



## Country profile **IRELAND** V4.0



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## Overview

MEDIA LITERACY DEVELOPMENT					
Little consideration is given to the <b>ML skills in the educational curriculum and life-long learning.</b>					<b>Media skills development is a core objective and is dealt with systematically in the curriculum.</b> <b>Adequate resources are available.</b> <b>Evaluation takes place both within and outside of the education system.</b>
Hardly any basic <b>teacher training</b> given.					ML forms <b>part of basic and further teacher training.</b> Both, technical and critical awareness are included. Systematic ML training for parents and teachers.
Non existent <b>ML evaluation systems.</b>					<b>ML is evaluated</b> not only in an educational context, but as a basic life skill.
Scarce <b>access to and production of didactic resources.</b>					Didactic resources aimed at teachers, parents and professionals exist. <b>There are centres with up-to-date resources</b> that are well organised and produced on a regular basis.
<b>Systems for guidance and orientation on ML</b> doesn't exist.					Important <b>centres for ML guidance and orientation exist.</b> Good systems for coordinating and uniting efforts.
<b>Stable ML campaigns</b> doesn't exist.					There are important, large-scale and far-reaching <b>ML initiatives and events</b>
<b>Specialised government or public departments on ML</b> doesn't exist.					<b>Organised centres exist</b> that bring together different areas of public administration
Almost none <b>Involvement of civil associations with ML.</b>					<b>There are important and influential associations involved with ML</b> which unite different entities and promote relations between different institutions.
They are hardly any <b>regulatory authorities</b> involved in the area of ML.					<b>Regulatory authorities</b> are constant and systematic in the area of ML. They endorse parliamentary, institutional and civic participation. They evaluate the progress of media literacy.
<b>Media</b> barely broaches ML programmes and initiatives.					Systematic and regular <b>ML projects launched by public media</b> take place, in conjunction with other institutions and entities.
<b>Media industry's mediation towards citizens</b> is not well developed					<b>Systematic and coherent mediation.</b> Particular attention paid to plans for media literacy. In connection with services for consumer protection
Very sporadic and incoherent <b>visibility and public debate on ML</b>					Important <b>events and fairs take place on a regular basis.</b> Support of public institutions. Emphasis on media literacy. Active involvement of citizens.
<b>Incentives for creative production by citizens</b> hardly exist.					Good <b>promotion in all contexts.</b> There are prizes, support mechanisms and grants. There are also festivals and fairs specifically aimed at children and young people.
<b>Research</b> rarely deals with ML subjects.					There are specific <b>institutions for research, Permanent Observatories and regular and continuous studies.</b> High level of participation in international networks.
Rare participation in <b>international cooperation initiatives.</b>					Leadership and international reference. Centres with <b>international links.</b>
<b>Participation of families.</b>					Good level of association and dedication to the theme. There is cooperation and unity between institutions. Good participation at an international level.
<b>Few Commercial communication initiatives.</b>					Specific centres and initiatives.

## General situation

### Media Literacy in the curriculum

Currently, media education seems widespread and vibrant within the school curriculum, particularly at primary level. However, as a forthcoming report into Media Literacy in Ireland<sup>1</sup> indicates, there are discrepancies between the official curriculum, its representation in policy, and how it manifests in the classroom. In that report, it is argued that media literacy in Ireland lacks coherence, consistency, equality of access and reach.

According to a 2002 report, while many schools are engaged in media education projects, they may not do so as any recognised contribution to media literacy (Merry and Titley 2002: 68).<sup>2</sup> This highlights a widespread concern about the need for consistency and agreement about definitions of media literacy and media education, as well as aims and future objectives for their development. One significant factor in the lack of coherence is due to the fact that the curriculum currently accommodates media education at various stages and within subjects (such as English, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)), yet it is not formally assessed and neither is it compulsory. Therefore, its implementation is open to interpretation by individual teachers, principals and boards of management. In most instances, because no official policies exist in schools, media projects are subsequently dependent on the motivation of individual teachers (with varying degrees of training and resources) in order to champion any media initiatives.

This, coupled with the fact that many schools are inadequately resourced, contributes to their feeling excluded from media education rather than part of an ongoing movement. Another factor that detracts from media literacy acquiring 'critical mass' is its place within the curriculum. Currently, media studies are 'stranded' into subjects such as English, rather than as a 'stand-alone' subject. At present, it also seems very unlikely that media studies will be introduced as a 'stand-alone' subject in (already overburdened) Irish curricula, at either primary or post-primary levels. These factors, combined with a prevalent attitude towards media as a 'soft' subject, means that its profile needs to be raised.

However, such a change may be about to happen as a result of very recent developments. The interest of several organisations. Dublin Institute of Technology, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin City University and National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and others have elevated the topic from the applied, academic and research perspectives. The Broadcast Commission of Ireland (BCI) has recently sent out a call for proposals, the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) is currently introducing significant changes to curricula at Primary and Post-Primary levels. It remains to be seen whether the culmination of these and other factors may represent a critical turning point in the development of media literacy in Ireland.

### *Background to Media Education in Ireland*

Media education was introduced to Irish schools throughout the late 1970s – at that time there existed a rapidly-increasing young population, economic recession and poor job prospects for many school leavers, all of which coincided with the opening up of Irish society. These factors placed immense strain on an already outdated school curriculum.

No clear policy for media education existed, therefore any efforts made by teachers to develop media projects were exceptional. In 1978, a Vocational Preparation and Training Programme was devised for early school leavers that included media in its communications syllabus. In 1984, a revised version of this aimed to 'develop an awareness of the nature and function of communications in contemporary society' and to enable students to 'acquire greater social competence' (O'Neill, 2000)<sup>3</sup>. This provided an early opportunity for some teachers to introduce elements of contemporary culture into the curriculum.

Simultaneously, the education department of the Irish Film Institute (IFI) provided film and media studies seminars and courses which helped develop critical debate around the media's contribution to and representation of Irish life. This further encouraged teachers to highlight the importance of media studies in the

<sup>1</sup> 'Critical Media Literacy in Ireland', The Radharc Trust, Dublin Institute of Technology and Dublin City University, forthcoming Autumn, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Merry, P. and Titley, G. (2002) 'Report on Media Literacy and Image Education in Ireland, the Netherlands, UK'. In this they discuss the state of media education, how certain media activities lack recognition and the contentiousness of terms used to describe Media Education.

<sup>3</sup> O'Neill, B (2000) 'Media Education in Ireland', *Irish Communications Review*, Vol. 8, pp. 57-64.

curriculum. The Curriculum Development Unit of the CDVEC, based in Trinity College, also developed teaching resources, in-service training and piloted new educational initiatives across a number of subject areas including media studies. However, it was not until after the first National Media Education Conference in 1985, that the Teachers' Association for Media Education (TAME) was established. In a 2002 study, Merry and Titley focused on the activities of TAME and highlighted the importance of the groups' activities. TAME worked extensively to raise the profile of Media Education by providing workshops, conferences and seminars throughout that period, and also published a text book in 2001 (Merry and Titley 2002: 31-32). However, currently ( in 2007) TAME has been inactive for several years, leaving Irish media education without a centralised organisation or support network.

#### *Standards of attainment in media literacy*

As a response to the manifest needs of a knowledge society, the eEurope 2002 Action Plan aimed to address the ways in which traditional education needed to adapt to changes in the workplace.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the Irish government recognised the significance of developments within the educational sector for the knowledge society. This was indicated in at least two documents: the *Schools IT2000, A Policy Framework for the New Millennium* (1998)<sup>5</sup> and *A Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education* (2001).<sup>6</sup> The Blueprint outlined the main impetus of the Government's three-year strategy: to increase ICT capital provision for schools, expand access to and use of Internet technologies, further integrate ICT into learning and teaching, and enhance teacher professional development to facilitate the uptake of software and multimedia resources.

One significant development from the *Schools IT2000, A Policy Framework for the New Millennium* document, was that it led to the establishment of the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) in 1998. This policy document also contained three major initiatives: a Technology Integration Initiative (TII); a Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI) and a Schools Support Initiative (SSI) – which included a Schools Integration Project (SIP) and the development of ScoilNet.

However, as indicated earlier, most media initiatives in Irish schools have developed in isolation and as O'Neill indicates "nearly all of which incorporated some elements of applied communications studies but for which skills acquisition was the primary emphasis".<sup>7</sup> This legacy has left an emphasis on the importance of computer literacy and associated skills reflected in the Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education. However, despite major efforts by teachers and support groups, media education remains under developed at a national level. Although in more recent years this has begun to change considerably, alongside an acknowledgement of the centrality and importance of media in the lives of young people, there is currently no clear and cohesive development plan for the future of media education in Irish curricula.

#### **Actors in ML**

Currently, no single agency has responsibility for overseeing or implementing Media Literacy in Ireland. Instead, while many initiatives have been very successfully implemented in formal and informal settings, there has been no consistency or coherence in fostering its advancement. However, the agencies listed below have significantly increased the profile of media literacy, although others that have significantly contributed to its development are also listed at the end of this section.

Policy development for Media Literacy is one of the aims of the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE). To date, it has introduced a Schools Integration Project (SIP), a Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools (SAFT) project, relating to security on the Internet, the Online Children in Education (ONCE) initiative and the Film in Schools (FIS) project.

The Irish Film Institute (IFI) is responsible for the development of Irish filmography, film education and film audiences; it also functions as a source of investigation and information, as well as a promoter of Irish movies.

Through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Media Education has been significantly developed and information is obtainable online at their website. Within the framework of the curriculum, teacher guidelines are available, in-service training has been provided and support is accessible through the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). While assessment guidelines are presented for teachers, media studies are not compulsory and this is an ongoing issue.

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/2002/action\\_plan/pdf/actionplan\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/2002/action_plan/pdf/actionplan_en.pdf). (p.14)

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education and Science (1998). *Schools IT 2000: A Policy Framework for the New Millennium*

<sup>6</sup> Department of Education and Science (2001). *A Blueprint for the future of ICT in Irish Education*

<sup>7</sup> O'Neill, B (2000)

The civil society is represented by associations such as Science and Technology in Action, a website funded with the participation of organisations from private and public sectors, and by Teachnet. MediaForum is a relative newcomer with a remit for promoting and assisting Media Literacy projects. The experiences and work with communities or vulnerable social groups such as EIRI Corca Bariscinn are also a significant contribution.

Craol (the community radio forum of Ireland) has emerged as a formal legal entity representing all twenty one licensed stations and more than ten others. It is an accredited FETAC training centre and designs its own courses. It is also recognised by the BCI as one of the strongest networks in the country.

Media Literacy is an issue of increasing interest in Ireland. Organisations such as the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI), the Digital Media Forum (DMF) and Media Forum are all actively pursuing research and policy development for Digital Literacy. Some initiatives have collaborated with educational organisations such as Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Dublin City University (DCU) and the Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT). Perhaps because many of these initiatives have been undertaken (sometimes at great personal expense to those involved) as 'isolated' efforts, they have not achieved the recognition they might achieve (and generally deserve) as part of a concerted effort.

### **Statistics Information Society**

With a population of approximately 4,210,000, Ireland is in the 4th place in the Human Development Index (HDI). A 99% of the Irish in school age, studies some of the three educational levels (primary, secondary, upper).

The 99% of the homes counts with at least one television set, while the 98% has access to telephone lines and the 36% have a computer, and 50% has access to Internet. As regards media consumption, 24.9% of the Irish sees television more than three hours, 29.9% listens radio in the same measure and 67.6% read the newspapers almost one hour.

## 1. Media Literacy-related policies and actions

### 1.1 Government and authorities

#### National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE)

[www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie)



#### Key reason

The NCTE designs and implements ICT training programmes for teachers and provides advice, support and encouragement in the use of technologies by teachers and students.

#### Definition

It is the Government agency on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education to maximise the benefits for students and teachers in the use of ICT. It provides advice and develops policy proposals for the Department of Education and Science (DES) on issues related to the development and use of ICT.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Technology Integration Initiative (TII).** It comprises a number of programs which primarily involve supporting improved levels of high quality ICT infrastructure in schools.
- **Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI).** This project has put in place a comprehensive training programme for teachers centred around a three-phase approach - ranging from basic skills, through professional skills to pedagogical skills development.
- **Digital Content.** Provides digital resources that are relevant to the Irish curriculum.
- **Scoilnet.** Online resource providing curricular support and information to students, teachers and parents.
- [www.french.ie](http://www.french.ie). Portal website developed as a resource to support teachers of French in Ireland.
- **Special Educational Needs (SEN).** The special needs area of the NCTE strives to ensure that the needs of students with special educational needs, and their teachers, are integrated into all the main ICT initiatives. The development and dissemination of information and advice for teachers is the focus of this initiative.
- **Schools Integration Project (SIP).** This programme was set up to examine and pilot models of technology integration in schools.

The NCTE is involved in collaborating on "innovative projects".

- **FIS** - The Film in Schools initiative ([www.fis.ie](http://www.fis.ie))
- **Webwise** - An internet safety initiative.
- **SAFT** (Safety Awareness Facts and Tools) project - A European initiative on Internet safety
- **ONCE** - The Online Children in Education project.

#### Target groups

General public, school management, policy makers, unions, teachers, students and parents.

## 1.2 Civil society

### Community Media Network (CMN)

[www.cmn.ie](http://www.cmn.ie)



#### Key reason

It promotes community development and social justice through access to and the use of media as a resource to reach the disadvantaged in Ireland.

#### Definition

CMN is a 32-county, not-for-profit organisation embracing all forms of media. It facilitates those using different media to support progressive development and social justice to build a comprehensive media resource and archive, providing information, networking opportunities and access to production resources and to bring together groups involved in Media in Ireland.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Building Community Media in Ireland.** Transnational project to promote community development and empowerment, using video, radio, photography, print and the Internet as resource tools.
- **CEDIS (Community Empowerment through Distance Education in the Information Society).** Pilot project, focusing on three states: Ireland, Greece and Italy, with transnational cooperation as a central aspect. Proposed themes include cooperation; in developing project resources for each country; between the final target groups during the training; in producing a final package; in disseminating output within each country and to other EU member states.
- **Grassroots.** Project which grew out of the CEDIS Project and is still being developed. The aim of the project is to give groups a web presence through a shared website. Each participating group has their own webpage which is hosted by CMN on the grassroots site.
- **A Day at the Races.** Collaborative project between groups and individuals from the refugee, traveller, ethnic and migrant communities to produce two video documentaries, six radio programmes and a series of photographic exhibitions looking at racism in Ireland.
- **Directory** of groups and individuals including: Community Video, Community Television, Community Radio, Photography, Alternative Print and New Media/Web.

#### Target groups

Disadvantaged and marginalised people.

### Eiri Corca Baiscinn

[www.eiri.org/](http://www.eiri.org/)



#### Key reason

It offers training courses (in basic literacy and media literacy) in order to help vulnerable groups (older people, smallholders, etc.), to improve their skills and to gain employment.

#### Definition

Community organisation comprised of volunteers and paid staff committed to improving life for vulnerable people in their communities. It works with people in the south-west area of County Clare to create a lasting, positive influence and impact on the most vulnerable in society. It aims to achieve equality of opportunity by working together creatively and honestly for change.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

Activities include media training, media skills and media awareness:

- **Adult education:** Training courses for adults who want to improve their skills to gain employment. Basic literacy and personal development courses to certified training in areas such as computers (ECDL and FETAC certified courses, as well as very basic beginners classes and specialised courses in desk-top publishing, web design, and computerised accounts/bookkeeping).
- **Radio Corca Baiscinn:** Community Radio Station for south-west Clare provides skills training to

groups such as people with disabilities, early school leavers, older people, smallholders and women's groups.

#### Target groups

Carers, lone parents, low income farm households, older people, people with disabilities, unemployed, women, young people at risk; all from the community of West Clare.

#### NEAR FM 90.3's Online training

[www.rte.ie/about/audiencecouncil.html](http://www.rte.ie/about/audiencecouncil.html)



#### Key reason

It promotes educative actions teaching civil society to appropriate media for more purposeful use.

#### Definition

A BCI licensed, communally owned, not-for-profit project. It is operated by a democratic co-operative, open to individuals and organisations in Dublin North-East.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- Educative actions involve **programming dedicated to lifelong learning**, focus on empowerment and team-building, and a **section on media literacy** in programs.
- Offers **guidelines on programme preparation**, interview skills, helpful hints to community media and volunteering, training in writing, reporting, presenting and production, management, administration and the legal framework of broadcasting.
- **Training resources for media production communities: "The Noosphere"**, a media activists handbook dealing with civil society, media and cultural evolution is offered free to civil society activists, particularly those involved in community media.

#### Target groups

The geographical community living in the area covered by the service.

### 1.3 Commercial communication

#### Irish Times Training

[www.ireland.com/training/it\\_training/](http://www.ireland.com/training/it_training/)



#### Key reason

It has a competition to promote students in the production of their own media (a magazine) and provide training courses in ICT topics.

#### Definition

A national newspaper that provides professional training courses that cover a wide range of topics including IT, Management, Personal Development, and practical learning courses.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **The Irish Times School Mag Competition** encourages schools and students to compete in the production of school magazines. The competition assesses graphic design; layout; feature and news writing; photography; cartoons and subediting. The competition helps students understand how a publication is put together.<sup>8</sup> It also encourages the use of new techniques in web design and layout – in line with the schools' Transition Year programme mandate to encourage the use of new technologies.
- **Irish Times Training.** Irish Time provides a full range of Microsoft, Internet & E-mail, website design and broadband technologies courses. They also provide a European Computer Driving licence (ECDL) and JEB IT Teacher/Training courses.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.irishtimeschoolmag.ie>

### Target groups

IT users, managers, and sales people.

## 1.4 Audiovisual works

### Irish Film Institute (IFI)

[www.irishfilm.ie](http://www.irishfilm.ie)



#### Key reason

Promotes a critical approach to film, both in school environment and outside of educational system.

#### Definition

The Irish Film Institute (IFI) is the cultural agency that promotes and preserves film culture in Ireland. It is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status that works for the development of Irish film and audiences for film. It also operates as a research and information source, educational provider, exhibitor and is the location of the Irish Film Archive.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

The IFI Education and Access department provides the opportunity for appreciation and critical interaction with film across a wide constituency both within and outside the formal education sector through:

- Regional Schools screenings. Screenings of films in an educational context.
- Wild Strawberries Film Club. is a monthly film club of free films for older people.
- Courses: For the general public as well designed specifically for specialised interest groups.
- Publications: Study guides, teacher notes, TY reports.
- Events: workshops, school visits.

#### Target groups

General public, Primary and secondary levels of the Irish education system; teachers, students and parents.

### TeachNet

[www.teachnet.ie](http://www.teachnet.ie)



#### Key reason

Its objective is to improve student learning by helping primary and post-primary teachers to integrate web-based resources into their instructional practice and create an on-line and off-line professional community of teachers.

#### Definition

Initiative of St Patricks College Drumcondra in association with the Teachers Network New York. Through TeachNet, teachers have access to curriculum resources, curriculum and technical specialists, grants and a support network to further develop their skills.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Internet Safety.** Links with advice on Internet safety.
- **TeachNet Online Learning Centre (TOLC).** Provides teachers with a comprehensive course on publishing quality educational content on the Web.
- **Internet Basics.** Selection of on-line resources to help teachers to get started or further develop their skills in using the Internet in the classroom.
- **Searching the Internet.** Tool for students when they are researching projects or trying to find information.
- **Internet Projects.** List of educational projects for classes to get involved in. These include email projects, inter-school collaborations and participation in one of the many online projects available

worldwide.

- **Tools** for Teachers and Curriculum Resources.

#### Target groups

Teachers and pupils.

#### FreshFilm Festival

[www.freshfilmfestival.net/](http://www.freshfilmfestival.net/)



#### Key reason

Film festival that aims to create a greater awareness and understanding of film culture among young people in Ireland.

#### Definition

National film festival for young people, aged between 7 and 18, that takes place in Limerick each year for providing young filmmakers the opportunity to exhibit and evaluate film and video. As a non-profit making organization, the festival is committed to the creation of a strong film culture in Ireland.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Ireland's Young Filmmaker** to encourage young people to make their own films on video or film.
- **Feature Film Programme.** Feature screenings.
- **Workshops.** Screenwriting, animation, etc.

#### Target groups

Young people.

#### RTÉ

[www.rte.ie](http://www.rte.ie)



#### Key reason

RTÉ, as the major public broadcast organisation, is committed to being open to its audience listening to all views, and responding appropriately.

#### Definition

In the Media industry the actions of the National Television (RTÉ) are significant. RTÉ communicates with its audience in various ways including the **Audience Council**. RTÉ respects children as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own. Other broadcasters in Ireland have a more commercial remit.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Audience Council of RTÉ.** Advisory group to the RTÉ Authority to facilitate the communication between the audience and the RTÉ authorities to guarantee the public service of the group.

#### Target groups

Audience of RTÉ.

## 1.5 Online environment

**Science and Technology in Action**  
[www.sciencetechnologyaction.com](http://www.sciencetechnologyaction.com)



### Key reason

Raise awareness and engage students in the world of applied science and technology.

### Definition

Website developed with the active participation of many of leading science oriented organisations (representative of both the private and public sectors).

### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **Broadband and the Internet (eircom)**. This lesson looks at the Internet and the meaning of broadband. It explained the concepts: analogue and digital data, bandwidth, modem, router, Internet protocol, ISP and URL.
- **Lessons** relate to the activities of one of the participating organizations and associated teaching materials that look at the Internet and the meaning of broadband developed with the participation of its leading science oriented organisations.

### Target groups

Teachers and pupils.

**MEDIAFORUM**  
[www.mediaforum.ie](http://www.mediaforum.ie)



### Key reason

Civil initiative to stimulate media awareness and a critical attitude in face media

### Definition

MediaForum provides, supports and facilitates media literacy in Ireland. It runs and supports projects which; stimulate media awareness, empower with critical media literacy skills, facilitate access to the mainstream media, foster an appreciation of social analysis media, advocate for increased media education and network like-minded groups and individuals.

### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- Website facilitating **debate about the media literacy** and media education.
- Website offer **links to categories** such as: General media, TV and Film, radio, new media, print; press freedom, audio.

### Target groups

General public.

## 1.6 Media production skills

### FIS (Film project for national schools)

[www.fis.ie](http://www.fis.ie)



#### Key reason

FÍS is aimed to develop children's understanding of film as a way of expression and acquire key skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking.

#### Definition

Project launched in 2000 in order to introduce the film in the curriculum as a way to provide creative learning experiences for children. As part of the FÍS process, schools participate in regional screenings of their films towards the end of the school year. Children have drawn up storyboards, written scripts, learned to use the latest digital film technology, and engaged in the challenging decision-making processes involved in editing their own films.

#### Media Literacy-related campaigns or initiatives

- **FÍS a Dó.** Project concentrates on introducing the medium of film into the Primary and Post Primary School curriculum. It places an emphasis on the exploration of creativity as a means of learning and self-expression through the visual arts, drama, music, dance and literature.
- **The FÍS National Film Awards.** Acknowledge the work and achievements of children and schools in the preparation and making of their films.
- The **FÍS regional screenings** offered children and teachers a chance to share the films created by the children over the year.
- **Teacher resources** and **teacher forum** to develop skills of teachers in using film and media as a learning source.

#### Target groups

Schools; pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community.

## 2. Education system

### 2.1 Media literacy in education

#### Primary curriculum

Media literacy is well grounded in the new primary curriculum in Ireland. A new primary curriculum was launched in September 2000 and completed its first review phase in 2003/2004. This review assessed teacher and student experience of the English, Visual Arts and Mathematics curricula and a second review phase is ongoing and will address the Irish language, Science and Social Personal and Health (SPHE) provisions. Media education is specifically provided for in SPHE which consists of three strands – ‘Myself’, ‘Myself and Others’ and ‘Myself and the Wider World’. The third strand defines two themes – ‘Developing Citizenship’ and ‘Media Education’ with dual emphasis on protection and empowerment.

Curriculum material is well developed and information is available online through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) website. Within the framework of the curriculum, teacher guidelines are available, in-service training has been provided and support is available through the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). While assessment guidelines are presented for teachers,<sup>9</sup> media elements are not compulsory or structured at a national level – this is an ongoing issue.

Media literacy education at primary level is also stranded into English, through a general framework of enhancing both oral and written language skills. To a lesser extent, the use of media technology as a tool is also evident throughout the Visual Arts curriculum and Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).<sup>10</sup>

#### Post-primary curriculum

The post-primary curriculum is divided into two main sections. The Junior Cycle (typically students aged between 12 and 15) which marks the end of compulsory education with an examination in the third year, providing a transition to the Senior Cycle. Currently there is no separate Media Literacy curriculum at either Junior or Senior Cycle in the Irish education system. At lower secondary level, a form of general media education is stranded into English under the heading of Cultural Literacy and into both Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Environmental and Social Studies (ESS), both of which emphasise the use of media forms as learning tools. Both CSPE and ESS are formally assessed at Junior Certificate level. However, the media education component in both is incidental rather than integral to the course of study.

The Transition Year Module was developed in partnership with the IFI, the Second Level Support Service (SLSS), the Arts Council, The Irish Film Board, The Irish Film Censor's Office all of whom formed the Arts Council Working Group on Film and Young People (2006a: 17). The TY Module does not have an official examination or a set curriculum, which provides students and teachers with considerable freedom.<sup>11</sup>

The Senior Cycle can be a two or three year cycle which culminates in the Leaving Certificate. Several options are available to Senior Cycle students which offer a variety of opportunities to experience media literacy education. The main options available are:

- A three year cycle in which students progress from Junior to Senior Cycle through an optional Transition Year (TY). TY is of particular importance in relation to Media Literacy education, as it offers both several established media programmes and project opportunities and also a variety of future directions for the study of media in the classroom.
- A two year cycle in which the student moves from 3rd year directly to 5th year.

Within the Senior Cycle curriculum, students can avail of one of a further three options:

- The Leaving Certificate (Established).
- The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).
- The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

<sup>9</sup> [www.NCCA.ie](http://www.NCCA.ie)

<sup>10</sup> Information on the revised primary curriculum [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

<sup>11</sup> McGivern, A. (2006a): Transition Year Module in Moving Image Education: Pilot Review. Dublin, Irish Film Institute.

At Senior Cycle, the majority of students opt for the traditional Leaving Certificate (Established) in which their opportunities to experience media literacy education are primarily contained within the English curriculum and are typically focused on Film Studies. Experiences vary widely from school to school, making levels of media education provided difficult to assess.

At LCVP and LCA, media education is more readily available and students are required to study a module entitled English and Communication at LCA, and ICT at LCVP. Assessment is split between an end-of-year examination and portfolio and project work for both LCA and LCVP. However, as with the Leaving Certificate (Established), the written response is privileged and practical media work, while seen as both empowering and necessary, is not currently assessed.

- The Senior Cycle is currently undergoing a review and radical changes to the structure and breadth of the curriculum have been proposed. These changes offer an exciting opportunity for media literacy education to advance its position in the national curriculum. As part of the review, Key Skills are to be integrated into all subjects with the aim of broadening the curriculum beyond its overt functionality and examination focus.<sup>12</sup>

It is hoped that this initiative will foster a new and more inclusive culture within the Senior Cycle, more receptive to the educational ethos of Media Literacy. In addition, two new forms of subject provision are proposed. The first of these is the Transition Unit, a 45-hour course designed by schools and individual teachers. While not yet operational, twelve draft proposals have been received by the NCCA - three of which relate directly to media education. The second form is a 90-hour short course which is to be developed and assessed at a national level.<sup>13</sup> Short courses are currently being drafted and include suggested subjects such as Music Technology and Art Technology (Fitzpatrick, 2007). Other possible subject areas include Enterprise, and Media and Communication Technology (Tormey, 2006: 17).<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 School enrolment and attainment

<b>Net primary enrolment ratio (%) (2005)</b>	96
<b>Net secondary enrolment ratio (%) (2005)</b>	87
<b>Pupils and students (2004) (Total)</b>	1,032,700

<b>Youth education attainment level – total (%) (2005)</b>	85.8
<b>Lifelong learning- total (%) (2005)</b>	7.4

<sup>12</sup> At the time of writing, Key Skills are in the process of being developed and embedded in the curriculum and are listed as follows:

- Learning to Learn
- Information Processing
- Personal Effectiveness
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Working with Others

Proposals for the Development of Senior Cycle Education in Ireland – Overview. (NCCA 2004: 18).

[http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Sc\\_Advice\\_0604.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Sc_Advice_0604.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Proposals for the Development of Senior Cycle Education in Ireland – Overview (NCCA 2004: 16)

[http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Sc\\_Advice\\_0604.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Sc_Advice_0604.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Social and Political Education in Senior Cycle. A Background Paper. (Tormey, 2006)

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### 3. Country statistics

#### 3.1 General data

<b>Population (2007)</b>	4,209,019
<b>Human Development Index HDI (2004)</b>	0.956 (4 <sup>th</sup> place)
<b>Life expectancy at birth (years) (2004)</b>	77.9
<b>Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) (2004)</b>	99
<b>Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%) (2004)</b>	99
<b>GDP per capita (PPP US\$) (2004)</b>	38,827

#### 3.2 Information Society data

<b>Television (%) (2006)</b>		<b>Telephone lines (%) (2006)</b>	
Households with at least one television	99	Households with access to a telephone line (landline, IDNS or mobile)	98
Households with no televisions	1	Households with access to a main landline, but not to a mobile telephone line	14
		Households with access to a mobile telephone line but not to a main landline	18
		Households without access to a landline or a mobile line	2
		Mobile phone subscriptions (2004)	94

<b>Internet (%) (2006)</b>	
Level of Internet access – households	50
Share of households with a broadband connection	13
Broadband penetration rate	8.8

Total time on average weekday (%) <sup>15</sup>	Television	Radio	Newspaper
None to 1 hour	16.3	32.5	67.6
From 1 hour, to 3 hours	58.8	37.6	28.5
More than 3 hours	24.9	29.9	3.8

Personal Computer (%) (2006)	
Individuals' level of computer skills - Low	13
Individuals' level of computer skills - Medium	10
Individuals' level of computer skills - High	19

Personal computers (%) (2006)	
Households with at least one computer	44
Households with a desktop computer but not a laptop	29
Households with a laptop but not a desktop computer	6
Households with a laptop and a desktop computer	10
Households with no computers	6

Internet (%) (2006)	
Individuals who accessed Internet at home	36
Individuals who accessed Internet at place of work (other than home)	23
Individuals who accessed Internet at other places	4
Individuals who accessed Internet at place of education	7
Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet	44
Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interacting with public authorities	21.3
(obtaining information) (downloading official forms) (sending completed forms)	19.0
	14.3
Share of individuals who ordered/bought goods or services for private use over the Internet in the last three months	21

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