

West Cork Schools Integration Project Details

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About the Schools Initiative

Background Information

The Schools Integration Project (SIP) was a major initiative of Schools IT 2000. Its intention was to foster whole school development in relation to information and communication technology (ICT) integration. In order to achieve this, pilot projects were established to determine models of best practice for the use of ICT's across the Irish education system.

Extra resources were allocated to these projects, and, given the need for the wider implementation of SIP's findings, preference was given to projects which could easily be replicated and modified for national dissemination. SIP 43 was one of the successful projects and represents the collective talents of the members of West Cork Information Technology Network, whose sought to exploit advanced technologies, in particular video conferencing, as teaching and learning tools, and, tested their application to practical working environments.

Project Goals and Objectives

Goals:

- To test emerging ICT's in a practical work environment.
- To advance co-operation and collaboration
- To formulate a model for collaboration among members of a schools network.

Objectives:

- To research the value of broadband technology in primary education.
- To promote good practice in pedagogical and technical terms for children and for teachers.
- To share expertise
- To share experiences
- To develop a bank of knowledge.
- To cultivate links at local, national and international level.
- To promote links between schools, communities and industry.
- To provide in-service training.
- To establish a project web site.

SIP 43

SIP 43 involves a broad range of organizations and partners. These come from the world of commerce and industry, third level institutions and community groups. The benefits of such partnerships are many and include:

- Increase in pupil's awareness of industry and commerce.
- Co-operation between the different education strata.
- School development by involvement in clearly focused, directed projects.
- Increased awareness of developments of ICTs in education.
- An elevation in profile of the sponsoring companies both locally and nationally and methods of teaching.
- An opportunity to test new technologies and methods of teaching.
- An opportunity for participants to develop projects appropriate to their own needs.
- A grass roots response to educational change.
- An opportunity to develop models of innovative practice.

Role of Co-ordination

Central to the success of this project has been project co-coordinator Donie Keane. Donie was seconded from his post as vice-principal of Newcestown N.S. to act as joint co-coordinator of SIP 43 and SIP 28.

His duties included:

- Securing funding
- Putting management structures in place
- Sourcing and purchasing equipment
- Liaising with Eircom to install I.S.D.N. lines to participating schools.
- Organizing training for teachers in participant schools
- Testing technology
- Timetabling activities for virtual links
- Identifying curricular areas suitable for video-conferencing
- Managing interactions at school level
- Managing project budget
- Dissemination of information to wider communities
- Developing a suitable model of good practice in

Official Launch

The official launch of SIP 43 was held in Baltimore Hotel on November 12th with the Minister Michéal Martin as guest of honor.

Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Michael J. Collins, principal of Rath N.S., Baltimore and the list of speakers included:

Minister for Education and Science	Michéal Martin
Minister for Agriculture and Food	Joe Walsh
Cormac O' Sullivan	Eircom
Michael Crowley	West Cork I.T.N.
Paul Stevens	S.P.E.A.K.
Fionbarra O' Tuama	Department of Education and Science
Professor Kieran Byrne	University of Limerick
Marie Martin	International Officer of the Western Educational and Library Board, Northern Ireland.

This was a unique occasion and included a videoconference link up with some northern colleagues who were virtual participants. This launch included an exciting virtual demonstration of the advantages of technology by the senior classes of Rath N.S. who performed for the audience from their adjacent classroom.

West Cork I.T.N.

West Cork I.T.N. is a cluster of schools which co-operate on a range of issues and endeavor to manage, change and elicit a grassroots response to current educational developments. The member schools are from a broad range of backgrounds- urban, rural and island. These schools represent the whole educational spectrum and included are single-sex, co-educational and gaelscoileanna.

The major areas of interest are as follows:

- Technology
- Literacy
- Comenius exchanges
- In-service courses
- SIP projects (member schools are involved in three pilot projects)
- European awareness
- North/South links
- Special needs
- Literacy projects (with Cork County library)
- Video Conferencing
- Teacher support-group development
- School collaboration
- Developing links with a wider community

This network of schools has contributed hugely to the sense of partnership that exists in West Cork and has been the forefront of the move to integrate technology into the primary classroom as a resource to enhance the educational experiences of the child.

Current officers are:

Name	Position	School
Michael Crowley	Chairperson	Coppeen N.S.
Michael J. Collins	Vice-Chairperson	Baltimore N.S.
Liz Dix	Secretary	Bantry B.N.S.
Maura Venn	Treasurer	Bantry Convent

Steering Committee

Name	Position
Michael Crowley	Project Leader
Dónal Keane	Project co-coordinator
Cormac O' Sullivan	Eircom
Seamus Knox	National Centre for Technology in Education
Hilda Hegarty	Skibbereen Convent
Fionnbarra Ó' Tuama	Department of Education and Science
Paul Stevens	Castletownbere N.S.
Dr. Colin McCormack	University College Cork

The steering committee which represented all the partners involved meet monthly and co-ordinate all the activities of SIP 43. These activities included sourcing and purchasing equipment, organizing training and supports, as well as deciding on the curricular areas to be examined.

Nature of commitment of partners

Eircom

- Donation of Hardware
- Free connectivity
- Advisory role as member of Steering Committee
- Dissemination of information
- P.R.

N.C.T.E.

- Responsible for current expenditure
- Project administration at Department level
- Training
- Dissemination and communication
- Advisory role as member of Steering Committee

West Cork I.T.N.

- Project implementation
- Co-ordination of activities
- Education

Department of Education and Science

Ensure that the activities undertaken are relevant to the revised Curriculum for Primary Schools.

Sponsors

The following have contributed to the project in varying degrees and the contributions of all have been appreciated by the project committee.

- Eircom
- N.C.T.E.
- County Library
- West Cork Leader Co-operative
- P.M.P.A.
- Alcatel
- Udarás na Gaeltachta
- Department of Education and Science

School Involved (Contact Details)

School	Address	Phone	Principal	Email	Staff
Coppeen N.S.	Enniskeane	023-47089	Mr. Gerard O' Mahony	coppeenns@eircom.net	2
Cappabue N.S.	Kealkill	027-66256	Mrs. Norma Healy	cappabue.ias@eircom.net	2
Castletownbere N.S.	Castletownbere	027-70325	Mr. Paul Stevens	paul@stevens.net	10
Schull N.S.	Schull	028-28400	Mr. Pat Gallagher	schullns.ias@eircom.net	7
St. James N.S.	Durrus	027-61330	Ms. Olwyn Anderson	stjamesdurrus.ias@eircom.net	2
Kilcrohane N.S.	Bantry	027-67285	Mrs. Mary O Sullivan	kilns.ias@eircom.net	2
Newcestown N.S.	Bandon	021-7338158	Mr. Con O Donovan	newcestownns@eircom.net	7
Glengariff N.S.	Bantry	027-63483	Mrs. Mgt. O Sullivan	fiachna@iol.ie	3
Gaelscoil Bheantraí	Beantraí	027-51966	An tUasal Sean O Briain	gsbeannt@iol.ie	7
St. Marys Senior Girls	Dunmanway	023-45108	Mrs. Jo. McSweeney	smgssd@iol.ie	6
Leap N.S.	Skibbereen	028-33574	Mrs. Frances Harrington	leapns.ias@eircom.net	4
S.N. Oilean Chleire	An Sciobairín	028-39171	Cecilia Bn. Uí Drisceoil	snchleire.ias@eircom.net	2
Rathmore N.S., Baltimore	Skibbereen	028-20135	Mr. Ml. Collins	rathns.ias@eircom.net	4
Togher N.S.	Dunmanway	023-55322	Mrs. Mary Keane	crannog@iol.ie	3
Kealkil N.S.	Bantry	027-66298	Mrs. Majella O Flynn	kealkil@iol.ie	3
Our Lady of Mercy N.S.	Bantry	027-50590	Sr. Claire	olomns.ias@eircom.net	13
St. Joseph Primary School	Skibbereen	028-21804	Mrs. Eileen Kehily	stjosskibb.ias@eircom.net	8