

S h p r e s a P r o g r a m m e



Supplementary  
School  
Toolkit

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## NOTE FROM THE ORGANISERS

I am delighted to be writing an introduction to Shpresa Programme's Supplementary school toolkit. This has been very generously funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation without whose support this project would not have taken place.

We hope this toolkit will inspire and inform a new wave of Supplementary schools to work in partnership with parents, schools, children and young people to raise attainment and foster confident, engaged and committed young people within all communities

We are indebted to the staff, pupils and volunteers at the mainstream schools that have worked with Shpresa over the years: Gascoigne School, Mayfield School, Churchfield School, Cleveland School, Gladsmore Community School, St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary school, and Bonds Green School for all their generosity patience and endless support.

We also want to thank those who have supported the development of this toolkit: all the parents, volunteers, children and young people and school staff who contributed to the DVD and gave so generously of their time and energy. This toolkit would not have been possible without the expert research and guidance of Raymond Sneddon, the film making and design skills of Manuel Nashi and the great expertise of the consultant Esme Madill

Finally, this toolkit is dedicated to all the young people who have attended and continue to attend Shpresa's Supplementary schools – their hard work and enthusiasm is infectious and they are our inspiration.

Luljeta Nuzi

Project director  
Shpresa Programme

## Introduction

### Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit has been written for:

- Parents, community groups and others wanting to start a Supplementary school; and
- Teaching staff in mainstream schools considering working in partnership with a Supplementary school.

The toolkit provides practical advice, checklists and useful contact information for those wanting to develop, or work in partnership with, Supplementary schools. We also hope that this toolkit will provide ideas and food for thought for existing Supplementary schools.

This toolkit has been written and designed by a group of parents, children, teachers, community workers and volunteers who believe passionately in the transformative power of Supplementary schools; our hope is to provide more than just advice and information. This toolkit seeks to win over children, parents, funders, commissioners and the public at large to the idea that Supplementary schools can transform the lives of children and young people, their families and schools, and help build more cohesive communities.

This toolkit is based on the experience of Shpresa Programme, a community organisation founded by refugees and asylum seekers from the Albanian speaking community, to develop services with and for the Albanian speaking community. Shpresa Programme has delivered Supplementary schools for over nine years and has worked in partnership with 15 schools, 7 youth centres and 2 libraries. We are currently providing Supplementary schools in seven mainstream schools across London and we have had the privilege to advising, supporting and mentoring other community groups as they start on their journey to develop Supplementary schools with and for their communities.

### What is a Supplementary school?

The term Supplementary school broadly refers to extra schooling, organised by and for particular ethnic groups or for other groups of people, which is provided outside of mainstream provision. Supplementary schools are established for many different reasons. Often parents who are from refugee and migrant communities do not have English as a first language, and may have little knowledge and understanding of the education system in this country. They may not feel able to support their children's education, and their children may lack role models within the family and the wider community. Children may know very few graduates and may struggle to see tertiary education as being 'for them'. Meanwhile, children who have grown up in families in transition, who may have fled war zones or whose parents may be struggling to create a new life in exile, can find it difficult to integrate in schools. This can be a problem for the schools and for the young people themselves who are failing to make the most of their educational opportunities.

While Supplementary schools are as diverse as the communities they serve, their fundamental aims can usually be summarised as:

- developing the child's cultural identity, or sense of belonging, self-esteem and confidence; and
- promoting the achievements of minority ethnic children, or children who are members of another group, in mainstream schools.

The New Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation from 1st October 2010. Now the race, gender and disability duties are gathered into one single Requirement. All public bodies including schools from 6th April 2011 are bound by the public sector equality duty which requires them to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relationships.

The act outlines that fostering good relations includes “the need to tackle prejudice and (develop) understanding”. Shpresa’s Supplementary schools can assist mainstream schools in achieving this by getting young people and their parents to talk and present to their friends, colleagues and teacher in mainstream school about their experiences as refugees, migrants or members of a specific cultural or ethnic group. This can have a very positive impact on the children and parents from the Supplementary school as well as giving all young people at the mainstream school an opportunity to develop their understanding of sanctuary and migration and of the experiences of those from diverse cultural and ethnic groups.

The ‘Developing Effective Partnerships’ survey found that eight out of ten pupils who attended a Supplementary school said it helped them with their mainstream school work and boosted children’s confidence and motivation both in and out of the classroom. Supplementary school activities can also reinforce children’s ethnic identities.

Shpresa Programme’s model for a thriving Supplementary school

Shpresa Programme’s Supplementary school model inherently shares the above aims and is also founded on two principles that underpin all Shpresa’s work:

- A family approach, whereby Supplementary schools work with parents (primarily women) to promote the achievement of the children and integration of the whole family in the life of the mainstream school and wider society. Shpresa Supplementary schools provide information sessions, parents support groups, volunteering opportunities and training for parents, as well as the provision of services for children and young people;
- Working in partnership with parents, children and mainstream schools. Staff and volunteers at Shpresa firmly believe that change cannot be brought about through Supplementary schools working in isolation with children. The parents and mainstream schools both have to invest in the project for parents to feel empowered and able to support their children’s development, and for schools to reap the benefits as children achieve and become integrated. Partnership is essential for the Supplementary school to be successful.

This toolkit consists of:

1. A ‘How to Guide’ for parents, and community groups wishing to develop a Supplementary school;
2. A checklist for mainstream schools wanting to work in partnership with Supplementary school;
3. A model training programme for parents;
4. A DVD to be used by all those interested in establishing, working with, funding or attending a Supplementary school;
5. A contact sheet with details of useful agencies.

## Checklist for mainstream schools on how to develop effective partnerships with Supplementary schools

As a teacher, deputy or assistant head teacher or head teacher in a mainstream school, the starting point for your relationship with a Supplementary school may be that you are facing challenges in engaging with certain communities within your school. Maybe some parents are isolated and not able to support their children's education, or it may be that some children seem disengaged or are disruptive. Your first step could be to identify any third sector agencies (voluntary and community groups) already working with these communities.

Is there an established Supplementary school within the mainstream school or local area that you could work with? If you are not aware of any such groups, the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (<http://www.continyou.org.uk/> - link to their contact details here) can help you identify groups in your area, as can your local CVS, Adult and Community Education team or Community Languages team. An existing Supplementary school could provide invaluable mentoring support to a newly established Supplementary school.

If there is no existing group, could you help parents to start one up? The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education has resources to help new groups ([http://www.continyou.org.uk/children\\_and\\_families/supplementary\\_education/quality\\_framework/](http://www.continyou.org.uk/children_and_families/supplementary_education/quality_framework/)). Again, getting an existing group to mentor or support a new group can be very helpful in the early stages. Talk with the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education about the possibilities in your area.

If there are a group of parents or a community group wanting to work with you to establish a Supplementary school, you could:

- Arrange to meet them and discuss the issues you want to tackle;
- Together with these parents or this third sector agency you could hold a Community and School event where you meet with parents and together identify what some of the problems are and what you would like to happen to change them.
- If you have not had any previous working relationship with this group of parents or this agency ask them to talk to you in detail after the event about the solutions that they have come up with and together identify what will work in practise.
- Offer them a minimum 3 months pilot to work in the school providing Supplementary school services.
- Once the Supplementary school is established invite Supplementary school staff to attend your in-service training where appropriate.
- Visit the Supplementary school during their lesson time and invite them to visit your classrooms during the school day.
- Give the Supplementary school time during assemblies to showcase their learning and share their skills and talents with the whole school.
- Always remember this is a joint venture so don't do things for them but do it with them.

Shpresa's experience and that of the schools that we work with (see DVD link interview staff at Gascoigne School, St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School and Mayfield School) is that Supplementary schools working in partnership with mainstream schools can bring each other a wealth of mutual benefits.

## Checklist

Has the Supplementary school got the necessary policies in place (the National Resource Centre can advise or look at their requirements for the bronze award ) or are they working towards developing them? [http://www.continyou.org.uk/children\\_and\\_families/supplementary\\_education/quality\\_framework/bronze/bronze](http://www.continyou.org.uk/children_and_families/supplementary_education/quality_framework/bronze/bronze)

Does the Supplementary school have a clear mission which includes working in partnership with your school?

Have all staff and volunteers been CRB checked? Ask for copies as well as copies of the Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.

Ensure you have a list of people working on the school site.

Assign a link person within your school who can meet regular with staff from the Supplementary school to ensure clear lines of communication?

Can you provide the Supplementary school with access to the classrooms and resources needed to run effectively?

Be clear about the opening time closing time, care takers duty and the responsibilities of the Supplementary school re- cleaning and locking up/ security

Have you identified time in assemblies when children attending the Supplementary school can showcase their learning?

Are you taking part in the evaluation of the Supplementary school?

Have you established clear lines of communication including emails, regular face to face meetings and opportunities to share learning?

How to Guide for parents, and community groups

Is setting up a Supplementary school for you?

Are you worried about your child's education?

Would you like to develop a better understanding of how the education system works here in England?

Do you want to have a better relationship with your child's school?

Would you like your child to learn their mother language?

Would you like your child to share your cultural heritage and theirs with you, with their school friends and with the local community?

Did you know that if your children are bilingual this can help them develop in every area of the school curriculum?

Would you like to be able to help your child with their school work?

Are you having problems communicating with your children due to the lack of a shared language?

If the answer to one, a few, or even all of the above is yes then you could start a supplementary school with other parents and members of your community to ensure that you and your child/children get the most from their education and are able to contribute and share your culture and experiences with the local community. You will almost certainly need to be determined, creative and to work closely with the school staff, but there are those who can help you (see National Resource Centre [http://www.continyou.org.uk/about\\_us/](http://www.continyou.org.uk/about_us/)) and if you work in partnership the benefits will far outweigh the challenges.

When a group of parents at Shpresa first thought a Supplementary school might help us and our children, we:

- Identified other Albanian speaking parents within the school and spoke to them about what services might help Albanian speaking children;
- Held a more formal consultation with parents and children to find out what they wanted and needed;
- Researched if another agency was offering the services parents and children wanted in our local area. As they weren't we decided to do something about it ourselves;
- Clearly identified our needs and how we wanted to meet these.
- Undertook a skills audit among parents (soon to become volunteers) to find out what skills we had and what skills we needed;
- Ran a small scale pilot project in one school to see if our ideas would work in practice;
- Arranged to meet with a representative from the school to discuss the possibility of working in partnership and replicating the model;
- Found out who could help us firstly in our local area and then nationally ([http://www.continyou.org.uk/about\\_us/](http://www.continyou.org.uk/about_us/));
- Identified what we could offer (start small – you can always build on what you begin to offer) and agreed with the school and other parents that we would run a 3 month pilot in the school;
- Filled the identified skills gaps with help from other agencies, volunteers and more parents that we recruited;
- Developed clear methods as to how we were going to monitor and evaluate the impact on our service to our users;
- Used our local CVS (for London CVS's see <http://www.lvsc.org.uk/Templates/information.asp?NodeID=90157&i1PNID=90016> or <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>) to adopt the policies that we required;
- Put in place quality assurance measures from the outset, making sure we measured the difference that we made (and continue to make) so that we can tell others why our Supplementary school is needed;
- Developed into a welcoming, inspiring organisation, engaging with our users and building trust as well as offering practical solution to the problems identified.

The head teacher at the children's school or other members of the teaching staff may not be clear about the many proven benefits of a Supplementary school. You can help by signposting them to the relevant research and showing them that Supplementary schools:

- Provide activities which are in line with their school's aims;
- Raise attainment;
- Improve attendance and punctuality;
- Give otherwise marginalised students a voice;
- Raise the confidence and self esteem of students;
- Help schools to engage with parents;
- Offer training and cultural awareness to teachers and pupils;
- Organise assemblies at school showcasing the skills and talents of children from minority groups;
- Help schools to meet Community Cohesion Agenda and requirements of the Equality Act;

In seeking to share the benefits of Supplementary schools, use research that identifies the impact of Supplementary schools such as: Uvanney Maylor et al. 2010. Impact of Supplementary Schools on Pupils' Attainment. DCSF. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101021152907/publications.education.gov.uk/eorderingdownload/dcsf-rr210.pdf>

Tozün Issa and Claudette Williams, 2009. Realising Potential – Complementary schools in the UK. Trentham Books. Department for Education and Skills (DfES), (2003) Aiming high. Raising attainment for minority ethnic pupils. DfES.

There is a great deal of valuable information about the benefits of mainstream and Supplementary schools working together on the site of CILT, the National Centre for Languages, at [www.ourlanguages.org.uk](http://www.ourlanguages.org.uk).

R. Sneddon, 2009. Hope, Literacy and Dancing. BERA. University of Manchester. 2/5 September 2009

To develop your Supplementary schools you need clarity and vision, but you also need to be realistic and start small – a project that starts small can have a very big impact (see DVD link or online link - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDCJ\\_xV4N\\_k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDCJ_xV4N_k) , for interviews with inspiring volunteers and young people).

Listen to the voices of the children and young people who are attending the Supplementary school. Build on what they tell you so that what you are trying to do for them is welcomed by them and empowers them.

However, the children are just a part of the picture, all be it a central focus for all our work. Shpresa Programme's model for a successful Supplementary school is based on a belief that parents need to be involved from the outset, giving them the skills and opportunities to play an active role in their local schools and communities. The next element of the Toolkit intends to help you engage and work with parents.



## Model Training Programme for Parents

When parents move to a new country they can desperately want children to do well in school; in fact their children's schooling may be one of the few areas of their life which they feel they can focus on. Yet often they don't know the language or school system and are unable to offer the support they want to their children. Parents may be very aware that they cannot act as role models for their children and that there are few or no role models within their communities.

By providing information sessions, parents support groups, volunteering opportunities and training for parents at the Supplementary schools you can:

- Provide parents with basic information about their children's schooling including the national curriculum and SATs tests;
- Give parents a chance to meet with school staff and ask questions in a facilitated meeting;
- Empower parents to identify how they can support their children's schooling and contribute to the life of their local school;
- Offer parents a space where they can gain mutual support from the group and, together, share the success of their children, their families and communities;
- Instil confidence in parents, making them believe that they can, and do, have the capacity to influence their children's educational attainment and to contribute to the life of their local school and community.

It is important that this training take place at the same time as the children are attending the Supplementary school. This ensures that the Supplementary school is addressing the needs of the whole family and empowering parents to feel that they are a part of their children's education. Shpresa's model involves six training sessions. We offer an outline for each below but this can be adapted to suit the needs and experiences of your own community, the young people, schools and parents that you are working with.

### Session 1

1. Ground rules - these help the group to be a safe place where everyone can come and learn and contribute. A sample of ground rules might look like this:

- Respect each other's opinions;
- One voice at a time;
- Confidentiality within the group – discuss and agree and also make people aware of exceptions;
- Say what you think;
- Say why you think it;
- Build on what others say;
- Support and include each other;
- Ask when you don't understand;
- Try to reach an agreement.

2. Getting to know you - there are lots of examples of simple exercises to help a group learn a little about its members and feel more relaxed. (See <http://www.teachablemoment.org/images/knowyou.pdf> and <http://www.suite101.com/content/ice-breakers-in-adult-education-a183652>)

3. Establish the expectations of group.

- Find out what parents want and need;
- Agree what you can cover realistically within the six sessions;
- Then have a 'hopes and dreams' session where you talk about what participants hope the group can give to them.

## Session 2

Bring in an outside speaker from the children's school to give an overview of the English Education system covering the key stages, the national curriculum, and parent/ school partnerships.

Give participants plenty of opportunities to ask questions and discuss how they can support their child in the education system.

## Session 3

Again an external speaker from the school can come in to talk on SAATs testing, exam system and tertiary education, covering expected levels and exam results. Participants will again need the time and opportunity to ask questions and discuss how they can support their child with his/her learning.

## Session 4

Hold a group discussion about how parents can address some of the problems that their children are having in school. Identify:

- core issues;
- agree on targets to work on (e.g. writing, behaviour, integration);
- agree on parent's tasks.

In addition, reaffirm parent's commitment to working together and supporting each other to improve attainment of their children in school and to develop better links between their community and the school.

## Session 5

The facilitator asks questions to help participants to establish the progress and future direction of the group: for example, 'we've talked about the children now what about you? As parents? Where do you want to be in 5 years time? What are your goals? Could you work together to achieve these? This is the fifth of six meetings; would you like to meet again after the sixth session and if so what would you like to do?'

It is important to offer options:

- training as volunteers;
- social group;
- issues based discussion group.

Agree a way forward; identify tasks and dates of future meetings.

## Session 6

At this session celebrate the group's achievements with certificates, a shared meal and a review of learning and achievements.

Ensure at this meeting that you get feedback via mother tongue questionnaires where participants can say what they have got from these six sessions and how they could be improved. By involving participants in the evaluation asking their views, taking them seriously and adapting your services to incorporate their feedback you will be empowering parents to become involved in running the project.

### List of agencies:

ContinYou

CVS - in Most of the boroughs there are organisation called Council for Volunteering sector

Local infrastructure organisation

Local supplementary school forums