

# CHANGING IRELAND

WINTER 04/05

ISSUE 13

The National Newsletter of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 170 community projects

€2.25



## *I'm not racist but . . .*

*I do worry that immigrants will not fit into our way of life . . . our culture will become diluted and our unique sense of Irishness will disappear!*

## Inside

**Stop the bloody violence!**



**Inner city Dublin: hidden poverty**



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



# The thinker behind the toons!

AUSTIN Creaven formerly worked in a community development setting in Limerick teaching art as a form of therapy for young people. He has been drawing cartoons for 'Changing Ireland' since 2001. "The 'I'm not racist, but...' cartoon came from deep down in the pit of my stomach," said Austin. "There is a hypocrisy in the 'new' Ireland. We have gone from being a nation of 'have-nots' to a nation of 'haves' and we don't care so much now about poor people."

"The worst of all is the hypocrisy and lying, when people say, 'We welcome foreigners and we look after our poor'. The truth is we are really not that good at either."

"Where do I get my motivation from? I get frustrated with people's apathy more than anything else. It's not that any one of us can change the world,



Austin at work in handeyestudios.

but nowadays us Irish often pretend to ourselves that things that are happening aren't happening. We like to stay in our comfort zones, but poverty in Ireland hasn't gone away."

While not perfect himself, Austin added, he strives at least to be honest.

Austin lives in Newport, Co. Mayo, where he and a colleague have established a design studio.

## We punch like Mohamed Ali!

When things look bleak, retain your scepticism, but think positive. In fact, when things are looking good, retain your scepticism, but think positive.

It's just about having a healthy approach.

Since an overhaul of the community and voluntary sector began, projects should be learning to rest a little easier in that many of their worst fears have not transpired. It is a new year and while the uncertainty of the two years has been hard on projects, things are looking up. The most recent changes have been good ones - both the Programme and its budget have expanded.

The number of Community Development Projects are up by ten to 180 since our last edition (with five more on the way). There have been no almighty mergers of local CDPs and regional Partnerships. No takeovers under ADM or some other such mega-agency.

CDPs are still CDPs even if the new ones will be a little different. Contracts are being renewed for the next two years and people can feel secure in their jobs and work. The projects remain autonomous.

The truth is that radical changes are unlikely. Why change a good thing? The Community Development Programme - though still without a name as well known as Mohamed Ali's - punches way above its weight.

For the price of a few kilometres of by-pass, or a small housing development, communities and individuals are working wonders to combat poverty and disadvantage. The evidence? Read our reports!

\*\*\*\*\*

Spread the word! 'Changing Ireland' is now available for sale through Easons and other outlets - see page 17. Congratulations to everyone involved - CDN Moyross past and present members and staff, the reporters, cartoonist, occasional contributors, the Editorial Team, layout and printers, the Department, the packing and distribution team, the editor, everyone!



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### DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author concerned.

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# Some people still think a 'mouse' is a small rodent

- Computer trainers now calling to homes

By MAURICE McCONVILLE

COMPUTERS are becoming more and more part of our work and everyday life. Microsoft Word, The Internet, email and digital photography are just some of the skills we have had to learn. However many people are being left behind. 'Computer illiteracy' is becoming the latest barrier to social inclusion. Many older people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds find themselves on the wrong side of the 'digital divide' as the technology advances further.

In Co. Louth, a new project called Dundalk Access Technology Action, is tackling this, the newest divide, in an innovative and empowering manner.

As newly appointed project co-ordinator, Dymphna MacGuinness, explained, "The project targets absolute beginners. Computers for the terrified if you like. It is for people, who still think that a mouse is a small rodent. We offer people a chance to learn computers, on a laptop, in their own sitting room."

Several part-time tutors work with Dymphna on the project and two local CDPs, **Le Cheile** and **Ait na nDaoinne**, are playing a key role in DATA along with a consortium of over 20 agencies and local groups.

DATA operates in two marginalised areas in Dundalk, Muirhevnamor and Coxs Demesne, both of which have suffered because of the conflict in the north.

The project works with people who have very little or no experience of computers and who would not be confident enough to take up a computer class. DATA gets over that problem by providing one-to-one tuition to people in their own homes, at their own pace.

The project has been praised in a recent report by Area Development Management and the Combat Poverty Agency for its innovation. Evaluator, Margaret Curran states, "The rationale and method of accessing the targeted group in an outreach basis within their homes is quite unique and proved to be a very successful method of engaging people who won't come to you."

The project was also commended for the way agencies and groups work together to tackle the lack of computer skills. It was acclaimed as a model "that could be adopted by all these organisations working in similar areas."

Some of the computer tutors who work for DATA live in the target areas and this has helped in recruiting participants. Belinda Mulligan is one of these tutors and lives in Coxs Demesne. She is also a volunteer director with Le Cheile CDP. Belinda is now using the training she has received through being a member of Le Cheile to teach other people in her community.

She said DATA is the first link in the chain towards closing the gap in the 'digital divide'.

"It is easier for people to relate to someone they know when they are taking the first step in computer training," said Belinda. "The fact that DATA is so user-friendly makes it appealing to people who have very little or no experience of computers"

DATA is also offering participants opportunities to develop their skills further by taking on other activities or classes. Working with DATA, both CDPs have plans to offer more advanced computer training next year. Computers are not the only progression route sought for DATA participants. By linking in with the VEC and other educational and training agencies, new opportunities are being opened up to participants. DATA is a good model for community-based delivery of an education programme, because it puts the needs of participants at its centre.

Funded through Peace II money, agencies beside the CDPs that are involved in DATA include Dundalk Employment Partnership, VEC, Local Employment Services and Home School Liaison, Fáilte Abhaile and several other voluntary and statutory agencies.

• To know more about DATA you can visit the website [www.dataoutreach.org](http://www.dataoutreach.org) or contact Dymphna at [dmac@dataoutreach.org](mailto:dmac@dataoutreach.org) or contact DATA on 042-9330288.



Dymphna MacGuinness, DATA co-ordinator. Computer trainers are calling with laptops to people's homes to introduce them to computer skills.

## 30,000 people used 175 local projects

Due to the adoption of a new software evaluation model, it is now possible to measure the impact each year of the Community Development Programme in communities across the country. Here are some of the most notable aspects of the Programme:

- There are now 175 projects countrywide, around a third of them in Dublin.
- Projects are actively involved in every disadvantaged community in the country.
- The projects support around 700 other local issue groups.
- There are over 1,000 people actively involved in voluntary management committees of CDPs.
- 12,000 meetings by other groups take place annually in project facilities
- 15,000 people are participating in Training and Education Courses set up through CDPs.
- Country-wide, 30,000 individuals use CDP services annually.
- Thanks to the network of CDPs, there are a wide range of activities, with a strong equality focus, targeting the most disadvantaged communities.



Meeting of DATA members with Dymphna MacGuinness in the foreground



# 15 communities get new projects

FIFTEEN new CDPs were assured of a future by Minister of State, Noel Ahern, when on November 15th he announced the allocation of funding to the following projects in counties Dublin, Wicklow, Offaly, Laois and Cork.

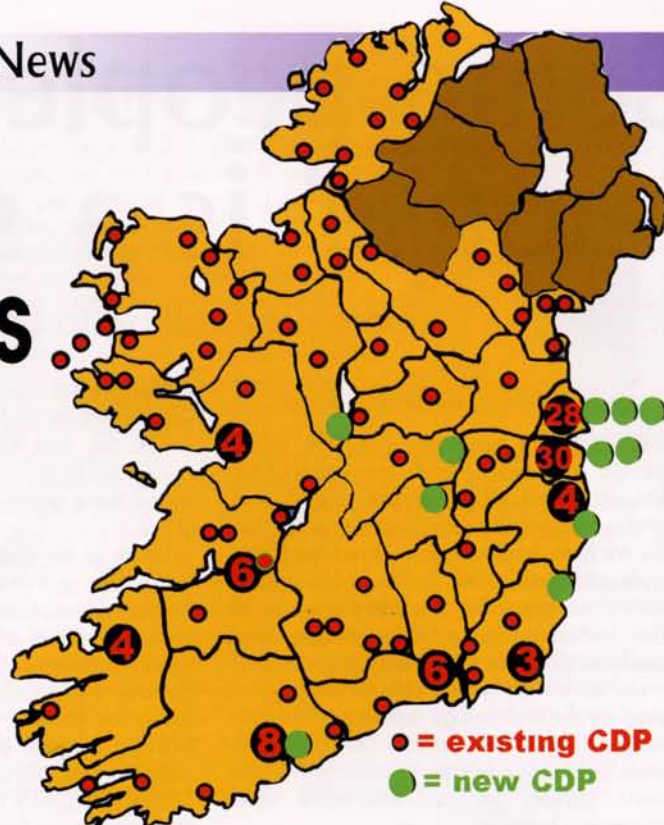
Cabra CDP,  
East Wall CDP,  
Edenmore CDP,  
Drimnagh CDP,  
Loughlinstown CDP, all in Dublin;  
Edenderry CDP, Co. Offaly;  
Arklow CDP, Co. Wicklow;  
Rathnew CDP, Co. Wicklow;  
Gurranabraher CDP, Cork city;  
Portarlinton CDP, Co. Laois.

While people in the towns and city areas concerned can look forward to the benefits that come with having a local CDP, the system by which the projects will be managed and administered locally has proven controversial. Whereas established CDPs run their own affairs, via a voluntary management committee, these new CDPs will be 'hosted' by an existing local development organisation.

Each project will receive a renewable contract for funding to the end of 2006. The commitment for the first year amounts to €600,000. The Department is in discussion with these projects to organise their start-ups as soon as possible.

A further five projects have been negotiating how they will be managed and are optimistic about receiving funding once they comply with the new guidelines.

It has been stated a number of times by the Ministers responsible for the Community Development Programme that these 15 will be the final projects set up under the Programme.



Minister of State Ahern has special responsibility for Community Affairs and the National Drugs Strategy at the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

He said "I am delighted to be able to announce the funding of these projects. It demonstrates the Government's on-going commitment to the targeting of resources to areas of greatest need. In line with commitments given under 'Sustaining Progress' we will continue to support disadvantaged communities and work with them in building a fair and inclusive society."

The Community Development Programme aims to counter social exclusion by involving people, most especially the disadvantaged, in making changes to their communities which they identify to be important and which put to use and develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

Time will tell whether the new system, which somewhat takes from the voluntary managers level of involvement, works out as well as the Ministers hope.

## CDPs' ideas for fighting poverty earn €635,000

### - Dublin, Cork & Tipp CDPs benefit from Dormant Accounts

At least six CDPs were among the 75 community groups countrywide who stand to receive a share of the €6 million handed out in November by the Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursements Board.

CDPs in Dublin, Cork, Wicklow and Tipperary were awarded a total of around €635,000 to turn their plans for fighting disadvantage into reality.

There is still quite an amount of money left unclaimed in old bank accounts remaining to be disbursed. The Government decided last June to double from €30 million to €60 million the total value of programmes and projects which the Board could approve. In the first round of funding, a number of CDPs received grants.

The most recent announcements were made on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The funding was directed towards programmes and projects that assist the most disadvantaged in society including persons with a disability. Under the Board's Disbursement Plan, a minimum of 52.5% of Dormant Accounts funding in 2004 was earmarked for RAPID, Drugs Task Force and

CLÁR areas. Most of these areas are home to CDPs.

While CDPs directly applied, CDPs were also involved in setting up a number of the groups that were successful in applying. In Dublin, for example, the Tallaght Intercultural Action stands to receive €130,000. Among other things, TIA, which was set up by a network of CDPs in Tallaght to fight racism and promote interculturalism, can now afford to employ an Intercultural Education Co-ordinator.

#### Among the CDPs to benefit directly are:

- **Ronanstown CDP and the Womens Education Forum**, in Clondalkin, Dublin, will receive €79,670 to employ a development worker to work in the fight against educational disadvantage. In the same area, **North Clondalkin CDP/Campus**, were allocated €47,712 to develop a project addressing educational disadvantage - the plan includes the employment of a parent resource worker.
- Also in Dublin, **Dolphin House Community Development Association**, in Rialto, is to

receive €118,000 which will enable the CDP to provide training in all aspects of IT, from basic computer skills to web design.

- **The Glen CDP**, Cork, made two applications and will receive €73,637 in total to purchase computers and to employ an outreach/development support worker.
- In Co. Wicklow, the **Little Bray Family Resource Centre** will get €75,288 to provide accessible educational courses for parents and young adults.
- Tipperary's **Knockanrawley Resource Centre** was allocated €110,000 to fund integrated personal and educational development programmes.

The Board will continue to approve programmes and projects over coming months until they have approved the allocated €60 million mentioned earlier. Project proposals are first evaluated by Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM).

More detailed information regarding the scheme and various publications are available on: [www.dormantaccounts.ie](http://www.dormantaccounts.ie) or [www.adm.ie](http://www.adm.ie).



# 16 Days of Action - remembering the hurt

**THIS** year, to mark the 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women, the focus was on the 104 women murdered in Ireland since the beginning on 1996. Of these women, 69 were murdered in their own homes and the figure jumps on average once a month. If it were a serial killer, perhaps the public would be more outraged.

The latest woman found dead, for which a male relative has been charged with murder, was Co. Clare teenager, Marguerite O'Dwyer. She died in her home in the midst of the campaign against violence against women.

Marguerite's body was initially removed to the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick where a post mortem examination was carried out by the state pathologist, while the deceased's brother Patrick O'Dwyer was remanded in custody. Her funeral took place on December 3rd.

The parish priest said it was a terrible tragedy that had touched the entire community around Ennistymon.

Touchingly, on this occasion, the theme of the campaign against violence was one of remembering. In Dublin, **Women's Aid** held a minute's silence outside Dáil Éireann at 11am on Thursday, November 25th to highlight the serious consequences of violence against women. They also ran a fundraising appeal to raise essential funds for their National Freephone Helpline - Women's Aid is a specialist support agency to the Community



*Marguerite O'Dwyer, a 17-year-old schoolgirl, was found dead in her home on November 30th, in Ennistymon, Co. Clare. Her 19-year-old brother Patrick O'Dwyer has been charged with her murder. The funeral took place in the midst of the 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women.*

**Development Programme.** Throughout the country, various groups held local awareness-raising events.

Among the projects funded under the Programme who took part in the campaign were **Kiltimagh CDP**, **Tralee Women's Resource Centre**, a network of Western-based CDPs, **West Training** regional support agency and the Dublin-based **Pavee Point** specialist support agency.

Pavee Point's Violence Against Women Programme launched a brochure challenging some of the most recurring myths and misinformation regarding violence against women in Traveller, Black and other minority ethnic communities living in Ireland. The brochure was intended to be "a pro-active response to challenging violence against minority ethnic women and a means of supporting policy makers and support services in their development of culturally appropriate responses."

In Mayo, Kiltimagh CDP held a window display on the issue of violence against women throughout the 16 days of action. The CDP also held an informal information morning on the issue of violence against woman.

CDPs in the West, working under the umbrella of the Community Response to Domestic Violence Network, launched a desk-calendar complete with statistics, words of wisdom and contact information. It is available free of charge from West Training Regional Support Agency.

In Co. Kerry, Tralee Women's Resource Centre held a Coffee Morning.

**For a copy of Pavee Point's brochure, contact: Pavee Point Travellers Centre VAW Programme 01-878 0255 or E-mail: [vaw@pavee.iol.ie](mailto:vaw@pavee.iol.ie).**

**The Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline, staffed by trained volunteers, is: 1800-341-900.**

## Media insensitivity

**WHILE** the local and national media generally gave good coverage to the campaign against violence against women in December, a magazine called 'Irish Crime' chose to focus their latest edition on female killers. They claimed there were more female killers per head of population in Ireland compared to the U.S.A. while giving no serious attention to the 104, and possibly 105, women murdered mostly by men since '96.

Campaigns and lobbying work by projects such as Women's Aid and dozens of CDPs and other groups around the country are crucial to combat the negative stereotyped image of women which is most often promoted by the tabloid press. To this day, women, despite their numerical strength, remain a minority when measured in terms of access to power and privilege and life-chances.

'Irish Times' columnist Kevin Myers attracted a flurry of letters, most complaining, after he dismissed Women's Aid as "these desperately silly women with their bigoted pathetic view of the world" and "their sexist, man-hating prejudice."

Meanwhile, local press and radio gave generally uncritical coverage to anti-violence events and to the theme of remembering the dead.



## It can be murder being a woman

**SURVEYS** and research, in Ireland and worldwide, have confirmed that many of the women killed by a partner or ex-partner had been living with domestic abuse prior to the murder.

One in five Irish Women experience domestic violence at one time or another or indeed regularly. A kick on the shins, a shower of vocal abuse, a deadly hammer-blow to the head, most of it coming not only from men, but from the very men women are in a 'relationship' with. Research has also shown that women are most likely to be killed by a violent partner when they try to, or do, end the relationship.

This 10% of our population, who are exposed to domestic abuse, whether occasional or regular, "can be in real danger" according to Women's Aid. An average of one woman almost every month is

murdered, the majority of them, though not all, killed by men.

No wonder that, since 1991, the 16 Days Campaign has grown to become a major international event. The campaign started in 1991 and nowadays there are over 1000 organisations in 139 countries participating.

This year, as before, the 16 Days of Action against Violence against Women ran from November 25th (International Day against Violence against Women) to December 10th (International Human Rights Day).

The Campaign aims to highlight the shocking levels of violence against women, raise the subject as a human rights issue at local, national and international level. It shows the solidarity of women around the world in organising against all violence.

**For more information, check the website: [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)**



# Limerick projects join forces against racism

AT City Hall on November 2nd, the Limerick Network Against Racism (LNAR) launched its new leaflet and poster campaign, inviting local schools, businesses, sports groups and voluntary and statutory agencies to join in its work of challenging racism and promoting respect in the community.

The LNAR is a network of the CDPs in the city who have joined forces to work actively against racism.

Said the network in a statement at the launch, "We are extremely proud of our city, county and region, and we believe that there is a genuine commitment throughout our communities to

Limerick Network  
Against Racism



Join Us

challenge the issue of racism in all its forms. We hope to offer an opportunity for individuals and groups to come together to voice that commitment, and to support each other to promote respect and celebrate our diversity. We would be delighted to welcome everyone to our celebration. Local media, sports personalities and public representatives have been invited to celebrate with us."

Further details on the Limerick Network Against Racism can be found at: [www.lnar.org](http://www.lnar.org)  
Or contact Steve McNamara, Community Development Support Worker at the MWCDSA, on 061-225711.

## Volunteer pack very popular

A 'Volunteer Pack' for CDP management committee members designed by West Training Regional Support Agency has proven so popular that other regions are beginning to use it.

A year ago, the Resource Pack for Voluntary Management Committee Members was launched

"We are very proud of as it is all our own work, design and so on," said Breda Lymer, agency co-ordinator. "It is available in Irish & English."

Since then, the Mid-West Support Agency and some of the projects in Limerick have been so impressed with the pack that they asked if they could use it in their region with their own logos and photographs.

West Training have co-operated fully with the request and now the pack is about to be launched in the mid-west and beyond. Mid-West Support Agency worker Veronica McNamara is the organiser.

## Evictions not a famine memory for some



A Traveller woman looks out the window as a Garda patrol car approaches on an eviction day in Cork. Photograph courtesy of Traveller Visibility Group CDP in Cork City.

## 70 racist incidents in six months

BETWEEN May and October of 2004, 70 racist incidents have been reported to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism which is one of the Specialist Support Agencies to the Community Development Programme. The majority of them happened in the Greater Dublin area,

with men and women experiencing similar amounts of racist abuse or attack.

CDPs throughout the country are actively engaged in a variety of anti-racist work and inter-cultural celebration and promotion in a prolonged effort to ensure that the arrival of newcomers to Ireland is a positive experience.

## Travellers need permanent accommodation in Clare

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) accommodation working group visited Co. Clare to visit Traveller sites in Shannon and Ballymaley in October. They have been visiting sites around the country to see how the Traveller Accommodation Programme is being implemented - or otherwise - in different counties.

In conjunction with the visit, Ennis CDP organised a round-table meeting over accommodation. Temporary Traveller halting sites are ear-marked for Ennis and Ennistymon - land has been acquired by the county manager who used his emergency powers to secure the sites. However, questions remain over the criteria for who should be accommodated and the design of the temporary sites. The meeting also discussed the need for permanent sites and permanent solutions to the decades-old crisis.

At present, in Ennis, one Traveller family is living - with the Bishop's permission - in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace, some are on farmer's land and some more families are squashed into accommodation with their extended families. In the county, more Travellers are living in very exposed conditions by the sea.

As well as Travellers, those who attended the meeting included: members of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, state agencies working with Travellers, two elected councillors, and officials involved in housing, social inclusion and Traveller accommodation.

Ennis CDP works with and for, people from Traveller, Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities in the area.

For more information, contact: Dermot Hayes, Ennis CDP Management Committee on 086-3157591 or Deirdre Toomey, Co-ordinator on 065-6869026 / 086-3613482.

## Lifestories' - a learning guide for youths

Racism and discrimination among young people, usually categorised as 'bullying', can be a problem for youth workers. Rather than having to watch out for and support the victim, life can be made a whole lot easier for everyone if youth groups develop a better understanding of, and appreciation for, people from minorities. Now there is an education guide you can receive through the post to help you do just that!

'Lifestories' is full of stories and activities for those working with young people. The pack celebrates the diversity of Ireland's young people and aims to raise awareness of how young people can be unfairly treated or excluded because of their age, background, culture, ability, skin colour or sexual orientation.

Based on the stories of 12 young people from minority groups living in Ireland, the pack provides young people with ideas for challenging injustices and encourages them to examine and value their own lifestories, cultures and experiences.

'Lifestories' also contains useful guidelines for youth leaders on working with young people from minority groups.

Copies of the pack are available from: Niamh McCrea or Johnny Sheehan, Development Education Programme, National Youth Council of Ireland, 3 Montague Street, Dublin 2. Tel. 01 - 4784122. E-mail: [yard@nyci.ie](mailto:yard@nyci.ie) Website: [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)



# Projects in Gaeltacht feel the boat rocking

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

**MIGHT** eight CDPs in Gaeltacht areas be moved from the Community Development Programme and placed under Údarás na Gaeltachta? Perhaps, if Minister Ó Cuív wins over the projects. Initially, however, projects saw little logic in the proposal.

The first most of them heard of the matter was informally at networking meetings in November.

"Nobody was in touch with us officially about the issue, but if Údarás take over we simply don't know what's going to happen," said Meta Uí Mháille, Oibrí Pobail (community worker) with Pléaráca Teoranta CDP in Rosmuc, Connemara.

Once alerted, the projects involved met to discuss the matter. One CDP, Pléaráca Teo., was to meet with Minister Ó Cuív on December 22nd. Prior to the meeting, the CDP expressed their concerns.

Said Meta, one of those involved in getting the meeting with the Minister: "There is a big fear that if the funding was to come through Údarás that their ethos would be different to the community development ethos we work under. And if Údarás are paid a fee for administration, then it is only creating an extra layer of bureaucracy. And, when things are administered at local level, personalities and politics come much more into play.

"The CDP management are not in favour of going to Údarás. It would be a disadvantage to the Programme too as a whole to be fragmented in this way. And the Minister is not cutting out the middle-man here, he is creating a new layer of bureaucracy.

"They (the Department) get good value for their money here and the community would prefer to see the money spent on the ground than on a new administrative layer. Really, we should be shouting it from the rooftops - the money goes directly from the Department to ground-level, giving the people on the ground the greatest benefit possible. Funds for other programmes go through so many channels that there is very little left by the time the money hits

the ground," argued Meta.

"Furthermore, Údarás may see us solely as an arts group, but would they recognise the community development aspect to that work? We do personal development through community arts work. The higher authorities see community development as different to community arts - (they don't understand) we simply use arts as a tool for development," said Meta.

Many of the people that Pléaráca get involved with are living in isolation and loneliness, and courses such as basketry are about much more than learning about straw and weaving.

"We work with gay people, we are involved in a domestic violence network, and we are not sure how Údarás would view some of this work. For instance, gay people are still despised - and the more prosperous the country gets, the more things like this are hidden. It's not easy for gay

people to call to any office and talk, but with the CDP, people can call in here anonymously because they could be calling to use our cyber-café, our library, our secretarial service or do a workshop.

"We have been in the national Programme since 1997 and it is working for us," concluded Meta.

The proposal was equally, for example, a "concern" to Pobail Le Cheile CDP in Fallcarragh, Co. Donegal.

Said Paul Kernan, co-ordinator, "Our CDP's view is like this: It was discussed at the North West Forum meeting in December and everyone said projects should be consulted about such proposals. The Programme is a network of projects working together in community development to fight poverty and disadvantage and it should be kept that way."

No final decision has yet been made.

## Na briseadh suas an clár náisiunta!

**LE GAIRID** tá sé tugtha le fios ag an Aire Gnóthai Pobail, Tuaithe & Gaeltachta - Éamon Ó Cuív go bhfuil sé i gceist aige na tionscnaimh CDP atá lonnaithe sa nGaeltacht a thóigáil amach ó chúram an VCS agus iad a chuir isteach faoi chúram Údarás na Gaeltachta.

I litir chuig na CDPs san reagún agus eile, rinne Peigí Ní Chonghaile agus Meta Uí Mháille ón eagraíocht Pléaráca Teoranta achainní ina eagrais eile sa clár chuid in aghaidh an phlean.

Scriobh siad, "Tá trí thionscnamh Gaeltachta i dTír Chonaill, péire i gCo Mhuigheo agus ceann amháin i gCo na Gaillimhe. Má théann an tAire ar aghaidh leis an bplean seo is céim tromchúiseach a bheidh ann don CDP go náisiúnta mar go gciallaíonn sé go bhfuil an clár go náisiúnta dá bhriseadh suas. Mar thionscnamh Gaeltachta, tá muid Pléaráca Teo. ag iarraidh ar an Aire gan an cinneadh seo a dhéanamh. Ba mhaith linn bhur dtacaíocht trí:

1. E- phost a sheoladh arais chugainn ag tacú leis an seasamh atá muid a

thóigáil. - [plearaca@eircom.net](mailto:plearaca@eircom.net)

2. Teagmháil a dhéanamh le bhur dTeachtaí Dála áitiúla maidir leis an gceist seo."

### IN SUMMARY

In summary English, there are Ministerial plans afoot to place all Gaeltacht-based CDPs under the remit of Údarás na Gaeltachta. There are Gaeltacht projects in counties Donegal, Mayo and Galway. However, the projects are protesting at the plans. Pléaráca Teoranta CDP has outlined their misgivings about the Minister's proposal, saying that if it goes ahead, "it will fragment the CDP and this has serious implications for the national structure of the programme."

As one of the projects likely to be effected, the CDP planned to ask the Minister to cancel his plan and appealed to other CDPs to e-mail letters of support and to contact local TDs about the issue.

## Resistance and appeal for consultations

There was anxiety and protestation at the news, confirmed at a Sligo CDP Conference, that Minister Ó Cuív was considering moving eight CDPs into the Gaeltacht Section of the Department. The revelation, reports Maurice McConville, tended to overshadow David Brennan's reassuring remarks about the security of the Programme and underlined the challenges facing CDPs in the future.

Workers and voluntary management members at the Sligo Seminar asked the Department to convey to the Minister their concerns about his proposal. They said it was

"important to keep the Programme together for stability and solidarity."

At present all 180 CDPs funded by the Programme are under the administration of the Community section of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Project staff and volunteers alike also stressed there was a need for projects to have information in advance of developments within the Programme. They gave as a prime example the Minister's proposal to place Gaeltacht-based projects under Údarás na Gaeltachta control.

The seminar participants also asked for

reassurance that issue-based projects will not be carved out of the Programme. Seminar participants in Dublin echoed some of these concerns.

"There should be real consultation with all the key players in the Programme before decisions are made - not after the decisions are made," said co-ordinators.

"How is the Department accountable to Projects?" they asked. "Consultation is a key community development principle, it should be mirrored in how the Department does business."



# Relief that FÁS schemes saved



Karen Healy (left) and Valerie Chrystal participants on the Community Employment Scheme at Sligo Northside CDP.

## MARTIN READING reports

**ENTERPRISE** Minister Micheal Martin's new broom at the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment has brought about a sweeping review of policy on the operation of the FÁS employment schemes.

On the Inishowen peninsula, in Co. Donegal, 63 workers were facing the dole and the community was heading for disaster when, in Autumn, it was announced that eight community enterprises were likely to be closed. Each of the enterprises, funded for the past three years under the FÁS Social Economy Programme, have since been given a new lease of life by the newly-appointed Minister.

Announcing the changes to FÁS policy nationwide, Minister Martin said he had taken fully into account the views and concerns expressed to him by Dail colleagues and other key stakeholders, including the social partners.

In Donegal as in Limerick, Dublin and elsewhere, communities had turned out in support of demonstrating workers and various protests were getting underway. Both the Community Employment (CE) and Jobs Initiative (JI) schemes were under threat,

effecting vulnerable employees and deprived communities.

Outlining his changes with immediate effect Minister Martin said: "There will be no compulsory lay-offs and the schemes and participants who remain on will have their contracts renewed while people who leave voluntarily will be replaced by CE participants to support the service being provided."

Stressing the valuable role the schemes play in communities throughout the country, the Minister said that in situations where an enterprise decides itself to cease activity the employees affected will be assisted by FÁS in finding alternative employment.

For CE workers the three year cap will be removed for people aged over 55 who will now be eligible to participate on community schemes for a maximum of six years.

"In the case of people advancing beyond 55 years during their normal period of service there will be an extension of up to a maximum of six years," said the Minister.

These changes will affect a number of CDPs. **Jim Garvey is the Community Employment Supervisor for Lifford/Clonleigh Resource Centre, in County Donegal.**

"The recent relaxations in the rules as

announced by Micheal Martin are to be welcomed but they fall very far short of undoing the damage done to schemes by the changes introduced by Mary Harney in the year 2000," he said.

Jim is also secretary for the Donegal and Finn Valley Supervisors' Network which is a group of twenty-four supervisors who meet on a monthly basis. "We welcome the fact that over 55s can get up to six years on CE and that there is to be no cut in numbers or funding. It is also welcome news that FÁS is going to continue supporting Social Economy Schemes."

The biggest single issue which was introduced in 2000 was the three-year capping. As Jim pointed out, "It is only in the last year that this was having a serious affect. Micheal Martin has said that numbers are not going to be reduced but did nothing to stop the number of unemployed people who are eligible for CE from decreasing every year. If recruitment in this area were becoming more difficult because unemployment figures were declining then we would have to applaud the state of the local economy etc. However, this is not the case. Eligibility for schemes is decreasing because after three years on C.E., people cease to be eligible ever again. There are many people who are under 55 and who have various social problems, which effectively exclude them from full time employment. Even for those who are actively seeking employment, there are very few jobs in the area. The northwest has traditionally depended heavily on the textile industry for factory employment. The job losses here have never been replaced with any alternative factory type employment."

Both **Anne Donegan, of Sligo Northside Partnership CDP, and Cormac Skinnader, supervisor of the CE scheme at Action Inishowen CDP,** also expressed relief that the schemes had been saved. More from them in the Spring edition.

## Cork/Kerry still losing CE places

**COMMUNITIES** in Cork and Kerry are suffering losses in CE places, despite the national trend towards rehabilitation. CDPs in particular have been left out in the cold as FÁS in the south-west have adopted a policy of generally refusing to place CE workers with CDPs. FÁS in the south-west claim it would be akin to 'double-funding' since CDPs receive funding from one Department already.

In reality, many CDPs depend on FÁS workers - whom they provide training to -

for the smooth running of community services. The only funding CDPs receive is to pay for core staff, usually a development worker and an administrator.

Glen CDP in Cork city, for example, has gone from having five CE workers attached to the project to having none. Mayfield CDP were also caught short when their hopes of securing a CE worker for their community centre were dashed.

Minister Micheal Martin has met with at least of the projects to hear their concerns.



# Is a 'multi-sensory room' a waste of money or the best idea yet?

- Wexford activists chill out in Quarryvale

By LORCAN BRENNAN

The Wexford Building Healthy Communities programme featured on our front page in the last edition and has been busy since. After holding a the Health Fair in the summer, community members on the programme have experienced massage, studied the art of social analysis, brought older people on a day out, and spoke up for their community in meetings with the South-Eastern Health Board.

However, without a doubt, the highlight for most people was a networking visit to Quarryvale CDP in Dublin because the local Community House has what is termed a "multi-sensory room." Featuring varied textures, including walls sprouting beads and strings and bouncy seating, it could be considered a waste of tax-payers money - until you try it out.

"I've never felt so relaxed in my life,"

said one of the male participants who is determined to see a similar room being available to men in Wexford.

The participants - coming from communities where life is often a struggle - have also been engaged in experiential hands-on learning of other methods for relieving and coping with everyday stress.

The programme began when 14 people from the community signed up for the health course held in a local youth project.

For the first few weeks, the participants looked at what health and well-being meant for them and what helped to make a healthy community.

Participants successfully carried out a small project in their local area that promoted the idea of a healthy, happy community. They were involved in a social evening of music, food and plenty dancing and in the sun care awareness

puppet show (featured on our front page) in association with Bui Bolg Community Arts Group at the Summer Playscheme Barbeque in Coolcotts.

In taking care of others, the group organised a first-time community day out for older residents of the Wolfe Tone/Talbot Green areas to some beautiful gardens in Carlow.

Four Participants are now active and involved members of the multi-agency Steering Group that applied for the funding and look at the development of the Programme.

The group planned another networking visit to broaden the scope of the learning and the numbers of people involved in the Building Healthy Communities programme. The group also met with the South Eastern Health Board and both sides agreed to work much more closely together in the future.

## Is Ireland 'the world's best country'?

The 'Economist' magazine, in its 'The World in 2005' special edition named Ireland as the best country of all to live in.

The magazine acknowledged that Ireland is behind on gender-equality and that our climate is not ideal, while giving us top spot for a combination of our high average income per head of population,

our political stability and our relatively stable family and community life.

The 'Economist' showed that life here is good for many people - however, not for everyone, as our cartoonist Austin Creaven demonstrates.

"I think being called 'the best' is slightly hard to take. I don't see how great it is to live here. Look at the state of the roads, at our nation's health. It's hard to see it," said Austin.

Poverty still exists, hidden beneath the weight of headlines about the great Celtic wealth generated in recent years.

Nonetheless, the Community Platform, a network of 26 national anti-poverty organisations, highlighted in the run-up to the budget in December that while Ireland "has undergone a period of unprecedented economic growth, we have also seen a widening of the gap between rich and poor."

They pointed out, in a postcard campaign, "Ireland has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the EU. Over 90,000 children (here) experience severe deprivation."

The UN, in 2004 - in contrast to the 'Economist's' massaging of the national ego - identified Ireland as being the second-most unequal country in the developed world. True, there are many millionaire business-people nowadays and there is a queue of happy heads seeking helicopter licenses. Yet 80% of people with a disability in Ireland are unemployed.

Austin's second cartoon is on page 11. Suggestions for a continuation in the series - to the editor please.

### 101 uses for an Economist magazine...no.2







Kurling trainer Sandy Holland (second from right) pictured with Go For Life tutors.

## Kurling worth a second look!

**KURLING!** In our Autumn edition, reporter and community worker, Sandy Holland, wrote about the almost-unknown sport that is proving popular in Leitrim. His story focused on an inter-generational event where young and older people were evenly matched in the game of kurling.

In fact, Sandy is a kurler himself and is a great advocate of the sport. He believes kurling is one activity which community groups should take a closer look at, as he explains here:

Kurling is usually played on ice elsewhere in Europe and in North America. However, the indoor (ice-free) version of the game is proving popular with local community groups and can be played competitively as well as encouraging gentle exercise.

The game can be adapted for people with varied levels of learning and mobility difficulties and provides a fun and enjoyable activity that both encourages physical activity and team involvement. This is also a game that can be played by able bodied and disabled people on

an equal footing. Recent trials with disabled people have proved the game so popular that it has been recognised as a sport by disabled groups around the world.

Recently, I trained eight Go-for-Life programme tutors to kurl. It is hoped these tutors will be available to work with older people's groups, both in community, hospital and residential settings and will introduce kurling as a way of encouraging fun and healthy activities.

The Go-for-Life programme is run by the region's health promotion unit and has 14 tutors who deliver workshops to older people promoting physical activity and sport.

For more information on the Go-for-Life Programme contact either Frances Greene Tel: 078-46113 or Geraldine Delorey at the Health Promotion Dept. Tel: 072-52000.

More information on Curling or 'New Age Kurling' as it is known can be found on the internet at [www.whatsthebigidea.ltd.uk](http://www.whatsthebigidea.ltd.uk) or by emailing [info@whatsthebigidea.ltd.uk](mailto:info@whatsthebigidea.ltd.uk)

## 2nd RAPID newsletter launch

Following the great success of their first edition of 'Tralee Together RAPID Review' the voluntary group of trained reporters again banded together before Christmas to produce a second edition.

Strongly supported by Tralee CDP, the newsletter group are breaking new ground in circulating good news stories from disadvantaged areas. These areas are used to being hammered in the local press.

The newsletter is distributed free to every household in the Tralee RAPID areas of Mitchell's Crescent and St. Martin's Park, Spa Road and Balloonagh Estate, and Shanakill and Ragoonane. It is hoped the newsletter will now be produced on a quarterly basis and volunteers of all ages are being sought to join the editorial team.

Enquiries to: Sharon Browne, Project Leader, Tralee CDP, Rock St., Tralee. Tel. 066-7120877.



## Upcoming UN dates

THE following are commemorative days of action that will be marked around the globe by various groups, including CDPs in Ireland.

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:

### February

21 International Mother Language Day

### March

8 International Women's Day and UN 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

## 'Glór don Phobal' - an dara lá breithe

THE Pobail le Chéile CDP, in Fallcarragh, Co. Donegal, was celebrating even before Christmas arrived. Since November, 2002, the project has produced 24 editions of its bi-lingual magazine 'Glór don Phobal'. In passing the magazine's second birthday, the project have firmly established 'Glór don Phobal' as the key local area magazine. They have printed and distributed close to 20,000 copies throughout the district of Cloughaneely and beyond and are delighted with progress.

"We have highlighted 320 different subjects (our estimate) of local interest," proclaimed the project in their birthday edition.

"From the outset we have worked hard to produce a bi-lingual publication with its unique bi-lingual crossword! The pages are always open to local people to tell stories, complain and ask questions," they said.

'Glór don Phobal' receives some local business sponsorship. In fact, to date, they have yet to approach a local business-person and be refused support. Long may their good luck stand and their hard work continue!

## Log onto Mahon's website

MAHON CDP have officially launched their website.

The Lord Mayor of Cork, Sean Martin, was the main guest at the launch, held in December. Also at the launch, a group of FETAC participants were presented with certificates for completing a computer course

Mahon CDP company secretary Declan Cassidy thanked staff member Anne Sheehy for "her efforts in realising this initiative and ensuring that the website became a reality".

Project co-ordinator, Viv Sadd, gave a quick demonstration of the website to highlight some of the significant pieces of work the CDP has been involved in this year including: the Mahon Mens Arts Group's exhibition at the Sirius Arts Centre Cobh this Autumn; the Equality Youth Groups adventures in Poland during the Summer (as part of the International Year of the Family) and the re-establishment of the Variety Drama Group who performed 'Cinderella' in the Mahon Community Centre in the last days of December.

Mahon CDP's web site address is: [www.mahoncdp.com](http://www.mahoncdp.com)

## Classes suitable for winter

For the winter, Cosgallen CDP in Mayo launched guitar classes for teenagers and adults, as well as Interior Design classes for which there was great interest. Contact Cosgallen CDP: 094-9255070.



# National Forum idea 'always a runner'

WITH 175 projects in the Community Development Programme - which is 15 years old - it wasn't until April of 2004 that projects finally came together, in Limerick, to make a serious attempt at establishing a National Forum for the Programme. Since then, however, the plan has appeared to fade. One reason is that project's budgets are tight and the Ministers are reluctant to release funding for the initiative, though they are not in principle against the idea.

David Brennan, at a Programme Conference in Cork, in November, said the Forum was always a runner.

"Projects can have a CDP National Forum tomorrow, next week, next month, if they so decide. The funding of that then becomes an issue. Our Minister and Minister of State have a fairly strong view - they don't have a difficulty with projects deciding to operate a Forum, but they do not want to fund it. If you look at 'Planet', the national forum for Partnerships, the Department doesn't fund it. That's where the two Ministers come from."

He said he was willing to discuss the possibility of releasing a small fund to cover the cost of more meetings between project staff and volunteers nationwide to push the idea further along the road to fruition.

Staff and volunteers at the Sligo Conference said it was important that the proposed National Forum for the Programme be set up.

The concerns of Dublin projects were remarkably similar. Project co-ordinators working in the capitol said, "A National Forum would be an independent voice." They noted with regret the reluctance of the Department to fund the forum.

Murt Flynn from Co. Wexford again raised the idea - first proposed in April - that projects pay half and the Department pay half towards the funding of a National Forum.

## How to handle the media...

### Stay mainstream or do it your own way!

Report: ALLEN MEAGHER

**DON'T put up with negative media - call them with your stories! And if you are still unhappy with the mainstream media, you could consider setting up your own community radio station or newsletter. That was one message coming through after a group of journalists and community workers met for a debate over the media's portrayal - or lack of portrayal - of poverty in Ireland.**

At the event, held in Dublin, a handful of invited journalists, including a community radio producer, urged a roomful of community activists to get their stories out. The event was organised by the Community Workers Co-operative.

Noting that while many groups, including CDPs, make use of community radio stations, Niamh Farren, an outreach worker with Near FM, was critical of the community sector.

"Most of all, community radio needs to be taken seriously by the community and voluntary sector in our efforts to tackle poverty and disadvantage," she said. "Community radio is unique because it involves people with experience of poverty and social exclusion in the programme-making and in the running of the radio station in general."

She said, "Many communities have been stigmatised by negative media" which prompted local community groups to set up their own alternative media.

There are more local newsletters than ever before and over the past decade over a dozen community-run radio stations have sprung up. Local community groups are, however, often still shy away from using the mainstream media, which would partly account for the less-than-desired representation of poverty in the media.

Time and time again, for example, the same projects make the headlines, while others are never heard of in the media.

Guest speaker journalists who attended the gathering urged the community sector to

become more vocal, to contact them more frequently, and to be prepared.

Every journalist present stressed the appeal of the human interest story if community projects wished to capture the interest of readers/viewers/listeners. Ideally, a human interest story will be accompanied with statistics or information for general analysis of the issue being raised. For a human interest story, projects should have someone who has been effected directly to talk about the story. So if you are talking about lone parents, ideally you should have such a person ready to speak to the media, with passion!

Frank Connolly from 'Ireland on Sunday' acknowledged that while the media in general can be a problem - "because they follow the agenda set by the powers that be" - individual journalists can be part of the solution.

Victoria Enright of Dublin station, Newstalk 106, urged community activists not to be shy and to give radio a try when they have a story.

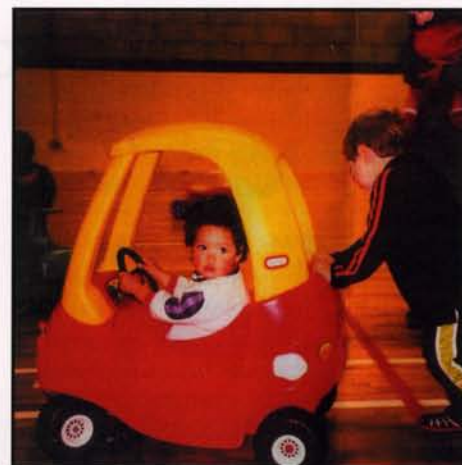
Ingrid Miley of RTE News said that she had 30 to 60 seconds to present each report and while it wasn't easy to get your pet topic aired, "If you tell a story well, you've a good chance!"

## 70 attend Drugs meeting in Dublin

**SEVENTY people attended the Drug Education Workers Forum, held in late October, in Dublin.**

"It was very worthwhile, it was good for networking because we don't meet people from other areas normally, and all the presentations were very good," said Sean Ward, a worker in north Limerick city.

The speakers included representatives from the National Drugs Strategy Taskforce and Comhairle while teachers also attended.



## Parents and toddlers from 20 nations

Parent and toddler groups can be found throughout the country, but, in Ennis, the Clare Women's Network have gone one better by setting up an 'International Parent and Toddler Group'. It has proven a major inter-cultural success.

The group meet every Wednesday morning at Clonroad Business Park, the children love it and parents get to meet new people, sometimes people very new to Ireland.

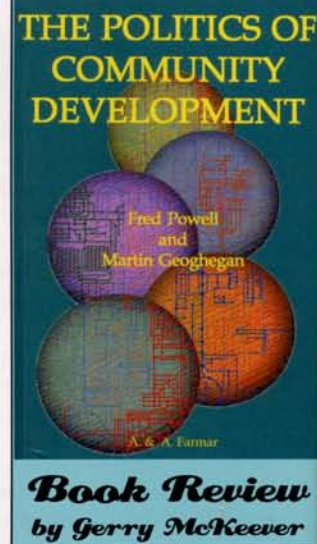
"With over 20 countries represented by parents who have attended or who attend now it is a wonderful chance for people to meet others from different backgrounds. They share experiences and support one another," said Sarah Mortimer of the CWN.

For more information on this approach to inter-culturalism, contact Sarah or Avril of the CWN. Address: CWN, Clonroad Business Park, Ennis, Co. Clare. Tel. 065-682-8731. Fax: 065-682-9388. E-mail: [clarewomen@eircom.net](mailto:clarewomen@eircom.net) Website: [www.clarewomen.ennis.ie](http://www.clarewomen.ennis.ie)



# We must challenge the 'end of poverty' assertion

GERRY MCKEEVER, co-ordinator of Tosach Regional Support Agency in Dublin, here gives his reaction to a seminal book on community development in Ireland. He is hard-hitting, opinionated and original as he reviews the newly published book, critiques its approach and discusses some of the topics raised. He also gives his understanding as to why the Community Development Programme is "in danger of becoming 170 projects in search of a role". The book that stirred Gerry is the first of its kind to examine in an in-depth way the community development sector in Ireland.



## The Politics of Community Development

Authors: Fred Powell and Martin Geoghegan

**THIS is a long overdue and academically rigorous review of community development in Ireland, largely from a Social Policy perspective. The book ranges over topics from active citizenship to social partnership and the role of the Community Development Programme.**

The book also draws on replies to a questionnaire from 177 community activist members of the Community Workers Co-Operative. And it teases out some of the apparent contradictions and paradoxes within the practice of community development.

Where the book falls down is when it dives for cover behind a flurry of obscure academic jargon. It explains, for example on page 174, that some aspects of community development are the result of the "possessive individualism of liberal thought"! It also controversially accuses community development in the Irish Republic of having "a fundamental faith in the capacity of the Irish state and pluralistic democracy to address their needs" (p196). Many community activists would disagree with this assertion.

The historical basis for the development of community development is well documented in the book and the author rightly draws attention to the shortcoming of Varley's casting of community development as either 'integrationist' or 'oppositionist'. Community Development, as the authors point out, is an elusive concept and given to various interpretations and emphasis. It is therefore important to situate it historically and in the specific Irish context. This the book does quite well.

### THE WELFARE STATE

In general, the role of the Irish state and in particular the Welfare State and its impact on community development is understated by the authors, as is the role of political culture in shaping community development. The modern roots of community development are largely, though not exclusively, rooted in urban based activist groups between the late 1960s and into the 1980s.

These groups grew up largely through the cracks in provision and the lack of response by the Irish state to pressing social issues faced by marginalised working class communities. Welfare rights, unemployment and drugs were issues that the Irish state either neglected or were incapable of addressing. Historically, the Welfare State in Ireland was some 20 years behind the more advanced countries of Western Europe. It was really only from the 'Cluskey reforms' of 1974 that a welfare aspect to the Irish state emerged coherently.

### LACK OF PLANNING

The point where political culture intersects with state policy is evident in the lack of urban planning that resulted in a total lack of social provision in huge urban housing estates in Greater Dublin. The authors also touch on, but do not develop the lack of capacity of the Irish state which gave rise to community development.

It was the exhaustion of ideas in the late 1980s and the inability of state agencies to engage with marginalised working class communities at that period which encouraged community development to grow and gain social policy credibility. There was also a willingness from EU sources to fund it.

### LOCALISM AND CLIENTILISM

To the ideological currents of 'Social Catholicism', 'Social leftism' and 'Humanism' which the author draws attention to, another important one could be added - 'Localism'. Much of community development is framed around a pragmatic and narrowly based

vision of "what is good for the project" or "what is good for the area".

The intersection with the political culture of 'clientilism' is evident both in the roots of the Community Development Programme, for example, and more generally with the way in which the political system interacts with CDPs. This intersection of political culture and localism better explains the lack of influence of community development on the national stage than does the authors' more favoured 'big picture' explanation of 'national community'.

### WHAT PROGRAMME!

It would be legitimate to ask in terms of the Community Development Programme: What Programme? With no Strategic Plan, no effective independent national management structure, and no overt policy remit, the programme is in danger of becoming 170 projects in search of a role.

The expansion of both the Community Development Programme and the Family Resource Centres from the mid-90s provided a national framework for the 'active citizenship' space to develop. But the political culture of clientilism acts against this, as does the internal influence of 'localism' on CDPs. Why, one might ask, despite a 100% expansion of the Community Development Programme, does the 'political clout' of CDPs remain so marginal? Why has no effective national, or indeed regional (eg Greater Dublin) community organisation emerged to represent the sector?

### HISTORICAL PROGRESS

In a global context, the Welfare State is increasingly under threat and question. Community Development has developed as a structural, state funded anti-poverty programme. This is historical progress, rather than something to be condemned. Activist community groups, protest groups and lobby groups will continue to emerge.

The Community Development Programme should be in a position to anchor and



consolidate these groups. Its role as a state-funded programme should be one where it engages actively to promote and lobby for reform rather than be consumed in communal 'angst' about how it has 'lost its soul' or will be 'consumed' by the state.

The authors address the role of the state in a number of ways, both historically and through the role of social partnership. The historical narrative is weak as it lurches into sweeping statements around the role of 'national community' and nationalism more generally. Indeed, it seems the authors have a major issue with nationalism as the ideological glue which permits the "fundamental faith in the capacity of the Irish state" on behalf of community development activists.

### COMPARING N.I. & REPUBLIC

They seem also, incorrectly, to counterpose the role of community development in Northern Ireland with that in the Republic. Within nationalist communities in Northern Ireland, community development draws on a more strongly bound notion of 'community' but while withdrawing from the political and security aspects of the northern state, community development activists engaged actively with local development initiatives, local government and all aspects of the welfare state. There are more similarities than differences between community development north and south of the border.

The authors point out how the economic advances in Ireland since the mid-90s have had a significant effect on community development. Unemployment has consistently fallen at a time when an anti-poverty programme has expanded in an unprecedented way. Yet it was not the empowering role of community development nor local development initiatives that gave rise to falling unemployment, but the more general economic upturn.

### THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY HAS CHANGED

To some extent community development appears to politicians and policy makers as a policy of a past era, whose time is past. It certainly does not fit easily into the rhetoric of 'nanny state' and free market economics. The task for community development activists is to recognise this historical fact and re-articulate the essential elements of community development that are relevant today. This means challenging the 'end of poverty' assertion and also recognising that the idea of community has changed and with it the emphasis on citizen rights.

Now there is a need to engage with and at times defend the welfare state rather than be consumed in sterile arguments about whether community development should be in or out of the state.

With 290 full pages, 'The Politics of Community Development' is good value at €20. It was published this year by A. & A. Farmar, Dublin, and is available in all good bookstores. Check it out!

# Social Partnership is *not* dead

By NICK MURPHY

**WHEN Susan Fox of Blakestown Community Development Project (CDP) tells people that real social partnership is alive and well and living in Blanchardstown, she is used to a certain level of scepticism.**

"When we told the Minister we worked closely together we got the impression he would like to see some proof," she said.

"Our CDP has always worked closely with the other three CDPs in the area, Greater Blanchardstown CDP, Corduff CDP, Traveller CDP and with the Family Resource Centre (FRC). In the past we have co-operated to provide joint training opportunities, as well as joining together to highlight issues that affect us all. We feel the approach has shown real results."

Co-operation in the area is not confined to CDPs. Bolstered by their experiences of what partnership can achieve the CDP's and FRC work closely with others doing similar work in the area. According to

information contained in the document has been successfully used to attract funding of €114,00 into the area, for some of the joint projects highlighted."

But is it all just about money?

"Not at all! We intend to conduct an audit of skills, resources, and equipment available to us. We are hoping that a joint approach to purchasing things like stationary, PC hardware and software and so on. As well, we will have a sensible, flexible, approach to the allocation of resources. This could yield significant savings to individual projects. Another cost which figures highly in every project is insurance and we would hope a joint approach to this might have real benefits for groups in Blanchardstown," Susan said.

Another example of cohesive working in Blanchardstown is the work being carried out in the area of estate management.

"We intend to conduct a detailed consultation in the wider county, and then,

**Blakestown CDP is very actively involved in all areas of Community development in the Blakestown and Blanchardstown area. The staff offer a friendly and welcoming environment to all that call to the office. They offer encouragement to local people to get involved in their area. The project is working to secure funding to continue the capacity building it started in 2001 with a FETEC accredit course in community development, in which seventeen local people were awarded certificates. The staff of the project are Susan Fox, project co-ordinator, Tina Joyce, development worker and Tanya Monahan, administrator.**

Susan there is a real sense of partnership and cohesive working which encompasses all the organisations working in Blanchardstown.

Now in response to what they perceive as political scepticism, the CDP's and FRC have joined with the local Partnership, Rapid Co-ordinator, Drugs Task Force, Fingal County Council, County Development Board and Community Groups in the area, to produce a "cohesive document" which outlines all the areas in which they co-operate. Minister O'Cuiv launched the document on December 2nd.

The areas looked at include planning & estate management, health services and community facilities - Susan says this proves that the Social Partnership approach is still very much alive.

"As with all joint ventures there is a lot of give and take to make things work but we approach community development in a spirit of co-operation and this is reflected in our success rate," she said. "Already the

working with local residents and agencies, design a model of estate management that can be owned and worked by all," she continued.

And is this the sum total of co-operative work in Blanchardstown? Not according to Susan:

"People in Blanchardstown are also working together under the title 'Blanchardstown Asylum and Refugee Network' - 'BARN' to bring together refugees and asylum seekers in the area to discuss their needs."

BARN's first meeting with the target groups was held on December 7th in Draiocht Art Centre in Blanchardstown. The next step is to see what needs can be met.

So, the next time people greet the news that social partnership is working well in Blanchardstown with a "prove it" attitude, Susan can supply a comprehensive document and point to a €114,000 grant as well as a string of local successes in support of her claim.



# Are we gone Programme-mad?

## RANT OR REASON?

You don't need to agree with Murt Flynn, but his writing reflects a certain frustration within communities. So, is he just a ranter? And ungrateful and impatient? Or the community voice of common sense? The new man to shout 'Stop!'?

The head honchos in RAPID, CLAR, the NDP and, indeed, our Dormant Accounts Fund might sniff at what he has to say. The people whose brainchild is those programmes may object, and are welcome to do so in the next issue of 'Changing Ireland'.

Here, Murt critiques the proliferation of programmes nationally. He describes himself as belonging to "the liberals, the lefties, the socially aware, the ones who experienced and witnessed the dark side of this pretty little place". Murt works with Framework Support Agency, which supports CDPs in the South-East Region.



## Murt Flynn examines 'PM'

**THEY** have a name for everything. You got a community need? They got a programme with a name on it. Yes, folks, we have climbed the mountain of nonsensical language. At its summit, the view is incredible - everywhere you look, you see 'programme mania' (P.M. for short).

Try this for 'programme mania': Imagine, if you can in these dark and hollow days, that your community has worked its arse off to try and get a playground built. For years and years, you got local people to work together, you overcame that complaining old goat in number 28, you identified the land, you got a few quid together and then, as if from out of nowhere, you heard the fanfare of trumpets piercing the morning air and the booming tones of a local worthy telling you, and all and sundry, that your dreams had come through and that the 'Dormant Accounts Board' for example had found the money to build that playground for you and your neighbours' kids. Well now, aint that something? The 'Dormant Accounts Board', no less. Instead of recognising the rights of communities and the hard work put in by people to get what they should have had years ago, you now have the 'Dormant Accounts Board' to thank for your slides and climbing frames. That's 'Programme Mania'. And so is every RAPID announcement. Every CLAR press release. Each tiny little bit that dribbles from the Regional Drugs Task Forces. PM everywhere you look.

'Programme Mania' has replaced social rights. Has replaced children's rights. Has put disability rights back on the deserving causes of charity agenda. Now we get to wait for grand scale initiatives that fund

what our taxes should fund in the first place. What our Lotto gambling should pay for. You figure that other European states go on with this nonsense? You figure wrong. They don't.

One of the benefits of more Irish people holidaying and travelling outside of the country is seeing the standards of social infrastructure in other countries. Playgrounds to beat the band. While this state, since its inception, has invested in dullness and narrow conservative charitable provision, other countries have vindicated the rights of people to have good quality social infrastructure. No fanfare. Even as we have grown wealthy (we?), this country lags behind those countries that are considered economically stagnant.

Consider Berlin! No, consider east Berlin, the side of the city on the wrong side of the wall. A city with high unemployment. Severe social problems. Racism and discrimination. Carrying the psychological scars of soviet domination. But still with a strong provision of social infrastructure. And not a brass plate in sight.

Back here, you can't move but get hemmed in with the tell-tale signs of 'Programme Mania' funded by this programme and made possible by that programme and blah, blah, blah. If you were to believe the mainstream media, and of course, we don't (ssshh... don't mention the referendum), you'd swear that this was paradise. The envy of Europe is what they say. One of the richest countries in the world, they purr. And, still. Still we have more golf clubs than playgrounds. More pubs than youth centres. Go figure.

The roads we drive on are made possible by the National Development Plan (your plan, your future©). The schools we sent

our kids to are only there because of the School Building Programme. Your hip replacement thanks to the Patient Treatment Fund. And none of it because of our right to it. The right to education, child or adult. The right to healthcare. We have become experts in the use of Orwellian language. We're fooled by it. Social Inclusion Measures Groups! Sounds like a phrase Stalin would have used. But we use it. All the time. It's as if we have forgotten who and what we used to be.

We have people taking their own lives in the hundreds. We have Task Forces and Tribunals and endless empty debates about rising tides and other guff. We have the privatisation of education, health, transport and banishment of collective action. We have trade unions who sell their members to the highest bidder. We are concerned to make sure that we pursue an equality agenda. We have equality legislation. We have equality infrastructure. And we have a minister for equality who thinks inequality is a good thing. I'll say it again 'cos it bears repeating. A minister for equality who thinks that inequality is a good thing. And this statement causes but a ripple in the political and media establishments. Two legs good. Four legs bad. And so it goes.

Lord, lord, how we could do with Orwell now. Orwell knew bull\*\*\*\* when he saw it. And heard it. And there was a time when we knew it too. We being the liberals, the lefties, the socially aware, the ones who experienced and witnessed the dark side of this pretty little place But that was then. And this is? But it's ok, let's not worry ourselves with the detail, huh? Me? I'm waiting for the Pol Pot 'programme'. Year Zero.

©Murt Flynn, 'the workers civil war blues collective'.



# Papering over Dublin inner city poverty



Photo by Dany from Sao Paulo State.

## Report: GERRY McKEEVER

A CONFERENCE in Dublin recently heard Emer Convery of Dublin Inner City Partnership outline how the most recent census figures painted an inaccurate picture of disadvantage in the inner city area. The development of large parts of the inner city had meant an increase in population as apartments were built over the past ten years. This had resulted in medium and high-income earners moving into the inner city.

However, the areas of high social disadvantage had not gone away, but often existed side by side with the more affluent areas. Looking at the averages, of course, it seemed the area had emerged from its poverty-ridden past.

The conference, held in late October, was organised by the Partnership to discuss the theme of 'Poverty in the Inner City'.

While unemployment had certainly fallen, it had not fallen to the extent suggested by the census figures. These new figures may well feed into the current debate over poverty and whether it had effectively disappeared in Ireland due to economic growth. The issues raised will also be of relevance to other CDPs as they make cases for funding based on their catchment areas.

The conference also discussed other issues relating to the community sector and what should be done. The debates in the workshops were lively with arguments over, for example, participation in initiatives like RAPID. Key discussion themes in the conference included; the value of community networks; the need for a more strategic

approach by the community sector; and another big question - 'Why had the community sector failed to significantly influence urban development?'

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamon O'Cuiv, saw there was plenty need still for community development work in the inner city. He was among those attending the conference and, in a pre-budget discussion with Larry Byrne of MACRO CDP, the Minister admitted there was "a good case" for increasing the core funding of CDPs.

Minister O'Cuiv explained, however, that as a result of the freeze on core funding to CDPs in the last two years, their grant had effectively been eroded by inflation and an increase in the core grant would be no more than 'catch-up'.

## Teach a woman to fish

If there is one line on development work that most people have heard and understood, it is: "Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime."

In any case, to every rule there is an exception and some variations on the old line have arisen over the years:

"Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he'll have a hobby for a lifetime."

Or, more starkly:

"Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he'll be dead from mercury poisoning inside of three years."

And, why don't they teach women to fish?

## Funding is withdrawn

PROJECTS in Clare and Limerick have written to the Department expressing concern at the fact that, last Autumn, funding for Kilrush CDP was not renewed by the Department and the CDP may be replaced by a different type of project.

The project was experiencing internal difficulties. Another project in the south, Sherkin Island CDP, was also effectively shut down last year. Fortunately, the Department has not felt obliged, until recently, to withdraw funding to any of the Programme's projects.

The future funding of community development work in Kilrush in particular was discussed at regional fora meetings in the mid-west and also at the Programme Conference in Cork.

At the conference, a project co-ordinator, Juan Carlos Azzopardi, asked if the Department now saw 'hosting' by other agencies/organisations as "a credible option" for troubled projects. While the money would, at least, be reinvested into the community, it would not be used to establish a new CDP. There was a fear the Programme

could run into decline and communities would suffer.

Replied David Brennan from the Department: "The Department doesn't have a fixed agenda or a fixed set of answers for when it comes across a project in trouble. But if there are other groups in the same area, doing similar work, and who might be able to take a piece of CDP work under their wing," then the Department would consider it. He said a 'host' for a new project could possibly be another nearby CDP.

"It depends on an area by area basis and depends on the scale of the problem," continued David. "We don't withdraw funding from projects overnight. If there are serious difficulties within a project, they must be serious over a long period of time, several years probably, before we will withdraw funding. But there does come a point where you can't keep putting money into something that isn't working."

"Hosting is a credible option in some cases," he agreed, "but we would hope those circumstances would happen very rarely."



# Ó Cuív secures 19% increase for DCRGA

- Budget includes cost of new projects

MINISTER Éamon Ó Cuív won an overall 19% budget increase for 2005 for his Department meaning that investment in Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will rise from €278.334m in 2004 to €330.734m in the year ahead.

The Minister said that this increase will have a particularly significant impact on the lives of people living in deprived areas.

"In 2005, there will be an 18% increase on spending on the Drugs Initiative and the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund. There will be an 8% increase on spending in Community & Voluntary Service and Local Development. There will be a 33% increase in the RAPID fund," said Minister Éamon Ó Cuív.

"Taken in conjunction with the substantial increases in spending on the Islands, the Irish language and on Gaeltacht areas, these (figures) demonstrate real commitment by Government to all areas of this Department," he added.

Current expenditure has increased by 24% (that's €42m) to €220.734m, while capital expenditure will rise by a more modest 10% to €110m.

"I wish to reiterate today that my focus as a Cabinet Minister is firmly on the people of this country who suffer from disadvantage in all its forms. The highlights of the spending programme outlined below prove once again, this Government's commitment to Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs," said the Minister.

An overall increase of €6m (8%) will accrue to the Community and Voluntary Service (VCS) section of the Department, bringing their budget up from €31.333m in the year just gone to €33.850m for 2005. Since half the overall increase for CDPs goes to setting up 15 new projects, the average increase per project is 4%.

Shortly, the number of CDPs will go from 170 to 185. Plans for a further five projects are currently under consideration. The overall funding increase will allow a number of community projects that currently operate within relatively low level resources to increase their staffing levels. They will also be able to extend opening hours in their respective Centres in some cases.

The majority of the money spent on CDPs is from the National Lottery.

## PEACE fund gets 114% boost

The budget increase of €4.75m (18%) in the Drugs Initiative and Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund will facilitate, among other things, the implementation of approximately 320 projects in the 14 Local Drugs Task Force Areas.

The RAPID programme gets a 33% increase. Meanwhile, €12m going to the Rural Social Scheme will make it easier to meet the target total of 2,500 participants involved throughout 2005. PEACE Programme funding received a massive percentage boost of over 114% (translating into a €12m cash increase) to facilitate the completion of various projects the government committed itself to. Islands fared well also with most of the nearly €3m increase (up 22%) paying for capital projects such as piers, an airstrip and dredging. Some will also go towards progressing plans for the by-now-infamous cablecar to Inisbiggle off Achill Island. Údarás na Gaeltachta (The Gaeltacht Authority) are getting increases of 7% and 6% respectively for capital and current spending. The Gaeltacht's Scéimeanna Cultúrtha agus Soisialta (Cultural and Social Schemes) received an increase of 9%. Ciste na Gaeilge (Irish Language Fund) which supports numerous Irish language and cultural bodies, will get a budget boost of 25%. Finally, €1m was set aside for Improved Coordination of Local and Community Development Schemes. That represents a 30% increase on 2004 and shows, the government says, that they are serious about this "very important initiative to bring real change and improvement to Local and Community Development."

## Once-off grants up 8%

In the government's budget for 2005, the level of spend on grants for locally based community and voluntary organisations will increase by about 8%, enabling a greater number of organisations to qualify for funding. This programme offers two schemes of once-off grants to local voluntary and community groups: the Scheme of Equipment and Refurbishment Grants and the Scheme of Education, Training and Research Grants. The level of spend on the Scheme of Community Support for Older People will also increase by about 8%. This scheme provides funding to improve the security of older people living alone. For more information, check the website: [www.pobail.ie](http://www.pobail.ie)

## 101 uses for an Economist magazine...no.1



"I wonder if they do a broadsheet version?"



## RE: 'Why do the poor die younger?'

October 2nd, 2004

58 Copland Street, Dalbeattie, Scotland, DG5 4EU

Dear Editor,

This morning, I received your newsletter Autumn '04. I've read each one with interest.

"Why do the poor die younger?" says the big baldy man on the front cover (of issue 12). Well I've just got to respond to that. There's a book you must get hold of ...

'Dying for Justice' by Dr. George J. Miller (2003) ISBN 1901202046. He's a Professor of Medical Science.

The book was first published by the Centre for Land Policy Studies, 7 Kings Road, Teddington, England TW 11 0QB. Tel: 020 89433352. Email: metaman@compuserve.com

If we're talking about combating poverty, let's get right to the heart of it.

Many thanks for your interesting newsletter.

Best Wishes, John Smith

## Refreshingly honest!

Thu, June 3rd, 2004

Dear Editor,

I am a member of the co-ordinating committee of the Donegal Community Workers Co-op and I work with the social economy sector and also with a number of community development groups in the border counties. The publication is an excellent resource in keeping up to date on current community development affairs.

I congratulate you and your team for producing a (refreshingly honest account) of the real issues affecting local communities throughout the island!

With kind regards

Annette Patton, Co. Donegal

## Infant death overlooked in Irish life

ISANDS, Carmichael House,  
4 North Brunswick St., Dublin 7

Dear Editor,

Thanks so much for the magazine. It is wonderful and congratulations to everyone concerned. The article about infant death is very well thought out and stated. I have spoken to Martine herself (the reporter) and extended my good wishes to her.

Thank you for featuring an article on such an overlooked part of Irish life. It is a sign of the changing times that you have done so.

Best wishes.

Ron Smith-Murphy, Irish Stillborn and Neonatal Death Society

## Become a journalist for

# CHANGING IRELAND

**'Changing Ireland' is looking to expand its network of reporters.**

*Ideal candidates should have:*

- a passion for reporting,
- an eye for a story,
- a reputation for accuracy,
- and knowledge and understanding of community development.

Preference will be given to applicants who work (salaried or volunteer) in projects funded through the Community Development Programme, though everyone's application will be considered.

Currently, there are opportunities for people in a number of regions to become Regional Reporters, in: Dublin, the South-West, Mid-West, Midlands and South-East.

Each reporter is expected to provide around two pages of news stories for each edition. Training and support is provided on an ongoing basis and there is a set payment rate for news and features.

So, are you passionate about highlighting examples of injustice and disadvantage that hit communities and the pro-active responses of those communities? If so, this could be for you!

The experience will particularly benefit those who already produce their own newsletter or wish to improve their relationship with the local media. Or if you are passionate in the fight against poverty and exclusion!

Aspiring reporters should contact the Editor (see page 2 for contact details).

## 'Changing Ireland' on sale in shops

'Changing Ireland' is now for sale through Easons and its network of 19 shops around the country. Existing readers are urged to spread the word - now it is available to everyone - at the following outlets: Easons in Dublin, at - O'Connell St., Heuston Station, Dun Laoghaire, Tallaght, Blanchardstown and Swords. The magazine is also available through Hannas Bookshop in Dublin. It is also for sale through Easons in the following cities and towns - Cork (Patrick St.), Galway city, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Carlow town, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Athlone, Co. Westmeath and Limerick city.

The magazine is available through three Porter's outlets in Cork city, at: Wilton Shopping Centre, Paul Street Shopping Centre and Douglas Shopping Centre. It is also for sale through The Book Centre, North Main St., Wexford.



## The story behind 'Changing Ireland'

The first edition of 'Changing Ireland' was launched in 2001 with a nun dressed as a man posing on the front page and a witch interviewed on the back. The idea was to challenge stereotyping as the magazine began on its job of promoting the anti-poverty and anti-discrimination work of Community Development Projects (CDPs) around the country.

The Community Development Programme that funds the projects was established in 1990 in recognition of the role of community development in tackling the causes and effects of poverty and disadvantage. In 1990, there were 15 Community Development Projects (CDPs); now there are 185 in total. All the projects have an anti-poverty, anti-exclusion focus and work from community development principles and methods. The projects are run by local voluntary management committees and the Programme provides core-funding for project staff.

'Changing Ireland' is hosted by one of those local projects, the Community Development Network Moyross Ltd. The editor is the sole employee at present. Development workers with a strong interest in journalism provide the majority of the stories and pics. An Editorial Team supervises the magazine's progress. 'Changing Ireland' is produced quarterly and there are plans to increase its publication to bi-monthly. The print-run has grown considerably over the years.



# Energetic debate within the Programme

- Hundreds attend, many complain, all applaud

THE Department held three regional conferences during November, in Dublin, Sligo and Cork. And they got at least as much as they bargained for - hundreds attended, many complained and probably everyone applauded the idea of the conferences.

At each one, there was a hush as David Brennan, the key Departmental official for Community and Voluntary Services, outlined the challenges he saw facing the Programme and emphasised the strengths of CDPs. He assured project staff and volunteers that the Programme was safe and replied to questions on-the-spot to ease concerns that people had.

Susan Scally, the civil servant who chaired all three seminars, concluded afterwards: "At all three seminars, there was a very energetic debate on the challenges facing the Programme in the years ahead. These discussions will feed into the process of planning how it will evolve after 2006. The overall reaction to the seminars was very positive and many projects expressed an interest in further seminars in 2005."

She added: "The aim of the seminars was to highlight the positive work being done by Community Development Projects across the country, to heighten awareness of the work of Specialist Support Agencies, to provide training in areas of key concern to projects and to have an exchange of views on the challenges ahead for the programme."

The professionally facilitated seminar workshops covered a wide range of issues for CDPs from Good Employment Practice, to Finance, to Responsibility of Management Boards.



The smoking ban is good for networking - participants at the Conference in Blarney, Co. Cork

## Programme secure, though name may change



In his address to CDPs at the three Programme Conferences, Principal Officer, **David Brennan** (left) assured people that, while there will be "changes in emphasis" to the **Community Development Programme** it is "very successful and it has a secure future."

He was further queried about this by 'Changing Ireland' editor, **Allen Meagher**: "When you say 'The Programme is secure', do you mean the Programme is secure as a programme, or as a bunch of projects?"

David replied: "As a Programme it is secure. I think the Programme title may yet change slightly - I think social inclusion as a philosophy may get greater weight in whatever title the Programme has after 2006."

He spoke of the need to "sell to the public what local development partnerships are doing and what CDPs are doing" and pointed out that these two programmes have already been brought together in the one division within the Department.

"And in terms of selling (their work) to the public, there will need to be an image of them

being closer together. We will be trying to get CDPs and Partnerships working as closely together as possible while recognising they are complimentary, they are not competing with each other in terms of what they are doing," he continued.

"But is the Programme under threat? I don't believe so at all. The jargon may change. And I don't know what will happen after 2007, there is going to be a new government and it is very foolish of anyone to try to second-guess that," added David.

He has his own vision of where he would like to see the Programme going in the next five years: "The Programme as a whole would have greater consistency in terms of impact and benefits for disadvantaged communities. And there would be greater recognition of the Programme across government as a model of good practice for engaging with disadvantaged communities," he said.

One of the key issues for the future, he said, will be to ensure that all projects are owned and accountable to their community and include representative membership from the community

## Poor don't always stay poor

ONE of the key components of any CDP is that the voluntary management committee includes people who have direct experience of poverty or exclusion. Projects, while glad to hear a senior civil servant, David Brennan, reiterate this recently, argued that it was not always possible. For example, poor people do not always stay poor - they may rise out of their difficulties, perhaps through joining CDPs. Should they then leave? It's a catch 22!

David said proposals may be put to Government to get more people from 'target groups' (more poor and disadvantaged) onto CDP voluntary management committees.

Volunteers and community workers at a Sligo conference agreed that target group representation on management committees

remained essential and central to the Programme. However, it is not always possible or easy to include people currently experiencing poverty, for example, on management committees.

Staff from Dublin projects discussed it as a group and responded, "People from target groups are not all living in poverty. From their involvement with a project, some have managed to educate themselves and find employment and now wish to contribute something to their communities. While they have direct experience of poverty and disadvantage, they may not be living in poverty."

In Cork, the response was rhetorical: "Whose responsibility then is it to look for target group representation on the

management board? Should staff be telling their employers who their employers should be?"

Members of one discussion group said looking solely for people from specific 'target groups' could lead to labelling people which was insulting.

"Remember," said another, "it is hard enough to get any volunteers and it is hard to keep volunteers."

Nonetheless, it was seen as no bad thing to place even greater emphasis on one of the Programme's key strengths.

David pointed out that the need for more people with experience on management committees "will be balanced by a need to maximise the capacity of the management committees."



## Shout from the rooftops!

"THERE is a need to shout the success of the Community Development Programme from the rooftops! The success of the Programme indicates that the model within the Programme actually works."

- Volunteers and project staff at a seminar in Sligo

## It's time to boast

"GIVEN that the Programme is having such an impact on communities, both Ministers should be boasting about the value of the Programme."

- Project co-ordinators in Dublin.

## Campaigning is essential

STAFF and volunteers in Dublin said projects should not be singled out for criticism from above when they engage in lobbying and campaigning which is "an essential part of the work" of CDPs.

"For many projects," said the participants, "success in development work leads on to a need to lobby and campaign."

Projects also saw it as an appropriate part of their work to encourage voter participation in elections.

## Merging CDPs in Dublin

IN Dublin, there is "insecurity" among projects in Tallaght and Clondalkin where a number of CDPs operate and where it has been suggested by Department officials that projects could merge.

"The implications of such mergers to management committees and staff of projects is not being acknowledged or considered," said staff and volunteers following a group discussion. Saying there had been "a breakdown in trust", they demanded to know what plans the Department had to merge any CDPs.

## Better relationship

DAVID Brennan was pleased to report that concerns had been allayed over 'endorsement' by local authority bodies of CDP workplans.

"On the CDB issue, the Minister said unequivocally that CDP funding will not be channelled through CDBs. The Ministers have agreed that CDBs will not hold up issuing of contracts in future and will not hold up any funding in future. That is a very different space to where we were a year ago," said David.

A month before, projects breathed a sigh of relief when the Department issued a letter stating that projects, in their contracts, would no longer (it lasted one difficult year) need to have their plans 'endorsed' by City/County Development Boards. In future, the workplans would only need to be submitted to these bodies "for information purposes."

## Volunteers have their say

# Volunteers lively in Sligo

CDPs in the West, North West, and Eastern Regions descended on the Park Hotel Sligo for their Programme Conference. Around 150 representatives from CDPs, staff from the Department and Support personnel took part. It brought together people from coast to coast, that is from Dundalk to Clare Island. Harmony CDP from Athlone and Pobail Le Cheile from Donegal both gave presentations, as did the Disability and Equality Specialist Support Agency.

David Brennan stated that the he could see little difference between what CDPs did and Partnerships did, except in scale. He knew that many people disagreed with him but that was his position. He also stated that this did not mean that CDPs and Partnerships were to be merged.

The small group discussion gave projects the



Mary Caldwell, Maurice McConville and Jibson Odidi all with Le Cheile CDP, Dundalk, Co. Louth, attending the Programme Seminar



Lucanne McDonagh, Harmony CDP, spoke at the seminar in Sligo. Other Harmony CDP speakers included Lindsay Adamson, chairperson, and Liz Fletcher, co-ordinator,

opportunity to discuss the challenges to the Programme and to the projects on the ground. Feedback was lively. One group, for example, raised the issue that CDPs without contracts left directors (who are volunteers) with a problem in honouring their own contractual agreements with staff they employ. It was pointed out that good employment practice meant that staff should be treated with respect and given greater security of employment. It was stated that some project directors had been considering issuing redundancy notices because of the wait for contracts from the Department. David assured projects that contracts would be issued shortly.

## Strong grassroots opinion

Volunteers and project staff throughout the country have had their say recently. Some of the more Programme-specific topics discussed at the regional conferences included 'endorsement', 'hosting', external funding, project autonomy, and budget templates. Here is a taster of what people were saying:

### On Volunteering

"New volunteers can get scared off easily. A standard induction pack would help." (West Training have developed just such a pack).

"Volunteers - some of us feel we are not being recognised, yet we are doing the work of councillors, county council workers and social workers put together."

### On Politics

"There is a difference between how local authorities see Travellers and politically how CDPs see them."

### On Business

"Is there developing too much of a business-style emphasis on CDP service delivery?"

### On Staffing and salaries

"It is a 14 year old programme, but it still operates under a system where project staffing numbers are limited to two or three people. ADM companies have a massive staff. Strange!"

"The 4% average funding increase for existing projects in 2005 is probably below inflation. What about salary increases?... As for the proposed payscale from the National Advisory Committee - are the figures mentioned punts or euros?"

"Some projects are paying mortgages, so some projects can't afford to give the staff a salary increase."

"Workers, especially those there long-term, are underpaid."



# Contradiction? Ballymun Men's Centre open to women

NICK MURPHY reports

CREATED through a local CDP called CAFTA, in 1991, the Ballymun Men's Group met once a week until 1997 when Dublin Corporation gave them a premises. In 1998, the Men's Centre opened its doors as Ireland's first, full-time drop-in for men. Two years ago, the Men's Centre joined the Community Development Programme. John Murphy, project co-ordinator, believes this has added spark and energy to their work. They have become so popular that even women are availing of the services provided at the Centre.

"While we aim to provide a haven to men, women are not excluded. The target group of our Back To Education Training programme includes women and quite a number are involved in our computer classes which happen on Monday and Friday," said. "This strikes some people who don't know us as unusual, but we are about inclusion not exclusion. In all about 50 people pass through our centre in an average week."

Since becoming a CDP, the Men's Centre has linked up with many other groups.

"Now we are much more involved in networking and working alongside other groups both locally and nationally," said the co-ordinator. "We are today represented on the Drugs Task Force and on its Prevention

- The Ballymun Men's Group Drop-in is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm

- Activities on offer include: Drama, Communications courses (FETAC), Art, Guitar, Games, Computers - Basic and Advanced, Library, and links to other groups and agencies

- For more information, contact: John Murphy or Dominic Coll, Ballymun Men's Centre, LS 4, Shangan Road, Ballymun, Dublin 9. Tel. 01-862-3117.

and Education Sub-committee. We have also joined the Anti-Poverty Network, and the Ballymun Community Organisation Network and the Ballymun Law Centre."

John recalled that joining the Programme coincided with a period of huge change.

"The group in the '90s started to address some of the issues facing men in Ballymun like unemployment, isolation, depression, and so on. Men also felt a sense of being lost and redundant," he said. "We opened the Drop-in Centre, then joined the CDP programme, and now we provide a number of accredited training courses."

The drop-in facility can provide appropriate personal back-up to individual men, there is group support and there are

education and developmental activities. This has led to the provision of quality training courses to FETAC level one and two as well as recreational courses, activities and a referral service to other groups and agencies.

"We are not a crisis centre but we have had a number of crisis over the years and we can refer men to other groups and agencies as required," said John.

And just as work is settling down, Ballymun Men's Group may be on the move geographically. As part of the regeneration of the area, the Men's Centre are in discussion with Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. about a new centre to house their activities.

"We hope a new building will be available within the next three years," added John.

## CDPs raise €20m

CDPs are expert at attracting extra funding into communities. For example, in 2004, CDPs received €16m from the government's Community Development Programme. From that start, CDPs secured in excess of €20 million for their communities from other funding sources. This revelation shows the power volunteers have to make changes in their communities once they become organised.

## Tralee volunteers want more than 'Thanks!'

Tralee CDP are pushing the idea of an accredited and participative learning programme that could be run over a few years. However they cannot do it alone and are appealing for other projects thinking along similar lines to join them.

They call their proposal 'Investing in Citizenship'.

"It is a way of investing in local community management standards and practices. It will ensure the future ownership and sustainability of CDPs. It will equip the learners with quality labour market skills. It has the potential to be a transferable pilot programme," said Sharon Browne, CDP co-ordinator.

Bearing in mind that we said action learning and collective responses are what made Tralee CDP puts its success down to the volunteers involvement in 'action learning' and 'collective responses' to issues.

"Every management member has brought something unique from their own life experience that has contributed to the development of Tralee CDP," said CDP chairperson, NAME SURNAME.

Management members in Tralee CDP typically engage in 'action learning' when

And they move from working in their own group to getting involved in collaborative networks when their volunteer work introduces them to, for example, the Tralee Learning Together Network or the Network of Services Providers to Lone Parents.

They are acquiring valuable skills, but until now, without any official accreditation to show for it.

The proposal is likely to gain support from many corners.

At a recent Programme Conference, in Sligo, both staff and volunteers suggested the Department and Programme should work to have the voluntary effort of volunteers accepted as accreditation for entry into further educational courses.

"This might encourage greater voluntary participation," they said.

Meanwhile, the Lourdes Youth and Community Services CDP, based in Dublin, have also been experimenting - successfully - with introducing accreditation for people who get involved in development education in their community.

Volunteers deserve more than 'Thanks!' for their work.



### Monday 9.46am

The results of the US election were like an early Christmas present. My man George Bush had to stand up and be counted and he was - 59,000,000 times! As for John Kerry - he may be married to that Heinz woman but now his lofty aspirations don't amount to a hill of beans and his political career is toast.

### Tuesday 6.08pm

Had a row with my fellow development workers Martin Luther Keane and Gail Gore. They accused George W of inconsistency because he's pro-life and pro-the death penalty. I pointed out that fishermen put back small fish they catch until they're bigger in order to catch it and eat it later and they are not accused of inconsistency.

I must send George a motto for fish and felons - I could make a fortune on the t-shirts.

'If hooked - you're cooked! If tried - you're fried!'

### Wednesday 11.00pm

Gail Gore works with Michael Mór a controversial Irish language film maker with TG4. He made the first ever porn movie "as gaeilge" with French subtitles. The film flopped because the subtitles kept blocking out the rude bits. Now he's making a bilingual documentary on poverty and social exclusion its called

## The Diary of Horace McDermott Community Development Worker

"Focal for the Poor in Ireland - A Word for those who are truly Bocht in Eireann".

### Thursday 2.17pm

Translating government documents into Irish is now compulsory so Gail Gore is really pushing that the Ballybog CDP annual report and new workplan be done in both English and Irish. So I suggested we send the English version to the Department and the Irish version to the County Development Board for information purposes.

### Friday 3.55pm

Endorsement is gone! Now the project's work plans are to be sent to the County Development Board for information

purposes only. I remember when I was in the Department information was given only on a "Need to Know" and "No to Need" basis. This meant that information was provided so officials had all they needed to know to say no to any need for funding. Things are different now so there's no need to worry.

### Saturday 4.09pm

The Christmas hype has started. Why the feast celebrating the coming of Santa creates such a fuss I don't understand? Shopping is like religion and shopping centres have replaced cathedrals and churches as the place to go on Sunday.

My girlfriend is a true believer so she dragged me along. There was no difference between Mass and Mass Marketing. The place was full of unhappy looking adults, bored teenagers and crying children being bombarded with advice on how to live their lives and feeling forced to give generously. I'm a non-believer because I don't buy the Santa thing even though I ended up buying nearly everything else in the shops.

### Sunday 8.11pm

An old buddy Hugh Ryan-Sampel now works as a drugs tester. He's a very relaxed guy who is well able to go with the flow. But imagine having to stand under a horse holding a cup waiting into the wee hours of the night for the animal to do his business.

## Kiltimagh CDP health service needed a launch

### DECLAN WEIR reports

BACK in the summer 2004 edition of 'Changing Ireland', we reported on the launching of a pilot project in the West. The family support service came about as the result of co-operation between a network of CDPs based in Mayo and Galway and the Western Health Board. While the individual CDP looks after the day-to-day management of the service, the Board looks after the funding.

One of the projects involved - Kiltimagh Community Development Project - officially launched their Family Support Service on Wednesday, October 27th. Without such a public event, many people may have remained in the dark about the new service and indeed existing facilities for families. So believes Bridie McMahon, Kiltimagh CDP

Project Co-ordinator.

She helped to promote the availability of the service, and to raise the profile of the existing opportunities for families to avail of individual support, group work & courses, a drop-in service and direct work with children.

Speaking at the launch, she said, "This is a new and exciting venture for both the CDP and the local community. A Family Support Service means that families in need of more specific help can be assisted quickly."

The aim is that people will receive assistance through a service that merges childcare skills with community development models of service delivery. It will be of use to people from Kiltimagh as well as outreach areas such as Kilmavee and Kilkelly.

Tommy Horan, Chairperson of Kiltimagh CDP, also officiated at the launch which was held in the town's Community Centre.



Two children at the launch of the Family Support Service in Kiltimagh.

Representing the Western Health Board was Paul Murphy, the Childcare Manager of Mayo Community Services.

To coincide with the launch and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 'International Year of the Family' Kiltimagh CDP was also involved in the promotion of an art competition in local schools. Aspiring artists to watch for in the future include: Katie Flately, Glen Osbourne, Aonghus O'Maicin, Lisa Hyland, Martha Gallagher and James McHugh.



At the launch of the Family Support Service run by the Kiltimagh CDP and funded by the Health Board: Bridie Mc Mahon, CDP co-ordinator; Tommy Horan, Chairperson; Kate Donnelly, Family Support Worker; Paul Murphy, WHB Childcare Manager; Martin Donoghue, programme Officer.

• Kiltimagh CDP can be contacted at: 094-9381506, and the Family Support Worker, Kate Donnelly, can be contacted at: 094-9382806 or 087-9911796.



# Are we blind to the truth about jargon?

IT'S nearly impossible not to be flattened by government departments as they eagerly roll-out their latest initiative. If you manage to avoid the rolling-out, you're still in danger of getting hit on the head by a wayward oar as another department gets caught up in the frenzy of rowing back on one of their earlier promises.

It's official. Spin and the jargon that goes with it has spun out of control.

When Noel Ahern recently spoke in the Dail about changes in the Regional Support Agencies ('Changing Ireland', Summer 2004) he talked of "maximising the spend" and "improved coherence." It would help for starters if the wording politicians use was more coherent! Really our elected representatives should look at a simpler way of speaking. They should sack the spinners. Sadly, the end result of speaking in a language that is tailor-made for snappy press releases is that the vast majority of people end up not listening.

Until recently, most of us could declare ourselves blameless and point at the legal profession as the undisputed World Champions of Cumbrous Language. Now our traditional right to point the finger is coming under threat as many of us involved in community development are clearly losing the language plot.

**Without wanting to get too misty-eyed, I can clearly remember a time when:**

A **network** was something to do with electricity or television or public transport.

A **workshop** was a place where practical things were made from wood and metal.

**Feedback** was the squall of noise that howled from Jimi Hendrix's guitar.

A **signpost** told you how many miles it was to Tipperary, and what way to head there.

A **benchmark** was considered an act of classroom vandalism that would have earned a slap around the ear from an irate teacher. The only thing you **parked** was a car, or maybe even a bike, and the only thing you **unpacked** was a bag.

And nobody had even heard of **facilitation!**

## FORGET SARCASM, THIS IS SERIOUS

Sure, it's easy to look at all this abuse of our language through sarcastic eyes and with tongue planted firmly in cheek, but there is a more serious side. All of us - whether we're elected representatives, legal professionals or community development workers - need to ask ourselves if, as we rush to label something as "person-centred," we are alienating the people and communities we're supposed to



be working with.

As we spend more of our time focusing on the style of what we say as opposed to the content of what we say, we come up with terms such as *capacity-building*, and *human resources*. As a result, we often end up saying absolutely nothing to those people or those communities.

And it's not just about nouns becoming verbs, and developing our own exclusive language. Often, as a result of a genuine, admirable desire not to offend, we almost trip ourselves up in the race to be politically correct.

The Summer 2004 issue of 'Changing Ireland' featured a couple of pieces about the use of language, one of which concluded that our concerns about terminology should not get in the way when it comes to dealing with disability issues. The magazine also featured a list of preferred words and phrases, that should be used when writing about disabled people or people with disabilities (delete as appropriate!).

This is, undoubtedly, a good thing. There's no denying that most people today, especially those of us working in community development, would gladly steer clear from using such negative words as retarded, or spastic, or cripple, or AIDS Carrier.

## SHOULD THE BLIND REALLY SAY 'I'LL SEE YOU LATER'?

I wonder, though, if I was the only reader whose brow furrowed when I read that it's no longer the done thing to use phrases such as "blind to the truth." Blind, after all, is a word with several meanings, not all of which are concerned with the visually impaired. Also, I have met blind people who, when parting company, actually say "I'll see you later." These people would not be remotely offended by such a phrase as "blind to the truth."

In the rush to do the right thing and not offend people, do we run the risk of going Politically Correct to the point of madness? (Or should that be to the point of mental health impairment?)

Another report in that issue focused on a new Disability Equality Steering Committee

booklet about disability as a community development issue. I noticed how this was also available in a "shorter, plain English version," and I wondered whether the longer version contained a more complicated, less plain, English. Who was the full version for? And who was the target audience for the shorter, plain English version? Why differentiate? Why not simply ensure that the handbook in all its formats is written in plain English and is therefore accessible to everyone?

We need to look carefully at the words we use in our press releases and the conferences and gatherings we organise, and not just from the viewpoint of being politically correct. We need to remember to include everyone. Otherwise we'll be the only ones reading the press releases and attending the conferences. Or is that the way it is already?

## BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE, STOP!

\* Finally, for aspiring volunteers and people new to the Community Development Programme, and to the 'poverty industry' in general, the jargon words mentioned in the article above are explained here in their new usage:

Community development work is full of people who are busy **networking**. Very often, we aren't even networking with a specific person or group, we're just networking. We go to endless **workshops** where nothing practical is ever made. In fact I can't remember when I last came across a lathe, or any piece of machinery at a workshop, apart from the odd pen and, maybe at a push, a flipchart. Now, people don't answer you anymore - they **feed back**. You no longer have to be on the road to find a **signpost**, for anything that points you in the general direction of anything - be it adult education opportunities or the county council website - is a signpost. **Benchmarking**, the dreaded b-word, today represents a healthy payrise. Now, if we cannot resolve an issue, we **park** it until later the time is right to return to **unpack** it.

It's said that some people can barely make it to the toilet nowadays without the help of a **facilitator**.

So, before it is too late for you too - learn the lingo, but use it only when absolutely necessary, or you will lose the common man and woman. And that includes me.

**Editor's note:** 'Changing Ireland', the national magazine of the Community Development Programme, aims to be "easily accessible" or, to phrase it better, readable. If we are not succeeding, please let us know. Thank you.



# A Dummy's Guide to Community Development jargon

he 'dictionary' printed here was submitted by a civil servant - yes, some of them do have a sense of humour! It was agreed that the contributor's name would not be published. S/he needs to retain an austere image!

<b>Social Economy Projects</b>	Those that support their local social economy, i.e. go drinking together.
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Drinking pints on Saturday night is a "capacity building" exercise.
<b>Equality proofing measures</b>	Getting women to buy their own round is an equality proofing measure.
<b>Preventive Measures</b>	If you pull on a Saturday night, you may need to use preventive measures.
<b>Soft supports</b>	If you pull, you might also need soft supports, e.g. mattress etc.
<b>Childcare</b>	Inevitable consequence of too much soft supports and inadequate preventive measures.
<b>Creche</b>	What they call a collision between two cars in Foxrock.
<b>Bottom-up Approach</b>	Technique used on a Saturday night if the toilet seat is wet.
<b>Coherence</b>	After "capacity building" or "measures" on Saturday night, one usually find one's coherence is gone. Hic.
<b>Endorsement</b>	What happens if the Guards catch you driving home without coherence.
<b>Political Correctness</b>	Things you should never say. Examples include: i) "Do you take a drink yourself, Guard?" ii) "How's the craic" to Ben Dunne; iii) "Is your hair a natural orange" to Pee Flynn.
<b>Socially Excluded</b>	Person who can't get a date on Saturday night. i.e. Married.
<b>Disadvantaged Woman</b>	Married. See above.
<b>Strategic Workplan</b>	A well disguised tissue of lies designed to get money from the State.
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Pay Increase.
<b>Programme beneficiaries</b>	People who were given every possible assistance, short of actual help.
<b>End beneficiaries</b>	Those who actually ended up with the money, e.g. the barristers at the Tribunal of Inquiry.
<b>Disadvantaged Area</b>	Constituency with no Minister.
<b>Designated Disadvantage Area</b>	Constituency without even a Minister of State.
<b>Seminar/Conference</b>	Junket.
<b>Integrated Services</b>	A process of co-ordination which leads to absolute confusion.

## Council may buy land for Athy CDP to expand

ATHY Town Council may buy land from Kildare County Council to enable Athy CDP extend their childcare facilities.

The situation in Kildare highlights the difficulties many CDPs around the country have in acquiring suitable premises for their work.

Denise Croke, project co-ordinator, has explained to sympathetic councillors in Athy that if the service the CDP provided was not expanded and secured permanently, including premises, it could be lost. Already, there is a long waiting list for community childcare in Athy and the CDP service cannot expand fast enough for demand.

The CDP's childcare service at Woodstock Street serves the needs of parents in the area who want to return to education and training, or take up employment.

The CDP is held in high regard by local councillors - Town Clerk, Des Page, described the CDP as a very important piece of infrastructure in the town. Aoife Breslin, one of the councillors who raised the matter, said it would be a shame if for the sake of 200 square metres of land the service could not move forward.

At a recent meeting the council agreed to take the matter seriously and investigate if a suitable site can be found.

Athy had for a long time needed quality, affordable, community childcare and since the CDP set up such a service it has been heavily oversubscribed. While the service is obviously a success, the childcare team do not have the space to provide all the services that are in demand by local parents for their children.

The programme has funding for the next two years - the childcare service is subsidised under the Equal Opportunities for Childcare Programme - however, it is possible that by 2006 funding would no longer be forthcoming. Currently it is funded through the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The CDP said it was crucial that the service become self-sustaining in the next two to four years. Many projects face such challenges when funding is given on a once-off or pilot scheme basis.

While Athy Town Council investigates the possibility of locating appropriate land for the CDP to build on, staff and volunteers in the project will be busy over the coming year fund-raising to ensure the childcare service has a future.

The project will also be working on securing capital funding for the childcare service, crucial to so many adults' chances of finding employment and/or returning to education while resting sure that their children are safe and well.



# Anatomy of a successful campaign

In any campaign there are winners and losers. On this occasion, the losers are those with the big money, private developers who stood to make millions. Had they had their way (thanks to an uncaring plan to 'regenerate' a Dublin estate) a community would have been uprooted with many people being dispersed to housing in other areas. The 11 acres of prime city centre land they currently live on would have been partly used for new housing only affordable to the better-off in society. St. Michael's Estate in Inchicore faced annihilation.

However, the residents have in their heartland a small and sturdy local community project - St. Michael's CDP. With other groups in the area, and with popular support from the entire community, St. Michael's took on the might of Dublin Corporation. Underdogs from the outset, they donned campaign t-shirts, collected and delivered petitions and descended on corporation chambers to demolish the hopes of developers and city planners alike. The corporation does not easily or often back down. They resisted the city-wide efforts of the bin-tax campaigners. Yet Inchicore succeeded. In this exclusive report, Nick Murphy, examines the strategy that made the Inchicore campaign work.

## Local people 1 - Big money 0

By NICK MURPHY

**FROM 2001 to 2003 Dublin City Council and the tenants of St Michael's Estate in Dublin worked together to draw up a plan for regeneration of the Estate.**

"The model being promoted was that the State and the Community were working together in partnership. People in St Michael's Estate did this in good faith. Local families stayed in chronic conditions, they worked on the plan, they compromised and they waited in hope," Rita Fagan, of St Michael's CDP, explained.

In September 2003 the tenants were informed that the plan they had worked so hard on was to be scrapped and a new draft framework plan would be drawn up by Dublin City Council. According to Rita this would be without any input from the tenants.

"The Council did this alone from September 2003 to June 2004. We were stunned and in shock but we were determined not to be left out of the process," she said. "We collected 3,200 signatures of support from tenants and the wider community and presented them to the City Manager on 30 June, the same day the new draft framework plan was launched".

The tenants felt forced to reject it because it did not meet their needs, they felt it was anti-family and anti-community. The density had risen from 320 units to 850 units and only 80

would be for local authority tenants.

"We felt this was a David and Goliath situation. We decided we would begin to lobby the elected representatives on the Council to support us against their own City manager and officials," Rita continued. "We had campaign tee-shirts printed and were

**"Democracy spoke!  
It felt like a victory,  
but we were not  
gloating"**

wearing them inside city hall distributing information packs on the night the newly elected members of Dublin City Council arrived to complete the post election formalities. It was our strategy to let the City Manager see we weren't going away."

The next step in the Community's campaign was to call all the people of Inchicore to a public meeting on 26 July.

"At this meeting 200 people voted to reject the Council's framework plan," she said. "As a result of this public rejection a local area Councillor put down a motion in the City Council to have the plan rejected."

Members of the Community were present in the gallery of the council chamber on the

night.

"It was quite powerful to hear the representatives of the political parties speak on the motion. The fifty-two Councillors voted unanimously to reject the plan. Democracy spoke!" declared Rita. "It felt like a victory but we were not gloating. We were left outside the process and had no choice but to take the steps we did."

"The Community campaign, and the pressure it created, hurt our relationship with the council officials as their actions had hurt their relationship with us, making it difficult to get a derailed process back on track. Years of trust and building relationships was put at risk by Dublin City Council closing the door on the Community and excluding them from participation in drawing up the draft plan. Perhaps they felt they could not deliver a new draft plan as quickly as was required if they included consultation with us in the process."

The challenge now for both the Community and the City Council is to find a way to work together.

"We have to find a way to work together for the benefit of the most marginalised people who are living in desperate conditions," Rita urged. "We have learned by this success that local representative democracy can work, when communities are organised and clear and put pressure on their elected representatives to represent their needs."

"We were left with a feeling of being pushed to the margins as onlookers and spectators in a production designed for us but not with us," she said. "The Councillors helped us stop that process but there is still a long road ahead. Communities identified for regeneration need to be involved in every step of the process."

In the meanwhile, planners have learnt they are unlikely to ever again get away with pushing a large-scale regeneration plan on a community without taking the community's views on board.



Tenants from St Michael's Estate in Dublin campaigning outside the city council offices.