

## **BUilding BRiDges, DimInishing Educational DiSadvantage: Examining the Role of the Home-School Community Liaison Coordinator (HSCL) across the island of Ireland. (The BUDDIES Project)**

The Buddies Project, a collaboration between Stranmillis University College (Drs Glenda Walsh, Jill Dunn, Ken Gibson and Karen Orr), University College Dublin (Dr Seaneen Sloan) and Marino Institute of Education (Dr Clíodhna Martin) aims to understand the role and potential of the Home-School Community Liaison coordinator (HSCL) in terms of addressing educational disadvantage across the island of Ireland.

**Expert advisor:** Professor Colleen McLaughlin, formerly of the University of Cambridge.

The main aims of this research are to:

- 1) explore the implementation and administration of HSCLs across the island of Ireland, with a particular focus on how they operate in schools (early years to post-primary) serving disadvantaged communities and those with higher proportions of educational underachievement;
- 2) gather evidence on how HSCLs operate in practice and how they are perceived by a range of stakeholders; and
- 3) to share learning across the island of Ireland in order to inform policy and practice for both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

The methodology will comprise two key phases:

**Phase one:** a policy-driven desk-based scoping review, drawing on a range of different sources/resources including databases held by the Departments of Education and local government.

**Phase two:** in-depth qualitative case studies with six schools (3 from NI and 3 from ROI) from across the island of Ireland. Attempts will be made to ensure representation from across early years, Primary and Post-Primary schools, where possible. Two researchers (one from NI and one from ROI) will undertake all data collection to further facilitate shared learning.

### **Overarching benefits**

A fuller understanding of the role of the HSCL across the full educational spectrum will guide policy makers and practitioners (both in service and pre-service) in their understanding and appreciation of the value of HSCLs, particularly for those facing disadvantage.

In addition, the shared learning for each partner across the island will be a vital component of this research.