of the strategy in a more cohesive way. BELONG has fed into the consultation through a developed consultation process with BME children (*described above*) and through work with the BME Consultative Forum. The changes that BELONG would like to see in the new CSI policy include *'a more cohesive, sharing and integrated society. But there are issues around how the new CSI will be managed and that there will be an action/implementation plan following on from the CSI Bill ... The indicators in relation to CSI need to be refocused to reflect the needs of the BME children identified during the consultation process'* (BELONG Services Development Plan 2009, pp. 25-26).
- **Equality:** Submissions have been made to the Single Equality Bill and to the Bill of Rights.
- **Citizen Bill:** Critical policy inputs were made to the UK Citizen Bill on tying citizenship to the capacity to speak English. BELONG also identified that the issues of migration go beyond Northern Ireland in that they are under UK administration.
- **Engagement with Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY):** NICCY produced a report entitled *Rhetoric or Reality: A Review of Children's Rights in Northern Ireland, 2007/2008*. This has contributed much to identifying weaknesses in the delivery of services to children. In addition to carrying out research, another of NICCY's functions is to act in an advocacy role with young people where their parents or guardians are not able to do so. This is particularly relevant for looked-after children. NICCY can advocate where, for example, children have complaints regarding Health or Social Services. In addition, NICCY has taken legal cases on behalf of children in relation to their rights. These functions serve to empower vulnerable children. BELONG ran activities with a group of BME children in relation to NICCY's 'Education for Everyone' month, addressing children's right to education, the need for education and how education can be enjoyed. This identified the need for additional English language classes for children within the BME Community. The work completed by BELONG and the groups with which it worked were acknowledged by a special award from the Commissioner.
- **Influencing practice with other agencies:** BELONG has already had an influence on the implementation of the funding through the Family Matters Strategy. Also, a number of programmes are incorporating BELONG's views in relation to cultural competence.

## Further Work Required in Relation to BME Policy

In addition to the perceived successes of BELONG to date within the policy arena (see above), interviews with the Board members also elicited information on a number of areas that BELONG still needs to develop:

- **Policy relating to the Traveller community:** There were a significant number of comments regarding the work that needs to be carried out with the Traveller Community. Firstly, there is a need for more strategic work with statutory agencies around increasing school attendance for Traveller children at second level. However, there was an acknowledgement that in the absence of Education Support Workers, this was not possible to date. Secondly, it was noted that BELONG consults with Traveller parents and children on a continual basis, both directly and through links they have created with An Tearmann, Armagh Travellers Support Group (ATSSG), Craigavon Travellers Support Committee (CTSC) and workers within the Newry Southern Education and Library Board and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. However, it is important that this work is not lost and that BELONG continues to make every effort to involve the Traveller Community and its representatives in the consultative process. Thirdly, there was also agreement that a new primary care model, similar to that developed in the Republic of Ireland, is required. As one of the participants commented: *'What would make the biggest difference? I would look at the Primary Care Strategy [in the Republic of Ireland, that led to the development of primary care workers [for the Traveller Community]. To work from that kind of model, to replicate it here. [This would involve] proper training and community development processes to build it up.'*
- **Implementation of policy:** As noted earlier, policy relating to BME children and families straddles different policy strands, such as adult migrant workers, racial policy, policy relating to children and to the religious divide, and others. The challenge is to ensure that policy is linked across the different statutory agencies. The importance of this was reflected in the following comment by one of the interviewees: *'Much of our work is implementing "good" policy and looking at where the policy is not linking. It is how policies are implemented. Policies are "value free" so if you are trying to change the values that militate against [vulnerable groups] ... for instance, the linkage in policies is not good in core policy in relation to Travellers – the outcomes for them are poorer. Policies are "siloed" in that they are not linked to ensure that the child is cross-referenced across sets of disadvantage.'* There was agreement among the interviewees that it is important to draft policy in the light of other existing policies, in effect to carry out a proofing or impact assessment of how this new policy will impact on existing policies in relation to their impact on children. A further point made by one of the interviewees, about the way that policy is implemented on the ground, highlights the situation regarding the Extended Schools Policy: *'The set of policies is good, but the implementation is poor. For example, the Extended School Policy supplies increased funds to schools for providing additional supports for disadvantaged children, including BME children. There is no stipulation that schools account for the ways in which these funds are used to support vulnerable children in their school.'* Therefore, the implementation of policy is seen as inadequate in many cases and BELONG sees its role as challenging this when it arises.
- **Inflexible Government structures:** Some Government structures can be inflexible and slow to respond to service users needs, making cross-statutory agency work difficult. This response can be contrasted with other statutory agencies that are able to be more flexible in order to facilitate the delivery of services to vulnerable groups. BELONG needs to continue working on trying to deal with this issue.
- **Funding environment:** The current funding environment is challenging, with many competing interests and groupings looking for funding for their services. Therefore, the interviewees suggested that the BELONG Programme needs to be able to show that it is achieving what it set out to do.

As noted by one of the interviewees, BELONG has an aspiration for the future in relation to the ways in which services to BME children should be delivered. The sentiment addressed in the following comment should, therefore, remain the central focus for BELONG's work: *'We are operating on two levels – at that of hearts and minds and at the policy level. Flowing from the core of BELONG work in cultural competence, I would like to see all services for children culturally competent. People [should be] aware of BME children's needs at a universal level. They*

*shouldn't see themselves as not there ... it's about making sure there is proper training and proper development for staff within basic services like speech and language service, mental health in relation to awareness of children's ethnic heritage. That the person has a knowledge and a way of being and knowing about the child whose heritage is somewhere else may need to be addressed in a specific way. It is not easily laid down.'*

## Development of the BELONG Model

The ability of the evaluation to identify transferable learning, which can then be used in other jurisdictions working with BME children, is of central importance. Therefore, using data collected from the 5 key BELONG stakeholders (Board members), this section provides initial comments and observations on the early implementation of the BELONG model, as well as identifying the areas that need further development. The data is subdivided into the key strengths associated with the development of the BELONG model, the perceived challenges in this regard and a list of suggested areas that need to be addressed in order to develop the BELONG model further.

## Perceived Strengths of BELONG's Model Development

The interviewees identified a number of common areas that they perceived to be examples of the successful development of the BELONG model. These were as follows:

- **Clear identification of target group needs underpinned by research evidence:** Respondents recognised that BELONG has identified the clear needs of the BME target group, which is supported by high-quality and strong evidence-based research. This underpinned the planning stage from 2007-2009. The BELONG Board engaged in a positive collective learning experience about evaluation processes with the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway. This greatly helped the design of a cohesive evaluation plan. As noted by one interviewee, *'You need to constantly monitor, ensuring outcomes are being achieved and [that] you have your feet on the ground'*.
- **Operating at a high level to influence policy:** The need to operate at as high a level as possible with key decision-makers within Government and statutory agencies was highlighted. Because the programme is outside the mainstream, BELONG relies on Government to achieve its objectives. Good leadership and support from key decision-makers within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) has been vital for influencing policy. As noted by one Board member, *'You need to operate at as high a level as possible, i.e. with Government departments and with policy-makers. In the education strand, with Higher Executive Officers or higher. At the level of the school, with School Principals to bring them on board. Best practice visits spread the learning and increase involvement'*.
- **A solid Board based on trust:** The prior existence of a strong trusting partnership between those involved with BELONG, and a clear set of priorities gave resilience to the BELONG model, enabling the programme to withstand the difficulties of a long gestation and planning phase. One interviewee commented: *'There was already an existing partnership that was clear in its mind about what it wanted to shift. The partnership was able to withstand the demands of a very long and demanding process, which meant the statutory agencies working alongside the community and voluntary groups and which had a good awareness of the needs on the ground'*.
- **The Board holds a wide range of experience, knowledge and perspectives:** The BELONG Board has representatives from the statutory, community, health, education and voluntary sectors. In addition BELONG has a good relationship with the funder Atlantic Philanthropies and this funding organisation provides strong support for the aims of the programme. The recruitment of management staff with in-depth knowledge and experience of issues relating to BME children and their families enabled the programme to identify pertinent issues quickly and develop strategies to resolve them, thus moving the programme forward.
- **Strong programme management:** The initial Programme Manager had in-depth experience of the issues relating to BME children and a clear vision for the programme, as does the current Programme Manager.



- **Strong parent organisation:** There have been great benefits to placing BELONG within STEP, the parent organisation – *'It is a rights-based, grass-roots community development organisation. STEP leadership has good vision and experience of the issues'*.
- **Excellent linkages with BME Community organisations:** BELONG has meshed very well with existing structures and created good links with BME and Traveller organisations, some of which had existing structures and networks in place. In addition, the recruitment of staff from BME communities has enhanced these linkages. This has enabled the widespread dissemination of information about BELONG to the target groups. One interviewee noted that *'Networking with other organisations has increased the dissemination of learning and as the Children Services Planning process goes regional, this spreads the message'*.
- **Unique design of the model of service delivery:** The BELONG model is seen as unique in the way that it engages with all BME groups together, instead of separating them into their different ethnic groups. BELONG concentrates on BME families with the objective of identifying the best ways of adding value by complementing existing services. This idea was summed up by the following comment: *'Now all the pieces are in place – it is a good service design. Its strength is that [we are] working with established BME Community groups and harnessing their experience and knowledge, e.g. Craigavon Travellers Support Committee ... The fact that it is a multilateral initiative in school and out of school using the Bronfenbrenner Model and identifying the risk and protective factors. Its value is based in children's rights.'*

## Perceived Challenges Facing BELONG's Model Development

In addition to identifying the strengths of the BELONG model (see above), the interviewees also cited a number of challenges in its development. These were as follows:

- **Responsive to need:** In the early implementation stage, the numbers requesting a service from BELONG grew quickly and reinforced the evidence for the need of the service. In the early stages, BELONG created new links with many organisations and stronger links with others, including the Migrant Community. The value of investing that time is now bearing fruit in the strength of these linkages. BELONG will need to continue to meet the needs of the target group since they can often change quickly. Therefore, the programme needs to be flexible enough to perceive these changes and to respond quickly.
- **Being realistic and grounded:** As noted by one interviewee, despite the most careful planning, when it comes to programme implementation, *'none of it works as you expected! ... It is important to keep your feet on the ground, constantly challenge reality and don't get carried away by your own music'*. It is essential to ensure that the flow of information to those with a stake in the programme is maintained – ensuring that those stakeholders not actively involved at certain stages are kept in the loop so that their buy-in is retained and their needs continue to be addressed. There may also be jealousy on the part of other bodies and this needs to be sensitively negotiated.
- **Dealing with organisational inflexibility in statutory bodies:** During the early stages of the development of BELONG, the Government administration was going through significant upheaval. Therefore, trying to achieve a buy-in from some Government departments caused frustrating delays. As one interviewee noted, *'Working with statutory agencies can be slow due to autocracy, delays, lack of flexibility and lack of commitment. The Education strand of the model has been slow to get established as the political upheaval has impacted. The structures of the SELB have mitigated against their ability to be flexible around the employment of staff to engage with BELONG in the delivery of services to the target group'*. However, at the time of writing, the Education Workers have been employed. On a related note, the effectiveness of BELONG's work has been compromised by the unwillingness of particular schools to engage with the process.
- **Geographic spread:** The wide geographic spread of the region in which BELONG operates has been challenging, not only due to the vast area covered but also because of the differing needs of the communities served. As the target groups are spread throughout the area, a balance has to be achieved between delivering interventions that have an impact without being spread too thinly so that the impact is diluted.

- **Achieving representation and involvement of Travellers:** Although BELONG has Traveller representation on the Board and employs a Traveller sessional support worker, from the outset it has struggled to employ staff from this group. Therefore, the programme continues to encourage greater Traveller involvement.
- **Funding constraints and the threat of marginalisation:** The interviewees raised two funding-related challenges that BELONG has faced. Firstly, as the programme entered the implementation phase, it became clear that there was a requirement for increased funding for translation services and for additional programme costs. This was a significant challenge not foreseen in the initial budgeting process. Secondly, once BELONG's funding comes to an end in 2012, it could find itself within a funding arena where it may be marginalised, with funding potentially being awarded to organisations perceived to be more established. One respondent called this '*the impact of juggernauts*'.

### Future Development of the BELONG Model – Key Considerations

To conclude their thoughts on the development of the BELONG model, the interviewees identified the following issues that need to be addressed in the next phase of programme implementation:

- a focus on creating closer links with Government/OFMDFM/ Department of Education in order to achieve their commitment to the programme;
- increase BELONG's pool of workers from BME backgrounds;
- set up a Service User Forum to increase involvement;
- form a Minority Ethnic Working Group at policy level to influence the Children Services Planning process and policies;
- engage a language-specific worker with Chinese and Urdu parents;
- enhance communication with BME parents to achieve further parental involvement in schools and the education system. There is a need for more work with parents on literacy so that they can help their children and this will have intergenerational benefits;
- increase the budget for sessional translation services;
- increase the budget for programme costs;
- disseminate information about the BELONG model to relevant politicians across each of the Councils in the region;
- convert the BELONG model from its current form into a mainstream model, basing it on the key messages and learning from the programme to date.

### 3. Early Implementation at Intervention Level

Chapter 2 described the early implementation phase of the BELONG Programme, with specific reference to the programme level. Following on from that, the overall aim of this chapter is to examine early implementation at the intervention level. As noted in Chapter 1, the BELONG Programme consists of 3 sub-programmes – Cultural Confidence and Competence, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racial Bullying, and Education (see Figure 1). Each sub-programme has a number of interventions, designed to address the overall aims of the respective sub-programmes.

To address early implementation, the following discussion is divided into three main sections;

- **Data on overall perceptions of BELONG staff** on the early implementation phase.
- **A baseline audit of services** describing:
  - provisions prior to BELONG;
  - new interventions organised by BELONG;
  - interventions organised by BELONG to support existing interventions;
  - a case study outlining the strategic influencing power of BELONG.
- **Analysis of each of the 3 sub-programmes** in the following areas:
  - what the specific sub-programme set out to achieve;
  - implementation to date;
  - what have been the major areas of learning.

#### Overall Perceptions of Staff on Early Implementation Phase

To assess the staff's experiences of the early implementation phase of the BELONG Programme, the Evaluation Team conducted 2 separate focus groups with the BELONG Team – one in late 2010 and one in early 2011. The following points emerged from those discussions.

The BELONG Programme began running its first set of activities for BME children and their families in February 2010. When asked about this period, it was the view of both the Programme Manager (previous) and Administrator, the sole BELONG staff at that time, that perhaps BELONG had '*put itself out there as a service provider too soon*'. At that stage, the service plan was not in place, pre-development work with the communities was not completed and the structure and staff required to roll-out the full programme were absent. Therefore, leading up to and during the spring of 2010, the Programme Manager and Administrator became directly involved in the provision of activities for BME children, which distracted them from their prescribed roles. This will continue to be the case until the new staff are fully operational. Due to requests being received from communities and organisations for BME activities, the decision was taken to respond, despite the lack of programme staff.

Both staff members agreed that in the absence of a full staff complement, the early implementation phase presented a '*sharp learning curve*'. In particular, this manifested itself in working with some groups of BME children who had extremely short attention spans, behavioural difficulties and an understanding that the activities were being run solely for them, to the exclusion of others. Learning how to deal with this situation was central to the success of BELONG in its early stages, with both staff members agreeing that a 3:1 child/staff (or volunteer) ratio was needed in these groups.

During the late summer/early autumn of 2010, three full-time Project Development Workers were appointed. Due to their relatively later-than-planned recruitment, from the onset the new staff were faced with considerable pressure to continue with existing groups and activities, and to get new groups up and running. However, the general feedback from the new staff was that implementation was much slower than expected. They attributed this to the need to build up initial trust and rapport with the communities in which they were based. When this point was discussed in the focus group, there was general consensus that BELONG's Service Plan had not allowed the time for this pre-development work. As suggested by one interviewee, '*We became Project*

*Development Workers first, building trust with our communities, and then slowly moving back to BELONG's interventions'.*

As a result, the staff group agreed that during the late summer/early autumn period of 2010, the activities they provided were very reactive to community needs and were short-term, often only running for 6-8 sessions (e.g. one session over 6-8 weeks). This, however, allowed the workers to gauge community need and highlight the help available to the BME Community from BELONG. A downside of the short-term nature of the interventions was that the Evaluation Team was unable to respond quickly enough to help the BELONG Team capture systematic monitoring and evaluation data from these interventions. This was primarily due to the prerequisites of their University Ethics Committee and the need to submit applications for approval for any planned data collection. Despite the absence of an agreed, structured systematic data collection system, BELONG has continued to collect monitoring and evaluation data from participants in these interventions.

Another issue identified by staff in the early implementation phase was specifically to do with Travellers. The staff found collectively that often when activities had been planned for Traveller children, they did not show up. When they investigated this, they found that it was often due to attendance at a family wedding, a funeral or First Communion. This cultural phenomenon was not considered in the BELONG Service Plan. However, the staff have now learned to be more aware of this issue and how best to deal with it.

Despite these initial early implementation difficulties, the staff group identified a number of successes at the intervention level. These were:

- All staff members have developed strong links with existing community groups on the ground. The success of BELONG depends on the strength of these relationships.
- BELONG has developed a very positive reputation among support services in the community, which are continually coming to BELONG looking for help. Therefore, BELONG has evolved into a sign-posting or gateway service for children or families looking for specific help.
- A major strength of BELONG is that it is very flexible and responsive to need.
- The Programme Manager (previous) suggested that due to the amount of work carried out on planning the mentoring programme, he is now an expert in the theory of mentoring BME children.

## **Baseline Audit of Services among the BME Community**

To provide a baseline from which to gauge BELONG's level of implementation of interventions over time, BELONG's Project Development Workers were asked to complete a baseline audit of services available for the BME Community in their respective areas. The data are presented for each of the geographic areas covered by BELONG under the following 3 headings:

- Provision prior to BELONG.<sup>2</sup>
- New interventions organised by BELONG;
- Interventions organised by BELONG to support existing interventions.

### **NEWRY**

#### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- There was limited programme provision specifically for BME children (aged 7-12) in relation to Cultural Confidence and Competence programmes. The most notable supports were the local language schools, particularly the Polish School where this type of work was delivered. Another notable provision was the 'Culture Club' in Warrenpoint, which offers support to BME children and their families. In addition, St. Vincent de Paul

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, it is not possible to include a full description of these pre-BELONG services. These data are instead contained in the Audit of Services survey, carried out by BELONG prior to the implementation of the programme; this is available from the BELONG project office.

has been a leader in providing English Language classes for Migrant adults for a number of years.

- There was also limited programme provision in relation to anti-bullying and anti-racial bullying. Various aspects were covered in schools and some issues dealt with in local youth clubs. The Challenge for Change Programme had delivered numerous anti-racism workshops to the local BME Community, but these were mostly aimed at adults.
- In relation to education, a number of schools have received funding from the Extended Schools Programme and although a number of activities are currently being offered, there was an identified need for additional academic support.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- Cultural Identity Summer Scheme programme for Traveller children from the Carnagat area, in partnership with Carnagat Community Association.
- Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Workshop with Traveller children, to highlight and discuss their thoughts and feelings on their community.
- 'The Right Ingredients' mentoring programme delivered to BME children in a local youth club and for Traveller children in Killeavy.
- An Education and Learning Club for BME children.
- Information to newly arrived parents, particularly in Education and Learning Club.
- An Art and Crafts Traveller Identity project was delivered for Traveller children, to highlight Traveller Focus Week in December 2010.
- A Traveller Homework Club was set up in St. Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook, to assist Traveller children with their school work.

### **Interventions Organised by BELONG to Support Existing Interventions**

- An Art and Culture Programme delivered to BME children from the Warrenpoint area.
- An Education and Learning programme for BME children in Warrenpoint area, to assist with homework and cover aspects of cultural identity.
- An Art programme in Carnagat with Traveller and Ethnic Majority children, hosted in the local community centre.
- Cultural Art programme in Polish School.
- Information to newly arrived parents.
- Education and lifestyle programme for Traveller and Ethnic Majority children, hosted in the local community centre.
- Information to Traveller parents through the BELONG project in relation to Traveller Focus Week.

## **ARMAGH**

### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- There was limited programme provision specifically for BME communities in the Armagh area in relation to cultural confidence and competence. There have been some schools, however, that were proactive in engaging BME communities and looking at cultural diversity within the school settings.
- There was limited programme provision specifically for BME communities in relation to anti-bullying and anti-racial bullying in the Armagh area. Various aspects were covered in schools and some issues dealt with in local youth clubs. There were a number of schools in the Armagh area with after-school activities, such as academic support, sports, arts and music. In the schools that BELONG has been involved with, BME and Traveller children do attend some of these programmes.
- A notable exception to these gaps was the St. Vincent de Paul, which organisation has worked with Bulgarian families in Armagh, as well as with the Armagh Travellers Support Group.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- A Single Cultural Identity project for Traveller children looked at Traveller identity and cultures. This was organised in partnership with Armagh Travellers Support Group.
- Integrated Summer Scheme in Callanbridge, where Ethnic Majority and Traveller children took part in confidence-building, art and sport activities.
- Right Ingredients Project, a mentoring programme for Traveller groups in Callanbridge.
- Information to newly arriving parents through an information afternoon at Mount St. Catherine's Primary School.
- Information to newly arriving parents through an information night in St. Malachy's School.
- Learning together after-school programme for BME children and parents.

### **Interventions Organised by BELONG to Support Existing Interventions**

- A Homework Club provision in Mount St. Catherine's for BME children.

## **DUNGANNON**

### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- In relation to Single Cultural Identity programmes, the BME Community in Dungannon had access to a Language Club, which teaches the children their own language, history and ethnicity. In addition, the Dungannon Youth United sports club, funded through Neighbourhood Renewal, provides sports activities after the Language Club lessons. An activist from Cunningham's Lane neighbourhood also organises Summer and Christmas events for BME and local families. STEP also ran a Homework Club for BME children, which has now ended.
- After-school activities in Dungannon are provided by the Youth Resource Centre and offer a variety of activities for children and adults. However, BME and Traveller children appear to have limited information about these.
- A group of East Timor parents and children participate in folk dance activities and occasionally represent their culture at a number of community events.
- A group of children and young people were involved in SELB's Youth Services programme held in Dungannon Library.
- STEP's front-line Advice Workers provide information for newly arrived families.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- Education to Everyone programme related to NICCY's 'Education to Everyone Month'. BME children expressed their views on the importance of education and raised issues in relation to bilingual children.
- BME children were consulted on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration policy.
- Halloween History and Art programme for Dungannon BME and Traveller children.
- An integrated dance project, 'SUTEMOS', involved Ethnic Majority and BME children.
- As an introduction to other cultures, BELONG organised a family trip to the Chinese New Year Festival.
- Winter Festival for BME children and families. Represented children art works, performances, folk dances.
- Anti-bullying and anti-racial bullying training for BME parents. A group of Lithuanian parents took part.
- BME children took part in the consultation on the Bill of Rights.
- Parents Consultative Forum. BME parents mostly from Language Club take part.
- 'The Right Ingredients' mentoring programmes have been delivered for Traveller, BME and Ethnic Majority children.

### **Interventions Organised by BELONG to Support Existing Interventions**

- Belfast MELA Festival was attended by a number of BME families.

## **COALISLAND**

### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- The services provided are the Ógras Youth Club, Boxing Club, Krafty Kids and An Tearmann (subsequently closed and then re-established). Most after-school activities were located in schools. Some BME children were attending dance and sport activities in the area.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- Programme in relation to Race Equality Month. Traveller children were asked to design images in relation to 'belonging'. Some of these were subsequently used in the BELONG Calendar.
- Art activities for Traveller children led to the design of the promotional material and poster for Traveller Focus Week.
- Multiple Realities Confidence and Competence-building and digital arts programme for BME children.

### **Interventions Organised by BELONG to Support Existing Interventions**

- Homework Club for Traveller children, running 4 days a week.

## **BANBRIDGE**

### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- The only services specifically available for BME communities in Banbridge have been provided by the Challenge of Change Programme. This concentrated on capacity-building for the communities and mainly involved adults, with evaluations revealing that children in general do not avail of any after-school activities. If they want to use the local leisure centre for swimming or dance lessons, they often have to wait for a year to get a place. The community itself lacks knowledge of services available and feels quite isolated.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- Establishment of the Polish Supplementary School in conjunction with lead members of the Polish community.
- Single Cultural Identity projects for Polish children.
- 'The Right Ingredients' mentoring programme.
- Community awareness-raising (Polish Flavoured Christmas, Launch of Living in Banbridge).
- Information to newly arrived Migrant families (signposting, information-sharing; more work to be done with parents on bullying, sharing information about school systems, etc).
- Support and empowerment to BME communities by offering advice and support, sharing information and assisting/supporting the leaders/volunteers within the community.

## **CRAIGAVON/LURGAN**

### **Provision prior to BELONG**

- Craigavon Travellers Support Committee is the only supporting body for the Traveller Community in this area. In the past, it offered a Homework Club, in-school support for Traveller children and a summer scheme.
- Wah Hep Chinese Association offers support to the community, including a Homework Club once a week for 8-12 year-olds and Chinese language classes.
- Different schools offer a variety of after-school activities.

### **New Interventions Organised by BELONG**

- Single Cultural Identity Programme (Clay/Art/Fun Programme).
- Mentoring programmes.
- Working with parents, e.g. Anti-bullying session for parents.

- Advocacy (children) – Sessions about children’s rights in relation to the Bill of Rights and Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consultations.
- Advocacy (parents) – consultation on the new Neighbourhood Safety Strategy.

### **Interventions Organised by BELONG to Support Existing Interventions**

- Homework Club.
- Cultural festivals and celebration (Chinese New Year).

### **A Case Study of Partnership Working and the Strategic Influencing Power of BELONG**

An important finding to emerge from the baseline audit of services (*see above*) is the way in which BELONG has engaged in partnership working with other service providers across the region. An example of this way of working is provided below, which relates to BELONG’s work in Coalisland.

Prior to BELONG, An Tearmann offered well-established services to the Traveller Community within the Coalisland area. However, the programme developed a number of difficulties, one of which was the small number of children attending the after-school (3) and nursery activities (3). Although excellent staff were in place and the resources were exceptional, the staff’s expertise lay in early years development and due to the position of the venue it was inaccessible to many in the community, including Travellers. Subsequently, the remaining children left the after-school club.

The knock-on effect was that An Tearmann had to take the difficult decision to end its service provision, making its entire staff of 6 redundant. However, this decision was made somewhat easier in that BELONG had already been established and staff were assured that work would continue with the Traveller Community in the area and activities would be offered to children between the ages of 7 and 12. An Tearmann, STEP and Sure Start worked in partnership to secure alternative employment for 2 of these staff to continue to work with the Traveller Community in the Coalisland area, thereby ensuring that expertise and links established were not lost.

At the same time, BELONG had begun to develop links with the Traveller Community in the same area and ran a number of Single Cultural Identity activities for the children within their age range. In November 2010, it ran a pilot Homework Club for a number of children. Due to the success of this pilot, in January BELONG re-opened the Homework Club and had a large number of children in attendance, plus a waiting list. Neighbourhood Renewal recognised that this programme was a model of good practice and agreed to work in partnership with BELONG, offering funding for parallel sessions. The Homework Club now runs 4 days a week, offering 2 groups of children 2 days of homework support each. A further waiting list has now been established.

With advocacy and influencing, BELONG raised its concerns about the children under 7 and through this work and the facilities now being offered to the older children, this allowed An Tearmann to devote its resources to the younger age group. Further partnership working led to the establishment of a Homework Club for 5-6 year-olds; this now also runs 4 days a week and has a total of 15 children attending on a regular basis. Neighbourhood Renewal has been approached for funding to ensure the continuation of this programme.

A core group of cross-organisational workers has been established, including BELONG, STEP, An Tearmann, Sure Start and SELB. Due to the loss of An Tearmann, a gap was also left in relation to pre-school children. Through the advocacy and influencing of the group members and in conjunction with the Traveller parents, 16 children have now been allocated nursery places within the area. This has, in turn, impacted on other services and led to an increase of a further 36 nursery places being offered within the Coalisland area.

The outcomes of this strategic work can be summed up in two ways: Firstly, an holistic approach is now provided to the Coalisland Traveller Community, ensuring joined-up service provision is offered to children aged 0-12 years. This ensures strong, cohesive links between the group and



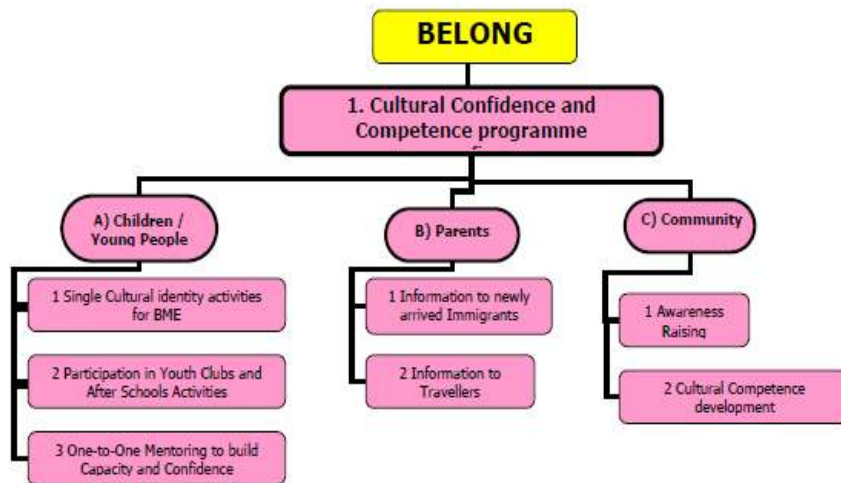
the Traveller Community. Secondly, a multiagency, 'one-stop' information, resource and service provision centre is currently being established within the Coalisland area.

## Analysis of Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme

### What it set out to Achieve

As shown in Figure 2, the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme set out to work at several levels, namely with children and young people, parents and the community. Full details of each of these interventions can be obtained in BELONG's Service Plan Proposal (2009).

**Figure 2: Details of the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme**



### Implementation to Date

Details of the interventions that have taken place are provided below. The overall target number of children BELONG set out to work with within the Single Cultural Identity and Participation in Youth Clubs and After-School Activities was 320. However, up to the end of March 2011, some 496 children have attended these activities, thus surpassing the initial expectations and still with more than one year of the programme left to run.

## SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Single Cultural Identity Activities for BME

The overall aim of these activities is to improve the range of and access to Single Cultural Identity projects, youth and after-school activities, community events and festivals. In terms of the implementation phase, up to the end of March 2011, a total of 239 children were involved in Single Cultural Identity projects across the region (see Table 2). A total of 150 of these were Migrant children, while 89 were Traveller children. The majority of activities for Migrant children were provided in Dungannon (n = 69), while Newry (n = 23) and Coalisland (n = 29) were the locations for the most Single Cultural Identity projects for Traveller children.

**Table 2: Details of Single Cultural Identity projects, by area and group (to March 2011)**

Overall target number of children until end of BELONG = 320 (for both SCI and YC/ASA)	Catchment areas	Migrant children and Settled BME community	Traveller children	Totals x Area
	Dungannon	69	7	76
	Armagh		17	17
	Newry	20	23	43
	Coalisland	10	29	39
	Craigavon	25	13	38
	Banbridge	16		16
	Warrenpoint	10		10
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>239</b>

### Participation in Youth Clubs and After-School Activities

The overall aim of these activities was to support BME children and young people to participate in mainstream youth clubs and after-school activities. Up to the end of March 2011, a total of 257 children participated in youth clubs and after-school activities (see Table 3). A total of 175 Migrant children took part in these activities in Dungannon, while most Traveller children did so in Newry (n = 24) and Armagh (n = 22).

**Table 3: Details of participation in youth clubs and after-school activities, by area and group (to end of March 2011)**

Overall target number of children until end of BELONG = 320 (for both SCI and YC/ASA)	Catchment areas	Migrant children	Ethnic majority <sup>3</sup>	Traveller children	BME children	Totals x Area
	Dungannon	147			15	162
	Armagh	18		22		40
	Newry	10	21	24		55
	Coalisland					
	Craigavon					
	Banbridge					
	Warrenpoint					
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>257</b>

### One-to-One Mentoring

BELONG's initial plan was to run mentoring on an individual basis for 160 BME children. Given the amount of time this would take, together with cost and staffing issues, BELONG decided to focus primarily on group mentoring instead. Following a tendering process, a consultancy company, OPAL Training and Consultancy, was contacted towards the end of 2010 with a view to providing this mentoring. Final discussions on the service-level agreement were held in early 2011. The details of the group mentoring to date are shown in Table 4. OPAL Training and Consultancy piloted the mentoring programme with a group of Traveller children in Armagh. In addition, 2 children were referred for short-term support.

**Table 4: Details of group mentoring activities, by area and group (to end of March 2011)**

Overall target number of children until end of BELONG = 160	Catchment areas	Traveller children	BME children	Totals x Area
	Dungannon	20	20	40
	Armagh	20		20
	Newry	10	10	20
	Coalisland			
	Craigavon		14	14
	Banbridge		8	8
	Warrenpoint			
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>102</b>

<sup>3</sup> One of BELONG's community partner organisations has an inclusion policy which prevented BELONG from running single cultural identity programmes. This explains the term "ethnic majority" being recorded in this instance.

## SERVICES TO PARENTS AND FAMILIES

BELONG has provided the following services to parents and families since it began.

### Information to Newly Arrived Migrant Families

A total of 120 parents were 'signposted' (or given information about services available outside of BELONG that they needed) by BELONG up to the end of March 2011. The issues presented by parents referred mainly to the lack of service provision. BELONG also found that referrals from other agencies came in an 'extremis' situation, where BELONG support is almost irrelevant. Additional details are provided in Appendix 2.

### Information to Traveller Families

BELONG staff have engaged directly with the Traveller Community in all areas. The success of this can be seen in the high attendance levels of Traveller children at activities offered by BELONG. In addition, BELONG has attended fairs and open information days where it has also provided information to parents (see Appendix 2). It has also established links with Toybox, An Tearmann, ATSG, CTSC and Traveller workers in the Newry area. BELONG was also instrumental, in conjunction with the Equality Commission Northern Ireland, in the design of the poster and material used to promote Traveller Focus Week.

## SERVICES TO COMMUNITY

### Awareness-Raising

BELONG set out to increase the awareness and understanding of BME communities and their cultures and traditions. Up to the end of March 2011, a number of events were organised and attended by a large number of the BME Community, for example:

- BELONG organised to take a group of BME families from the Dungannon area to the Chinese New Year Festival at St. George's Market and the Belfast MELA.
- A summer festival was organised for children in Armagh who had participated in the summer scheme. As part of this work, a wall mural was created by the children and unveiled by NICCY.
- A mini-cultural festival was arranged for families in the Dungannon area.
- Children were invited to attend Stormont, but due to bad weather conditions around Christmas, this visit had to be cancelled.
- In Banbridge, a Polish Flavoured Christmas programme was arranged.
- In terms of media coverage, there was a media campaign across 9 sites and 3 press releases. There are now good links developed between BELONG and the local papers.

### Cultural Competence Development for Service Organisations

BELONG also created a training pack in conjunction with Trademark and Southern Regional College (SRC). In partnership with Safe & Well, BELONG will be organising training for teachers in 2011.

Between January and March 2011, 9 community groups in Craigavon and Banbridge have been encouraged by BELONG to take up the Working to involve BME Communities Programme. Organised jointly by YouthNet and the National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland, this programme aims to build individuals' and organisations' capacity to work effectively with BME communities.

## Major Areas of Learning

BELONG held a planning day in January 2011 for all BELONG staff and Board members. At that event, the Evaluation Team was able to gather data on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme. The key points that emerged were:

- The main strength of the programme is the clear focus in the provision of single identity work. There is a clear identified need for the provision of this kind of service and BELONG has covered this gap. There has been acceptance of the programme due to the lack of provision of activities such as these for children in the region.
- The main weakness of the programme to date is related to the frequency of the interventions. In the initial service plan, BELONG was going to cover gaps in the provision of existing services. Currently, the gap has become bigger as there has been a withdrawal in the provision by some agencies and community groups. As a consequence, BELONG has not been able to provide frequent and regular single identity programmes as it would like. Despite acknowledging the fact that the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme has been a success and well attended, BELONG staff have been questioning the potential impact of these activities due to their brevity and lack of continuity. Another weakness lies in the fact that the programme was designed to be carried out with members of the wider community. However, this has not been clearly defined and due to the lack of other services may not now be possible.
- As the demand for these services increases, there is a lack of the necessary staff to run the activities.
- There was an absence initially of an agreed system between the staff and Evaluation Team for the collection of monitoring and evaluation data relating to these interventions.

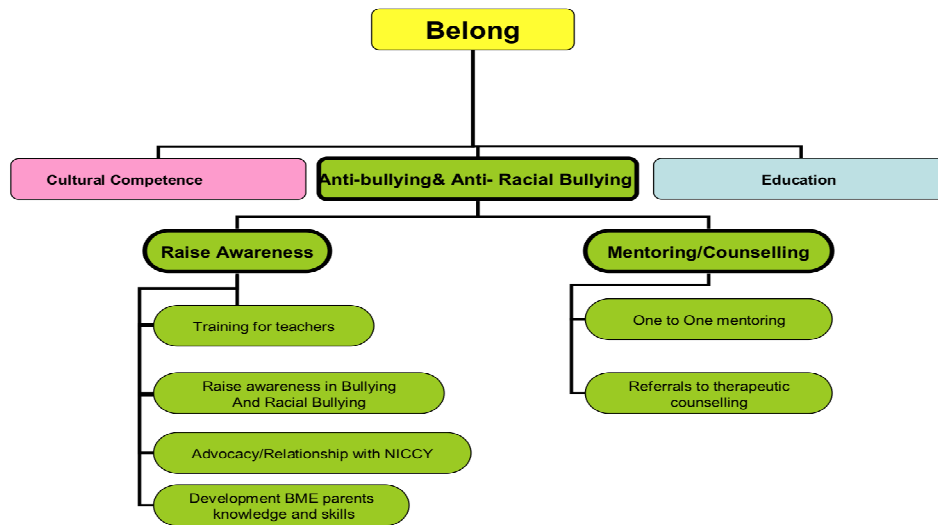
## Analysis of Anti-bullying and Anti-Racial Bullying Programme

### What it set out to Achieve

The epidemiology research undertaken by Queen's University, Belfast assessed the level of bullying experienced by the children and young people surveyed. The results indicated that bullying remains a major issue for BME children/young people, with nearly half (46%) of all surveyed having been the victim of bullying in the past couple of months. The problems faced by Traveller children/young people appeared to be particularly acute, with nearly two-thirds (62%) reporting that they had been a victim of bullying. This compares to 45% among White settled children/young people. These findings were also found to be in line with previous research carried out by the Department of Education (Livesey *et al*, 2007). While similar levels of bullying among all BME children/young people and White settled children/young people were reported (46% *versus* 45%), the findings acknowledge that there may possibly have been a level of under-reporting among children/young people due to the fact that they may not have felt comfortable in completing the questionnaire particularly within a school setting and thus may not have answered all of the questions truthfully.

Considering this need, the Anti-bullying and Anti-racial Bullying Programme was built into the BELONG Programme (see *Figure 3*). The overall outcome of the programme will be to improve the access for BME children and young people to support workers, mentors and language assistants. Full details of each of these interventions can be obtained in BELONG's Service Plan Proposal (2009).

**Figure 3: Details of the Anti-bullying and Anti-racial Bullying Programme**



### Implementation to Date

Up to the end of March 2011, two specific areas within the Anti-bullying and Anti-racial Bullying Programme have been achieved, which are as follows:

- **Awareness of bullying and anti-racial bullying:** A toolkit has been developed by BELONG in this area and work on its implementation has begun. Lithuanian Migrant parents have attended an anti-bullying/anti-racial bullying workshop in Dungannon.
- **Develop parents' knowledge and skills:** Parents have been provided with advice and support on bullying issues.
- **One-to-one mentoring:** Two children were referred to OPAL Training and Consultancy for one-to-one short-term support.
- **Advocacy:** It was originally planned that BELONG would focus its advocacy work with parents. However, in addition to this, it has also been empowering children to speak about their own concerns. This came about through work such as the Bill of Rights Workshop in February 2010 in which Migrant children took part; the Education for Everyone Programme in Dungannon/Armagh/Newry, which involved Migrant children from these areas; Cohesion, Sharing and Integration activities in the Dungannon Language Club; and the Workshop on Children's Rights held in the after-school club, Wah Hep in Craigavon.

Traveller children from the Newry area and Migrant children from the Craigavon area participated in the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Workshops. BELONG also engaged with Muslim women from Craigavon for a consultation on the new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland.

### Major Areas of Learning

As with the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme, the Evaluation Team was able to gather data on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Anti-bullying and Anti-racial Bullying Programme at the planning day organised by BELONG in January 2011. The key points to emerge were:

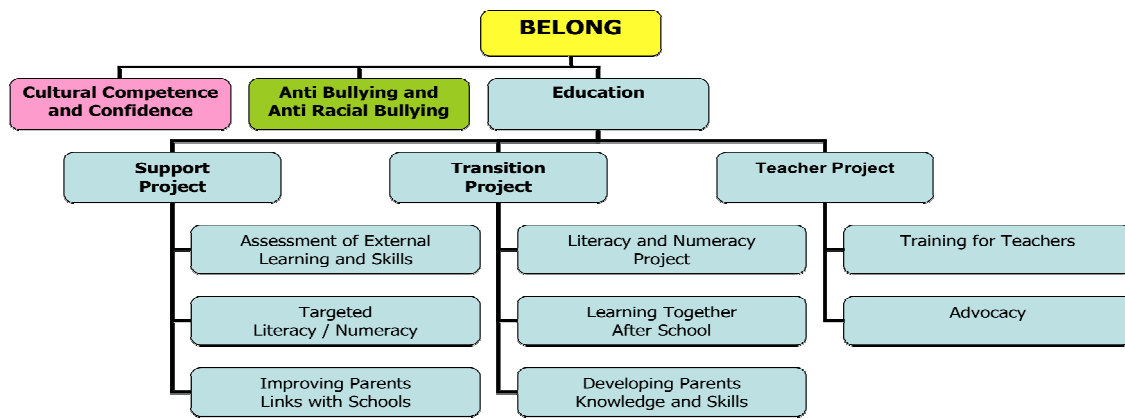
- The main strength of these particular activities resides in the clear identified need, the lack of provision of these services and the large uptake of children.
- Taking into consideration the recent development in Atlantic Philanthropies' policies, the fact that there is an emphasis on self-advocacy is very positive. This is a proven efficient mechanism to raise concerns and create awareness of needs.

## Analysis of Education Programme

### What it set out to Achieve

The Education Programme was established to support those BME children who have been identified through baseline assessments as being those who would benefit from additional support to improve their educational achievement, enhance their enjoyment of learning and increase their participation in school activities. As shown in Figure 4, the Education Programme was initially designed around the Support Project, the Transition Project and the Teacher Project. Full details of each of these interventions can be obtained in BELONG's Service Plan Proposal (2009).

Figure 4: Details of the Education Programme



### Implementation to Date and Major Areas of Learning

The initial plan was that the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) would employ staff to deliver the Education Programme in conjunction with BELONG. However, this never materialised, primarily due to the recruitment ban within the public sector. Thus, by and large, the Education Programme never came into being as planned. A joint decision was taken in early 2011 by STEP and the SELB that the employment responsibility for the education workers would be transferred from SELB to STEP, the parent organisation for BELONG.

In addition to the staffing issue, it took some time for the SELB representatives on the BELONG Board to match the BELONG outcomes to realities within the education sector and within schools in particular. One of the SELB team involved with BELONG on the Education Programme suggested that the first version of the Education Programme (*see Figure 4*) was too aspirational and visionary without the delivery arrangements in place. However, 6 themes of work have now been agreed, lead schools and clusters are now in position and staff were appointed by STEP in early May 2011.

Despite these difficulties, BELONG was able to deliver a limited number of activities under the Education Programme up to the end of March 2011:

- The creation of new education-based groups for BME children where there was no provision to this point.
- The empowerment of communities on education issues through consultations with community leaders, involvement of volunteers and the employment of sessional workers from the community.
- Parents and children have attended the Learning Together After School at Mount St. Catherine's School in Armagh.

- Due to the success of the initial pilot, Traveller children from Coalisland have received additional learning needs assessment. The programme is now running 4 days a week with 2 different groups of children, each attending 2 days each.
- Traveller children in St. Joseph's School in Newry are receiving additional educational support through a Homework Club.
- Education programmes are running in Craigavon with settled BME children and with Migrant children in Newry, where 16 children are registered.

## Early Implementation at the Intervention Level

### The Voice of the Children

The function of this report is not to present data collected from the children who have participated in BELONG interventions. Instead, this will be dealt with in the follow-up Interim Report in September 2011. However, it is still important to acknowledge the voice of the child in this report. A review of the project report sheets completed by staff, incorporating feedback from children at the end of all interventions, reveals a number of common achievements for the children involved:

- The children learned a new range of skills, such as arts and creative work.
- The children further developed their communication and teamwork skills, and thus built their confidence and self-esteem.
- Children learned to use their imagination, share, listen and respect others.
- They got the opportunity to build relationships with their peers, as well as with adult staff and volunteers.

When asked by the Evaluation Team for their views on an intervention in which they had attended, children in Armagh suggested that, '*I really enjoyed coming in and making things – it was great*'. Another suggested that '*We were treated with respect by [the facilitators]*', while for another, '*getting the chance to hang out here with my friends was deadly*'.

## 4. Key Emerging Messages and Recommendations from the Early Implementation Phase

The aim of this chapter is to offer critical objective reflection on the plethora of data collected for this report and covered in Chapters 2 and 3. The Evaluation Team has highlighted key thematic areas that describe the early implementation successes and difficulties experienced by BELONG. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list; rather, it is a broad sweep of the issues, which, in turn, are core to the future of BELONG.

### The Views of the Evaluation Team

The overall aim of this Early Implementation Report was to investigate and document the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the BELONG Programme up to March 2011. By doing this, it would allow the Evaluation Team to generate formative information and clear recommendations for the BELONG Board, Operational Management Team and Staff Team to consider. Therefore, in the sections to follow below, there is specific discussion and recommendations relating to BELONG's involvement in policy development for BME children, the development of the BELONG model and its implementation to date at the intervention level.

Taking a step back from the programme allows the Evaluation Team to offer some overall comments on the work of BELONG up to this point.

- It is our opinion that based on the level and extent of the interventions provided by BELONG to date (*see Chapter 3*), there is a clear need for the BELONG programme. We believe that the overall extent of this need will become even more pronounced in the next phase of its development, due to the programme now having a full complement of staff (since early May 2011), coupled with the cutbacks facing other organisations in the community and the challenges this will bring.
- The quality of the people involved in BELONG is also top-class, be it at Board level or on the front line. All of the people we have interacted with to date have the interests of the BME Community at heart and are working to ensure that their needs are continually met.
- Another defining feature of BELONG has been its ability to be strategic and link with agencies and organisations, from grass-roots level right up to Government level, in its advocacy role for the BME communities.
- BELONG is not without its challenges. The greatest of these, in our opinion, is the issue of sustainability of the programme after the March 2012 cessation of funding. To this end, as the programme advances it will become more of an imperative for it to prove, be it through quantitative, qualitative or a combination of both approaches, that the outcomes of the programme are being achieved. Given the later-than-planned start of the Education Programme Workers, for example, this may be an extreme challenge, one which we think warrants a discussion with the funders about the possibility of an extension of the programme's timeframe.
- Another challenge for the programme is the extent to which it changes practice among existing agencies regarding their work with the BME Community.

### Policy Landscape and Policy Development for BME Children and their Families

From the outset, BELONG has been interested in instigating change not only at the level of the child, the family and the community, but also at service and policy level. It became evident to the Evaluation Team after completing the policy landscape baseline that BELONG has been successful in attracting onto its Board key representatives from the Health and Education sectors, as well as from the Southern Area Children and Young People's Planning Committee. This has



created a critical awareness of BELONG's work among these policy-making agencies. To support its advocacy role for the BME Community, BELONG has also developed a consultation process for BME children, who now have the chance to feed directly into the planning process.

All of this work is to be welcomed and indicates a strong leadership from within BELONG. In addition, BELONG has made important submissions to such areas as health, education and child poverty, to name a few.

The review of early implementation highlighted areas that the BELONG Board, Operational Management Team and BELONG Team need to consider – in this case, in relation to its role in influencing the development of policy for BME children and their communities. The main recommendations are as follows:

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: Educational Support for Travellers**

It is recommended that BELONG works more closely with statutory agencies to bring about a more positive level of school attendance for Traveller children. This will be aided by the new education staff joining BELONG.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: Proofing and Cross-Referencing of Policy for BME Children**

A major difficulty with policy-making in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, is the lack of linkages and cross-referencing of a specific policy across the different statutory agencies. Therefore, it is recommended that BELONG continues working to represent the voices of BME children and their communities in policy development, by engaging in an active process of proofing new policy against the intended and unintended impact it will have on the BME Community.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: Closer Links with Government, Statutory Services and Politicians**

It is recommended that BELONG focus on creating closer links with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Department of Education, Public Health Agency, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and the Health and Social Care Board in order to achieve their commitment to the BELONG Programme. By linking with relevant politicians across each of the councils in the region, BELONG can also help to disseminate the BELONG model and investigate the possibility of BELONG becoming mainstreamed.

## **Development of the BELONG Model**

The data collected for this report support the view that there have been many positives associated with implementing the BELONG model. In particular, BELONG has been excellent at clearly identifying the needs of the BME Community. This has been due to an experienced Programme Manager and Administrator and, more latterly, the Project Development Workers. The Programme Team has made excellent linkages with the BME Community and other community-based organisations, and has been more than adequately able to deal with the demands placed on them. This work has been supported by an experienced Board and host organisation, STEP, who were there as a sounding board for issues that arose throughout the roll-out of the programme. A major strength of the BELONG model has been its ability to engage with all BME groups together, instead of dealing with them as separate ethnic groupings. This supports a holistic, socio-ecological way of working, while meeting the needs of BME children and their families. The organic, rather than a programmatic, model of development of the BELONG model is also welcomed.

In terms of the continual development of the BELONG model, the data revealed a number of areas that warrant consideration by the BELONG Board, Operational Management Team and BELONG Team. These are as follows:

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4: Future Funding**

The future of BELONG after the 2012 funding deadline is a concern. It is recommended that the BELONG Board and Operational Management Team need to proactively consider how best this might be resolved, be it in seeking additional funding for the post-2012 era or by mainstreaming the work the programme is currently doing through surrogate existing organisations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5: Geographical Spread and Intervention Dosage**

Due to the need to build relationships with communities in which they were based, the Programme's workers have run more short-term interventions, which were often diluted by the need to deliver across a large geographical area. BELONG cannot be all things to all BME children and their communities. Therefore, it is recommended that the BELONG Team consider delivering more long-term interventions (like the model used with the Polish School Language Club in Banbridge and Dungannon), which will have the maximum benefit in terms of outcomes for the children and families involved.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6: Involvement of the BME Community with BELONG**

It is recommended that to increase the level of strategic involvement of the BME Community in BELONG, a Service User Forum be established. In addition, a Minority Ethnic Working Group needs to be formed to help influence the Children Services Planning process and policy.

### **Early Implementation at Intervention Level**

From an implementation point of view, the BELONG Programme was slower to start running its interventions than expected. There is no single reason for this. The delay of approximately 6 months was due to the unforeseen hold-up resulting from the need to engage in community development and relationship-building with the BME Community and other organisations prior to rolling out any interventions. This, in turn, delayed the finalisation of an intervention-level work plan, which further delayed the employment of the 3 current programme staff. Despite these acceptable teething issues, BELONG has become a trusted agent in the BME Community, as well as among service organisations in the catchment area.

The Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme has been the most successful of the 3 sub-programmes in attracting large numbers of young people, particularly in the Single Cultural Identity projects and the participation in youth clubs and after-school activities. BELONG has also provided information to newly arriving Migrant families and has worked on raising awareness and tolerance of BME communities in its target areas. All of this work clearly shows the need for these interventions among the BME communities.

The Anti-bullying and Anti-racial Bullying Programme has focused on advocacy work with BME children and their families. For example, 138 children were involved in the Education for Everyone Programme in Dungannon, Armagh and Newry. Work such as this has begun to raise awareness of bullying issues. However, this programme has had a slower implementation than the Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme.

As noted in Chapter 3, the Education Programme has been dysfunctional from the outset and has suffered a number of setbacks. As a result, the vast majority of it has not been implemented to date. The initial plan was that the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) would employ staff to deliver the Education Programme in conjunction with BELONG. However, this never materialised, primarily due to the recruitment ban within the public sector. A joint decision was taken in early 2011 by STEP and the SELB that the employment responsibility for the Education Workers would be transferred from SELB to STEP, the parent organisation for BELONG. Staff began work in early May 2011.

Taking a broader view of implementation at the intervention level, a number of recommendations warrant consideration by the BELONG Board, Operational Management Team and BELONG Team. These are as follows:

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7: Monitoring and Evaluation**

As noted in Chapter 3, little systematic monitoring and/or evaluation data were collected from the early interventions. However, the Evaluation Team has facilitated the BELONG Team in developing pre-evaluation tools for the 3 sub-programme areas. It is recommended that due consideration be given to the development of methods for the collation of data.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8: Weighting of Travellers**

Supported by the existence of the specific needs of Traveller families in the catchment area, the BELONG programme has been weighted to insure that Traveller children receive 60% of the total programme time. From the data made available to the Evaluation Team from BELONG, it is unclear as to whether this weighting is being considered when developing new interventions. It is recommended that BELONG investigates this possibility and takes corrective action if required.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9: Group Mentoring**

In early 2011, BELONG contracted OPAL Training and Consultancy to deliver the group mentoring programme. This began with a pilot for Traveller children in Armagh, which was completed in March 2011. The activities were evaluated by OPAL based on an agreed evaluation model with BELONG. To date, there has been no formal discussion between the Evaluation Team and OPAL Training and Consultancy on how future mentoring programmes might be evaluated.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 10: Parental Support**

It is recommended that BELONG continues to communicate with BME parents to achieve parental involvement in schools and the education system. There is a need for more work with parents on literacy so that they can help their children in their educational pursuits.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11: Involvement of the BME Community in Programme Delivery**

In terms of programme delivery, it is recommended that BELONG engages a language-specific worker for work with Chinese and Urdu parents. Also, BELONG needs to create a pool of workers from a BME background who can then slot into programme delivery.

## **Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to offer critical objective reflection on the early implementation of the BELONG Programme, using the data collected for this report. As a result, key messages and recommendations from the early implementation phase were presented thematically above.

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## Appendix 1: Policy Backdrop in Northern Ireland Relating to Black and Minority Ethnic Children and their Families

In order to improve the delivery of services to Black Migrant and Ethnic (BME) children and their families, it is important to have an understanding of the relevant and current international and Northern Ireland policy and practice issues. The central purpose of this section is to outline the legislative and policy backdrop that currently exists in Northern Ireland.

### International Context

During the 1960s, a consensus arose on inequality in societies. It was widely acknowledged that in order to address inequality, it was necessary for Governments to take proactive steps, in effect positive action. In 1969, Article 1 of the **UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** identified that special measures were needed to '*secure adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups ... requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights*'. The CERD Convention is the key international instrument on racial discrimination.

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and contains a comprehensive set of international legal standards for the protection and well-being of children. It addresses civil and political rights, social and economic rights, and protection rights. The general principles of the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, and survival and development provide the framework for actions concerning children. Article 30 states that Governments should make sure all children's rights are protected and that children's own views should be respected. Article 22 states that refugee children have extra entitlement to special protection.

Article 18 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948) establishes the rights of minority ethnic, religious groups to enjoy their own culture, practise their own religion and speak their own language.

Article 20 of **A World Fit for Children 2002 – Special Session of the General Assembly of the UN** discusses the goal of eliminating discrimination against children, '*whether rooted in the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status*'. Furthermore, Article 22 identifies that appropriate measures must be taken to end discrimination and provide special supports for indigenous children and children belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups who are disproportionately disadvantaged in many countries.

### European Union Context

At European Union (EU) level, the **Racial Equality Directive** (EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC) implemented the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. This directive established '*a binding framework for prohibiting racial discrimination throughout the EU. It defines direct and indirect discrimination and provides for redress for racial discrimination and shifts the burden of proof to respondents*' (Watt and McGaughey, 2006, p. 31). This, for the first time, guaranteed a common legal framework of minimum protection across all EU Member States. The scope of the Racial Equality Directive includes the provision of, and access to, goods and services, including health and social care.

### Northern Ireland Legislative Context

The Northern Ireland Assembly is a fairly new legislative body and as such is building on the legislative environment enshrined in UK law that applied before the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1998. Until 1972 and from 1974 to 1999, Northern Ireland (NI) did not have a

government of its own to enact legislation and the province was ruled from Great Britain. The **Good Friday Agreement** in 1998, followed by the **Northern Ireland Act 1998** created a Northern Ireland Assembly, which has the power to enact primary legislation. Because of the long history of segregation between the two dominant cultures, equality is firmly enshrined in NI legislation. The Northern Ireland Act also established the Human Rights Commission, whose duty is to review NI law and practice relating to the protection of human rights, to advise Government on new bills and legislation, and to assist people whose rights are denied to take action or to carry out investigation where necessary. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on all public authorities *'to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity throughout nine equality strands and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people on the basis of race'*.

### **Race Relations (NI) Order 1997/2003**

In recent years, campaigning by minority ethnic groups, voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), supported by the evidence from research (Connolly, 2002), has created an awareness of racism in Northern Ireland. The **Race Relations (NI) Order 1997** made it unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds in the areas of employment and training, education, provision of goods and services, disposal or management of premises and in advertising. In addition, this Order outlined the duties of the Commission of Racial Equality (since 2000 incorporated into the Equality Commission). The Equality Commission has researched and produced guidelines for public bodies and will be discussed later in this section. More recently, there has been an increase in reports of incidents of racist harassment (Jarman and Monaghan, 2003), which, augmented by media coverage, has further raised awareness of racism.

The **Criminal Justice (No. 2 NI) Order 2004 – Hate Crime** is an important legislative change in Northern Ireland because it imposes penalties in relation to bullying and racial harassment crimes.

The **Race Relations Order (Amendment) Regulations NI 2009** identifies the specific needs of the Irish Traveller Community as a group to be protected against unlawful racial discrimination and segregation on racial grounds and outlaws discrimination by employers and educational establishments.

### **Northern Ireland Child Care Law**

Within the Assembly, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is responsible for children and works across departments where necessary. Before 1995, there was a wide range of legislation applying to children. The **Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995** has *'reformed and brought together most of the public and private law relating to children into a single coherent statutory framework along the lines of the Children Act 1989 in England and Wales'* (DHSSPS, 2006). The Order contains more than 200 articles and introduced the central importance of parental responsibility and the significance of the child's welfare being the primary factors in issues regarding the child's care. In addition, the Order places specific responsibilities regarding race relations on Health and Social Services (HSS) Trusts, voluntary organisations and private Children's Homes to give *'due consideration to the child's religion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background'* (Sections 26, 76 and 92).

A further amendment to the Order, the **Children Services Planning Order 1998**, charged HSS Trusts with producing a Children Services Plan, which must be published and produced with interagency and stakeholder consultation. Currently, the consultation process crosses a wide representation and this has been a positive benefit in the development of policy and practice in the health services. As identified by A. Godfrey (personal communication, December 2010), *'Where Children Services Planning committees have broad effective partnerships, then policies are more effectively carried into practice'*.

The **Child Care Act 2006** places a requirement on Local Authorities to reduce inequalities among young children. In fulfilling this requirement, Local Authorities across the region are engaging in neighbourhood renewal programmes.

## Northern Ireland policy Relating to Racial Equality

There was a key policy development in 2005 with the publication of the **Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland** by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action from the UN World Conference against Racism, held in Durban in 2001, influenced this policy development as it recommended that States establish and implement national policies and action plans to combat racism.

The Racial Equality Strategy was developed in consultation with minority ethnic groups and has 6 shared aims:

- The elimination of racial inequality.
- Equal protection.
- Equality of service provision.
- Participation: *'To increase participation and a sense of belonging of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, economic, social and cultural life'*.
- Dialogue: *'To promote dialogue between and mutual understanding of different faiths and cultural backgrounds, both long-standing within Northern Ireland, and for recent arrivals and society guided by overarching human rights norms'*.
- Capacity-building: *'To build capacity within minority ethnic communities to develop a vibrant and sustainable minority ethnic sector at both local and regional level and to help minority ethnic people to fulfil the Government's aim of a shared future for Northern Ireland'*.

## Northern Ireland Policy Relating to BME Children and Families

The expansion in the population of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children and families moving to live in Northern Ireland is a fairly recent phenomenon. BELONG and others (Queens University Belfast, 2007) have identified that recent population changes since the last Census in 2001 have impacted on accurate data capture regarding numbers of BME children. Using the best available estimate obtained through the Autumn Schools Census in 2006, it is estimated that the numbers of BME children aged 7-12 years within the Southern Health and Social Services Board is in the region of 600, with the greater number of 350 coming from Eastern Europe, 150 Irish Travellers and 100 Chinese/Asian and other ethnic groups. These numbers will have increased since 2006 since the growth rate for the BME population is significantly higher than the mainstream population. It is this significant growth in the BME population that has stimulated the development of policies addressing the needs of this vulnerable group.

As identified in BELONG's *Service Development Plan 2007*, the Northern Ireland Assembly's **Programme for Government 2008-2011** outlines its key priorities. Priority 2 across all 23 of the nominated Public Service Agreements is *'to promote tolerance, inclusion, health and well-being'*. The Programme includes cross-departmental strategies that pertain to good relations, social inclusion, poverty and neighbourhood renewal.

The overriding strategy in Northern Ireland relating to children is ***Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge. A Ten-Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2006-2010***, published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in 2005 (OFMDFM, 2005a). This strategy was developed over 4 years in widespread consultation with children and other stakeholders. Relevant parts include:

- Section 15: *'Working to ensure a co-ordinated partnership approach to policy development across Government and coherent delivery of services ... for improved outcomes'*.
- Section 17: *'In recognising that NI is emerging from a prolonged period of conflict, we will ensure that our children and young people are supported to grow together in a shared, inclusive society where they respect diversity and difference'*.
- Section 20: *'In accordance with the UNCRC, we will be proactive in obtaining the views of the child on matters of significance to them'*.
- Section 21: *'Needs-driven evidence-based practice will inform future practice'*.



## OFMDFM Draft Action Plan 2008-2011

The **Draft Action Plan** developed from the strategy *Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge* (OFMDFM, 2005a) identifies key areas of work. These include Targeting Social Need Assessment to deliver improved outcomes for children, based on new performance indicators that are linked to outcomes and, as such, enable a more precise evaluation of the achievement of strategic targets.

## Education Policies

### Racial Policy in Education – *Good Practice Guide 2001*

This **Racial Policy in Education**, published by the Department of Education and the Equality Commission (2001), states that schools should '*develop and maintain an equality culture which promotes equality of opportunity, the development of good relations and the elimination of unlawful discrimination*'. It recommends that the following steps should be considered:

- the development of equal opportunities policies and procedures;
- a commitment and ownership of the process at a senior level;
- an audit of existing policies and procedures;
- the development of racial equality standards;
- implementation of a programme of action;
- monitoring, evaluation and review.

As part of the Government's **Neighbourhood and Renewal Strategy 2003**, schools are encouraged to act as a focal point to work with communities and voluntary agencies in their catchment to create neighbourhood partnerships to provide additional services to disadvantaged children and their families. The OFMDFM have identified that supporting the aspirations of young people and improving their life chances through education is one way of contributing to community regeneration.

The **Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003** includes an anti-bullying policy, which has been implemented by the Education and Library Boards.

The Equality Commission published ***Every Child an Equal Child*** in 2008, which sets out a number of priority groups that have either displayed consistent educational underachievement or for which there was insufficient information to make that assessment, namely:

- Protestant working-class boys;
- children and young people from the Irish Traveller Community;
- gay, lesbian and bisexual children and young people;
- looked-after children and young people;
- children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds;
- young people with caring responsibilities for parents/others;
- children and young people with disabilities;
- children and young people of new residents and migrant workers.

Through the **Extended Schools Policy 2006**, funding is made available for additional services for children who need them. One-third of schools in Northern Ireland operating in the most disadvantaged areas avail of this funding stream. Selected schools collaborate with statutory, voluntary and community organisations operating in the local community to deliver targeted supports that include breakfast clubs, homework clubs, adult and peer mentoring. Parental supports include parenting classes and ICT skills. In addition, referral to a range of specialist services, such as local social services, local or onsite nursing services, is available in some schools.

The Department of Education established the Inclusion and Diversity Service in April 2007 to provide support to schools which have newcomer children whose first language is not English. Diversity coordinators, working as part of this service, provide direct help to cluster groups of schools.

The Good Relations Forum was established in 2005 and is co-chaired by the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council. Their recently published policy, *Ensuring the Good Relations work in our Schools Counts 2010*, is available on [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org).

### **Restructuring of the Education Sector**

It is currently proposed that the Education sector should engage in a restructuring process. This radical reorganisation entails a lengthy consultation process, which should hopefully result in a more cohesive policy development approach and also benefit the development of equality and good relations. Under the proposals, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will be a single Authority and will replace the 9 existing education statutory organisations. Currently, the public services are engaging in a review of public administration and as the Equality Commission (2006) identifies, this '*provides an enormous opportunity for consistent practice and direction in Northern Ireland's education sector.*' It is planned to amalgamate into the ESA the range of education bodies that include the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (the Irish Medium education sector), the 5 Education and Library Boards and the Council for the Curriculum, Examination and Assessments (CCEA). This will enable the Department of Education to operate as the strategic policy formulation body for education, and the ESA to concentrate on acting as the delivery arm of the Department. In addition the Department of Education will become a designated body under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and thus subject to its stipulations.

### **Policy and Practice Relating to Healthcare**

According to the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY, 2003), Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the routine collection of data on health services provided to ethnic minority groups. Unfortunately, planning as a result of gathering such data is not in evidence in service commissioning. No regional statistics across all regions are routinely kept in relation to the health needs of ethnic minority and Traveller children. This results in a gap in matching provision to need and the consequent inequality of outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families.

Connolly (2002) noted a number of difficulties experienced by Black and Minority Ethnic people, which, he suggests, are repeated across a wide range of public services (including health and social services). These include language barriers, lack of awareness as to what services are available, low take-up of GP registration and the need for staff training and cultural awareness.

To address these issues, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety devised *The Racial Equality in Health and Social Care: Good Practice Guidelines* (DHSSPS, 2003) in consultation with the Equality Commission. The guidelines include the employment of interpreters to work with link workers and health workers, the addressing of appropriate dietary needs in hospitals, the addressing of appropriate cultural and religious beliefs, and consultation with ethnic minorities in planning processes and through user surveys.

### **Health Needs of the Traveller Community**

Local and regional health strategies include the **New Targeting Social Need (TSN) Initiative**, which aims to ensure that Government programmes are more effective in helping those in greatest need by directing resources and efforts towards tackling social exclusion. The New TSN specifies that: '*Some groups have additional needs which, if not catered for, could place their most vulnerable members at risk due to social exclusion. Examples of such groups ... are Travellers and members of other ethnic minority communities.*'

The Northern Ireland Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) Working Group on Travellers has set 33 three detailed recommendations in its report, including interdepartmental recommendations and recommendations relevant to the DHSSPS and other statutory health and social service providers.

It is notable that some work has already been carried out in order to address these recommendations. The publication of the *Racial Equality in Health: Good Practice Guide*, the commissioning by the DHSSPS of a *Traveller Community Health Care Programme*, and participation during 2002 in *The All Ireland Traveller Health Study* in partnership with the Department of Health and Children in the Republic of Ireland are some examples of work in this area. Subsequently, the *All Ireland Traveller Health Study* was published in 2010. This is the first study of Traveller health status and health needs that involves all Travellers living on the island of Ireland, North and South and arose from a recommendation in the Irish Department of Health and Children's National Traveller Health Strategy, 2002-2005. The study was a large-scale and ambitious undertaking and represents a major commitment by the sponsoring stakeholders to Travellers' health. The census of families North and South marks the completion of the first stage of this exercise. Following on from this report is the Vital Statistics Report and the consultative process with both Travellers and service providers, employing both qualitative and quantitative interview methodologies. The birth cohort study is still in follow-up stage and is a major prospective issue for the future. The 2010 final report, *All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, assimilates findings from all stages of the project, together with recommendations.

## Refugees and Asylum Seekers

McVeigh (2002) noted a lack of specific services for refugees and asylum-seekers in the statutory sector and recommended that appropriate services need to be put in place. Numbers of refugee and asylum-seekers in Northern Ireland remain fairly small, although the diversity of background has increased since 2000. Over 30 different countries are now represented and include Sri Lanka, Russia, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Romania. The DHSSPS has published policy guidance for these groups, entitled *Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Policy Guidelines 2003*.

## Upcoming Legislation and Policies in Process of Consultation

The draft policy **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED)** concerns community relations and racial equality, and proposes a new racial equality strategy for educating children and young people to develop self-respect, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination. The CRED will also contribute to the development of an enhanced anti-bullying strategy. BELONG has fed into the consultation process, which finished in November 2010. One issue identified by BELONG is that there should be mandatory reporting by schools of bullying and racial harassment incidents.

The draft **Child Poverty Strategy** is currently out for consultation and BELONG has made submissions on this. The consultation process will be completed in February 2011. On a recent fact-finding visit to Northern Ireland, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that *'It is a particular concern in Northern Ireland, where over 20 per cent of children reportedly live in persistent poverty. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that the Government's strategy is not sufficiently targeted at those groups of children in most severe poverty and that the standard of living of Traveller children is particularly poor'*.

The **Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI)** is currently out for consultation and BELONG has also fed into this consultation process. The CSI advocates an interagency approach. It does not propose to replace the Racial Equality Strategy for NI, but instead proposes a framework for delivery of aspects of the strategy in a more cohesive way, as identified by Todd (2010).

## Children's Rights

This section looks at three key aspects relating to disadvantaged BME children in Northern Ireland – their rights; their empowerment and their participation.

In 2008, the Northern Ireland Assembly established the All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority Communities, with Northern Ireland's Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) acting as its

secretariat. This group was established as a mechanism for representatives of ethnic minority communities to discuss and lobby with politicians on issues of specific concern.

On a recent fact-finding visit to Northern Ireland, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that it was *'concerned that in practice certain groups of children, such as Roma and Irish Travellers' children; migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children; lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender children (LBGT); and children belonging to minority groups, continue to experience discrimination and social stigmatization. The Committee is also concerned at the general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children, especially adolescents, which appears to exist in the State Party, including in the media, and may be often the underlying cause of further infringements of their rights'*.

Because legislation and policy cut across a range of socio-political factors concerning disadvantaged children, it has the effect that children's rights are seen in a fragmented way. Therefore, in the absence of much-needed cross-referencing, new policies may not be positively impacting on overall children's rights.

Other issues of concern regard the sometimes conflicting rights of the parent vis à vis the child include:

- parental rights regarding corporal punishment *versus* the rights of the child not to be chastised using corporal punishment;
- parental rights regarding the right to limit the right of the child to mix with others of a different cultural background *versus* the right of the child to choose to do so.

## Empowerment

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was established in 2003 and identified weaknesses in the delivery of services to children, through its published research *Rhetoric or Reality. A Review of Children's Rights in Northern Ireland, 2007/2008*. In addition to carrying out research, another of NICCY's functions is to act in an advocacy role with young people where their parents or guardians are not able to do so. This is particularly relevant for looked-after children. NICCY can advocate where, for example, children have complaints regarding health or social services. NICCY also has taken legal cases on behalf of children in relation to their rights. These functions serve to empower vulnerable children.

Interventions to empower children include those that recognise and support the child experience of their own culture. As Murray and O'Doherty (2001, p. 42) state: *'Children exposed to negative images about their home culture, language, background or ability, however subtle or unintentional, will be affected to the detriment of their self-image and group identity, with resulting conflicts of loyalty between home and the education setting.'*

Empowering children includes making their culture visible and recognised, and public service personnel should be trained in cultural competence (A. Godfrey, personal communication, December 2010). At the universal level, this would include simple things like posters depicting children like them – black or minority ethnic children seeing themselves reflected in what they see on the walls, hear read to them in stories and poems. As suggested by one of BELONG's Board members: *'They shouldn't see themselves as not there ... it's about making sure there is proper training and proper development in relation to awareness of children's ethnic heritage for staff within basic services like speech and language service, mental health. That the person has a knowledge and a way of being and knowing about the child whose heritage is somewhere else may need to be addressed in a specific way. It's not easily laid down.'*

## The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is the organisation responsible for the enforcement and promotion of the provisions of the **Race Relations (NI) Order 1997** (the Order). It also oversees the implementation of Section 75 of the **Northern Ireland Act 1998**. It is the Commission's job to work to eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of race and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups. The Commission was

set up in 2000 (previously called the Commission of Racial Equality) and has worked to influence the programmes for Government, the resultant budgets and the associated Public Service Agreements. The stated aim of the Equality Commission (2010) is to '*ensure that equality of opportunity and good relations is at the heart of public policy*'. This is achieved through three strands of work: statutory advice to Government departments, especially by ensuring that Section 75 duties are complied with at a strategic level; response to Government policy development; and '*encouraging progress to be made to address persistent inequalities through identifying opportunities in policy-making and budgetary processes*' (*ibid*).

## Participation

There are several forums, networks and bodies that have the role of ensuring that vulnerable groups have their views considered when policy and practice are being designed.

The **Racial Equality Forum** was established in 2003 and has 'done much to guide the work of Government departments' (OFMDFM, 2005b). It has a key role in partnership working and influencing policy-making in this sphere. The membership of the Forum consists of 50 representatives from across statutory bodies, NGOs, and community, voluntary and ethnic groups, including Travellers.

The **Participation Network** was established in 2007 by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister as part of the Government's commitment to implementing the requirements in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. The aim of the Participation Network is to support statutory agencies, local government and Government departments to engage effectively with children and young people in public decision-making.

In 2008, the Northern Ireland Assembly established the **All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority Communities**, with Northern Ireland's Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) acting as its secretariat. This group was established as a mechanism for representatives of ethnic minority communities to discuss and lobby with politicians on issues of specific concern.

In addition to these Government bodies, BELONG has developed a group, the **BME Consultative Forum**, and process that directly involves BME children in the consultation process for relevant legislation, strategy and policy that impact on them and their families.

## Appendix 2: BELONG Information Events

Event	Organised by (and venue)	Date	Number attending	Ethnicity
<b>ARMAGH area</b>				
Family Fun and Information Day	Children Services Planning (Cathedral Road Recreation Centre)	25 August 2010	300	Migrant and Traveller families
Information morning for parents	Armagh Travellers Support Group and Safe & Well (Callanbridge Community Centre)	9 September 2010	11	Travellers
Meeting with Travellers	Armagh Travellers Support Group (Callanbridge Community Centre)	September 2010	10	Travellers
Traveller Focus Week	Equality Commission and other statutory agencies (Navan Centre)	1 December 2010	40	Travellers
Traveller Focus Week	Safe & Well (Callanbridge Community Centre)	10 December 2010	20 reps. (community organisations)	Community organisations and Travellers
Information afternoon for parents	Mount St. Catherine's 'Challenge of Change' and BELONG (Mount St. Catherine's)	January 2011	10	Lithuanian, Latvian and local community
Meeting with BME parents	BELONG (Mount St. Catherine's)	January 2011	8	Lithuanian, Latvian and Indian
NICCY presentation	BELONG (Dobbin Street Community Centre)	22 February 2011	27 staff parents children	Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Polish and East Timor
Information event	BELONG (St. Malachy's School)	March 2011	2	Lithuanian
<b>BELFAST</b>				
Belfast MELA Festival	Arts Ekta (Belfast Botanic Gardens)	29 August 2010	Hundreds attended. BELONG/STEP supported 80 families from Dungannon.	East Timor and Lithuanian – majority children
Traveller Focus Week Launch	An Munia Tober and other agencies (St. George's Market)	29 November 2010	5 Traveller families, over 45 children from schools	Traveller families and Ethnic – majority children
Conference 'Toolkit to Success'	Venture Outdoors (La Mon Hotel & Country Club, Belfast)	3 February 2011	10 organisations	Sport businesses (private sector) and Community groups working with BME
<b>DUNGANNON</b>				
Language Clubs Teachers' meeting	BELONG (STEP Training Room, Dungannon)	11 September 2010	12	Teachers from Dungannon, Portadown, Armagh and Newry from Polish, Lithuanian, Bulgarian and Portuguese communities
Information night for families	DHA Culture, An Tearmann, Safe & Well (Ballysaggart Business Complex)	13 September 2010	19 (8 families and 11 children)	Travellers from Annaghshee area

Migrant parents' meeting	BELONG (Windmill Integrated Primary School)	18 September 2010	40	Lithuanian, Polish and East Timor
Information evening for families	DHA Culture, Safe & Well (Ballysaggart Business Complex)	27 September 2010	7 adults and 14 children	Travellers from Annagshee area
Hallow'een Event	STEP (Library Market Square)	23 October 2010	20 adults and 30 children	Migrant and local community
Language Club, Teachers' Meeting	BELONG (Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon)	13 November 2010	10	Teachers from Dungannon, Portadown, Armagh and Newry from Polish, Lithuanian, and Portuguese communities
Migrant parents' meeting	BELONG (Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon)	20 November 2010	38	Lithuanian and Polish
Language Club, Winter Event with information about activities	STEP, Portadown Lithuanian School (Windmill Integrated Primary School)	11 December 2010	Over 300 (147 children)	Migrant community, Dungannon
Health & Safety Fair	Safe & Well and other agencies (Ballysaggart Business Complex)	17 January 2011	6 adults and 11 children	Travellers from Annagshee area and local community
Migrant parents' meeting	BELONG (St. John's Primary School, Moy)	14 April 2011	4	Lithuanian
Training and Employment Fair	Safe & Well and other agencies (Loughview Community House)	4 May 2011	6 adults and 5 children	Travellers from Annagshee area and local community
Migrant parents' meeting	BELONG (Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon)	7 May 2011	29	Lithuanian, Polish and East Timor
<b>COALISLAND</b>				
Information morning for families	BELONG (Coalisland Enterprise Centre)	23 September 2010	2	Travellers from Coalisland area
Traveller Focus Week, event for parents	Toy Box and other agencies (Parochial Centre, Coalisland)	18 November 2010	16 adults and 9 children	Travellers from Coalisland area
Migrant parents' meeting	BELONG (Enterprise Centre, Coalisland)	7 February 2011	7	Lithuanian, Russian and Latvian
<b>NEWRY</b>				
Meeting with Travellers	BELONG (Mullaghbawn Community Centre)	August 2010	10	Travellers
Meeting with Polish and Lithuanian representatives	BELONG (Newry Town Hall)	August 2010	3	Polish and Lithuanian
Meeting with Community representatives	BELONG (Carnagat)	August 2010	4	Local community
Meeting with Travellers	BELONG (Bessbrook)	September 2010	11	Travellers from Bessbrook area
Meeting with Polish parents	BELONG (Polish School)	October 2010	8	Polish

Meeting with Lithuanian teachers	BELONG (Lithuanian School)	November 2010	4	Lithuanian
Information event	Safe & Well (Cloughrea Community Centre)	January 2011	40	Travellers and local community
Information event, BME Focus Group	Trust Promoting Well-Being Team (Cloughrea Community Centre)	February 2011	0	BME families
Information event	Safe & Well (Carnagat Community Centre)	February 2011	15	Travellers and local community
Meeting with Travellers	BELONG (Killeavy site)	March 2011	5	Travellers from Killeavy area
Meet with BME parents	BELONG (Arts Centre)	March 2011	6	Polish
Meeting with Travellers	WHI (Mullaghbawn)	April 2011	2	Travellers from Killeavy area
Information event	Safe & Well and BELONG (Killeavy Community Centre)	May 2011	15	Travellers
<b>PORTADOWN</b>				
Information day	Craigavon Intercultural Programme (Portadown)	2 November 2010	40	Mixed BME participants
<b>CRAIGAVON</b>				
'Make a Difference To Your Community'	Craigavon Council, Land and Property Services (Craigavon)	9 March 2010	20-30	Statutory and community organisations
Chinese New Year	Wah Hep (Craigavon)	8 February 2010	300	Chinese, Muslim, Polish and Ethnic majority
<b>BANBRIDGE</b>				
Polish Flavoured Christmas	Polish Supplementary School and BELONG (Banbridge)	13 December 2010	48	Polish and Ethnic majority
'Living in Banbridge' Guide Launch	'Challenge of Change' (Banbridge)	2 April 2011	30	Ethnic majority, Polish and Chinese
<b>LURGAN</b>				
Information evening	Craigavon Intercultural Programme (CIP) and statutory organisations (Lurgan)	30 September 2010	20	BME families
Open Day at Lough Neagh	Craigavon Council and statutory organisations (Lurgan)	3 December 2010	40	BME families