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## FOREWORD

PROFESSOR ÁINE HYLAND, PROJECT DIRECTOR

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Bridging the Gap has come to the end of its third year – another successful and fruitful year for pupils, their teachers and communities. We continue to marvel at the enthusiasm and creativity of the participants who have been involved in a variety of events and activities throughout the year. A growing number of our colleagues in UCC have worked in partnership with schools and community groups to provide new and enhanced learning opportunities for children and their parents. The gap is being effectively bridged between “town and gown” – between UCC and the less advantaged communities of Cork City.

This evaluation report summarises what was achieved during the past year and also includes details from individual schools of projects and events supported by Bridging the Gap. It is clear from the case studies that many of the projects carried out by schools are of a very high standard and represent exceptionally good value for money. The capacity of school principals and their staff to identify and implement projects which will enhance their pupils’ learning is well documented in this report. Each project sets out clear targets, states how it is intended to achieve these targets, and includes a system of monitoring and evaluating the extent to which the targets are met. We are continually impressed by the willingness of teachers to engage in these projects, many of which require an involvement beyond the classroom and beyond the traditional school day.

I would again like to thank all those involved in Bridging the Gap, especially Tracey Connolly the Project Manager and Cynthia Deane, Project Consultant and Internal Evaluator. I would particularly like to thank the pupils who participated with such enthusiasm in the various projects and events and their principals, teachers and parents. Special thanks are due to the three funders – the Atlantic Philanthropies, and especially Tom Costello who has been unfailingly supportive and helpful; the Department of Education and Science; and an anonymous Cork philanthropist, who between them have contributed almost two million euro towards this five-year initiative. I would also like to express my thanks to Professor G.T. Wrixon, President of UCC and to my colleagues in the university for their ongoing support and encouragement.

This report summarises what has been achieved during the past year and contains recommendations for the future development of the project. We look forward to the continuing success of Bridging the Gap during the coming years.