



Review of Lurgan Catalyst Parent Programme

May 2006

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Index

Section	Page
1 Introduction	6
2 About the Programme	7
3 Evidence of Review	9
4 Progress Made	13
 Appendix	
A Financial Procedures	18

1. INTRODUCTION

Love for Life, is a Warringstown based relationship and sexuality educator, who have been delivering a range of programmes to schools, young peoples groups and parents for over a decade. Following a period when the organisation showed itself able to deliver support programmes in the Lurgan area, Love for Life made an application to Craigavon Local Strategy Partnership to deliver a focused programme that would engage parents in Lurgan.

The proposal sought to fund Love for Life to deliver a programme of capacity building and support that would better place parents and carers to address issues that young people face in the town of Lurgan.

This interim review report seeks to evaluate if the project has been implemented in the manner agreed by the letter of offer and if the impacts anticipated are being achieved in a way that contributes to the overall objectives of the Peace II programme being delivered by Craigavon Local Strategy Partnership. The review also seeks to establish a number of key recommendations upon which Love for Life can act, in order to further enhance its ability to fulfil the objectives set in the original application.



Thomas J Stewart
External Evaluator

2. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Love for Life's application to Measure 3.1 of the PEACE II programme stated that the project would:

- Develop and deliver programmes for parents around the Catalyst theme in church and community settings in North and South Lurgan
- Network church and community parents groups around Catalyst Parent
- Form a cross community parents focus group to steer Catalyst Parent
- Mobilise parental cross community leadership to move community vision towards the Catalyst aspiration that "underage young people would be nicotine, alcohol, drug and sex free"

OBJECTIVES

These objectives were based upon a perceived need for such interventions given Government research into risk taking behaviours amongst adolescents. Local research was reported to demonstrate the high level of such risk taking behaviours in the Lurgan area combined with the feeling of hopelessness being expressed by parents.

To fulfill this mission the project has sought to:

- Provide training and development opportunities for parents in relation to risk taking behaviours
- Deliver services with direction coming from parents through a parents focus group
- Provide opportunities for parents from both sides of a divided town to stand together on the common issue of addressing teenage risk taking behaviours

To this end Love for Life in their application for funding established a number of expected outputs for their project. These were:

- (i) delivery of 8-10 parents/carers events in North and South Lurgan to approximately 250 parents by June 2006

- (ii) organisation of 5-6 meetings of a Catalyst Parents Focus Group, involving 20-30 parents/carers from across North and South Lurgan by June 2006
- (iii) organisation of 1-2 cross community parent issues evenings as directed by the Catalyst Parents Focus Group, by June 2006

It was further anticipated that the achievement of these outputs would result in communities being empowered to make healthier choices around risk taking behaviours leading to a healthier and safer Lurgan for all. This in itself was expected to lead to greater community awareness about the problems young people face.

In relation to PEACE II Distinctiveness and Reconciliation criteria the project has sought to:

- build cross community networks and forums
 - build respect, trust and common goals amongst people from both sides of a town with a recognised sectarian interface
 - enable people to make informed, healthier choices resulting in higher engagement in arts and sports activities
 - promote Catalyst objectives through arts and sports and to underage users of arts and sports social venues
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- hold 6-8 cross community events
 - develop co-operation and collaborative working between the communities of Lurgan
 - develop a cross community focus/steering group
 - engage sports clubs encouraging them to commit to the Catalyst vision
 - target the most disadvantaged wards in the Borough

DISTINCTIVENESS

RECONCILIATION

3. EVIDENCE OF REVIEW

In the development of the evaluation we first sought to review all relevant project documentation to enable an objective evaluation of progress prior to engaging the views of stakeholders.

3.1 Documentation Review

As part of the evaluative review process we sought evidence in relation to project design, implementation and management in order to determine the effectiveness of the project in fulfilling the objectives set out in the original applications and the projects fulfilment of the terms set out in Craigavon LSP's letter of offer.

Documentation reviewed included:

- Original Application Form
- Letter of offer
- Amended letter of offer
- Financial procedures
- Grant Aid Declarations
- Financial Remittance
- Promotional Material/Presentations
- Information Literature
- Press cuttings
- Questionnaires
- Contact Lists

3.2 Views of Stakeholders

To gauge the views of a number of agencies who have been involved with the Catalyst Parent programme we contacted three key agencies who have had direct input into the programme. These were:

- Craigavon PSNI
- Lurgan YMCA
- Craigavon Borough Council

To give as full a favour of the views expressed by the stakeholders we have included direct comments made by each:

3.21 David Smith Community Safety Constable, Craigavon DCU, PSNI

“From my point of view this programme has begun a very important piece of work in the Lurgan area. As a police service we are keen to see a reduction in the levels of drinking, drug taking and underage sex and in order to do this we need a wide variety of approaches. We have already a number of organisations dealing directly with the young people themselves including police, YMCA and others. The *Catalyst Parent group fills a gap* in services because it is *getting parents on board* in supporting their children and other young people in their communities in *resisting these harmful risk taking behaviours*. The sort of effective working relationship/partnership we have developed is *essential to solving some of these shared problems*. Catalyst Parent is starting to create a *community ownership* of these problems and giving people the *skills and strategies to face and solve them*. Overall I feel that this is a very worthwhile programme that is hopefully only beginning what will turn out to be a long term piece of work in Lurgan.”

3.22 Martin Larkham, Lurgan YMCA

“My remit is drugs and alcohol hence my involvement with Love for Life. *The Catalyst programme has been successful in drawing attention to the much needed area of parents and their young people*. There has been a focal point in the field of alcohol abuse/misuse which drew me to the programme. The team at Love for Life have worked extremely hard at getting parents involved in this programme and in my estimation have succeeded, numbers increasing as we take *small yet meaningful steps toward our objective*. The partnership work has worked well which in turn allowed those parents involved an opportunity to see first hand how organisations can join together and work for the betterment of young person, parent and family unit. If I could offer one small piece of constructive criticism it would be *lack of inclusion of young people*. This is not to say Love for Life have not worked at this, they have.

3.23 *Daryn Greene Sports Development Officer, Craigavon Borough Council*

“I was contacted by Michelle who asked me to attend the Lurgan Catalyst for my input in terms of *sports, and diversionary projects*. She asked me to deliver a presentation to a group of interested parents around the above themes, and this *presentation / information evening was a huge success*. Since then the Catalyst group has met several times to discuss what can be done to tackle the issues and concerns Love for Life have in relation to young people. Additional to this I have also been involved with Love for Life, and Michelle, in *developing an awareness raising project around the theme of under-age drinking in sports clubs*, and this is ongoing at the minute. In summary, The Lurgan Catalyst Programme has been positive in terms of *providing a good community network* for assessing need and potential for developing new projects.”

3.3 *Project Development*

To understand Love for Life's development of the project we met with the Chief Executive of Love for Life, Dr. Richard Barr and the part time Lurgan Catalyst Parent Project Worker, Michele Wilkinson.

Dr. Barr explained that originally he had felt he could develop the project but soon realised that a part time worker with experience of working with parents would be required. This change was agreed with the LSP resulting in Michele Wilkinson being appointed¹. Michele also works part time in a parenting project run by Barnardos.

The Chief Executive and Project Worker were both of the view that quite a considerable amount of progress had been made and that a dynamic community led focus group had developed who were very passionate and committed to the aims and objectives of the Catalyst Parent project.

¹ Michelle is employed on a temporary 18 ¾ hour per week contract

It was felt that the group had received a considerable boost with some key stakeholders signing up to the project including the local PSNI Chief Inspector, the Principal of Lurgan College and a representative from the Vintners Association.

In terms of peace and reconciliation benefits Dr. Barr noted that these were being achieved through:

- having a cross community grouping working together for common good on an interest of concern to the whole community
- focus group members sharing best practice and development tips to group members from the “other side”
- enabling engagement in the project by the use of neutral venues
- engaging people in a forum involving the PSNI
- building cross community relationships and friendships

4 PROGRESS MADE

We have observed that the project has progressed in accordance with its action plan as reported in monitoring reports submitted to the Craigavon LSP.

Further examination of the project has enabled us to provide brief comment on programme effectiveness, the programmes contribution to its objectives, project outcomes, and the contribution the project has made to the PEACE II Distinctiveness and Reconciliation criteria.

4.1 Overall Programme

Area of Effectiveness	Comment
Contribution the programme was making to the LSP's policy objectives	Overall the Project appears to be making considerable contribution to the LSP's objectives, although further enhancement could be made ²
Effectiveness and Efficiency of Use of the Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments, terms and conditions of service • Administrative and secretarial support • Value for money • Financial accounting and auditing • Policies and procedures 	Love for Life has developed excellent in house systems to monitor and manage PEACE II projects. They have dedicated administrative and finance staff who seek to ensure value for money in all aspects of the programme. ³ A range of policies and procedures are in place that enable efficient management of staff and resources
Effectiveness of Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group satisfaction • involvement of stakeholders in programme planning • quality standards • methods of redress, complaints procedure • effectiveness in promoting programme 	Programme participants seem very pleased with the project and a cross sectoral group of parents are involved in programme development. All those engaged are able to raise any issues of concern with the Love for Life CEO. Great effort has been made to promote the programme via posters, leaflet and media with PEACE II funding and Craigavon LSP being recognised on each occasion.

² See section 4.4

³ See Appendix A for Love for Life's finance policy

<p>Effectiveness in managing objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficient and effective use of the grant • planning process • ability to set and meet targets • evidence of progress and achievements 	<p>Staff at Love for Life appear to have made effective use of the grant, following amendment to the letter of offer. In hindsight some of the original targets set in the application may have been somewhat ambitious.</p>
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4.2 Projects success in meeting agreed objectives and project outputs/outcomes.

Objectives	Comment
Develop and deliver programmes for parents around the Catalyst theme in church and community settings in North and South Lurgan	This objective is being fulfilled, although perhaps not in the way originally envisaged
Network church and community parents groups around Catalyst Parent	Networking of churches has proved somewhat difficult. Communities have networked although perhaps more on an individual level than on a group level
Form a cross community parents focus group to steer Catalyst Parent	A cross community parents focus group is meeting on a regular basis and giving direction to the programme
Mobilise parent cross community leadership to move community vision towards the Catalyst aspiration that "underage young people would be enabled to be nicotine, alcohol, drug and sex free"	Leadership of the project is now coming from Love for Life with guidance from parents who are making decisions in regard to approaches/actions. The process of the community vision moving towards the Catalyst vision is perhaps a more long term process
Outputs	Comment
Delivery of 8-10 parents/carers events in North and South Lurgan to approximately 250 parents by June 2006	These targets have not been met although a few events have taken place. Love for Life appear not to have foreseen the impact apathy can have on getting parents to engage with programmes of this nature
Hold 5-6 meetings of a Catalyst Parents Focus Group, involving 20-30 parents/carers from across North and South Lurgan by June 2006	This aspects of the project has been successful and will exceed its original target
Hold 1-2 cross community parent issues evenings as directed by the Catalyst Parents Focus Group, by June 2006.	In total three such events have been held to date in Lurgan Town Hall which would be regarded as a neutral venue.

4.3 Projects success in fulfilling distinctiveness and reconciliation targets

Distinctiveness	Comment
Build cross community networks and forums	Continue to progress slowly
Build respect, trust and common goals amongst people from both sides of a town with a recognised sectarian interface	Some degree of success in this objectives although further progress could be made
Enabling people to make informed, healthier choices resulting in higher engagement in arts and sports activities	Difficult to gauge but parents have certainly been given the information to assist them make such choices
Promoting Catalyst objectives through arts and sports and to underage users of arts and sports social venues	Beginning to occur more recently
Reconciliation	Comment
Hold 6-8 cross community events	If public information events are counted this target will be reached
Develop cooperation and collaborative working between the communities of Lurgan	Evidence would suggest that in a small scale this is beginning to happen and that relationships could develop if the project is sustained in the medium to long term
Development of a cross community focus/steering group	Achieved
Engage sports clubs to endorse to the Catalyst vision	Work with sports clubs has begun in conjunction with the local Council's Sports Development Officer
Target the most disadvantaged wards in the Borough	Parents engaging have primarily been from areas of disadvantage

4.4 Recommendations for Programme Development

As Love for Life takes forward this exciting project we would make a number of recommendations:

- i. Love for Life should continue to liaise with Craigavon LSP to develop a project which addresses current needs whilst still contributing to LSP and SEUPB objectives;
- ii. Programme management and reporting should continue to be conducted to the current high standard;
- iii. At every stage Love for Life should seek to ensure value for money remains central to their expenditure;
- iv. Work should be focused towards gaining maximum “buy in” from parents already involved and to develop them as promoters of the Catalyst programmes and policies;
- v. Activities developed with parental groups and support agencies should always seek to reference and develop peace and reconciliation;
- vi. Love for Life should continue to seek engagement of church based groups where possible although we recognise the difficulty of mobilising this particular sector;
- vii. Training should be considered to build the capacity of the cross community parents focus groups so that its work can be sustained after the current period of funding ends;
- viii. Before funding ends the Focus Group should be supported in developing their own vision statement and strategy for carrying the objectives forward.

4.5 Future Development

Having considered carefully the nature of this programme we believe that it presents a model that could well be replicated or indeed developed and enhanced for delivery either within Craigavon or elsewhere in Northern Ireland. We perceive there to be direct benefits to a wide range of areas of public concern including:

- Personal health
- Family life
- Social development
- Community education
- Community development
- Community planning
- Community safety
- Peace and Reconciliation

We further believe that to ensure future Catalyst programmes can maximise their impact they should be funded for at least a two to three year period to allow for effective project and group development.

APPENDIX A LOVE FOR LIFE'S FINANCIAL PROCEDURE

Payment of Invoices

- Invoices specifically relating to the project should be separated from any Love for Life invoices when post opened. They should then be filed in the project file.
- A Payment Authorisation Form (APF) needs to be completed and attached to the invoice. This needs to be countersigned by either Janice Barr or Dr R Barr before a cheque can be issued.
- Write the cheque, also completing the cheque details on the APF. Each cheque then needs two signatures, usually Janice Barr and Deryck Harrison.
- Attach a photocopy of the invoice to the cheque and post to the payee.

Percentage Payments

- At the end of each quarter, extract all the common invoices (i.e. utility bills etc) from the Love for Life invoice file leaving a photocopy for record purposes. Calculate the correct percentage to be claimed from the project and issue an invoice from Love for Life to the project for the correct amount. Attach this LFL invoice along with original invoice for full amount to an APF and proceed as normal.

Cheques Required for Other Reasons

- If a cheque is required but no invoice is available (e.g. a training course or venue booking) attach a copy of the application form to the APF and also the receipt if and when received.

Bank Reconciliations

- A bank reconciliation must be completed and signed on receipt of bank statement each month. A hard copy to be printed signed by Dr Barr and kept on file.

Lodgements

- Each lodgement to be documented in back of cheque record book.

Returned Cheques

- Cheque record book to be adjusted along with bank reconciliation.

Cheque Record Book

- All financial transactions must be recorded in the book. There is no petty cash so all cheques must be documented with a paper trail placed in the file.