

# **INTERACT**

## **WP 5 Interviews with Institutional Actors: England**

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### **Objectives:**

To explore with key actors and policy makers their

- *perceptions of the influence on policy making in England of European policies on multicultural/intercultural education for active citizenship*
- *perceptions of how policy and institutional objectives with regard to intercultural active citizenship education are formed at national level*
- *understandings of the concepts and strategies contained in European and national legislation and guidance relevant to intercultural education for active citizenship .*

### **Methodology**

All project teams agreed that the data should be collected from semi-structured interviews with key actors, following a common schedule.

Interviews were to be audio-recorded and transcribed.

The interview schedule was adapted from that agreed by all INTERACT partners.

A list of potential interviewees was compiled and contact details obtained.

A selection was made from the list. The selection of interviewees ensured that a number of perspectives were covered across the range of respondents. The perspectives included experience of and /or involvement with:

- multicultural education
- race equality policy
- politics
- English as an additional language (EAL)
- citizenship education
- Local education authority
- Central government and civil service
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Community group
- Teachers' trade union

Contact was made with interviewees by mail and by email and permission obtained to conduct and record an interview of about one hour's duration.

Responsibility for conducting the interviews was shared between the two UK partners. Interviews were conducted during the period November 2005 – March 2006.

All those invited willingly agreed to be interviewed, although one, a senior member of the Church of England and member of the House of Lords was unable to find time for us due to pressure of work. In other cases we had to agree a meeting time several months in advance.

## **Contextual background**

As we noted in our report for Workpackage 3, until the 1990s, Education in England was a national service, locally administered. Responsibility for the curriculum lay with Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

During the 1970s, the presence of increasing numbers of visible ethnic minority students in schools stimulated LEAs to put in place *multicultural* support services including advisers for multicultural education. Multicultural education policies were produced at local level by the largest LEA, Inner London (ILEA) in 1977 and a semi-rural area, Berkshire, in 1979. In the 1980s the promotion of multicultural education and varieties of political education, including human rights education, mostly found support in urban LEAs. We interviewed key actors with experience of locally based multicultural support services.

As a parallel development migrant children whose first language was not English received support from English as an Additional Language (EAL) staff, often managed within the multicultural support service. We interviewed key actors with experience of EAL provision.

Following the publication of the official *Swann Report* (1985) resources for developing multicultural education for all young people, majority and minority, were put in place in LEAs across the country. We therefore interviewed key actors from the LEA sector.

The Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988) ended the decentralised system of responsibility for the curriculum and examinations. It introduced a compulsory national curriculum for 5 – 16 year-olds divided into four Key Stages. Education priorities shifted resources from non-compulsory multicultural education to the new national curriculum. This was based on programmes of study defined by groups of experts in three core and seven foundation subjects. It was gradually introduced from 1990. We interviewed actors who had detailed knowledge of this transitional period.

In 1997 an advisory committee chaired by Professor Bernard Crick was set up with the remit of producing a rationale for the inclusion of citizenship as a compulsory subject in the national curriculum and guidelines for its implementation. The report *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (1998) led directly to the publication of *Programmes of Study for Citizenship* (1999). An important parallel contextual development was the publication of the *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* and the Government's response (1999). The report raised the issue of 'institutionalised racism' in public life and proposed a response in the form of citizenship education. We included interviewees with experience in developing race equality policies and key actors who had been involved with curriculum reform at national level.

## **The interviewees**

We were able to obtain interviews with very senior people who were able to provide a broad policy overview as follows:

- Two former ministers of education
- Two former chief inspectors of education in local authorities (LEAs)
- One government inspector of education (HMI)
- One member of the House of Lords, formerly responsible for the government funded agency responsible for monitoring race equality policy
- One teacher union leader
- One senior government adviser on citizenship
- One academic and policy adviser to government
- One former civil servant

A number of the interviewees were able to give evidence across several of the themes and from several overlapping perspectives.

### **Interview schedule**

The interviews were semi-structured and the schedule below was adapted to the experience and the position of the interviewee.

1. What is your understanding of multicultural education? To what extent do you consider it to be a relevant dimension to the curriculum?
2. To what extent do you consider that the curriculum is intended to reproduce a national culture?
3. To what extent does the curriculum acknowledge and support other identities e.g. European, global?
4. In formulating curriculum guidelines to what extent do you feel that there was a concern to ensure the incorporation of a multicultural / human rights / European dimension?
5. To what extent is there official support for multicultural education? How is this shown concretely e.g. policy statements, budgets, curriculum guidance?
6. Are you aware of any pressure to ensure that multicultural perspectives are present (e.g. European or other international (UN, UNESCO, Unicef) policies)? Are you familiar with any such policies and can you specify which?
7. Are you aware of a tradition of multicultural education? In what ways has this tradition evolved over the years? To what extent has there been continuity?
8. To what extent is multicultural education a priority within citizenship education / civic education / democratic education / foreign language teaching / English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for minorities?
9. What mechanisms have been put in place to help teachers and teacher trainers implement multicultural education? e.g. training programmes, websites, guidance.
10. To what extent is multicultural education a politically sensitive issue? What effects, if any, does this have on priorities?