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**STIRLING COUNCIL****COMMUNITY**

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**28 JUNE 2007****NOT EXEMPT**

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**VENEZUELA EL SYSTEMA**

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**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 El Systema is a 32-year-old highly successful Venezuelan approach to social inclusion. The method applied is that of teaching very young children to play musical instruments in the discipline of an orchestral setting.
- 1.2 Richard Holloway, formerly Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and now interim Chairman of Creative Scotland, is leading an initiative and has formed a Limited Company with Charitable Status to pilot the approach in Scotland. Stirling Council had in early discussion with the SAC, BBC Scotland and other partners about developing a Scottish National pilot in a community that is going through significant physical regeneration and may therefore benefit from this social engagement approach in September 2006. Raploch was suggested as a suitable pilot given the nature of scale of the physical regeneration in this community. It is envisaged that if Raploch becomes the Scottish pilot the initiative will roll out to other communities across Scotland. It is envisaged that the pilot will run for a least 5 years and will be thoroughly evaluated throughout this time.
- 1.3 Funding is available to start the project but the Company established for the project will raise funds to develop the initiative further. The Company will manage the project, with support from Stirling Council, the BBC, SAC and other partners and will provide free musical instruments and tuition. A director has been appointed by the Board and it is envisaged they will be based in the local community. Community Services will seek to accommodate the Director.
- 1.4 On the initial scoping visit to Venezuela in February 2006 and the follow up visit in May 2007 the BBC created a DVD to show the project at work. This is available to Members and is being shown to groups in Raploch to raise awareness about the opportunity and to begin to identify participants. The dvd highlights the work of El Systema and shows the national system of orchestras at work.

- 1.5 The Scottish Arts Council organised a visit to Venezuela in May 2007 for partners who are involved in the pilot to see the scheme in action and begin to understand how it works and the benefits accruing from it; meet trainers and participants; establish networks etc. This group also included representatives from the national press, (The Glasgow Herald) the new project director, members of the board of the company as well as the SAC, BBC and Stirling Council. A very positive article about El Systema featured in the Glasgow Herald of 9 June 2007.
- 1.6 The project although led by the Company would be supported by Stirling Council through Libraries, Learning, Communities and Culture Service. Work will begin with the community in June to identify interested young children and their families in the area, possibly via Early Years Centres/Nurseries and recruit council and other agency staff to keep in touch with these families to be ambassadors for the initiative.
- 1.7 The initiative will be community based rather than being delivered via mainstream Education. The performing arts studio in the new Raploch Campus will be utilised and will be for children to volunteer although there is potentially a five-day commitment to tuition per week after school.
- 1.8 The Venezuelan approach began 32 years ago by involving very young children and it is proposed that this project will be offered to children under five to begin with who will, over the five-year lifespan of the pilot, become peer trainers themselves. Whilst the pilot will follow the pure Venezuelan model, modifications may be necessary in Scotland to comply with Legislation here.
- 1.9 The project is likely to require some council officer support to work alongside the project staff as they are appointed. There has been no financial commitment made on behalf of the council to date apart from officer time and access to council facilities.
- 1.10 Members will be kept up to date with progress with the Community Services portfolio holder maintaining support for the development of the project.
- 1.11 The Company wish to announce Raploch as the Scottish pilot site on 17 August to coincide with a visit to Edinburgh by the Simon Bolivar Orchestra from Venezuela to perform during the Edinburgh International Festival.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 Members are requested to agree that Raploch should be the Scottish pilot site and that this decision can be publicised by the Company.
- 2.2 Agree that a Stirling Council Elected Member or Senior Officer should sit on the Venezuela /Raploch Project Board.

### 3 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 El Systema, a community based social inclusion initiative delivered through orchestral playing of classical music has the capacity to change the learning and the lives of those who participate in it and piloting this initiative in Stirling would provide opportunity for those participants and the wider community of Raploch and support regeneration. The initiative will be led by a Limited Company with Charitable status with in kind support from the council and will run over a five year timespan. The company will provide free musical tuition and access to musical instruments for participants.
- 3.2 There is no direct financial cost to the council and other partners including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the BBC, Scottish Arts Council and Raploch URC will also provide support.
- 3.3 The initiative fits well with Community Services vision and aspirations in the Community Services Plan and with Stirling's existing reputation and strength in music and is likely to further enhance its reputation for innovation and creativity.
- 3.4 If approved the pilot initiative in Raploch will be launched on 17 August 2007 to coincide with a performance by the Simon Bolivar Orchestra in Edinburgh. Representatives from the community of Raploch and partners will be invited to the launch.

### 4 POLICY/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

<b>Policy Implications</b>	
Diversity (age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation)	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	No
Corporate/Service Plan	Yes
Existing Policy or Strategy	Yes
Risk	No
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	No
People	Yes
Land and Property or IT Systems	No
<b>Consultations</b>	
Internal or External Consultations	Yes

#### Policy Implications

- 4.1 The initiative sits well with Stirling Council's regeneration approach.

#### Resource Implications

- 4.2 No financial commitment has been made but officer support and access to facilities would result in in-kind support being provided to the project.

## Consultations

- 4.3 Presentations and initial consultations have been made to community representatives in Raploch and early discussions held with Children's Services, Raploch URC and a paper has been presented at the Corporate Management Team.


## 5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 None.

### Author(s)

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### Approved by

Name	Designation	Signature
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Date 20 June 2007

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