

Love for Life



Final Evaluation of the YESIP Programme

“Empowering 13-15 Year Olds

to make

Informed Choices”

June 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

Love for Life, a relationship and sexuality educator have been delivering a range of programmes to schools and young peoples groups over a number of years. Since 2003 Love for Life has delivered a programme under Measure 2.2 (European Structural Funds) of the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

The programme sought to deliver a Personal Development and Training Programme in selected schools enabling those working in these schools to lower risk taking behaviour amongst young people. In May 2005 an interim evaluation report provided mid point guidance to Love for Life to ensure that the programme was being delivered in the manner required by the letter of offer and considered if the impacts anticipated are being achieved in a means which contributes to the overall objectives of Measure 2.2.

The final evaluation considers the overall impact, outcomes and outputs of the programme and reviews how Love for Life responded to a range of recommendations made in the interim evaluation report.



Tommy Stewart (Vision Management Services)

External Evaluator (June 2006)

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In designing the final evaluation methodology it was determined that the evaluation should look at evidence from four areas:

- (i) project files;
- (ii) self evaluation sheets;
- (iii) teacher impact statements;
- (iv) Love for Life senior staff.

2.1. Project Initiation/Desktop Analysis

During this phase a number of actions were completed:

- Initial meetings were held with the project worker (Lisa Gregg) and the Chief Executive Officer of Love for Life (Dr. Richard Barr) to agree the format and timescale for the evaluation and to discuss a way forward for the development of the evaluation report and recommendations;
- Review of all desktop evidence – the project worker was asked to submit a range of documents including all monitoring reports;
- Additionally the evaluator had access to the original application made to the funder, all written communication with the funder and evaluation sheets completed by pupils.

2.2 Consultation

As part of the evaluation, evidence in terms of impact, outcomes and outputs, evidence was sought from:

- (i) **Teachers** - those who see the delivery of the programme closest from a professional stand point are the teachers whose classes have received Love for Life input on a weekly basis. Semi Structured telephone interviews were conducted with teachers from all five participant schools.

- (ii) **Project Officer** – we met with and considered the views of the project officer (Lisa Gregg) as part of the evaluative process.

- (iii) **Love for Life Chief Executive Officer** – we met with the Chief Executive Officer of Love for Life to consider the impact he believed the programme had made on its original objectives and to consider how he perceived such work might be taken forward and sustained in the future.

2.3 Consideration of Evidence and Development of Report

The final element to the evaluation was broken into a number of key tasks which included:

- Drawing together all evidence presented, both quantitative and qualitative;
- Developing a framework for consideration of effectiveness;
- Evaluating comments made by contributors;
- Cross comparison of evidence with funders objectives;
- Consideration of future sustainability of project activities;
- Development of a written evaluation report for submission to the Board of Love for Life and to the project funder.

Together the three strands of the evaluation have enabled objective comment which is documented in the sections that follow.

3. DESKTOP ANALYSIS

To inform the evaluation a range of documentation was considered. Four key elements were incorporated into the desktop analysis to enable accurate assessment of compliance and to determine the level of progress that had been made on measures agreed with the funder. These elements were:

3.1 Review of Baseline and Performance Measures

Following the mid point evaluation of the project a baseline was established as follows:

- Project need identified - Summer 2002;
- Funding awarded – Early 2003;
- No previous project of this nature in the SELB area;
- No other external support to teachers in delivery of such programmes.

Implementation of the project was based upon a number of performance measures:

- (i) Empowerment of Year 10 young people to make informed decisions regarding their own health, targeted at those young people most at risk in the 25% of the wards with the lowest combined Noble ranking for education and employment;
- (ii) Through a Year 10 programme of Relationship, Sexuality and Drug Awareness Education to reduce unplanned pregnancy and other risk taking behaviours whilst encouraging responsible behaviour by young people;
- (iii) To enable participant young people to:
 - increase their levels of confidence and self esteem;
 - enhance their understanding of their roles and responsibilities;
 - develop a greater understanding of and increase their skills in reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect;
 - have better opportunities to develop to their full potential;
 - have increased knowledge and understanding of a range of personal and social issues;
 - become empowered to get involved in their school and local community activity;
 - desire to stay at school and continue with third level education thereby increasing their employability.

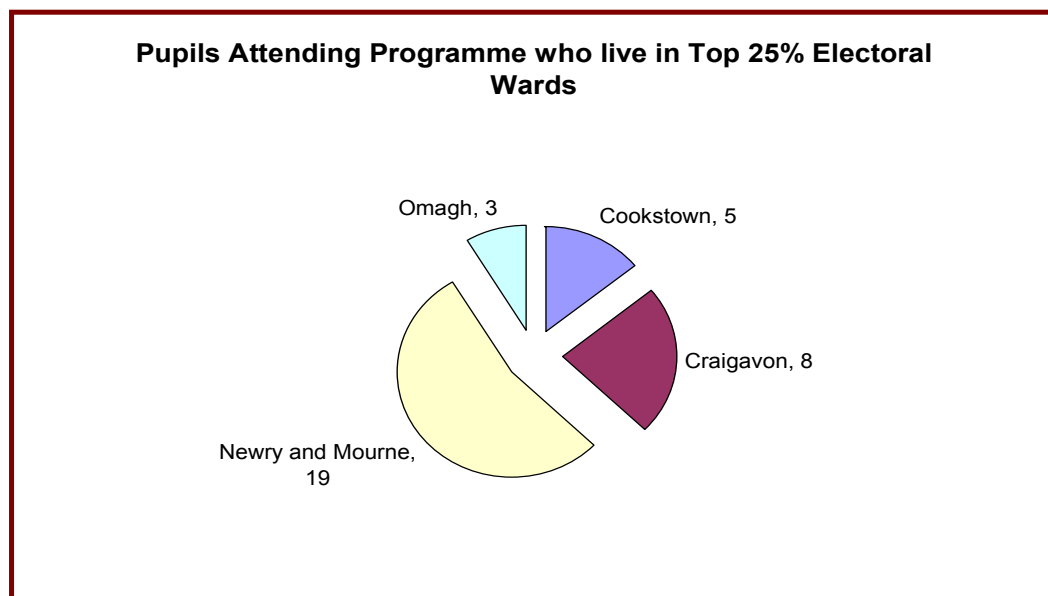
3.2 Consideration of project annual plans

Agreed targets were established on an annual basis for project implementation. Consideration was focused particularly on fulfilment of the year three project plan given that completion of year one and two project plans was considered in the interim evaluation report.

3.3 Review of monitoring returns

Since commencement of the project Love for Life has submitted one end of year return to the funder. This was made on the basis of a calendar year i.e. the year January – December 2005. These provided a number of output measures e.g.

- On average almost 100 pupils benefited from the project annually
- Higher proportion of participants were male
- 95.8% of participants who commenced the programme completed it.
- 36.1% (2004-2005) lived within the top 25% of YESIP Identified Wards. The distribution of these by Borough is demonstrated in the table below.



3.4 Consideration of evaluations completed by students

The project promoter, Love for Life, made available to the evaluation all such student evaluations as were requested. Evaluation sheets were sampled from three of the five participating schools.

Evaluation sheets were sampled in regard to pupil's views on the sessions delivered by Love for Life. In addition analysis was noted in regard to forms completed by students in relation to:

- (i) good relations;
- (ii) baseline questionnaires completed by students.

From the pupil evaluation of sessions it was evident that:

- the majority always enjoy Love for Life sessions;
- the introduction of games as an interactive learning tool was the most popular means by which pupils liked to learn;
- most students did not like having to complete the worksheets associated with each session;
- of those sampled 58% always or often understood what was said in the sessions, whilst 37% sometimes understood the lesson content;
- of those sampled 56% always or often knew what they had to do in the sessions with 42% sometimes knowing what they needed to do;
- of those sampled 35% always or often felt better about themselves after the session with 32% sometimes feeling better about themselves after the session.

4. THE PROGRAMME

4.1 Programme Delivery

The “Empowering 13-15 Year Olds to make Informed Choices” programme, funded by YESIP under Measure 2.2 has been delivered over the period 2003 – 2006 in five schools. These are:

- Fivemiletown High School
- Drumcree College, Portadown
- Cookstown High School
- St. Paul’s High School, Bessbrook
- St. Joseph’s High School, Newry

4.2 Programme Content

During the course of the programme Love for Life delivered four Lifeskills modules. These were:

Citizenship

Preparation for Working Life

Personal Care

ICT

Pupils were given an opportunity to work towards accreditation via ASDAN’s Certificate of Personal Effectiveness¹.

¹ www.asdan.co.uk



4.21 Citizenship Module

This module covers five areas:

- (i) Self Advocacy (Making Choices);
- (ii) Caring for the Environment;
- (iii) Decision Making;
- (iv) Developing Good Relations and Resolving Conflict;
- (v) Different Communities.

4.22 Preparation for Working Life Module

This module covers five areas:

- (i) Finding Out about Work;
- (ii) Preparing for a Work Related Activity;
- (iii) Taking Part in a Work Related Activity;
- (iv) Health and Safety;
- (v) Using Help and Advice to Plan your Next Steps.

4.23 Personal Care Module

This module also covers five areas:

- (i) Drugs, Identifying and Understanding the harmful Effects of Drugs;
- (ii) Health and Fitness;
- (iii) Healthy Eating;
- (iv) Personal Hygiene;
- (v) Different Roles and Responsibilities inside and outside the Home.

4.24 ICT Module

The five areas covered by this module are:

- (i) Using ICT in the Home;
- (ii) Using ICT in the Community;
- (iii) Using ICT in Personal Communications;
- (iv) Using ICT to enter, save and retrieve information;
- (v) Using ICT to Present Ideas.

In addition to module units young people were able to participate in a number of specific Good Relations activities including:

- Group activities bringing together pupils from participating schools that were perceived to have mainly Protestant and Catholic students;
- Engaging an external facilitator (Lesley Macaulay) to deliver specific Good Relations training sessions with young people.

5. KEY STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In evaluating the work done during the three years of the project we sought to obtain direct input from a range of beneficiaries and stakeholders. Firstly we sought to interview teachers from all five schools that have had opportunity to see the programme delivered on a weekly basis in their classroom.

Secondly we met with the Chief Executive of Love for Life to consider the impact of the project on its objectives and to consider the way forward for the delivery of such programmes, given that the funding period has come to an end.

5.1 Teachers

Teachers from all five participating schools were interviewed. Their comments are recorded verbatim and demonstrate the high regard for the programme amongst the teaching staff.

5.11 Why did your school decide to participate in this programme?

- “Because the Love for Life organisation had previously been in our school delivering presentations to young people”.
- “Because of the area of need within which the school is located”
- “We were approached by Love for Life to get involved in this programme”.
- “We became involved in the Love for Life programme, largely as a result of other activities within the school that Love for Life were already involved in”

- “We became involved in the programme following a discussion with Love for Life staff. Within the school we had identified a specific group of individuals and we felt it would be useful through the Love for Life programme to address their specific needs”.
- “We decided to get involved with the Love for Life programme because we had a significant number of special needs children. We were interested in improving their social skills and promoting their awareness of the wider world. In addition we also wanted to do the best that we could to prepare them for the world of work.”

5.12 What did you perceive were going to be the benefits of participation?

- “Love for Life offered PSC skills teaching to young people within our college, for whom we as staff were not equipped to deal with. Lisa had the edge on delivery; her approach was fresh, innovative and encouraging. She was more appropriate to deal with the young people in terms of her approach and age. She was quickly able to develop a relationship with pupils that teachers could not.”
- “Students were more likely to speak more openly to a member of non-teaching staff, in an informal setting. Lisa brought a different approach to the subject matter and learning became fun for pupils. They enjoyed the project immensely, were less inhibited, and as there was no formal examination or assessment at the end of the programme everyone engaged.”
- “We anticipated that our young people would benefit from participation through experiencing improved self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition a number of young people are experiencing extreme forms of peer pressure and we were concerned as to how to address this. A small number of young people have gained immeasurably through this programme and a definite improvement has been noticed across-the-board.”

- “For our young people the benefits of participation included improve self-esteem, increased self-confidence, improved social skills. In addition young people have been able to build life-skills. This programme was particularly successful because learning was achieved through small group work settings which were informal and offered the potential for success where a formal classroom setting could not.”
- “The biggest benefit for us in participating in the programme was the fact that Lisa had 90% of the curriculum already developed. On this basis we as a school would be able to benefit greatly from participating in the programme as we had little preparation to make prior to commencement of delivery.”

5.13 Has the programme been delivered in a professional manner?

- “Yes the programme was delivered in an extremely professional manner; Lisa was well prepared and knew her subject matter.”
- “Yes the programme was delivered in a very professional manner. We were very impressed with Lisa and the materials that she provided, including the materials that she left behind for us to utilise.”
- “Yes the programme was delivered in an exceptionally professional manner, Lisa was very good at what she did, and her approach was very sensitive and appropriate.”
- “Yes we were very happy with Lisa's delivery of the programme, it was very professional.”
- “Yes the programme was delivered in a very professional manner. "Top drawer!"

5.14 Do you believe pupils have found the sessions to be interesting and informative?

- “Yes those pupils who participated in the programme thoroughly enjoyed it.”
- “People seem to enjoy the course immensely. Normally I had them for the next two periods immediately following their session with Lisa. I must say they were always in good spirits and seem to have a lot to talk about as result of their interaction.”
- “Yes, people seem to enjoy the material delivered, especially those with lower ability. Lisa managed the group quite well and maintained a good relationship with pupils. She used a variety of means to communicate with students including PowerPoint presentations. This helps to maintain their levels of concentration and interest in the subject matter.”
- "Young men, don't like being involved in things that are not interesting, they vote with their feet! Our young men remained in full connection with the programme throughout. I believe their attendance speaks for itself in terms of the quality of the material delivered and the levels of interest expressed by students.”
- “Yes the kids got a great deal out of the sessions and enjoyed it very much.”

5.15 How do you believe the programme contributes to other curriculum subjects?

- “The Love for Life Programme delivered by Lisa contributes to the religious education curriculum and the new emerging citizenship programme. In addition I can see that it will also make a substantial contribution to the new revised curriculum.”

- “I believe this programme connects with a number of other curriculum subjects. It ties in with science, citizenship, home economics, religious education, PSHE etc.”
- “Yes the programme has a number of good links with other curriculum subjects for example the new citizenship curriculum which will shortly become obligatory for everyone. The Love for Life project also links well with the old now obsolete PSE programme. Religious education also has a natural link with the programme however, I believe the strongest link to be citizenship and it is likely that as the subject matter develops more students will benefit from the Love for Life programme.”
- “I believe the programme contributes to other curriculum subjects in a number of ways. In fact it contributes to a wide range of curriculum subjects but primarily, I believe it contributes to promoting independent living and PHSE.”
- “The programme helped develop interpersonal skills as well as personal skills. Some of our young people were on placements and the experiences that they learned through the Love for Life programme helped them considerably in terms of being able to communicate with people whilst on placement. Individuals also improve their self-esteem and confidence as a result of the programme, this was also evident in their ability to get on and enjoy the experience of their work placement.”

5.16 In what other ways does the programme contribute to the school as a whole?

- “As a whole, the Love for Life programme contributes to the school in that it makes those who participate in the programme feel more valued, it also improves their self-esteem and promotes their ability to interact and engage with their peers in a classroom setting.”

- “The programme has provided opportunities for young people to meet pupils from other schools. Young people engaged in cross community activity and we visited other colleges. Cookstown High School would not have had the resources to fund such initiatives without the input from Love for Life. So yes I believe our participation in the programme has had a significant contribution to the overall strength of the school.”
- “The programme links well with religious education and local charity groups. It encourages young people to consider those who are less well-off than ourselves. In addition our travel and drama group (AXIOM) provides opportunities for young people to develop self-esteem and confidence.”
- “I think the fact that the worker was external to the school provide a young people with the freedom to get involved. I believe Lisa’s relationship with the students was such that it was less threatening for young people and therefore promoted their engagement of participation in the programme. I think Lisa brought a high level of personal commitment and skill to the programme, this has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the programme.”
- The programme has helped young people with special needs to participate more fully in the life of the school. Lisa's approach and interaction with our young people has helped them to develop their confidence to the point that they are now better integrated than ever before.

5.17 Do you believe that the school could deliver these sessions or is it necessary for an external agency to deliver the sessions?

- “For us it is important that this particular subject be delivered through an external agency as we as an organisation do not have the capacity, capability or resources to deliver material at this level. Lisa's approach is very focused and specific; she was always well prepared, informed and

able to present her material in a fresh and innovative way. Quite often school staff; do not have the relationship with some of these difficult pupils, or do not necessarily have the time or resources to prepare adequately for such a difficult subject.”

- “Yes I have no doubt that the school could deliver something similar, but not to the same extent. It is unlikely that school staff could deliver this programme in a similar way where pupils can feel less inhibited, as is the case when someone from an outside agency delivers the programme. An external delivery agent can create a less threatening environment and as we are so close to the children this is less possible for us. I believe, if we deliver the programme it will be more threatening for students, and probably a lot less beneficial.”
- “Yes the school could deliver however external delivery is preferable. Given the need for informality and flexibility in terms of delivery and the need for a strong bond on relationship between student and teacher it would be preferable for the external delivery agency to facilitate the subject.”
- “Yes school could deliver the sessions however the best solution would be a combination of both. It would be important to identify the right person, with the right interpersonal skills who is able to develop a relationship with young people and exercise constraint and sensitivity in how the subject matter is addressed. The success of the Love for Life project hinges upon the relationship that young people develop with the tutor. I believe Lisa's approach was excellent. So in summary, yes the school can deliver, however it is probably better to adopt a combined approach.”
- “No, the school could not begin to attempt delivery of the sessions, as staff do not possess the necessary skills. Lisa was able to bring a level of skill and interaction to the programme that college staff did not possess. Her informal approach and interaction with the students allowed her to nurture relationships with the pupils and thereby enhance their learning and

participation in the programme. The structures within which we operate cannot be as informal as we would like to be.”

5.2 Dr. Richard Barr (Chief Executive, Love for Life)

Dr. Barr commented that the programme had been highly effective in enabling Love for Life develop more sustained interventions in schools. Normal Love for Life schools programme delivery is focused on short term interventions with Love for Life staff going into schools to present one off talks/events and then perhaps not returning until the following year, engaging a different group of students each time. Although delivered with a package of support materials this model is less effective than intensive work with a small group.

In the case of the “Empowering 13-15 Year Olds to Make Informed Choices” Programme, Love for Life has the opportunity to work with Year 10’s and 11’s over the course of one or two years. This is seen to have been beneficial for a number of reasons:

- Young people are proven to respond better to programme delivery when they have had the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with the person delivering the programme;
- One staff member from Love for Life delivered the sessions in all five schools over the three year period, providing continuity and enabling Lisa to develop delivery skills;
- Lisa was viewed by pupils as being “different” in that she was not teaching staff and they therefore seemed to be able to relate to her better than they would have done to a teacher;
- Relationships have been built with the schools and the teaching staff, enabling the programme to become bedded into a supportive teaching environment;
- Pupils have been able to share problems with the Love for Life staff member and receive non judgemental guidance as to how best to move forward;

- Confidence building has been enhanced through long term sustained interventions;
- Weekly inputs from Love for Life seem to have served as a motivator for pupils when moving on into other classes.

Finally Dr. Barr believed that thanks to YESIP funding Love for Life has been able to make a life impacting input to the lives of all programme participants which should enhance the young person's ability to contribute to their family, community and working lives in years to come.

6. MOVING FORWARD

The following analysis and observations are based upon comments received during the evaluation or upon the evaluator's observation of the implementation and management of the programme.

6.1 Outcome Analysis

We have considered how implementation, management and delivery have contributed to the stated objectives (see section 3.1) over the 2-3 years of project delivery. Our analysis is shown in the table below.

Anticipated Outcome	Progress
Increase pupils levels of confidence and self esteem	For the vast majority of pupils it would appear that the programme has made a considerable contribution to confidence building
Enhance pupils understanding of their roles and responsibilities	Through the modules of the programme pupils have been given an insight into their responsibilities and roles that should serve to enhance the contributions they make
Develop a greater understanding of and increase pupils skills in reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect	This has been achieved through a number of the Citizenship modules, though bringing together schools from the Protestant and Catholic background and through focused Good Relations training provided by an external facilitator
Have better opportunities to develop to pupils full potential	As a result of the programme inputs it is apparent from teaching staff that pupils do seem to be more participative in class and school life therefore enabling them to have more opportunity to make a full contribution
Have increased knowledge and understanding of a range of personal and social issues	Clearly teachers believe the programme to have enabled them to achieve this objective. This has occurred through coverage of issues such as drugs, alcohol,

	smoking, fitness, healthy eating and hygiene as part of the Personal Care module
Become empowered to get involved in pupils school and local community activity	Certainly the programme has empowered young people to get involved. The extent to which this actually happens will be dependent on ongoing supportive school, family and community environments
Desire to stay at school and continue with third level education thereby becoming more employable	Pupils who are participative seem to find lessons more enjoyable in school as they had the Love for Life sessions to look forward to. If schools can be supported to engage interactive programmes of this nature then we believe young people are more likely to remain in education

6.2 Observations

1. The programme has been delivered in a manner complimentary to the objectives established in the letter of offer.
2. All planned objectives have been addressed by Love for Life in a timely and professional fashion with evidence that Love for Life has sought to fulfill service delivery to the beneficiary groups outlined in their original application.
3. Record keeping and financial management has been carried out in a competent manner and in compliance with guidance issued by the funder.
4. Project promotion has been conducted through agreed methods with strong linkages established with the Southern Education and Library Board's Pastoral Care Advisor.
5. Apparent impact on pupils has been considerable with attitudinal changes noted in all participating schools, with quite a number of pupils now interacting more positively in mainstream classes.

6. Service standards appear to have been high with all respondents stating that delivery standards are very high.
7. Programme development went beyond the specification of the terms established, in order to ensure tailored delivery to the specific needs of each school.
8. Ongoing demand for external support to schools has been evidenced. The programme seems to prove the case that delivery of interactive programmes of this nature, by non teaching staff can make a considerable contribution to pupil's development, both academically and socially. It is obviously important that this is done in a way that always respects the ethos and value base of the school.

APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- ESF Monitoring Return
- Programme Annual Work Plan
- Range of Pupil Evaluations
- Range of Teacher Evaluations
- YESIP Pre Initiation Meeting Questionnaire
- Programme Budget
- Original Project Application Form
- ASDAN Programme Documentation

APPENDIX B SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teachers

- (i) Why did your school decide to participate in this programme?
- (ii) What did you perceive were going to be the benefits of participation?
- (iii) Has the programme been delivered in a professional manner?
- (iv) Do you believe pupils have found the sessions to be interesting and informative?
- (v) How do you believe the programme contributes to other curriculum subjects?
- (vi) In what other ways does the programme contribute to the school as a whole?
- (vii) Do you believe that the school could deliver these sessions or is it necessary for an external agency to deliver the sessions?