

The Polish School in Cork: Recognising Polish Voices in Irish Education

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Purpose

- To critically investigate a recent Polish Government educational initiative - the **Polish weekend schools** - from the perspective of key actors, providers, teachers, students
- To set this empirical work in the context of key ideas from established conceptual paradigms of multicultural and Development Education (DE)
- A critical review of concepts such as identity, integration

Method

- Group workshop meetings with PGDE students
- Ethnographic Interviews with Polish Embassy staff; teachers and students of the School
- School Visits and Observation
- Literature Review



New Multicultural Context - Year ending April '06

- 26 % immigrants are from Poland; one in three males work in construction
- More Polish persons (1.5%) than black (of African or Irish identity) persons (1%), Asian or Asian Irish (1.3%) and Irish travellers (0.5%)
- Polish community: 23% of Polish community are educated to Degree or Higher level (twice as many Polish women as men) [CSO 2007]

Quotes from interviews

“He had English but just didn’t want to talk. And there were a few things going on. I think, first of all, like he was in an age inappropriate class. He was also much taller, older, and he just didn’t gel with the group”

- Aedamur on a Lithuanian pupil she taught

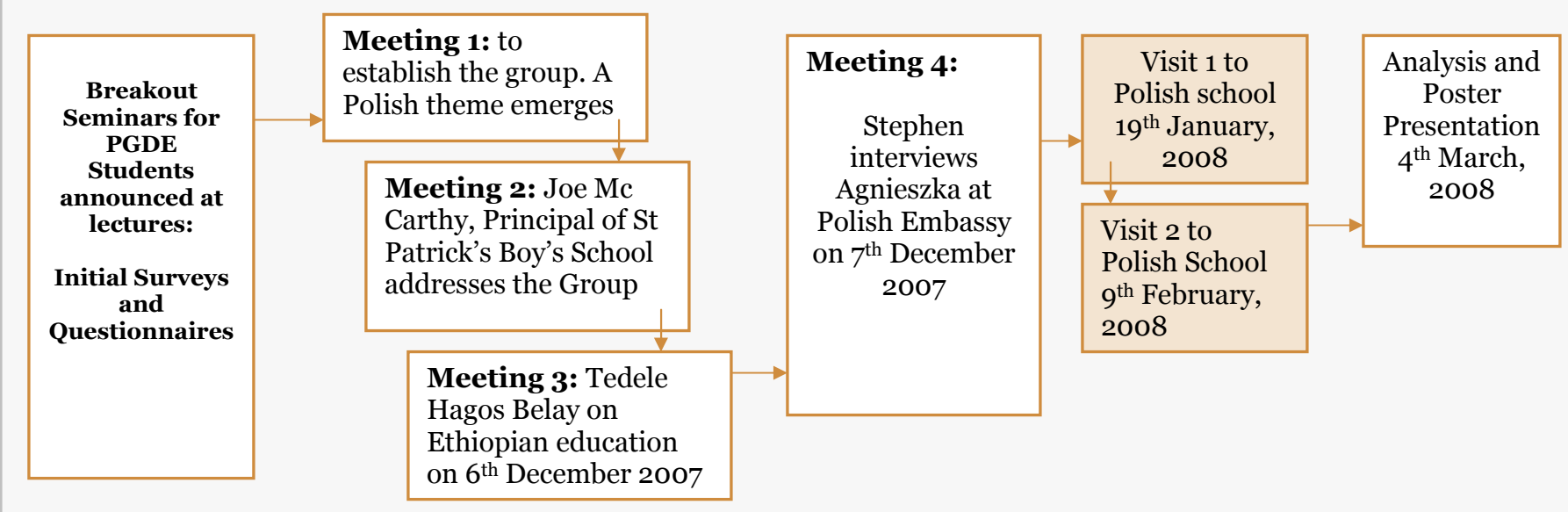
“They [polish schools] are giving them possibility to come back to Polish educational system”

- Polish Embassy Attaché

“...the danger would be that people would come to come to Ireland and say, we’ll forget Polish now, look you are in Ireland, they speak English, you have to learn English. Concentrate on your English, look forget...forget Polish. You know...I don’t think they have that mentality.”

- Joe McCarthy, Principal of Host School (St Patrick’s Boys School)

Timeline for our interventions 2007-2008



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