

December 2016



basis.point first grants
Evaluation and Impact
Report

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Summary

Genio was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the first two grants provided by basis.point; the Incredible Years (IY) Programme provided by Archways in Dublin's inner city, and the Parent Child Home Programme provided also in Dublin's inner city by the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at the National College of Ireland (NCI). Both grants were to facilitate the wider implementation of these evidence-based programmes in Dublin's inner city. The key findings of the evaluation are summarised here.

The Archways initiative modified some objectives with the agreement of basis.point and achieved the following:

- The Incredible Years programme was rolled out widely in Dublin 1 and 7, to a small extent in Dublin 2 and on the fringes of Dublin 8. While these areas were different to those specified in the application, they fell within the aims and intent of basis.point in providing this grant and there was strong and effective engagement in these two areas.
- Three Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) Trainings were delivered to 47 school staff across nine schools. This outcome exceeded the original objective (to deliver two training sessions to 36 staff) with funding from the Parent Group Leader (PGL) training used to provide the extra TCM training.
- Six community organisations took part in one Parent Group Leader (PGL) training; 17 facilitators were trained and parent training was provided to 21 families. The original objective was for two PGL trainings for 32 facilitators to reach 192 parents. Part of the resource for this objective was moved over to the TCM training.

The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at the National College of Ireland (NCI) achieved their core objectives including;

- The provision of the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) to 25 families
- The recruitment and training of 8 new Home Visitors – an excess on the target of 6
- The provision of the PHCP in two new areas. The original plan was for three new areas but good coverage was achieved in the new areas.

The first two basis.point grants have been very successful and have largely achieved their core objectives resulting in direct and indirect benefits for over;

- 725 children
- 46 families
- 47 school staff
- 25 community-based staff
- 9 schools
- 6 community organisations.

In terms of outcomes, the IY programme has been shown to bring about significant improvements in children's behaviour, lower levels of stress and distress on the part of parents and significant improvement in teacher classroom management skills, while the ECI/NLI programme has shown significant improvement in cognition, behaviour and language for participating children.

The basis.point grants are a good example of long-term social investment. While these immediate benefits are evident for children and families, the two programmes which have been supported are also building social capital and educational capital in the community which will have much wider and longer-term benefits.

In conclusion, the basis.point strategy, of funding well-established organisations, implementing evidence-based interventions with high fidelity, has produced a high level of impact in a short space of time with a relatively modest amount of funding.

KEY FINDINGS



"The basis.point strategy, of funding well-established organisations, implementing evidence-based interventions with high fidelity, has produced a **high level of impact in a short space of time** with a relatively **modest amount of funding**. This is a sound investment strategy which **yields high impact relatively quickly**."

The first two basis.point grants have been very successful and have largely achieved their core objectives resulting in direct and indirect benefits for over;



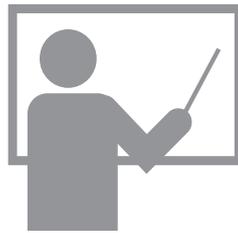
725
CHILDREN



46
FAMILIES

47

SCHOOL
STAFF

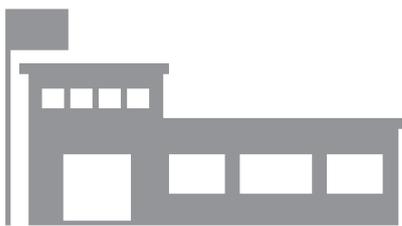


25

COMMUNITY
BASED STAFF



EXPANDING
INTO NEW
INNER CITY
AREAS



SCHOOLS
9



6
COMMUNITY
ORGANISATIONS

"The processes around identifying grantees, seeking applications, assessing applications, awarding and monitoring grants, ...on the basis of this evaluation **these processes have proved very robust**."



"The basis.point grants are a **good example of long-term social investment**. While immediate benefits are evident for children and families, the two programmes which have been supported are also **building social capital and educational capital** in the community which will have **much wider and longer-term benefits**."

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1. Background

Basis.point made its first two grants in 2015; the first to Archways to facilitate the implementation of the Incredible Years Programme in Dublin's inner city, and the second to the Early Learning Initiative at the National College of Ireland to facilitate the implementation in Dublin's inner city of the Parent Child Home Programme over two years. Basis.point is committed to the evaluation of grantees to determine the extent to which agreed objectives were met, to identify achievements and challenges experienced by grantees in order to share what has been learned by grantees and to capture what can be learned by basis.point as it goes forward in making further grants.

Genio was commissioned by basis.point to carry out an independent evaluation of the two grantees. Both grantees were implementing evidence-based programmes and the activities funded by the basis.point grant were part of a wider programme of work, both geographically and in terms of the interventions offered by these established organisations. Thus, the evaluation was not directed at the impact of these programmes in themselves or at the wider work of the organisation. It was designed as a high level evaluation of the delivery of the specific initiatives funded by basis.point to establish to what extent the grantees achieved their objectives and to capture stories of success, lessons learned, challenges encountered and how these were overcome.

The method adopted for this evaluation is outlined in Appendix 1.

This report is a concise account of the evaluation findings and conclusions. Links are provided throughout for more detailed information on the specific programmes and other areas which may be of interest. Two concepts that underpin the work described in this report are;

- Evidence-based programmes or interventions have demonstrated the highest level of evidence of effectiveness based on rigorous scientific evaluations, or large scale studies and which show significant and sustained effect. These programmes, if implemented with adherence to the model, are likely to produce positive outcomes.
- Fidelity can be defined as the extent to which delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocol or programme model originally developed i.e. is the programme delivered as intended. It is important to measure fidelity when delivering evidence-based programmes as high fidelity in implementation is the basis for confidence in programme outcomes.

The implementation of evidence-based programmes delivered with high fidelity means we can assume that similar outcomes are being achieved by the recipients (e.g. children, parents, teachers, etc.) without having to measure these directly.

2. The grantees

2.1 Archways

Archways is a national organisation established in 2006 which provides evidence-based programmes for children and families who are experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. One of these programmes is the Incredible Years (IY) Programme which is being delivered in Clondalkin, Ballymun and other areas in Ireland. Incredible Years was developed in the US and is an evidence-based programme that develops positive parent-teacher-child relationships and assists in preventing and treating behaviour problems and promoting social, emotional, and academic competence before a child becomes an adult¹. It contains separate training programmes for parents, teachers and children which are stand-alone interventions but can be delivered together as part of a wider strategy. The IY programme has been rigorously evaluated for almost 30 years, has been recommended by the American Psychological Association as an effective intervention and is used in many countries. Its use in Ireland has also been evaluated by a team in NUI Maynooth using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design². This study and a subsequent follow up, found significant and sustained positive outcomes, including;

- 71% of children showed improvements in behaviour;
- parents reported lower levels of stress and distress;
- parenting skills were improved;
- teacher classroom management skills were significantly improved; and
- teacher wellbeing and confidence in using the skills and strategies they learned were increased³.

2.1.1 *The Archways basis.point programme*

The aim of the Archways basis.point initiative was to make IY training for parents and teachers available to schools and community organisations in the inner city of Dublin. The application to basis.point outlined the specific objectives to be achieved and activities to be undertaken:

1. To target the geographical areas of Dublin 1, 2, 3 and 8.
2. To provide two Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) trainings which would train up to 36 teachers.
3. To provide two Parent Group Leader (PGL) trainings to train 32 parent facilitators to deliver one programme per year and train 192 parents.
4. To provide ongoing coaching and support post-training to ensure the programme is being delivered with fidelity.

¹ <http://incredibleyears.com/about/>

² An RCT is where participants are randomly assigned to an intervention or control group, ideally with all participants blind as to which group they are in. This study design produces a high level of confidence that the results achieved are due to the intervention.

³ McGilloway, S., Bywater, T., Ní Mháille, G, et al. (2009) *Proving the power of positive parenting: a Randomised Control Trial to investigate the effectiveness of the Incredible Years Basic Parent training programme in an Irish context (short-term outcomes)*. Other. Archways and NUI Maynooth.

2.2 The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at the National College of Ireland (NCI)

The ELI at NCI is a community-based educational initiative which provides evidence-based educational support programmes at each stage of a child's/young person's educational journey. The Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) is one of the programmes offered to parents and pre-school children (0-3 years) and is about "learning through play experience". This programme prepares children for later success in school. PCHP employs specially trained local women as Home Visitors. The Home Visitor meets the family twice a week, in their own home, for two short (1/2 hour) visits, during the school year. The Home Visitor brings suitable books and toys to the home. Each week a new book or toy is introduced and the Home Visitor models reading and play for the parent and child. The books and toys are then left as a gift to the family to continue the learning in their own time. The programme was developed 50 years ago in the US and has been rigorously tested to demonstrate significantly better educational outcomes and parent-child relationship outcomes. An evaluation of the PCHP by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College⁴ and subsequent longitudinal evaluations of the ELI programme have reported on the positive benefits of the programme for children and parents.



Early Learning Initiative

National College of Ireland

2.2.1 The ELI at NCI basis.point initiative

The aim of the basis.point funding was to provide the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP) to more families and to extend the reach of the overall ELI programme into another geographical area. The specific activities to be undertaken included:

1. To provide the PCHP to a further 25 families and work intensively with these families over two years.
2. To provide the PCHP in the North Wall Area, Summerhill/Mountjoy Square and areas of Dublin 7.
3. To recruit and train 6 new Home Visitors (HVs).
4. To provide support and resources for effective implementation.

The evaluation of both the Archways and ELI/NCI initiatives only considers the specific activities funded under the basis.point grants. These initiatives are located with organisations with a wider remit and range of activities which was not within the scope of this evaluation.

3. Evaluation findings

The evaluation findings are considered separately for the Archways basis.point programme and the ELI at NCI and are grouped under the following headings; achievement of objectives and changes; outcomes and impact; achievements and sustainability; and project management and financial arrangements.

3.1 The Archways basis.point programme

3.1.1 Achievement of objectives and changes to objectives

⁴ Share., M, Doyle, E. Callahan, A., et al. (2011) Baseline Evaluation of the Dublin Docklands Parent Child Home Programme. Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin.

Objective 1 – To target the geographical areas of Dublin 1, 2, 3 and 8

This objective was partially achieved as the TCM and PGL programmes were successfully rolled out in Dublin 1 and 7. The general focus area of the initiative could be described as North and South Inner City and using these descriptors the initiative was successfully rolled out in the North Inner City but not in the South. The use of postal codes in defining target areas, while useful, does not give sufficient specificity, as parts of D3 for example, were not within the remit of the initiative.

Dublin 1, 2 and 3 were new areas for the organisation. A process of awareness raising and engagement was required to recruit schools for the TCM training and community organisations for the PGL training. This process involved working through previous contacts and building out from existing organisations which had good links and relationships within the wider community to create awareness of who Archways were and what was involved in the IY programme and to build trust so that organisations and individuals were willing to engage with the programme. As well as these activities, an information event was held in the National College of Ireland to invite potential participating schools and organisations to participate. This event had the advantage of ‘piggy-backing’ on the positive reputation of NCI (and the NCI ELI programme in particular) in Dublin 1 and there was strong engagement from schools and community organisations in D1. However, in reflecting back on this meeting, Archways felt that this venue was not so accessible for Dublin 8 in particular, and may have affected the possibility of engagement from this area. While a community organisation from D2 was recruited for the PGL programme, there were only two DEIS⁵ schools in that area and neither came forward to participate. There was no engagement from D3 (the target area was East Wall). Again there are few DEIS schools in this area. The IY programme had been rolled out in the D8 area some years ago and there may have been a saturation effect for this area, although one school on the fringes of D8 (actually in D12) became involved in the third round of the TCM training.

However, awareness also spread beyond the target areas to D7 where there was significant interest and engagement. In an initiative such as this, which requires schools and community organisations to make a commitment and to become involved, it is important to ‘go where the energy is’ to achieve success. Thus the reach in Dublin 1 and Dublin 7, while different to the application, falls within the aim of this initiative and the vision and intent of basis.point in providing this grant and there was strong and effective engagement in these two areas.

Objective 2: To provide two teacher classroom management (TCM) trainings

The original objective here was to provide two TCM trainings to train up to 36 staff. In the roll out of the initiative, an additional TCM training was provided, resulting in a total of 47 school staff being reached. Nine schools enrolled in the programme, three in Dublin 7, five in Dublin 1 and one in Dublin 12. Table 1 below gives the numbers of staff trained in each school and the approximate number of children impacted (i.e. in the classes in which these staff teach). This original objective was exceeded due to changes in objective 3 and the use of resources in another way (this is described below).

⁵ Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) is a Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The DEIS designation results in the targeting of additional teaching and support resources to such schools.

Table 1: Participating schools, number of staff trained and number of children impacted

School name	Area	Number of staff trained <i>Target 36</i>	Approximate number of children impacted*
St Gabriel's National School	D7	4	75
St Vincent's NS	D1	5	75 +
St Lawrence O'Toole JBC	D1	12	150 +
Stanhope Street NS	D7	5	75
Presentation School, George's Hill	D7	4	75
Holy Child Preschool	D1	3	50 +
St Lawrence O'Toole GNS	D1	9	125 +
Rutland NS	D1	1	25
Our Lady of the Wayside NS	D12	2	50
Total		45 (+ 2 non-teaching staff)	700 +

* The numbers of children impacted figures relate to classroom teachers. Figures for learning support teachers or special needs assistants have not been added as they are working with the same children as the classroom teachers. Equally figures for Principals have not been added, though in the experience of Archways, when principals attend the training, it can impact on the whole school and the training can lead to substantial changes within the school itself.

The type of staff included:

- 28 teachers
- 8 learning support teachers
- 5 special needs assistants
- 2 Principals
- 2 Deputy principal
- 1 Home School Community Liaison staff
- 1 secretary

The range of staff trained reflects the adoption of a 'whole school approach' by two schools (St Lawrence O'Toole JBS and St Lawrence O'Toole GNS). This helps develop a systematic approach across all staff and gives further consistency to the adoption of the IY programme throughout the school.

Objective 3: To provide two Parent Group Leader (PGL) trainings to train 32 parent facilitators who will train 192 parents

This objective was partially met with the training of 17 Parent Group Leaders from six community organisations (see Table 2). These were new geographical areas for Archways to work in and time was needed to identify relevant organisations and to build relationships so that organisations could make the commitment to training. In the 20 months to date, six organisations have been recruited and committed to having personnel trained as Parent Group Leaders. This slower pace of engagement with community organisations in the new areas and resultant reduced training commitment led to a discussion with basis.point regarding a different use of some of the grant funding. It was agreed with basis.point that another round of TCM training would be provided instead of one of the rounds of PGL training.

The target of 192 parents could not be reached due to the slower pace of engagement with community organisations and the smaller number of facilitators trained. In addition, the schools in the TCM training did not prove to be a very fruitful route for recruiting parents to take part in the parent groups. There seemed to be a greater gap between schools and parents/community than was the experience of Archways in other areas. It was also challenging for the community organisations to engage families in a 14 week training programme and there are social and environmental barriers to participation. However, 21 families have participated in an IY parent programme to date and the capacity is now established within the six organisations to continue to provide this training to further families, so it is likely that the target will be reached over a longer time frame

Table 2: Organisations participating in the PGL training

Organisation name	Number of participants	Job title of participants
One Family, Dublin 2	4	Parenting Team Member Counselling Support Worker Crèche Supervisor Director of Children and Parenting Services
Hill St. Family Resource Centre, Dublin 1	3	Child Development Worker Child Development Worker Project Manager
SAOL Project, Dublin 1	4	Senior Childcare Worker Children's Centre Locum Manager Children's Centre Locum Manager Children's Centre Manager
Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services, Dublin 7	3	Family Worker Family Worker Family Worker
Home School Community Liaison, St Lawrence O'Toole GNS, JBS, Dublin 1	1	Teacher
Little Treasure Community Crèche, Dublin 1	2	Childcare Coordinator Childcare Coordinator
	17 Participants	

Objective 4: To provide ongoing coaching and support post-training to ensure the programme is being delivered with fidelity.

This objective was fully achieved. Continuous contact is maintained with schools and the provision of the third TCM training with the schools strengthens these links further. Implementation and research workshops were provided to the staff of the six community organisations and seven additional support and supervision sessions were provided by Archways to ensure the programme was delivered with fidelity so that optimal outcomes can be achieved. With the support of the Archways trainer, one of the group leaders is pursuing the IY parent programme accreditation process.

3.1.2 Outcomes and impact

Ongoing fidelity measures were gathered in the course of this initiative and demonstrated that both programmes were being delivered with high fidelity. Thus, the outcomes achieved by the IY programme can be inferred from the previous evaluations of the programme conducted in Ireland, such as significant improvements in children's behaviour, and lower levels of stress and distress on the part of parents.

Previous evaluations⁶ have also reported how teacher classroom management skills were significantly improved; and teacher wellbeing and confidence in using the skills and strategies they learned were increased. These outcomes are evident from the qualitative reports collected by Archways during and after the delivery of the TCM programme in the schools in this initiative, as illustrated in these quotes from teachers:

During the training:

"Leaving feeling very positive and enthusiastic about new strategies to try. Has made me reflect upon my teaching skills and affirms a lot of the work I am doing, while also highlighting areas I could improve upon which is fantastic for my professional growth."

"Very helpful ideas and approaches to helping children with behaviour problems."

"Really loving the course. So practical and relevant. Really looking forward to bringing this back to school."

Following the training:

"The behaviour plan is a great place to start to address classroom problems"

"Tiered approach is an excellent way of looking at behaviour management."

3.1.3 Achievements, scaling and sustainability

Expanding the IY programme into new areas was an achievement. This is testament to the skills and experience of the Archways team in building relationships with schools and community organisations to ensure strong and effective participation. While there were challenges encountered in entering a new area which slowed down the progress of the initiative, these were not insurmountable as Archways demonstrated. The adoption of whole school engagement by two of the participating schools is important as this leads to a significant step-up in terms of impact for children attending the school, not just in the year that training takes place, but as an embedded way of teaching and interacting in a school

⁶ http://www.archways.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Files/Documents/Incredible_Years_Ireland_Study_-_Combined_12_Month_Follow_On_Report.pdf

that is self-sustaining. The engagement of Principals was also an achievement as these individuals are key to championing the programme within schools and can lead to greater sustainability.

In examining sustainability, capacity-building activities such as training trainers can be considered as 'self-sustaining' in that once people are trained they have the capacity to continue with the activity and many more parents and children, in this case, can benefit positively. The PGL programme is now embedded within two of the six community organisations which is a significant achievement. This means the programme will be sustained and offered to all families who access supports in these organisations. In the other four organisations personnel have been trained and will also be in a position to provide training on a more ad hoc basis. In this way the original target of 192 families is likely to be reached over a longer time scale.

The TCM programme is now part of the new Education Action Plan for the next two years. This is encouraging as the Department of Education and Skills (DES) is potentially an important source of funding into the future for the wider Archways organisation and for specific IY programmes.

3.1.4 Project management and financial arrangements

Archways is a registered charity and is signed up to the Governance Code. The project was successfully managed to achieve its objectives to a significant extent. The slower progress in one objective was used as an opportunity to do further work in another to ensure the funds were expended in a way that most closely fit the agreed objectives of the grant.

The change in focus on the objectives is reflected in the budget, where the change from two to one training session for the Parent Group Leader training led to a reduction in that budget line and an increase in the TCM budget line where this funding was reallocated. This reallocation did not cover the full cost of the additional TCM training, as two facilitators are required for this, but this extra cost was absorbed by Archways.

3.2 The NCI at ELI programme

3.2.1 Achievement of objectives and changes to objectives

Objective 1: To provide the PCHP to a further 25 families and work intensively with these families over two years.

This objective was fully met with 25 families fully engaged in the PHCP programme since Oct/Nov 2015 (one family joined in January 2016). Table 3 shows the extent of engagement with the programme for these 25 families compared to other families in the wider programme. The visits continue with all families until the all visits have been made (i.e. visits may extend beyond the 2 year time period to accommodate all visits).

There were no changes to the objectives from those set out in the application and letter of offer.

Table 3: Attendance rates for families in the wider PCHP and families funded by basis.point

	Year 1 families – wider PCHP programme	%	Families funded by basis.point	%
100% attendance	23	32%	11	44%
75% attendance	26	37%	9	36%
50% attendance	14	20%	4	16%
25% attendance	6	8%	1	4%
0-10 visits – 1 per fortnight or less	2	3%	0	0
Number of families	71		25	

Objective 2: To provide the PCHP in the North Wall Area, Summerhill/Mountjoy Square and areas of Dublin 7.

This objective was partially met. The 25 new families were largely from the Dublin 1 area (that is the North Wall Area, Summerhill/Mountjoy Square). No families were recruited from the D7 area. While North Wall was not a new area for the programme, Summerhill and Mountjoy Square were new areas. As with the Archways initiative, breaking into new areas is a slow process and can be challenging. For the ELI programme, access to the programme is through referral, either Public Health Nurses (PHNs)/other agencies (about 60%) or self-referral through 'word-of-mouth' awareness (about 40%). Both of these routes require an awareness to have been built up so people will access the programme and this had not happened to a sufficient extent in the D7 area.

Objective 3: To recruit and train 6 new Home Visitors (HVs).

This objective was exceeded through the recruitment of 8 new HVs. HVs are part-time and work on an hourly basis so while there were two more than the target recruited, the same number of families were visited. However, within the funding received, greater capacity was built in terms of HVs who will be available to the programme in the future. Two of the 8 HVs who were recruited are from the Chinese community. These HVs are visiting 8 of the 25 families and deliver the first year of PHCP through their native language and the second year through English. All HVs receive two uniforms. The uniforms help provide a recognisable 'brand' in the community which is well established and now well accepted.

All HVs are trained to Fetac level 5 and all 8 HVs completed 16 hours initial training and have supervision every week of the academic year for two hours per week. They also take part in ongoing training throughout the year as required, for example, on how to carry out the new assessments which the ELI has introduced.

Objective 4: To provide support and resources for effective implementation.

This objective was fully achieved with all participating children receive books and educational toys throughout the two year programme – usually one per visit. These resources are provided as part of the visits.

The provision of ongoing supervision and training is critical to implementing the programme with fidelity to ensure optimal outcomes and the ongoing supervision and training supports fidelity and also the regular assessment of children. The location of the ELI initiative within the NCI means that there is a strong infrastructure to support the programme and provide

ongoing training and implementation support. Fidelity measures were collected throughout the initiative and indicated that the programme was delivered with high fidelity.

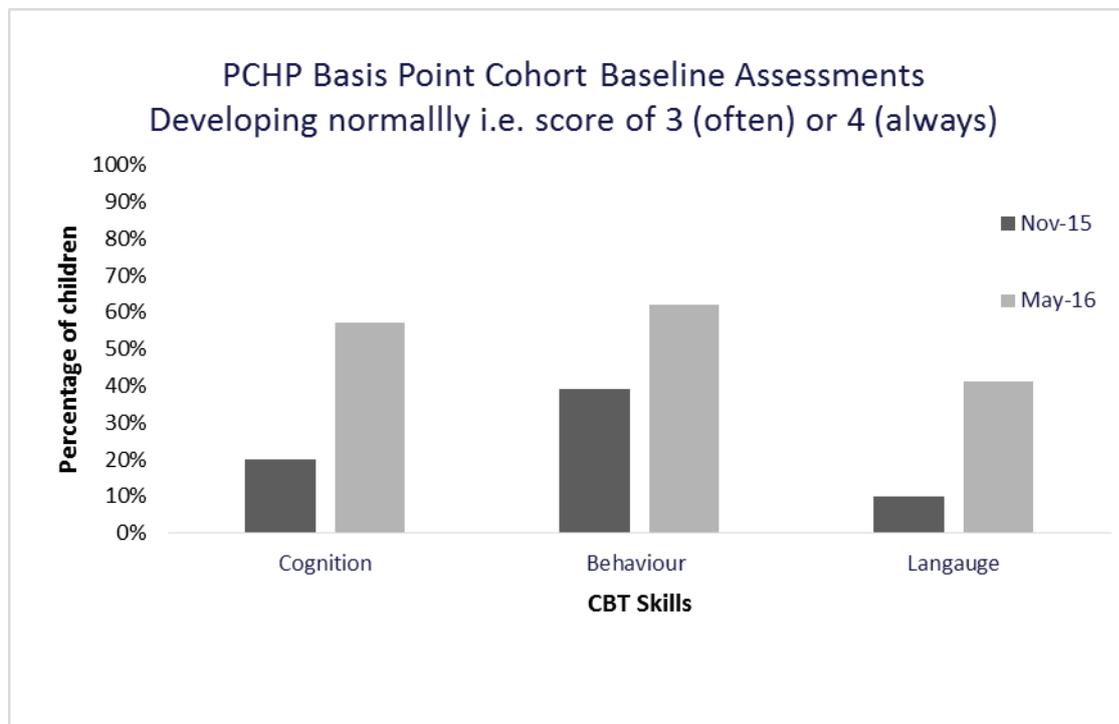
3.2.2 Outcomes and impact

The ELI at NCI is unusual in that individual-level outcomes data is routinely collected as part of the programme across three areas:

- Cognition – understands and completes activities
- Behaviour – demonstrates sharing and tolerates delays in having needs met
- Language – can describe pictures in a book using words or sentences

The children who are involved in the basis.point initiative have made significant progress in all three areas between their commencement in the programme in Nov 2015 over the six months to May 2016. Cognition scores increased by 37 percentage points, behaviour scores by 23 points and language by 31 points (see Figure 1). The baseline language scores for the children in these 25 families were lower than the previous year Docklands cohort. This may be due to the greater intake of families from the Mountjoy Square, Ballybough and Summerhill areas which are more disadvantaged than some of the Docklands areas. There are also more referrals from Public Health Nurses who are noticing more children with speech delays. Despite this lower starting point in terms of language skills, the children had made very significant gains by the end of the first year and had 'caught up' with other cohorts from the ELI programme.

Figure 1: PHCP basis.point initiative participants. Assessment scores at baseline and 6 months



Outcomes can be considered as direct and indirect. The direct outcomes or benefits are those that arise for children as a result of the intervention they receive, such as improvements in language skills as described above. However, there are also other 'downstream' or indirect benefits which are important in describing the wider impact of such

programmes. For example, other children and subsequent children in the household will benefit from the skills the parent has gained resulting in a multiplier effect. Another important example is the HVs who are all members of the local community and have received accredited training, valued employment and income as a result of the programme. One quarter of HVs are parents who previously participated in the programme (one of the new HVs recruited under the basis.point initiative was a previous participant). Eleven HVs are taking part in the Early Years degree in NCI (two of whom are HVs in the basis.point initiative). The initiative also builds capacity and sense of belonging in the community. An 'ELI family' is developing with the wider community where people know each other as they meet in ordinary places, particularly the HVs. One grandmother of a child in the programme who is from a migrant community, attended the ELI Christmas party and spoke of how this was the first time she had been invited to an event like this as 'herself', that is a grandmother and not a 'representative' of a particular community.

Some of the feedback from parents captures the benefits of the programme:

At first it was a struggle with the books but he absolutely loves them now. I read to him every day. He loves the play dough, building blocks and tea sets.

I have learnt to have more patience. Perhaps to lower my expectations and take more time when completing tasks. I just found the programme is amazing. My child looks forward to the home visitor coming every week, she has so much patience and is professional at all times. I have enjoyed watching my child grow and develop over the past few months.

And from the Home Visitors:

X had no words when I started end of November. Now he can say book, bike, ball, duck, lots of words coming. I have also suggested to mum to take soother away during day to encourage X to talk and she has and its working.

X is great he loves the books but he gets excited at a certain book he likes, he just wants to see it. I'm looking forward to next year with him to see how he comes on.

3.2.3 Achievements, scaling and sustainability

The key achievement of the ELI was being able to reach more children and families through the grant funding. The recruitment of Chinese home visitors was also a significant achievement and will enable the ELI to extend their reach into this community. The rolling out of the Parent and Child Together (PACT) Assessment was a significant achievement as this built further capacity in the HVs who were trained to use it and it will also add another dimension to the evidence base for the ELI at NCI programme.

The ELI at NCI has a significant level of partnership with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and other agencies. The Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme provides 54% of ELI's income which comes from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This means that the core of the ELI programme will be sustained for the foreseeable future. Other funding, through fundraising activities, enables scaling of the programme into other geographical areas and to greater numbers of children, young people and families.

3.2.4 Project management and financial arrangements

The NCI takes full responsibility for the financial, management, contractual, reporting and governance requirements of the ELI. It has robust standards of corporate governance and is signed up to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising, The Regulation of

Lobbying Act 2015 and The Governance Code. The NCI does not charge any central overhead to ELI and has absorbed historical deficits between funding available and the cost of delivering ELI programmes and services.

There is likely to be an overspend on the overall initiative funded by basis.point, largely due to pay increases to HVs and the fact that PRSI was not factored into the budgeted amount for HVs. This overspend will be absorbed by the NCI. The overall PCHP programme costs €318,371, the bulk of this funding coming from the ABC Funding and a proportion from other funders.

4. Learning from grantees

Both Archways and ELI at NCI are organisations which take time to reflect and learn and have been involved in several evaluations of their work. They have many years of experience in delivering their programmes and are well established as respected organisations in their respective geographical areas and areas of expertise. For these reasons there was little evidence of the challenges and learning we might expect in organisations which were either in a set-up phase as organisations, or in terms of learning how to effectively implement their programmes. However, there were some insights in terms of challenges encountered and what had been learned.

For Archways a key learning was that entering a new area takes time. While they have experience in implementing this programme in several areas already, there is no way of speeding up this process in a new area, as it essentially involves relationship building. The communities being targeted have high levels of disadvantage and high level of problems such as drug addiction and the criminality associated with this activity. For these reasons there is a high degree of suspicion regarding individuals and organisations doing any work in the locale. It is important to recognise that time, effort and resource is required to slowly build relationships and trust so that community organisations, schools, parents and others will engage with the new work being undertaken. This can result in a lead-in time that needs to be taken account in targets and time scales. Unforeseen events in the wider environment, such as the shootings in the area and resultant tension and police activity are real world factors which impinge on the ability of organisations to progress their work.

An unexpected challenge was the disconnect between the participating schools and their communities, which had not been the experience in other areas in which Archways had worked. There was a greater gap to be bridged which meant there was not an immediate route to recruit parents to take part in the training offered by the Parent Group Leaders. The community organisations were the means of accessing parents which was difficult as there was a slower response from the community organisations. However, Archways identified an alternative course of action in terms of maximising the output from the basis.point funding and instead of providing a second PGL training course, they provided a third TCM training. This enabled more school staff to be trained and for the TCM programme to become more strongly embedded in the participating schools.

Although the ELI at NCI is a well-established programme which has been refined through several years of implementation experience, the learning for ELI was the need to be responsive to events in the wider environment on an ongoing basis. Since February 2016 gang-related shootings have created a dangerous environment for Home Visitors. Additional training and support has been provided to the HVs to cope with this environment. In these scenarios their uniforms and NCI ID cards have been very helpful. As with the experience of

Archways, recruiting families in a new area can be slow and word-of-mouth has proved to be very important. The strong reputation of ELI has been important in speeding up this process. Also direct contact with participating children, through extended family for example, who see these children making more progress than their own children means people actively seek out the programme and want to be involved. It is not seen as a programme for people with 'problems' but as a positive way of supporting your children to 'get ahead'.

5. Analysis

5.1 Achievements

The first basis.point grantees have achieved a huge amount. In terms of numbers:

- More than 725 children have benefitted directly
- 46 families have gained new skills
- 47 school staff have received comprehensive training
- 25 community-based staff have been trained and 8 have gained employment through one of the programmes
- 9 schools have participated
- 6 community organisations have participated.

Both grantees fully achieved most of their objectives. For objectives that were not completely achieved, they took constructive approaches to maximising what could be achieved within the grant funding. The objective that was the most challenging for both grantees was the extension into new locations. This was achieved, not strictly by post code area, but definitely with the North Inner City which was the general area agreed with basis.point and the grantees as the focus for the funded activities.

5.2 The counterfactual

A counterfactual analysis is a comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention. As both programmes used strongly evidence-based interventions, whose fidelity in implementation was monitored, there is a high degree of confidence that the outcomes described in previous evaluations would pertain here and would not have happened in the absence of the interventions. Thus, significant gains were made by the children in ELI in terms of the skills they need when starting school. Teachers and parents in the IY programme acquired skills to better address the behavioural and emotional difficulties they may experience with their children.

In the case of this evaluation, the counterfactual analysis is also considering what would have happened in the absence of the basis.point grant, i.e. what difference did the funding make. The funding was provided for a quantified and measurable extension of existing programmes and this happened as described above; 25 families and their children benefitted from the NCI Early Learning Initiative and 8 Home Visitors were employed; and 47 teaching staff, 17 facilitators and 21 families benefitted from the Archways initiative. The grant funding was provided to well-established organisations who could easily scale their existing operations to add more capacity (for example, more Home Visitors or more training sessions) and thus increase the number of beneficiaries. Essentially, without the additional funding provided through the basis.point grants, these children, families, teachers and communities would not have received the interventions and would not have benefitted from the programmes.

5.3 Longer term impact

However, this is not a case of simply 'buying more'. The basis.point grants are a long-term social investment. Immediate benefits are evident for children and families but it is essential to consider the wider impact on the community and the longer term impact that results from the grants. The two programmes which have been supported are building social capital and educational capital in the community and have much wider benefits as described in sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.2 above.

The international evidence on the positive externality produced by investments in early intervention are compelling. According to the Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman;

“It is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy. Early interventions for disadvantaged children promote schooling, raise the quality of the workforce, enhance the productivity of schools and reduce crime, teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency. They raise earnings and promote social attachment.”⁷

Heckman has also calculated the likely return from investment in early childhood education to be 10% per annum for every dollar. He estimates that \$8,000 invested in early education will return \$650,183 over the lifetime of a single person as the annual rate of return on the original investment is compounded at a 7% per annum rate up to age 65⁸.

Given that the two programmes supported by basis.point have been rigorously evaluated and were delivered with fidelity to the programmes and that they have already demonstrated positive outcomes in Ireland, there is a high degree of confidence that they will have significant positive and long-term impacts on the children, their families, and their wider communities. This is not typically the case for many community-based interventions, where outcomes and positive benefits are much harder to identify and quantify and it is also usually much more difficult to attribute wider impact and longer-term impact to such interventions.

6. Learning re grant-making

6.1 Learning from grantees

While there were challenges encountered in entering a new area which slowed down the progress of the Archways initiative, these were not insurmountable and steady progress was made in engaging with community organisations which is likely to be maintained into the future. There is significant potential to scale the IY programme to other areas in Dublin and nationally. Archways has rolled the programme out to other areas in Ireland and Belfast. It is likely that challenges will be encountered in any new area depending on a variety of local social, economic and historical factors but Archways has demonstrated that it is possible to overcome these to successfully grow the programme in new areas. Future grant making could benefit from building in time and resource within the grant envelope, to scope out new areas, for example identifying key organisations and individuals with whom relationships

⁷ Heckman, J. (2006) UCD Geary Institute Policy Paper No.1

⁸ <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/letter-national-commission-fiscal-responsibility-and-reform>

should be built. This could facilitate a smoother entrance into a new area. This learning point applies equally to the EC/NLI initiative, where challenges were also encountered in developing the programme in a new area.

While the separate TMC and parent programmes in the IY programme confer positive benefits, there is a complementarity to the two programmes such that when both are delivered together their combined impact is much greater. Teachers can reinforce what the parents are doing at home and vice versa. This type of complementarity did not happen as much as it could have in the Archways initiative, due to the reasons outlined earlier. In future funding decisions where programme complementarity is important, it would be useful to recognise this in how funding is provided/awarded. For example, an initial scoping could be funded and carried out to determine whether the conditions are in place to support complementary programmes and then further funding allocated or not based on the findings.

In terms of sustainability and the Archways initiative, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) are training some of their staff in TCM and may roll out the TCM programme more widely. A potential area of focus for basis.point could be to fund the parent programme in a complementary way. This would increase the impact of both programmes than if both were delivered separately and could 'multiply' the effect of any funding provided. It would be worth waiting to see how DES roll out the TCM programme and how effective that process is before making any commitments. It may be worth meeting with DES to see if they would be interested in a complementary approach as for this to have an optimal impact, the two programmes (TCM and parent) would need to be implemented simultaneously on a school-by-school basis.

Both grantees had positive comments about the application process, reporting process and other interactions with basis.point. They felt the application assessment process was very thorough and very fair. Both would welcome greater interaction with members of basis.point and would be happy to provide opportunities for members to see the work in action, which can bring the numbers and reports to life a very powerful way, although they acknowledged the demands on everyone's time. The comments in this section are based largely on the experience of Genio in large scale application processes and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on over 200 grantees.

6.2 Application process and documentation

There are some improvements that could be made to the application form to ensure basis.point gets the information it needs as clearly as possible. Refinement of the questions regarding the project description, aims & objectives, activities and outcomes would help produce clearer statements of objectives and activities. These, in turn, could be used to monitor the grants and to structure reporting templates.

6.2.2 Letter of contract/grant agreement letter

A clear statement of the aims, objectives and activities should form part of the grant award letter, ideally drawn directly from the application. This is a clear statement of what is being funded, what it is expected will be achieved and what will be monitored and reported on.

There are further clauses/sections that could be included such as:

- The process for making changes to the objectives and activities
- The process for making changes in how the budget is to be spent

While the process of identifying and seeking applications was not an explicit part of this evaluation, basis.point does not seem to have explicit criteria to assist in this process. The availability of such criteria would be helpful in this process of identifying potential grantees

and also in managing expectations from other organisations which may seek funding. Such criteria could also be used in assessing the content of applications that are made.

6.3 Monitoring of grants and reporting

The most practical way to monitor the performance of grantees in the absence of a significant resource to conduct site visits, is through the collection of information on progress towards the agreed objectives using a template form. This could copy over the objectives and activities as per the application and letter of offer, and 3 monthly or 6 monthly reports could be requested. The reporting form could also allow space for capturing more qualitative information that would be valuable, such as challenges encountered and how these were addressed.

In addition, basis.point needs to set out the information that will be required of grantees at the commencement of the grant, so that this can be routinely collected and necessary provision made within the organisation.

If possible, a member of basis.point should visit with each grantee at least once in the course of the grant. This is a really useful way to learn about what is happening and the difference the funding is making. Sitting in on training sessions or other activities (if appropriate) is the best way to get a real sense of what is happening, rather than at special events or occasions.

Reporting requirements need to be proportional to the amount of funding provided and cognisance needs to be taken of the demands placed on small organisations for reporting. This is particularly the case for financial reporting. Organisations may have several sources of funding, of which a grant may be a very small proportion, or may be hosted by a larger organisation, in which case full accounts may not be relevant. The requirements for financial accountability and reporting also need to be made clear at the commencement of the grant.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The first two basis.point grants have been very successful and have achieved their core objectives resulting in direct and indirect benefits for over 725 children, 46 families, 47 school staff, 25 community-based staff, 9 schools and 6 community organisations. This is a very significant return for an investment of €118,179. The basis.point strategy, of funding well-established organisations, implementing evidence-based interventions with high fidelity, has produced a high level of impact in a short space of time with a relatively modest amount of funding. This is a sound investment strategy which yields high impact relatively quickly. Another advantage of funding well-established organisations which have an existing funding base is that there was relatively little overhead cost and the organisations could scale their operation to cater for additional numbers.

In terms of the development of basis.point as a young philanthropic organisation, this is probably a strategy worth pursuing in the short to medium term, in order to build a portfolio of successful grants that can fairly easily demonstrate strong and meaningful results and demonstrate the possibilities of transforming the lives of hundreds of children. This type of success should be helpful in supporting basis.point to encourage further members to join and grow fundraising so that further grants can be made. In relation to the basis.point mission to support charities with a focus on education, there is a wide range of well-tested interventions and programmes in this area and so a prudent approach to achieving maximum impact with minimum risk is to continue with this approach. Areas which can also

yield impact but may be less strongly evidence-based are in community-development or personal development-type programmes.

However, in considering longer term strategy, it may be useful for the board to consider more early stage organisations and/or interventions at the development stage. , There may be a greater risk in terms of grantees not achieving what they set out to do and there will definitely be a greater lead-in time before results are evident, but there is also a possibility of significant success. For example, if basis.point had supported ELI back in 2005/06, there would have been very slow progress in terms of numbers being reached and outcomes being achieved. However, the ELIs and Archways of the future may need support to emerge and grow to a point where they can achieve the kind of outcomes that the current grantees have achieved. This may be a role basis.point wishes to play in the longer term.

In terms of the basis.point processes around identifying grantees, seeking applications, assessing applications, awarding and monitoring grants, on the basis of this evaluation these processes have proved very robust. There are some areas for refinement and development such as developing clear criteria against which grant applications can be assessed, improving the application form so that there is greater clarity on the aims, objectives and activities and then using these to provide a structure for the monitoring of grants and reporting.

7.1 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that basis.point continue with its current strategy of funding established organisations delivering evidence-based interventions and programmes to achieve robust impact in a relatively short space of time.
2. In identifying future organisations for grant funding it is recommended that some high level criteria which could be considered include: the track record and experience of the organisation itself; the content of their programme or intervention (is it evidence-based, other attributes that make it worth funding etc.); the clarity around aims and objectives; and how much they know about implementation and how good their implementation processes are.
3. It is recommended that grant making processes and documentation are refined to ensure greater clarity and efficiency in the reporting and monitoring of grants.
4. It is recommended that a range of grant-making strategies be considered to respond to the complexity of the programmes that may be funded (e.g. with complementary streams) and the challenge of 'breaking new ground' -either geographically or with different target groups and so on. For example, awarding a scoping grant to test out some of these issues with a larger grant being conditional on the outcome of such as exercise.

Appendix 1

Evaluation methodology

A high level evaluation was required which would:

1. *Assess the performance* of the two grantees in delivering against their project proposal (objectives, targets, etc.) detailed in their application, award/letter of offer.
2. *Identify the main achievements and accomplishments* of the grantees and to what extent benefits will be sustained and scalable if further grants were to be made.
3. *Assesses how the programme of work for each grantee evolved* since the original proposal and identify any changes.
4. *Assess the project management and financial arrangements*. This will include an analysis of actual versus budgeted expenditure with reasons identified for any substantive differences which may emerge.
5. *Comment on lessons learned and implications for future projects*. In particular, to describe challenges that were encountered, how these were overcome and the learning that emerged.
6. *Consider the counterfactual* – to what extent might outcomes have been different if the grantees had not carried out their activities.
7. *Comment on the grant application, monitoring and reporting processes* and identify potential improvements to these processes.
8. *Produce an analysis* based on all the above that would make recommendations where appropriate, on how the implementation of the projects and the generation of outcomes could be enhanced.

The main methodologies used included:

- Systematic documentation review and consideration of relevant literature. This will inform the content of the interview questions and topics;
- Interviews with the project leaders and other key stakeholders;
- Transcription and analysis of interviews and analysis of project budgets;
- Compilation of quantitative data from project documentation, budgets and interviews.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff in Archways and the Early Learning Initiative who met with us in the course of this evaluation and who provided generously of their time and knowledge. Their participation and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

About Genio

Genio works to bring Government and philanthropic funders together to develop better ways to support disadvantaged people to live full lives in their communities, specifically in the areas of disability, mental health and dementia. Since 2010, we have awarded funding to 226 projects nationally to provide over 5,500 people with individualised supports in the community. In addition over 9,000 families, carers and staff have attended information and training events through the projects we support.

Our approach to this work has three elements:

- **Innovation funding:** Release of funds on a competitive basis to encourage innovation and cost-effectiveness. These funds are outcome-focused and performance managed.
- **Learning and skills:** Support and training of key stakeholders to manage and implement required changes.
- **Measuring impact:** Ongoing monitoring of projects to identify learning alongside the undertaking and commissioning of research to measure impact.

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