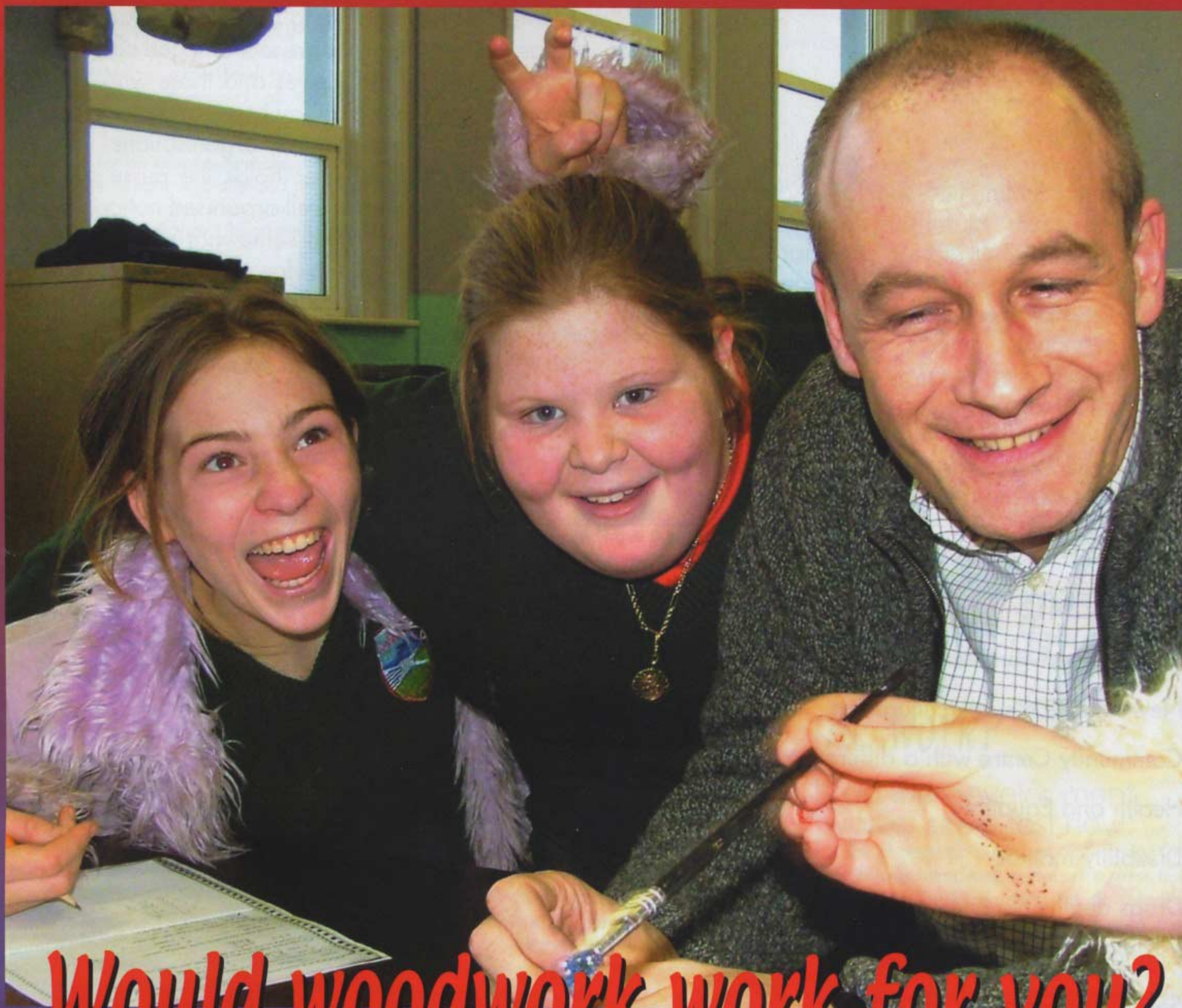


CHANGING IRELAND

SPRING '04

ISSUE 10

The National Newsletter of the Community Development Programme - funding 170 community projects



Would woodwork work for you?

INSIDE

- Older people forced from work
- Travellers with a healthy future
- New disability agency launched
- Drugs deaths remembered
- Strong reaction to Dept's changes
- Horace happy CFGs gone!

This publication and most projects featured inside are funded by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.
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A power struggle

Since last year, a power struggle has been taking place at a higher pitch than usual in the community and voluntary sector. Elected representatives seem to be pushing for a greater say and role in community projects, while projects are angry at what they see as political interference. The process is being driven by the Minister and Minister of State in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, who are making big decisions for the future after carrying out a review of the community and voluntary sector.

But why should politicians have a say in disadvantaged communities that largely do not bother to vote for them, or for anyone? Well, why not? It would seem that elected politicians should be as entitled to be involved in local community projects in disadvantaged areas as non-elected community workers and volunteers.

However, staff and volunteers engaged with vulnerable people in disadvantaged areas argue that CDPs operate best with state support, but without the politicians telling communities what is best for them or claiming the credit when things go right.

Working through community development principles means leaving communities to decide for themselves what is best for them. The communities, the argument goes, will stand up for themselves and learn from it.

And so, since last year, an argument has raged between those advocating participatory democracy as the best means for disadvantaged communities to empower themselves and those who argue and push for more of a say by elected representative democrats in community organisations.

Given that the Minister holds the purse strings and that CDPs are not well organised nationally to protest, or at least seem somewhat shy to protest publicly, it seems the top-down views will prevail.

And so the thrust of the Community Development Programme may indeed change. Projects may even lose some of their local autonomy. The emphasis in the future may be more on providing services than on challenging the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion.

Really? Well, it's up to the projects now.

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Cover photo:

After-schoolers at Sligo Northside CDP with Philip White, project co-ordinator.

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PRODUCED IN MOYROSS

Would woodwork work for you?

- CDP in Sligo secures 2-year funding pilot

MARTIN READING reports

A successful pilot scheme last year has led to Peace II-funding for an innovative after-school project run by the local CDP in Sligo town. 'Sawdust' is a scheme to give wood-working training, experience and creative opportunities to teenagers at the Sligo Northside Resource Centre. Staff are currently being recruited with funding approved for an initial two years.

There are already well-attended homework clubs, and it was from these that the three-month pilot project grew. Young people were shown the basic techniques of woodwork and, with staff at Sligo Northside, particularly John Conlon and James Darwin, the CE supervisor, a range of items were made. These included toys and small furniture, which were subsequently sold or raffled and donated to other projects.



Kyle Clancy and T.J. Wallis from St. Joseph's.



Sligo Northside community centre.

The young people who took part in that short project cannot wait to get back to the workshop. Anthony, from St. Joseph's After-school Club, particularly liked the rocking horse they made "and dogs you sit on," but this time he is looking forward to making things for himself.

Philip White, the out-of-school learning co-ordinator, tries to work from the young people's perspective. "I'm keen that the instructors will develop a programme based on what the kids want to do, not have a programme inflicted on them," he said. "The younger groups should have projects that can be completed in two or three sessions."

These younger users, under-16, will have access to hand tools only, with maybe a power screwdriver. For the older ones there will be training on the standard power tools with access to the larger band-saw, for example, restricted to the instructors.

A significant aspect of the programme is to be the cross-border element. Links have been

established with a youth project in New Buildings, near Derry. The teenagers there have pioneered the building of wooden skateboard ramps, an example that could be replicated in Sligo and one that would reflect some of the participants' interests. There will be cross-border visits in both directions, using the workshops as a focus but also allowing joint visits to leisure and historical attractions.

The careful planning needed to equip and safely run this project should provide opportunities for involvement by other members of the community, particularly fathers, who may themselves have skills to share. Maybe chips off the old block.

Are you stressed at work?

- do the development worker stress-test now:

The photograph published on the page 24 (wait!) was introduced as part of a stress test developed by researchers at St. Mary's Hospital in London. It is the final picture in a series of stress determinates that gauge the amount of stress a person has built up over a short time. It has been used extensively in the community and voluntary sector in Britain and shows that many workers are more stressed than they realise.

Read the following instructions and when you have finished, turn to page 24.

Quite simply, the photograph clearly shows two dolphins jumping out of the water in tandem. The medical research has shown that the more differences you notice between the two dolphins, the more stressed you are.

Note: The two dolphins are very similar, so if you see differences without looking hard, you should pack up work and go home immediately. It is now time to turn to page 24.

NAC decided to rename CFGs

The Community Development Programme's National Advisory Committee recognised during last year the need to give a proper name to the 48 projects which by tradition were quite vaguely referred to as Core-Funded Groups.

And common sense ruled when it was decided that these projects will in future be known as Community Development Projects (CDPs) as is the case with the other 122 projects that operate under the CDSPs. The name CDP suits both since community can be defined in either geographic or sectoral terms.

In plain language, there are now 170 Community Development Projects operating under the Community Development Programme which is funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; two-thirds of the CDPs are based in specific geographic areas and deal with a wide spread of people and

issues, while the remaining third of CDPs are issue-specific (focusing on women or Travellers for example).

The change should make life simpler for everyone and make it easier to explain what the Programme and its 170 nationwide projects are to the wider public and the media.

The Department, in a letter to projects, said: "This repositioning of projects does not demand or require any change of focus on the part of individual projects either in terms of make-up or operation. This change is being introduced purely to simplify matters and to avoid confusion with regard to programmes and programme names. Furthermore, the reclassification of core-funded groups as community development projects has no implications for current funding arrangements."

• See centre pages for more details.

CWC find projects are frustrated



A newly published report on the controversial endorsement process had been published by the Community Workers Co-operative. The report is a follow-up to a series of seminars held to examine the new system whereby a range of community and local development bodies must have their workplans endorsed by City/County Development Boards.

It says the endorsement process "is a cause of major concern for those working on anti-poverty and justice issues in Ireland."

Groups who need to have their plans endorsed are: CDPs, Area-Based Partnerships, Local Drugs Task Forces and City and County Childcare Committees.

In its final conclusions, the report noted: "Perhaps the most notable aspect of all of the seminars was the level of consensus, the degree of frustration, and the lack of trust in the process that was so evident amongst those involved."

This report outlines the rationale for the

CWC seminars, the key issues arising as identified by participants, and recommendations for future action. The report will form the basis of a further submission to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs on the endorsement process. It will also act as a guide to the CWC in undertaking further work on this issue.

"It is clear," say the authors, "that feelings of disempowerment and marginalisation from decision-making processes are rife amongst community workers, communities and CDP management committees on the ground. Many have expressed dismay at the extent to which control of the work of CDPs is being handed over to what are essentially Local Authority structures and question the right of such structures to have a say in the priorities they set or the action that they take."

"Those present, however, did not refute the need to develop more effective strategies to tackle poverty and social exclusion

at local level, particularly amongst state agencies. This is something that CDPs have sought for many years and have put much time and effort into promoting," said the report.

The CWC seminars were held in Dublin, Galway, Sligo and Cork and were funded by the Combat Poverty Agency. They were attended by approximately 70 representatives of CDPs, Regional and Specialist Support Agencies and others involved in community work at local and national levels.

The report was prepared by Rachel Doyle, the CWC representative on the Community Development Programme's National Advisory Committee.

•For more information, contact the Community Workers Co-operative, Unit 4 First Floor, Tuam Road Centre, Tuam Road, Galway. Tel. 091-779030. Fax: 091-779033. E-mail: info@cw.ie Website: www.cw.ie

New Ross CDP attract 200 people

Members of the New Ross CDP, Co. Wexford, and New Ross Intercultural group hosted an intercultural event just before Christmas to raise awareness of prejudice and to celebrate the diverse range of cultures present in the town today. Entitled 'Ebony & Ivory' it was attended by over 200 people from the area. Not bad going for a relatively new CDP working to establish a profile among people on the margins.

The programme of entertainment was truly varied as a reflection of this diversity - it included traditional Irish music dancing and singing, a fashion show of African traditional

dress, local children dancing and reciting a Christmas speech, an African dance & drumming group from Drogheda, Irish dancing, choral singing by a minority Christian choir and poetry to highlight racism. Local volunteers also prepared a feast of Irish, Jamaican and African food for all to taste. Like many such events held in the past 12 months, it was funded through the National Anti-Racism Programme - the Know Racism fund.

The event was organised by volunteers from the New Ross Intercultural group, the New Ross CDP womens group & the CDP management committee who had worked

together for a number of weeks to plan the event. This group took part in a workshop to explore the subjects of 'Prejudice & Discrimination' as part of the planning process and were supported by Ester Foley, a newly appointed Development worker with the CDP.

The project has been officially established since 2002. It covers the New Ross urban area and at present is supporting women's development groups, a local community education course, English language classes (through a local qualified volunteer). The CDP also operates as a drop-in information service (for info on welfare, services, training & education) and a meeting place for local groups. The CDP helped design a plan under the government's RAPID II programme. And the project is part of a group that is currently working on bringing an affordable childcare facility to the town.

Incidentally, New Ross CDP are interested in hearing from other groups who may own or lease a community building and manage it as a group. They are in the process of lobbying for a government owned building to be handed over to them and are interested in hearing from anyone who may already have experience of this.

For further information contact, call or write to: New Ross CDP, 48 South St (2nd & 3rd Floor), New Ross. Tel. 051-425636. E-mail: newrosscdp@eircom.net

To contact the New Ross Intercultural Group call: Jackie on 087-7450114 or Abraham on 086-392-4861.



An intercultural group from Drogheda perform in New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Community centre with beds opening in Donegal

By SANDY HOLLAND

A modern multipurpose community resource centre for has been built in Cashelard, a small rural area, rich in natural amenities, located four miles north east of Ballyshannon off the main Donegal/Ballyshannon Road.

A seven-member committee working in association with Atlantic View CDP over a nine year period was responsible for seeing this dream project come true.

The CDP helped the group to look at funding opportunities and applications and also advised the group in the setting up of a women's group and an active age group who now meet in the centre.

The Resource Centre known as the Breezy Centre will open in April 2004. The centre consists of a main meeting hall, two meeting rooms, one of which doubles as a dining room and a fully fitted commercial kitchen. A 20-bed, self-catering unit, made up of a four en-suite bedrooms and a common room with cooking facilities, together with a manager's office complete this very attractive building.

Additional amenities, such as tennis/Basketball courts and playing areas are planned to compliment the centre.

This center is located in a quiet, scenic area straddling the border of Donegal and Fermanagh and should prove an attractive location for short breaks for many clubs. The walking, angling and photographic opportunities are endless, while the rural setting is an open invitation to the flora, fauna and bird



The New Centre, Cashelard.

enthusiasts.

The local response to the provision of this facility has seen the development of new housing, the provision of street lighting in the immediate area of the centre and an application for planning permission for a shop to service the area.

The center was built with the commitment, hard work and the assistance of the following funding agencies: ADM/CPA, International Fund for Ireland and Lottery funding through the Department of Sports, Tourism and Recreation.

This new centre is available as a training and conference venue and has overnight accommodation and catering available. Contact: Atlantic View CDP, Tir Conaill Street, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. Tel. 072-22833.

Donegal adult learner guidance service

The Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service (DALGS) was established in January 2002 following a successful application to the Department of Education and Science. The initial proposal involved delivering guidance to clients in three target groups; the *Vocational Training and Opportunities (VTOS)*, *The Learning For Living* (adult literacy) programme and *Community Education* programme. The level of funding was such however, that only the VTOS and Learning for Living clients could be supported. So the guidance needs of adults in isolated communities who were not part of these programmes remained unmet.

In response to this, DALGS has secured funding from the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme to establish and evaluate a model of community-based guidance in four community groups in the county.

These projects are based at Action Inishowen CDP in Carndonagh, Mevagh Resource Centre Downings, Carrigans/St Johnson Resource Centre, St Johnson and Forbairt na Rossan, Ionad Teampall Chróine

Dungloe, all in Co. Donegal.

Each of the centres has a Community Guidance Support Worker and the Guidance Counsellor attends one day a week.

The mission of the service is to support and encourage adults in County Donegal to explore and realise their educational, vocational and personal potential through a whole person approach to lifelong and life-wide learning. DALGS has a particular focus on the needs of those adults who have been most disadvantaged by the formal education system.

The service offers:

- Help to identify your skills, interests and goals in life.
- A chance to explore your learning options and ways of moving forward.
- Help to overcome issues that may be holding you back.
- Support to achieve your learning goals.

For more information contact: Action Inishowen CDP, Tel. 074-9374411.

Local carers contributed nationally

A newly published report making important recommendations for the reform, of social welfare payments, the health services and community supports available to Family Carers and the people they are caring for has been published. The report, by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs, recommends changes on a national basis.

Local groups throughout the country, including North Leitrim and West Cavan Carers' Group supported by their local CDP (see previous edition), were involved during last year in the process of the drawing up of this report.

The report is now available and can be obtained from Richard Manley, Clerk to the Joint Committee Tel: 01-618-3490 and can also be downloaded from the internet at www.oireachtas.ie under the 'Parliamentary Committees' section.

Women tackle stereotypes

The cross-border partnership of Atlantic View CDP, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal and the Ballybeen Women's Centre, Dundonald, Co. Antrim have organised a Cross Border Womens Collective.

Its remit is to set up workshops and training for women including all denominations, and cultures, including travellers, asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland north and south.

The initial funding was accessed through Co-operation Ireland and their first workshop, about 'Breaking Down Stereotypes', was facilitated through art & drama and was held in Ballyshannon last month. The next workshop 'Sharing our Cultural Heritages' will be held on May 28th in Dundonald.

For further information contact Ann McGowan, Atlantic View CDP, Tir Conaill St, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. Tel. 071-982-2833.

"Before we came on the course we had nothing to look forward to except the dole and marriage"

INTRODUCTION: We all know about discrimination, but this story is about how projects and agencies fighting exclusion can take real pro-active steps towards achieving equality.

The words that follow are those of a dozen Traveller women who are currently undergoing Primary Health Care Training in Tralee, Co. Kerry. This group are the first of three groups of Traveller women to undergo formal training with a real opportunity of employment at the end when the Southern Health Board will provide twenty jobs as Primary Health Care Workers to the participants. The training was carried out in co-operation with the local CDP, the Kerry Travellers Development Project. The quotes below are taken from a group-interview, a new concept in community journalism being piloted by our Regional Reporter, Martine Brennan.

"Many of us married young and have never had employment outside the home. Our experience of school was that we were automatically put in the classes for 'slow learners'. We were given colouring books and crayons, or sent on messages or let out to play on the playground. If there was any kind of trouble in school we knew that we could get expelled while the settled children would be left stay on. So for a lot of us literacy was a problem, filing in forms or helping the children with their homework. School was hard and we felt invisible. We knew at the end of the day that we wouldn't get jobs. People would take one look at us, know we were Travellers and then the job would be gone. We had no hope, nothing to look forward to."

"Now we know that we are learning for real jobs. Our confidence has grown as we learn together as a group. We know

where to go to get information. Already our sisters and cousins and neighbours will ask us to find out things for them. Before (the training programme) we didn't know what questions to ask at the hospital or we didn't have the confidence to ask. We know now if our children aren't being treated right at school what to do and where to go for help. We can see the value of education and we can help our children with their homework. We have learnt how to do C.V.s. We can deal with settled people on the same level now that our confidence has grown." "On the training programme everything is built on our decisions. We have worked out our own rules and we say the things that we want to learn more about. Some of us would never have spoken out in a group before the course but now we know we have a right to our opinions and that they matter. Already, this is making a difference to our

children, because we have more hope so do they. Because we see the importance of learning they have more interest in school. They say things like 'if my mother can do this so can I, if my mother got this far so can I'.

"There is still discrimination, we live with it every day. Our children see it happening to us and it happens to them too. But now we don't just give up. We keep trying and trying. We are still dealing with 'you can have a takeaway but you can't sit down' or not being allowed to block book tickets for concerts or people locking doors if they see us coming. But now we have goals for ourselves and our children. We are all going to finish our Primary Health Care Training and some of us will be Primary Health Care workers for the Southern Health Board. We are encouraging our children to get their Leaving Certificates."

Although some of us feel discrimination will never end we have higher hopes than we did before. Some of us think that Travellers in government would make a big difference. A lot of what we hope for may not happen in our lifetime but we build each other up in the group and we work together. We are taking better care of our own health and we pass on what we have learned to our mothers and sisters and cousins and neighbours. We talk to our daughters about their health. We are stronger now than when we started the course, more confident. We know that people take us more seriously. We are setting an example in our community and for our children and we plan to keep it up!"

The course tutors had the following to say about the training programme:

"To be witness to the gradual, steady empowerment of the participants, as they evolve at a pace comfortable for them individually, leaves us with no doubt that the PHCP is the tool which will kickstart the improved health status of the Traveller Community."



After renovation. Sitting closest to the Grotto at Collis-Sandes, Tralee, Co. Kerry are Primary Health Care Training Group participants Eileen O'Brien, Ann Casey, Teresa McCarthy and Nora Fitzgerald. Mary Kate O'Connor, Primary Health Nurse, and Carmel Gornall, KTDP development worker, are sitting to the front.



Before renovation. Carmel Gornall (KTDP development worker) and health course participants Ann Casey, Breda Quilligan, Ellen O'Brien, Breda Quilligan, Nora Fitzgerald, Eileen O'Brien stand alongside the statue of Holy Mary from the Grotto at Collis-Sandes, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

So what did they learn?

The facilitators of the Kerry course are Carmel Gornall of the Kerry Traveller Development Project, and Mary Kate O'Connor and Mary Harty, public health nurses seconded by the Southern Health Board.

Participants are studying everything from galactocaemia to crisis pregnancies to infection control and safety in the home. **And, to date, the course participants have covered topics as varied as:** exercise, nutrition, biology, well-woman health checks, literacy, numeracy, art, music, computer training, drug awareness, community development principles, facilitation and negotiation skills, discussion on Traveller Health Strategy and the structure of the present Health Board and perceived changes.

External tutors have come in from the Kerry Education Service, MABS, the Health Promotion Unit of the Southern Health Board. Professionals from a variety of fields have also given talks.

As to the students on the course, they have contributed their own art work to the Traveller Focus Week run by the Irish Traveller Movement in Dublin, have participated in the charity walk for the Irish Cancer Society, have attended the theatre at Siamsa Tire and have gone on a pilgrimage.

They have been invited to participate in the street theatre festival, Samhlaíocht Chiarraí held at Easter time in Tralee.

And since spirituality is so central in the culture of the Traveller Community, one of the projects undertaken with pride by the course participants in Kerry was the renovation of the grotto at Collis-Sandes in Tralee. The 'before' and 'after' photos are a reflection of how they seem to have developed themselves through doing this course. If you haven't already read the accompanying main piece which tells it from the participants' experience, then do not finish with this magazine before doing so!

Traveller health a national disaster

Nearly one in a hundred Traveller infants die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, while in the overall population the figure is below one in a thousand. The most recent health survey found Sudden Infant Death Syndrome kills 8.8 in every 1000 Traveller live births, compared to 0.7 per 1000 live births for the overall population). This means that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is 12 times worse for Travellers than for the population as a whole. The figures were published in the

Traveller Health Strategy 2002-'05.

Meanwhile, in terms of life expectancy, Traveller women live on average 12 years less than women in the general population and Traveller men ten years less than men in the general population.

These figures cannot be argued with, showing clearly that a substantial number of Irish citizens are excluded from the benefits enjoyed by the general population as a result of being Irish citizens.

The Philosophy of Primary Health Care

Primary Health Care as a concept was established at the joint World Health Organisation/UNICEF conference at Alma-Ata, Russia in 1978. Primary Health Care is a philosophy not a package. It facilitates a process that values empowerment, partnership and advocacy in which a community highlights inaccessibility and inequity in an existing service and negotiates solutions with the relevant health authority.

"Primary Health Care is essential health care . . . made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation . . . in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. It is the first level of contact . . . bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work...." Alma-Ata Declaration 1978.

Kerry Travellers Development Project

The Kerry Travellers Development Project, KTDP was set up in December 1994 with the main aim of establishing a partnership between settled and travelling people. It is hoped that this partnership will challenge the inequalities faced by Travellers at an individual and an institutional level. In 1996, KTDP became a Community Development Project, funded like all the other CDPs directly by government. It is one of a dozen or so projects with the Community Development Programme that is specifically focused on Travellers' issues.

KTDP acknowledges the separate and distinct culture of the Traveller Community and adopts a community development approach in all its work. This means in practise that the Traveller Community assesses its own needs, develops strategies to address those needs and aims to combat poverty and marginalisation. Key areas identified are Health, Education, Accommodation, Economy and Discrimination.

Primary Health Care Training programmes

There are three Primary Health Care Training courses running currently in the Southern Health Board region with a dozen participants in both Kerry and North Cork and 16 participants in Cork City. These courses are funded by the Traveller Health Unit of the Southern Health Board and the Community Development Programme. The Kerry Education Service and the VEC are also becoming involved.

Participants have already undertaken a pre-development course and are now undergoing the first year of a three-to-five year course. Those who devised the course are now in negotiation with FETAC for accreditation. The Southern Health Board has agreed to provide 20 Primary Health Care Worker posts at the end of the training. It is envisaged that the Health Care Workers will work alongside the Public Health Nurses providing information about health services available to the Traveller Community. The workers and nurses will facilitate access to those services and act as advocates where the need arises. Lack of access to mainstream education is not a barrier to participation in the training programme.

Getting people with disabilities 'into the loop'

- how a Disability Information Outreach Project works in practice

By DECLAN WEIR

It's hard to remember exactly what my aspirations were when I started work as *Disability Information Outreach Worker in Connemara* during February 2003. But those five words were heard repeatedly when the European Year of People with Disabilities Bus visited Galway last July and they go a long way to summing up the project.

The year-long pilot had three aims: meeting the information needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers; raising community awareness of disability issues and acknowledging the move towards mainstreaming, a stated desire of many people with disabilities.

For many in rural Ireland, getting into the loop is the real problem. It is worth remembering, though, that people still live in isolation with no idea about their entitlements. Many such people have disabilities which are made worse by old age, for example diminished hearing or sight or decreased mobility. Often, regardless of how many social policy reports are launched, these individuals do not, or cannot, claim what they are entitled to. Yet, FORUM's Social Care Programme has effectively reached many such people through the carer companion service, meals on wheels, transport and assistance with housing grants. Experience in North West Connemara shows that once a person accesses one service or support, they become aware of others,



and become known to an existing, effective local support network including FORUM and CIC.

Once the work began, the issue of carers came up repeatedly, and almost without exception carers felt isolated, frustrated and ignored. Their concern that not enough was being done to support them led to further work between FORUM (who are developing a local carer support group), the CIC, and myself as the Disability Information Worker. We sent a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee into the position of full-time Carers and held a Carers Information Evening. At Clifden CIC, we also held dedicated one-to-one information sessions for carers.

Many queries raised locally, could have applied to anywhere in rural Ireland. Concerns over physical access were made worse by the area's geographical isolation, which has a huge impact on the lives of peo-

ple with disabilities, especially in health service provision. Studies based on FORUM's work and the Western Health Board's Special Housing Aid for the Elderly recognised the specific problems faced by providers and recipients of services where a scattered rural population exists.

The pilot was administered by FORUM, the local CDP, who also provided access to North West Connemara's strong local community network. FORUM was keen to build on existing co-operation with Clifden Citizens Information Centre, who provided the information database. The all-important funding came from Comhairle, Galway Rural Development and the Department of Social & Family Affairs. According to FORUM director, John Coyne, the project provided them "with the perfect opportunity to bring together communities, voluntary organisations and public agencies into working partnerships."

Using radio to raise awareness on disability

As mentioned in the accompanying story from Connemara, one of the Disability Information Project's aims was to raise public awareness about disability. The European Year of People with Disabilities and the 2003 Special Olympics provided the perfect opportunity for a series of disability-related programmes on Connemara Community Radio. This community-based station is very often the only point of contact for many of the geographically isolated people in Connemara.

The first programme coincided with the games and 16 programmes were broadcast, featuring interviews with many individuals and organisations, both people with disabilities and disability workers in County Galway. It also offered a comprehensive guide to supports and services available, and the response to the series was hugely encouraging.

The issue of access could easily have merited a series all to itself, and a wide range of expert interviewees offered a great cross-section of experiences and opinions. During one interview, Ronnie Conlon of the Irish Wheelchair Association recounted one memorable access experience as a wheelchair-user of many years: "The only part of me that

fitted into the loo was up to my knees the rest of me was out in the corridor it's funny in a way, but it's appalling."

Physical access is usually what comes to mind, but the programmes taught us that **access is about more than just the width of doors and corridors**. Small adaptations and increased awareness can do a lot to improve accessibility.

Deirdre Towe of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland summed up some of the little things that can have an enormous impact on someone with a disability: "Real bugbears for vision-impaired people are cars parked on footpaths, ladders unattended, a bike lying on a footpath, and people sitting in cars with the engine running."

With the year ended, an evaluation is currently being worked on by University College Galway. In fact, everyone involved in the European Year of People with Disabilities is looking to the future, to ensure the momentum is maintained. John Coyne, for one, has emphasised FORUM's desire to continue to target the needs of people with disabilities.

"FORUM is committed to exploring options and strategies to implement the recommendations arising from the Disability Information Project in conjunction with the partner organ-

isations," he said.

What evolved during the project was the notion of disability as a community matter, and how co-operation can be put to good use in rural Ireland. A seminar in January - themed around disability and community - gave people with disabilities, their families and those who work with them the opportunity to get together and look to the future to see what needs to be done locally.

And one of the most encouraging developments in recent years, according to Ronnie Conlon, is that people with disabilities are more likely than ever to be in amongst things, sorting matters out for themselves. If the Disability Information Project has helped in any way to contribute to that, then it can only have been a success.

• For more information, contact FORUM, Letterfrack, Connemara, Co. Galway. Tel. 095-41116/41117. Fax: 095-41198.
• To contact Declan Weir (including with stories from the West Region) call him on 094-30712, or e-mail him at: decweir@eircom.net

Projects tackling disability issues have a new friend

DESSA - another new specialist support agency

While cuts to the regional support structure within the Community Development Programme may dominate people's thoughts as we start into a new year, it is important to be aware that two new Specialist Support Agencies were launched late last year. One deals with arts and community development, while the other is now providing support to projects looking at disability issues.

Blue Drum, which featured in our Autumn edition, aims at encouraging community projects to use art as a tool to promote development and to fight poverty and exclusion.

Now, DESSA, officially launched in November and with a staff of three, is here to "enhance the ability of community projects to actively involve and include people with disabilities within their own communities."

DESSA, otherwise known as the Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency was established to work with CDPs and Family Resource Centres (FRCs). Because of its dual role in working to support community projects as well as family centres, DESSA is jointly funded by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

The organisation has a lot to offer local groups throughout the country and can:

- help projects to identify what people with disabilities in their area need to properly participate in the community.
- train projects in how to use the equality laws to better effect for people with disabilities.
- encourage learning about disability issues and about people with disabilities among community projects.
- support projects to appreciate both skills

and deficits they may have regarding disability issues.

- encourage networking between local projects and organisations of people with disabilities.

For example, DESSA has been working in conjunction with Holywell Trust Support Agency in the north-west since before its official launch in November of last year. As with other support agencies, Holywell Trust supports a local network of CDPs and FRCs whose job is to work with communities affected by high unemployment, poverty and disadvantage. And there is a thriving disability movement in the region, as is evident from the broad range of disability groups.

Martin Naughton, board member of DESSA, highlights the need for community projects to become more proactive in raising the profile of people with disabilities within their communities. This is particularly so since it is well documented that they are at considerable risk of experiencing high levels of poverty and isolation.

DESSA is working through consultation, seminars, training, networking, research and facilitated discussion. It has already set up its own website (www.dessa.ie) and is developing a library.

And nationally, DESSA will help drive policy within the Programmes by, for example, commissioning research on disability issues.

Alice Griffin, manager of DESSA, acknowledges that the development of DESSA was timely given that 2003 was designated the European Year of People with Disabilities and that the government have been promising since 1999 to enact the Disabilities Bill.

Alice indicated that "both the community sector and the disability community have

much in common and much that they can learn from each other. It is hoped that DESSA will act as a catalyst to build a foundation of mutual understanding between the two sectors."

Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, formally launched the Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency on November 28, in Donegal town.

DESSA defines Community Development as being "about people working collectively for change in order to improve the quality of their lives and the communities in which they live."

For further details about DESSA contact Alice Griffin, manager, or Eileen Carol, community development support worker at: DESSA, Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8. Tel. 01-416-3548. Fax 01-453-6861. E-mail: info@dessa.ie. Web Site: www.dessa.ie

What will DESSA do for you?

DESSA has adopted a rights-based approach to its work. For example, it aims to train community workers and volunteers in how to use the equality laws to better effect for the people with disabilities.

"We as people with disabilities are shouldering our responsibility to ensure that disabled people are "included" as full citizens in Ireland. It is now time that everyone else joins this process, so that we can all live and participate together as equal members of society". (Source: Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities 1996).

DESSA is committed to the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. And DESSA is committed to promoting the human rights of people with disabilities in how it works with community based projects. Human Rights include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Who manages DESSA?

Membership of the management committee reflects the commitment of DESSA to disability equality and to community development principles and practice. Management committee members comprise of people with disabilities, people who work for organisations which support people with disabilities and

people who work from a community development perspective.

Among one of the management members is, for example, Susan O'Neill. She is the co-ordinator of St. Munchin's CDP in Limerick and, as a registered blind person, has personal experience of disability.

Drug deaths remembered with hope

By NICK MURPHY

The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, attended a 'Family Network Annual Service of Commemoration and Hope' on February 1st. It was the fifth year the service was held and the first one attended by the President. Organised by Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, a Specialist Support Agency to CDPs on the issue of drugs, the service took place in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sean McDermot Street, Dublin.

Phillip Keegan of the City Wide Family Support Network said, "The first service was intended to bring hope and some comfort to drugs users and their families and friends and the families and friends of users who had died. The Network is all about families."

That first service, held in 2000, also served to highlight the fact that the number of deaths from drug use was much higher than officially recognized. This was because many death certificates did



President Mary McAleese.

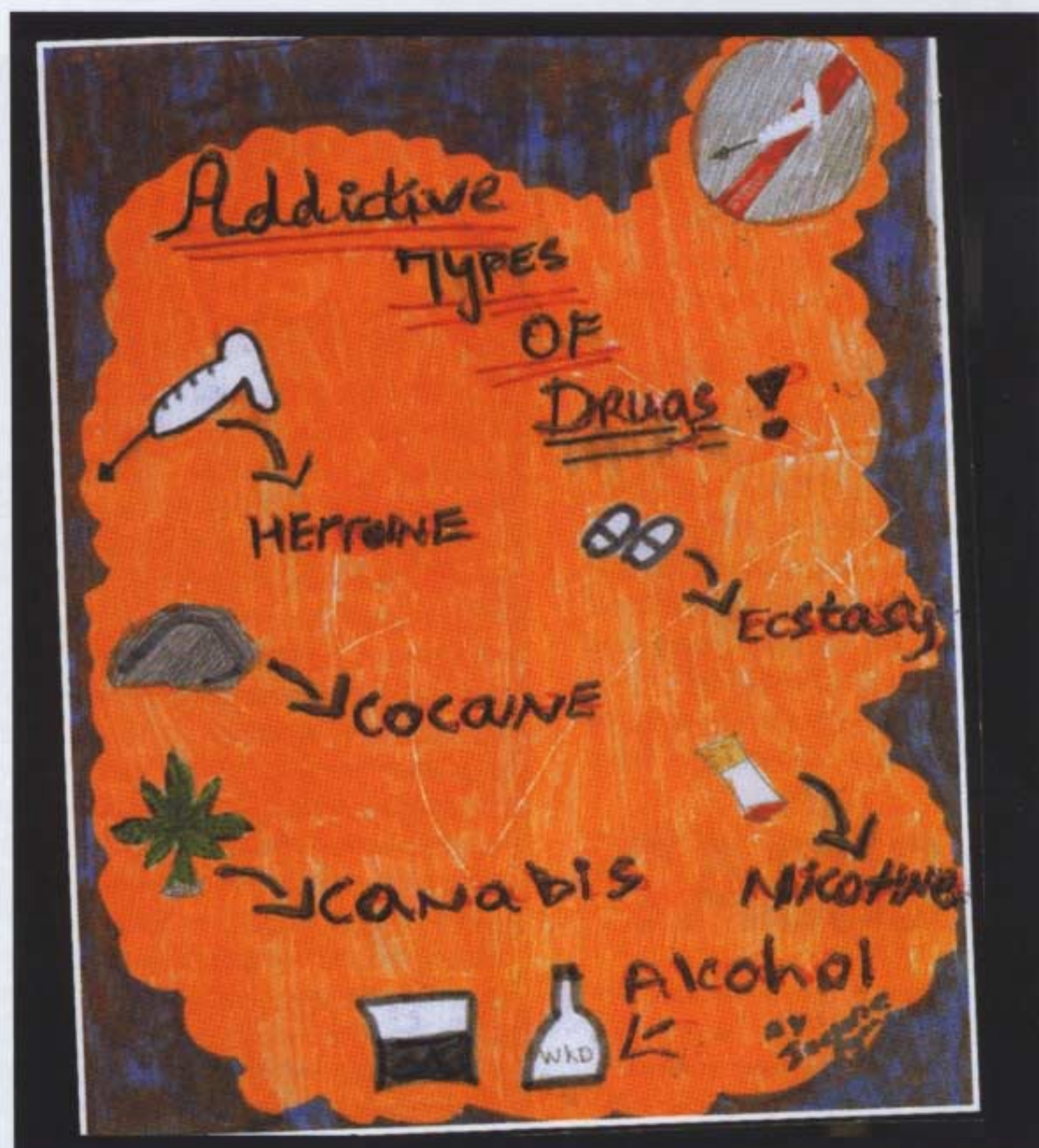
not list drug-use as linked to the cause of death.

"It was very understandable that doctors did not want to cause the family more distress by mentioning drug-use on the Death Cert but the practice was obscuring the true extent of the problem," Phillip explained.

In the absence of hard statistics it was difficult to persuade government departments to allocate funds and plan a proper response to the situation.

"The service to commemorate those who had passed on, and offer hope to those left behind, also has the effect of raising awareness of the extent of the problem," continued Philip. "All the groups working in the field locally were involved in planning and setting up the service. It gives hope to those groups, and people working with them, that the problem is being recognised."

Now people are becoming more aware and offering support.



Joanne from Limerick South City Youth Initiative drew this poster for a calendar. See page 22 for more details.

Support for communities to tackle drug crisis

The Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign was set up in 1995 to provide communities from across the greater Dublin area with a forum where they could support each other, share experiences and address policy issue around drugs. Citywide has a membership drawn from every part of the city and is made up of community activists, trade unionists and the voluntary sector, with support from church groups. In the last couple of years, the membership of Citywide has expanded outside of Dublin, as concern about the drugs problem has grown in communities across the country. This broad based membership has enabled Citywide to play a key role in campaigning for a state response to the drugs crisis.

Citywide produced its first policy document 'Responding Together' in May 1996, which outlined the need for an integrated approach around issues of treatment, education/prevention and justice. A second policy document 'Responding Together - the Crisis Continues' was produced in 1999 and there is now the third policy document. Each of these policy documents has been drawn up through an intensive consultation process to ensure that the policies are based on the real needs and real issues on the ground.

Many people are actively involved in their own local communities in working on the drugs issue, developing services to respond to local needs. To assist further, Citywide approached the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The Voluntary and Community Services section of that Department (it has since moved to the Department of Community, Rural Affairs and Gaeltacht Affairs) agreed to provide funding for Citywide to work as a Specialist Support Agency with local community projects.

Citywide is committed to a community development approach to tackling the drugs crisis.

"This means that local communities must be supported in developing the skills and resources necessary to tackle the drugs crisis," they argue. "It also means that the people most affected by the drugs problem - drug users, families and communities - must be involved in developing policies and making decisions about how resources are spent."

Citywide facilitates a range of networks and working groups that provide opportunities to identify and address key policy issues.

- Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign can be contacted at: 175 North Strand Road, Dublin 1. Tel. 01-836-5090/836-5039 Fax: 01-8364849. E-mail: citywide@dna.ie

Minister highlights positive reasoning behind changes

Minister Ó Cuiv, in a statement last month, highlighted the positive reasoning behind the changes he is introducing in the community and voluntary sector. The changes apply to a range of programmes and agencies.

Firstly, the Minister noted, "The Government recognises that local and community development measures are contributing significantly to tackling a range of challenges at local and community level." He mentioned by way of example drugs, unemployment, youth services, and community and enterprise development.

"With their bottom-up approach and the active involvement of local communities, they are a key mechanism, not just for innovative local responses and for delivery of services, but also as critical input for public policy," stressed the Minister.

However, Minister Ó Cuiv warned, as he had at the launch of the Review last year, "the number and complexity of structures now involved is very extensive and complex. These arrangements can be confusing and present difficulties for the very communities they are designed to serve."

Hence the Review and the changes that are now following.

Arising from the review, Minister Ó Cuiv and colleagues brought forward proposals which Government has now agreed (See page 14). "These," he said, "are designed to:

- improve delivery of services on the ground;
- improve arrangements under which community and local development initiatives are delivered;
- re-affirm Government's commitment to local and community development programmes;

- improve cohesion and focus across various measures; and
- enable communities to more readily access and make maximum use of the funding available."

"The main features of the measures agreed by Government are:

- Community and local development groups across urban, rural and Gaeltacht areas are being requested to bring forward measures for improved alignment of structures in their respective areas by mid-year. This process will be co-ordinated by the local County/City Development Boards (CDBs).
- Funding is being earmarked to support specific co-ordinated measures emerging from this process. This will continue over the next three years. The focus of this funding will be towards enhanced service provision.
- Except in exceptional circumstances Departments/public bodies will look to existing local or community development bodies and/or local authorities for delivery of any further initiatives in this area. In this way, additional expenditures can be prioritised towards services rather than administration.
- Restructuring of ADM is to be undertaken to take account of changes since its inception.
- CDBs will be asked to consider and endorse plans prepared by community and local development agencies. This will help secure better co-ordination of services on the ground.
- The role of CDBs in overseeing and pro-

moting an integrated approach to service provision at local and community level is also being underlined.

- I will continue to seek improvements in the alignment of community development structures falling within the remit of my Department."

Incidentally, the Review process included bringing together three Departments that play substantial roles in supporting community development. Minister Ó Cuiv has therefore raised the importance of community development as an issue among these Ministers as well as making other Government members more aware of community development. The three Ministers involved in the Review were from the Dept. of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Changes to support structures good for communities

In 2003, €3.4m was spent paying 13 Regional Support Agencies (RSAs) to deliver training and support to the 170 projects funded under the Community Development Programme.

"That represents almost 17% of the total amount spent on the Programme last year," pointed out Noel Ahern, Minister of State for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The Minister explained why he was now changing the regional support structure: "In order to maximise the spend for communities themselves and to bring investment on training and administrative supports for the CDSP more into line with the costs of other Programmes under the remit of my Department, I embarked on a process last year of restructuring arrangement involving Regional Support Agencies."

In the future, 6 RSAs will be contracted to cover larger regions.

Minister Ahern said in a recent statement that this will achieve the objective of refocusing investment on community development activity and improve coherence between local and community development programmes.

The streamlining move is also designed to lessen the complexity and multiplicity of structures and programmes that are there for "for the provision of local and community services".

"Our purpose is to ensure these structures best support communities in tackling disadvantage to the greatest extent possible," emphasised the Minister.

How endorsement will overcome difficulties

The objective of the endorsement process, says Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv, "is to enable the CDBs build up a picture of the range of services, activities and priorities of the various community and local development bodies within each of their areas. In this way improved coherence of the delivery of services and better use of resources to the benefit of local communities can be pursued."

The Minister recently explained how the endorsement process is working:

Where issues of overlap or conflicting priorities emerge, he hoped "that the CDB and local bodies will, acting in the interests of the community, succeed in resolving these."

He further explained that where it is not possible to resolve matters locally, it will fall to be considered by the funding authority (the Department or ADM). "In that regard," he continued, "the responsibility for funding

decisions has not changed."

He pointed out that guidelines on the endorsement process, agreed between the three Departments involved in the review (his own Department, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform) were issued to CDBs by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government last July. The guidelines are designed to assist and clarify the objectives of the process.

It should be remembered that groups and projects asked to submit their plans to County and City Development Boards (CDBs) for endorsement included more than just Community Development Projects. They also included Area Partnerships, ADM supported groups, LEADER groups, and County/City Childcare Committees.

The CDSPs is dead,

INTRODUCTION:

Murt Flynn is a community development worker in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. He firmly believes in the work he is doing, and in how and why the unique attributes of the Community Development Programme work for people in poverty and/or experiencing disadvantage. However, his belief in the programme is being shaken by the powers above. His essay here makes for provocative reading.

Murt believes, and was willing to speak up for his beliefs here, that there is a fundamental and ideological re-vamp of the Community Development Programme taking place, directed primarily from the top-down by the Ministers. His views on the City/County Development Boards 'endorsing' of CDP plans certainly reflects a frustration felt by projects across the country. Murt argues that the endorsement process will, far from guarding against duplication of work by various agencies, actually add another layer of bureaucracy to the community and voluntary sector, and thereby further hinder the sector's capacity to tackle poverty and exclusion on the ground.

Remember, the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs says he is always willing to listen to people on the ground. So is 'Changing Ireland'. But it must be said, as highlighted by Murt, that many projects are shy to protest against the changes taking place within the sector, against budget cutbacks last December and to fight on the public airwaves over Ireland's huge rich-poor gap and exclusion of various sorts.

There are of course some fantastic and suitably loud exceptions to this trend. Generally, however, are we a 'positive' programme where most people prefer to lobby for rather than against things? Let us hear more from our readers. Letters and contributions to 'Changing Ireland' are always welcome for submission to the editor. Thanks to Murt for his contribution which follows here:

The King is dead. Long live the king. That's what they used to say, way back when all was simple and kings were kings (and sometimes Queens) and the rest of us were, well, we were subjects. And the CDSPs is dead, so long live the CDP.

It's reassuring to know that not only are this Government committed to saving money (on whose behalf?) but they are also committed to saving letters as well. You have to hand it to them, you really do. Not that it really matters, all this name changing and letters going here and there. It's one more, small step, in the fundamental and ideological re-vamp of the Community Development Programme and there is very little that those of us involved, as volunteers and workers, can do about it.

"As a Programme of over 170 Project', we seem strangely silent on what is happening to communities where our projects are based."

Very little, that is, if we accept the prevailing logic of social partnership and the ever increasing dilution of independent community development work. And it looks like we have accepted it, as Project's and as a Programme. It looks like that and it sounds like that. Very few of us made any public comment on the

"I've been waiting all year for someone, anyone, to tell me what positive benefits will come from the Endorsement Process."

Social Welfare cuts. Very few of us make any comment on the cutbacks in health and education. As a Programme of over 170 Projects, we seem strangely silent on what is happening to communities where our projects are based.

Silent and inactive. So, it's not surprising that the work of the past year, stemming from the National Seminar in February 2003, has, in my view, has not reached anything like the potential it seemed to have. The reasons for this? The main reason is that we are all consumed with the social partnership myth. We have RAPID, one and two. We have Clar, Drugs Task Forces, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees and, the mother and father of all of them, Local Government Reform. Other reasons are lack of trust, between ourselves, and between us and the State, and maybe a sense of resignation that no matter what we do or say, it will have little or no impact on the result or the decision.

We run and hop from one forum or strategy group to the next. We articulate our posi-

tion. Our views. We get angry. We get strategic. We get burned out and run ragged. And, while we do, this Government, with the help of the pliant media and a useless and toothless opposition is embarked on a systematic and political campaign to ensure that the community sector is 'part' of the great big happy family that is Ireland in 2004. And, as we all know, there is no room for dissent in a happy family.

So, I have a few questions, reasonable questions, and maybe the next time that Changing Ireland gets to interview one of the Ministers responsible for the CDP (before they all head off to Knock) they might ask these questions.

Questions like, why the CDP? The CDP last year cost €29 million. That's €29 million for all Projects and Support Agencies. That's

"Like rabbits in the headlights of an oncoming bus, we seem paralysed. Or maybe, just maybe, we are being 'strategic'. Strategically doing nothing."

roughly twice the amount that the Punchestown Equestrian Centre got (€14.8million).

This near-€30 million supports a diverse

so long live the CDP!



Murt Flynn

range of Community Projects, urban and rural. The beneficial outcomes of that are well documented (for example, by Nexus Research). Contrast that €30 million to the PuncHESTOWN funding, which will benefit a small and elite group of people. That it doesn't even meet the minimum requirements required of such a facility merits only passing critical media and political comment and demonstrates, or should demonstrate, that this Government is interested in looking after those that look after them.

So, why the CDP? I've been waiting all year for someone, anyone, to tell me what positive benefits will come from the Endorsement Process. I'm still waiting. If it's about information sharing, then, I would argue, that this happens, often times informally, between CDPs and Partnerships, CDPs and Local Authorities, CDPs and Health Boards, and CDPs and other State Agencies (eg VEC, FAS).

Do we need, in each county and city, another forum to make this happen? And each CDB has to have staff and facilities and the costs that go with that and, hey presto, there's your duplication, there's another layer and another structure that is a million miles removed from the people and communities that, by its existence, it is meant to benefit.

Am I alone in thinking that this whole

Review is nothing less than a complex and elaborate plan to gag criticism and to ensure that the State is protected and insulated from the negative experiences that the State, through its actions, brings about? Am I alone in thinking that this Review is a done deal? That once the Trade Union bosses and IBEC and the IFA/ICMSA can spin out the partnership myth and the media demonises those who argue against it (or, as of late, argue that there is no need for it because the market will fix everything and that the 'national interest' is paramount), then all is sweetness and light.

Am I alone in thinking that, in a year or two, all CDP's will be forced to change the

"The reason for the success of the CDP was that local people felt ownership of the work. Their involvement is their way of giving testimony to their citizenship. And it is their way of saying and demonstrating that it is possible for local people to manage their affairs, with the support of the State, but not directed by the State."

make up of their Voluntary Management Committees to allow for 'political representation'. **[Editor's note:** This article was written just prior to the release of a Cabinet Memorandum (documenting decisions taken by government) which included one decision that hinted at the possible appointment of political representatives to CDP committees.

See the memorandum, published in this edition, for more.]

So, they can change from the CDP to CDSPs and back to CDP and they can call for Reviews and spend God knows how much on experts and then, slowly, implement the results of any Review that suit their interest and bury (like the Nexus report?) anything

"Am I alone in thinking that this whole Review is nothing less than a complex and elaborate plan to gag criticism..."

that may be critical or call for increased resources. While we watch on and look. Like rabbits in the headlights of an oncoming bus, we seem paralysed. Or maybe, just maybe, we are being 'strategic'. Strategically doing nothing.

The old cliché that says if it ain't broke then don't fix it seems to be apt these days. The reason for the success of the CDP was that local people felt ownership of the work. In the main, these local people are disengaged from mainstream representative democracy. Their involvement is their way of giving testimony to their citizenship. And it is their way of saying and demonstrating that it is possible for local people to manage their affairs, with the support of the State, but not directed by the State. Their way of saying, to themselves and others, that this is their country, too.

And so it is, their country too. And their CDP. It doesn't belong to Fianna Fail or the PD's or Fine Gael or any of them. It's funded by the National Lottery (that's you and me folks).

To begin to undermine the core philosophy of the CDP will be to break it into tiny little pieces where service delivery takes precedence over community leadership and ownership. The results of this don't need to be 'flagged' or 'strategised'. They should be obvious to all. Unless, of course, they are consciously ignored, for other reasons.

- Murt Flynn

6 support agencies to replace current 13

NICK MURPHY reports

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs have written to all Community Development Projects about the changes to the current regional support structure within the Community Development Programme (CDP).

It has been decided that there should be six regional agencies to replace the 13 currently contracted. The six new regions will be made up as follows: Dublin South, Dublin North, South East, South West, West/Midlands, North.

The duties of the new agencies will include training, promoting good practice, working with projects drawing up work plans, and

monitoring performance as required.

The letter indicates that all funded projects must engage with the agency designated for their area.

The Department of Social Community and Family Affairs, as it was known when it was the parent agency for the CDP, introduced the support structure some years ago. This was followed by the transfer of the Programme to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The current decision to scrap the existing support structure and replace it with a totally new one, and the recent controversial decision to require all projects to submit work plans to their local City/County Development Board for 'endorsement' is causing serious concern throughout the Programme.

The decision to adopt this new structure and to put the contracts out to public tender, without any consultation with the Projects involved, has angered many in the Programme.

For example, Claire Casey of the Community Action Programme in Ballymun said:

"To make this decision without consultation is repeating the mistake made when the support agency structure was first introduced. Back then the Department did not consult us and by failing to do so they fostered suspicion and resentment among many projects who objected to having support agencies foisted on them. It took years to sort out the fall-out from that mistake and is crazy that they are in the process of making the exact same one

again. The projects must be included in the process of appraisal of any tenders received for this work. Projects are willing to embrace change and be part of better, more efficient structures, but we on the ground have valuable experience to contribute and this decision appears to be leaving us without any opportunity to do that."

Many feel that the wide geographical area to be covered by these new agencies must, inevitably, mean a lessening in quantity and quality of support offered.

Claire Casey pointed out for example that "the cut in funding for support work means that new agencies will be expected to do more work with less resources, and represents a massive cut in resources for community development work across the country."

The Minister says that the money saved can be used for other community development work.

The Department has said that Projects may of course get in touch with their relevant contact person in Voluntary & Community Services in relation to any clarifications that may be necessary at this point.

Projects should call their usual contact person with any queries.

Questions tabled in Dáil

TDs who tabled questions to the Minister of CRGA regarding recent developments included the following: Joan Burton, Thomas P. Broughan, Damien English, Jan O'Sullivan, Brian O'Shea, Pat Rabbitte, Olwyn Enright, John Deasy and John Perry.

The six new Support Agency areas will cover:

- Dublin South
- Dublin North
- South East (counties Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Wexford, Kildare, Wicklow)
- South West (counties Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary North)
- West/Midlands (counties Galway, Mayo, Westmeath, Roscommon, Longford, Offaly, Laois)
- North (counties Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth)

Govt memo signals more changes

The following are decisions that have been ratified by Government as a result of a 'Government Memorandum on Improving Service Delivery at Local and Community Level - actions which are relevant to the Community Development Programme':

- No new local development agencies or bodies to be created without express Government approval. Requirement on departments/public bodies to look to existing local structures and local authorities for delivery of new local or community development initiatives.
- No further expansion of the Community Development Support Programme after the completion of the current programme.
- There will be a continuation of the process of significantly reducing the funding for Regional Support Agencies and the reduction of the number of such agencies with which the Department has a contract under the CDProg.
- The membership of the boards of commu-

nity development bodies will be reviewed.

- A Code of Ethics will be applied to support the boards of all local and community development bodies.
- Opportunities for improved service co-ordination will be pursued, underlining the co-ordination/endorsement role for CDBs.
- The Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government will examine the operation and membership of the SIM Groups of the CDBs to ensure balanced representation and their enhanced operation.
- There will be new requirements on sharing facilities between community and local development projects, such as shared accommodation and administrative supports.

The Ministers intend to return to Government with further proposals in late 2004.



Minister Éamon Ó Cuív intends to return to Government with further proposals in late 2004.

Endorsement process an opportunity to educate councils

- says county councillor working in CDP

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

Joe Reilly from Meath is in a unique position to judge the merits and demerits of the endorsement process. He is employed as the co-ordinator of Navan CDP and is also a county councillor.

"If people believe this is a political takeover of the community development sector, they are well up the scale of paranoia," said Joe.

"I am not frightened by the endorsement process, though I think other people do find it a bit daunting. They are nervous about going to the county council and talking to a bureaucracy. But the barriers can be overcome. And when projects get used and get confidence in dealing with CDBs, they will be able to deal with them very well," he said.

The endorsement process means that from now on City and County Development Boards view and assess plans by CDPs, LEADER and other community-orientated groups in an effort to ensure greater cohesion.

As well as presenting plans, Joe believes projects also have an educational role to play in explaining what community development is to local authorities. He said the people looking over CDP plans may think community development is about "going around helping people" and they would benefit from a greater understanding.

"Wearing my County Councillor hat, I would point out that the role of Councillors is changing too. Each member is now on a Strategic Policy Committee. For example, I'm on the Community, Social and Cultural Committee and the Housing Committee. We have a five-year arts plan, a sports strategy, a housing plan and so on. That's a positive role that councillors are playing in communities."

"And the development the Community Forum (there is now one in each local authority area) means councillors now have more involvement than before in communities," said Joe. He quickly pointed out that while the relationships up to now between councils and projects "have been frosty", he expected things would improve.

"Councils come with a bureaucracy and people in community development can find that difficult. And development projects tend to submit to the bureaucracy rather than working towards a partnership."

He said that RAPID was "an example where you have a mix of community and councillors working together - it hasn't been a glowing success, but there have been sparks of light."

"People shouldn't be afraid," he urged, "they should be confident in themselves and

have the strength to work with local government. And local government has to learn to treat people with equality in partnership. And councils do accept that, most of the time, local people know best what they need," argued Joe.

But is endorsement good overall?

"We don't know the outcomes yet. There would need to be an evaluation after the first year or two to see how it worked. To find out did it serve its purpose or is it just another layer of bureaucracy for the community development sector."

He said people would not stay in community development work if the process was not working and projects also would not stay with the programme, so a review was important.

He admitted it was "a bit confusing" to have to hand in one evaluation to the Department and another to the CDB.

"But I am not as frightened of the big house (the county council office) as many of the projects are," he again said.

Joe has long-term experience of the Community Development Programme. He was involved from the beginning as one of the initiators behind getting a CDP set up in Navan, the only CDP in all of County Meath. He was on the management committee from the start and became co-ordinator last October.

POLITICIANS IN CDPs

Many projects fear having political representatives on their committees, though there are exceptions. In Dungarvan, the co-ordina-

tor is a local Labour party councillor. In Larchville/Lisduggan CDP in Waterford city, the co-ordinator had considered going for election but changed his mind after talking about it with the management committee.

As a member of a political party, neither Joe nor his management committee had a problem with his appointment as co-ordinator. It was of course raised at interview stage, but as Joe said: "The roles compliment each other. The knowledge you have as a councillor can be useful to the project."

"Not one member of the management committee backs my own party," pointed out Joe, a member of Sinn Féin. "And if any CDP was party-political dominated, it would have no credibility and for right reasons. While I am in no way shy about my beliefs, I am responsible to the people that employ me and nobody else."

He clearly differentiates between his two roles and consciously avoids using the CDP to promote his name: "Whenever we send out a press release, no public statement ever goes out in my name."

"I think the management committee, at the interview stage, also saw advantages to my being a county councillor. And they also knew me a long time because I was one of the initiators of the project."

Joe and some other management members and workers across the country bear witness to the fact that political representatives have been proven to work very well in the participative democracy setting that CDPs operate in.

Limerick raising money



€5,000 was recently presented by Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Willie O'Dea, to St. Mary's CDP for social integration between the youth, older people and community gardai. Overall, €35,000 has been raised by the project. Volunteers placed a local TD and rugby player 'behind bars' to raise money and collected outside big games at Thomond Rugby Grounds. More information on the social integration project will be published in future editions as the project gets off the ground.



Pictured at the launch of the FORUM 'Memories are made of this' book: l-r Mary Gannon, chairperson FORUM; Tim Rabbitte, Mayor of County Galway; Minister Eamonn O'Cuiv, TD; Kathleen Aspell Mortimer, Outreach Social Care Worker, FORUM; John Coyne, Director, FORUM.

'Memories are made of this'

- here's how one project led to another

By DECLAN WEIR

When the first Intergenerational Festival organised by the local CDP took place in Connemara in Summer 2001 (See *Changing Ireland*, Issue 5) it's unlikely that the participants saw themselves having a future in publishing.

Back then, breaking down existing poor perceptions between the generations was a priority, and seeing your name in print was way down the list of things to achieve.

Since then, it's fair to say that perceptions have improved and the festival has become a much-anticipated regular feature in the area. The woman at the centre of the activities is project co-ordinator, Kathleen Aspell Mortimer, who works for the rural CDP called FORUM.

As an outreach social care worker, Kathleen has a particular grá for working with the older people in North-West Connemara and she was delighted with the publication of 'Memories are Made of This', a compendium of writing which was recently published and launched as a result of the Intergenerational Project.

The first aim of the project was to pro-

mote and encourage the participation of older people in their community. It also hoped to establish strong links between older and younger people and to transfer traditional skills and crafts to a younger generation. The project concentrated on reminiscence as its theme, and young and old alike got to grips with many of those traditional crafts, such as basket making, spinning and weaving. All of this was complemented by older people's storytelling during which they relived experiences of schooldays, emigration, house dances, weddings, traditions, old cures and piseogs.

With such a wealth of words and priceless knowledge available there was nothing for it but to compile them all together in one volume - so Kathleen describes the origins to 'Memories are Made of This'. With a plan formulated, many of the local children gladly gathered together the stories and poems as told by their grandparents and neighbours.

For Kathleen, one of the most positive aspects of putting the collection together was the commitment and vibrancy of the older people. They related their stories with amazing energy and it was a great

way of getting on paper much of what was previously known only to the storyteller.

A huge amount of work went into the book, and contributions were gratefully accepted from the likes of Galway County Council, FAS and the Museum of Country Life in Turlough. Teachers, staff and pupils from the area's national schools all made their mark and FORUM worked closely with Letterfrack Writers Group in bringing it to completion. The book was officially launched by Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv in Clifden last December.

All in all, some 600 older people and children took part in last year's Intergenerational Festival. Its success was welcomed by Kathleen who described it as highlighting the vital contribution which older people make to society while providing an opportunity for them to be active participants in their community.

Undoubtedly many of those who took part will also remember it as the year they became published authors!

To purchase copies of 'Memories are made of this' contact FORUM at 095 - 41116.

Older people forced out of work

Suppose you are good at your job, you like it, and have huge enthusiasm for it. Then one day you are told you must leave. It's not because of redundancy, they're hiring someone else in your place. It's not because you can't do your job. It's nothing specific to you at all, they've clearly told you it's because you simply fall into a specific category of human being. And afterwards you probably won't be able to get another job, you can't sign on the dole, and FAS won't touch you.

"That can't be legal," you would say. Well, whether it is or not, it happens every year to thousands of people who, through no fault of their own, get one day older. The compulsory retirement age which many companies and Government Departments operate, comes into force on the 65th anniversary of your birth, no appeals, no fitness test, no aptitude test, out you go.

Chronological age is not a good indicator of how active and fit for life someone actually is, according to Michael O'Halloran, chief executive of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, one of the Community Development Programme's 170 projects. Unusually for a CDP, this project, while based in Dublin has a national focus.

"Older people should have the choice of whether to retire or not. They may not have the physical strength to take on certain jobs but that should be the determining factor not chronological age."

At 67 Michael is himself taking adult education night classes in Irish.

Older people need to have their voices heard both nationally and locally and that is what the Senior Citizens Parliament is there for. Acting as an umbrella organisation to over 300 affiliated groups the Parliament concerns itself with the rights and welfare of older people in our society.

"I know people who are in their nineties and are still extremely active while others in their twenties are far less so," he said. "One



IRISH
SENIOR CITIZENS
PARLIAMENT

of the ways older people, and younger people, can resolve many of the issues which affect them is to combine to share problems and find solutions. Older people should be able to contribute to their community, to help find solutions to problems."

"The interesting thing about the Senior Citizens Parliament is that it is both a national organization and a community organisation," he said. "In this organisation we argue we must be inter-generational and try to impact on issues which affect our children and grandchildren as well as those which affect older people directly".

Michael sees a need for community organisations to recognise the experience and knowledge older people have gained when recruiting or seeking volunteers. (See adjoining story on older people and volunteering). He feels that older people have a contribution to make: "Older people may be no smarter than younger people, but they've had longer to learn."

Contact details: Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, 90 Fairview Strand, Dublin 3. Tel. 01-856-1243. Fax: 01-856-1245.

E-mail: seniors@iol.ie

Website: www.seniors.ie

Note: The government intends to change the law and remove the compulsory retirement age of 65 for newly recruited public servants. It will end compulsory retirement at 65 in the sector. The government hopes to have the laws, which were first flagged in the budget, passed by the end of March. Meanwhile, the compulsory retirement age for gardai is being lifted to 60 years. Source: Irish Times, 26/1/04, page 3. It seems likely the changes are being made mostly for economic reasons.

Parliament wants rural transport gap plugged

Since its inception the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament (see page **) has lobbied for a system where a number of vouchers would be issued to older people to enable them to access taxis and hackneys which would bring them to the nearest point of access to the Free Travel system.

The Parliament does of course acknowledge that some progress has been made in

this regard by the Rural Transport Initiative. They remind people that the RTI emerged following a survey which found huge non-usage of travel passes and isolation among rural dwellers because of the lack of transport.

The Free Travel Pass for Older People was introduced in 1967. Other people, such as those with disabilities, also qualify for free travel. Many rural people still do not have the opportunity to use their pass.

90,000 older people have cure to volunteer 'shortage'

Like many other CDPs, the Senior Citizens Parliament sees that the literacy and numeracy problems, which affect so many people, are a huge handicap. However, unlike many other organisations who are suffering from a shortage of volunteers, the Senior Citizens Parliament may be able to help. "There are 90,000 active older people out there in the organisations affiliated to the Parliament. If we can harness just a small number of these as volunteers in a scheme to combat literacy, for example, older people could then make a huge contribution to their local communities."

"In common with other vulnerable groups, older people depend on the Government to make provision for their welfare." And like those other groups of vulnerable people, older people need to influence political decision-making at national and local level.

"When people retire from work at whatever age they no longer have the protection of their trade union, they no longer have the benefit of general increases in the standard of living applied across the board. They are dependent on the outcomes of political decisions that affect their pensions, their healthcare and so on."

Why have a Senior Citizens Parliament?

Senior Citizens have a right to be heard and the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament is a national organisation of older people. Its origins go back to 1993 when the European Parliament held its first Senior Citizens Parliament in Luxembourg.

The event was attended by Irish delegates who returned full of enthusiasm. They recognised the need for older people to have a strong voice at national level and so the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament was founded and held its first Parliament in 1994.

The Parliament has 300 affiliated organisations, each of which have an equal status, having the right to nominate three delegates to the Parliament, regardless of the size of the organisation.

You can't ignore the writing on the pavement

- Ringsend project highlights domestic violence

NICK MURPHY reports

On the 5th December 2003, amid the hustle and noise of a building site, a group of people gathered to watch the Minister for Justice, Equality, and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, T.D. lay a stone slab entitled "Memories of the 'The Door'" at the Library Plaza in Ringsend.

Every year the days between 25th November (*International Day Opposing Violence*) and 10th December (*International Human Rights Day*) are marked by women throughout the world as 16 Days of Action against Violence against Women.

Projects throughout the country were heavily involved in various anti-violence activities during this time and in Ringsend it was no different. And they had a novel approach.

In 2002, as part of marking the days of action, the Ringsend Action Project and local women erected 'The Door', a wooden piece of temporary street sculpture to represent the issue of domestic violence. Recognising that the majority of the violence against women happens in the home, the door was left ajar to signify that there is a way out of a violent relationship for women when they are ready to leave. And the stone slab laid by the Minister is inscribed 'remembering the door' and commemorates that initiative.

Aileen Foran, development worker with Ringsend Action Project (the local CDP) welcomed the Minister and pointed out that most domestic violence occurs in the home, hidden from public view. Many of the cases are dealt with in family court where, under the 'in camera' rule, they are heard in the judge's private



Nick Murphy, regional reporter for 'Changing Ireland' in Dublin.

chambers.

"What the Ringsend Action Project is about is taking domestic violence out, exposing it as an issue and seeking a commitment that it is no longer acceptable," said Aileen.

As they listened, the audience examined slips of paper attached to the fence, bearing details of 92 women who have been murdered in Ireland since the end of 1995, 62 of them in their own home.

"The biggest reason why women do not leave a violent partner is having nowhere to go," Aileen stated.

"18% of Irish women have been abused by a partner and that 4 out of every 10 women who have been involved in a sexual relation-

ship with a man have experienced some form of violence from their partner," she added.

In a short speech the Minister said that there are just short of 10,000 cases of domestic violence reported to the Gardai each year. He acknowledged that there are doubtless far more cases which go unreported. Of this number he said that 87% are acts of violence against women.

Referring to the 'in camera' rule in family courts the Minister said, "That is one closed door I am about to open."

He announced the publishing of a courts and civil liabilities bill. While this bill deals mostly with other issues, some of its provision will allow the gathering of information on how cases are handled in family courts to ensure that trends (in sentencing and so on) can be identified.

"This one area, which is hidden from public view, will be able to come under the public gaze," he said.

Aileen said that over the next five years the Ringsend Action Project hoped to achieve an acknowledgement by the community that domestic violence is an unacceptable part of some peoples lives, develop a strategy to reach out to members of the community who have suffered and are continuing to suffer at the hands of abusers and develop long-term education and training programmes for children, young people and adults.

"This stone will stand as an enduring reminder that domestic violence is with us forever," she cried.

In closing the Minister praised the work of the Ringsend Action Project. Asked could the area rely on funding into the future the minister said, "While I can't guarantee future funding, just like that, I know that the money the department has been putting into projects in this area is well spent and that at least some of the problems affecting the area are being dealt with."

If your organisation is interested in taking part in the '16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women' next year call Women's Aid on 01-868-4721 or check out the website - www.womensaid.ie

The inscription laid into the ground reads as follows:

*Remembering
'The Door'
A street sculpture
That commemorated
The 16 Days of Activism against Gender
Violence 2002
Created by Local Women
& Ringsend Action Project.*

Details of violence makes judge 'sick to the core'

Quoting from a recent media interview Aileen Foran of the local CDP in Ringsend said, "District Court Judge Mary Martin has described domestic violence as the most disturbing aspect of her work. Judge Martin said, 'The number of women seeking refuge from their husbands and the details of the violence endured by them would leave one sick to the core. Cases of Marital Rape are common. We have laws to protect women from rape in their marriage but there are very few prosecutions for Marital Rape despite the fact that I would hear evidence of it happening regularly.'

"The judge also highlighted the number of elderly dependents forced to seek barring

orders because they can no longer tolerate the constant abuse received from family members. 'It is absolutely essential' the judge continued 'that we break the dreadful cycle of domestic violence. Young boys grow up accepting what they see their fathers doing, young girls grow up accepting and putting up with what they see their mothers tolerating. Things will never change until society says stop'."

Aileen read her speech, including the judge's remarks, to a group assembled for the laying of a stone slab on the public footpath with a suitable engraving to mark the '16 Days of Action against Violence against Women'.



'Changing Ireland' in Brazil with Rotary International

THIS is the second of a two-part report from Brazil. 'Changing Ireland' editor, Allen Meagher visited the country in 2003 while on a cultural exchange visit organised by Rotary International, a worldwide volunteer organisation.

In this edition, we will look at how and why Brazil's employers are so involved in community development. We hear from a family living in a flood-prone slum in Sertaozinho. Development workers and volunteers in Sao Carlos tell of their fight against poverty and disadvantage. And development programme managers explain their vision for a new Brazil.

If Ireland, also known for its big rich-poor gap, was to copy one of Brazil's most successful initiatives, it might encourage the Irish Business and Employers Confederation to get stuck into community development.

SESC is a social and community development programme

funded and managed by the country's employers. The funding comes from a 1% government tax on companies, but rather than lodge the money with the exchequer, the government has allowed the employers to manage the spending and direct it towards those experiencing hunger and disadvantage. It is producing big results and the UN is being asked to take notice.

A special thanks to Brazilians, Ailton, Dani and Ivo, for making it possible to cover these stories.

And thank you to Rotary International, a worldwide volunteer organisation that works against poverty and disadvantage at home and abroad. It was with the Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange Programme that Allen travelled to Brazil. He was hosted by local Rotary families and given extensive tours of the region.

Lovestruck couple caught in vicious cycle of poverty

Sertaozinho, in Sao Paulo State, is a paradise to many of its residents and famous as Brazil's capital of roller-hockey, sugar-cane farming and alcohol production (used as a fuel in cars). The city boasts the highest quality of life in Brazil, but some people still live in dire poverty and gratitude is due to local Rotary member, Ailton de Queiroz, who understood that 'Changing Ireland' readers would want to hear from poor people how life is. He acted as translator as one jobless couple living in a roughly-built home in a flood zone told their story:

"Because I was poor, I never went to university," said Jose Simao do Amaral. "The main problems are that we don't have jobs, no proper house, no education and no (job) security. Last year, I lost my job and Ilda (Jose's partner) can't find a school to learn to write and read. For us, without education, nothing is possible. Nothing good happened in the last year."

"We get floods here up to two feet high inside the rooms - this is normal," said Ilda Avguno, showing me the stains on the wall from previous floods. The floodmark was a few inches above their bed.

"Jose does get a social security payment (R\$240 per month), but we are both now unemployed," she continued, "and we have five children between us. Only one of the children has work, cleaning for a well-off family. I was looking for a place to study, because I don't know how to write or read,



Ilda Avguno and Jose Simao do Amaral are among Brazil's 54 million poor people.

but even if I find a place in the city we don't have transport to get to schools."

Asked was crime, particularly burglary, a problem, Ilda replied, "We don't have anything to steal - what is anybody going to steal from here?"

Outside, children played near the polluted stream that overflows into their homes during the rainy season. There is little furniture inside Jose and Ilda's home. Outside, Ilda shows me into a new 'house' they built from chipboard - it is where their growing chil-

dren sleep at night. Inside the large, window-less 'house', curtains served as walls. Ailton, incidentally a real-estate broker, talked with the couple about hope for the future.

"The government do plan to replace the shacks with proper housing," he said. "In Sao Paulo, for example, the government is already replacing much favela housing with high-rise apartment blocks. But the people here will only really believe it when they see it happen."

Said Jose: "We have no belief in government because they do not resolve the problems of poor people. The Government is the problem, not President Lula though - I voted for Lula. We hope he can solve our problems, with God's help."

Ailton and his Rotary colleagues work hard in their city to provide facilities for the poor and they work through community development principles - in, for example, the way they run a medical store (see photograph) and youth clubs and work apprenticeship schemes.

Finally, Jose and Ilda revealed they were looking forward to one thing. After being together eight years (each brought with them children from previous partnerships) they were set to get married on June 7th. They seemed really close.

"We will have coffee for everybody, close friends and family, we can't really do much more," said Ilda.



Brazil's employers heavily engaged in community development

Employers in Brazil are heavily engaged in community development programmes across the country and they have led the way in introducing life-long learning courses to the population and in improving the quality of life for older people. It all started in the 1940s when companies agreed to pay a 1% tax specifically for the people's development. Companies now also provide other supports, such as giving their services freely to the poor, and they try to work from community development principles.

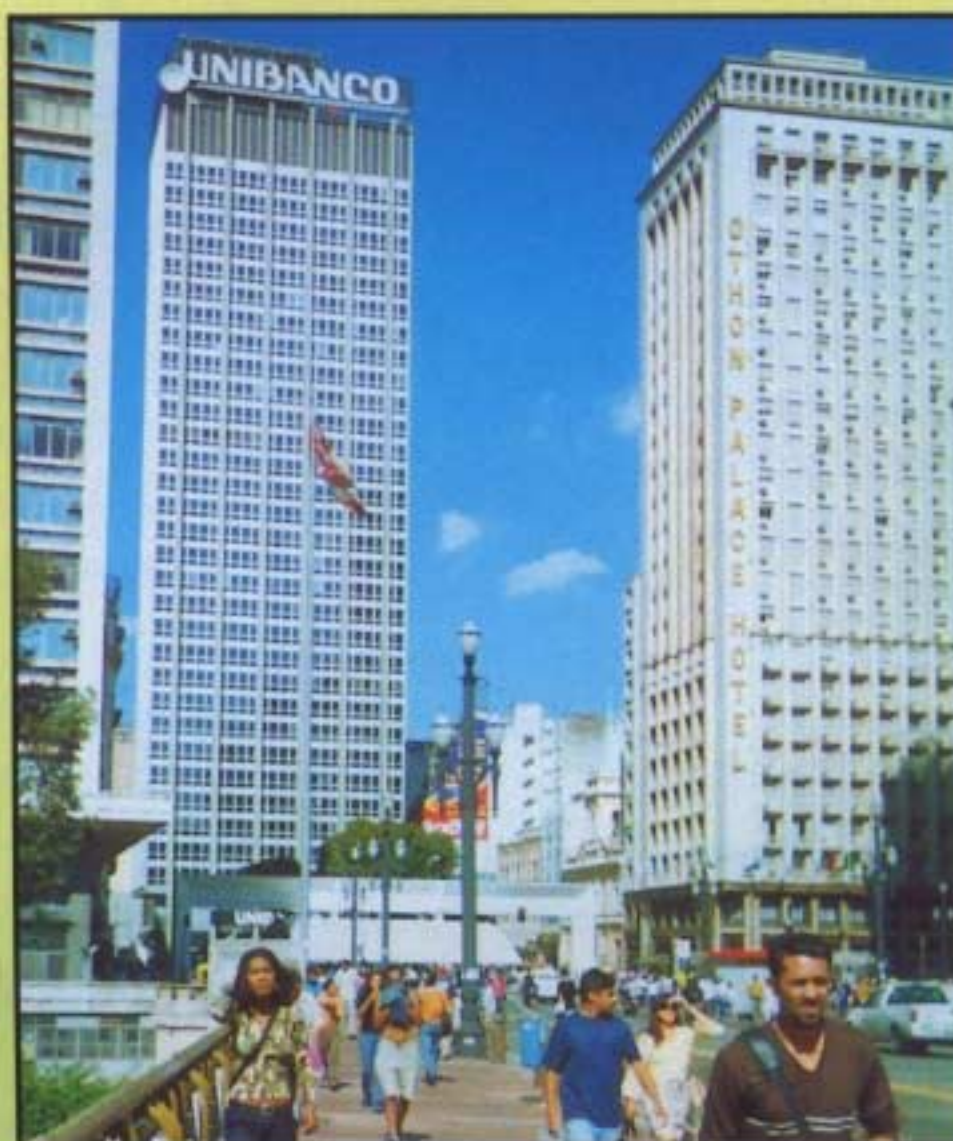
The employers manage the spending of the tax through an organisation called SESC which translates as the Social Service of Commerce.

SESC regional manager, Joel Naimayer Padula, said SESC is not so much there to provide social services as to change people's thinking. Even when it comes to feeding the 400,000 people in Sao Paulo who are poor and hungry, SESC sees it as more important to change the attitudes of the well-fed.

"The main purpose of our food programme," said Joel, "is to educate and change the attitudes of people because in Brazil we waste a lot of food and people are hungry. If everybody in society starts to think 'how can we solve the country's problems?' then we will be getting closer to the solutions."

SESC's programmes are changing the attitude of the population from not always looking to government for everything, but also to look to companies and to themselves as citizens. SESC sees cultural development as crucially important, though they have a difficult time getting others to accept this.

Across Brazil, SESC promotes social welfare, improves people's quality of life and aims to improve the people's cultural development. Funded and managed by the country's employers, SESC operates diverse programmes in feeding actions, health and dental care, the 'third age' sector (older people), and in culture, arts, sports, environmental education and technology. An all-in-one



Sao Paulo, city of 25 million people.

approach to development.

In one centre I visited, all the SESC programmes ran projects under one roof, bringing rich and poor, young and old, educated and streetwise. In Ireland these people would only ever gather together to watch a match. However, if there is one flaw with the SESC approach, it is that they do not have people directing programmes who themselves have experience of the poverty or disadvantage the programmes aim to tackle.

Asked why, SESC Sao Paulo programmes manager, Paulo Ricardo Martin, said they

had not thought of it before. He, and other senior SESC people, were fascinated to hear that Ireland's CDSPs work in this way and wanted to know more about our approach.

"Some people in the local food distribution centres have experienced hunger, but none of the staff, volunteers or directors here have," said Mr. Martin. "But we do ask them (people who are fed through SESC) for their opinions, though we never thought of having them on our board of directors. We do not directly distribute the food, we deliver the food, and provide support and training to the local centres which have often been set up by poor people themselves."

He quoted the example of a homeless centre they supported being set up which is managed by people who were formerly homeless themselves. And he talked of how DHL's President "visited a creche in a slum here which is managed by people from the slum." Now, the company president and employees regularly visit the slum to engage in development work and are utterly committed to this work. DHL also support SESC's feeding programme (see related article).

Mr. Martin referred to Paulo Freire, the Brazilian king of development theory, saying "We are trying to help people understand why they live the way they do, say in poverty or hunger, and ask them to see how they can change their circumstances. Knowledge should begin with knowledge of your immediate reality, and then a person can begin to develop themselves."

Brazil & Ireland - 12 facts

- Ireland imports 13% of its beef from Brazil; the first thing Ireland exported to Brazil was a barrel of whiskey, nowadays software is the chief export.
- The Sao Paulo and Rio De Janeiro regions are infrastructurally more developed than anywhere in Ireland.
- The poor north-eastern regions around Amazon are poorer than Ireland has been for a century.
- There are more dentists in parts of Brazil than in Ireland and braces are very fashionable among middle-class children. Some dentists, doctors and plastic surgeons volunteer their services in poor communities.
- To stay middle-class in Brazil, people need to work at least two, if not three, jobs.
- There are estimated 54 million Brazilians (total pop. 170 million) living in poverty while a minority are very rich; the country has the biggest rich-poor gap in the world.
- One Brazilian man owns nearly half the world's oranges.
- Middle-class Brazilians live in secure, high-rise apartment blocks.
- The poor have live in fear of everything - except being robbed or kidnapped - big worries for rich people.
- Rotary is a worldwide voluntary organisation for professionals who wish to contribute to the less well-off; it is very popular in Brazil and many middle-class Rotarians and poor people work together on social projects.
- Brazil exports coffee - but only receives a fraction of its selling-price in Europe from the coffee corporations.
- All Brazilians embrace their friends with a hug whenever they meet - a beautiful idea.





Poor communities need faith in development work

- the community worker's role

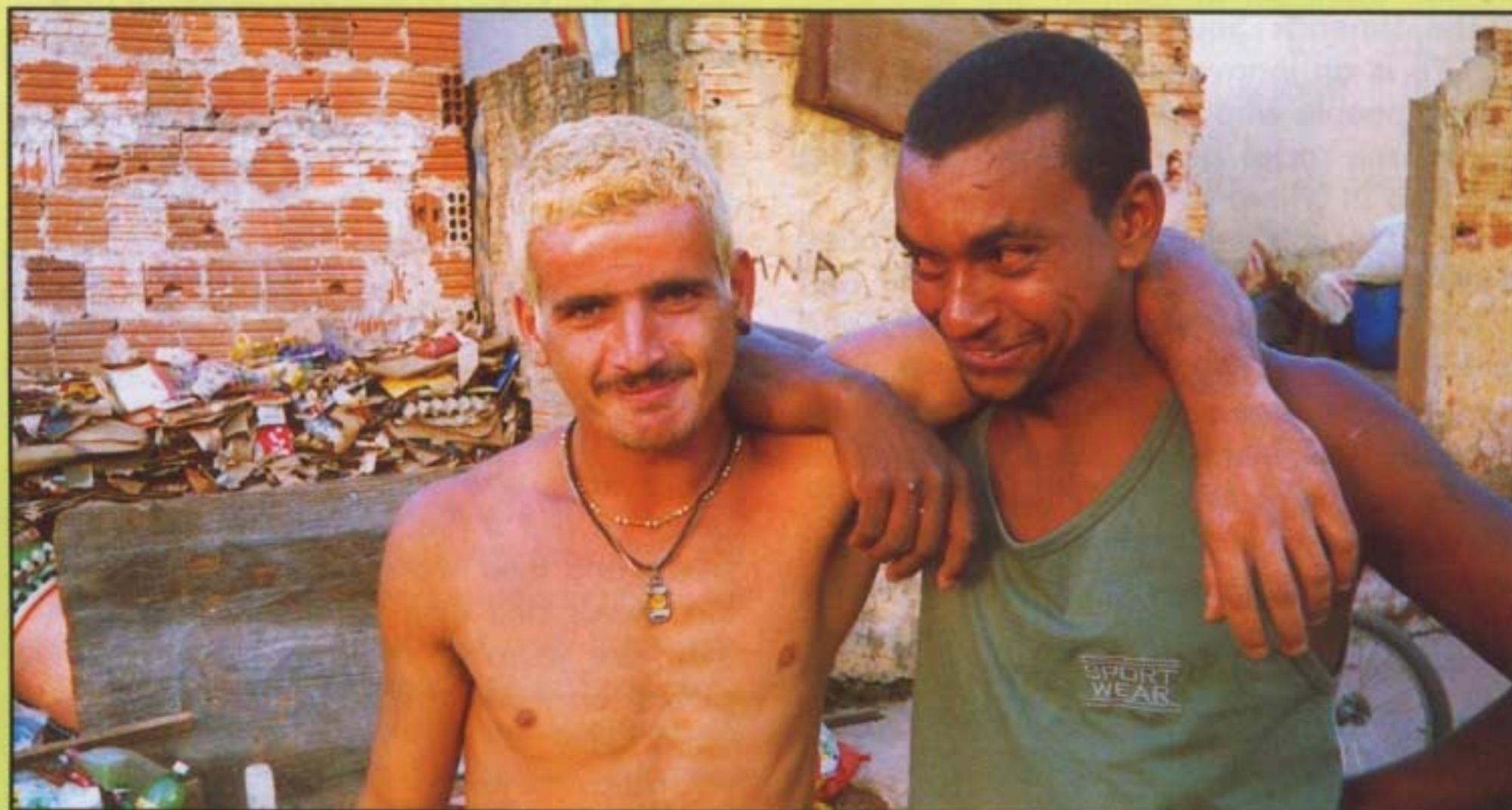
Valeria de Vasconcelos is a dedicated community development worker in Sao Carlos, Brazil. After 30 bad years of political corruption, her initial challenge is to convince people in the poor community (favela) she works in that the government is now serious about tackling poverty. It sounded remarkably like Ireland's RAPID programme, though crucially with the money coming through.

Valeria had opportunity to work in Britain, she studied there, but chose to return home when President Lula was elected and see what could be done at home. She is one of the large numbers of middle-class Brazilians, including many Rotarians, who voted for Lula and sincerely hope the country can lift itself out of poverty and violence.

In her district, there is now a 2 million euro budget, most of it destined for new housing, roads and infrastructure. But it is easy to understand as we walk through the desperately poor favela with its dilapidated housing why people are slow to believe that new homes will be built for them.

Children play in the background as I photograph a favela home literally made of cardboard. While most are brick-built and secure, this one sat dangerously on the edge of a litter-strewn ravine. Below, five natural springs that could provide clean water are all polluted. Sewerage leaks across paths that bare-foot children walk on - I was horrified, surely child-mortality must be sky-high?

"No, it was high," said Valeria, "but nutritional deficiencies are nearly gone now. This is thanks to Pastoral de Crianca (a christian organisation) whose volunteers encouraged people to use local products, here manioc and bananas grow easily, and mix them into their traditional basic diet of beans and rice. They also run training for young mothers, provide adult education and work with '3rd Age' people (a sector which in Ireland we term active age people, senior citizens, older people or the elderly). The Catholic Church started the work and now it is ecumenically



Two residents from a Favela, or shantytown, in Sao Carlos, Brazil

driven."

"We are a third-world country. The problem is not the poverty; the problem is the fence between rich and poor. Sao Carlos is considered Brazil's Boston - we have the most number of doctors here per head of population compared to anywhere else in the country. And yet we have favelas here - it is wrong.

"Gonaga Garden - where we just walked around - the biggest problem there is drugs. And it's like the chicken-and-egg puzzle, which comes first? Do drugs lead to poverty, or does poverty lead to drugs?

Confronting a history of oppression

"We are starting a massive project against social and environmental degradation. This area is controlled by gangs, though the poor people have no choice but live here. But this area will be transformed - 500 homes will be rebuilt or replaced altogether," said Valeria, acknowledging that local people remained sceptical.

"They have a history of oppression," she said.

About 60,000euro of the budget is targeted at social projects, youth clubs, sports clubs and the like. As we walk up the road to visit a club, Ronan Keating's voice blasted merrily from a stereo in a nearby house. Neighbours, both black and white, sat outside their homes relaxing in the dying heat of the day.

Valeria quoted Paulo Freire - 'We went to the communities, looking for leaders and to see how they can be free.'

I was introduced to an outreach worker and some of the community leaders, all volunteers involved in various projects. We met Lucimar, a mother of three who makes 33euro per month recycling paper and cardboard and who receives extra support through Lula's Zero Hunger rations programme. Valeria had tried without success to get Lucimar to join a recycling co-operative, but Lucimar was afraid it could mean a drop in income.

Valeria's work is targeted especially at 120 teenagers who would otherwise be in gangs. For example, volunteers teach them Kung Fu to increase the teenagers' sense of self-esteem. With the backing of city hall, they had worked for four months on building a soccer pitch and a youth centre, all nearing completion.

It's turning dusk as we talk and some girls start to leave the club. Valeria explains, "It is difficult to get teenage girls to go to the youth centre after dark. At night, only one or two people go out on the streets, because the police think all the locals are dangerous and they beat them if they see them wandering around at night-time. And if you are walking on your own, they think you must be there looking to buy drugs."

Lula's government has started similar programmes to the Sao Carlos one in favelas throughout Brazil. Working from community development principles, it could be the start of something that will grow in a similar way to Ireland's Community Development Programme.

www.saocarlos.sp.gov.br



Lucimar recycling cardboard in a plastic drum while chatting with development worker, Valeria de Vasconcelos.

Limerick youth proud of Garda project

MARTINE BRENNAN reports

The Limerick South City Youth Initiative (LSCYI) is an innovative project that targets young people who are at high risk of developing anti-social behaviour and becoming involved in crime.

As a Garda Diversion Project, it is funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It was established in 1997 and is typical of the various projects funded nationwide under the Garda Diversion Project. And while 'Changing Ireland' is published to promote the profile of the CDP, it is useful to look in each issue at how other programmes operate in the development arena.

The LSCYI project gives the young people opportunities to develop new skills and abilities. It also fosters abilities that the young people have but may not have had the chance to develop. Participation in the project gives young people the time to develop confidence in themselves, the ability to co-operate with their peers in group projects and self-discipline in terms of working towards goals over longer time periods. On a day to day level the young people have a safe place to go and rewarding, interesting tasks to complete.

Last year's Special Olympics sparked off a great deal of interest from the young people. They became very involved in and enthusiastic about their contribution. Working together as a team they decorated St. Enda's swimming pool for the Munster Final and also decorated City Hall for the Mayor's reception for the Austrian Team. Two of the young people led the Austrian Team onto Croke Park for the Opening Ceremony and took part in the

opening dance - 'A Dash of Colour'. They also were involved in designing the Limerick flag for the Special Olympics and took part in the Torch Run in Limerick and were part of the Torch Run guard of honour.

The young people from LSCYI have participated in Dáil na nÓg, the Plassey 10km marathon, and various programme in Equine Awareness, Racism Awareness, Drug Awareness, the 'Copping On' crime prevention programme, and the Schoolmate Life Skills Programme.

Days at the project are clearly busy and demanding and the young people have begun to feel a real sense of pride in themselves and their work. They have proved to themselves and their local communities that they are capable of large and sustained pieces of work when they are given the opportunity.

Groups involved in the LSCYI project include: Our Lady of Lourdes Womens' Group, Southsiders Group, Clovers Group Southill, Outreach Group, Weston Young Mens' Group and Weston Mixed Group.

LSCYI also links into the Juvenile Liaison Offices, Probation, Social Services, the ISPCC, Rossbrien Drugs Strategy, Southill Drugs Strategy, Limerick Youth Service, Our Lady of Lourdes and Queen of Peace School Completion programmes and ACCESS at University of Limerick. LSCYI takes an active role in the policies and programmes of these groups.

If you would like to purchase one of the calendars please contact Antoinette McLoughlin, project co-ordinator on 061-318097 or e-mail: lscyi@hotmail.com

International days for projects to act on

Since the early days of the United Nations system, the UN has established a set of Days and Weeks (as listed below), Years and Decades to help focus the world on the issues in which the UN has an interest and commitment. The UN calls on Member States and other organisations, and that includes CDPs of course, to mark these days in ways which reflect their priorities. These are days coming up over the forthcoming months that may be relevant:

February

21 International Mother Language Day

March

8 International Women's Day and United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace
21 International Day Against Racism
21-28 Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
22 World Water Day
23 World Meteorological Day

April

7 World Health Day
23 World Book and Copyright Day

Have a laugh without leaving your desk!

How strange is this? While sitting at your desk make clockwise circles with your right foot. While doing this, draw the number '6' in the air with your right hand or on paper if you prefer. What direction is your foot going now?



Keep Our future Safe!

By AMANDA Mullane

A poster drawn by Amanda Mullane for the LSCYI calendar.

The Community Development Programme - a history

1990 - Community Development Programme established and 15 projects funded by the end of the year. The Combat Poverty Agency and later other organisations were appointed as support agencies.

1994 - Family Resource Centre Programme established and the number of projects in this programme also slowly expands to 10 centres by the end of the year.

1994 - Core-Funded Groups Programme (well, it actually had a longer title, but this is what it was known as) was established and 20 projects received funding.

2001 - The umbrella of the Community Development Support Programmes (CDSPs) comes into being, the aim being to bring about greater cohesion. There is great fanfare as it brings together nearly 200 projects funded under the Community Development Programme, the Family Resource Centre Programme and the Core-Funded Groups Programme. Mighty!

2002 - The Family Resource Centre Programme is taken out of the CDSPs, given statutory status and set up as the part of the

new Family Support Agency. So the shamrock loses a leaf. (However, at local level, projects brought together under the CDSPs continued to network and work together, no bad thing!)

2003 - 15 new projects are set up, bringing the number of Community Development Projects to 122. The number of Core-Funded Groups around the country stands at 48. A review is organised by Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv of the community and voluntary sector programmes and agencies funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. And from now on, CDPs must get their workplans endorsed by local city/development boards.

2004 - The CDSPs umbrella term becomes obsolete as the 48 Core-Funded Groups are re-named Community Development Projects. With all projects now known as CDPs, life becomes simpler (if only there hadn't been so many changes since 1990) and there are now 170 Community Development Projects in the Community Development Programme (there were only 15 in the beginning). Until now, the programmes have continued to grow

and remain autonomous projects based in local communities receiving central funding support from the state through the new Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Regarding the support structures, the number of Regional Support Agencies is to be reduced from 13 to 6. Meanwhile, more Specialist Support Agencies have been set up.

What is Community Development? Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of inequality and to offer new opportunities to those lacking choice, power and resources. Community Development involves people in making changes they identify to be important and which put to use and develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

Note: 'Changing Ireland' is the national newsletter of the Community Development Programme.

More information: For more indepth coverage of current developments, turn to the centre pages.

Friday 4.05pm:

I really feel sorry for our management team who at this stage aren't sure who they are and who funds them. It used to be the CDP with work plans and reports going to DSCFA. Then it was CDSPs or CDSP still under the DSCFA. Then it was the CDSP(s) under CRAGA. Then it was CDSP(s) without the FRCs with work plans and reports going to CDB via SIM and CRAGA. Now we have the "Ss" removed so its back to CDP again. At least we have clarity and cohesion at departmental level.

Saturday 12.55am:

Glad to see those CFGs got rid of. It sounded like they were out there doing harm to the ozone layer along with CFCs and the like. Thank God they've been turned into harmless CDPs.

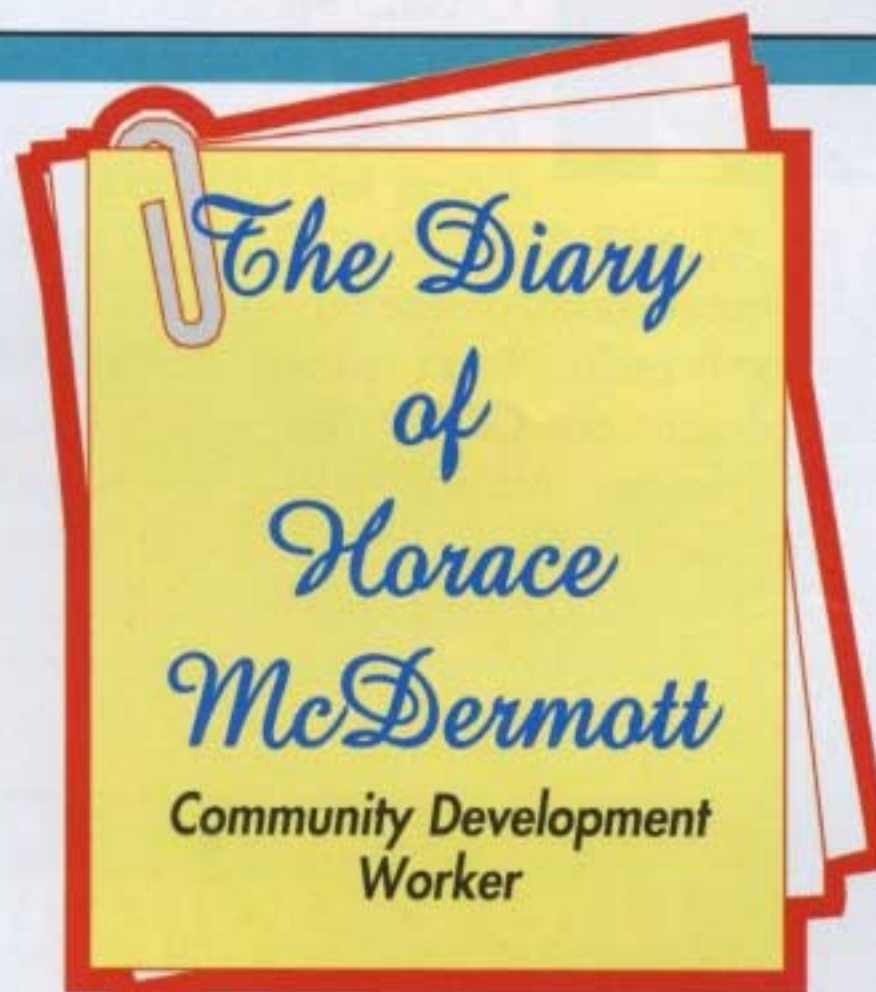
Monday 9.30am:

I thought the SIMS was a computer animated virtual reality play station type game. It turns out that instead it's a different virtual reality game where you can imagine you co-ordinate all social inclusion measures through a computer software package CDBcerv.

Tuesday 9.30pm:

Wrote up my part of the Ballybog 2004 work plan for submission to SIM and the CDB. As usual Mick gave out to me because I included a section on Cohesion and Co-ordination of Service Delivery. Under the template from the Department I put:

Action: Produce additional yearly work plan and reports for endorsement by CDB



How action meets objectives of CDB strategy: Empower CDB to fulfil this function

Target Group: SIM members, councillors, the odd bureaucrat and paper producers

Reason Why Action is Needed: God alone knows cause I don't.

Expected Outcomes: More work for me and less time for community led issues.

Linked actions: Additional paper work, extra meetings and general bitching sessions.

Mick said I couldn't include it even though it is now part of my work. I don't know!

Wednesday 7.10pm

Great news that the Rose of Tralee has been saved. It would have been a tragedy if Ireland's greatest international achievement in winning Miss World was spoiled if our greatest beauty contest went by the wayside. It would be worse than playing our world cup soccer internationals in a different country like Cardiff or a different planet like Croke Park.

Thursday 12.09am

Plans for our own festival and beauty pageant 'The Heather of the Bog' are going great. The CDP are sponsoring an entry with our administrator Penny Pincher already qualified for the final 12 contestants known locally as the Last Bunch of Heather. Sylvester is compering the show this year.

Friday 5.34pm

Not sure if the Community Development Programme is part of the new Dept. of Environment "Race Against Waste" campaign. The dangerous CFGs binned and recycled as CDPs. The Support Agencies are being scrapped and repackaged in a smaller size yet covering a larger area. It is a mystery why it took them so long to think of it. Get twice the work for half the cost. Mind you if I was still in the Department I would suggest staying consistent to the county model and have just 4 regions to match the provinces.

Saturday 7.00am

I think George Bush's Mars invasion is a great idea. Though of course if there is intelligent life on Mars, then Martians will soon be marching in protest against the use of their landing areas to transport US troops all over the galaxy.

Sunday 9.45am

Came into work to catch up on some stuff, but after 15 mins I found out that I need a break. I did the stress test on page 3 of this edition of 'Changing Ireland' I am VERY stressed, it appears, and I've to leave work immediately.

If you don't ask questions, you don't get answers!

The Dail regularly deals with questions raised by members of the public through their locally elected public representatives. In each political party that sits on the opposition benches, either a TD or Senator, or sometimes both, is given the task of 'shadowing' the work of a particular Department. They can raise questions in the Dail over a Department's performance and enquire into any changes that have taken or are about to place. Their job is also to question the Minister in public on the direction s/he provides to their assigned Department.

Making contact with relevant opposition spokespersons who may ask questions in the Dail or Seanad can be a useful way of raising a topic, gaining information, generating public awareness and stirring national debate. The following TDs and Senators are opposition party spokespersons on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (CRGA) according to their respective party websites. Some of the websites provided relevant personal details which are included here:



Fine Gael

Fine Gael's Fergus O'Dowd, TD, is his party's chief spokesperson on CRGA.

He is a new TD and was appointed spokesperson on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in June 2002. Deputy O'Dowd is a Senator since 1997. He is the founding chairman of the Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda. Home Address: 24 St. Mary's Villas, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Tel: 041-984-2275. Leinster House Tel: 01-618-3078. E-mail: Fergus.O'Dowd@fine-gael.ie

Seymour Crawford, TD, is Fine Gael's deputy spokesperson on CRGA.

Deputy Crawford was appointed deputy spokesperson on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2002 after ten years in the Dail. He was Fine Gael spokesperson on Food, Horticulture & Disadvantaged Areas in 1994 and was a member of the British Irish Parliamentary Body between 1993 and 1997. Home Address: Drumkeen, Aghabog, Co. Monaghan. Tel: 047-71911. Leinster House, tel. 01-618-3408. E-mail: Seymour.Crawford@finegael.ie

Senator Joe McHugh, a former youth work-

er, is Fine Gael's Seanad spokesperson on CRGA. He is a new Senator elected in July 2002. Senator McHugh worked as a Community Youth Worker from 1996 - 2002. Home address: Claggan, Carrigart, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074-915-5968. Fax: 074-915-5968. Leinster House Tel: 01-618-4242. Constituency Office: Leinster House, Dublin 2. E-mail: Joe.McHugh@finegael.ie



Labour

Labour's Brian O'Shea, TD, is his party's Dail spokesperson on CRGA. Personal details were not available from the party's website. Home tel: 051 381913.

Dail tel: 01-618-3780. Fax: 01-618-4198. Email: brian.oshea@oireachtas.irlgov.ie

Senator Brendan Ryan is Labour's Seanad Spokesperson on CRGA (as well as on Health, Foreign Affairs, Arts, Sport and Tourism). Cork Office, tel. 021-480-8024. Senate, tel. 01-618-3417. Fax: (01) 6184192. E-mail: brendan.ryan@oireachtas.ie, brryan@indigo.ie

Green Party

The Green Party's Dan Boyle, TD and party chief whip, is spokesperson on Community, Rural Development and The Islands. Constituency address: 45 Capwell Ave, Turner's Cross, Cork. Tel. 021-470-4238. Tel. Dail at 01-618-4227. Fax: 01-618-4538. E-mail: dboyle@oireachtas.ie

Trevor Sargent TD, Green Party Leader, is his party's spokesperson on Gaeltacht issues (as well as other portfolios). Constituency address: 35 Main Street, Swords, Fingal, Co. Dublin. Tel. 01-890-0360

Fax: 01-618-4524. E-mail: trevor.sargent@oireachtas.ie

Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin's website did not seem to highlight any particular public representative as being an official spokesperson on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The party's head office in the republic is: Sinn Féin, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel. 01-872-6100/872-6932. Fax: 01-873-3441. Email: sfadmin@eircom.net

The 2 dolphins stress test

See page 3
for instructions

