

Working Forum Belfast

Dear Reader,



ROGER AND BONNIE NEUGEBAUER (WORLD FORUM FOUNDATION) FROM SEATTLE, USA CHATS WITH PEARCE McCULLOUGH AND PAULINE WALMSLEY (NIPPA) AT THE AN DROICHEAD IRISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL, ORMEAU ROAD, DURING A WORLD FORUM DELEGATION VISIT TO BELFAST.

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Delegates to the World Forum on Early Care and Education from some of the most embattled nations in the world have offered much-needed messages of hope. Early childhood programs are showing that divisions between ethnic and religious groups can be healed.

In Northern Ireland, for example, early childhood programs are bringing together Protestant and Catholic families to raise a generation of children who embrace diversity. This message of hope is also being conveyed by early childhood programs in Bosnia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, East Timor, and in many other troubled areas of the world.

At the 2003 World Forum in Acapulco, Mexico, delegates identified three major threats to the children of the world: HIV / AIDS, Poverty, Violence. In response, we have organized Working Forum Belfast with the theme "Building Bridges: Healing Communities Through Early Childhood Education — Powerful lessons from Northern Ireland and other communities around the world." This Working Forum will have three parts:

- On November 15 and 16, leaders of early childhood programs making a difference in 16 troubled nations will meet to compare experiences and to identify common threads, challenges, and strategies.
- On November 17, these leaders as well as all attendees will be invited to see first hand how early childhood services are delivered throughout Northern Ireland or to participate in a day of distance education training.
- On November 18 and 19, building upon their work together, the 16 leaders will share their stories through presentation and discussion with early childhood professionals from around the globe.

We invite you to nominate programs that are playing a healing role in communities in conflict as well as to plan to attend the Working Forum Belfast yourself. For details on the program and registration, go to the World Forum section of our web site, www.ChildCareExchange.com.