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Evaluation of Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (SCOI)

Final Report

March 2009

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We also thank those individuals who kindly agreed to participate in the key stakeholder interviews, focus groups and the beneficiary survey conducted by the team.

Finally, the study team in PwC would like to thank the Department for Employment and Learning for their comments and support in this research.

Abbreviations

ARC	Applied Research Centre
BELB	Belfast Education and Library Board
BIFHE	Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education
BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office
CSR	Construction Skills Register
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
EGSA	Education and Guidance Service for Adults
EPF	Executive Programme Fund
ESB	Employment Services Board
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FAST	Financial and Audit Support Team
FE	Further Education
FEP&SDB	Further Education Policy and Strategic Development Branch (within DEL)
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GRIT	Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDF	Integrated Development Funds
LEMIS	Local Employment Intermediary Service
LoO	Letter of Offer
MCOC	Millennium Community Outreach Centre
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICON	Northern Ireland Open College Network
NSP	National Skills Profile
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OCN	Open College Network
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PAT	Policy Action Team
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
SCOI	Springvale Community Outreach Initiative
SEV	Springvale Educational Village
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TI	Targeted Initiatives
TSN	Targeting Social Need
WBGSTF	West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce
WEDC	Workforce Economic Development Centre

1 Introduction and background

Background to the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (SCOI) concept

- 1.1 In 1993 the University of Ulster put forward a proposal for a higher education (HE) campus to be built on the Springvale Road, West Belfast, on a site adjacent to the location of the former Mackies factory. This co-incided with a proposal from Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE), (now known as Belfast Metropolitan College¹) for a Further Education development at Springvale. The rationale for the project was partly derived from the Dearing Report² (1997) which showed that £45 million was lost to the NI economy due to the outflow of students from NI to universities elsewhere in the UK and Ireland ('the brain drain').
- 1.2 A proposal was put forward in 1997 to develop a combined HE and FE campus at Springvale (known as the 'Main Campus'). This Main Campus was to become a core part of a new Springvale Educational Village (SEV).
- 1.3 The SEV concept envisaged local facilities to encourage people to progress from first-step learning into further and higher education and, subsequently, into employment. The Village concept was a key recommendation in the joint West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce Report (February 2002) and was seen as providing a cornerstone for future educational, economic, physical and inter-community development in an area of high social and economic deprivation.
- 1.4 The aim of the SEV was the development of a unique partnership between education providers and local communities to address the particular educational, cultural and social needs of West and North Belfast. It was intended to offer a programme of learning from basic skills to dedicated postgraduate research. Uniquely it proposed to engage local communities, in a series of educational and related programmes and activities aimed at creating and enhancing "social capital", thus promoting social and economic regeneration. The proposed catchment area for the SEV was North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill area.
- 1.5 The 1997 SEV concept was intended to encompass three core elements:
 - **Main Campus**; to be shared between 1,500 FE and 1,500 HE students and located on the northern part of the Springvale site. It was proposed that the campus would offer courses in Entrepreneurship, Creative Industries, Business Development, Information Technology and Bio-medical subjects (estimated cost £59 million);
 - **Applied Research Centre (ARC)**; a 45,000 square feet facility consisting of 20 incubator units for 'young' technology based companies. According to the Taskforce report, the ARC

¹ Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) is a merger of BIFHE campuses and Castlereagh FE College

² Dearing (1997) The Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education

was aimed at stimulating new technology companies to expand (using expertise from the Main Campus) and then move off the site and expand in other premises in the Task Force area (estimated cost £8 million); and

- **Millennium Community Outreach Centre (MCOC)**; an outreach centre on the southern part of the hub. The Centre would act as a hub for various community outreach programmes in attracting local people back into training and education *and* to provide progression routes and bridging from first-step learning through to FE and HE (estimated cost £4 million).
- 1.6 In August 2002, the University of Ulster withdrew from the proposed development and as a consequence the Main Campus and the Applied Research Centre did not proceed. At this stage just over £9 million had been spent on the Springvale Educational Village in respect of the MCOC enabling works, legal / professional, consultancy and staffing fees³.
 - 1.7 Following the University of Ulster's withdrawal, a review of the project was commissioned by DEL to determine what could be salvaged from the original concept. The review confirmed that the only viable project, consistent with the objectives of the review, was a proposal for a Workforce Economic Development Centre (WEDC), submitted by Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC).
 - 1.8 The review also concluded that there was a need 'to improve education and training opportunities' to meet the more immediate needs of the wider communities, following the University of Ulster's withdrawal. On the basis of this review, DEL entered into discussions with Belfast Metropolitan College and Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) on the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (SCOI) an outreach programme that would operate through MCOC. Support for the initiative was sought through a bid for Executive Programme Funding (EPF) for the first two years (it was understood that the remaining three years would be funded under the Integrated Development Fund).
 - 1.9 The MCOC was constructed and opened in May 2002. It was funded through the National Lottery via the Millennium Commission as well as private investors, and cost approximately £4 million. The MCOC is a two-storey multi occupancy, commercially operated building which operates under the control of BMC. It provides premises for local community organisations and a base for the College's SCOI operations. The Centre hosts an IT resource centre and rooms which can be made available for the use of local community groups.
 - 1.10 In 2006 the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) reported on the failure of the SEV plan. The reasons identified for the failure included issues around affordability, viability, governance and strategic visioning. The report made no references to the SCOI outreach programme, but did refer to the success of the MCOC at the time of the report. Subsequently, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published a report on the SEV⁴ which stated that '*very solid and sound work is now being done in the community*' through outreach work being carried out at the MCOC through SCOI. However, the report did note that some opportunities had been lost:

3 NIAO (2006) Springvale Educational Village Project, report by the comptroller and auditor general, HC 40, Session 2006-07, 30 November 2006

4 PAC (2007) Report on Springvale Educational Village Project, Report: 4//0708R Public Accounts Committee, September 2007

"There have been only limited tangible benefits from the project (SEV). While the Community Outreach Centre was completed and now provides a valuable resource for the area, there is no Main Campus and no Applied Research Centre. The Committee acknowledges that there have been other initiatives, including the approval of a £13 million Workforce Development Centre. However, these do not amount to a university and so the vast majority of the anticipated educational, cultural, social and economic benefits of the planned project have not materialised. The levels of deprivation within these areas are as high today as when the project was brought to an end in 2002. An opportunity to reduce the 'brain drain' from NI and respond positively to the findings of the 1997 Dearing Report was also lost".

(PAC 2007⁵)

- 1.13 The NIAO report identified some return on the £9.2m6 already invested in the pre-planning phases of the Main Campus and the Applied Research Centre. The £1.5m spent on site and infrastructure works for the proposed ARC will go towards a new facility proposed by BMC, the Workforce Economic Development Centre (WEDC). The Centre will be built at the same location as the Applied Research Centre and, with the MCOC, will complete the physical regeneration of the southern site. It is intended that the WEDC will be used to pilot the delivery of pre-employment training in areas such as hospitality / leisure, manufacturing, environmental engineering, electronics, software engineering and multi-media. The Centre will be a resource for the local community to incubate and develop local community businesses and social enterprises. The WEDC was approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in April 2006.
- 1.14 The Springvale Community Outreach Initiative was introduced in 2003 and operated from the MCOC premises. The original aim of SCOI was to *"create an outreach programme which ensures that the new MCOC based at Springvale plays a significant role in improving educational standards and in promoting social, cultural and economic regeneration in North and West Belfast, on a cross-community basis, in line with the original concept of the Springvale Village and in line with the recommendations of the West Belfast Taskforces."*
- 1.15 Although the SCOI proposal was implemented, in the absence of the SEV concept, it ran in isolation from the original aim of community based learners proceeding onto FE and HE provision.

Overview of the implementation of the SCOI concept

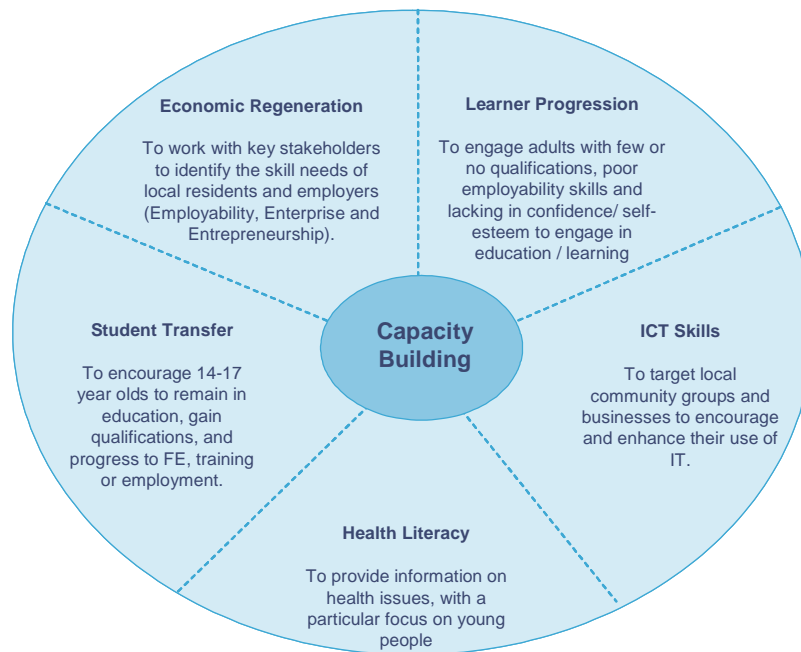
- 1.16 From the outset it was envisaged that the entire Initiative would be funded through Executive Programme Funds (EPF)⁷. Funding was sought from EPF for the five year life of the Initiative, but was only secured for the first two years of the Initiative (2002/03 to 2003/04) up to March 2004. The EPF funding allocated per year was £0.8m and £1.3m respectively. Due to delays, the 2002/03 funding was rolled into the 2003/04 allocation and the Initiative was launched in Spring 2003 with a plan to run through to March 2007 (actual four year timescale). On completion of the first year, SCOI secured mainstream funding from DEL for a future three years from 2004/05 to 2006/07. The project closed in March 2007.
- 1.17 The six thematic strands of SCOI are shown in Figure 1.1 with the sixth strand, capacity building, introduced at a later stage of the implementation of SCOI in 2005. The focus of this additional strand was to provide resources (such as development grants) for the development of projects from promoters with community infrastructure.

5 PAC (2007) Report on Springvale Educational Village Project, Report: 4//0708R Public Accounts Committee, September 2007

6 According to the NIAO report on the Springvale Educational Village project (30 November 2006) £5.1m was spent on ARC and the Main Campus in terms of site and enabling works, legal and professional fees, consultancy costs and staffing costs. Of this £1.5 m related solely to site enabling works for which will provide a return on investment as the sites works can help towards the development of the WEDC.

7 The aim of the EPF is to deliver innovative mechanisms for focusing resources on the NI Executive's priorities and encourage co-operation between Departments to deliver these in the most effective ways.

Figure 1.1: Six SCOI strands



1.18 A Letter of Offer (LoO) for SCOI was issued by the DEL to BIFHE in July 2003. This LoO covered £2.1 million of EPF funding for the first year 2003/04 and was based on the project costs set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Initial SCOI budget 2003/04

Costs	
Management set-up costs (inc Baseline Analysis)	£0.30m
Allocation to strands	£1.57m
<u>Sub-total recurrent costs</u>	<u>£1.85m</u>
Capital costs	£0.25m
<u>Sub-total capital costs</u>	<u>£0.25m</u>
Overall total	£2.10m

Source: EPF Letter of Offer from DEL to BIFHE dated March 2003

Allocation to Strands: Learner Progression (£561k), Student Transfer (£337k), ICT Skills (£225k), Health Literacy (£225k) and Economic Regeneration (£225k)

1.19 A condition in the original EPF Letter of Offer was that a baseline analysis should be completed within the first few months of the Initiative. The baseline report was completed by Inter-Ed⁸ in June 2003.

1.20 The budget over the life of the Initiative is set out in Table 1.2.

⁸ Inter-Ed Ltd (2003) Baseline Analysis for Executive Programme Fund Initiative: Belfast North, West and Greater Shankill areas – a report for the BIFHE and BELB, June 2003

Table 1.2: SCOI budget 2002/04 to 2006/07

Year	Budget	Source of secured funds
2002-04	£2.10m	EPF
2004-05	£1.50m	DELNI mainstream funds
2005-06	£2.00m	
2006-07	£2.00m	
Total	£7.60m	

Source: Email from DEL (FE Policy and Strategic Development Branch) on 23rd October 2006

1.21 The general objectives established prior to the 2003 baseline analysis were to:

- Improve participation rates for post-16 year olds in education and training;
- Improve the retention rates of post 16 year olds in education and training;
- Increase the number of young people and adults achieving accreditation;
- Increase adult participation in learning;
- Increase the number of adults involved in literacy and numeracy skills development;
- Increase the opportunities for employment through enterprise development; and
- Improve health awareness.

1.22 The revised objectives of the Initiative according to original Letter of Offer were to:

- Develop the MCOC as a hub for a growing network of educational, training and health education providers in order to promote North and West Belfast as a 'lifelong learning community';
- Improve access to, and participation in, education and training across the North and West Belfast area served by the MCOC, in order to give young people, especially those in disadvantaged circumstances, a better chance of success in employment and society; and
- Establish collaborative learning networks embracing the statutory and non-statutory providers, facilitated and driven by the MCOC and the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB).

1.23 DEL was the lead department for the EPF bid with support from a number of other departments (DE, DHSSPS and DCAL). The Initiative targeted those who are currently, or are at risk of becoming, socially excluded and applies to those aged 14 and over. According to the EPF application form the Initiative aims to:

"Create an outreach programme which ensures that the new MCOC based at Springvale plays a significant role in improving educational standards and in promoting social, cultural and economic regeneration in North and West Belfast, on a cross-community basis, in line with the original concept of the Springvale Village and in line with the recommendations of the West Belfast Taskforces".

Source: SCOOI application for EPF (undated)

1.24 During the two year EPF funding period the Initiative was managed by an Advisory Board which included representatives from BIFHE and BELB (jointly they were the main project partners), DEL, DE, West Belfast, Shankill and North Belfast Partnership Boards and the North and West Belfast Health Trust. The specific role of the Board was to advise on the balance of the strand areas, advise on potential collaboration in relation to each strand, identify gaps in provision, review progress reports and participate in the evaluation of the Initiative.

1.28 To summarise the timeline of the SCOI project is set out in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: SCOI timeline

Timing	Terms of reference
1993	Springvale Educational Village (SEV) proposal put forward
2001	MCOC opened
2002	Publication of the joint West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce Report
2002	University of Ulster withdraws from SEV proposal
Spring 2003	SCOI began
August 2003	Baseline Analysis Report published
March 2004	EPF funding for SCOI ceases
April 2004	DEL funding for SCOI begins
May 2005	ETI evaluation of SCOI published
April 2006	WEDC given ministerial approval
November 2006	NAO publish report on SEV project
March 2007	SCOI closes
September 2007	Report on SEV by the Public Accounts Committee

Source: Various SCOI documentation

SCOI evaluation report by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1.29 In May 2005, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) published a report¹¹ on the evaluation of the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative. The overall aims of the evaluation were to assess:

- The role of a sample of projects in providing learners with access to an appropriate range of programmes to meet their individual needs (See Section 4 – Effectiveness of learning networks);
- The extent to which the projects contributed to the establishment of collaborative learning and social networks (See Section 4 – Effectiveness of learning networks); and
- The quality and effectiveness of the leadership and management of the SCOI at all levels, including the role and impact of the quality assurance procedures (See Section 5 - Effectiveness of management and administration).

1.30 At the time of the ETI report, a total of 64 projects had received SCOI funding, which is less than half of the total projects (135) in receipt of the funds by the end of the Initiative in March 2007. Therefore the ETI report was undertaken at an interim stage of the Initiative and the timing should have enabled changes to be made to SCOI at this 'early' stage.

1.31 Following the ETI report and associated recommendations, BIFHE submitted a response to ETI in October 2005 setting out a number of actions for the way forward. Following this in December 2005 the ETI submitted a response to BIFHE highlighting areas where they felt more work needed done to address to address the ETI recommendations.

1.32 The key findings and recommendations from the ETI evaluation are referred to in the appropriate Sections of this report as indicated above.

¹¹ ETI (2005) Evaluation of SCOI, DE ETI

Terms of reference

1.33 It was the intention of the EPF bid from the outset that an evaluation of SCOI would be carried out during the third year of the Initiative. The evaluation was tendered by DEL in autumn 2006 during the fourth and final year of implementation of SCOI.

1.34 DEL commissioned PwC in November 2006 to carry out an evaluation of the Initiative over its four year life. In particular, the terms of reference require an evaluation to establish the extent to which the Initiative has (as a whole and at an individual strand level) achieved its main aim and objectives since its introduction in 2003/04. In particular the evaluation is required to:

- a) Consider the findings of the recent Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluation of SCOI and provide recommendations on the basis of which the future of such initiatives could be guided;
- b) Examine the appropriateness of each of the 5 thematic strands, in terms of delivering DEL's primary budgetary focus;
- c) Examine linkages between this initiative and its potential impact on the Institute's future Workforce Economic Development Centre;
- d) Provide recommendations on how appropriate aspects of the initiative, which complement the Department's current strategic aims, can best be continued within mainstream FE adult community education provision.
- e) Consider the effectiveness of baseline analysis, and revised baseline analysis targets, having regard to a possible need for wider performance indicators that will help determine the diverse range of personal, social and educational outcomes, across the initiative, and within individual programmes;
- f) Consider the effectiveness of community and voluntary sector and key stakeholder involvement in the initiative, the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to engage stakeholders and social partners in the design and implementation of the programme, and make any necessary recommendations for improvement. The evaluation should also consider how the roles of these key players could be clarified and developed, to provide better models of delivery;
- g) Consider the effectiveness of the various learning networks in helping to meet the aims and objectives of the initiative. The evaluation should also identify optimum models of delivery and areas of good practice;
- h) Consider SCOI's interface and relationship with other on-going Government initiatives, notably: the Workforce Economic Development Centre, Neighbourhood Renewal, Health Action Zones, Educational Action Zones and other targeted initiatives, operating in North and West Belfast. Identify areas of complementarity, overlap, or duplication. Determine to what extent, if any, SCOI adds value, or is otherwise unique; how such provision might be sustained; and the implications of SCOI's cessation in the context of the prevailing learning cultures to be found in the communities that comprise north and west Belfast; and
- i) Evaluate SCOI management arrangements and funding processes, including the effectiveness of SCOI's recently revised structures.

1.35 During the 2006/07 financial year the Department's Financial and Audit Support Team (FAST), at the request of FE Policy and Strategic Development Branch (FEP&SDB), undertook an inspection of SCOI funding for the period March 2003 to November 2005, examining sample claims totalling £757,363.60. The FAST team was unable to give an assurance on 11% of expenditure included in the claims. The Team made a number of recommendations for improvements in systems in place for SCOI and future similar initiatives.

1.36 In carrying out this evaluation, and in the context of the terms of reference, PwC has provided

no opinion, attestation or other form of assurance with respect to the information upon which the evaluation is based. **PwC has not audited or otherwise verified the information supplied in connection with this engagement, from whatever source. The evaluation does not constitute an examination in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.**

Structure of report

1.37 The structure of the remainder of this evaluation report is presented in Table 1.4*. Each of the subsequent sections¹² of this report cover one or more of the above terms of reference as shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Terms of reference and report structure

Section of the report	Terms of reference
Section 3: Effectiveness of baseline analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the effectiveness of baseline analysis • Appropriateness of each strand in terms of delivering DEL's primary budgetary focus
Section 4: Effectiveness of learning networks and identification of good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the effectiveness of the various learning networks
Section 5: Evaluation of SCOI management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate SCOI management arrangements and funding processes
Section 6: Extent of linkages with other initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider SCOI's interface and relationship with other initiatives • Consider the effectiveness of community and voluntary sector and key stakeholder involvement • Examine potential linkages with the Workforce Economic Development Centre
Section 7: Conclusions and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide recommendations on how appropriate aspects of the initiative can best be continued within mainstream FE adult community education provision

*The findings from the ETI report are referred to as relevant in each section of this evaluation

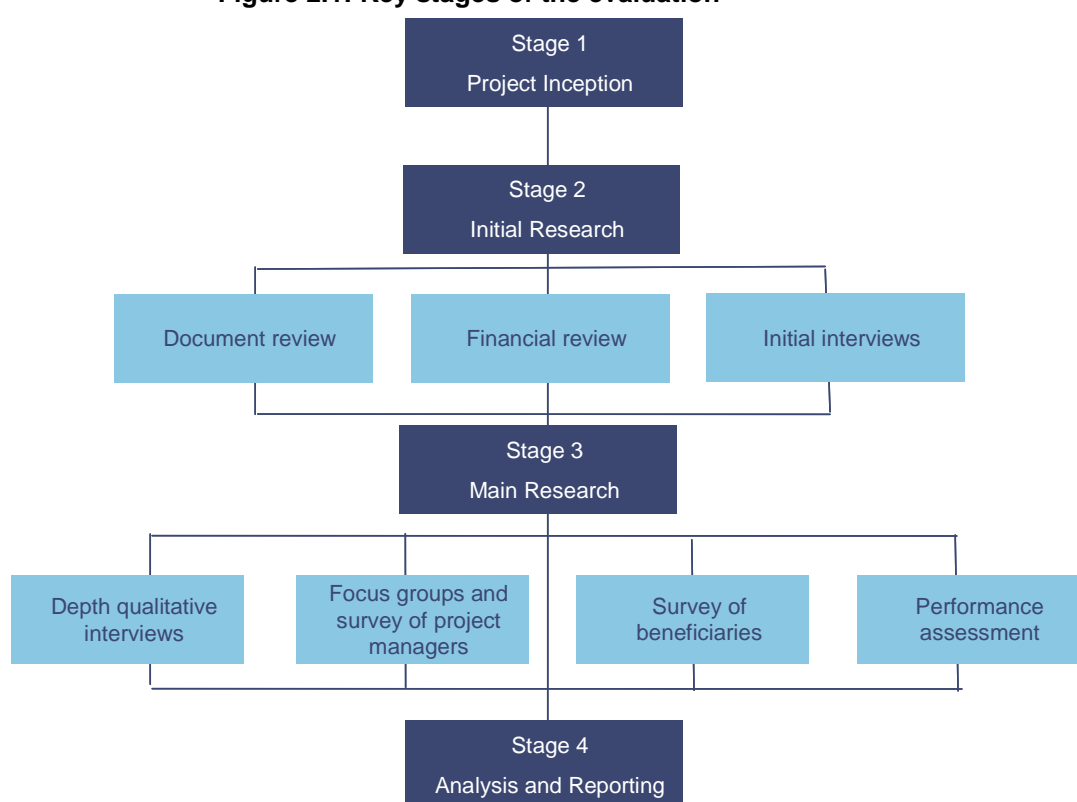
¹² With the exception of Section 2 which presents the methodology for undertaking this evaluation

2 Methodology

Overview of the methodology

- 2.1 The evaluation was undertaken in four key stages as shown in Figure 2.1. At the end of each stage a meeting was held with the Steering Group to either discuss and agree the next steps or share findings from the research to date.

Figure 2.1: Key stages of the evaluation



- 2.2 The remainder of this section of the report is structured around each of the four stages of the methodology.

Stage 1: Project Inception

- 2.3 At the outset of the evaluation the PwC team liaised with the appointed DEL Project Steering Group through a Project Inception Meeting, which took place on 18th October 2006. During this meeting the methodological approach, key personnel for interview, report outputs and timescales were discussed and agreed.

Stage 2: Initial Research

2.4 The initial research stage involved three individual elements – document review, financial review and some initial interviews. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

Document Review

2.5 Documentation and data relating to the Initiative were reviewed. The review encompassed documents such as the Letter of Offer, EPF bid, SCOI Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) report, SCOI baseline report, monitoring data and project evaluation forms. The overall aim of this review was to provide a brief contextual background to the study, to gain a deeper understanding of the programme and its individual projects and to help inform the evaluation.

2.6 In addition an analysis of documents relating to other initiatives and / or programmes which are in the same policy arena as SCOI was conducted. This included educational, health and regeneration initiatives.

Financial Review

2.7 A detailed review of the financial resources allocated and spent to date in respect of SCOI. This aspect of the methodology also examined the total funds spent on management and administration of the Initiative and the level of spend per Strand. In keeping with the agreed terms of reference no form of audit was carried out as part of this review.

Initial Interviews

2.8 A series of interviews with stakeholders was undertaken to identify key issues to be addressed during the evaluation. These interviews also served to contextualise the Initiative and each of the thematic strands and also to understand the degree to which the projects funded were additional to other activities in these areas, and where overlap existed.

2.9 Preliminary interviews were undertaken with representatives from the following organisations:

- DEL;
- BIFHE;
- Partnership Boards; and
- SCOI Programme Manager.

2.10 Following this preliminary research, the initial findings were presented to DEL. The presentation included an analysis of financial resources allocated and spent across each strand, outputs secured from funding, key issues arising from initial interviews and key focus areas for the remainder of the evaluation.

Stage 3: Main Research

2.11 A range of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used at this stage of the study to address the evaluation questions outlined in the terms of reference.

Depth qualitative interviews

2.12 A series of face-to-face interviews were held with individuals and representatives from the following organisations:

- DEL – in particular those within the Further and Higher Education Unit;
- BIFHE – Programme Manager, strand managers, capacity building manager and administration and finance staff;
- Partnership Boards and other representatives from community organisations;
- DSD – Neighbourhood Renewal;

- West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce;
- Employment Services Board; and
- DE / Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

2.13 The general topic guide for these interviews is set out in Appendix A. It should be noted that this was tailored slightly for each stakeholder depending on the focus of the interview.

2.14 In addition interviews were held with SCOI staff including the SCOI Programme Manager, Programme Managers, Community Liaison Officer and finance / administration staff.

Focus groups and survey of project managers

2.15 A series of six focus groups were held with project managers - one for each thematic strand, including separate focus groups for managers of projects funded under the capacity building theme.

2.16 There was no central base with contact details for the managers of all the SCOI projects funded and therefore each of the Strand Managers were contacted individually to access such information and then a random sample of project managers was selected for invitation to each focus group.

2.17 Where possible, between seven and ten participants were recruited to each focus group session. Each representative was provided with a follow-up letter confirming details of the venue, timing etc. In addition to ensure a high attendance at the focus groups a reminder telephone call was made to each participant on the day preceding their focus group.

2.18 Between five and eight representatives attended each focus group and those who were unable to attend on the day (due to unforeseen circumstances) were invited to provide written feedback based around our topic guide. The focus group participants were asked for their views on SCOI's management process, its impacts and success in targeting social need, the extent to which the Initiative has added value and linkages with other initiatives. The topic guide for the focus groups is presented in Appendix A.

2.19 Each focus group was recorded, transcribed and analysed using a content analysis approach which involved mapping views and opinions, gathered across the six focus groups, on the topic guide questions. Feedback from the focus group participants is included throughout the report.

2.20 Furthermore a short postal questionnaire was issued to teachers involved in managing SCOI projects, which mainly fall under the remit of the Student Transfer strand. Due to the teaching commitments, it was felt that this was the most appropriate and effective way to gather these project manager views. A total of 15 completed questionnaires were returned by teachers which consisted of 12 questionnaires for Student Transfer projects, 2 for economic regeneration and 1 for Learner Progression.

Survey of beneficiaries

2.21 A questionnaire was designed for the beneficiary survey. A copy of this is included in Appendix B.

2.22 The SCOI management and administration system does not hold a central database of all projects which received funding. Therefore for the purposes of the survey contact details for project managers were obtained in various formats from each of the SCOI strand managers.

2.23 PwC created a database of all the SCOI approved projects, with associated project manager contact details, and coded all the entries by a range of variables to assist with stratification:

- **Year of project** - projects which were now complete (past projects) and projects which were still running (current projects);
 - **Strand** – projects were coded according to which SCOI strand they were funded under;
 - **Duration of funding** – projects were split by one-off grants and those which received roll-over funding (e.g. funding which was rolled over for two, three or four years).
- 2.24 The database contained information for the 135 SCOI projects. Given that some projects received roll-over funding, the total number of projects funded through the Initiative is 246. However, to avoid the over-sampling of individual projects (e.g. those which were rolled-over for three or four years) the 135 was treated as the population for the survey.
- 2.25 A representative sample of 40 projects was selected for the survey and project managers were contacted accordingly. Once contacted they had three options for engaging beneficiaries in the survey:
- **Option A;** PwC emailing / faxing the questionnaire to project managers who distributed them to beneficiaries on our behalf;
 - **Option B;** PwC visiting beneficiaries on-site to distribute and collate questionnaires; and
 - **Option C;** project managers providing PwC with telephone contact details for some beneficiaries and PwC carrying out a telephone interview with beneficiaries.
- 2.26 During the survey fieldwork it was apparent that beneficiaries of projects funded in 2005 or previously were difficult to access / trace. Therefore a decision was made by the research team to attempt to contact all 135 project managers to access project beneficiaries to complete our survey. As a result 45 project managers agreed to participate in the survey¹³. In terms of engaging with beneficiaries, the majority of project managers opted for Option A. A total of 86 questionnaires were returned from beneficiaries which represented 19 of the 135 projects funded (returns from projects managed by 19 of 45 project managers who agreed to participate in the research).
- 2.27 It is important to note that the sample size is quite small and the results of the survey cannot be treated as representative. However, they do give a partial insight into the impact of SCOI on end beneficiaries.
- 2.28 A full breakdown of the number of questionnaires returned according to year of project, strand and duration of project is set out in Appendix C. In summary the results show that:
- The 19 projects which the questionnaires relate to include two one-off projects and 17 roll-over projects;
 - The 86 questionnaires included eight for one-off projects and 78 for roll-over projects which had been funded for two, three or four years; and
 - The 19 projects represent less than 20% of the projects funded in any one strand¹⁴.

¹³ Of the remaining 90 project managers – 13 were responsible for development projects with no direct beneficiaries and therefore were not relevant to this survey; for 7 project managers the contact details received were incorrect; and 28 project managers were unobtainable (i.e. at least eight calls were made / messages left for each project manager - these projects were mainly past projects)

¹⁴ The 19 projects represent 14% of the 135 projects funded. In particular, it represents 19% ER, 8% HL, 14% ICT, 13% LP and 15% ST projects.

Performance Assessment

2.29 As part of the Terms of Reference, an assessment of performance of the overall Initiative against objectives and targets set was carried out. This performance analysis considered targets at Initiative level and also across each of the strands.

Stage 4: Analysis and reporting

2.30 In the final stage of the evaluation, a review was carried out of all of the qualitative and quantitative evidence obtained during Stages 1 to 3, and this has provided the basis for the evaluation report. An interim presentation of the findings from Stage 1 and Stage 2 were presented to the Steering Group in February 2007 and the findings from Stage 3 were presented in June 2007.

3 Effectiveness of baseline analysis and progress against targets

Introduction

3.1 This section of the report addresses the following terms of reference:

- Consider the **effectiveness of baseline analysis** and revised targets, having regard to a possible need for wider performance indicators that will help determine the diverse range of personal, social and educational outcomes, across the initiative, and within individual programmes.
- Examine the **appropriateness of each of the six thematic strands**, in terms of delivering DEL's primary budgetary focus.

3.2 This section is structured as follows:

- Description of the baseline analysis;
- Appropriateness of strands;
- Appropriateness of targets;
- Progress towards targets; and
- Conclusions.

Description of the baseline analysis

3.3 A condition in the original Letter of Offer was that a baseline analysis¹⁵ should be completed within the first few months of the Initiative. According to the Letter of Offer the purpose was to identify the local education, health and employment needs and develop a range of specific objectives and monitoring targets for each of the five original strands of the Initiative. The baseline analysis was also intended to identify the actions necessary for the establishment of effective partnerships and learning networks, to identify community needs within North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill area.

3.4 Inter-Ed Ltd was commissioned to complete the baseline analysis and the report was subsequently published in June 2003¹⁶. This report provided the rationale for the operation of the Initiative in terms of the needs of the area and also proposed a series of targets for the first three years.

3.5 The report noted the overall aim of the Initiative which was as follows:

"To establish collaborative learning networks which will serve to give young people and adults especially those in disadvantaged circumstances a better prospect of success in employment and society". Inter-Ed (2003)

¹⁵ It should be noted that at the outset an economic appraisal was not carried out of the SCOI concept, although a baseline analysis was carried out

¹⁶ 'Baseline Analysis for Executive Programme Fund initiative: Belfast North, West and Greater Shankill Areas', A Report for Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education and Belfast Education and Library Board, June 2003, Inter-ed Ltd

3.6 Some very general targets had been set for the Initiative prior to the baseline study, which included improving participation and retention rates for those aged 16 or over in education and training, increasing the numbers of young people receiving accreditation and increasing adult participation in learning. The target groups for the Initiative were those aged 14 years and over at risk of social exclusion as well as groups identified under Section 75 legislation. The themes that had been identified for the Initiative were:

- Student transfer;
- Learner progression;
- ICT skills;
- Health literacy; and
- Economic regeneration.

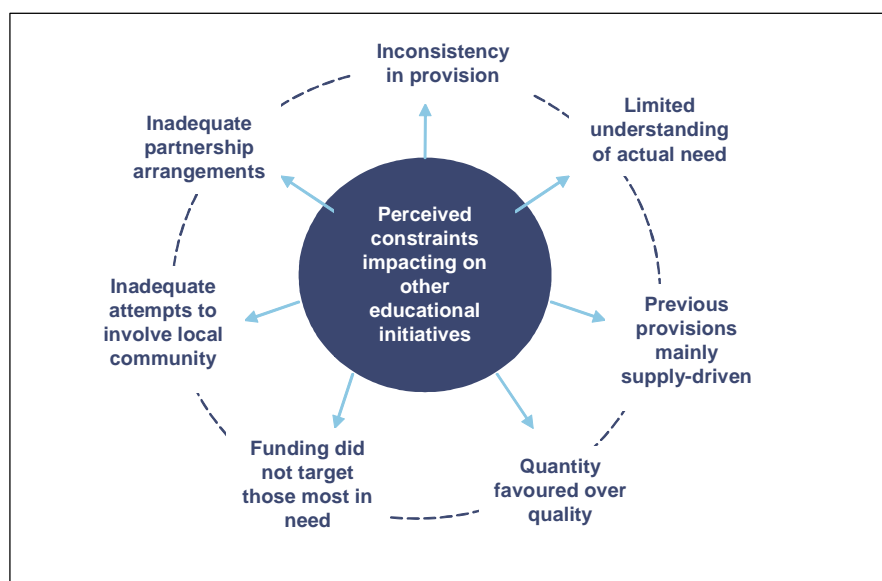
3.7 The report noted that the intentions of the Initiative were broad and ambitious and it targeted the most difficult groups to engage in education and training which needed a different approach to current forms of delivery if it was to achieve the desired level of impact. The report of the baseline study covered four tasks:

1. To identify what needed to be done to ensure that effective partnerships and learning networks were established and developed;
2. To identify the scale of need in key areas to provide a focus for specific initiatives;
3. To review innovations and research in some areas that may be considered as the Initiative develops; and
4. To propose a range of targets in the light of the intentions of the Initiative, the capacity of the partners and the scale of the need in the three areas.

3.8 The report noted some of the reasons why previous initiatives in the area had been unsuccessful and these are illustrated in Figure 3.1. The lessons from this were that the proposed new Initiative should have the following characteristics:

- It should work with existing partnerships, including the three Partnership Boards;
- It should be demand-led rather than supply-driven; and
- It should avoid duplication of other existing programmes.

Figure 3.1: Perceived problems with other local initiatives



- 3.9 The baseline report also provided a detailed analysis of the current socio-economic situation in the three geographical areas targeted by the Initiative. The key challenges outlined by the baseline report were:
- **Significant levels of deprivation;** the area suffers from very high levels of deprivation. There are eight or more wards in the catchment area within the top 20 ranked deprived wards in NI in respect of economic, health and education deprivation indices. The baseline report suggested that these high levels of deprivation are likely to present barriers to participation in the SCOI;
 - **Low educational attainment;** the catchment area comprises large numbers of individuals with no educational qualifications. For example, 51% of the population of West Belfast and 65% of the population of the Greater Shankill have no qualifications compared to an average of 42% across Northern Ireland;
 - **Single parent households;** the area comprises a higher incidence of lone parent households than NI as a whole. Typically, single parent households in these areas tend to rely on benefits as a source of income and as a result, many individuals within the areas of North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill are likely to rely on childcare to enable them to engage in learning; and
 - **Illness;** the catchment area also comprises of a high proportion of households containing at least one family member with a long-term illness which is likely to hinder engagement in learning for many of the targeted individuals.
- 3.10 In addition to high levels of deprivation, the catchment area has suffered from exposure to the violence associated with the Troubles. In both absolute and relative terms, Belfast has seen the greatest intensity of violent deaths in comparison with all of NI. Furthermore the SCOI catchment area has had the highest number of incidents and deaths as a result of the Troubles. In particular the Falls, Clonard, Whiterock, Upper Springfield and Shankill wards have had a high proportion of incidents.
- 3.11 In Table 3.1 we have presented some of the statistics produced in the baseline report which highlight the very high levels of deprivation in the wards covered by SCOI. In particular, Crumlin and St Anne's wards in North Belfast are in the top 7 deprived wards (out of the 566 wards in NI) in terms of the employment, health and education indices. The table sets out how the high levels of deprivation link back to each of the SCOI strands.

Table 3.1: SCOI wards in the Northern Ireland Top 20 deprived wards¹⁷

Strand	Some statistics	SCOI wards within NI top 20 deprived wards (Rank ¹⁸)
Economic Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 SCOI wards in NI Top 20 according to the Employment Index • 52% of the Belfast population live in the 28 SCOI wards, however, only 34% of the VAT registered businesses in Belfast are located in these wards 	(2) Crumlin (3) St Anne's (5) Woodvale (7) Shankill (11) Falls (13) Whiterock (16) Duncairn (18) Water Works (19) New Lodge
Health Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 SCOI Wards in NI Top 20 according to the Health Index • 27 out of the 28 SCOI wards have higher proportions of people with long-term illnesses than the NI average • 24 out of the 28 SCOI wards have higher proportions of female lone-parent households than the NI average 	(1) Crumlin (2) Whiterock (3) New Lodge (5) Falls (7) St Anne's (8) Ardoyne (9) Upper Springfield (10) Woodvale (15) Shankill (16) Duncairn
Student Transfer / Learner Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 SCOI wards in NI Top 20 according to the Education Index • 60% of the population in the SCOI wards have no educational qualification – this figure is above the NI average of 42% 	(1) St Anne's (2) Crumlin (5) Whiterock (6) Woodvale (8) Falls (9) Shankill (14) Duncairn (16) Upper Springfield

Source: Inter-ed Ltd (2003) Baseline Analysis For Executive Programme Fund Initiative: Belfast North, West and Greater Shankill

3.12 Due to the deprivation factors outlined above, according to the baseline report, **capacity building** within disadvantaged local communities was considered to be a fundamental aspect of the Initiative. The report suggested that traditional methods of education and training would not be sufficient in engaging the particularly hard-to-reach groups targeted by the Initiative, and that it would be essential to mobilise and develop the capacity of local communities to identify those most in need and to engage them in learning.

3.13 Finally, the baseline report proposed a list of 60 indicators grouped under the thematic strands of the Initiative. The list of targets is attached at Appendix D to this Report.

¹⁷ The ranking of the wards has been sourced from the 2003 Baseline Report. We have not used more recent figures here as this Table sets out the context in which the SCOI was being implemented

¹⁸ Rank Orders are based on the Employment Index, Health Index and the Education Index respectively

- 3.14 The baseline report represented a very comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic situation in the target area and the problems that it faced. It also identified a broad range of initiatives under the various theme headings for addressing these problems and set a list of 60 targets for the Initiative. These reflected the high expectations of the Initiative and the wide range of anticipated outcomes. In the next sections we consider the appropriateness of the themes and targets set for the Initiative.

Appropriateness of each of the SCOI strands

Economic Regeneration

- 3.15 The baseline report recognised that the areas of North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill have high levels of unemployment and benefits uptake and low levels of inward investment. It also noted a lack of entrepreneurial infrastructure and culture, a weak business base and low levels of self-employment. The need for an economic regeneration focus for SCOI was also derived from the Employability Taskforce¹⁹.
- 3.16 The report recommended the provision of bespoke training services to local businesses as a tool in supporting economic regeneration, enterprise education and skills training. Some of the projects funded did focus on these such as the Tar Anall project which upskilled ex-prisoners as builders and door staff, some of whom achieved City & Guilds qualifications, and Failte Feirste which upskilled the employees in the tourist industry.
- 3.17 In addition the report stated that work undertaken in these areas *should* complement other programmes and initiatives currently providing training to the unemployed (for example programmes being led by Belfast City Council, Invest NI, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership and BIFHE). However, there are some concerns that the activities within this strand worked 'in isolation' from other initiatives. For example, this strand funded social economy activities, however, there is no evidence that the SCOI staff liaised with the Social Economy Branch in Invest NI, Belfast LSP or the Employment Services Board.

Health Literacy

- 3.18 The baseline report notes that there is a correlation between higher education levels and lower incidences of poor health among individuals and communities. It cites the 1999 Health Action Zone (HAZ) report suggesting that inequalities in health in North and West Belfast could be addressed through joint working and the pooling of resources by private, public and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 3.19 The Health Literacy strand aimed to:
- **Provide health awareness sessions to champions/ advocates/ delivery staff** which promote early detection and intervention to more effectively meet the needs of young people and their families;
 - **Develop and deliver healthy living advice and support clinics** to young people and parents; and
 - **Provide transition health education support** to young people progressing to further education, training and employment.

¹⁹ Published in September 2002 by the Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment

- 3.20 The rationale for including this strand is that poor health and personal well-being can act as a barrier to realising education, training and employment opportunities. The cross-departmental public health strategy, Investing for Health, recognised that there is a direct correlation between poverty, social disadvantage and health - the more disadvantaged people's social and economic circumstances are, the worse their health status is likely to be. This strand attempts to address some of these issues faced by participants in the hope that they would then progress on to one of the more education or employment focused strands of SCOI. However, due to the absence of participant tracking data no comment can be made on the level of progression to other strands.
- 3.21 The baseline report advocates that Health Literacy learning should not be restricted to the Health Literacy strand of SCOI, but instead should be an important part of training for staff involved in all strands. In this context the baseline report suggests that the promotion of healthy living / lifestyles should be a cross-cutting theme running across all strands. However, the evidence indicates that this aspect of the Initiative was not integrated into all thematic areas as suggested and was run as a 'stand-alone' strand. Therefore this strand was not holistic in nature as was advocated in the baseline analysis and thereby its impact as part of the wider Initiative was reduced.
- 3.22 Notwithstanding this the strand did have some positive health impacts on participants in terms of the PIPS²⁰ project focusing on suicide prevention, the Adult Mentors Turning project which addressed the concerns of vulnerable young through a mentoring process and the Yoga for Life project. This latter project is an innovative programme that has now been mainstreamed. The programme develops self confidence, reduces stress and promotes health and well-being in the individual, in addition to building capacity in the community through its mentorship scheme.

ICT Skills

- 3.23 The baseline report comments that many small businesses may not be utilising ICT opportunities in their workplace, whereas those that do use IT systems often do not have the skilled staff to maximise the opportunities from such IT packages and systems. It also suggests that businesses and community organisations would welcome the provision of IT support, and that many homes would also benefit from computer ownership. In particular, the baseline report advocates developing non-accredited IT training as a first step into accredited ICT skills.
- 3.24 The baseline report recommended that ICT should be cross-cutting across all strands and in addition it set out the following aims:
- **Promote the delivery of accredited ICT programmes** in community groups and schools;
 - **Deliver one-to-one support** to 800 individuals via the ICT drop-in facility;
 - **Research the feasibility of offering an A+ computer technical course** to individuals in partnership with community organisations, Department of Community Education and Department of Computing in BIFHE, report to management and deliver this course to 30 individuals if considered feasible; and
 - **Research the potential of ICT** to support the development of innovative processes of providing careers and vocational guidance to schools and young people.

²⁰ PIPS is the Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm project.

- 3.25 Similarly to the Health Literacy programme, the evidence suggests that the ICT strand of the SCOI was not implemented as a cross-cutting theme. Indeed, many stakeholders agreed with the view taken in the baseline report that ICT skills training should be integral to all courses, and spoke of a “silo mentality” existing within SCOI projects, preventing the dissemination of core skills training and good practice.
- 3.26 However, the use of non-accredited training as a means of engaging learners advocated by the report was viewed by SCOI staff as particularly successful. A project cited during stakeholder interviews as being particularly beneficial was an IT project which provided a number of local homes with disused computers from BIFHE to enable family learning.

Learner Progression

- 3.27 The baseline report suggests that the Learner Progression strand should primarily target those with no qualifications or those holding only Level I or II qualifications (e.g. NVQ Level I), and that consideration be given to the identification and support of disadvantaged learners whose progression may be inhibited, for example, those with dyslexia. Finally, the importance of implementing ‘frameworks for progression’ is highlighted, again connected to the suggestion that the Initiative should use non-accredited learning to engage hard-to-reach groups. More specifically, the Learner Progression strand aimed to:
- Develop and deliver **community training sessions**;
 - **Develop basic literacy and numeracy skills** for adults;
 - **Increase the number of adult learners** who are returning to education for the first time since leaving school; and
 - **Provide support to community organisations** who can clearly demonstrate the engagement of new learners on innovative programmes that create educational progression routes for the participants.
- 3.28 This strand of SCOI was considered by some stakeholders as particularly effective in terms of offering non-accredited training programmes acting as a “hook” to increase the number of adults returning to education. However, some stakeholders commented that the lack of methods for monitoring and tracking learners was detrimental to the effectiveness of this strand of the programme. It is likely that the procedures allowing for individual tracking and the implementation of clear progression frameworks advocated by the baseline report would have increased the efficacy of this aspect of SCOI had they been employed by SCOI or BIFHE staff at a local level. Such data would also have been highly beneficial to DEL in informing future initiatives.
- 3.29 It was also suggested by some stakeholders that careers guidance and employability skills should be promoted across all strands and projects, rather than limited to one strand. This was viewed as a weakness in the Initiative, restricting progression opportunities for learners.

Student Transfer

- 3.30 Low educational attainment in the three partnership areas is noted in the baseline report, as well as the potential role of schools in capacity building within the communities. The report advocates providing a strong vocational focus for pupils who would be unlikely to proceed into higher education, to include work visits to employers, as well as family network programmes aiming to engage with adults in order to encourage support to their children in learning. The importance of effective guidance and advice for learners was also asserted. More specifically, the Student Transfer programme key aims were to;

- **Increase the number of schools participating in accredited vocational training programmes;**
- **Increase the number of pupils aged 14+ participating in accredited vocational training programmes;**
- **Ensure that all vocational training courses lead to accreditation** at one of the following levels – NSP, GCSE Occupational Studies or NVQ; and
- **Establish and develop a Partnership Forum** of all agencies, including employers involved in delivering vocational training/ placements to young people in North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill area.

3.31 While many of the proposed aspects of this strand in the baseline report were considered useful, some stakeholders questioned the appropriateness of the Student Transfer strand. It was suggested that such work should be undertaken by schools rather than external agencies, and that there was little evidence of additionality through this strand. This is discussed in further detail in Section 7 of this report.

Capacity building

3.32 A lack of capacity within the three partnership areas was noted in the baseline analysis, which asserted the need to have an element of the SCOI money set aside for capacity building. The baseline report stated that one of the first elements of implementing SCOI should be about capacity building to support the five strand areas. However, in reality the capacity building was introduced to SCOI three years later in 2005 and focused on developing weak bids for funding as opposed to improving the broader capacity of groups in the catchment area.

3.33 Evidence from the focus groups indicates that these suggestions from the baseline have helped to guide the implementation of SCOI. SCOI staff suggested that mobilising and developing capacity within the community had been a main focal point for the Initiative. Many of the staff viewed SCOI funding as a means of developing the community and building capacity within it. In particular, they felt that the use of local mentors deriving from these communities was also considered to be advantageous across the various strands of SCOI.

Views from stakeholders on the SCOI strands

3.34 The following are some quotations taken from the interviews with stakeholders and focus groups with project managers.

“It is very difficult to get a handle on whether this (the student transfer) has made a difference... schools should be able to help and support their own pupils. Addressing issues like poor attendance and levels of motivation is an issue across the school and not something that ought to be addressed by an Initiative like SCOI.”

“Careers education should be across all priorities to improve employability as you have to prepare beneficiaries for the world of work across all of the SCOI projects.”

“IT skills should have been part of every project, where relevant, and not limited to just one of them within SCOI.”

“Many SMEs didn’t know how to do marketing and the Economic Regeneration projects have provided them with specialist guidance around business planning.”

(Various Stakeholder interviews)

"The main thrust of the work done in the community is community capacity and empowerment - we engage with first step learners and that is progressed through us. The main thrust is community development." (Learner Progression focus group participant)

"We saw it as capacity building as well: there is a definite need for counselling in the area. There was a knock-on effect, and GP hours were reduced through our work." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

Appropriateness of strands in delivering DEL's primary budgetary focus

- 3.35 This sub-section examines the extent to which each of the strands fits with DEL's primary budgetary focus. It should be noted at the outset of this sub-section that SCOI was a multi-disciplinary initiative which was originally funded as an EPF initiative, engaging a number of government departments (DEL, DE, DHSSPS and DCAL). However, as set out in Section 1 of this report, due to funding problems, the project was funded entirely through DEL's mainstream budget from 2004/05 to 2006/07. Therefore whilst the terms of reference for this evaluation seek to examine how SCOI fits with DEL's priorities, the Initiative was never aimed to focus solely on DEL's objectives. The aim of DEL is *'to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy...and to improve access to skills and employment through education and training and to promote learning for social and personal development'*²¹.
- 3.36 Of the six strands of the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative, it is clear, that two strands are relevant to DEL's objectives, namely, Learner Progression and Economic Regeneration strands. The Learner Progression strand is relevant as it aims to target individuals holding few or no qualifications, with a view to providing training and support in the community, increasing the number of adult returners to education and developing adults' literacy and numeracy skills. Economic regeneration is also pertinent to DEL's aims and objectives, as it aims to support entrepreneurship and self-employment, as well as providing training for local SMEs to improve their businesses. Of the remaining four strands Health Literacy falls within the remit of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), student transfer relates to school aged children and fits with the objectives of the Department of Education (DE) and finally both ICT and capacity building are cross-cutting strands. Therefore, in terms of delivering DEL's primary budgetary focus in the future, only the areas of focus of Learner Progression and economic regeneration strands are relevant.

Appropriateness of the revised baseline targets

- 3.37 Prior to the baseline analysis there were only a small number of general targets in place for the Initiative as set out in the EPF bid. Such targets included improving participation rates for post-16 year olds in education and training and improving health awareness. These targets are not SMART and were too generic.
- 3.38 The baseline report reiterated the importance of developing monitoring and administrative procedures that allow for individual tracking in terms of progression. The report proposed a series of 51 targets across all the strands for the period up to March 2004. The targets included those which were specific to each strand and some aggregated targets across the Initiative as a whole. For example, ensuring that geographical location of beneficiaries should be 40:40:20 in terms of participation from North Belfast, West Belfast the Greater Shankill respectively. The baseline report also indicated provisional targets for subsequent years, however, it stated that these should be revised after the first year of implementation following an analysis of patterns of engagement.

²¹ DEL (2005) DEL Corporate Plan 2005-2008

- 3.39 The full list of all the targets for SCOI as per the Baseline Analysis report are set out in Appendix D. Some examples of targets, in respect of the Learner Progression strand, are included in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Examples of performance indicators in the baseline analysis report

Learner Progression

Target No. 20 - to have developed by January 2004 a system of Individual Development Plans for all adults participating on project programmes.

Target No. 21 - to have engaged 60 adults in pilot non-accredited programmes by March 2004 (120 adults, 180 adults and 240 adults in subsequent years).

Target No. 22 - to have developed Individual Development Plans for 50 individuals on non-accredited programmes by March 2004 (100, 150 and 200 in subsequent years).

- 3.40 The baseline report argued that traditional monitoring indicators in place for education and training programmes would not be sufficient to measure the success of a programme such as SCOI. Traditional indicators include the number of learners registering, retention rates, number of learners completing a course and number achieving accreditation. These were considered appropriate monitoring indicators for some education provision, but was unsuitable for accurately capturing the impacts of SCOI which was targeted at socially excluded and those with low personal development skills or attributes.
- 3.41 One of the positive findings in the ETI evaluation report on SCOI in May 2005, was that almost all of the projects evaluated, had met their 'traditional' targets in terms of achieving planned enrolment numbers etc. However, it is the impact over and above the number of learners which is important in a programme of this nature. Furthermore the 2003 baseline report stated that SCOI needed targets which were more than 'just a numbers game'. It emphasised the need to capture qualitative outcomes both during and after a project. Community representatives interviewed as part of the baseline research stated that it was not uncommon for a learner to complete a programme successfully (such as ECDL), gain a certificate and yet be unable to perform relatively simple tasks such as using a database or spreadsheet.
- 3.42 An ETI team member from the evaluation stated during the interview process that *"there was enthusiasm amongst learners in the majority of projects inspected, however, it was difficult to assess and get a handle on impact. It had been particularly difficult to understand the impact of the Learner Progression and Student Transfer strands and whether the Initiative was making a difference"*.
- 3.43 Due to the varied nature of the thematic strands of the Initiative, as well as the demographic of potential beneficiaries outlined in the 2003 baseline, with particular regard to the high levels of deprivation, long-term unemployment and low educational attainment prevalent in the three partnership areas, there is clearly a need for the inclusion of wider performance indicators to help determine the diverse range of outcomes of the Initiative, in particular, the personal, social and educational outcomes in individuals and communities.
- 3.44 The need for such wider indicators becomes particularly apparent in light of the findings detailed in Section 4 of this report, which outlines a wide range of personal, social and educational outcomes of the SCOI. Some stakeholders commented that SCOI had had a positive impact on the communities of the partnership areas, however, existing performance indicators were unable to capture this. Furthermore, wider performance indicators were called for in order to monitor beneficiaries' progression towards employment.

"Indicators [at the time of inspection] were not wide enough to measure the impact of the initiative on communities and individuals, and there was little in relation to measuring the impact of the initiative in relation to progress towards employment."

"I would like to see much clearer criteria for impact on the community, for example, how you can engage with hard-to-reach groups."

(Stakeholder interviews)

- 3.45 It is evident that the actual targets are too specific and not adequately strategic in nature. Furthermore the ETI evaluation report made a recommendation for improving the targets in place and this was taken forward by piloting the SPEAK²² and Rickter²³ scale systems (and associated training for project managers) for capturing qualitative outcomes. However, for the purposes of the evaluation we have no information on the effectiveness of these two approaches. However, the decision to attempt to measure the distance travelled by individuals is welcomed.

Table 3.2: Recommendation from ETI evaluation report

ETI recommendation	Action from SCOI staff
The need to develop a wider range of key performance indicators in addition to the quantitative monitoring targets. The qualitative indicators should reflect the diverse range of personal and educational outcomes of the projects and begin to assess their impact on the communities, and in particular, the individual learners in terms of their progression to other learning and / or employment	Implementation of SPEAK system for self-evaluation and the Rickter Scale. The latter attempts to measure 'distance travelled' and the soft outcomes that individuals achieve, e.g. in dealing with barriers to employment, training or education, by overcoming limiting beliefs, and gaining confidence and self-esteem.

Source: ETI (2005) Education and Training Inspectorate Report of an Evaluation of SCOI, Inspected: April/May 2005

Progress towards targets

- 3.47 In order to devise the sample for the survey of beneficiaries discussed in Section 2, an analysis of all SCOI projects was required. The results in Appendix C, which informed the survey, show that SCOI has funded 135 stand alone projects, of which 74 were funded for one year only and 61 were rolled-over for either two, three or four years. This resulted in a total of 246 LoOs being distributed. As shown in Table C1 in Appendix C, there was a broad spread of roll-over projects across each strand. Roll-over projects tended to be the more successful projects, in other words, if the project was effective, then it was more likely to receive more funding the next year.
- 3.48 The SCOI Manager was responsible for submitting annual progress reports to DEL. The results show that 26,704 participants were engaged in SCOI over the four year period, with the highest number of engagements in 2005/06 (42%). This level of engagement is positive bearing in mind that other recent initiatives, such as the Futures Project funded through the EQUAL Community Initiative, had difficulties in engaging learners, partly as there were so many other projects 'competing' for the same target participants.
- 3.49 The strand which led to the highest volume of engagements was Health Literacy which resulted in 10,965 engagements, whereas Economic Regeneration engaged with 2,636 as

²² SPEAK is a self-evaluation system to allow project managers to evaluate their projects

²³ The Rickter Scale® is an innovative non-paper based assessment, evaluation and action planning tool. It provides a framework for engaging clients in motivational solutions-focused work. Using a ranking based system, people will assess their own status, develop individual action plans and review progress made. The tool measures 'distance travelled' - the soft outcomes that clients achieve, e.g. in dealing with barriers to employment, training or education, by overcoming limiting beliefs, and gaining confidence and self-esteem.

shown in Table 3.3.

- 3.50 The monitoring data captures all participants based on approved applications and includes both those who received a formal accreditation and those who did not receive an accreditation. It should be noted that these figures are based solely on the number of participants / engagements and not on the number of individuals. For example, one individual may have participated in 5 courses (e.g. 'recycled' learners) and would therefore be counted as 5 participants in Table 3.3 (with further detail on participants per project shown in Appendix D).
- 3.51 These figures are based on aggregated project monitoring data obtained during the course of our evaluation which is ongoing. It should be noted that we have not been required to carry out any form of audit on these figures or the applications upon which these are based.

Table 3.3: Number of participants per strand per year

Strand	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of participants	Percentage of participants
Economic Regeneration	121	479	1,169	867	2,636	10%
Health Literacy	754	2,224	5,600	2,387	10,965	41%
ICT	191	817	1,439	1,679	4,126	16%
Learner Progression	406	2,635	1,483	879	5,403	20%
Student Transfer	211	431	1,602	1,330	3,574	13%
Total no. of participants	1,683	6,586	11,293	7,142	26,704	100%
Percentage of participants	6%	25%	42%	27%	100%	

Source: Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (2007) Monitoring information on each strand

- 3.52 Furthermore Table 3.4 reflects that some of the strands were very number focused (e.g. numbers of engagements), such as the Health Literacy strand. For example, of all those engaged in SCOI in 2005-06, 50% of engagements were in relation to the health strand.

Table 3.4: Percentage of participants per strand per year

Strand	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Economic Regeneration	7%	7%	10%	12%
Health Literacy	45%	34%	50%	33%
ICT	11%	12%	13%	24%
Learner Progression	24%	40%	13%	12%
Student Transfer	13%	7%	14%	19%
Percentage of participants	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (2007) Monitoring information on each strand

- 3.53 As an EPF bid, the original overall aim of SCOI (as set out in Section 1) was to improve access to, and participation in, education and training to give people a better chance of success in employment and society. It can be said that SCOI has improved access to learning based on the engagement numbers set out above. However, in recent years, the Initiative become under the funding remit of DEL, a Department which is aimed at getting people into work and achieving formal accreditations. SCOI was not set a target for job creation or employment and hence such data has never been recorded across the Initiative.

- 3.54 Since DEL became involved the monitoring requirements were increased and SCOI had to submit more detailed yearly progress reports on the achievements across each strand.
- 3.55 Data on the numbers of participants achieving accreditations was reviewed as part of this evaluation. This data was aggregated manually across all strands as no central monitoring system was in place. The data was reviewed for those who participated in 2005-06, the year in which there were the highest levels of engagements. The results show that information was available on 9,580 engagements in this year and that 2,175 (23%) of these engagements resulted in a formal accreditation. Similar to the figures above, we cannot say whether, for example, a small number of participants achieved a high proportion of these accreditations. A summary of the accreditations achieved is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Accreditations achieved in 2005-0624

Strand	Actual enrolment	Retention rate	No. achieving an accreditation	Percentage achieving an accreditation	Examples of accreditations achieved (no. of participants who achieved this)
Economic Regeneration	1,216	95%	542	45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCN Counselling (135) • Certificate in Personal Effectiveness (24)
Health Literacy	5,628	99%	428	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQ Level 3 Counselling (20) • OCN Level 1 Yoga for Life (164) / Level 2 (9), Level 3 (7)
ICT	354	85%	181	51%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDL (30) • CLAIT (21) • Certificate in Sage / Payroll / Accounts (75)
Learner Progression	1,193	92%	376	32%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDL (45) • OCN Level 2 Radio Skills (38)
Student Transfer	781	97%	300	38%	• GCSE English / Maths / Essential Skills (422)
	408	97%	348	85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQ (104) • NSP²⁵ (122)
Total no. of participants	9,580		2,175	23%	

Source: Springvale Community Outreach Initiative (2007) Monitoring information on each strand

- 3.56 One of the projects above which resulted in a large number of participants achieving an accreditation is the Yoga for Life project funded under Health Literacy. Participants began at OCN Level 1 (Entry) with the opportunity to progress through Level 2 and 3, both of which are recognised as part of the National Qualification Framework (NQF). The results above show that a small number of participants (7) went on to achieve Level 3. The project was implemented through a mentoring programme which enables those who have completed Level 3 to support the learning of others (train the trainers). Collaboration with schools has also resulted in Yoga being incorporated as part of the Year 12 curriculum and the programme has now been mainstreamed which is a positive outcome for SCOI.
- 3.57 As possibly expected the lowest proportion of accreditations obtained was in the Health Literacy strand. This is also the strand, as outlined in Table 3.3, with the greater number of engagements across the Initiative. Therefore the high number of engagements and retention

²⁴ This data was provided by a member of the original ETI team which carried out the original ETI evaluation report on SCOI

²⁵ NSP – National Skills Profile

rates, which is the main aspect of SCOI that is monitored by SCOI, does not mean that high numbers of participants achieved accreditations. Across 2005-06, on average 23% of engagements resulted in an accreditation. If this proportion is calculated across the four year period then we could estimate that of the 26,704 engagements approximately 6,000 resulted in an accreditation, however, this can be presumed.

- 3.58 There is no aggregated information across the four years of SCOI of the number of participants that achieved Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 accreditations. This would have been beneficial to show the added value of the Initiative. Further detail on some of the education and employment outcomes and information on accreditations from SCOI evidenced through the survey of beneficiaries and focus groups with project managers is presented in Section 4.
- 3.59 In terms of the overall targets set out in the baseline, the targets were constantly revised year on year and in terms of the evaluation it was difficult to measure overall progress against original targets. It is recognised that it is sometimes essential to adjust targets, however, to be credible and meaningful, they should be consistent.

Conclusions

3.60 To conclude on the baseline analysis:

- On the whole, the evidence suggests that the **baseline analysis steered the Initiative appropriately to some extent**. Proposals from the baseline which were successfully implemented and considered worthwhile included the provision of non-accredited qualifications which were thought to act as a “hook” to engage particularly hard-to-reach groups, stimulating individuals to progress into further learning with the potential for eventual employment and the mobilisation and development of local capacity, particularly removing barriers to participation through the use of local mentors and informal learning environments within the community. The evidence suggests that this was one of the Initiative’s key outcomes;
- The baseline analysis **also made a number of recommendations that were not fully put into place by the SCOI**. These included integrating the thematic strands, ensuring that the ICT and Health Literacy elements of SCOI were cross-cutting through all strands, implementing methods of monitoring and tracking the progression of learners and the implementation of clear progression frameworks. It is likely that these suggestions, had they been implemented, would have increased the efficacy of the Initiative as a whole;
- Furthermore, some stakeholders commented that **the cohesive partnership working proposed by the baseline was not adequately achieved**. There was also some concern from stakeholders that the SCOI was duplicating work undertaken by other programmes and this is discussed in more detail in Section 6. The potential for such duplication was outlined in the baseline analysis, which suggested that identification and consideration of such programmes should be undertaken;
- The **baseline report also outlined constraints that were thought to have hindered other previous educational initiatives and suggested that these should have acted as lessons learned for SCOI**. In particular, learning from previous initiatives shows that involving the local community, not focusing on quantity over quality and ensuring that the initiative is demand-driven are all elements of best practice which should be considered, especially in the context of implementing SCOI; and
- Finally the baseline report stated *‘it is widely understood that none of the five programme*

*areas should be looked at or funded in isolation from the others*²⁶. However, the **evidence from the evaluation suggests that a 'silo' approach has been undertaken** in implementing SCOI. In this context, it may be worth considering whether the Initiative would have been more effective having the strands as core objective areas rather than stand alone silo's under which bids were sought.

- 3.61 To conclude on the baseline analysis it is evident that the report produced by Inter-Ed was very comprehensive and gave good indications of the levels of need within the catchment area in terms of the focus of each of the SCOI strands. However, there are concerns, that as already mentioned in the above sub-section, that some of the good suggestions made in the baseline report, were not carried through to the implementation of SCOI.
- 3.62 The performance indicators outlined in the 2003 baseline analysis were largely too numerous, specific, detailed and not adequately strategic in nature to coherently direct successful implementation of SCOI. Furthermore, given the demographic nature of the three partnership areas and the varied composition of the thematic strands of the Initiative, it is clear that wider performance indicators are necessary in order to successfully assess the range of personal, social and educational outcomes across the Initiative.
- 3.63 Finally, in terms of progress towards targets, in one year alone (2005-06), the Initiative resulted in 2,175 formal accreditations being achieved by participants. This represented 23% of all engagements in that particular year. However, there is no detail across the Initiative, over the last four years, on the number of participants achieving Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 accreditations. This is mainly due to the fact that accreditations were never the main focus of the Initiative and that it was initially not a DEL funded project.

²⁶ Inter-Ed (2003) Baseline Analysis for the Executive Programme Fund Initiative : Belfast North, West and Greater Shankill Areas (Page 10)

4 Effectiveness of learning networks

Introduction

4.1 This section of the report addresses the following terms of reference:

Consider the **effectiveness of the various learning networks** in helping to meet the aims and objectives of the initiative. The evaluation should also identify optimum models of delivery and areas of good practice.

4.2 It is our understanding that in the context of the above terms of reference, the 'various learning networks' refers to the actual projects funded through the various strands of SCOI.

4.3 When considering the findings presented in this section, it is important to bear in mind the aim of SCOI, as outlined in the EPF application was to *"create an outreach programme which ensures that the new MCOC based at Springvale plays a significant role in improving educational standards and in promoting social, cultural and economic regeneration in North and West Belfast, on a cross-community basis, in line with the original concept of the Springvale Village and in line with the recommendations of the West Belfast Taskforces."*

4.4 This section is based on evidence taken primarily from the six focus groups conducted with SCOI project managers, the short postal questionnaire of teachers who acted as project managers, the beneficiary survey and also includes evidence from stakeholder interviews.

4.5 The structure of this section of the report is as follows:

- Effectiveness of the various learning networks;
- Aspects of SCOI which worked well;
- Aspects of SCOI which did not work well;
- Main impacts of SCOI;
- Optimum models of delivery; and
- Conclusions.

Effectiveness of the various learning networks

4.6 The first part of this sub-section addresses the recommendations made in the ETI evaluation of SCOI and then presents the benefits of SCOI as evidenced from the focus groups, surveys and interviews undertaken as part of this current evaluation of SCOI.

Views from the ETI evaluation report on the effectiveness of the learning networks

4.7 The ETI evaluation report reflected positive findings with respect to the quality of projects and learning. Some examples of these findings are:

- The projects evaluated provide **good opportunities for the targeted learners to access learning** and take advantage of an appropriate range of health and personal development programmes. For example, the report cited that one project had good success in engaging with male adults with a very challenging range of personal and social problems;
- Most of the projects evaluated by the ETI team were effective at **establishing collaborative links** within, and across communities, and in focusing appropriately on a variety of learning, health, social and economic needs;
- The **good or better quality of learning in most of the sessions observed**, which is characterised by suitably high levels of motivation and challenge; and
- The employment of **experienced and qualified staff** within the projects evaluated. Staff worked well with the participants and had a very good understanding of the social and economic needs of the local communities.

4.8 Nonetheless, the ETI evaluation report made a number of recommendations in respect of the quality of learning in projects and the level of careers advice given within projects. These recommendations are set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Recommendations from ETI evaluation report

ETI recommendation	Action from SCOI staff
The need to improve the quality of learning in a minority of the sessions observed in the student transfer programme which is characterised by poor attendance and low levels of motivation.	Decision to focus on a smaller number of pupils in each of the student transfer sessions. Closer monitoring of attendance / retention rates and progression outcomes.
More opportunities for the learners to receive, where appropriate, specific and targeted advice on careers education and guidance , and preparation for work skills	The SCOI staff introduced seminars and information sessions for school principals, vocational co-ordinators and careers teachers. Also an allocation of £10k was made available for schools to bid for funding for improving career guidance in schools

Source: ETI (2005) Education and Training Inspectorate Report of an Evaluation of SCOI, Inspected: April/May 2005

4.10 Following the ETI report, SCOI staff devised actions for implementing the ETI recommendations as shown in Table 4.1 above. The interview with the ETI staff (as part of this evaluation of SCOI) showed that they were not entirely happy with the SCOI proposed actions to dealing with the recommendations. In particular, the ETI were not convinced that the above proposed actions would greatly improve the quality of provision and again, as with other recommendations, the ETI staff felt that there is a lack of a coherent and strategic approach to implementing the recommendations. For example, the introduction of another bidding process to share £10k amongst schools to improve careers advice as opposed to ensuring that all project managers, where appropriate, incorporate careers advice within their projects and signpost individuals to existing career advice infrastructure systems already in place.

4.11 A member of the ETI evaluation team interviewed as part of this evaluation of SCOI stated that:

"There should be better recognition of the calibre of young people that SCOI projects worked with and an understanding that 'getting individuals up in morning' could be an achievement in itself....

....the majority of participants across the range of projects were enthusiastic in relation to the project they were involved in. The biggest difficulty has been the Learner Progression and student transfer strands. It was difficult to get a handle on whether the Initiative was making a difference...

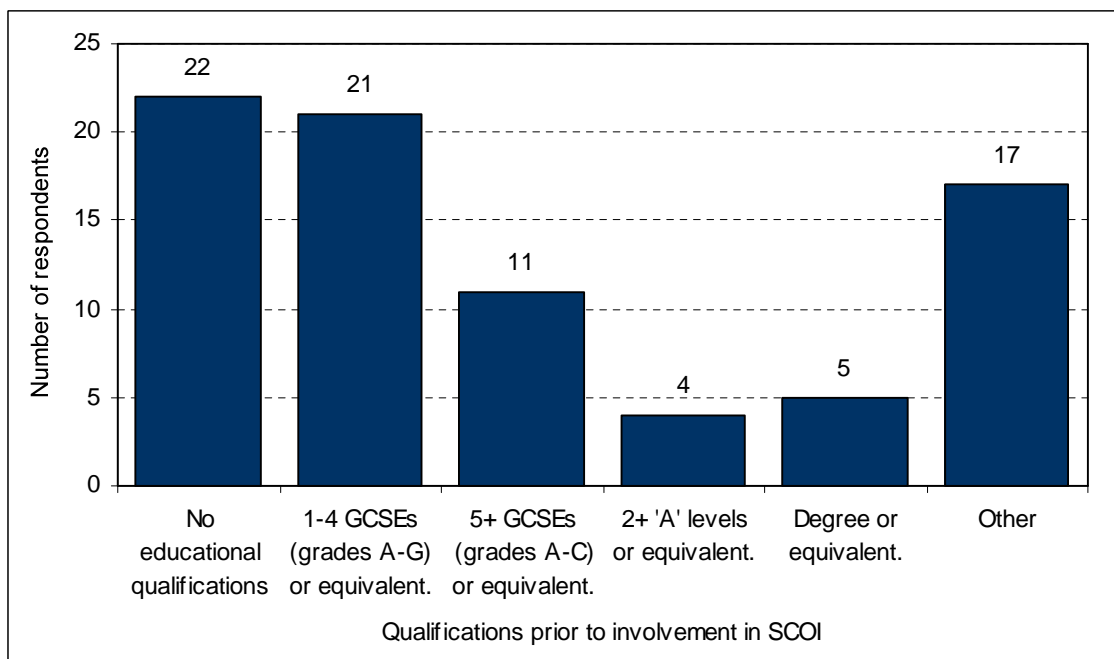
SCOI lacks a specific employability focus and opportunities for the learners to access careers advice, and this was raised in one of the recommendations in the ETI report. Each of the strands across the Initiative should have had a careers/signposting as an element to improve employability skills".

(ETI staff interview)

Education and employment outcomes²⁷

4.12 In terms of educational qualifications, 58 out of 80 respondents (72%) had some form of education qualification prior to their involvement with SCOI. Within this, most had 1-4 GCSEs. Over one quarter of the respondents had no qualification. These figures need to be treated with caution as those who are better educated may have been more likely to engage in the PwC survey.

Figure 4.1: Educational qualifications held by participants prior to engagement with SCOI



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

4.13 The majority of project managers agreed that their project had improved the *employability* of participants as opposed to leading them directly to employment. SCOI projects were generally considered to act as a 'platform' which may help beneficiaries to achieve employment in the future.

²⁷ A total of 86 respondents to the beneficiary survey. However, not all respondents answered every question in the survey, therefore the base numbers vary across each question. The base numbers are clearly presented in each of the charts and tables which follow.

“I think on a very basic level, it has definitely made a lot of people feel that they are able to go into employment. The psychological change in people is quite dramatic, but perhaps not as dramatic as the SCOI staff might want it to be.” (ICT focus group participant)

“We provided nearly 400 people with CSR cards which helps them to find employment, we’ve put 60 people through the door-supervisors course; you’re providing a platform there for people to move into employment.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

“The high levels of skills they have received in completing many studied areas will give them a basic starting point towards whichever career they choose.” (Student Transfer focus group participant)

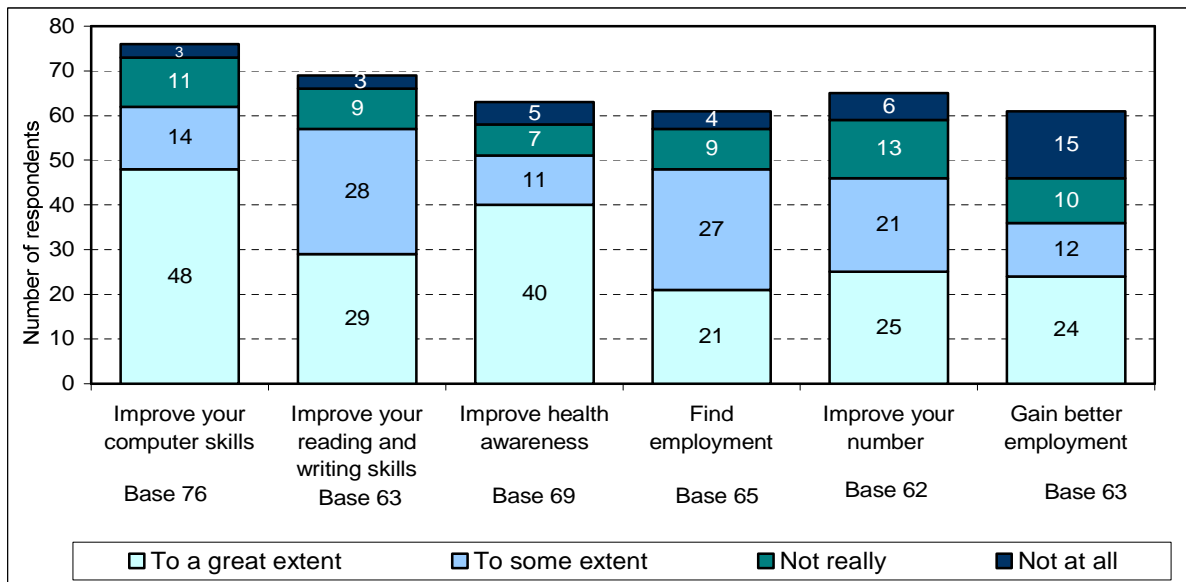
4.14 Indeed, one stakeholder commented that there had been inadequate focus on employment and a lack of monitoring of learners.

“There was very little in the way of employment focus... there was nothing in relation to interview techniques and so on, and no way of tracking individuals as learners as they move between programme strands. All strands of the initiative should have had careers guidance as an element to improve employability skills.” (Stakeholder interview)

4.15 To counter argue the point on ‘tracking’ participants, the SCOI staff stated that due to confidentiality issues, especially in respect of the health strand, details of participants’ names could not be recorded.

4.16 Findings from the beneficiary survey also evidenced the perception of increased employability rather than employment per se. The beneficiaries suggested that the SCOI projects have had a greater impact on their employability skills than attaining employment or progressing within employment. The survey results show that at least 80% of respondents stated that participation in the SCOI project had improved their computer skills or reading / writing skills. These findings are outlined in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: The extent to which SCOI has increased beneficiaries’ skills



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

4.17 Some project managers indicated that SCOI had enabled a number of beneficiaries to enter employment, however, due to the fact that SCOI staff do not track participants (to see how many enter employment or education after engaging in a SCOI project) we are unable to report on employment and educational outcomes from the Initiative. Therefore comments regarding beneficiaries entering the labour market are largely anecdotal, and many project managers interviewed for this evaluation had no way of quantifying the number of people directly entering employment as a result of SCOI.

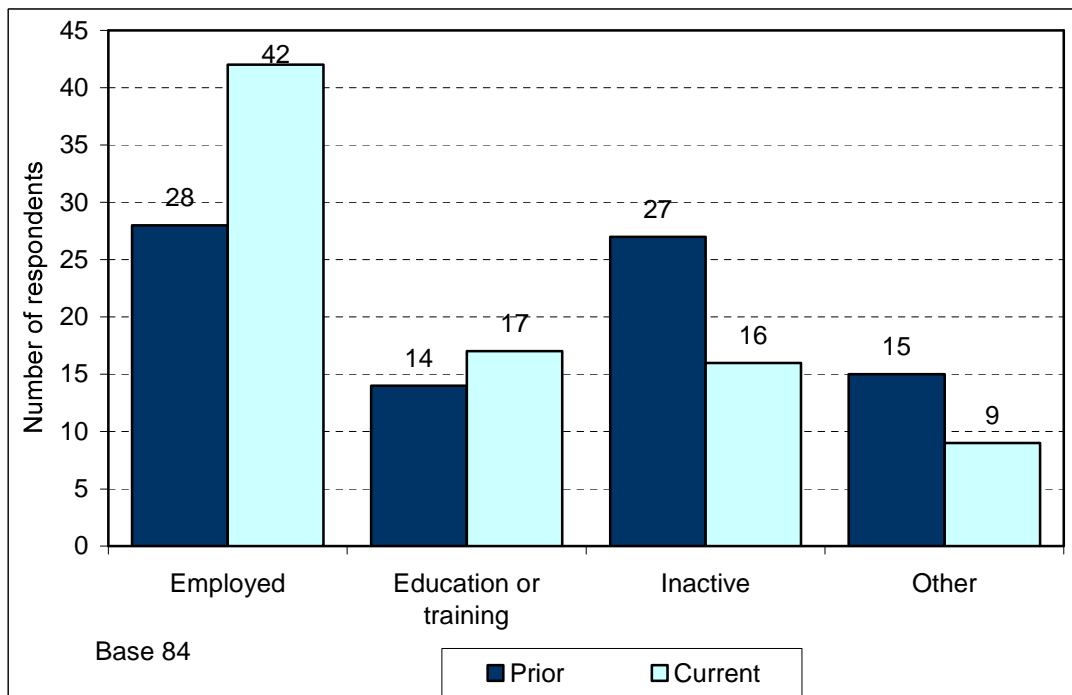
“Some of our participants have gained employment.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

“One of our participants learned to use email and to word-process, and she found a job on the internet, applied for it, and actually got it.” (ICT focus group participant)

“18 out of 20 participants gained full employment. Some were already in part-time work and used it as career enhancement.” (Health Literacy focus group participant)

4.18 These positive comments are confirmed by the survey, which indicates that of the 84 beneficiaries who responded, 28 were in employment prior to engaging in a SCOI project whereas 42 were employed afterwards. As presented in Figure 4.3 there is some positive progression into employment and education as a result of SCOI and also a reduction in the number of people who are inactive. However, the base is quite small and the findings can not be extrapolated across all those engaged (26,704) over the four year life of the Initiative.

Figure 4.3: Respondents status prior to and after involvement in SCOI



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

4.19 The results presented in Figure 4.3 have been examined further to track the progress of individual respondents. The results show that following SCOI, for the majority of respondents (two thirds) their status remained unchanged (See Table 4.2).

- 53 (63%) respondents employment status remained unchanged;
- 23 (27%) respondents moved into employment / education / training; and
- 8 (10%) respondents employment status declined.

4.20 Of the 23 respondents above that moved into employment / education / training, just over half of them (12 respondents) stated that SCOI had contributed to this progression to an extent.

Table 4.2: Outcomes from participation in SCOI

Status prior to engagement in SCOI project	Status after engagement in SCOI project									Total
	Full time work	Part time work	Self employment	Education or training	Out of work and claiming related benefits	Out of work but not claiming benefits	Looking after the home or family	Voluntary work	Other	
Full time work	7	2							1	10
Part time work	3	12								15
Self employment		1	2							3
Education or training	1			13						14
Out of work and claiming related benefits	4	3		2	9	3	1	1		23
Out of work but not claiming benefits		1				3				4
Looking after the home or family	1	2					4			7
Voluntary work	1			1				0		2
Other			1	1		1			3	6
Total	17	21	3	17	9	7	5	1	4	84

Key

Employment status remained unchanged	53	63%
Employment status improved	23	27%
Employment status declined	8	10%
Total	84	100%

Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

4.21 One of the objectives of SCOI was to improve access to, and participation in, education and training across the catchment area for young people, especially those in disadvantaged circumstances and to give participants a better chance of success in employment and society. In NI the Employment, Education and Health Indices, produced by NISRA²⁸, provide a ranking of all the 566 wards in NI from the most deprived (Ranking = 1), to the least deprived (Ranking = 566). At the baseline stage, as discussed in Section 3, a large number of wards in the catchment area were in the top 20 deprived wards in NI. As part of this evaluation we re-examined the current ranking of all wards in the SCOI catchment area to see if there were any positive changes in the rankings. The results in Table 4.3 show that approximately 7 wards improved their rank order in the last four years during which SCOI was implemented, however, in contrast to this at least 18 wards deteriorated in terms of their rank position. Full details on the 2003 versus 2007 ranking of each SCOI ward is set out in Appendix E. Nonetheless it would be difficult to ascertain the direct link, if any, between impacts of SCOI and effects on deprivation rankings.

²⁸ NISRA – Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency

Table 4.3: Changes in ranking of wards between 2003 and 2007

Number of wards in SCOI catchment which:-	Employment Index	Education Index	Health Index
Improved	7	7	7
Remained static	1	2	2
Deteriorated	19	18	18
Total wards	27	27	27

Source: NISRA, Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures

*Based on Deprivation Indices

Accreditation outcomes

- 4.22 Sixty seven out of 81 beneficiaries responding to the survey stated that participation in the project had resulted in their attaining a qualification and this is in line with the findings from the teacher survey. This is a largely positive result, particularly in light of the fact that 28% of respondents reported having no prior educational qualifications, with a further quarter holding between one and four GCSEs at grades A-G. However, data was provided to PwC on the accreditation of participants in 2006/07. The results show that of the 9,580 participants, 2,201 obtained accreditation, which represents 23% of all participants. The accreditations vary from GCSEs to NVQ Level 2, GCSE Maths, OCN Entry Level 3 in ICT, CSR Card, CLAIT and the ECDL.
- 4.23 For many of the beneficiaries who reported in the survey that their participation in the Initiative had resulted in the achievement of a qualification, it is likely that they achieved a non-accredited qualification, such as a certificate provided for successful completion of a course.

Projects which did not offer accreditation:-

“People need to start somewhere, if you have a programme which is designed before the individuals are recruited it can be very inflexible. We recruited the individuals and then designed the programme around their needs. We were not averse to running unaccredited courses.” (Learner Progression focus group participant)

“The non-accredited training has given them the confidence to see that they could proceed to accredited training courses.” (Student transfer focus group participant)

“Even for those that weren’t accredited, we made up certificates, to take along to employers. There were certificate presentations: all that is very important. Put them up in a bar, in a restaurant, if you’re working there. It’s showing people what you have achieved.” (ICT focus group participant)

Projects which offered accreditation:-

“We decided that all the courses should have an accreditation, the fact that people were gaining real qualifications from awarding bodies gave it more worth in their eyes, and their families eyes. It meant something to them.”

“I think people achieving a formal qualification, no matter what level...it gives them the confidence to access other qualifications. It might not be next month; it might not be next year before they achieve it, but it might lead them sideways into a GCSE or an NVQ.”

(IT focus group participants)

“It has a big impact on their (participants) employability...these are young people who would otherwise not have gained any accreditation” (Student Transfer focus group participant)

4.24 Accreditation was considered by many focus group participants as a highly beneficial aspect of their projects, with the potential to:

- **Provide specific accreditation required to access certain jobs:** *“A lot of people had the skills in computer maintenance, but needed the qualification to get a job as a computer technician”;*
- **Act a means of raising confidence and self-esteem:** *“It improved self-esteem and confidence: probably more important than the qualifications they came out with. For many of them it was the first qualification they’d ever got, and that meant a lot to them. It was more than that – in themselves they were able to do it”;* and
- **Work as a motivational tool to aid progression:** *“I think people achieving a qualification, no matter what level; it gives them the confidence to access other qualifications. It might lead them sideways into a GCSE, into an NVQ. That’s where the extra educational opportunities are.”*

4.25 Despite the potential to achieve these perceived benefits, many of the projects did not provide any form of accreditation. In the focus groups it was suggested that by offering only accredited courses, it may be difficult to target “hard to reach” groups.

“People need to start somewhere. If you design programmes where you get a piece of paper – it makes things very inflexible.” (Learner Progression focus group participant)

“The non-accredited training has given them the confidence to see that they could be self-employed. Some of those women have set up their own business: some are making greeting cards, some are making jewellery boxes.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

4.26 Furthermore, some of the focus group participants expressed concern about the new requirements for accreditation of courses, arguing that non-accredited courses are essential to getting individual participants to start thinking about the next learning steps and that they are an essential “hook” in getting some individuals onto accredited courses.

4.27 There were important lessons which could have been learned from other local initiatives in terms of measuring outcomes, such as the Futures Project, which found difficulties in engaging long term unemployed persons.

“We had some accredited and some non-accredited courses. We need the non-accredited stuff at the beginning to get people to “bite”. They are” bite-size” courses in areas such as health and safety, food hygiene and manual handling.”

“There was a big progression: they did the 3 hour course in a bar, then they went on to do the NIOCN, then the NVQ level 2. I think the bite-size thing is vital. It’s the hook, it’s the one that gets them in, and they go on to do accredited courses: otherwise you just won’t get them in.”

(Economic Regeneration focus group participants)

Impact of SCOI on ‘softer’ skills

4.28 As outlined above, the majority of project managers thought that SCOI-funded projects had largely increased employability, rather than resulting in direct employment for beneficiaries. The evaluation evidence suggests that employment was, in fact, not considered by many project managers to be the main objective of the Initiative. In the context of SCOI, this partly goes back to the rationale of SCOI, which was seen as a multi-disciplinary health, education, ICT and employment programme and not as solely an employment programme. .

4.29 Rather than a direct route to employment, the perceived personal impacts of the Initiative

were instead cited by most project managers as its key benefits.

"It improved self-esteem and confidence, probably a lot more important than the qualifications they came out with." Capacity Building focus group participant)

"A lot of my participants benefited from personal development and confidence building. The project was mainly about widening participants' horizons and encouraging community participation. The skills development aspect was rather much a secondary benefit." (Learner Progression focus group participant)

"Progressing into employment isn't the ultimate focus for our groups. It's trying to instil a confidence into people, seeing people progress to other courses or levels, maybe composing a demo disc for musicians, seeing them doing their first gig. That's important; it's not just about employment."

"The confidence levels of the pupils in the schools, young people who weren't excelling – it had a ripple effect across their studies. Their concentration had improved and their focus on education had gone in a different direction. They were actually performing much better." (Economic Regeneration focus group participants)

"It improved self-esteem and confidence and this is probably more important than the qualifications they came out with. For many of them it was the first qualification they'd ever got, and that meant a lot to them." (IT focus group participant)

4.30 Project managers in the focus groups also cited aspects of personal development and employability as the main outcomes of the Initiative, particularly a growth in beneficiaries' confidence, which was cited by all respondents as having increased to a great extent. In addition to highlighting these outcomes, 11 out of 12 teachers thought that the projects would help pupils to gain better employment in due course.

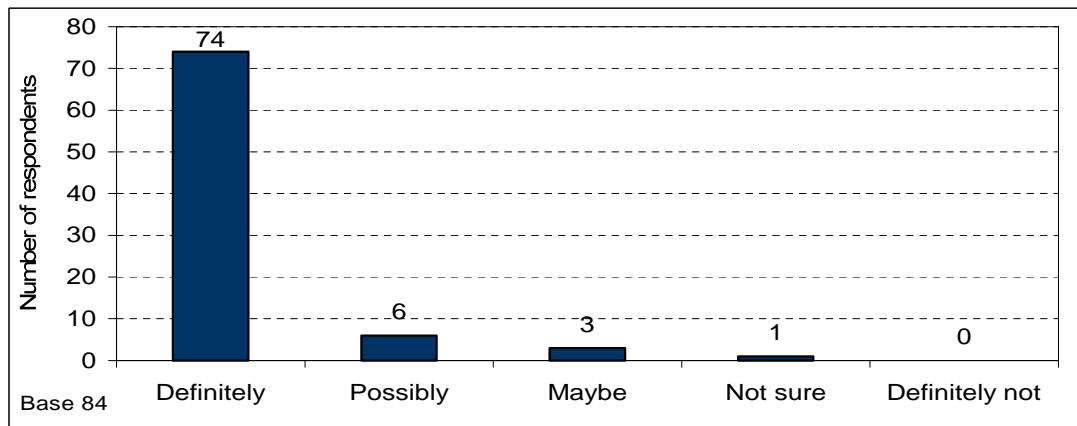
4.31 Leaving aside the issues of employability and accreditation, which some project managers believed was not the core of the Initiative, some viewed SCOI as an opportunity for beneficiaries to develop inter-personal skills and to realise that they have a series of opportunities that they could benefit from. In summary, SCOI projects helped to increase project beneficiaries' confidence and enabled them to realise that they had both opportunities and choices to progress to a wider range of accredited courses and job opportunities.

"A key benefit of the project was fact that they could start thinking about going to tech and the project made them realise that they had choices." (Student Transfer focus group)

"It gave them a self-awareness of personal development, which led to a build-up of self-esteem. It is all about building up relationships and it's given them the opportunity to reach optimum potential." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

4.32 Evidence from the survey confirms these findings, with the majority of respondents (95%) indicating that they would certainly feel more prepared to attend another course, whether it is run by the same or an alternative provider. Figure 4.4 illustrates these findings.

Figure 4.4: Levels of preparedness expressed by beneficiaries in relation to attending further courses



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

Impact on targeting social need

- 4.33 The majority of the project managers believed that their projects focused on social need and the socially excluded, including those most removed from the labour market. The targeted groups included individuals from new TSN²⁹ areas; individuals who are long-term unemployed; those with physical disabilities; those with learning difficulties; ex-prisoners; substance-abusers; teenage mothers; adults returning to education; school pupils; travellers; students and people who have suffered from trauma.
- 4.34 Most respondents suggested that the focus on targeting social need had been largely successful and had generally succeeded at engaging those most in need and socially excluded, as well as those furthest removed from the labour market. As previously outlined, the evidence indicates that the main outcomes described by the project managers were largely ‘soft’ in nature rather than resulting in direct entry into employment.

“It was mainly young female mothers who have no income other than benefits. One is doing the training to become a project manager – basic skills that she received have given her the confidence. The objective of the projects is building capacity in the community not just the individuals that participate in the programme.” (Capacity Building focus group participant)

“We had a lot of children with Asperger’s, so for them to go out into the world of a tech is very big. It’s the little things – like not getting the yellow bus to school, allowing them to go on the bus, and start to get some independence.” (Student Transfer focus group participant)

“Building a good relationship with them and being there when they need you, they see you as a friend as well as a tutor. Treating them as individuals and not talking down to them enabled us to ‘engage’ with them.”

“Being flexible in class times and sizes, being understanding, keeping in touch, because people do drop out; it may just be because they were sick one week and think they’ve missed too much to come back. So it’s getting on the phone and chatting to them.”

(IT focus group participants)

“Because the crux of our training – there’s a support mechanism there, travel costs, peer support, essential skills, that process can actually be mainstreamed.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

²⁹ TSN = Targeting Social Need

- 4.35 A number of respondents highlighted the difficulties of engaging with those most in need and socially excluded, namely the short timeframe provided for the projects, problems with marketing, beneficiary perceptions and raising awareness. Word of mouth was considered to be an effective means of engagement, however, this naturally requires projects to run on a longer-term basis.

"This was very difficult. We had only six to eight sessions: limited time. But if you "touch" even one person it's worthwhile." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

"It was slow to begin with, but that is just the nature of promoting yourself. Our main promotion in the latter year has been word of mouth, so I think we were quite successful in getting known." (ICT focus group participant)

"It was difficult to engage. There's a mindset that it's about academic qualifications, and that if you don't have 'x' amount of qualifications, you're beaten. We encouraged them to look at the bigger picture." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

- 4.36 Furthermore, there is a sense amongst some of the focus group participants that formal educational institutions are unable to deal with the needs of project beneficiaries in comparison to organisations in the voluntary and community sector. In a sense, one participant felt that the difficulty around delivery of courses in formal institutional settings had been compounded by bad experiences in school.

"They can't (FE provider) deal with these kids; they just want to lecture." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

"Something delivered at BIFHE would have been difficult to do." (Learner Progression focus group participant)

"Some tutors could not cope with them. Many have had a bad experience with schools." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

- 4.37 In respect of targeting the socially excluded, the focus groups revealed that in the absence of SCOI projects, the majority of project managers thought that beneficiaries would not have accessed other courses or projects, namely because they perceived SCOI courses to be more accessible to target beneficiaries (particularly the socially excluded) than FE colleges, as outlined above.

"We can reach out to people; I don't know if they would go to another service – it's all about confidence." (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

"We are working with young people who are already excluded from the mainstream. They've said that they wouldn't be going anywhere if it wasn't for us."

"These courses would not have been given the support from my Principal and Senior Management team, due to financial constraints."

(Student Transfer focus group participants)

- 4.38 These findings from the focus groups are broadly supported by evidence from the beneficiary survey. The majority of beneficiaries who responded to this question stated that they would not have accessed any other learning or training.

“Without this project I wouldn’t have done anything. Without the personal development I don’t think I would have stuck with this project.”

“I would still be claiming benefits.”

“I would never have had enough confidence to return to further education after such a long absence.”

“I would have remained in a low-paid job with no higher qualifications.”

(All views from beneficiary survey)

- 4.39 In particular, two respondents remarked that without participating in the programme that their computer literacy would have remained at a low level.

“I would probably never have learnt how to use a computer.”

“Without this course I would have continued to be ‘bamboozled’ by computer skills that were shown to me in work-related courses which were far too advanced and confusing.”

(All views from beneficiary survey)

- 4.40 Nonetheless, a few project managers stated that beneficiaries may have accessed other learning in the absence of SCOI funding. This was due to their projects receiving funding from other sources, as well as the potential to access courses through other institutions and organisations.

“We get funding from other areas, such as anti-smoking campaigns.” (Health Literacy focus group participant)

“We’re in tourism, and we’ve sign-posted people, for example, to Invest NI. So there are other things.” (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 4.41 The elements of SCOI which are thought to have helped to engage these targeted groups are explored further in the sub-section ‘Aspects of SCOI which worked well’.

Aspects of SCOI which worked well

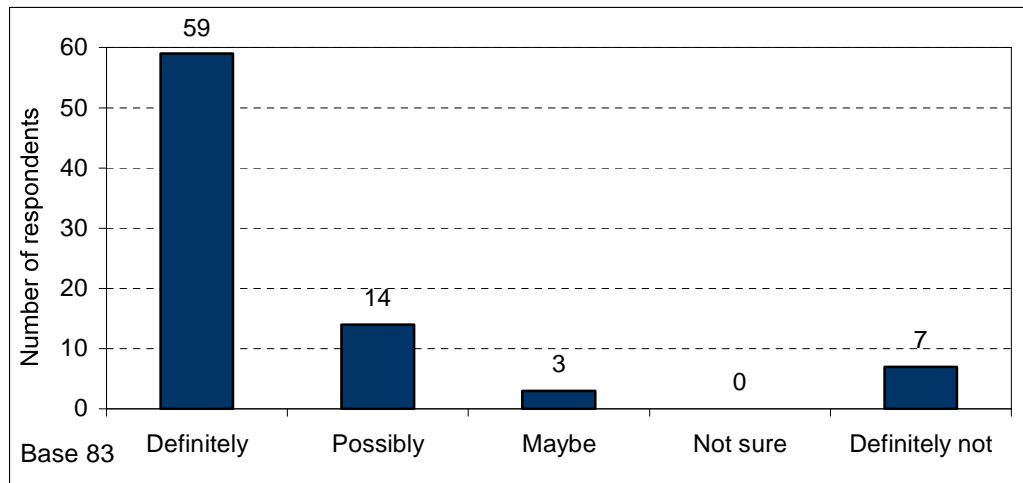
- 4.42 A number of factors were cited by project managers as having a positive impact in the engagement of these “hard to reach” groups. The main factors are outlined in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Aspects of SCOI which worked well

Factor	Evidence
Informal learning environment	<p><i>“Because you were based actually in the TSN areas, rather than in some formalised institution, you were making it easier for people to take part, it’s not just a class-based environment, it could be in a pub, it could be in a school, it could be on the street. Barriers are broken down.”</i> (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)</p> <p><i>“BIFHE courses attract people who want to learn. SCOI goes a stage further and through various mechanisms (e.g. engaging learners through the voluntary and community sector) engages with those who do not want to learn”</i> (SCOI staff member)</p>
Convenient location	<p><i>“A lot of our group members don’t want to leave the area; they want everything to be delivered in the area itself, they’re familiar with it. It’s amazing the amount of people who won’t travel even from the Crumlin Road to the Shankill Road. When you work with these people you need to be flexible.”</i> (Learner Progression focus group participant)</p>
Provision of support	<p><i>“There were a lot of problems with people and essential skills: there were exams attached to them. They provided us with tutors and so on to help support those who had no formal education, or had left school early, or gone to prison. It helped break down the barriers for people doing exams and looking to gain employment. It was a big factor.”</i> (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)</p>
Small class-size	<p><i>“Having smaller groups, tailoring everything to the individual child, personalising it: that’s how it works at engaging them. They won’t do anything that they don’t want to do.”</i> (Student Transfer focus group participant)</p>
Childcare facilities	<p><i>“The crèche was good; a lot of single mothers were able to come. Childcare was on site, so people were happier to come. They couldn’t have afforded it otherwise.”</i> (IT focus group participant)</p>
Novelty factor	<p><i>“There were single mothers, people with no previous training. They were marginalised. Some of them told you their horror stories from school, and how hard it was for them to come back. The reason they came back was probably because it was to do with computers, so it was something they hadn’t done before.”</i> (ICT focus group participant)</p>

4.43 The survey findings support the view that the informal nature of the learning environment had a positive influence on beneficiaries’ participation in the Initiative. In particular, 88% of respondents stated that the informal learning environment within which the SCOI project was set, definitely or possibly had a positive influence in their engagement in the project. Only 8% of respondents stating that it had not been a factor (Figure 4.5), whilst 4% were unsure of the influence.

Figure 4.5: Views on whether the informal nature of learning influenced participation in SCOI



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

Impact on cross-community relations

4.44 Many of the project managers interviewed commented that their projects had achieved a cross-community impact, but for most the impact was incidental (geographical coverage determined participation to a large extent) as opposed to a deliberate intervention to engage both communities. This perceived impact was generally achieved through the use of a neutral venue.

“Our project did have a cross-community impact, but it wasn’t so direct. It was one class which attracted people from both communities.” (IT focus group participant)

“Not explicitly cross-community but geographical coverage determines participation from the two communities.” (Learner Progression focus group participant)

“We brought them [the two communities] together and they mixed: it was in a neutral area so everyone came along.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

“There was one man from the Falls, he had never left his community, he was scared to leave, but he now does community work in the Shankill women’s centre. It was great networking; personal development reaching over their safeguard and understanding another religion.”

“Yes, there are cross-community elements presently in the sense that some participants travel to ‘other’ areas.”

(Health Literacy focus group participants)

4.45 However, a few project managers reported that their projects had not had any cross community impacts. One stakeholder also thought that there ought to have been stronger cross-community relations within projects.

“It’s been mainly working within our own community as the projects involved small amounts of money and was area-specific.” (Capacity Building focus group participant)

“Projects have been well supported, however, I would have liked to have seen greater links across the communities. Links within individual communities have been good.” (Stakeholder interview)

Impact on capacity building

- 4.46 Community development and capacity building within the community were mentioned by participants in the survey across a number of the Initiative's strands as important impacts of the Initiative. Some quotations in terms of community development benefits from SCOI are as follows:

"Some of these people don't go outside their own street, never mind their community...getting them out of their physical community is very difficult." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

"In our case, a lot of group members don't want to leave the area and want everything to be delivered in the local area." (Capacity Building focus group participant)

"The fact that it's in their local community, they're familiar with it; there's other support there if they need it in terms of childcare and so on." (IT focus group participant)

"We are more accessible to our target population; many feel more comfortable in a community based organisation." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 4.47 The main aspects of capacity building achieved by SCOI comprised:

- **Beneficiaries' personal development** which may augment employability: *"Until you do that personal development, the door can't open. Doing one of courses doesn't mean you're going to get a job in the construction industry – it could open their mind to get an NVQ level 3 and then go on to seek employment";*
- **Wider distributional impact** of the Initiative through project beneficiaries: *"The biggest impact was on the community. The individual projects impacted on their families and in turn their communities. It was like a ripple effect: it's beyond measuring the impact of this course";* and
- **The creation of networking opportunities:** *"Networking is a big thing. For example, two females set up a women's group, and we signposted them to other fundraisers. It's now a full befriending service operating on the Falls Road".*

Sustainability beyond SCOI funds

- 4.48 The majority of projects were reportedly due to end following the termination of SCOI funding in March 2007. Many respondents believed that accessing further funding would prove difficult or impossible, particularly due to the small scale nature of many of the projects within the programme in relation to the requirements of other funding initiatives.

"The projects are too small to get funding under Peace II, for example. My concern is that we will lose opportunities like this to do small pieces of work on the ground." (Capacity Building focus group participant)

- 4.49 A small number of project managers stated that funding for their project was secured for the foreseeable future through other sources. A few other respondents reported that they were in the process of seeking other sources of funding, such as through Neighbourhood Renewal; however, they voiced concerns regarding the sustainability of these sources.

"People are going to have to re-evaluate their projects to see where they can get the money from, and unfortunately the funding pool is drying up every year: there's less and less money available." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 4.50 Mainstreaming projects through DEL was considered both viable and desirable by the majority of project managers for the following reasons:

- **Meeting existing need:** *“It could definitely be mainstreamed as the demand is there. It’s hard to say no to the people who have been using it.”*
- **Promoting consistency:** *“People have benefited from this, and now it is coming to an end. The cut-off of SCOI funding for us is going to be devastating. It’s going to reduce our delivery and service output.”*
- **Retaining capacity:** *“DEL could definitely mainstream us; the structures are there, the relationships are there: it has been evaluated and it was rated as good. In the long-run, once you lose the capacity, the only way you can get that back, is to put even more resources into it a year down the line.”*

4.51 In line with findings from project managers, some of the stakeholders we interviewed suggested that many of the projects could be sustained and some mainstreamed, due to community need, the capacity and credibility built up by SCOI, and in order to promote coherence. Some of these respondents suggested that projects could best be taken forward through programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal, Renewing Communities, PEACE III or other European funding programmes or regeneration initiatives.

“There would be no problem sustaining the programme: it has built up credibility, and there is an expectation that the service will be available. It hits every button: the disadvantaged, those falling behind: it’s specific, targeted initiatives.”

“The focus is ok, so there is nothing to stop them building upon it.”

“While there may be deficiencies, the next time it will be against a much clearer background and will be more informed. Workers in the community now know what their priorities are and have a greater insight into what is needed.”

(All stakeholder interviews)

“There is no possibility of mainstreaming if DEL’s criteria are based around employability and accreditation. Unless DEL creates another strand... there is a need for a campaign around non-accredited capacity building in the community.” (Student Transfer focus group participant)

Aspects of SCOI which did not work well

4.52 A number of comments were made that suggested that certain aspects of the Initiative impacted on the achievement of its objectives. Table 4.5 below highlights a range of these along with a range of illustrative quotations for each of these.

Table 4.5: Aspects of SCOI which did not work well

Factor	Evidence
Lack of time / resources	<i>“We could have filled more classes if there had been more time and resources.” (Health Literacy focus group participant)</i> <i>“Sometimes the monthly budget was a bit tight. There was a bit of difficulty there.” (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)</i>
Short-term nature of SCOI	<i>“Something longer-term might have been more effective as it is difficult to fully impact on “harder to reach” groups in such a short timescale.” (Health Literacy focus group participant)</i> <i>“It would have been more successful if we had worked with half the number of people for a longer period of time. The ability to engage and work through a lengthier period of time would have been more effective.” (Learner Progression focus group participant)</i>
Administration / bureaucracy	<i>“The level of administration in terms of the time it took to do the returns... this was not always matched with the level of funding that was given.” (Student Transfer focus group participant)</i>

- 4.53 Most of the negative aspects cited related to the funding of the Initiative and what some project managers perceived as the short-term nature of funding for initiatives such as SCOI. This was said to impact on planning, promotion and consistency.

"The reduction in funding for the second year has had an impact. It reduced the amount of advertising and promotion we were able to do." (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

"High staff turnover has been an issue. For consistency, we try to keep a worker engaged with young people, parents or staff. This has been difficult to achieve due to the short-term nature of funding – the funding is unreliable." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

- 4.54 Other barriers mentioned included:

- The **existence of rival projects** which impacted on the achievement of targets: *"target beneficiaries are involved in other activities... this is a significant distraction which has resulted in indifference to our activities."* (Student Transfer focus group participant)
- **Age limit for project beneficiaries:** *"The upper age limit was 64 and there were a lot of older people coming looking for training and it's hard to turn people away."* (IT focus group participant)
- **Holidays and events:** *"Target beneficiaries are involved in activities associated with the July fortnight street parties, as well as activities dictated by parents and family members."* (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 4.55 The first of the barriers quoted above relates to the fact that SCOI projects were perhaps in competition with a plethora of alternative interventions in the catchment area. This is discussed in more detail in Section 6.

Main impacts of SCOI

- 4.56 The majority of the stakeholders found it difficult to agree on the main overall impact of SCOI. One respondent described it as creating a 'trickle-down effect'. Reasons cited for this included a lack of employment focus and monitoring, little evidence of additionality to other initiatives, inadequate targeting of projects and a lack of dissemination of good practice.

"While there was enthusiasm from learners, it is difficult to get a handle on impact."

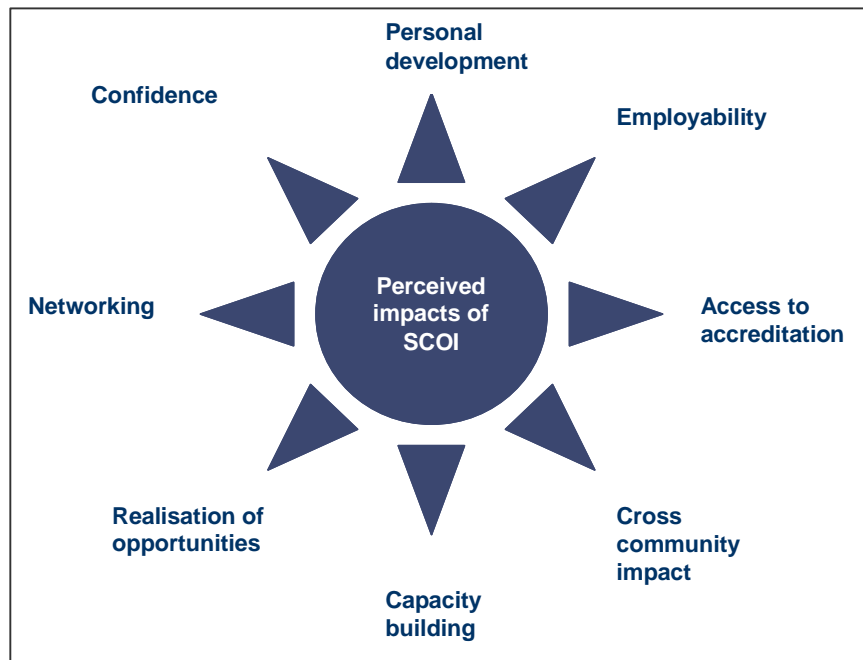
"Having had one go, it should now become more targeted. The first go was a blunderbuss: 'let's fire lots of pellets and hope it hits something,' and that's ok, but now we need a rifle."

"Most of the projects worked in isolation so that SCOI weren't aware of any successes. There was lots of good work going on but most of the projects had a 'silo' mentality".

(All stakeholder interviews)

- 4.57 Many of the perceived benefits of the Initiative have been identified previously in this section, however, Figure 4.6 consolidates the key benefits of SCOI as cited by focus group participants.

Figure 4.6: Benefits of SCOI as perceived by project managers



- 4.58 Evidence from the beneficiary survey broadly support these findings, with beneficiaries and teachers citing an increase in self-confidence, employability, personal development and the realisation of opportunities as the key benefits arising from their participation in the Initiative. In addition, beneficiaries commented that the Initiative had acted as a social outlet, enabling them to meet new people, and giving them a reason to socialise.
- 4.59 A few stakeholders commented that SCOI had been somewhat beneficial, particularly in terms of aiding hard to reach communities and meeting specific needs, rather than in succeeding in achieving its overall aims.

"I have gained a lot of confidence which will allow me to do further courses and hopefully get a job."

"It has improved my physical and mental health."

"Meeting new friends, women with the same problems as myself, in which I've been feeling depressed; the other girls will try and help build you up again, have a laugh."

"It was having a reason to leave the house."

(All views from beneficiary survey)

"It really helped communities that fall out of care boundaries."

"SCOI met a particular need, for example, suicide prevention. It facilitated a lot of work with this and added value in the flexibility of the programme."

(Stakeholder interviews)

Optimum models of delivery

- 4.60 The evidence has identified various aspects of good practice within the SCOI initiative, primarily from the perspective of project managers. As previously discussed, the informal learning environment was perceived as fundamental to successfully engaging hard-to-reach groups. The provision of mentoring and support, childcare facilities, novelty factor and small

class-sizes were also thought to be effective. Furthermore, respondents suggested that additional resources, longer-term funding and reduced bureaucracy would have proved beneficial to the projects.

- 4.61 A common theme across all the focus groups (discussed in Section 5) is the perceived benefit of delivering education in the community. Many of the focus group respondents felt that this delivery model worked to the advantage of the beneficiaries and improved community access to education. Many commented that beneficiaries find it difficult leaving their own street and community to access educational opportunities. The following quotations illustrate the importance of how SCOI was perceived to improve community access to education

"Some of these people don't go outside their own street, never mind their community." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

"Getting them outside their physical community is very difficult to do." (Learner Progression focus group participant)

"The fact that it's in their local community, they're familiar with it; there's other support there if they need it in terms of childcare and so on." (IT focus group participant)

"We are more accessible to our target population; many feel more comfortable in a community based organisation." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 4.62 Stakeholders had a number of suggestions regarding optimum models of delivery and good practice. These tended to be more holistic, and are outlined below:

- **Identify additionality:** stakeholders expressed some concern that SCOI had duplicated the efforts of other initiatives;
- **Increase clarity:** some respondents asserted that criteria regarding community impact should be more transparent;
- **Improve communications:** stakeholders recommended that communications and alignment between the various strands of SCOI be improved and formalised, and that project managers should have been brought on board earlier;
- **Disseminate good practice:** it was suggested that a formalised way of sharing good practice between programme and project managers would be highly beneficial; and
- **Increase focus on employment:** some respondents remarked that employment focus within the Initiative had been inadequate, and asserted that career guidance should have been fundamental within each strand.

Figure 4.7: stakeholder suggestions for optimum models of delivery



Conclusions

4.63 The following points serve to highlight some of the key messages arising from the primary research as to the main impacts of SCOI and the effectiveness of the learning networks.

4.64 The evaluation evidence suggests that:

- Many of the participants view SCOI funding as a means of developing the community and building capacity;
- Many of the outcomes achieved by SCOI were mainly 'soft' in nature (e.g. increased confidence/self esteem) rather than 'hard' (progression in employment);
- The main perceived impacts of SCOI included community development; accreditation; improved employability; development of confidence and personal skills; and realisation amongst some beneficiaries of the opportunities that are available to them;
- On balance, a greater number of participants in the focus groups agreed that SCOI had improved the employability of beneficiaries as opposed to leading to employment;
- A number of factors were highlighted as having a positive impact on the engagement with targeted groups including the informal learning environment; provision of support; small class-sizes; and childcare facilities;
- Many of the project beneficiaries believed that their project had an impact on cross-community working but that this was a consequence of the geographical boundaries of SCOI rather than a deliberate attempt to engage both communities;
- There were a few issues which impacted on the achievement of objectives. Project

managers mentioned a range of issues including lack of time/resources; the short term nature of SCOI; administration/bureaucracy; and high staff turnover; and

- Project managers, for the most part, reported that they were largely positive about the degree to which SCOI had effectively engaged their local community and felt that SCOI could engage individuals where other institutions might not (e.g. schools / further education etc.).

5 Evaluation of SCOI management arrangements

Introduction

5.1 This section of the report addresses the following terms of reference:

Evaluate **SCOI management arrangements and funding processes**, including the effectiveness of SCOI's recently revised structures.

5.2 Before proceeding to the main findings in this section, it is important to repeat the aims of the SCOI as defined in the EPF application form. We will come back to the importance of this point below.

'Create an outreach programme which ensures that the new Community Outreach Centre based at Springvale plays a significant role in improving educational standards and in promoting social, cultural and economic regeneration in North and West Belfast, on a cross-community basis, in line with the original concept of the Springvale Village and in line with the recommendations of the West Belfast Taskforces³⁰.

5.3 The structure of this section is set out as follows:

- Effectiveness of management processes;
- Effectiveness of administration processes; and
- Conclusions.

Effectiveness of management processes

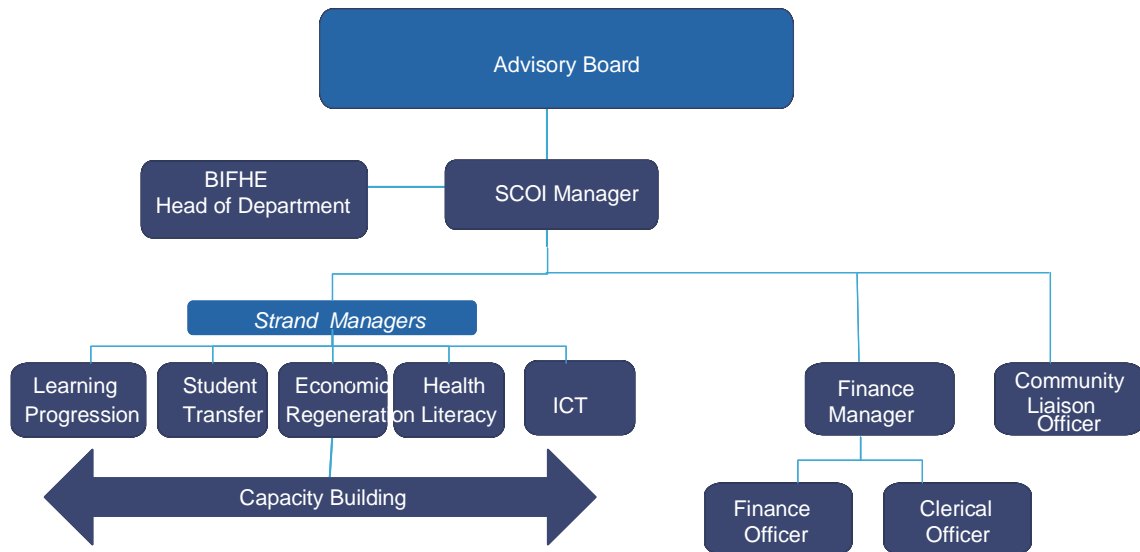
Staffing structure

5.4 The SCOI staffing structure consists of a full-time manager, six full-time individual strand managers (one responsible for each strand, including capacity building), full-time community liaison officer and clerical / finance staff (Figure 5.1).

5.5 The Initiative is overseen by the Advisory Board which consists of representatives from BIFHE, BELB, DEL, DE, West Belfast, Shankill and North Belfast Partnership Boards. The specific role of the Board was to advise on the balance of the strand areas, advise on potential collaboration in relation to each strand, identify gaps in provision, review progress reports and participate in the evaluation of the Initiative. The baseline report cited that the reason why some other local initiatives, complementary to SCOI, had failed was due to a lack of partnership working. Notwithstanding this the SCOI Advisory Board did consist of representatives from each of the three Partnership Boards, however, according to SCOI staff, attendance rates at such meetings by the Partnership Boards was poor and therefore the Board was not effective as it could have been.

³⁰ Application for EPF (undated)

Figure 5.1: Operational structure of SCOI (as at March 2007)



5.6 A number of changes were made to the original staffing structure during the course of the Initiative:

- **Strand managers change from part-time to full-time posts;** strand managers were changed from a small number of part-time managers to dedicated full-time managers for each strand in 2004/05. SCOI mentioned during the interviews that the structure worked much better with dedicated full-time managers focusing on each strand ; and
- **Role of Community Liaison Officer;** the introduction of the role of Community Liaison Officer which was seen as important in the context of an initiative aimed at promoting cross-community links in North and West Belfast was introduced in 2004;
- **Introduction of capacity building strand;** the capacity building strand was introduced as an additional strand in September 2005. This strand supports the other original strands and is viewed as integral to the economic and social regeneration focus of SCOI referred to in the introduction to this section of the report. This was introduced as it was recognised by the strand managers that many groups applying for SCOI funds lacked adequate capacity to put forward strong proposals (e.g. administrative and reporting/evaluation capacity) and lacked a strategic approach to their proposed projects. The capacity building strand, unlike the other strands, offered capacity support / modest development grants (£3k on average) to groups rather than larger grants. This strand was available to any group with weak community infrastructure who had received, or intended to apply for, SCOI funds under one or more of the other strands. The capacity building strand has had a number of beneficial effects on those applying for the grants.

5.7 It should be noted that the capacity building element of this Initiative was identified in the baseline report, and in hindsight, this strand should have been introduced at the outset of SCOI alongside the other strands.

5.8 Some views from stakeholders to substantiate the points above are as follows:

“Word got into the community that there was funding available. There was an identified need for a person that would liaise with and get information into the community. The role came on stream mid-way. The Inspectorate report favoured a Community Liaison Officer. [Key responsibilities include] acting as an advocate on behalf of community organisations and looking at developing future sustainability in the areas we operate in. The model and the development grants made available have been successful.”

“The programme managers should have been on board much earlier.”

“The revised structure is so much better. Before the revised structures, the SCOI manager and the secretariat manager were the only full-time members of the Initiative – everyone else was part-time and it was difficult only having part-time individuals with sub-divided tasks.”

“It’s more about support than funding... we provide projects with a needs assessment that provides a justification for funding under one of the SCOI strands. Community development groups would never have approached other organisations and there would have been a lot of frustration. We are positioned locally, are accessible and have a lot of personal experience. Without this SCOI funding and the capacity building support, community groups would not have done the development work they did.”

(All stakeholder interviews)

5.9 Key strengths in terms of the management of the Initiative were cited in the ETI evaluation report. These strengths were as follows:

- The hard work of the network manager, supported by the wider strategic and operational management teams to meet the main aims of the SCOI;
- The work of the community liaison staff, who provide effective support to a very wide and diverse range of community and voluntary organisations across the three communities, and who act as an effective link between the strategic management group of the SCOI, and the respective partnership boards;
- The timely restructuring of the strategic and operational management teams, in response to the emerging patterns of engagement and interventions the SCOI has achieved over the first two full years of its operation;
- The strong commitment from the Institute, and the BELB to the success of the SCOI and its aims and objectives.

Management processes

5.10 The stakeholder interviews were largely positive in relation to the overall management of SCOI and commended the SCOI Manager in relation to how the project was run. There was a feeling, amongst some, that the best was done within the constraints in which the project was operating (e.g. some of the areas in which SCOI was operating appeared to have development needs that inhibited involvement).

5.11 Focus group participants were very positive about the contributions of SCOI, the hands-on approach and the supportive, visible and accessible nature of the support. The following points illustrate the findings from the focus groups and stakeholder interviews:

“One strand area could not get their act together... their projects were more focused on the past and I felt they couldn't move on. A lot of the projects couldn't get operationalised because of the politics. The [Project Manager] did the best he could within the constraints.”

“Very committed... it was a big learning experience for him stepping outside the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education.”

(Stakeholder interviews)

“[The Project Manager] was always there to help [the strand manager] out.”

“The SCOI Project Manager was very hands-on from the start.”

“The Project Manager was always accessible and visible at the network meetings.”

(Capacity Building focus group participants)

- 5.12 In addition the ETI evaluation report stated that the SCOI Manager did a good job ‘considering the changing scope and context of the Initiative’. Nonetheless the ETI report did state that there was a need for improved quality assurance procedures.

Table 5.1: Recommendation from ETI evaluation report

ETI recommendation	Action from SCOI staff
The need to develop further the quality assurance procedures across the programme areas, to monitor and evaluate more effectively the range and quality of provision.	Implementation of SPEAK evaluation system, Rickter scale and ongoing review of self-evaluation reports Commissioning of evaluation report on the Initiative itself

Source: ETI (2005) Education and Training Inspectorate Report of an Evaluation of SCOI, Inspected: April/May 2005

Financial systems and processes

- 5.14 The FE Policy and Strategic Branch (FEP&SDB) within DEL requested the Financial and Audit Support Team (FAST) to undertake an inspection of SCOI in 2005. The aim of the inspection was to provide assurance on funding paid by DEL to SCOI for the period up to November 2005 which involved verifying a sample of the £2.7 million of DEL funds spent on the Initiative covering all aspects of expenditure from wages, management / administration costs and funds to projects. The inspection was based on examining sample claims totalling £757,364.
- 5.15 The FAST report was issued in draft form in September 2006. The key finding³¹ from the inspection was that the Team was unable to give an assurance on 60% of the expenditure claims due to the absence of proper documentation supporting claims (e.g. inadequately detailed invoices, photocopied invoices or unavailable invoices)³². FAST recommended that

³¹ Other issues raised during the FAST inspection included:

- Inadequate records of selection processes used by SCOI during the first few years of the Initiative, however, FAST noted that evidence of more detailed selection processes (e.g. selection panel membership and selection criteria) were available for selection processes in place for early 2006;
- Lack of evidence of a central register of all advances paid to projects and FAST recommended that a central system should be put in place;
- Lack of evidence as to why some projects did not always receive their full funding amount;
- Inadequate staff time records to evidence the amount of time spent on SCOI versus other projects, in particular, in the case of then, part-time SCOI staff members; and
- Poor maintenance of project case file system and inconsistency filing system (e.g. some files contained application forms, LoOs and budget returns, whereas others did not).

³² In accordance with the Terms of Reference for this evaluation PwC has not undertaken any work in the form or nature of an audit of any aspect of the Springvale

no further funds be released to SCOI until the issues in the inspection report were satisfactorily resolved. As a result DEL withheld funds from SCOI until this issue was resolved.

- 5.16 During discussions between BIFHE and FEP&SDB it was agreed that a re-inspection should be carried out in March 2007.
- 5.17 The final FAST report was published in April 2007. The results of the re-inspection showed significant improvements in that the level of non-assured expenditure fell from 60% to 11%. DEL stated their intentions to recoup £67,141 of the non-assured expenditure. In addition DEL took forward the Team's recommendation that BIFHE be required to re-examine other claims for the period of the audit to ensure that only expenditure which is supported by relevant documentation is re-submitted to the Department. The Team concluded by categorising SCOI as a medium risk in a submission to the Department's Audit Committee.
- 5.18 The terms of reference for this evaluation did not require an audit of SCOI processes, however, the need for a continuous audit should be an integral part of the terms of reference for any future initiatives of this nature.

Effectiveness of administration processes

Application process (including project selection)

- 5.19 Interviews with SCOI staff revealed that at the outset of the Initiative, the staff spent considerable time developing selection criteria, application forms, assessment processes and selection panels in respect of the application process. In addition time was spent on setting out and agreeing the allocation of funds in 'rounds' (periodic calls for applications) which is the norm in many public funding programmes. Projects which were deemed 'border line', for example, they just met the criteria, were mapped according to the six strands and geographies to assess if they met any gaps in funds disseminated.
- 5.20 However, there is very limited documentation to verify the project selection procedures used in the early calls for applications.
- 5.21 Following the assessment of applications, unsuccessful SCOI applicants were offered a debrief opportunity with SCOI staff. Applicants were able to appeal decisions, however, during the four-year life of the Initiative there was only one appeal, which is a positive finding.
- 5.22 The views of project managers show that the process for application was generally considered to be relatively efficient, both in terms of the application form itself and the support provided by SCOI staff members. The application form varied in length depending on the amount of money applied for.

"Application was straightforward and easy to follow. There was no trouble with outreach, explanation or help. There was an empathic approach to the process, and this was the same for other project managers we spoke to." (Health literacy focus group participant)

"Compared to some of the applications, it was one of the easier ones. You were being driven by the development workers in SCOI." (Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

"My application was very straightforward, a lot more so than those that come from the department, and we heard back quite quickly." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

- 5.23 However, a few participants voiced concerns regarding the slow application process and the

uncertainty period between applications being submitted and finally accepted for funding.

“The second year there was a bit of uncertainty around whether the funding would go ahead. It was difficult to plan as we only got funding for six months. I’m not sure why, I think there was such a demand for the funds.” (IT focus group participant)

“You had to get applications in December and the project was finishing by end of March and you didn’t actually know you were getting it until February and that was a concern.” (Capacity Building focus group participant)

5.24 The majority of the respondents were extremely positive about the support they had received from the strand managers. The evidence suggests that individual project managers perceived this to be one of the Initiative’s greatest strengths. A small number of respondents suggested that the money they had received from the Initiative was small compared to other projects. However, it must be remembered that the amounts of funding supplied to each project varied.

“I’ve had experience with other funders, and SCOI was different to all of them. There was a lot more contact than with other funders, they weren’t quite as scary as other funders. It was more simple and straightforward.” (ICT focus group participant)

“I found the staff very supportive in assisting me and directing me and I needed that in the tight timescale that we had.” (Capacity Building focus group participant)

“To me, it wasn’t a massive amount of money. We got £25,500 over the two years but that was for 116 kids, so it wasn’t that much really. You’re limited how much you can do with that. It was really just a build-on.”

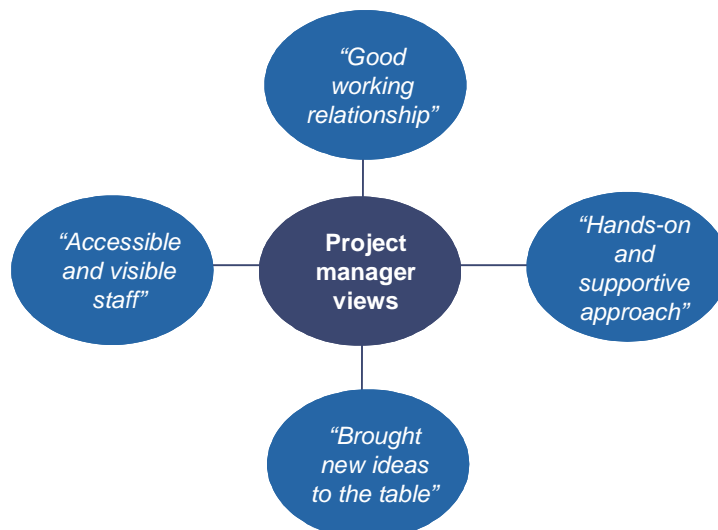
“The amount of money I was given was small.”

(Student Transfer focus group participants)

Delivery processes

5.25 A number of the interviewees were very positive about the delivery approach adopted by SCOI Manager and the strand managers. Many interviewees in the focus groups were also positive and commented on the personal approach and the on-demand nature of support that programme strand managers adopted towards the project managers over the duration of their project. Figure 5.2 summarises some of the comments made in relation to the programme strand managers and this is followed by a selection of quotations from the focus groups we undertook with project managers.

Figure 5.2: Views on SCOI programme managers



- 5.26 Many focus group participants asserted that the administration of SCOI compares very favourably to other initiatives they have previously received funding from. Some quotations from the focus groups reflecting on the positive work of the strand managers are as follows:

"I am really going to miss this because the personal approach was great"

"She was fantastic – she was efficient and support was provided was on-demand. Whatever you needed, she supplied it."

"SCOI is far easier and it reflects the amount of money you receive. Another initiative we receive funding – they almost do a forensic audit every few months."

(Capacity Building focus group participants)

"I think we are all in agreement and she really needs an OBE for her endeavours."

"I organise a lot of projects. I think this was one of the clearest. You knew exactly what you were doing."

(Economic Regeneration focus group participant)

"It was excellent. She had very good inter-personal skills and was able to build relationships. She would come along to our events."

"It was simpler, clearer and well defined."

"SCOI did provide the necessary platform and finance."

(Health Literacy focus group participants)

- 5.27 There were some issues raised in relation to the amount of paperwork and administration involved, some felt that it was particularly onerous, particularly in the latter stages of the Initiative.

"The amount of paperwork was an issue. They tried to streamline it this year but there is still a problem." (Student Transfer focus group participant)

"There was a lot more work involved with SCOI... there was a lot more administration." (Learner Progression focus group participant)

"During the initial stages the administration worked okay. During the latter stages time spent on administration often surpassed time spent on project... towards the end it seemed that there was a push towards more of a paper exercise." (Health Literacy focus group participant)

- 5.28 Respondents in the survey were asked to comment on the extent to which the project met their objectives (Table 5.2). It is interesting that of the vast majority (89%) stated that the project definitely met their objectives, whilst a small proportion (11%) stated that the project met their objectives somewhat. None of the respondents stated that the project did not meet their objectives ('No, not really' / 'No, not at all').

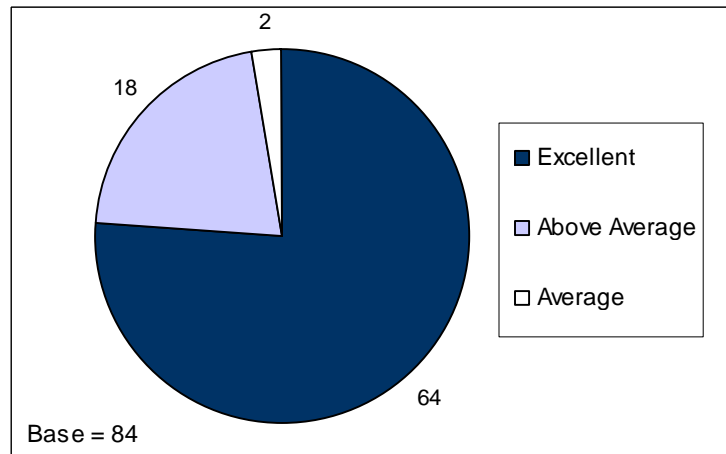
Table 5.2: Extent to which projects meet their objectives

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	74	89%
Yes, somewhat	9	11%
No, not really	0	0%
No, not at all	0	0%
Total	83	100%

Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

5.29 Beneficiaries were also asked to rate the delivery of the project. A large proportion of respondents rated the delivery of SCOI as 'excellent'. Ninety eight per cent of respondents stated that the delivery of SCOI was either excellent and or above average (Figure 5.3). A small percentage of respondents (2%) felt that delivery was average, with none of the respondents rating the delivery of SCOI as below average or poor.

Figure 5.3: Ratings in relation to delivery of SCOI projects



Source: PwC survey of SCOI beneficiaries

Conclusions

5.30 The following points summarise the key findings in respect of the management arrangements and funding processes:

- A number of changes were made to the original staffing structure for SCOI which were welcomed by SCOI staff. The position of community liaison officer and capacity building strand manager were introduced to raise awareness in the local community and build capacity in voluntary and community groups to enable them to benefit from funding in one of the other programme strands. In addition, all programme strand managers moved from part-time to full-time. Overall focus group respondents were generally positive about the revised structures;
- The stakeholder interviewees, in addition to the focus group participants, were largely positive in relation to the overall management of the Initiative (in particular, in comparison with other projects they were involved in delivering). The individuals interviewed felt that the SCOI Manager was hands-on, visible and accessible throughout. The focus group participants were equally positive about the contribution of the programme strand managers;
- Focus group participants were positive about the application process describing it as straightforward, clear and well defined and proportionate to the amount of money received, however, some respondents felt that the amount of administration and paper work was an issue, particularly towards the end of their project;
- The vast majority of beneficiaries felt that the project they were involved in definitely or somewhat met their objectives (90% and 10% respectively). A high proportion of respondents (98%) felt that the delivery of SCOI was excellent or above average; and
- Focus group participants were generally positive about the application process although there were some concerns voiced in relation to the timing between applications being

submitted and being accepted for funding, leading to an inability to plan effectively.

5.31 However, there were some areas where SCOI could have performed better:

- Whilst the projects managers engaged with each other, they worked very much in a 'silo' approach in funding their projects and there could have been much more integration across strands. In particular, the baseline report stated that ICT and health could be seen as cross-cutting themes, this shows that there was potential for the managers to work in a more joined-up manner;
- The SCOI Advisory Board represented, in theory, a team of multi-disciplinary stakeholders. However, attendance at the Board meetings was poor, particularly in respect of the Health Trust and Partnership Boards. Therefore the Board did not operate as effectively as it could have done, and should have proactively replaced those Board members with poor attendance records. However, it appears that the SCOI project manager *'did his best within these constraints'*³³;
- In addition there was limited liaison with relevant stakeholders throughout the project. As discussed in more detail in Section 6, the SCOI project was implemented in a 'busy' arena in terms of social and educational interventions and therefore it was imperative to liaise with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity. However, interviews with key stakeholders showed that consultation with them could have been better;
- At the outset it took considerable time to get the application and assessment procedures up and running. However, there were opportunities to exchange best practice with other local funding bodies in respect of calls for applications, scoring processes and developing letters of offers etc. This was a missed opportunity on the part of SCOI which resulted in a delay in the Initiative getting started and consequent delays in projects receiving money from the Initiative; and
- As evidenced in the FAST report, it is important that appropriate financial systems and controls are put in place from the beginning for an initiative of this nature in the future to ensure accountability of public funds.

³³ Quote taken from a stakeholder interview

6 Extent of linkages with other initiatives

Introduction

6.1 This section of the report addresses the following terms of reference:

- Consider SCOI's interface and **relationship with other ongoing Government initiatives**, notably Neighbourhood Renewal, Health Action Zones, Educational Action Zones and other targeted initiatives, operating in North and West Belfast. Identify areas of complementarity, overlap, or duplication. Determine to what extent, if any, SCOI adds value, or is otherwise unique; how such provision might be sustained; and the implications of SCOI's cessation in the context of the prevailing learning cultures to be found in the communities that comprise North and West Belfast.
- Consider the **effectiveness of community and voluntary sector and key stakeholder involvement** in the Initiative, the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to engage stakeholders and social partners in the design and implementation of the programme, and make any necessary recommendations for improvement. The evaluation should also consider how the roles of these key players could be clarified and developed, to provide better models of delivery.
- Examine linkages between this initiative and its potential impact on the Institute's future **Workforce Economic Development Centre**.

6.2 This section of the report is presented under the following key headings:

- The linkages between SCOI and other local initiatives;
- Potential impact of SCOI on the Workforce Economic Development Centre (WEDC);
- Effectiveness of the voluntary / community sector engagement in SCOI; and
- Conclusions.

The linkages between SCOI and other local initiatives

6.3 This section is drawn from a desk-based review of all relevant documentation relating to other ongoing Government initiatives and interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. staff from the Partnership Boards, DSD Neighbourhood Renewal; West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce; and the Employment Services Board).

6.4 It identifies how SCOI adds value, duplicates or overlaps existing provision or how SCOI is different. It also includes evidence from the six focus groups conducted with SCOI project managers.

6.5 The SCOI project operated in a 'busy' space in terms of other initiatives focusing on education, health and employment. This includes both local initiatives and NI initiatives. At the outset, the baseline report stated *'there is much evidence of very considerable investments in North and West Belfast and the Greater Shankill areas under the broad heading of education and training'* and as such the baseline report emphasised the need for liaison with relevant stakeholders throughout the implementation of SCOI. Furthermore the consultations undertaken as part of the baseline exercise recommended that SCOI should go beyond existing provision and prevent simply *'more of the same'*.

6.6 A summary of some of these other initiatives / organisations is set out in Table 6.1 below. The challenge therefore for SCOI staff was to ensure that the work of SCOI and its funded projects complemented these existing initiatives and also to ensure that SCOI did not duplicate existing activities.

Table 6.1: Other local and regional initiatives

	Economic Regeneration	Learner Progression	Health Literacy	ICT skills	Student Transfer
N&W Belfast and Greater Shankill initiatives	Renewing Communities West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce Employment Services Board	LEMIS ³⁴ Targeted Initiatives & Job Assist Centres in W Belfast & Shankill BIFHE Outreach Centres Work of EGSA ³⁵ , Proteus and ESB	N&W Belfast Health Action Zone (HAZ)		Communities in Schools
	North Belfast, West Belfast and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards Belfast & Lisburn LSPs (funded social economy, health and enterprise projects) URBAN II (funded social economy, ICT, enterprise and employment projects) in North Belfast Opportunity Youth (focused on engaging with disaffected youth through health, education and employment initiatives) and Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust (GRIT) (working with disaffected youth)				
Broader NI initiatives	Neighbourhood Renewal	New Deal			Extended Schools
	Projects funded under PEACE II, EQUAL and New Opportunities Fund (National Lottery)				

6.7 Given this range of other activity it was imperative that SCOI resources were used in a coherent and effective manner, avoiding duplication. The baseline report emphasised the need for an appropriate partnership approach toward committing resources. The ETI evaluation report argued that SCOI could have played a stronger role in ensuring complementarity with other initiatives. The recommendations made by the ETI report in respect of these are presented in Table 6.2.

³⁴ LEMIS – Local Employment Intermediary Service. It was introduced in April 2007 provides tailored assistance to help voluntary clients overcome their personal barriers to employment

³⁵ EGSA = Educational and Guidance Service for Adults

Table 6.2: Recommendations from ETI evaluation report

ETI recommendation	Actions from SCOI staff
The clarification, at a higher strategic level, of the role of SCOI in terms of how it should complement and/or add value to the range of other on-going Government initiatives in the areas of economic regeneration, health education, and vocational education and training across the three communities	Discussions with DEL as to where SCOI fits with other local provision and activities
The need to review the course proposals for each of the schools involved in the Schools-Link project more thoroughly, to ensure they provide a range of distinctive vocational programmes with appropriate and relevant progression routes, and which demonstrate clear and effective links to mainstream school provision of literacy, numeracy and ICT.	Funding will only be allocated to work-related vocational programmes and not enrichment programmes
The provision of opportunities for representatives of individual Partnership Boards to meet formally , and more regularly with appropriate staff to identify opportunities for the dissemination of good practice across and within the respective communities.	SCOI staff to consult with Partnership Boards to encourage more regular input into SCOI Ensure that the SCOI Community Liaison Officer is represented on local relevant committees

Source: ETI (2005) Education and Training Inspectorate Report of an Evaluation of SCOI, Inspected: April/May 2005

6.8 A member of the ETI team interviewed as part of this evaluation of SCOI stated that:

“Someone needs to have a good overview of all the initiatives operating in these areas to understand, in more detail, where SCOI is making an impact...”

“There were poor literacy skills amongst pupils participating in the Schools-Link project and a lack of emphasis on developing literacy skills through the project. Poor literacy skills were not picked up as there was no initial diagnostic assessment. There was no evidence of internal quality assurance which might have picked up on these issues....it is not about attendance or ‘bums on seats’, it’s about the progress of participating individuals. This involves undertaking diagnostic assessments to ensure that individual needs are catered for. How do you know the success of the initiative? You can only gauge the success of the initiative if you know the relevant parameters....”

“Some of the projects could have made better links to mainstream programmes to improve these areas....expertise within existing resources, such as the Partnership Boards, could have been better exploited....”

“Examples of good practice could have been better communicated. There was lots of good work going on but most of the projects had a ‘silo mentality’.”

(ETI interview)

6.12 **Neighbourhood Renewal** was launched in November 2004 and focuses on the 10% most deprived areas in NI. In Belfast there are 15 Neighbourhood Renewal areas, managed by Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), most of which overlap geographically with the SCOI catchment area. For example, Crumlin / Ardoyne, Upper Springfield / Whiterock and Greater Shankill / Woodvale areas. The Neighbourhood Renewal initiative was slow to develop and unfortunately the Action Plans were not prepared in time to significantly influence SCOI projects. However, there was a feeling amongst stakeholders that SCOI could potentially have worked closely with the Neighbourhood Partnerships if they had been more advanced.

It is not clear if the Neighbourhood Partnerships have learned from SCOI.

- 6.13 Whilst economic disadvantage is still greater in Catholic communities, it is perceived that there is a better developed capacity at community level to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Government funded programmes and services to support these communities. Hence **Renewing Communities** was launched in June 2006 and is targeted at Protestant working class communities in North Belfast, Shankill and West Belfast. The initiative supports a range of actions from health, numeracy, literacy, enterprise, parenting schemes, employability programmes, skills/ training, vocational training, housing and youth outreach. There is again some geographical overlap between the focus of this initiative and SCOI, for example, the Lower Shankill and Lower Falls, are targeted by both initiatives. Some of the stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation felt that there was some degree of overlap between the objectives of Renewing Communities and SCOI. However, moving forward there is an opportunity to sustain some of the SCOI projects through accessing funds under Renewing Communities.

"Both SCOI and Renewing Communities have very similar objectives and there is a fair amount of overlap. There is potential for overlap, in particular, with the first four priorities of Renewing Communities (tackling low levels of education achievement, building social cohesion, civic leadership and improving public services)".

"The lead partners must determine which actions/projects to continue or expand. There may be scope to sustain SCOI activities through Neighbourhood Renewal or Renewing Communities but it will be up to DEL to decide. SCOI will not be funded unless DEL bid for additional funding under Renewing Communities, otherwise there are limited possibilities".

(Stakeholder interview)

- 6.14 The capacity building aspect of SCOI is similar to some of the weak community infrastructure projects funded under **PEACE II**, with the exception that PEACE II projects must meet the Distinctiveness Criteria³⁶. The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI)³⁷ was responsible for the delivery of PEACE II, Measure 2.7 'Developing Community Infrastructure' (Developing Low Community Capacity and Promoting Active Citizenship). The objectives of Measure 2.7 were to 'stimulate and support community involvement building community confidence and cohesion' and 'to provide appropriate capacity building support to groups'. Similar to SCOI, this Measure sought to target geographical areas of high social need characterised by the absence of formal and informal community activity. Essentially there was some overlap between this Measure and the SCOI capacity work in Shankill wards which had low capacity.
- 6.15 Within the Belfast and Lisburn areas, **Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)** have been funded under PEACE II comprising members from the respective councils, senior managers from Central Government Departments and from Social Partners. The LSPs provide support to local economic initiatives for developing the social economy, education and employment training. There is potential for overlap between the work of the LSPs and SCOI. The LSPs also provide funds to disadvantaged urban areas under Measure 2.11³⁸, however, there is no overlap as the Belfast target areas are outside of the SCOI catchment area.
- 6.16 The **URBAN II** Community Initiative is worth in excess of £10.5 million pounds and focuses on the Inner North Belfast Area. It is delivered by the North Belfast Partnership Board and a key focus is on tackling unemployment. In comparing SCOI's relationship with the URBAN II

³⁶ Addressing the legacy of the conflict and taking opportunities arising from peace

³⁷ CFNI delivered this Measure in conjunction with Belfast Interface Project, Community Technical Aid, the Rural Community Network, the Volunteer Development Agency, Workers Educational Association and YouthNet.

³⁸ Measure 2.11 'Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation'

initiative, one stakeholder commented that the SCOI programme allowed specific areas falling outside the scope of URBAN II funding criteria to be funded.

“SCOI helped communities that fall outside core North Belfast URBAN II funding areas. Therefore SCOI allowed projects to be funded outside North Belfast core areas, dependent on the areas, for example, Ligoniel had a strong community involvement in SCOI and was outside our scope”. (Stakeholder interview)

- 6.17 **Opportunity Youth** was established initially in 1993 in response to the diverse needs of young people involved in vocational training in Belfast. It is core-funded by DEL and was set up to encourage the social and personal development of young people and support them as much as possible in their progression to obtaining NVQ Level I and II. The organisations promotes the use of peer mentoring and has recognised that ‘hooks’ to engaging young people in education are related to dealing with health and personal development issues (substance abuse awareness, mechanisms to increase confidence, self esteem and social skills and mental and emotional health). There is evaluation evidence to suggest that young people from Greater Belfast who have engaged in Opportunity Youth have better education and employment outcomes than those who have not used the service. Similar to this programme, the **Gerry Rogan Initiative Trust (GRIT)** was established in 2006 to engage with young marginalised people and encourage them to get more involved in social, educational and reconciliation activities.
- 6.18 In terms of school initiatives, there are a number of schemes which operate in the same ‘space’ as the Student Transfer strand of SCOI. The **Communities in Schools (CIS)** initiative was developed to help students stay in school by bringing resources, services, parents, and volunteers into schools. The initiative aims to create a community of caring adults who work hand-in-hand with educationalists. In some schools services are made available to all students and their families. CIS in a similar way to the Student Transfer strand also provides after-school programmes for parents. As part of the stakeholder interviews conducted, it was indicated that some of the provision of the SCOI programme helped to support and sustain programmes already in place in the community, such as Communities in Schools. In June 2006, the then Minister for Education, announced a £10m package to develop **Extended Schools** across NI using the experience and learning from the CIS programme to inform and develop the Initiative. The cluster of 6 post primary schools in N&W Belfast has provided a model of good practice for the Extended School programme currently being rolled out across 127 schools in Belfast and a total of 500 schools across NI. The CIS and Extended Schools are integral parts of the overall North and West Belfast **Health Action Zone (HAZ)**. However, again this opportunity to share learning could have been strengthened by better attendance by Board members at the SCOI Advisory Board.
- 6.19 Furthermore the SCOI baseline report stated that there are numerous education and training projects being delivered in the SCOI catchment area, however, some local groups are unwilling to share examples of best practice, despite the potential of such projects in helping share lessons learned for the future. The baseline report stated, however, that the three Partnership Boards are *‘ideally placed to develop an intra-partnership approach among each of the three partnerships...this will promote sharing of best practice in terms of projects that work well, avoid duplication of provision and encourage the effective usage of resources’*.
- 6.20 Furthermore, a key stakeholder felt that SCOI should not be engaging in projects within schools, although others welcomed this aspect of the Initiative.

“Should SCOI have been involved with schools? Schools should be able to help and support themselves. Addressing issues like poor attendance and low levels of motivation is an issue across the school and is not something that ought to be addressed by an initiative like SCOI.”

“Taking the Communities in Schools Initiative as an example, project funding is precarious in the sector i.e. community projects as opposed to voluntary, find it difficult to sustain work, thus SCOI allowed more mainstream projects to sustain themselves as some community projects are more short-term.”

“SCOI included a lot of schools based programmes. This very much supplemented formal education practices, as opposed to supporting new provision.”

“We received three years funding from SCOI to run the Easter Schools Initiative up to GCSE level, to help pupils secure grade Cs in Maths and English. This was funded under the Student Transfer strand of SCOI. The aim of the Partnership is economic and social regeneration. Therefore by raising the educational attainment level through three years funding from SCOI, this was very welcome funding, through which 65% of students achieved Grade C.”

“SCOI acted as a funder of alternative education in this area, funding community-based education initiatives. They [SCOI] were there for being practically supportive, not there as a scrutiny committee. Although they were tough on deliverable outcomes, they worked in partnership with us and were an absolute dream to work with as a funder, in addition to the fact that they were educationalists themselves.”

“The Easter Schools programme has been running for nine years. We have existing relationships with pupils and parents, as well as expectations from parents and pupils. We have very motivated pupils who are giving up their Easter holidays to study Maths. This programme hits every button in terms of Government initiatives i.e. disadvantaged people in disadvantaged areas, anti-poverty, targeted social need, neighbourhood renewal and has formed all the right partnerships.”

(Various stakeholder interviews)

- 6.21 A further example of SCOI funding offering a support to core provision was cited by one stakeholder in terms of the Easter Schools initiative which was originally pioneered in the Upper Springfield area in 1995 through European funding. Although discussions had been held with BELB and DE at the outset in a bid to attract mainstream funding for the programme, this had not proved successful.
- 6.22 A stakeholder interviewed as part of this evaluation indicated that the impact of SCOI was more likely to be seen in the increased uptake of further education through a ‘trickle down effect’, as well as individuals coming into contact with outreach support.

“Education is the big issue, the root of other problems. Children are failing in education at a very young age, and the school results in Protestant areas are poorer than those of children in similar socio-economic circumstances due to lack of parental support and encouragement....the two big issues are seen as....parental attitude to education: there is clearly an issue around families. Parenting skills and parental involvement in children’s education are not being addressed and these must be addressed if other aspects of the [SCOI] programme are to be effective.....and community competence: understanding how the system works, for example Government and other basic workings. This leads to social issues.” (Stakeholder interview)

- 6.23 The **Targeted Initiatives** concept originated in the Taskforce report on Employability and Long-Term Unemployment report³⁹ and as a direct outcome of the NI Executive’s first Programme for Government (PfG). Operating from 2003 until 2006, and funded by DEL, Targeted Initiatives operated in a small number of geographical areas (West Belfast, Greater Shankill, Derry City Council Area and Strabane District Council Area) with low employment and high levels of social deprivation. It consisted of a number of strands, the most important

³⁹ DEL (2002) The taskforce on employability and long-term unemployment, December 2002

of which, in terms of SCOI, included the Job Assist Centres (JAC) and Transition Employment Programme (TEP). Similar to SCOI, Targeted Initiatives had an explicit focus on improving the skills of beneficiaries and operated in areas with similar levels of deprivation (indeed some of the geographical areas overlap between both initiatives). Fundamentally, both initiatives were characterised by community outreach activities as a means of engaging the community. In contrast, however, there were a number of key differences between both initiatives, namely:

- **Larger scale:** Targeted Initiatives was characterised by a large number of separate strands aimed at improving the employability of those furthest from the labour market (e.g. JACs, TEPs etc.). Funding for the Targeted Initiatives amounted to £14m in comparison to £7.4m funding for SCOI;
- **Greater employability focus:** Targeted Initiatives had a much greater focus on employability or the capability of individuals to move self-sufficiently into and within labour markets and to realise potential through sustainable and accessible employment. Indeed, the two major strands of TIs (JACs and TEPs) adopted a structured approach to measuring and reporting progress of its client groups in moving towards and into the labour market and sustaining employment.

6.24 There was potential for greater liaison than actually occurred between SCOI staff and TI staff and vice versa as they were essentially both focusing on the same group of people – e.g. those most furthest removed from the labour market in the SCOI area. In addition, this may have resulted in opportunities to share best practice in terms of measuring the ‘softer outcomes’ of SCOI especially in respect of HARP and CPK measures used in TIs.

“Some of the groups now involved do receive funding from other initiatives but this has not directly influenced engagement in this programme. The Programme is designed to be “free standing” and therefore dependent as far as possible on the value the individual places on it. It is moving closer to this status all the time. I repeat this is not an initiative but an investment of permanence in individuals.”
(Health literacy Focus group participant)

“Links with three organisations: Mount Vernon Community House, Springhill Community Centre and Support, Care and Advice.”

“Cedar Foundation, Help The Aged, North & West Belfast Trust, Tullymore Community Centre for those recovering from mental health problems, and the job assist centre as well.”

(IT Focus group participants)

“Sometimes the statutory services let young people down.” (Student Transfer Focus group participant)

“SCOI is really just a small part of what is going on, it’s just an add on, rather than any sort of driver. Outside IT, I can’t think of any area where SCOI is driving anything, it’s just supporting...it’s the cream in the bun rather than the bun itself.”

“More consultation is needed in terms of future initiatives. SCOI was probably linked to BIFHE’s knowledge of what the community needed. For example, the Partnership Boards would have a clearer idea about the community infrastructures. The main thing to take away, is that while there may be deficiencies in SCOI, as well as a lack of clarity as to whether it will have an impact on the wider community and whether it should be DEL’s role, future initiatives should be designed against a much clearer background and a much clearer knowledge as regards what is needed.”

(Stakeholder interviews)

6.25 Outside of all these schemes and programmes there are a range of key bodies with which SCOI staff could have worked more closely with. These include **EGSA**, **Proteus** and **the Employment Services Board** who work with long-term unemployed and those disengaged

with the labour market and education through, for example, outreach work in essential skills training. Similar to the SCOI initiative, all these organisations recognise that a 'hook' is often required to attract disengaged learners. For example, EGSA ran a 'Cook-It' Programme which is similar to projects funded under SCOI's Health Literacy strand. In the statutory side, DEL has been involved in the delivery of **New Deal**, **Progres2Work** and **LEMIS** all of which focus on engaging with the long-term unemployed.

- 6.26 In terms of ICT skills there are initiatives such as **MyGroupNI** which is an OFMDFM initiative offering excluded community groups the opportunity to engage in the digital environment. It offers similar support to that provided under the ICT and Economic Regeneration strands of SCOI.
- 6.27 Despite the fact that it was acknowledged that the potential existed for SCOI to build on initiatives already in place, stakeholders indicated that, overall, they would struggle to identify direct linkages between SCOI and programmes already in place. In most cases, it is perhaps more accurate to identify indirect linkages. For example, the Social Economy Programme which came through Belfast & Lisburn LSP with a view to stimulating social economy within community groups, may be indirectly linked to the Economic Regeneration programme area/thematic strand under SCOI.
- 6.28 In summary there were mixed views from the interviewees as to whether duplication did occur through SCOI.

"We had good links with the other Partnership Boards through SCOI. We hosted a series of workshops on community development involving all three Partnership Boards. Through the SCOI project management team, we worked to ensure that this happened."

"There may have been some overlap between organisations within the context of the Social Economy, i.e. organisations delivering different projects. A lot of organisations in these areas are well practised at gaining funding, therefore enabling them to sustain their organisation as opposed to funding a certain need. For example, if someone kept developing something which met SCOI's real objectives, it was likely to be funded."

(Stakeholder interviews)

- 6.29 In summary all of the above programmes and initiatives were often competing with SCOI projects and therefore to avoid duplication and in the interest of the best use of public resources, there was a need for strong linkages between these schemes and the SCOI staff. However, as was noted earlier in this evaluation report, SCOI had a multi-disciplinary Advisory Board in place at the outset which it was hoped would provide a degree of co-ordination and complementarity. Unfortunately the Board meetings were poorly attended and therefore scope for strategically linking with other initiatives, in particular the work of the Partnership Boards, was not as effective as it could have been.

Potential impact of SCOI on the Workforce Economic Development Centre

- 6.30 As discussed in Section 1 of this report, the Workforce Economic Development Centre (WEDC) was designed to be an integral part of the developments at the Springvale site. The WEDC was seen as a replacement for the Applied Research Centre (ARC). The Centre was given DFP ministerial approval in April 2006 and it is proposed that the WEDC will secure funds from the Renewing Communities initiative, International Fund for Ireland and DEL. It is also proposed that the WEDC is re-named as the '3 E's' (Education, Enterprise and Economic Development⁴⁰).

40 PAC (2007) Report on Springvale Educational Village Project, September 2007

- 6.31 The WEDC aims to pilot the delivery of pre-employment training in areas such as hospitality / leisure, manufacturing, environmental engineering, electronics, software engineering and multi-media. The WEDC will also support the delivery of bespoke training/ short courses for the business community, ICT training, community capacity building (linked to the development of the social economy) and enterprise awareness training to young people (14-19 years of age) and community groups to support the development of an 'enterprise culture' in the Springvale area.
- 6.32 The Centre will be a resource for the local community to both incubate and develop local community businesses and social enterprises. The planned WEDC could potentially act as a conduit for increased participation in training and education in the area and act as a catalyst for Economic Regeneration in the local area. There was an opportunity for SCOI participants to progress to pre-employment training opportunities at the WEDC, however, given the timing issues this has not been possible (i.e. SCOI is now finished and the WEDC has not yet been built).
- 6.33 The WEDC will offer pre-employment training in a range of industries as set out above, many of which will attract highly skilled individuals, such as graduates. However, there is also scope within some of the sectors, such as hospitality and leisure to attract low skilled individuals. This may include some past beneficiaries of SCOI projects. In the hospitality, leisure and tourism sector the vision for this component of the WEDC is to contribute to addressing many of the development issues that have prevailed within the tourism and hospitality sector in NI (as elsewhere) over the last ten years. These include the low levels of formal qualifications by those working in the industry and skill shortages. There is potential to upskill people working in this industry, such as some of the work undertaken under the Economic Regeneration strand of SCOI.
- 6.34 In terms of lessons for the future of the WEDC, there is a need to ensure good linkages between the WEDC and community-based access and participation schemes (such as the legacy of the projects funded through SCOI).
- 6.35 Community support is as critical to the success of the WEDC, just as it was critical to the success of SCOI. BIFHE will need to build on learning from SCOI to ensure that the WEDC makes a significant contribution to economic development and capacity building within the local community. BIFHE has already made significant progress in this regard through its work with the MCOC, its consultations with local communities during the development of the WEDC project, and through the community representation mechanisms that have been established for the MCOC and are proposed for the WEDC.

Effectiveness of the voluntary / community sector engagement in SCOI

- 6.36 The voluntary and community sector have essentially played a very important part in the implementation of SCOI in terms of delivering projects focusing on those most socially excluded. In particular, the sector has been successful in 'reaching out' to disengaged learners and providing learning in non-formal and less institutional environments which are less threatening to this target group.
- 6.37 At a strategic level the Partners for Change Strategy, which has been in place since 2001, provides a comprehensive account of the extent of engagement between Government and the voluntary / community sector. The most recent Strategy (2006-08) endorses the need for investment by the voluntary / community sector itself in improving the capacity of those who are socially excluded and this is essentially what the voluntary and community sector, through delivering SCOI projects, has achieved.
- 6.38 The voluntary / community sector in NI is very strong, with one of the highest ratios of

organisations per head of population in all of the UK regions. The sector has developed extensively in the last decade, to some extent through the influx of European Union funds and the emphasis placed on the importance of the sector in targeting social need. The sector has contributed to a broad range of areas across NI and has been heavily involved in the implementation of the SCOI projects. More recently, the role of the sector has been important in delivering elements of Neighbourhood Renewal, Renewing Communities, Lifetime Opportunities (the anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy).

- 6.39 The role of the voluntary and community sector was vital to the success of SCOI. Mainstream providers such as BIFHE, even through their outreach centre work, attract learners 'who want to learn'. By availing of local community groups, which local people are familiar with, SCOI has been able to use 'hooks' to attract people (of the community group services) and indirectly engage them in activities to improve their health and social welfare, and in some cases this leads on to undertaking educational courses and in a minority of cases, a formal qualification. However, in the absence of engagement with the sector, it would have been very difficult to attract people to such SCOI activities.
- 6.40 As was discussed in Section 4, the fact that projects were run in local venues greatly influenced individuals' participation in the projects (See Figure 4.5). In terms of the effectiveness of mechanisms used to engage stakeholders and social partners in the design and implementation of the programme, the majority of stakeholders indicated that more consultation would be beneficial in the design of future programmes and initiatives.
- 6.41 Finally stakeholder interviewees questioned to what extent community representatives and social partners were able to shape the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative in the early days in terms of the strands identified and roll-out etc.

Conclusions

- 6.42 The main conclusions in terms of linkages with other initiatives, including the WEDC, are as follows:
- There is a wide range of similar initiatives operating in the SCOI catchment area which focus on education, training, health and personal development;
 - Sometimes it is not clear that there have been any serious efforts to co-ordinate such projects / interventions;
 - As also stated in Section 5, the low attendance rates, at the SCOI Advisory Board meetings by some partners, has not helped to improve the co-ordination of the Initiative with other local activities;
 - Nevertheless there is evidence that SCOI, amongst the plethora of other local initiatives, has filled some of the gaps in provision in the catchment area;
 - The voluntary and community sector has played a significant role in engaging those furthest removed from the labour market in SCOI projects. In particular, the informal learning environment and innovative approaches used by the sector have been effective;
 - The WEDC has an opportunity to benefit from some of the work of SCOI by providing pre-employment training in 'lower' skilled areas which could potentially attract some of the past participants of SCOI projects; and
 - BIFHE will need to build on learning from SCOI in ensuring that the WEDC makes a significant contribution to economic development and capacity building within the local community – engagement with the voluntary and community sector will be vital to this success.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

7.1 This section of the report addresses the following terms of reference:

- Provide recommendations on how appropriate aspects of the initiative, which complement the Department's current strategic aims, **can best be continued within mainstream FE adult community education provision.**
- Consider the findings of the recent ETI inspection of SCOI and **provide recommendations on the basis of which the future of such initiatives could be guided.**

7.2 This section is structured as follows:

- Conclusions in relation to each of the terms of reference;
- Overall conclusions and lessons learned; and
- Recommendations.

Conclusions in relation to each of the terms of reference

Conclusions on the effectiveness of the baseline analysis

7.3 On the whole, the evidence suggests that the baseline analysis steered the Initiative appropriately to some extent. Proposals from the baseline which were successfully implemented and considered worthwhile included the provision of non-accredited qualifications which were thought to act as a "hook" to engage particularly hard-to-reach groups, stimulating individuals to progress into further learning with the potential for eventual employment and the mobilisation and development of local capacity, particularly removing barriers to participation through the use of local mentors and informal learning environments within the community. The evidence suggests that this was one of the Initiative's key outcomes.

7.4 In addition, the baseline analysis made a number of recommendations that were not fully put into place by SCOI. These included:

- Integrating the thematic strands;
- Ensuring that the ICT and Health Literacy elements of SCOI were cross-cutting through all strands;
- Implementing methods of monitoring and tracking the progression of learners; and
- The implementation of clear progression frameworks.

7.5 It is likely that these suggestions, had they been implemented, would have increased the efficacy of the Initiative as a whole. Furthermore, some stakeholders commented that the cohesive partnership working proposed by the baseline was not adequately achieved. There

was also some concern from stakeholders that the SCOI was duplicating work undertaken by other programmes. The potential for such duplication was outlined in the baseline analysis, which suggested that identification and consideration of such programmes should be undertaken.

- 7.6 The baseline report also outlined constraints that were thought to have hindered other previous educational initiatives and suggested that these should act as lessons learned for SCOI. In particular, learning from previous initiatives shows that involving the local community, not focusing on quantity over quality and ensuring that the initiative is demand-driven are all elements of best practice which should be considered, especially in the context of implementing SCOI.
- 7.7 The performance indicators outlined in the 2003 baseline analysis were largely too numerous, specific, detailed and not adequately strategic in nature to coherently direct successful implementation of SCOI. Furthermore, given the demographic nature of the three partnership areas and the varied composition of the thematic strands of the Initiative, it is clear that wider performance indicators are necessary in order to successfully assess the range of personal, social and educational outcomes across the Initiative.
- 7.8 Furthermore, the baseline report stated *'it is widely understood that none of the five programme areas should be looked at or funded in isolation from the others'*⁴¹. However, the evidence from the evaluation suggests that a 'silo' approach has been undertaken in implementing SCOI. In this context, it may be worth considering whether the Initiative would have been more effective having the strands as core objective areas rather than stand alone silo's under which bids were sought.
- 7.9 Finally, in terms of progress towards targets, in one year alone (2005-06), the Initiative resulted in 2,175 formal accreditations being achieved by participants. This represented 23% of all engagements in that particular year. However, there is no detail across the Initiative, over the last four years, on the number of participants achieving Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 accreditations. This is mainly due to the fact that accreditations were never the main focus of the Initiative and that it was initially not a DEL funded project. The non-accredited training has given participants the confidence to see that they could be self-employed.
- 7.10 To conclude on the baseline analysis, it is evident that the report produced by Inter-Ed was very comprehensive and gave good indications of the levels of need within the catchment area in terms of the focus of each of the SCOI strands. However, there are concerns, that, as already mentioned, some of the good suggestions made in the baseline report, were not carried through to the implementation of SCOI.

Conclusions on the effectiveness of the learning networks

- 7.11 The following points serve to highlight some of the key messages arising from the primary research as to the main impacts of the SCOI projects and the effectiveness of the learning networks:
- Many of the participants view SCOI funding as a means of developing the community and building capacity;
 - Many of the outcomes achieved by SCOI were mainly 'soft' in nature (e.g. increased confidence/self esteem) rather than 'hard' (progression in employment);

41 Inter-Ed (2003) Baseline Analysis for the Executive Programme Fund Initiative : Belfast North, West and Greater Shankill Areas (Page 10)

- The main perceived impacts of SCOI included community development; accreditation; improved employability; development of confidence and personal skills; and realisation amongst some beneficiaries of the opportunities that are available to them;
- On balance, a greater number of participants in the focus groups agreed that SCOI had improved the employability of beneficiaries as opposed to leading to employment;
- A number of factors were highlighted as having a positive impact on the engagement with targeted groups including the informal learning environment; provision of support; small class-sizes; and childcare facilities;
- Many of the project beneficiaries believed that their project had an impact on cross-community working but that this was a consequence of the geographical boundaries of SCOI rather than a deliberate attempt to engage both communities;
- There were a few issues which impacted on the achievement of objectives. Project managers mentioned a range of issues including lack of time/resources; the short term nature of SCOI; administration/bureaucracy; and high staff turnover; and
- Project managers, for the most part, reported that they were largely positive about the degree to which SCOI had effectively engaged their local community and felt that SCOI could engage individuals where other institutions might not (e.g. schools / further education etc.).

Conclusions on the evaluation of the SCOI management arrangements

7.12 The following points summarise the key findings in respect of the management arrangements and funding processes:

- A number of changes were made to the original staffing structure for SCOI which were welcomed by SCOI staff. The position of community liaison officer and capacity building strand manager were introduced to raise awareness in the local community and build capacity in voluntary and community groups to enable them to benefit from funding in one of the other programme strands. In addition, all programme strand managers moved from part-time to full-time. Overall, focus group respondents were generally positive about the revised structures;
- The stakeholder interviewees, in addition to the focus group participants, were largely positive in relation to the overall management of the Initiative (in particular, in comparison with other projects they had been involved in delivering). The individuals interviewed felt that the SCOI Manager was hands-on, visible and accessible throughout. The focus group participants were equally positive about the contribution of the programme strand managers;
- Focus group participants were positive about the application process describing it as straightforward, clear, well defined and proportionate to the amount of money received, however, some respondents felt that the amount of administration and paper work was an issue, particularly towards the end of their project;
- The vast majority of beneficiaries felt that the project they were involved in definitely or somewhat met their objectives (90% and 10% respectively). A high proportion of respondents (98%) felt that the delivery of SCOI was excellent or above average; and

- Focus group participants were generally positive about the application process although there were some concerns voiced in relation to the timing between applications being submitted and being accepted for funding, leading to an inability to plan effectively.

7.13 However, there were some areas where SCOI could have performed better:

- At the outset it took considerable time to get the application and assessment procedures up and running. However, there were opportunities to exchange best practice with other local funding bodies in respect of calls for applications, scoring processes and developing letters of offers etc. This was a missed opportunity on the part of SCOI which resulted in a delay in the Initiative getting started and consequent delays in projects receiving money from the Initiative;
- Whilst the project managers engaged with each other, they worked very much in a 'silo' approach in funding their projects and there could have been much more integration across strands. In particular, the baseline report stated that ICT and health could have been seen as cross-cutting themes and there was potential for the managers to work in a more joined-up manner;
- The SCOI Advisory Board represented, in theory, a team of multi-disciplinary stakeholders. However, attendance at the Board meetings was poor, particularly in respect of the Health Trust and Partnership Boards. Therefore the Board did not operate as effectively as it could have done. Board members should have been trained on their roles and responsibilities and those members with poor attendance records⁴² should have been replaced with alternative individuals from their representative organisations;
- In addition there was limited liaison with relevant stakeholders throughout the project. As discussed in more detail in Section 6, the SCOI project was implemented in a 'busy' arena in terms of social and educational interventions and therefore it was imperative to liaise with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity. However, interviews with such stakeholders showed that consultation with them could have been better; and
- Finally as evidenced in the FAST report, it is important that appropriate financial systems and controls are put in place from the beginning for an initiative of this nature in the future to ensure accountability of public funds.

Conclusions on the extent of linkages with other initiatives

7.14 The main conclusions in terms of linkages with other initiatives, including the WEDC, are as follows:

- There is a wide range of similar initiatives operating in the SCOI catchment area which focus on education, training, health and personal development;
- Sometimes it is not clear that there have been any serious efforts to co-ordinate such projects / interventions;
- Low attendance at the SCOI Advisory Board meetings by the partners has not helped to improve the co-ordination of the Initiative with other local activities;

⁴² For example, a Board member who failed to attend three consecutive Board meetings

- Nevertheless there is evidence that SCOI, amongst the plethora of other local initiatives, has filled some of the gaps in provision in the catchment area;
- The voluntary and community sector has played a significant role in engaging those furthest removed from the labour market in SCOI projects, in particular, the informal learning environment and innovative approaches used by the sector have been effective;
- The WEDC has an opportunity to benefit from some of the work of SCOI by providing pre-employment training in 'lower' skilled areas which could potentially attract some of the past participants of SCOI projects; and
- BIFHE will need to build on learning from SCOI in ensuring that the WEDC makes a significant contribution to economic development and capacity building within the local community – engagement with the voluntary and community sector will be vital to this success.

Overall conclusions and lessons learned

7.15 Finally, to conclude on the impact of SCOI, we have addressed three key questions in the following paragraphs:

- Are there too many initiatives in the area?
- Which strands should DEL have funded?
- What are the key lessons for the future?

Are there too many initiatives in the area?

7.16 The SCOI catchment area contains some of the most deprived wards in NI and is one of the areas of NI which has been most affected by the Troubles. These two things combined, have resulted in the area being the focus of a large number of initiatives targeting unemployment, education, training, health, cross community and reconciliation issues. As was outlined in Section 6 there are a plethora of activities and initiatives being implemented in this area which to some extent are competing for the same target group of people (e.g. unemployed, youth) or the same theme (e.g. education, health).

7.17 The deprivation indices statistics, however, show that despite of these efforts, the area still accounts for a high proportion of the most deprived wards in NI. Therefore there is a continuing need for interventions to address the health, education and employment problems. However, at all stages of the planning, implementation, delivery and management of such initiatives, there needs to be strong liaison between relevant key players to ensure that there is no duplication and that complementarity is maximised.

Which strands should DEL have funded?

7.18 SCOI was originally devised as an EPF project and funded through multi-departmental EPF money. It was always the intention for an evaluation to be carried out mid-way through implementation to measure the effectiveness of the Initiative to date. SCOI was originally developed as a cross Departmental Initiative, providing a holistic approach to tackling the problems of high unemployment, low educational achievement, poor health and capacity in North and West Belfast and the Shankill. However, when the funds from EPF were no longer available and the project was unable to secure IDF money, DEL was obliged to use the FE mainstream budget to fund the remaining three years of the Initiative. DEL took over the funding of SCOI in 2004/05 and funded it for three years until the Initiative closed in March

2007.

- 7.19 Under EPF, in the first year of SCOI, there were 1,683 engagements, whereas in the three year period where DEL took over the funding, there were 25,021 engagements (See Appendix D). This shows the extent of the work that was carried out in this period as a result of DEL funding. Uncertainty remains as to whether it was appropriate for DEL to fund the entire Initiative or whether it should have selected a few themes of the Initiative, most aligned with DEL's priorities. Only the Economic Regeneration and Learner Progression strands of SCOI are relevant to DEL's primary focus. Of the remaining strands, student transfer is more aligned to the work of DE, health literacy with DHSSPS and the ICT and capacity building strands are cross-cutting.
- 7.20 However, whilst Economic Regeneration and Learner Progression strands were most aligned with the focus of DEL, the Department was not at liberty to decide which strands it should take forward as part of its funding package to SCOI. As stated earlier in this report, from the outset of SCOI an evaluation was planned at the mid-way stage and therefore DEL were not in a position to make radical changes to the Initiative before an independent evaluation was carried out. This evaluation did not take place until the final year of implementation of the Initiative at which stage it was too late for the evaluators to advise DEL on which strands to focus on. An additional learning point from this is to ensure more timely evaluation efforts for future similar initiatives to allow findings to influence programmes during their implementation.

What are the key lessons for the future?

- 7.21 The lessons to be learned for future initiatives of this nature are as follows:
- **Liaison, liaison, liaison;** it is important to consult with key players at all stages to ensure that value for money is achieved and that the initiative does not duplicate with other activities. It can also result in the sharing of best practice;
 - **Capture baseline information and monitor 'soft' and 'hard' outcomes;** in an Initiative of this nature, it is very important to measure outputs, over and above attendance and retention rates. Mechanisms need to be in place to measure the 'hard outcomes' such as progression into employment and education. Likewise there is a need to measure the 'softer' outcomes such as enhancements in self confidence, motivation, communication skills and motivation levels. It is our understanding that DEL is currently reviewing the HARP and CPK monitoring tools which were used in Targeted Initiatives, the results of this should feed into any future initiatives attempting to move people along the employability continuum. Overarching all of this, there is a need at the outset to capture baseline information on learners and to gather ongoing monitoring information during and after completion of the project to enable evaluation of the intervention to take place at a later date; and
 - **The importance of informal learning environments for engaging with 'hard to reach' learners;** it is essential that the learning is offered in an informal environment, at a location convenient to the learners, with hands-on support and ideally using local mentors. In addition, smaller class sizes can be effective as can the provision of on-site childcare facilities to ensure those with young children are not excluded from attending.

Recommendations

- 7.22 It should be noted that the SCOI programme has now ended and the purpose of the

recommendations in this context of this evaluation is to make suggestions in terms of any similar future initiatives. As such the key recommendations from this evaluation are as follows:

- **More strategic approach to funding of projects;** the Initiative supported over 135 individual projects in the local area. Each of these was funded under a specific strand, whereas, the baseline report had suggested a more cross-cutting approach, especially in relation to Health Literacy and ICT. It is considered that perhaps a different approach to the selection of the projects may have been beneficial, whereby projects had to meet one or more of the core themes – therefore encouraging a more integrated approach;
- **Sharing of best practice in relation to administering public funds;** the SCOI staff admit that the Initiative took a while to get ‘up and running’ as there were a lot of application and approval processes to develop at the outset. For example, developing application forms, selection criteria and rounds of funding approvals. There was an opportunity for staff to liaise with other organisations with experience of distributing public funds to share best practice. For example, the Special EU Programmes Body or even some of the local organisations in Belfast such as EGSA, Proteus or Belfast LSP. It should be ensured that appropriate systems are in place throughout the life cycle of any initiatives of this nature in future;
- **Mechanisms to measure ‘distance travelled’;** the monitoring indicators in place for measuring the effectiveness of the Initiative were very quantitative in nature. They missed the opportunity to capture the qualitative outcomes and distance travelled by individuals, especially as the target group were those who were far removed from the labour market. Other local initiatives such as the IDF funded Targeted Initiatives (TIs) which used HARP and CPK⁴³ measures to assess distance travelled by participants. Under the HARP system, clients are rated between 1 and 4 (where 4 indicates significant barriers to employment and 1 is job ready) and under CPK, clients are rated either red, amber or green (where red indicates clients with significant barriers to employment and green are clients who are job ready). The role of TIs is to assist these individuals to overcome their barriers, moving from red to green or from a 4 to a 1 and essentially progress these individuals along the ‘employability continuum’. Again there was a missed opportunity in terms of ‘linking’ in with such initiatives to share best practice in measuring such qualitative outcomes;
- **Greater linkages with other existing local initiatives and programmes;** in the catchment area there are a wealth of interventions targeting those furthest removed from the labour market. These include EU funded projects implemented by Proteus and EGSA, Targeted Initiatives and LSP projects. However, there is a feeling that the SCOI staff took a ‘silo approach’ in dealing with individual projects, and did not engage sufficiently with other local interventions to ensure real added value. Furthermore there is a feeling that the Student Transfer strand duplicated some of the work already being carried out by the Communities in Schools and Extended Schools initiatives and this could have been avoided through better liaison with those organisations delivering these other initiatives;
- **Looking for gaps in existing initiatives;** the SCOI was implemented in a geographical which had a wealth of existing education and training initiatives, however, it was its task to address gaps in provision. It should be ensured that any initiatives being implemented in future, in areas where there is already a plethora of activity, should strategically address gaps in provision to ensure value for money and additionality;
- **Engagement with the voluntary and community sector in the consultation period;**

43 HARP - Holistic Assessment Reintegration and Progression and CPK – Client Progression Kit

the baseline report reiterated the importance of consulting with the sector in the design of SCOI. This is an important in scoping the programme and ensuring the support of the sector in the actual delivery of future initiatives; and

- **Maintaining records of outcomes of applications;** there is no central database or file system recording all the applications to the Initiative⁴⁴. Therefore it is not possible in this evaluation to state the percentage of applications which were unsuccessful and the reasons for unsuccessful projects. Again there could have been benefits with liaising with other public funding bodies to share best practice in this area.

⁴⁴ In addition the FAST inspection report had not the absence of a central register of advance payments to projects.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDES

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BENEFICIARY SURVEY

APPENDIX C: DETAILS ON THE SAMPLE SELECTION FOR BENEFICIARY SURVEY

APPENDIX D: SCOI TARGETS

APPENDIX E: STATISTICS

Appendix A: Interview topic guides

Table A1: Topic list for stakeholder interviews

<p>Appropriateness of the SCOI strands</p> <p>1. Views on the appropriateness of each of the strands? Views on types and range of projects funded under each of the strands?</p> <p>Learning networks / models of delivery</p> <p>2. Impact of engaging the voluntary and community sector in the delivering of the projects – as opposed to delivery solely through BIFHE?</p> <p>3. Views on SCOI as a model of delivery?</p> <p>Management and administration processes</p> <p>4. Views on SCOI re-structuring? Views on SCOI management / administration processes? Views on SCOI as a model of delivery?</p> <p>5. Could the Initiative been implemented, managed or targeted better?</p> <p>Linkages with other initiatives</p> <p>6. How effective has SCOI been in linking in with other on-going Government initiatives (e.g. Workforce Economic Development Centre, Neighbourhood Renewal, Health Action Zones, Educational Action Zones etc)?</p> <p>7. Views on the extent to which the Initiative has addressed the issues highlighted in the Taskforce report?</p> <p>8. Examine linkages between this initiative and its potential impact on the Institute's future Workforce Economic Development Centre?</p> <p>9. Views on DEL funding the Springvale Initiative as opposed to inter-departmental approach? Fit of SCOI with DEL's primary budget focus?</p> <p>Baseline analysis, monitoring targets and impacts</p> <p>10. Consider the effectiveness of Baseline Analysis targets in terms of measuring social and educational outcomes?</p> <p>11. Sustainability of projects funded to date? Recommendations on how appropriate aspects of SCOI can best be continued within mainstream FE adult community education provision? What are the implications of SCOI's cessation in the context of the prevailing learning cultures to be found in the communities that comprise north and west Belfast?</p> <p>12. Main impacts to date in terms of <i>'improving educational standards and promoting social, cultural and economic regeneration of North and West Belfast'</i>?</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <p>13. Overall what has worked well?</p> <p>14. Overall what has not worked so well?</p> <p>15. Any recommendations for the future of the Initiative?</p>
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Table A2: Topic list for focus groups

Background

1. Please describe the project you are responsible for delivering under the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative?
2. What were your reasons for applying for funding under the initiative?

Management Process

3. What did you think about the application process? [Prompt: Length of application form, timing between application, being accepted for funding, drawing down of funds etc.]
4. How does this project compare [Prompt: management process, input from SCOI staff, focus, impacts] to other projects you may have been involved in?
5. How much help or assistance did you get from the programme managers (give the name of the programme manager) in developing your ideas and delivering you project?

Targeting Social Need

6. How successfully have your projects been at engaging with those most in need and/or socially excluded? How do you ensure that your project engages with such individuals?
7. How successful have your projects been with those individuals who are most removed from the labour market (e.g. long-term unemployed)?
8. How do you ensure that your project engages with such individuals?

Impacts

9. What have been the main benefits of your project? [Prompts: educational, self-confidence, quality of life]
10. What have been the main educational outcomes from the project, if any? [Prompt: achievement of recognised qualification, move into employment or move in further education or training]
11. To what extent have your projects moved people closer to the labour market?
12. Is there any follow-up with individuals on completion of courses to see how they have progressed in terms of employment / training or education?
13. Has your project had any cross community impacts? How have these been achieved? [e.g. use of neutral venue for training sessions]
14. What aspects of your project did not work well? How could the project have been more successful?
15. What, if any, have been the main barriers to the projects success?

Value added

16. Springvale projects are delivered, mainly by, voluntary and community groups. What have been the benefits through local delivery as opposed to FE college delivery?
17. In the absence of the Springvale funded project for which you responsible, do you think participants would have accessed other capacity building courses / projects [e.g. courses ran by BIFHE, BELB, Local Council, Local Strategy Partnership]?

Linkages with other initiatives and future of project

18. Through your project have you collaborated with other initiatives or projects in your area to meet the needs of your participants? Which initiative? [*prompt Neighbourhood Renewal, Renewing Communities, local council initiatives*]. How successful has this been?
19. The funding for SCOI will run out in March 2007. What will happen to the project post March 2007 [*Prompts: access funds under other initiatives such as Renewing Communities, one-off activity, met need, mainstreamed*]. Could any of your projects be mainstreamed by the Department for Employment and Learning? Why do you say that?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for beneficiary survey

Questionnaire for survey of beneficiaries

Name of project	< >
Venue	< >
Project code	< >

Table to be completed in advance by consultant

1. When did you participate in the above project? *(Please tick all year(s) that apply)*

2003	
2004	
2005	
2006	
2007	

2. How long did the project last? *e.g. 1 night every week for 10 weeks / 1 day course*

3. What was your **employment status** immediately **prior** to being involved in the above project? *(Please tick one box only)*

Full time work	
Part time work	
Self employment	
Education or training	
Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefit	
Out of work but not claiming unemployment related benefit	
Looking after the home or family full-time	
Voluntary work (full-time or part-time)	
Doing something else <i>(please write below)</i>	

4. Did you have any of the following qualifications **before** you began the above project? *(Please tick one box only)*

No educational qualifications		
1-4 GCSEs (grades A-G), 1-4 'O' level passes, NVQ level 1, GNVQ Found.	Level 1 ⁴⁵	
5+ GCSEs (grades A-C), 5+ 'O' level passes, NVQ level 2, 1 'A' level	Level 2 ⁴⁶	
2+ 'A' levels, 4+ AS levels, NVQ level 3, GNVQ Advanced or equivalents.	Level 3	
First degree, NVQ level 4, HNC, HND or equivalents.	Level 4	
Higher degree, NVQ level 5 or equivalents.	Level 5	
Other, please explain below		

⁴⁵ Also includes: CSE (grades 2-5), 1-4 CSEs (grade 1),

⁴⁶ Also includes: 5+ CSEs (grade 1), Senior Certificate, 1-3 AS levels, Advanced Senior Certificate, GNVQ Intermediate or equivalents.

5. What did you hope to achieve from participating in the above project?

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6. Did the project meet your expectations? (please tick one box only)

Yes, definitely	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you answered 'No not really' or 'No not at all' then please explain below why the project did not meet your expectations?
Yes, somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No, not really	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No, not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	

--

7. (a) How has your participation in the project helped you to **find employment**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

(b) How has your participation in the project helped you to **gain better employment**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

(c) How has your participation in the project helped you to **improve health awareness**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

(d) How has your participation in the project helped you to **improve your number work**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

(e) How has your participation in the project helped you to **improve your reading and writing skills**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

(f) How has your participation in the project helped you to **improve your computer skills**?

To a great extent To some extent Not really Not at all Don't know or N/A

8. Has the project resulted in you obtaining a qualification?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, what qualification did you obtain?
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

9. How would you rate the delivery of the project?

Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Was your participation in the project influenced by the fact that it was available at a local based venue? (please tick one box)

Definitely	Possibly	Maybe	Not sure	Definitely not
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Would you now feel more prepared to attend another course run by the same or other provider?
(please tick one box)

Definitely	Possibly	Maybe	Not sure	Definitely not

12. Have you participated in any other similar projects? (Please tick one box only)

Yes	No	If yes, what is the name of the other project(s)? How did this project differ from the current project?

13. What have been the **three main benefits** to you from your involvement in this project?

1.
2.
3.

14. What is your **current employment status**? (please tick one box only)

Full time work	
Part time work	
Self employment	
Education or training	
Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefit	
Out of work but not claiming unemployment related benefit	
Looking after the home or family full-time	
Voluntary work (full-time or part-time)	
Doing something else (please write in below)	

15. To what extent would you agree that your participation in this project contributed to your employment outcome as described in Question 14 above? (please tick one box only)

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree or disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

16. What would you have done in the absence of this project?

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This research has been conducted within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and all information will be treated with anonymity

Thank you for your co-operation

Appendix C: Details on the sample selection for beneficiary survey

Table C1: Total number of projects funded

Strand	One-off projects		Roll-over projects		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic Regeneration	17	23%	14	23%	31	23%
Health Literacy	16	22%	10	16%	26	19%
ICT	6	8%	8	13%	14	11%
Learner Progression	21	28%	17	28%	38	28%
Student Transfer	14	19%	12	20%	26	19%
Total	74	100%	61*	100%	135	100%

* A breakdown of the number of years these projects were rolled-over for is presented in Table A2.

Table C2: Breakdown of number of roll-over projects funded per strand

Strand	Projects funded for:-			Total no. of LoOs issued
	2 years only	3 years only	4 years only	
Economic Regeneration	7	5	2	37
Health Literacy	2	5	3	31
ICT	3	1	4	25
Learner Progression	8	6	3	46
Student Transfer	6	3	3	33
Total (61 roll-over)	26	20	15	-
Total no. of LoOs	52	60	60	172

Table C3: Breakdown of individual responses to the survey

Theme	One-off projects		Roll-over projects		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic Regeneration	0	0%	27	35%	27	31%
Health Literacy	0	0%	10	13%	10	12%
ICT	0	0%	11	14%	11	13%
Learner Progression	8	100%	12	15%	20	23%
Student Transfer	0	0%	18	23%	18	21%
Total	8	100%	78	100%	86	100%

Table C4: Breakdown of projects captured by the survey

Theme	One-off projects		Roll-over projects		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic Regeneration	0	0%	6	35%	6	32%
Health Literacy	0	0%	2	12%	2	11%
ICT	0	0%	2	12%	2	10%
Learner Progression	2	100%	3	18%	5	26%
Student Transfer	0	0%	4	23%	4	21%
Total	2	100%	17	100%	19	100%

Table C5: Comparison between projects captured in the survey and total population of projects

Theme	Survey		Total population		% of projects surveyed
	No.	%	No.	%	
Economic Regeneration	6	32%	31	23%	19%
Health Literacy	2	10%	26	19%	8%
ICT	2	11%	14	11%	14%
Learner Progression	5	26%	38	28%	13%
Student Transfer	4	21%	26	19%	15%
Total	19*	100%	135	100%	-

**This represents 14% of the 135 projects in the total population*

Appendix D: SCOI targets

Table D1: List of 60 SCOI targets in the baseline report

<See separate PDF file with the targets taken from the Baseline Analysis Report>

Table D2: No. of engagements across each SCOI project / strand

Project Code	Title	Number of participants				
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of engagements
ER 1	Entrepreneurship					0
ER 3	Action Research for Skills / Community	18	18	14	14	64
ER 7	Employers Forum					0
ER 8	An Club Eachta Community Business					0
ER 11	Self Employment Awareness & Mentoring	15	198			213
ER 12	North Belfast Start a Family Business					0
ER 13	Entrepreneurship Education NI					0
ER 15	Feasibility Study/Ballymurphy Women's					0
ER 16	West Belfast infrastructure Development					0
ER 17	Top House IT project					0
ER 20	Promoting political tourism / Coiste					0
ER 23	Bus 2 Bus					0
ER 25	Arts			11		11
ER 26	Women's economic empowerment			24	32	56
ER 27	Faite / Developing tourism (West Belfast)			166	150	316
ER 28	BB Clinic / Hospitality and tourism clinic			167	160	327
ER 29	Conway					0
ER 30	Ard XP					0
ER 33	Employment Intervention (North City)					0
ER 34	Employability and Training Needs - ex-					0
ER 35	Bone Business Enterprise			25	28	53
ER 42	One stop shop pilot training programme for			30	12	42
ER 43	Language awareness training project					0
ER 44	The innovation and enterprise centre			40	40	80
ER 45	Pre New deal for self employment			10		10
ER 47	Tar anall training and education programme			200	178	378
ER 48	Leading to success - Strategy Management			360		360
ER 50	Active Mobile Production systems			121	150	271
ER 51	Small and Medium Enterprise Clinic (now			1	70	71
ER 52	St Gabriel's				13	13
ER 53	Belfast Girl's Model				20	20
ER *	Entrepreneurship programmes in schools	70	131			201
ER *	Entrepreneurship programmes for adults	18	132			150
Economic Regeneration Total No. Engaged		121	479	1,169	867	2,636

Table D2: No. of engagements across each SCOI project / strand (cont'd)

Project Code	Title	Number of participants				
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of engagements
HL 1	Money Management					0
HL 3	Healthy Living programme			205	271	476
HL 4	Adult mentoring turning point / AM training			12	6	18
HL 5	One stop health shops (Eammon Quinn) /			1,624	337	1,961
HL 7	Vital nutrition					0
HL 8	Paddling my own canoe					0
HL 9	Shape up for life					0
HL 10	Yoga for youth					0
HL 12	Health and Wellbeing			291		291
HL 14	Young mens health and literacy project					0
HL 15	HELP programme (Upper Andersonstown)					0
HL 17	PIPS / Public Intervention for the Prevention					0
HL 18	Young people's needs assessment					0
HL 19	Youth action: learning through counselling					0
HL 21	PIPS / Public Intervention for the Prevention					0
HL 22	Yoga / Yoga for life			104	20	124
HL 23	Community through partnership			900	1,498	2,398
HL 24	LOCA Health Action Programme					0
HL 25	Big Work Out					0
HL 26	Ligoneil Family Centre Social Skills / Stew			32	25	57
HL 28	NVQ counselling			22	20	42
HL 30	From substance to stability					0
HL 36	Breakfast clubs in schools			2,231	180	2,411
HL 38	Health, mind and body / Healthy body and			30	30	60
HL 41	Peer education			86		86
HL 42	Sexual health in young men			63		63
HL *	Health Awareness	299				299
HL *	Peer mentors in schools	45				45
HL *	Adult peer mentors	23	33			56
HL *	Health awareness clinics for adults	387				387
HL *	Health awareness champs, advocs, delivery		145			145
HL *	HL awareness for individs, schools,		2,046			2,046
Health Literacy Total no. Engaged		754	2,224	5,600	2,387	10,965

Table D2: No. of engagements across each SCOI project / strand (cont'd)

Project Code		Title	Number of participants				
			2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of engagements
IT	1	IC3 / Internet & Computing Core					0
IT	2	Microsoft IT academy			144	90	234
IT	3	Learning resource library			871	1,247	2,118
IT	5	Community IT Helpdesk			80	42	122
IT	7	U Need IT			159	185	344
IT	9	E Personal Skills					0
IT	11	E Personal Skills					0
IT	12	Family Learning Homes			52	50	102
IT	13	Parents and Families					0
IT	15	Computer Maintenance Skills				15	15
IT	16	Computerwise / Shankill Library			79		79
IT	17	IT for all					0
IT	18	IT access programme			18		18
IT	22	Bytes Online			36	50	86
IT	*	Learners in IT taster programmes	32	171			203
IT	*	Accredited IT family learners	122	5			127
IT	*	1/1 ICT drop-in facility support	37	526			563
IT	*	SME/ community support		115			115
IT Total No. Engaged			191	817	1,439	1,679	4,126

Table D2: No. of engagements across each SCOI project / strand (cont'd)

Project Code	Title	Number of participants				
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of engagements
LP 1	Local Learning Advisors			15	0	15
LP 2	Opportunity development plan					0
LP 3	Entrepreneurship Community					0
LP 4	Return to study for marginalised adults					0
LP 5	Accreditation framework					0
LP 6	Family Learning Matters			243	110	353
LP 7	History begins at home					0
LP 8	Independent Travel					0
LP 9	Shankill women's centre education and			106	79	185
LP 10	Career Progression					0
LP 13	Learning @ your library			65		65
LP 15	Learning for ourselves					0
LP 18	Employment Options through sport / leisure					0
LP 19	Parents as co-educators					0
LP 20	LEAD					0
LP 21	Key Skills III					0
LP 22	Women's training project			138	63	201
LP 24	Language , Communication and learning					0
LP 26	Career Progression in childcare					0
LP 27	Tar anall training and education programme					0
LP 28	Action research: acquired disability					0
LP 30	The first step drop-in centre					0
LP 31	Cloona Oasis men's support group / Cloona			39		39
LP 37	Feile / Feile FM			48	95	143
LP 39	Tar anall training and education programme					0
LP 46	Into Learning					0
LP 47	Bytes and Bifhe					0
LP 50	Ethnic Minority					0
LP 53	LIFE (Ligoneil)			60	48	108
LP 54	North Belfast learning together / LNBCC /			136	272	408
LP 56	Wheatfield Moving On Project			440	97	537
LP 58	Pathways to progression			9		9
LP 60	Reading and spelling: a new approach			19	22	41
LP 64	Mount Vernon family learning programme			18		18
LP 67	FEAST			15	10	25
LP 68	Step up 2 learn			49	51	100
LP 76	Reach for the stars			38	32	70
LP *	Adult Pilot Programmes	65	617			682
LP *	Individual learner guidance	289	698			987
LP *	Adult progress to accredited programmes	52	510			562
LP *	IDPs for 23 above		611			611
LP *	Literacy, numeracy skills programmes		199			199
LP 74	Inclusion, Support Employment Family			45		45
Learner Progression Total no. Engaged		406	2,635	1,483	879	5,403

Table D2: No. of engagements across each SCOI project / strand (cont'd)

Project Code	Title	Number of participants				
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total no. of engagements
ST 1	Accessing FE for students with severe or					0
ST 2	Entrepreneurship / Globe entrepreneurship			56	143	199
ST 3	School Links Vocational training	151	226	821	414	1,612
ST 6	Hospitality choices					0
ST 7	Ready Steady Cook					0
ST 8	Improving results					0
ST 13	Work Wise					0
ST 14	Switch Training					0
ST 16	XL Princes trust					0
ST 17	Improving student retention					0
ST 18	Easter revision school			169	165	334
ST 19	Prime Project					0
ST 20	Reaching Out					0
ST 21	Neighbourhood Learning					0
ST 25	CBS Revision School					0
ST 27	CBS 1					0
ST 28	Vine Centre			168	184	352
ST 29	Pathways			36	36	72
ST 31	Lowood Primary			100	143	243
ST 32	Autistic spectrum research					0
ST 33	Concorde natural highs disco project					0
ST 38	Youth education and training programme			39	60	99
ST 40	Easter revision school				37	37
ST 41	Alternative Education programme			30	30	60
ST 43	Belfast Computer Clubhouse			123	118	241
ST 45	Youth development Tar Anall			60		60
ST *	Family Network Programme	60	205			265
Student Transfer Total No. Engaged		211	431	1,602	1,330	3,574

Appendix E: Socio economic statistics

Table E1: Changes in ranks of deprivation for SCOI wards between 2003 and 2007

Statistic	DEPRIVATION INDICES								
	Education index (Rank Order)			Health Index (Rank Order)			Employment Index (Rank Order)		
Date of data	2003	2007	Difference	2003	2007	Difference	2003	2007	Difference
West Belfast Wards									
Andersonstown	217	218	1	92	71	-21	160	45	-115
Beechmount	50	88	38	31	19	-12	42	46	4
Clonard	46	24	-22	40	18	-22	28	18	-10
Falls	8	5	-3	5	2	-3	11	4	-7
Falls Park	181	303	122	47	39	-8	117	56	-61
Glen Road	130	122	-8	50	23	-27	82	24	-58
Glencolin	89	13	-76	38	22	-16	78	30	-48
Ladybrook	233	197	-36	119	35	-84	158	76	-82
Upper Springfield	16	11	-5	9	14	5	34	9	-25
Whiterock	5	4	-1	2	4	2	13	1	-12
Greater Shankill Wards									
Crumlin	2	2	0	1	3	2	2	2	0
Glencairn	29	13	-16	22	22	0	36	30	-6
Highfield	40	32	-8	39	54	15	67	81	14
Shankill	1	1	0	7	1	-6	3	3	0
Woodvale	6	3	-3	10	10	0	5	23	18
North Belfast Wards									
Ardoyne	25	7	-18	8	12	4	39	16	-23
Ballysillan	68	60	-8	46	38	-8	121	110	-11
Bellevue	222	254	32	124	75	-49	217	207	-10
Castleview	200	199	-1	163	145	-18	224	163	-61
Cavehill	550	557	7	394	254	-140	461	511	50
Chichester Pk	400	453	53	89	26	-63	147	136	-11
Cliftonville	265	138	-127	35	37	2	164	113	-51
Duncairn	14	12	-2	16	7	-9	16	13	-3
Fortwilliam	443	306	-137	117	46	-71	256	292	36
Legoneil	57	55	-2	59	33	-26	106	52	-54
New Lodge	23	10	-13	3	5	2	19	8	-11
Water Works	43	76	33	21	6	-15	18	21	3
Conclusions	9 wards improved (or stayed the same) in terms of Education Rank Order 18 wards deteriorated in rank			9 wards improved (or stayed the same) in terms of health Rank Order 18 wards deteriorated in rank			8 wards improved (or stayed the same) in terms of Education Rank Order 19 wards deteriorated in rank		

2003 data based on 566 wards whereas 2007 data is based on 582 wards

people:skills:jobs:



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