

ATTAINMENT AND INEQUITY *top the agenda*

SHARING APPROACHES AND KNOWLEDGE FROM ACROSS EUROPE HELPED DELEGATES LEARN INVALUABLE LESSONS AT THE RECENT CIDREE CONFERENCE

Given its location, it was only right that the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) Conference 2016 should be accompanied by the skirl of bagpipes.

But while there was an unmistakably Scottish flavour to the event at the Macdonald Holyrood Hotel in Edinburgh, the subjects for discussion transcended all borders.

Raising attainment and tackling inequity were the focus of the agenda – and it was soon clear both were crucial to the 65 delegates from Scotland and the other 16 European CIDREE member countries.

Last year's CIDREE conference discussed literacy across learning in Hungary. This year, it seemed fitting to host the annual gathering in Scotland, given our clear national focus on raising attainment and tackling inequity through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It also seemed a perfect fit, given that the current CIDREE President is Education Scotland Strategic Director, Alan Armstrong.

It was also fitting that such a compelling theme should be discussed in the shadow of the Scottish Parliament, whose ceremonial mace is inscribed with the words: "Wisdom. Justice. Compassion. Integrity."

Each CIDREE conference traditionally focuses on the theme of the current yearbook – in this case

Successful Approaches to Raising Attainment and Tackling Inequity – chosen by the host country in agreement with CIDREE members.

As well as formally launching the 2016 yearbook, the conference aimed to share other countries' approaches, exchange knowledge, facilitate learning and discover what progress is being made.

A PACKED PROGRAMME

Delegates were welcomed by Alan Armstrong and Education Scotland Chief Executive Bill Maxwell, before Stephen Edgar, Research and Evaluation Manager at Education Scotland, introduced the yearbook.

Conference delegates then took part in workshops providing greater insight into the Scottish perspective, with discussions on:

- *Exploring the development of the Attainment Advisor role in Scotland*, Alison Drever, Attainment Advisor
- *Supporting Dundee City Council to close the poverty-related attainment gap*, Audrey May, Attainment Advisor
- *Targeting schools through the Scottish Attainment Challenge*, Jane Gray, head teacher, Sarah Else, Education Officer, and Hugh Martin, Attainment Advisor
- *A local authority approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Glasgow*, Sharon Hayward, Attainment Advisor, and Glasgow City Council colleagues.

Matters then remained close to ☺

WORDS:
IAIN MASON



LEARNING

AUTHORS who contributed to the 2016 yearbook pose with their handiwork



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home with an address on *The Scottish Attainment Challenge* by Graeme Logan, Education Scotland’s Strategic Director for School Years, and Fiona Robertson, the Scottish Government’s Director of Learning.

In the afternoon session, delegates heard from further afield in workshops led by yearbook contributors from four countries.

They shared their experiences of key aspects of raising attainment and reducing inequity in their own contexts. These workshops focused on:

- *Quality teaching to support equity*, Catherine Perotin, France
- *Implementation and evaluation*, Amina Kafai-Afif, Luxembourg
- *Meeting the needs of all children and young people*, Marta Hunya and Maria Szabo, Hungary
- *Dealing with complexity*, Barry Slattery, Ireland.

Stephen said: “It was fascinating to hear this input from different countries. Their approaches helped us build a bigger picture of the challenges we all face.

“For instance, in Ireland, the

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Programme, like the Scottish Attainment Challenge, is a national initiative to address equity issues and raise attainment.

“Hearing about their experience was a great opportunity to reflect on another approach to a complex issue.

“People may have been from different countries but it was clear that raising attainment and tackling inequity are common issues we all encounter.

“A lot of countries are looking at implementing ideas and examining their impact, including Scotland.

“But what’s heartening is that, although countries are at different stages, we all seem to be trying to achieve the same broad goals.”

Stephen added: “Purely from a local level, involving colleagues from Scotland in reflecting on opportunities from a European perspective was another great step forward.”

Entertainment was provided by dancers and musicians from the City of Edinburgh Music School, before Alan closed the day with discussion and reflection on what had been learned.



Read an online
version of the
CIDREE Yearbook
2016 at [http://
bit.ly/2gBSY1B](http://bit.ly/2gBSY1B)



A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Stephen said the overwhelming feeling was that raising attainment and reducing inequity had been put firmly on the map – and would continue to be discussed after delegates returned home.

Seeing the yearbook receive a positive response was another highlight. He said: “It was heartening to see it being discussed on the day and rewarding for the authors to see their hard work already in use.

“The conference really reinforced the importance of the yearbook as a valuable and relevant learning tool.

“Many of the articles are based on research and it has a great cross-country reach. Being available online also broadens its appeal.”

As attention turns to the 2017 conference in Ireland, Alan Armstrong said: “The conference was a huge success and made it clear that raising attainment and reducing inequity are a priority, not just in Scotland, but across Europe.

“It reinforced the strength of comparing, contrasting and learning at first-hand from the ways many other countries identify and tackle a common

ABOUT CIDREE

The Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) aims to improve the quality of European education through:

- Creating high-quality professional learning through national agencies
- Inspiring innovation and change in education systems throughout Europe
- Developing new perspectives and influencing policy across Europe, its countries and beyond
- Reshaping and improving the curriculum in European countries through development and research
- Exchanging best practice and experiences through networks of European experts
- Exploring and sharing effective learning and teaching, from global to local practice.

priority. It is central to the aims of CIDREE and why it was established.

“The engaging discussions and experiences were invaluable and will help ensure that we keep working together to raise attainment and close the equity gap – wherever we may be.” **TS**



Over the coming issues of Teaching Scotland, we'll share some of the approaches taken by those countries featured in the yearbook