Northern Ireland Assembly – Committee for Education Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry
Submission by Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland
Contacts
Dr Padraic Quirk (Atlantic Philanthropies)
Dr Adrian Johnston (International Fund for Ireland)
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1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This submission to the Northern Ireland Education Committee Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education is made by the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies, two organisations which have been jointly supporting shared education since 2007 onwards. We welcome the opportunity to submit written evidence to the timely inquiry on shared and integrated education.
- 1.2 Although the details of this submission focus on our collective experience of funding the *Shared Education Programme*, it is worth noting that Atlantic Philanthropies has supported initiatives in shared <u>and</u> integrated education and view both as positively contributing to transforming a divided education system.
- 1.3 Our submission follows the key headings set out in terms of reference by the Education Committee: nature and definition of shared and integrated education; key barriers and enablers; alternative approaches and models in other jurisdictions; and, priorities and actions to improve sharing and integration. Of necessity, the emphasis in our submission is based on our collective intervention on shared education drawing on the experience and research evidence generated therein.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 What is integrated education? Integrated education brings together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions and those from other faiths or none. Pupils experience an education that gives them the opportunity to understand, respect and celebrate all cultural and religious traditions. Parental involvement is a central value of integrated education, with a high level of parental representation on Boards of Governors.
- 2.2 The origins of the sector can be traced back to 1974 when a group of parents called *All Children Together* lobbied successfully for legislation which would allow existing schools to become integrated (Education (NI) Act 1977). The first planned integrated school (Lagan College) was established by parents in Belfast in 1981. Integrated education was given a major fillip through the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 (article 64) which, for the first time, placed a statutory duty on the Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate' the development of integrated education. The Order also gave the department the power to fund a central, representative body to develop, support and promote integrated education in Northern Ireland the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE was established 1987). There are now 62 integrated schools in Northern Ireland with an enrolment in 2013/14 of 21,206 pupils or approximately 6.7% of the overall school population.

2.3 What is shared education? Shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools. The Ministerial Advisory Report on Shared Education (2013: xiii) defines it as:

Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

- 2.4 Shared education is distinct from integrated education. The essential point is that shared education involves inter sectoral collaboration to improve both educational and reconciliation outcomes. It seeks to create interdependencies between schools mostly through delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive inter sectoral collaboration to support the common good.
- 2.5 Shared education has been delivered through 3 project providers: Queen's University Belfast, the Fermanagh Trust and the North Eastern Education and Library Board PIEE project. In 2012/13 there were 101 primary schools and 61 post-primary schools involved in the Shared Education Programme with 12,771 pupils participating (4% of the school population). We set out the key differences between shared and integrated education in table 1. We do however see the practical distinction between shared and integrated education as a false dichotomy. Instead, we argue that there is a spectrum of collaboration which is possible between schools ranging from: schools working in isolation through, ad hoc collaboration, organic partnership, irregular (and less sustained) shared activity, regular sustained activity, culture of collegiality and institutional interdependence (Duffy, Baker and Stewart, 2013).

Table 1: Shared and Integrated Education – defining characteristics

	Shared Education	Integrated Education
Definitions	Shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained and meaningful process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools.	Integrated education brings together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions and those from other faiths or none.
Characteristics	The focus of shared education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive collaboration to support the common good. Shared education involves parental, pupil, teacher and community involvement.	Pupils experience an education that gives them the opportunity to understand, respect and celebrate all cultural and religious traditions. Parental involvement is a central value of integrated education, with a high level of parental representation on Boards of Governors.
Numbers involved	Maintain the percentage of schools engaged in shared education on a whole school basis at 15% (114) in the 2014/15 academic year and increase to 20% (152) by 2017/18 (from DE Business Plan for Shared Education Signature Project).	21,206 (62 schools) or 6.7% of school population.
Key transformative changes	 Programme for Government commitments to shared education. Building a United Community commitment to share education: 'we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience'. 10 new shared education campuses. Ministerial endorsement of shared education and commitment to mainstream it to become part of the 'DNA' of education system. 	 Parental choice for parents who wish to send their children to integrated schools. Legislative commitment by Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education. State funding for integrated schools. Justice Treacy's ruling (2014): integrated schooling cannot be delivered by schools with a predominantly Catholic or Protestant ethos – integrated education is a stand-alone concept.
Legacy	Cross-sectoral interdependency between schools for education and reconciliation benefits. Boundaries between existing sectors are now porous.	Solid base of integrated schools with opportunities for further growth to meet parental demand.

3. Enablers and Barriers

3.1 There are both public policy and legislative <u>enablers</u>. For example, the Northern Ireland Executive entitled *Together: Building a United Community* (T:BUC), makes a clear commitment to shared education as follows:

We believe that creating more opportunities for socially-mixed, shared education, with a view to achieving a full shared education system in Northern Ireland, is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of inter-generational educational underachievement unemployment, and sectarianism; and improving good relations amongst and for our young people. This must also be considered within the context of the increasing diversity of our society, which is reflected within the school environment. Through this Strategy, we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience. T:BUC (2013: 48).

- 3.2 Under the banner *Delivering Social Change* there is now a Shared Education Signature project which commits £25m from OFMDFM, the Department of Education and Atlantic Philanthropies to take shared education from pilot schools to scale throughout Northern Ireland. In addition, the Northern Ireland Executive has committed to building 10 shared education campuses. These projects should make a significant contribution towards mainstreaming shared education.
- 3.3 The Ministerial Advisory Report Advancing Shared Education (2013) recommended a statutory duty on the Department of Education (and ESA) to encourage and facilitate shared education as defined in the report. The Minister of Education told the NI Assembly (22nd October 2013):

Shared education is rolling out as we speak. I would like to see a legal definition put in place through the ESA Bill. However, if the ESA continues to be delayed, I will consider bringing forward legislation to introduce a definition of shared education separate from the ESA Bill, as I place such importance on it.

Given the collapse of the ESA bill we suggest separate legislation to enable the development of shared education as follows:

- (1) There will be a duty on schools to collaborate in the delivery of education on a cross community and cross sectoral basis.
- (2) Duties

i. Duty of schools

a. There will be a duty on schools to collaborate¹ on a cross community basis² as defined in the footnotes below.

¹ Definition of collaborate. By collaborate we are referring to schools working together on a regular, sustained basis in the delivery of statutory curricular subjects. "Collaborate" also refers to the delivery of extra-curricular activities.

b. Principals and the Board of Governors shall take steps to ensure that opportunities are created for sustained, regular cross community contact between pupils through the delivery of Education. These commitments should be defined in school development plans and take into account existing DENI guidance on school improvement and educational delivery.

ii. Duty of new (combined) Education and Library Board (ELB)

a. There will be a duty on the new (combined) Education and Library Board to ensure curriculum choices are made available to all students based on the shared education model. The ELB will provide support, guidance, resources and funding of shared activities based on the statutory curriculum.

iii. Duty of the Department of Education Northern Ireland

- a. There will be a duty on the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) to monitor and evaluate the delivery of education on a cross community basis.
- b. The Education and Library Board will have a duty to report on all schools cross-community partnership work and disseminate best practice both to DENI and throughout the ELB.

(Laura Lundy, Queens University Belfast)

- 3.4 **Barriers:** At the macro level there is a statutory duty on the Department of Education under the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. There is also a call from the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education (2013) for the same legal duty to be applied to shared education. Neither of these has however translated into a clear blueprint for a fully shared and/or integrated system of education. Hence, government intentions are aspirational rather than practical involving time-bound targets, associated funding to achieve significant change and measurable educational outcomes.
- 3.5 One of the key barriers to shared and integrated education is the area planning process which has attracted a large response through public consultation. There is evidence that in some cases ELBs have chosen to ignore grassroots opinion which offers potential local shared education solutions. This represents the worse type of paternalism on the part of school managing authorities; a 'we know best attitude' reinforced by a needs model in the area plans which is based on 3 separate sectors: controlled, maintained and integrated schools. Such an approach stifles 'innovation and creativity' which the Department of Education implored the Education and Library Boards and CCMS to embrace in their approach to area planning.

² Definition of "cross-community". By "cross community" we recognise the existence of controlled, maintained, voluntary, integrated, special education resource centres and Irish Medium provision. "Cross community collaboration" occurs when schools from different management types work together on a regular, sustained basis.

- 3.6 The Education Minister has encouraged public engagement in the future reorganisation of the education estate, in particular bottom-up solutions. There is evidence that people are much more advanced in their thinking than managing authorities which have acted as gatekeepers for local solutions and sought to protect their own sectoral interests. In short, the area planning consultation process has been tokenistic.
- 3.7 Another barrier to the development of shared education is that the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments may be treated in a 'light touch' way through the Entitlement Framework, Area Learning Communities, Extended Schools, and the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy (CRED). The inclusion of shared education targets within the PfG, whilst encouraging, are weak. What does 'ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education by 2015' actually mean when shared education in this context has been undefined? Moreover, the Minister's reference to shared education being an integral part of the way in which the Entitlement Framework operates lacks conviction as the Department of Education has no way of telling – they cannot provide evidence to The concern is that shared education morphs into substantiate this claim. community relations work rather than an opportunity to improve educational performance on a cross-community basis, with DE taking a passive role.3.8 addition, the sectoral vested interests, in particular the churches, maintain a resistance to a change in the status quo. While maintained schools, for example, have been active participants in shared education, they do not see their involvement in the long term as a substitute for exclusively Catholic education. An associated barrier is the political risks linked with creating a more shared education system since it blurs the traditional boundaries and could impact on the medium term voting habits in a political system which has reflected a segregated society.
- 3.9 The existing sectoral based teacher training degree programmes compound the status quo and can act as a barrier to a system which is attempting to become more shared and integrated. The new opportunities and challenges created by systemic educational change need to be reflected in the ways in which new teachers are trained and the professional development needs of existing teachers. There is little point in a structural reconfiguration of the school system without accompanying investment in those professionals which teach our pupils.

4. Other jurisdictions

- 4.1 Although the Shared Education Programme has a specific focus on Northern Ireland, there is the potential for wider learning in countries in, or emerging from, conflict. A team from the Centre for Shared Education in Queen's University were invited to support the work being carried out to tackle divisions with the Macedonian education system. This, in turn, has leveraged funding (from UNICEF and USAID) in support of a shared education programme between ethnic Macedonian and Albanian schools. Queen's University has been advising on the formulation and implementation of this programme given their experience in Northern Ireland.
- 4.2 A team from Queen's Shared Education Programme also travelled to Israel to participate in workshops and seminars on shared education. Working with Queen's, the Nazareth Academic Institute examined ways to implement research outcomes within its constituency, namely students in a college of higher education and the communities surrounding it. Queen's is also co-operating with *Hand in Hand*, Centre for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel in order to explore shared options for school age children and their communities. *Hand in Hand* was founded in 1997 as a centre for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel and builds peace, coexistence and equality through a network of integrated, bilingual schools for Jewish and Arab children.
- 4.3 Atlantic's collaboration with the Office of the Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) in the Shared Education Signature project will link us into a European Centre for Delivering Social Change which, inter alia, which carry out work that provides a research-policy-practice nexus for policy initiatives at the centre of government. The Centre will disseminate best social change practice [outwards] to other European countries and learn from developments elsewhere [inwards] which will help tackle key thematic areas in the Northern Ireland social change agenda. Shared education research, policy and practice will be a core theme in the European Centre for Delivering Social Change.
- 4.4 Perry (2012) provides examples of shared education in other jurisdictions: shared campuses in Scotland; federation in England and Wales; communities of schools in Belgium; and school clusters in New Zealand. The Scottish experience of shared campuses was very positive despite initial concerns that denominational schools might lose their ethos. The federated model also offers a useful comparator for Northern Ireland. This is where two or more schools share leadership and governance arrangements. The literature notes that while federations require a larger budget in comparison to an individual school, economies of scale may be realised, and increased costs are offset by greater resources. In a recent Ofsted report on federations, inspectors found educational provision and outcomes had shown improvement, with the federated model as a contributory factor to the improvement.

5. Priorities and Actions

- 5.1 At the strategic level there is a need for the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly and Department of Education to agree a future plan for a fully integrated and shared system of education moving forward. We need to move from aspirations to pragmatic systemic changes. The investments by Atlantic Philanthropies and IFI have demonstrated clear economic, education and societal benefits of shared education what is needed is to embed shared and integrated education comprehensively in the delivery of education in Northern Ireland.
- 5.2 Beyond this strategic goal the key priorities and actions are scaling-up shared education in a meaningful way rather than a superficial engagement in short-term community relations work. The key priorities and actions are listed in table 2.

Table 2: Scaling-Up Shared Education

Scaling up Shared Education

There are a number of elements involved in scaling up the levels of collaboration and sharing between schools. Typically this will comprise work across a number of areas including:

Support for Shared Governance

- Participants: Chairs of governors; all governors; governors sub-committee
- Activities: agreed shared governance arrangements; promote school partnership; employment of staff; agree shared policies; and, oversight of partnership transactions/finance.

Shared School Management

- Participants: Principals and Vice Principals
- Activities: Embed and promote philosophy of the partnership; Principals work closely with Vice Principals to shape programme; deployment of staff across the partnership; employment of staff; and, financial management.

Shared Curriculum Planning

- Participants: Principals and Vice Principals
- Activities: Maximise shared curriculum in order to reduce duplication and provide broadest choice possible; agreed benchmarking, assessment and target setting; synchronisation of timetabling; agreed teaching and learning strategies formulated; and Identification of future need.

Shared Teaching & Learning

- Participants: Heads of department; subject specialist teachers; and teachers
- Activities: Agreed teaching and learning strategies implemented; shared plans and schemes of work; audit of existing resources within partnership; maximise the use of existing resources across partnership; joint staff training; and creation of shared policies.

Shared Classes

- Participants: Pupils
- Activities: Pupils engaged in shared classes and learning; shared student council; and shared pupil extra-curricular activities (sports, choir/music etc).

Educational Improvement

In addition to the above, school partnerships should be encouraged to specifically develop shared plans focused on improving educational outcomes. Likely activities to be supported will include:

- Assistance to identify common areas of educational need;
- Conduct a curriculum audit which identifies duplication of provision, areas of under- provision and how best to address these issues.
- Identify complementary expertise and how schools intend to use it to benefit the partnership.
- Highlight existing resources that could be shared for the benefit of the partnership (physical space, ICT suites etc.). The schools will provide a rationale as to how existing resources can be used more efficiently and effectively across the partnership in a sustainable manner.
- Identify opportunities for the development of common teaching and learning strategies, benchmarking and standards across the partnership with a focus on improving educational outcomes.
- Identify opportunities for shared training and capacity building and how they intend to provide access to these on an on-going process.
- Demonstrate how the cross-sectoral partnership will lead to improved educational provision across the partnership.
- Identify additional resources that they would require to progress the work of the partnership in terms of improving educational outcomes.

Outputs

The above activities will result in the following outputs:

- Increase in the number of schools involved in shared education delivery.
- Increased level of interdependence in the school system.
- Increase in the number of joint governance schools (models of confederation, federation, co-location and possibly shared campuses).

Expected Outcomes

The outcomes from this work should result in:

- Improved educational outcomes and enhanced access to curriculum for all pupils involved in shared education.
- Normalised peer-to-peer cross-community relationships built through regular contact within mainstream education.
- Shared education becomes a core element of all schools' strategic planning and day-to- day functional activities.
- The Department of Education will fund, incentivise and formally regulate shared education.
- The Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) will incorporate shared education activities as a component part of their regular inspection process of schools
- Learning from shared education exemplars will inform international best practice on transforming segregated education systems.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Ministerial statement Advancing Shared Education (22nd October 2013) noted:
 - Shared education must become the accepted reality at every stage of education, from early years to post-graduate study...We need to ensure that sharing is in the DNA of our education system: in legislation, policy and the structure of ESA.
 - Sharing brings: educational benefits, respect for diversity and good relations. It builds equality and a confident community. So my vision is one of education without barriers; good schools where children learn, grow and develop together.
- 6.2 Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland have, through the Shared Education Programme, developed the concept, practice and supporting evidence to demonstrate the benefits of shared education. We see the role of DE and the new unitary Education and Library Board as embedding our work in the system.

See appendix 1 for a sample of the evidence on the effectiveness of shared education

Appendix 1: Some examples of evidence on shared education

Title	Author(s) and source
Are separate schools divisive? A case study	Joanne Hughes (2010) British Educational Research Journal,
from Northern Ireland	iFirst Article, 1–22.
Sharing classes between separate schools:	Joanne Hughes, Simon Lolliot Miles Hewstone, Katharina
a mechanism for improving inter-group	Schmid & Karen Carlisle (2012)Policy Futures in Education
relations in Northern Ireland?	10 (5)
School partnerships and reconciliation: an	Joanne Hughes, Caitlin Donnelly, Tony Gallagher & Karen
evaluation of school collaboration in	Carlisle (2010)
Northern Ireland	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Sustaining Cross-Sector Collaboration: An	Gavin Duffy &Tony Gallagher (2012)
examination of schools involved in the first	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
cohort of the Sharing Education	
Programme	
Collaborative evolution:The context of	Gavin Duffy & Tony Gallagher (2012)
sharing and collaboration in contested	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
space	
Sharing education through schools working	Gallagher, T., Stewart, A., Walker, R., Baker, M. and
together'	Lockhart, J. (2010)
	Shared Space: A research journal on peace, conflict and
	community relations in Northern Ireland, 6, 65-74
School collaboration in Northern Ireland:	C. Donnelly & T. Gallagher (2008)
opportunities for reconciliation.	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
The Sharing Education Programme	FGS McClure Watters (2010)
Attitudinal Research Results	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Inter-group contact at school and social	Joanne Hughes (2012)Oxford Review of Education
attitudes: Evidence from Northern Ireland	(under review)
Promoting good relations: the role of schools in Northern Ireland	Joanne Hughes and Caitlin Donnelly (2012)
schools in Northern Ireland	(Eds) Cillian McGrattan and Elizabeth Meehan, Everyday Life After the Conflict The Impact of Devolution and North-South
	Cooperation. Manchester University Press. (In Press)
Contact and context: Sharing education and	Joanne Hughes (2012a), Research papers in Education
building relationships in a divided society	(Under review)
The School in the plural and divided Society	Joanne Hughes and Caitlin Donnelly (2012a)Introduction to
The School in the planar and divided Society	Policy Futures in education
Key Issues in Coexistence and Education	Tony Gallagher (2010)Boston: Brandeis University
Rey issues in coexistence and Education	Coexistence International
	http://www.clubmadrid.org/img/secciones/Cl Key Issues i
	n Coexistence Education Jan 2010.pdf
Sharing Education Programme: Views from	Colin Knox (2010)
the White Board	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Community Engagement in the Education	Colin Knox (2012)
Policy Debate	Draft paper (see authors)University of Ulster,
	Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email:
	vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
The Economics of Shared Education	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox
Programme	Draft paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern
	Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk
	cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
The Economics of School Closures in	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox

Northern Ireland	Draft paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern
	Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk
	cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Educational Performance and Post-Primary	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox
Schools in Northern Ireland	Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern
	Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk
	cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Northern Ireland's School Funding Formula:	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox
Explanation and Critique	Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern
	Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk
	cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
A Critique of the Education and Library	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox
Boards' Area Plans	Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern
	Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk
	cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Community Engagement in the Education	Colin Knox (2012)
Policy Debate	Draft paper (see authors)University of Ulster,
	Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email:
	vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Inter-school collaboration	Atkinson et al. (2007)NFER@ Queens
Education and a shared future: Options for	O'Sullivan et al. (2008)
sharing and collaboration in Northern	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Ireland schools	
Activity Theory in Practice: Promoting	Daniels, H, Edwards, A, Engestrom, U and Gallagher, T (Eds)
learning across boundaries and agencies	(2009) London: Routledge (Pp239 ISBN 978-0-415-47724-6)
Breaking through silence: tackling	Gallagher, T and Carlisle, K (2009)
controversial barriers through inter-	In H Daniels et al (Eds) Activity Theory in Practice:
professional engagement.	Promoting learning across boundaries and agencies,
	London: Routledge (Pp140-159)
A Deliberative Poll on Education: what	Fishkin, J, Gallagher, T, Luskin, R, McGrady, J, O'Flynn, I and
provision do informed parents in Northern	Russell, D (2007)
Ireland want?	http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/Vie
	ws%20from%20the%20White%20Board%20May%202010.p
	<u>df</u>
Developing the case for Shared Education	Oxford Economics (2010) IEF
Sharing over Separation - Part B -	Russell (2009)CRC research reports No. 8
Promoting Shared Education	http://gtcni.openrepository.com/gtcni/bitstream/2428/564
	39/1/part-b-d-russell.pdf
The Contribution of Shared Education to	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. British Educational Research
Catholic-Protestant reconciliation in	Journal, Vol. 39 (5), 2013, pp. 925-946 (with Vani Borooah).
Northern Ireland: a third way?	
Reconciliation and Human Rights in	Knox, C and Beirne, M. 'Journal of Human Rights Practice,
Northern Ireland: A False Dichotomy?	Vol. 6 (1), 2014, pp. 26 – 50
Access and Performance Inequalities: post	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. Journal of Poverty and Social
primary education in Northern Ireland	Justice, Vol. 22 (2), 2014: pp. 111-135
Segregation, Inequality and Educational	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. International Journal of
Performance in Northern Ireland: problems	Educational Development (in press 2014)
and solutions	