
TAKING POST-16 CITIZENSHIP FORWARD: LEARNING FROM THE POST-16 CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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Background

This is a summary of findings from the final year report of a three year evaluation of the post-16 citizenship development projects undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is based upon qualitative interviews with 67 individuals and 26 groups of young people across 20 case-study organisations from the Round 1 and Round 2 projects, and upon management information (MI) data supplied by the projects. It sets these findings within the context of findings from the first two years of the evaluation. The aims of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the extent to which the development projects were progressing in line with their action plans, and working towards their own objectives.
- Identify the conditions necessary for the success of post-16 citizenship.
- Identify the forms of citizenship provision that appear the most effective.
- Examine the apparent impact of involvement in post-16 citizenship on young people's knowledge, understanding and skills.

In this final year of the evaluation, there is a specific focus on the sustainability of the development projects, and issues that need to be addressed in any period of expansion leading to eventual national roll-out of post-16 citizenship entitlement for all young people.

Key findings

The evaluation has provided evidence that the projects have been successful in developing a range of innovative approaches to active citizenship in a range of post-16 education and training settings. There are a number of key factors that appear to underlie the most successful post-16 citizenship provision, including.

- A flexible, yet rigorous, framework which recognises that projects are developing citizenship programmes in a wide variety of ways, from taught to more active approaches, according to the specific needs and circumstances of their organisations, staff and young people.
- A clear definition of what citizenship means, and what the programme seeks to achieve, tailored to the needs, skills, interests and experiences of young people.
- Dedicated and enthusiastic staff with sufficient resources and development opportunities. Senior management support and a supportive cultural ethos within the institution are also important.
- An emphasis on combining knowledge, understanding and skills with practical action - what is termed a 'political literacy in action' approach, as opposed to a narrower political knowledge approach.
- Involvement and participation of young people in decisions about their learning, and the development of a student voice.

Policy background

Citizenship education has been at the centre of a major debate and review over the past decade. In 1998 the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, chaired by Professor (now Sir) Bernard Crick, recommended in its report¹ that citizenship education be developed around three separate but interrelated strands: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. Citizenship has since become a statutory component of the National Curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 (students aged 11-16).

In 1999, a separate Advisory Group on Citizenship for 16-19 year olds in Education and Training was established, also chaired by Professor Crick. Its report in 2000² recommended that citizenship should become an entitlement for all young people aged 16-19, who should be given effective opportunities to develop their citizenship skills, and suggested that citizenship should be recognised as a key life skill alongside the six key skills already identified. The post-16 recommendations built on the principles embedded within the pre-16 report, whilst recognising the specific context of post-16 education and training, and the need for skills development and 'active citizenship' opportunities.

The development projects

A three year developmental phase of post-16 citizenship started in September 2001, when a first round of pilot projects began exploring ways of delivering citizenship in organisations providing education and training to 16-19 year olds. In September 2002, a new group of pilot projects began a second wave of development. The Round 1 projects consisted of 11 consortia, each with a Consortium-level Project Manager (CLPM) overseeing the development of a range of programmes across partner organisations. The Round 2 projects were organised rather

differently, with no CLPM, but a Project Manager within each individual organisation.

According to MI data, 79 organisations were involved in developing post-16 citizenship projects in 2003-4, including school sixth forms (22), sixth form colleges (13), FE colleges (16), Training Providers (14), Youth Services (9) and other organisations (5).

Methodology

The evaluation adopts a largely qualitative methodology, with this third annual report based upon the following research methods:

- In-depth strategic interviews with 11 CLPMs across the 11 Round 1 consortia in the autumn term of 2003, and with nine LSDA consultants across the 10 Round 2 consortia between March and April 2004.
- In-depth interviews with staff and young people across 20 case-study organisations (one per consortium). These included discussions with project managers (20), staff delivering programmes (23), young people (26 groups, involving around 150 young people) and, where relevant, external partners (4). Interviews took place between April and June 2004.
- Analysis of data from the consortia through termly management information (MI) returns to the LSDA, giving details of young people's participation rates, project action plans and progress.

Main findings

Participation

The number of young people participating in post-16 citizenship projects had increased substantially in 2003-2004, compared with the previous year, according to MI data. The reported number of participants across Round 1 projects rose from 5860 to 7760, and across Round 2 projects from 3043 to 4581. There appeared to be a fairly even split between male and female participants, and the majority were classified as white, with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis being the largest ethnic groups among the remaining participants. Three fifths of Round 1 participants were level 3 learners, while in Round 2 projects half were learning at level 3, and a third at level 2.

¹ QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY (1998). *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools: Final Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship*, 22 September 1998. London: QCA.

² FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL (2000). *Citizenship for 16-19 Year Olds in Education and Training. Report of the Advisory Group to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment*. Coventry: FEFC.

Management and status of citizenship

From the evidence of the case-studies, the organisational model adopted for Round 2 projects was very successful. While project managers at organisational level handled day to day issues, the Consultants were able to take a more strategic perspective, and to facilitate networking and liaison between partner organisations. Overall, it would seem that the Round 2 model streamlined management structure would be appropriate for a national roll out of post-16 citizenship provision.

There was a high level of senior management support for post-16 citizenship within the case-study organisations, although some felt that this was more in principle than in terms of real time and funding. The following factors were also considered crucial to ensuring that post-16 citizenship had high status:

- A 'champion' to promote the importance of citizenship to staff and young people.
- Genuine enthusiasm on the part of delivery staff, and a desire to work in partnership with young people. This was felt by most interviewees to outweigh the need for specific expertise or knowledge.
- Ring-fenced time for coordinators to plan and organise, and for deliverers to develop their understanding of citizenship and to design interesting programmes. Lack of time remains an issue across many of the projects.
- Good opportunities for staff development and training. This is still an underdeveloped area in most organisations, where informal development activities prevail rather than formal training courses.

Definition and understanding of citizenship

Most of the development projects have established a clear understanding of the principles of citizenship, and many have been able to link these to specific learning outcomes for their young people. Consultants felt that understanding was developing particularly in terms of the active, participative element of citizenship. While there was still some concern about covering political literacy, many of the case-study projects provided coverage of all three strands of citizenship, even if project

managers were not always aware of the balance they had achieved.

Active citizenship has been achieved across the range of case study organisations, with many young people being given the opportunity to put their citizenship understanding and skills into practice and participate in a community or public context. Young people had derived great satisfaction from their involvement, and most demonstrated some understanding of citizenship education, and active citizenship. However, at this stage in many organisations the most active engagement has been available to a small and highly motivated group who had chosen to become involved in their citizenship programme. Issues still remain about how to extend the same opportunities to larger groups in a range of different organisational settings.

As post-16 citizenship is extended nationally, it will be important to find ways to communicate clearly and concisely what post-16 citizenship means, and how this can be translated into practice in individual organisations. There will be a need for systematic training and development, and for ongoing support and reinforcement once programmes are established.

Integration and linking of citizenship

It was clear from interviews with young people that experiential learning programmes and discrete taught courses were the most popular, and also helped young people to develop the most comprehensive understanding of what citizenship meant. Those with experiential or project-based programmes were often either stand-alone activities, or integrated seamlessly into the wider ethos of the organisation, typically involving small numbers of young people; they were mainly in youth work and training providers, and also some schools. Less positive views and poorer citizenship learning experiences were apparent in some of the tutorial programmes, which were most common in school and college settings.

There was widespread recognition of the importance of developing continuity between pre- and post-16 citizenship, and interest among many of the post-16 organisations in pursuing this, but as yet little progress has been made. Consideration needs to be given to putting systems in place which can help

organisations to develop their programmes in partnership. These might include:

- The development of local networking groups, involving key citizenship coordinators from a range of organisations.
- The provision of baseline data from schools to post-16 providers on students' experiences and understanding of citizenship issues.
- Independent guidance on the development of post-16 citizenship programmes, taking into account the baseline of pre-16 activity
- An individual or agency to facilitate links between post-16 organisations and schools, to assist with the flow of information, and to offer advice and guidance on developing citizenship across the 14-19 continuum.

The implementation of the Tomlinson proposals for 14-19 education may also help to provide a cohesive framework, at least for a basic core element of citizenship entitlement.

Teaching and learning approaches to citizenship

A variety of teaching, learning and facilitation approaches have been developed across the projects. Case-study evidence suggests that the most successful approaches included the following features:

- Negotiation of key issues of interest with the young people.
- Development of a critically reflective learning environment, with scope for discussion and debate.
- Use of a variety of experiential learning experiences, including project work, drama, role play, art, photography and exhibition work.
- Use of varied and interesting resources, ideally related to, or growing out of, current events that have relevance for young people.
- Facilitation of activities based on the active involvement of young people rather than the teaching of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Links with the wider community through off site visits, the use of external speakers, and the allocation of responsibility to young people for working and negotiating with external partners.

- Involving young people in active participation in large-scale assemblies such as youth fora and student parliaments.

For organisations aiming to offer post-16 citizenship entitlement to large numbers of young people, delivery through a tutorial programme may often be chosen, as was the case with seven of the case study organisations (all sixth form and FE colleges). There are, however, some issues that relate specifically to developing a successful tutorial approach. These include the need to use active and participative teaching and learning approaches, including debate and discussion; to provide enrichment or other opportunities for active citizenship; and to ensure that tutors have training and support in citizenship so that there is consistent and high quality delivery across all groups.

Outcomes from the development projects

Few projects had established rigorous systems for assessment, mostly relying on informal review and reflection at the end of sessions or major events. All project managers agreed on the importance of recognising young people's achievements and efforts in their citizenship programmes, though views on formal accreditation were mixed. While some project managers did not favour examined qualifications, there were those who felt that examination results provided a tangible outcome that young people could use for university or job applications. Most young people were keen to receive recognition of their citizenship achievements, and while a few favoured qualifications that might help with university applications, most would not welcome examinations or additional written work, and felt that certificates would be appropriate.

In terms of what young people had gained from their citizenship activities, confidence and communication skills were those most frequently mentioned both by project staff and young people themselves, and these were coupled with gaining greater knowledge and awareness of issues and 'wider horizons'. Some also identified gaining deeper understanding of issues, and feelings of empowerment.

Project managers perceived the main challenges to the future of the projects as being the lack of time

and resources for developing and sustaining programmes, motivating staff (especially when citizenship was delivered through tutorial programmes), and engaging students.

The following factors appeared to underlie the most successful citizenship projects

Factors for success: Management factors

- A flexible, yet rigorous, framework which recognises that projects are developing citizenship programmes in a wide variety of ways, from taught to more active approaches, according to the specific needs and circumstances of their organisations, staff and young people.
- Sufficient funding for local management of projects to be effective, including support for relevant agencies to act as brokers of information between pre- and post-16 citizenship providers.
- Encouragement of local networking and dialogue between those developing citizenship programmes, without establishing an imperative.

Factors for success: Institution-level

- A clear definition of what citizenship means, and what the programme seeks to achieve.
- Senior management support and a supportive organisational ethos.
- Sufficient time for staff to develop aims and objectives, teaching and learning strategies, assessment approaches and preferred outcomes.
- Sufficient funding, especially if citizenship is to be introduced on a wider scale with large numbers of young people.
- Dedicated and enthusiastic staff (these need not be specialists, but ideally should be willing volunteers) who would act as 'champions' to promote citizenship to staff and students.
- Appropriate and sufficient staff development and training opportunities.
- The tailoring of citizenship to the needs, skills, interests and experiences of young people.

Factors for success: Learning context-level

- Dedicated and enthusiastic staff, with the skills to facilitate as well as teach.

- A dedicated time slot for citizenship (whether as a discrete course, a module within a programme, or a specific project). The integration of citizenship into a wider tutorial scheme was generally regarded to have been a less effective approach, although there were examples of successful provision in this respect.
- An emphasis on combining knowledge, understanding and skills with practical action - what is termed a 'political literacy in action' approach, as opposed to a narrower political knowledge approach.
- Involvement and participation of young people in decisions about their learning, and the development of a student voice.
- A focus upon critically active forms of learning, including discussion, debate, dialogue and reflection. The best examples were where young people were helped to think, reflect and take action.
- The use of a variety of experiential learning approaches, including project work, drama, role play, art, photography and exhibition work.
- The use of varied and interesting resources, ideally with relevance to the interests and experiences of young people.
- Links with the wider community through off site visits, the use of external speakers, and giving young people responsibility for working and negotiating with external partners.
- The involvement of young people in active participation in large-scale assemblies such as conferences, youth fora and student parliaments.
- Assessment strategies that are effective and realistic, based upon the needs, skills and capabilities of the young people.

The way forward: a ten point plan of action

Project managers and staff involved in the pilot programme are keen to continue their post-16 citizenship provision, and to see that provision eventually extended as an entitlement for all young people involved in post-16 education and training. They used their experiences from involvement in the pilot to suggest practical ways that post-16 citizenship can be taken forward, identifying ten minimum requirements necessary for successful expansion of existing post-16 citizenship provision, leading to an eventual national roll-out. These

minimum requirements comprise a ten point plan of action:

- **A clear statement of policy** from DfES and LSDA about the principles and aims underpinning post-16 citizenship provision. This should include a campaign to raise awareness about post-16 citizenship
- **Adequate lead time** for planning and preparation of post-16 citizenship programmes, particularly in institutions that are new to the area.
- **A visible and viable support structure at regional and national level** to sustain and develop appropriate networks for developing citizenship 'champions'.
- **Dedicated project managers** at institution level with sufficient time allocated for their citizenship programme, and for networking with others.
- **'Serious resources'** in terms of **funding, time and staffing**, and a range of easily accessible materials.
- **Systematic and ongoing training** at all levels for staff and young people involved in post-16 citizenship programmes.
- **Flexibility of approach** to programme design, assessment and accreditation, with different methods and approaches for different organisations and groups of young people.
- **Guidance on good practice**, to ensure that programmes remain dynamic and actively involve young people in order to maintain their interest and commitment.
- **Minimal bureaucracy** from government and central agencies so that valuable time is not taken from developing post-16 citizenship programmes.
- **Stronger pre and post-16 citizenship link** to ensure continuity and progression of citizenship experiences for young people as they move from the National Curriculum citizenship to post-16 education and training settings.

Taking post-16 citizenship forward

The majority of the twenty case-study organisations who contributed to the evaluation were keen to continue with their post-16 citizenship projects, and several of them had plans for further expansion or extension. Staff were unanimous in their belief that post-16

citizenship entitlement should be extended to more young people in more organisations, though they identified a number of key issues which require further consideration and development. These include issues relating to the nature and scale of provision and assessment; flexibility to accommodate the diversity of post-16 provision; the status of and support for citizenship in organisations, and its distinctiveness compared to other programmes and courses; staff attitudes, training and turnover; and issues relating to adequate resources, time and funding.

Concluding comment

The post-16 citizenship development projects, which began in 2001, have been successful and influential in laying strong foundations for the development of post-16 citizenship. They have shown how effective citizenship programmes can be developed in a range of post-16 settings for the benefit of young people, particularly in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills development through participation in a variety of active citizenship experiences. The central issue now is how far the experiences of the pilot programme can be shared more widely through a phased expansion, leading to an eventual national roll-out and entitlement to post-16 citizenship for all young people.

Additional Information

Copies of the full report (RR604) - priced £4.95 - are available by writing to DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.

Cheques should be made payable to "DfES Priced Publications".

Copies of this Research Brief (RB604) are available free of charge from the above address (Tel: 0845 60 222 60). Research Briefs and Research Reports can also be accessed at www.dfes.gov.uk/research/

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