

Beyond Caring

Interim Evaluation Report

December 2005



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Beyond Caring Development Partnership brings together organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in counties Fermanagh and Tyrone with the aim of managing a training and employability programme funded under Equal. The Equal programme is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to test new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job, with a view to developing new ideas to change policy and practice in employment and training. The Beyond Caring project aims to develop new and innovative training and employability programmes and policies for people with disabilities and for carers.

1.1.2 The partners in the Beyond Caring project include:

- ◆ Fermanagh College (lead partner)
- ◆ Community Activity Partnership
- ◆ East Tyrone College
- ◆ Fermanagh Training
- ◆ GG Training
- ◆ Mencap
- ◆ Omagh Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Omagh College
- ◆ Protocol Skills
- ◆ Sperrin Lakeland Trust
- ◆ Strategic Management Support

- ◆ The Quinn Group

1.1.3 The Beyond Caring Project is an initiative to test ways of overcoming barriers to learning and employment for those persons with a disability or caring responsibilities. A Development Partnership has been established to progress this initiative, which consists of key players in the field of training and support for the target group in the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh. The aims of the Development Partnership are to:

- ◆ Establish a steering group with key individuals and organisations with relevant experience and expertise in working with the target group to guide the direction of the project;
- ◆ Examine ways whereby organisations can work together to maximise support for the target group;
- ◆ Research and pilot training methodologies and content, particularly using I.C.T., that will inspire the target group to access learning programmes that enhance their employability skills;
- ◆ Development diagnostic tools that allow beneficiaries to map a route through learning into employment;
- ◆ Research, test and develop practical changes in work structures that can contribute to sustainability of employment for the target group.

1.1.4 In order to achieve these goals, the Development Partnership will:

- ◆ Recruit 400 beneficiaries to undertake piloting;
- ◆ Pilot models of essential skills enhancement and I.C.T. with 300 beneficiaries;
- ◆ Pilot route planning tools with 250 beneficiaries;
- ◆ Support 200 beneficiaries to undertake vocational training;
- ◆ Provide 100 beneficiaries with access to work placements and work based training.

1.1.5 The Development Partnership is a member of a transnational partnership, Chances, which includes partners from Hungary, Slovakia and Italy. The transnational partners also work within a local development partnership framework and aim to empower disadvantaged groups to re-integrate into their communities both socially and economically.

1.2 The Evaluation

1.2.1 Fermanagh College, as the lead partner of the Beyond Caring Development Partnership, has appointed Williamson Consulting to undertake an external evaluation of the activities of the Beyond Caring Development Partnership and the Chances Transnational Partnership. The evaluation brief includes:

- ◆ Oral and written reports on the progress of both the domestic and transnational elements of the project at regular intervals;
- ◆ Submitting interim and final reports on the project, both domestic and transnational elements, covering:
 - The extent the project has obtained its aims and objectives;
 - How the project has achieved its aims and objectives;
 - The transferability of results;
 - Good practice and issues to be addressed within the project;
 - Recommendations for the future development of the project.

1.2.2 This report outlines the findings of the evaluation of Action 1 and focuses on:

- ◆ the need for the project and fit with the relevant policy context
- ◆ the effectiveness of the Partnership
- ◆ the appropriateness of the project
 - Agreements and Plans
 - Activities, inputs and anticipated outcomes

- fit with EQUAL requirements
- ◆ Conclusions and recommendations

1.2.3 The evaluation of Action 1 involved:

- ◆ Initial meeting with the Development Partnership to discuss the project and the evaluation of Action 1 in more detail, including processes, rationale, involvement in EQUAL structures
- ◆ Detailed consideration of the Development Partnership Agreement (incorporating the Transnational Cooperation Agreement) and Action Plans to assess the extent to which key actions, outputs, outcomes, milestones, delivery agents and costs have been outlined and clarified and the extent to which it meets EQUAL requirements and the needs of the wider labour market.
- ◆ Consultation with each of the partners individually to discuss their involvement
- ◆ Consideration of resource inputs

2 The Policy Context

2.1 The Equal Programme

2.1.1 The EQUAL Programme is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to test new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job, with a view that new ideas could change future policy and practice in employment and training.

2.1.2 EQUAL operates by bringing together the key players in a geographic area or sector into Development Partnerships (D.P.) to pool their expertise and experience. Development Partnerships must establish links with at least one partnership from another European member state. The EQUAL Programme has 5 key themes, within which there are 9 subsets. The themes include Employment, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and, Asylum Seekers.

2.1.3 The N.I. EQUAL Community Initiative Programme is positioned within the wider labour market policy context of N.I. and aims to ensure that:

- ◆ Employment opportunities are spread more equally
- ◆ Concentrations of unemployment among certain groups in society are reduced
- ◆ Long term unemployment and inactivity are removed
- ◆ Welfare dependency is reduced

2.1.4 The EQUAL programme in N.I. is structured as follows:

Managing Authority European Unit within D.E.L.	Overall responsibility for the implementation & delivery of EQUAL in N.I.
	Responsibility for payment and monitoring finance
National Support Structure Proteus N.I.	Assist with the provision of some of the more specialist D.P. Support roles.
	Monitor D.P. activity
	Assist with transnational co-operation
	Offer ongoing advice and guidance to Development Partnerships.
	Training (e.g. in monitoring/evaluation and partnership working)
	Websites, newsletter, conferences, workshops, seminars
National Thematic Network Representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors & each D.P.	Adopting a strategic focus ensuring that EQUAL continues to focus on priority areas
	Identifying, selecting and analysing good practice
	Recommending projects for approval by N.I. EQUAL Monitoring Committee in the 2nd round of EQUAL
	Developing and agreeing a dissemination strategy
North/South Steering Group Managing Authorities in N.I. and R.o.I., National Support Structures in N.I. and R.o.I., the Equality Commission (N.I.) and the Equality Authority (R.o.I.).	Established to facilitate and promote cross border co-operation
Joint Support Structure Managing Authorities and National Support Structures representing N.I., R.o.I., England, Scotland and Wales	Assist the co-ordination and standardisation of processes and procedures for EQUAL

2.1.5 The N.I. EQUAL Programme has adopted two of the 9 subsets within the 5 key themes as being appropriate to the needs of the N.I. labour market. These are:

Theme	Subset
Employability	Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market, which must be open to all
Equal Opportunities for men and women	Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation

2.1.6 There are two funding rounds within the EQUAL programme. Round 1 commenced in November 2001 and will end in November 2005. Round 2 commenced in October 2004 and will end in December 2007. In N.I. 13 organisations received funding under the second round of EQUAL.

2.1.7 Each project receives funding to complete three Actions:

Action 1:	Setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation
Action 2:	Implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships
Action 3:	Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy (mainstreaming)

2.1.8 The EQUAL programme incorporates six key principles

Partnership	bringing together key players into development partnerships and ensuring links with other member states
Innovation	testing and promoting new ways of combating discrimination and inequality faced by those groups most disadvantaged in the labour market
Equal Opport.	cross cutting feature of the programme
Transnational Co-operation	the transnational dimension ensures that lessons are learned across member states and examples of good practice are exchanged
Mainstreaming	EQUAL has been designed so that its actions inform policy developments and ensure that policy makers learn lessons from its activities.
Empowerment	those who are targeted for support also have an opportunity to influence the design and the evaluation of the proposed activities.

2.2 Public Policy

2.2.1 In N.I. there are approximately 200,000 people with disabilities (based on the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability).

- ◆ 35% of people with disabilities are in work compared with 77% of non disabled people
- ◆ 62% of disabled people are economically inactive (16 years+ and not in employment and are not unemployed) compared with 20% non disabled people who are economically inactive.

- ◆ Of the 62% who are economically inactive, 36% want to work. This means that approximately 45,000 people with disabilities, who are currently economically inactive, want to work.

2.2.2 In N.I. legislation under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has given people with disabilities rights in a number of areas, including employment and access to goods, facilities and services. Under the Act it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against people with disabilities in the field of employment for a reason relating to their disability.

2.2.3 Section 75 of the N.I. Act 1998 indicates that a statutory requirement is that Government departments and programmes pay due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between various groups of people and specifically includes “persons with a disability and persons without”.

2.2.4 In 2003 the Government introduced the Welfare Reform and Modernisation Programme in recognition of the need for a radical reform and modernisation of the current welfare system. The fundamental aim of the Programme is to achieve the Government’s Vision of “work for those who can and security for those who cannot”. The key themes of the Government’s reform agenda include “Welfare to Work - promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age who are able to work”. Welfare Reform is a major step towards increasing economic activity, reducing the number of workless households, and encouraging more people to take up work. In practical terms the introduction of Welfare Reform has included:

- ◆ **The introduction of New Tax Credits** - Tax Credits have replaced Working Family Tax Credit and Disabled Person Tax Credit and the administration of Tax Credits has been transferred to the Inland Revenue.
- ◆ **Jobs and Benefits** - the introduction of combined Jobs and Benefits offices, delivered jointly by D.E.L. and S.S.A., across N.I. aims to help people who can work to do so and to ensure that those who cannot can obtain the security to which they are entitled, thus promoting social inclusion. During 2005 further “Pathways” pilot

schemes have been introduced in parts of N.I. (with a view to rolling out across N.I.). They aim to help people on Incapacity Benefit move into work through a series of Work Focused Interviews which focus on “capacity to work” rather than “incapacity”.

2.2.5 In N.I. mainstream support to help people with disabilities move into work is provided through the Disablement Advisory Service within D.E.L. The Disablement Advisory Service (D.A.S.) provides advice, guidance, training and a placing service for people with disabilities and health issues. It is accessed through a team of Disablement Employment Advisors based in Job Centres throughout N.I. (now mostly Jobs and Benefits Offices, since the introduction of Welfare Reform and Modernisation - see below). In addition, D.A.S. offers a range of practical and financial support to employers to help them in recruiting and retaining disabled employees, as well as a professional employment assessment service. Services and programmes offered through the Disablement Advisory Service include:

- ◆ **Employment Assessment and Occupational Psychology Services**
- ◆ **Job Introduction Scheme** - job trial facility which lasts 6 weeks and provides a contribution towards employment costs.
- ◆ **Access to Work (N.I.)** - grant towards approved extra costs that arise if employing a person with a disability.
- ◆ **New Deal for Disabled People (voluntary)** - This includes:
 - advice on the opportunities available
 - advice and assistance with jobsearch or interview skills
 - vocational training courses which last up to 13 weeks to update existing, or develop new, occupational skills and lead to a qualification or part qualification
 - opportunity to undertake N.V.Q.s at a further education college
 - self employment route for those keen to set up their own business
 - advice on benefits and how they are affected by work
 - continued support after finding work.

- ◆ **Employment Support** - providing people with severe disabilities the opportunity to work alongside non disabled people in a range of jobs.

2.2.6 In 2005 D.E.L. proposed new Family Working Arrangements that introduced a right to consideration of requests for part time working for any employee with a caring responsibility. This could make it easier for those with caring responsibilities to access and remain in employment and therefore this project is very timely.

2.3 The Area

2.3.1 The Beyond Caring Partnership covers a relatively large geographic area, encompassing Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone. The area includes five local council areas: Fermanagh, Cookstown, Dungannon, Omagh and Strabane. The total population covered by the project is just under 135,000 people, or 8% of the population of Northern Ireland.

2.3.2 Within the catchment area there are some of the highest unemployment rates in Northern Ireland. The table below summarises the claimant count figures in October 2005 for the five Council areas. Although only one area has an above average claimant count, the average figure is skewed by the high concentration of unemployment in Derry and Belfast, the two large urban areas. In fact, Strabane has the second highest claimant count level in Northern Ireland, and only four Council areas have a higher claimant count than Fermanagh and Omagh.

Unemployed Claimant Count (October 2005)

Council Area	No. Of Claimants	% of Claimants
Cookstown	376	1.8
Dungannon	476	1.6
Fermanagh	938	2.6
Omagh	819	2.7
Strabane	1,163	4.9
Beyond Caring Total/Average	3,772	
N.I. Total/ Average	27,727	2.7

2.3.3 Figures from the 2001 Census show that there is a high level of economic inactivity in the Beyond Caring area. Out of a total population of almost 135,000, almost 45,000, or one third are economically inactive. Of this, over 25,000 people, over half, are looking after home or family or permanently sick/disabled.

Council Area	Total Pop.	Economically Inactive	Retired	Student	Home/ Family	Sick/ Disabled	Other
Cookstown	19,700	6,890	252	1,371	1,840	2,261	1,166
Dungannon	28,434	9,328	321	1,949	2,600	3,022	1,436
Fermanagh	34,514	10,432	552	2,415	3,017	2,678	1,770
Omagh	29,055	9,424	483	2,096	2,373	2,922	1,550
Strabane	23,017	8,493	271	1,504	2,276	3,026	1,416
Total	134,720	44,567	1,879	9,335	12,106	13,909	7,338

2.3.4 In Northern Ireland it is assumed that around 12% of the workforce have caring responsibilities for someone other than children. Moreover, the employment rate among those with caring responsibilities is 7% lower than for those without. This means that it could reasonably be assumed that around 1,000 carers in the area could work if some of the barriers to employment were addressed.

3 The Project

3.1 Action 1

3.1.1 The Beyond Caring Project started at the end of 2004, initiated by the three colleges (the South West Learning Partnership) coming together to develop a programme to access funding under EQUAL to build on a previous initiative, the Caring for Carers Project, that provided training for carers. The project was successful in securing funding for the project.

3.1.2 Action 1 of the project was scheduled to run until June 2005, although it was not completed until December 2005 for a number of reasons. The project involves a large geographic area and needed to have partners in each area and representing all of the key stakeholders. The project spent a number of months putting together the partnership. This was a long process because of the number of partners and the complexity of the EQUAL project. In the early months, there was a difficulty in establishing the financial and administrative systems for the project. Initially, this was to have been done through the South West Learning Partnership but this was not possible because it is not a separate legal entity. After some discussion, it was agreed that Fermanagh College would act as lead partner.

3.1.3 The delay in establishing the lead partner held up the process of recruiting staff to administer and manage the project, which further delayed progress. The Project Co-ordinator was appointed in May 2005. After this the process of establishing the partnership and the project picked up momentum.

3.1.4 The D.P. held a residential in August 2005 which was very important in terms of securing commitment to, and building understanding of, the project. The project now has all of the partners on board, the Partnership is active and meeting regularly and discussing issues that affect the outcomes and management of the project. The D.P. has also established three local advisory bodies to provide a more local focus and bring new partners into the project.

3.1.5 The project has also established research projects with Mencap and the University of Ulster to look at need and barriers within the sector and provide baseline information. These should report back early in the new year. Beyond Caring expects to be ready to run its first pilot projects in January 2006.

3.2 The Partners

3.2.1 The Beyond Caring partnership has a relatively large number of partner organisations, mainly because of the large geographical area covered, but also because of the need to include representatives from stakeholder organisations in the education, training, employer and disability sectors. The list of partners is as follows:

- ◆ Fermanagh College (lead partner) is a provider of Further and Higher Education for the Fermanagh area. It is based in Enniskillen and provides a range of full-time and part-time courses. The college has over 9,000 full-time and part-time students.
- ◆ Community Activity Partnership is based in Omagh.
- ◆ East Tyrone College is based in Dungannon and provides a wide range of Further and Higher Education courses. The main catchment area is the area around Dungannon.
- ◆ Fermanagh Training is a private company based in Enniskillen which provides training for adults, including New Deal.
- ◆ G.G. Training is a training provider based in Omagh.
- ◆ Mencap is the leading charity for adults and children with learning disabilities in Northern Ireland. It provides a range of services including education and employment.
- ◆ Omagh Chamber of Commerce is the organisation representing commercial organisations and employers in Omagh.
- ◆ Omagh College is the main provider of Further and Higher Education in the Omagh area.

- ◆ Protocol Skills is a training organisation which works with Colleges in the Fermanagh and Tyrone areas.
- ◆ Strategic Management support is a consultancy organisation which provides advice and guidance on strategic planning and monitoring of outcomes.
- ◆ Quinn Group is the biggest private sector employer in Fermanagh. The Quinn Group includes a range of companies involved in financial services, construction and hospitality, among other things.

3.2.2 The partnership represents three main sectors. These are:

- ◆ **Education and Training** - this sector is covered by the three main colleges in the areas, along with Fermanagh Training, G.G. Training and Protocol Skills. These organisations represent the main providers of education and training in the area and will provide access to courses, teaching resources, participants and support.
- ◆ **Employers** - this sector is covered by Omagh Chamber of Commerce and the Quinn Group. Tesco is also represented on the Steering Group. Most of the other partnership members are also major employers in the area, e.g., Sperrin and Lakeland Trust, and the collages. Support from employers is a very important aspect of this project so that participants can be found appropriate placements and support. The involvement of employers should also help to address employment issues and human resource issues. Most of the larger employers in the area are included in the partnership, either directly or indirectly.
- ◆ **The Health and Social Care Sector** - this is represented by Sperrin Lakeland Trust which is the main health and social care provider for the area. Carers NI and Disability Action are also on the Steering Group. Sperrin Lakeland Trust brings knowledge and experience of health care issues and contact with potential participants, including those with disabilities and carers. The Trust will also be able to provide advice and guidance on respite and other health issues. Mencap provides representation for adults with learning difficulties and will provide access to potential participants, as well as guidance and advice on their needs. It is perhaps surprising that other organisations representing people with disabilities, other than learning disabilities, were not initially included on the Development Partnership, however this has recently been addressed through the involvement of Disability Action on the Steering Group.

- ◆ **Community** - the community is represented on the partnership by Community Activity Partnership which works in both Fermanagh and Omagh. All of the other partners also have close community contacts.

3.2.3 It is generally agreed that the Beyond Caring Partnership has the right partners on board. All of the main stakeholder organisations are involved in the education and training sectors, along with major employers. While the health care sector is well represented by the major provider of health care in the area, it is perhaps surprising that Mencap was the only disability organisation. This has been recognised by the Partnership and Disability Action has become involved with the Steering Group more recently to address this. It is important that disability organisations representing the range of disabilities have input to the project. This will be important both in terms of planning the project and delivering the project, and also in mainstreaming findings and best practice.

3.3 The Partnership

3.3.1 The idea for the Beyond Caring Partnership grew from the Caring for Carers project, which was run by Fermanagh College and Sperrin and Lakeland Trust. This was a programme designed to assist those with caring responsibilities to access training and education. One of the issues highlighted by the Caring for Carers project was the lack of access to employment after training for those with disabilities and carers. The three colleges, Fermanagh College, Omagh College and East Tyrone College had all worked together on a number of programmes, including education programmes for those with disabilities and had good working relationships. The Equal programme offered an opportunity to build on existing relationships and past experience of delivering training to a difficult to reach group and to pilot new approaches to deal with major issues affecting the employability of this group.

3.3.2 The South West Learning Partnership, which comprises the three colleges, initiated the Beyond Caring project. For legal and administrative reasons, Fermanagh College agreed to be the lead partner. The aim in establishing the partnership was to involve partners in each geographic area, i.e. Fermanagh

and Tyrone, and to bring together representatives from the education and training sectors, the private sector/employers, the community, trade unions and the health sector. Setting up the partnership took a number of months and progress was initially slow because of the large geographic area, and the large number of partners, combined with the lack of full-time support. Staff in the colleges had to take on the initial work forming the partnership on top of their full-time work. Forming a partnership of disparate organisations required a lot of time and effort and this proved difficult with limited resources. The process speeded up considerably after the Project Co-ordinator was employed in May 2005.

3.3.3 In the initial stages, it would appear that several of the partners were unsure of what an Equal project was and what the project aimed to achieve. The main attraction for the partners was that the partnership contained credible organisations and there were clear benefits of developing partnerships in the region, potentially in terms of developing education, training and employability for those with disabilities and carers. All of the partners were clear from the outset that there could be benefits from this programme, although not so clear, at least initially, about what was required or how they would be involved. It would appear that the residential, which was held in August 2005, was very important in terms of informing the partners about the aims and objectives of the project, explaining what was required of them and how they could benefit. The residential also gave the partners time to develop relationships and focus on the project rather than the requirements of their own workload. The residential seems to have been very important in terms of securing commitment and an understanding of the Beyond Caring project.

3.3.4 All of the partners feel that the partnership is now working well, that there is commitment from the partners to making the project work and that the structures are in place to take the project forward to Action 2. The partners are also supportive of the aims and objectives of the project and feel that they have the opportunity to make a positive contribution both to the development of the project and to developing policy within their own organisations. The potential benefits from the project include better relationships and links between partners who work in the same field, the opportunity to develop new

approaches to training for the target groups and long-term benefits for the target group.

- 3.3.5** One issue that was raised during consultation was the involvement of the health sector in the project. There are concerns within the health sector about how carers can be effectively targeted and supported during the programme, the involvement of disability groups covering the full spectrum of disability and issues such as support for participants in employment and respite care. Perhaps this is a legacy of the fact that the project was initiated within the education sector and these issues will need to be addressed during the early stages of Action 2.
- 3.3.6** The project structure seeks to provide a strategic and practical approach which covers all of the target area, both in terms of geography and target groups. The development partnership involves the key stakeholders in training and education, employability and health care and is responsible for the strategic planning of the project and dissemination of best practice. The development partnership is supported by a Co-ordinator, an Administrator and three Project Officers, who provide support on a part-time basis. The staff will support the development partnership, provide administrative and financial monitoring and reporting, support the partners, organise the operation of the project, co-ordinate the work of the partners, and undertake the day to day running of the project. The project has also set up local groups, supporting each area. These involve other local partners, including disability organisations, employers and local health care workers. The local groups will be involved in organising training, engaging with employers, attracting participants, providing support and overseeing the day to day operations of the project in their area. The local groups will provide a more local focus for the project which covers a very wide geographic area and will also ensure a more effective community involvement.
- 3.3.7** The project has set itself challenging objectives. These are:
- ◆ Establish a steering group with key individuals and organisations with relevant experience and expertise in working with the target group to guide the direction of the project;

- ◆ Examine ways whereby organisations can work together to maximise support for the target group;
- ◆ Research and pilot training methodologies and content, particularly using I.C.T., that will inspire the target group to access learning programmes that enhance their employability skills;
- ◆ Development of diagnostic tools that allow beneficiaries to map a route through learning into employment;
- ◆ Research, test and develop practical changes in work structures that can contribute to sustainability of employment for the target group.

In order to achieve these goals, the Development Partnership will:

- ◆ Recruit 400 beneficiaries to undertake piloting;
- ◆ Pilot models of essential skills enhancement and I.C.T. with 300 beneficiaries;
- ◆ Pilot route planning tools with 250 beneficiaries;
- ◆ Supported 200 beneficiaries to undertake vocational training;
- ◆ Provide 100 beneficiaries with access to work placements and work based training.

3.3.8 At this stage, as might be expected, the project has only achieved the first objective, which is to establish a steering group. This has been achieved as outlined earlier in the report. All objectives will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that progress is being made towards achieving these. It should be noted at this stage that the numbers involved in the project are relatively large for a pilot project of this type. While the partners are content that these objectives, particularly in terms of participant numbers, are achievable, this is largely based on experience of training and it may be difficult to find placements for beneficiaries and support them effectively. The objectives should be kept under review to ensure that they are achievable. It would be better to adjust the target numbers early in the project if they appear to be unrealistic, rather than

lose sight of the main objectives in terms of developing best practice for the sake of achieving numbers.

3.4 The Transnational Element

3.4.1 A key component of the Equal programme is the Transnational Partnership which requires projects to develop partnerships in other E.U. Countries. In this case the Beyond Caring project is a member of a transnational partnership, Chances, which consists of partners in Hungary, Slovakia and Italy. These projects are:

- ◆ Slovakia - this project provides educational activities to prepare unemployed people for the labour market.
- ◆ Italy - this project works with people with drug and alcohol problems and aims to provide education and training, aimed towards social reintegration.
- ◆ Italy - this project works with marginalised young people to seek to improve their basic skills.
- ◆ Hungary - this project works with people with disabilities to provide I.C.T. training aimed towards improving employability.

3.4.2 All of the partners recognise the potential benefits from partnership with projects in other countries within the E.U. As well as improving networking opportunities it also provides learning opportunities and helps to promote understanding of different cultures. There are also potential benefits in looking at how culture affects barriers to employment and ways of tackling these. It was also noted that the Transnational Partnership will require a significant commitment in terms of time and it will be important to ensure that this does not impact on the delivery of the project itself. All partners were supportive of the transnational element and keen to either participate or look at how they could benefit from this.

3.5 Finances

- 3.5.1** The table below summarises the expenditure during Action 1 compared to the budget. In most areas the actual expenditure is below the budgeted figure. This is largely because progress on Action 1 was slow at first until staff were recruited which was a little later than had been planned.

Beyond Caring Actual Expenditure against Budget (Action 1)

	Budgeted	Actual	Match
Salary Costs	42,106	35,601.44	4,720.8
Staff Travel and Subsistence	1,900	1,751.9	
Staff Training	3,000	0	
Premises and Overheads	1,764	59.47	
Admin Costs	1,420	2,333.09	
Consumables	565	355.77	
Small Equipment	2,600	3,252.38	
Legal and Professional Fees	1,400	233	
Evaluation	2,100	700	
Transnational Costs	3,980	98.24	
Overall Total	60,835	44,385.29	

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 The Beyond Caring Partnership has completed Action 1 and is now moving towards the point where it can start to deliver projects under Action 2 . To date, the project has focused on establishing the partnership and ensuring that the appropriate structures are in place to enable this to happen. This evaluation therefore focuses on Action 1. The conclusions that can be reached at this stage are as follows:

- ◆ The Beyond Caring Project has achieved its initial objective of setting up a steering group of key individuals and organisations with relative experience and expertise of working in a target group to guide the direction of the project.
- ◆ The development partnership includes the main stakeholders in the sector. All of the relevant sectors are included.
- ◆ Representation from the health and caring sector on the Development Partnership, particularly from disability organisations, was perhaps weak although it should be noted that this has been addressed by the involvement of Disability Action on the Steering Group and in the local groups.
- ◆ Initial progress on forming the partnership was slow, largely because there was no full-time staff. Once the funding situation was clarified and the Co-ordinator appointed, progress improved.
- ◆ The residential was very important in terms of securing commitment from the partners and improving their understanding of the project.
- ◆ All partners are now aware of the requirement and the potential benefits from this.
- ◆ The partnership is very strong in terms of its education and training input. Input from the health sector has been slower to develop but this is improving. Input from employers has been less evident at this stage but should increase once the project starts to run programmes.

- ◆ The financial monitoring systems are robust and expenditure, while slightly less than budgeted is satisfactory.
- ◆ Monitoring systems are currently being developed and will be tested in the pilot programmes. These will be based on the Rickter Scale, but will be developed to better fit with the outcomes of the project.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1** At this stage the partnership appears to be working well and there are few recommendations that need to be made. It may be useful to organise another residential for members of the development partnership and local groups after three months to provide an opportunity for detailed discussion on how the project is operating, particularly after the pilot phase. At this stage the project should also review its targets to ensure that these are realistic.

5 Appendices

5.1 Consultation List

- ◆ Beyond Caring Project Co-ordinator
- ◆ Proteus
- ◆ Fermanagh College
- ◆ Omagh College
- ◆ Mencap
- ◆ Sperrin Lakeland Health & Social Care Trust
- ◆ Omagh chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Quinn Group
- ◆ East Tyrone College



Williamson Consulting, 244 Kingsway, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9AE
Tel: (028) 9062 5511 Fax: (028) 9062 3635
E mail: info@williamsonconsulting.co.uk