

# CHANGING IRELAND

CHRISTMAS '05

ISSUE 16 The National Newsletter of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 190 Community Development Projects

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# Your house should be your home

IRELAND has the greatest gulf between rich and poor in the EU. In terms of developed countries, we are second only to the USA for inequality in this regard.

The statistics from the EU and UN have been challenged. But there are other ways of examining the issue. For instance, houses in disadvantaged parts of Dublin sell for €130,000 less than the average house price. A heck of a lot of Dubliners are moving to the country as a result.

In Limerick, hundreds of families have no choice about moving. They are stuck in houses that are regularly put up for sale for no more than €30,000. This is the price many people in Ireland will be shelling out in January for a new car or SUV. Derelict shacks in the countryside sell for three times more.

In every area where house-prices are low, the Community Development Programme has a project. If they were not there, there would be as big a gulf between the authorities and the communities as there already is between rich and poor in Ireland. No



wonder community leaders wish there were double the number of community workers available to them.

When you are working in a community where houses prices are more than €100,000 lower than, let's say, over the wall in a leafier part of Dublin, Cork or Limerick, there are many forces that are outside your control.

There seem to be four factors behind the lower prices: government neglect, criminal gangs operating in the areas, poverty, and negative perceptions (some real, some imagined) about the areas.

'Changing Ireland' in this edition attempts to identify the problem, takes comment from inside and outside the communities and shows how the government's regeneration programmes may help.

Even An Taoiseach, on a visit to north Limerick city, was surprised to see houses selling for €30,000.

Your house should be your home, not your prison.

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### DISCLAIMER

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# 'Celtic Tiger' pushing Dubliners out of the city

THE average price paid for a house in Dublin in September 2005 was €356,220, well over €100,000 more than you would pay to buy in North Clondalkin writes Allen Meagher.

"Here, the average 2-3 bedroomed house sells for around €220,000," outlined Andy Lane

of North Clondalkin CDP (a project that carries out annual studies on housing and social impact).

"€220,000 is good money, if you want to move out of Dublin," he said. "But most people here who sell their houses move to Kildare. If they want to stay in Dublin, you are really screwed."

"And if you are forced out into the country, then you are probably forced to commute to work. Your quality of life decreases. If you move to Kildare, you lose your community, and it destabilises the community left behind."

"North Clondalkin prices are not great



Pic © Derek Speirs.

compared to house-prices in Clondalkin Village which cost up to €50,000 more. It costs a lot more again to buy a house in well-off part of the city," he added.

Crime does nothing for house-prices, he said: "We have had a couple of gang-related murders in Clondalkin recently."

The main things effecting house-prices in Clondalkin are:

- the environment, rubbish piles on the streets;
- the levels of perceived and actual anti-social behaviour in the estates;
- the level of drug and alcohol use;
- the perception people have of the place, the negative ideas outsiders get when they see kids loitering on street-corners.

"The attitude many people have - whereby they wouldn't even go there for a visit - doesn't help the confidence in the community. I even know one TD who said he wouldn't go near Clondalkin," said Andy.

The government investment in areas such as Clondalkin is too little, too late.

"People are disenfranchised, so the politicians don't care what happens to these areas," pointed out Andy.

## 'Anti-social' appeal to CDPs from 'Changing Ireland'

WHAT community, and therefore what CDP, is not effected by the anti-social behaviour issue? There may not be one. It is a hot issue in Ireland today and 'Changing Ireland' want you to help us showcase CDP solutions to the problem. Let us know, and let us know in particular what your project is doing regarding the following:

- local authorities, housing, planning, developers, profit-making versus social benefits, planning laws, regeneration.

- parenting;
- drugs and alcohol;
- guns and gangs;
- gardai, CCTV;
- Community Safety Statements;
- vigilantism;

How we handle the above determines the level of social infrastructure in a community. The new housing developments being built at rapid speed around the country should not become the community deserts of the future. Let us know how. And, tell us, what should the role of City/County Development Boards be in all of this. Contact details for 'Changing Ireland' are on page 2.

Thanking you, in advance:

The Editorial Team: Viv Sadd, Sharon Browne, Sean Dooley and Allen Meagher.

## Rich-poor gap is now 'a gulf' - Dr. Humphreys

DR. Eileen Humphreys is a specialist on sustainable development with the Tipperary Institute, Thurles. Recently, she addressed a regional conference for CDPs in the mid-west and south-west. She has walked the disadvantaged estates of Limerick, talking to people on the street and door-to-door. She has extensive views on housing and believes the gap between rich and poor has become a gulf. Here's what she had to say - the extraordinary, the good and the bad:

### THE EXTRA-ORDINARY

- If you want to get from Moyross to Caherdavin - jump over the wall and house prices go up €100,000.
- For definite, there are more inequalities in Ireland now than before the 'Celtic Tiger'. Those left behind are left further behind and the rich-poor gap has widened.
- There are many really salt-of-the-earth people, who are trapped in poverty, stuck in houses they cannot sell and they are forgotten about. There are really good people living in these disadvantaged areas and they are all tarred with the same dirty brush. But you never get a headline saying 'Southill - they're great people!'

### THE GOOD

- It is very hard for CDPs to make the

difference on housing. But they can have a role if the laws are enforced and if badly-behaving tenants are penalised.

- St. Mary's has reputational problems and yet the people there are amazing. Parts of Moyross are terrific, but this is mostly only known by people living there. They are very nice people there, though they are disillusioned.
- CDPs make a huge difference. If you took them out of the communities they are in, look at the gulf that would be there between the people and the establishment, the council and the state.

### THE BAD

- If you are serious about regeneration, you need good tenants.
- Government policy on social housing looks good, on paper.
- There is no incentive for people to regenerate older council housing estates, not when there is an oversupply of private housing.
- It has been widely documented how the tenant purchase schemes was the worst thing to hit many estates. (Tenants who had bought their houses from the council could sell them back, because the local authorities were short of housing stock, and get €5,000 more than their market value).

## What you're getting for €30,000

A 2-BEDROOMED terraced house recently put up for sale in O'Malley Park for €30,000 was advertised as having double-glazed windows, dual oil/fire heating, fully-fitted kitchen with appliances, sitting room in pine-antique style, bedrooms with built-in-wardrobes, and an electric shower. The house was fully alarmed and came with a garage.

## Houses in Ireland for below €100,000

HOUSES in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary occasionally sell for under €100,000. A former council house sold, in November, for €70,000.

In rural Tipperary, Cavan and Mayo, houses can be purchased for under €50,000, though they are usually in poor condition.

In New Ross, Co. Wexford, you can buy a house on Michael Street or Bewley Street for under €40,000. However, the houses are part of the Tottenham Estate, an anomaly from pre-independence days and they cannot be (easily) purchased outright.

In Limerick this year, the following prices were sought for well-maintained 2/3-bed houses in city estates:

O'Malley Park (2-bed) - €30,000;

O'Malley Park (3-bed) - €36,000;

Moyross - €45,000;

Keys Park - €55,000;

Carew Park - €56,000;

St. Mary's Park - €60,000;

Ballynanty - €80,000.

**The average price paid nationwide for a house in September of this year was €268,040. (source: TSB/ESRI House price index).**

## Trapped in England

IN NORTH and central England, including Salford (which has been mentioned by An Taoiseach) house prices have plummeted in inner-city areas, trapping thousands in negative equity.

## CCTV in the community

Crime and fear are obviously factors in people's lives; 83 groups are so far seeking funding for CCTV cameras in their communities.

It is believed that 13 communities in Dublin were seeking funding along with nine in Cork, six in Galway, five in Wexford and

# Houses for €30,000 and

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

**HOUSES are for sale in urban disadvantaged areas outside Dublin for as low as €30,000. Due to a mixture of government neglect and rising criminality, certain parts of Limerick estates have suffered from declining popularity.**

Now, hundreds of families are trapped in good quality houses that cannot be sold for more than a few thousand euro. The desperation is evident from a pattern of activity that in any other situation would be considered insane:

There are confirmed reports of residents, frustrated with their lot, walking clean away from their homes. In other cases, council-housed residents have been suspected of torching their homes so as to be allocated houses elsewhere.

An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, on viewing an advert for a house in O'Malley Park, Limerick, where the seller was looking for €25,000, recognised the disparity: "In the heart of estates in Dublin, you wouldn't have prices like that. In the housing estates in Salford, England, there are houses selling for 30,000, though that is sterling."

When told that the price advertised was not unusual for houses in disadvantaged and crime-troubled parts of Limerick city, An Taoiseach responded: "I never liked the term 'disadvantaged' - there are no disadvantaged people, I prefer to say 'communities under stress.'"

Speaking to 'Changing Ireland' on the

matter earlier this year, he said the Government were doing their best across the country.

"By resourcing facilities - educational, leisure, crèches and so on - we are doing a lot and pushing big money through," he said, quoting examples from a plethora of government programmes aimed at supporting communities.

Even in Dublin - where houses rarely sell for less than €200,000 - the fact that house-prices in disadvantaged areas are up to €130,000 below average mean that many Dubliners are being forced to move out of the city.

In Limerick, the problem is particularly obvious in O'Malley Park - which is earmarked for regeneration - but is common to many other estates.

Houses can be purchased for under €50,000 in other parts of the country - but they are usually rural, in poor condition or have complex legal conditions attached to the sale, as is the case in New Ross.

Limerick's estates have no such excuse and the State Solicitor for the city, Michael Murray, for one, has been scathing in his criticism of the city council for neglecting some estates.

"I know of some very good local authority housing schemes in Limerick and they have worked very well, with estate management committees and good social interaction," he began.

"But I am not at all surprised at the house-prices in O'Malley Park. It is scandalous the way the Limerick City Council has let it go. I was up there and was appalled by what I saw.

"I know there is a long-term plan to redevelop the area, but what has happened in the meantime is that a new generation of brats have been given the impression that they can do what they want. They run the place and the decent people have to leave. The council allowed it to happen.

"My experience is of Limerick, but I suspect there are areas in Dublin and Cork with the same kind of problems. There are areas in north Dublin and nobody in their right mind would want to live in those places if they could help it," he commented.

The side-effects of criminal activity on urban disadvantaged communities is something that

**Guide Price €30,000**



**For Sale by Private Treaty**

2 Bedroom terrace  
Fully alarmed with  
Double glaze windows with  
Fully fitted kitchen with  
Sitting room with pine a  
with matching units. Bot  
Electric shower. Ph





## in good condition



goes under-reported by the media. However, Mr. Murray is not shy to highlight the issues.

He spoke on the Late Late Show recently about a Limerick resident he knew of who had a house valued at €80,000. He decided to sell, a crime-gang offered him €16,000, the owner refused and was burnt out. He ended up broke and homeless.

Reports circulate about gangs who bully

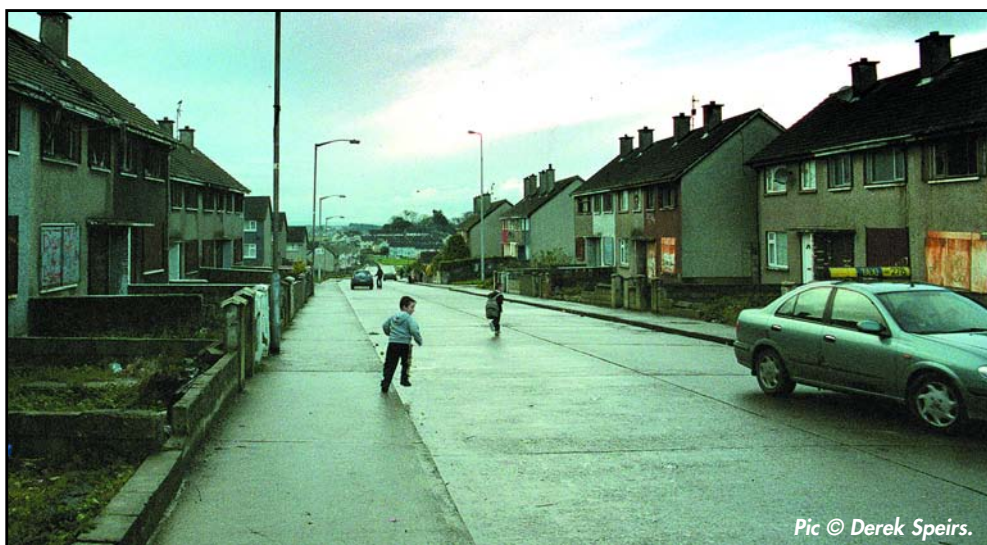
people into selling their houses at low-prices (as a way of laundering money, for instance) and it is known the Criminal Assets Bureau keeps an eye on what is happening.

The best way to take on the gangs, according to Mr. Murray, has been through community-backed initiatives:

"One of the big pluses for Limerick is that it is small enough for residents groups, community reps and Gardai to resist the criminal gangs. But it doesn't happen easily, it takes a lot of work and collaboration."

While unhappy with Limerick City Council over O'Malley Park, Mr. Murray feels strongly that people "should not be forced to see the value of their house decrease because of intimidation by criminal gangs."

## Ahern's hopes for Southill and beyond



**MINISTER of State, Noel Ahern, is responsible for Housing and Urban Renewal, with the Department of the Environment and Local Government.**

In the long-term, O'Malley Park and the wider area of Southill in Limerick, as well as numerous other disadvantaged areas throughout the country, are to benefit from a refit or from entire regeneration programmes.

Minister Ahern visited Limerick last year to announce details of the five-year plan for Southill. The overall refurbishment of the 600 houses (including O'Malley Park) will cost around €80 million. Some houses will be knocked, some new ones built, and a €1 million community centre constructed.

On the national stage, for the first time ever, housing was included in the National Development Plan (2000 -2006) with £6 billion

earmarked for social and affordable housing. That's €6,000,000.

During Mr. Ahern's tenure, the number of houses built has reached an all-time high, though affordability was obviously another issue.

Despite a slow start, €1.6bn was spent on social and affordable housing in 2004, providing homes for more than 12,000 households.

This year saw Minister Ahern spend a total of €922 million (which was a record increase of 19.3% on 2004). It went on the following programmes:-

Provision of local authority housing = €841 million;

Provision of traveller accommodation and support = €45 million;

Remedial works to local authority dwellings =

## CDP volunteer slams "decades of neglect"

A CDP volunteer of many years' experience in community development and who lives in one of Limerick's disadvantaged areas felt s/he could only talk openly on housing by being anonymous. S/he said drug-gangs often buy people's houses in disadvantaged parts of the city and it was not wise to be seen talking openly about their activities.

Here are the points s/he makes:

- "There have been decades of neglect, prior to the upsurge in gang-violence. St. Mary's Park, for example, was built in the 1930s and forgotten about. Poverty has been ingrained in people's minds over four generations.
- "It is no surprise St. Mary's has the lowest level of electoral turnout in the entire state. In the past, people didn't even think they were entitled to have a voice. The CDPs do represent the main voice of the community, though you have to be careful how you represent the community.
- "Moyross and Southill, 30 years ago, were fantastic places to go to, but the €5,000 tenant purchase scheme finished all that.
- "At the moment, there are certain families from one estate who are being moved by the city council to another estate where a family they fighting with live. Everyone knows these two families don't mix.
- "The authorities need to clampdown on drug-dealing. It is spreading into more and more estates. But the Gardai are doing absolutely nothing as far as I can see. They are probably so peed off bring criminals to court and the judges letting them off. The judges should be made live in one of our estates for a week.
- "My neighbour had a window shot in by mistake. All because she lived next door to someone who was a target."

# Community, Rural & Gaeltacht due a 12% increase

THE budget estimates (published in November) showed that the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is in line for a 12% increase in funding for 2006. The extra money will bring the total spend for next year by the Department to €366 million.

"This clearly indicates the importance attached to this sector by Government," said the Department in a statement.

The 12% increase will not, however, apply 'across the board'. The 'Community Affairs' section will get a 5% increase. The €93,255,000 community budget will provide, among other things for CDPs, Partnerships and other community groups funded through the Department. It also includes budgeting to promote cohesion among projects/programmes and to improved co-ordination of local and community schemes.



Minister Ó Cuív

The fact that the overall increases are above the rate of inflation will be broadly welcomed.

Nonetheless, there was also criticism. The budget for the Drugs Initiative - which includes the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund - is due to be increased up 8% to €34 million.

But opposition deputies argued it was too little (see Dáil report).

The following are the highlights from the estimates, as regards community development generally:

## HIGHLIGHTS:

National Rural Development Scheme - up 21%.

RAPID - up 17% to €8,800,000.

Drugs Initiative - Young People's Facilities and Services Fund - up 8% to €34 million.

Community Affairs (including CDPs, Partnerships, etc) - up 5%, to €93 million.

Udaras na Gaeltachta - up 5% to €36 million.

Islands funding - up 8% to €17 million.

Social Economy Scheme - not available at time of going to press.

## RAPID up 17%

FUNDING for the RAPID programme is to increase by 17% to €8,800,000. And the Minister intends to at least double this figure through matching funds from other Government departments and local authorities.

## Rural Social Scheme

There are now 1900 people employed on the Rural Social Scheme and the number of participants should rise next year to 2,500.

"It has been a great success," said Minister Éamon Ó Cuív. "It plays a major part in providing development and services in rural Ireland, while dealing with the problem of declining farm incomes".

The scheme works by providing employment to low-income farmers in return for the provision of community services. It began in the summer of last year and work done under the scheme includes village enhancement, the building of walkways, the maintenance of community facilities and the provision of care services.

Provision has been made in the 2006 budget to increase participant numbers to

## New estates should not become community deserts

**HOUSING estates devoid of community facilities are a phenomena the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, is naturally anxious to avoid. Such shortcomings are, he said, the reason why his Department "must intervene time and again to deal with problems of anti-social behaviour, community breakdown, etc."**

He found himself, during a debate with opposition member, Ms C. Murphy, in complete agreement with her on the matter.

She had put it to the Minister: "There are areas where nothing but houses are constructed and they are devoid of community facilities. This is a significant disadvantage as regards community development."

Ms. Murphy pointed out that national bodies such as Combat Poverty and the national institute for regional and spatial analysis have categorised this as a type of poverty.

She asked would the new all-in-one community programme being devised by the Minister deal with this issue, given that it is to

cover every part of the country. She further asked, "Was there any discussion on policies as regards the obligations on developers?"

Replied Minister Ó Cuív: "[Regarding] the whole question of supervision of community centres, that is not my Department's direct responsibility. However, as the Minister with responsibility for community, I have an absolute belief that each community must have the requisite buildings. Under a new arrangement where levies are being taken out of all developments, it is absolutely imperative, as the Deputy rightly points out, that local authorities provide that land is available and ensure that the fund is used to construct the community's buildings."

"I have repeatedly said that the idea of building housing estates without providing the necessary community facilities at the same time is the reason our Department must intervene time and again to deal with problems of anti-social behaviour, community breakdown etc. I fully accept the point made by the Deputy."

## More needed to tackle drugs

THE Government's spending on countering the drugs problem in Ireland was attacked, after the budget estimates were published.

An 8% increase was promised for the Drugs Initiative, which includes the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund. But it was not enough, argued opposition parliamentarians in a Dáil debate, on November 30th.

Tony Gregory, T.D. stated that because, "the planned strategic response to the drug problem by the regional drugs task forces will soon be in a shambles" and asked was this the reason why "a long serving and committed member of the national drugs strategy team has submitted his resignation to the Minister".

He asked Minister of State, Noel Ahern: "Is it not the problem that the Minister is ignoring the scale of the drugs problem?"

Mr. Ahern outlined Government's achievements on the issue: "Almost 600 people are now working on drugs task force projects and young people's fund projects. ...we spend approximately EURO 50 million on projects that begin on local drugs task force level (and) the

Department of Health and Children and the HSE spend more than that every year on treatment. There is massive Government funding across a range of headings."

Aengus Ó Snodaigh, T.D. said, "The money for anti-drugs and drugs rehabilitation and awareness programmes will be EURO 15 million short."

He asked the Minister, if funding was not increased beyond what was promised in the budget estimates, would he "resign as having failed in his job."

Mr. Ahern countered, saying, "I do not consider myself as having failed."

He said it had been brought to his attention last year that, as the drugs situation evolves, additional funding would be needed to deal with some key emerging needs.

He suggested the Government would look at the matter again in the revised estimates due to be published in January.



# The future will be simple, effective and cohesive

- Minister Ó Cuív on merger of national programmes

**MINISTER Éamon Ó Cuív has outlined his plans to amalgamate LEADER groups, Partnership companies and other certain types of community groups by the end of next year so there is more cohesiveness to the Government's funding of community initiatives.**

While some national programmes are to be merged, the Community Development Programme does not appear to be one of them.

In outlining how it will take shape, in a keynote speech made on November 24th, at the Conference of Comhar LEADER na hÉireann, the Minister said, "what is to be gained from engaging in this change far outweighs any downside."

He stated:

"To ensure that there is a simple, effective and cohesive approach to the delivery of programmes across the country, my Department have engaged with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in a cohesion programme that sets about achieving the following from the 1st January 2007.

1. That all areas of the country, urban and rural, will be covered by an area based company delivering a wide range of services and programmes.
2. That there shall be in any one area, only one such area based company and that they will deliver those programmes.
3. The CDPs or Community Development Projects which are focused either on specific themes or groups in society such as Travellers, Men's Groups, Women's Groups, or on focused areas of disadvantage, will be retained. However I want to confirm that programmes such as the LDSIP, Rural Development Programmes and the Rural Social Scheme and potentially a number of other programmes will be delivered by the one area based company in each area."

He proposed that, "such an area-based arrangement would provide

much better services to our citizens who are the ultimate target of what we do. As well as that, it will ensure that every citizen in the state who requires services from programmes will be able to avail of them. And thirdly, it will ensure that schemes such as the Rural Social Scheme and perhaps the Social Economy Scheme can be delivered through Community Area Based companies to all eligible citizens within the state."

Minister Ó Cuív remarked, "Everything is changing, changing utterly."

"All boards of these new companies will have membership from the community, the statutory sector, the social partners and public elected representatives. The exact details of how the various appointments will be made will be worked out in the coming months," he added.

People working as volunteers and workers at local community level, including in CDPs, will no doubt be keen to influence the development of a fair, democratic and community-friendly process for appointing people to the new companies.

Since he was appointed to the newly-created position of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Mr. Ó Cuív's dream has been to introduce a one-stop shop in each city and/or county for the provision of community services. He wanted a system the public could easily understand.

The process began in 2003. The Minister's aim (in partnership with his colleagues, the Ministers for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government) was: "streamlining and rationalising structures so as to avoid overlaps, duplication and undue administrative overheads; bringing transparency, co-ordination and improved control to the funding and operation of local-community development measures; and strengthening the democratic accountability of agencies and service providers in this area."

## Concern raised over amalgamations

PEOPLE working in Government-funded programmes believe that plans to merge LEADER groups and Partnership groups at city and county-level will affect both funding and accountability, stated Sinn Féin T.D., Martin Ferris, speaking in the Dáil in late October.

Mr. Ferris said the concern was that the plans would lead to a significant dilution of local control over programmes.

Replying to questions, Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, said it is intended to introduce simplified local delivery structure and that this would lead to more coverage and improved levels of services to communities.

In a later Dáil debate, on November 30th, the Minister elaborated on the level of funding available to improve cohesion at local level between groups: "In 2005-06 I am making funding of €7 million available for measures focused on the alignment of local, community and rural development organisations to achieve full county-city coverage by 2006. In rural areas, this will involve LEADER and Partnership companies coming together to secure a unified structure that will provide full area cover."

## Knock-Knock! Who's there?

THE Decentralisation Programme, which should see the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht move entirely from Dublin, is "now proceeding apace", reported Minister Éamon Ó Cuív recently. "It is hoped that by this time next year 70 public servants will be in place in the Knock Airport region with the full decentralisation of the Department being completed in 2007.

"Furthermore ADM, which will henceforth be known as POBAL, have advertised for 10 positions in Clifden as part of their decentralisation of 40 staff to this area," said the Minister.

A recent survey found that, on average, one in nine civil servants is willing to decentralise. Many posts will need to be filled by newcomers to the civil-service.



## Older people in Cavan/Leitrim resist bullying

SINCE 2003, the nine Active Age groups in North Leitrim and West Cavan have - along with Community Connections CDP - been working to get a realistic picture of how older people feel about the factors that influence and affect their lives.

They have looked at practical things such as attitudes towards money, where to access legal advice, and also issues such as loss, bereavement and the abuse of older people.

The groups learned and discussed - for example - some of the subtle ways in which people can be the victims of abuse and the variety of forms this can take, be it physical punishment, emotional blackmail or withholding love and affection.

The 200-plus members of the groups have now come up with ideas on how some of their concerns can be addressed.

For more information, contact Brenda Whitley, tel. 071-9853380 or e-mail: [info@communityconnections.ie](mailto:info@communityconnections.ie)

## Women's projects a model for Hungarians

A 19-STRONG Hungarian delegation anxious to learn about setting up women's projects visited CDPs in the West to get ideas to put into action back home.

Hungary has the lowest percentage of female workers in the labour market and the delegation have the task of boosting the ratio of women to men in the workforce. Among the delegation were potential project managers, government officials and researchers.

They specifically visited four projects that are backed by the European Social Fund (ESF) to see how they operate and manage to keep going while continuing to meet the needs of participants. Hungary has received ESF funding to train and educate women to make it easier for them to get paid employment.

The four sites the delegation visited were Tuam CDP, Women of the North-West CDP, the Longford Women's Link, along with the FAS training centre in Athlone.

Afterwards, the delegation wrote to say the tour was an "incredible success" and had helped them in their understanding of how Ireland dealt with ESF projects and also the way women interact with the Irish Labour Market.

Irish Rural Link organised the visit with European support.

Young people in small towns all over the country, who have no interest in sport, find there are next to no public facilities for them. While most manage to entertain themselves sufficiently, some slip into anti-social behaviour, vandalism, intimidation and petty criminality.

It's likely that Anti-Social Behaviour Orders will only serve to further the alienation of young people in these areas. The real crime is the slow pace of investment in young people's obvious talents and energies. Millions of euro have been poured into programmes and services, but mostly in the cities. It would be fine if they could wait, but young people don't stay young for long.

The following stories come from two sides of the Shannon - counties Clare and Limerick - and show that youth throughout rural Ireland, as they grow up, need to be given more than the remote control for the television.

## 'Psychotic Episode' y

### - A Rock Concert in 'Ballyanonymus', Co. Limerick

By GER FITZGIBBON

ON a winterish Saturday night in late October, six young, loud and noisy bands played a concert at the Community Hall in 'Ballyanonymus', Co. Limerick (it could be anywhere in Ireland. The town's name is held back; the reasons become apparent later). From 8pm to 12.30am, playing through a sound system more suited to somebody's bedroom than a community hall, a bunch of mostly teenage youths 'rock out'.

"Loads of people wanted to have a gig around Halloween, so I decided to try to organise one," said the main organiser, 17 year old Tom Cregan.

A huge revival in playing and performing original music has been going on among Ireland's youth over the last few years. According to Adam from the band *Psychotic Episode* "the reason more and more young people are forming their own bands is the lack of meaning and substance in mainstream commercial music."

With names like *Blind-Arsed Monkey*, *Blind Christ* and *Psychotic Episode* these bands are not exactly middle of the road: "For me and I think for most of us, music is a creative outlet," says Adam, "and playing gigs, as well as being a good laugh, is a chance to show what you can do."

Although happy at the chance to play, neither Tom nor Adam were happy with the 'Ballyanonymus' gig: "We tried to get a venue in a nearby town, but everyone turned us down. We had no support. Sometimes it

seems like people in this area don't give a damn about young people. If you try to organise something like this they say 'go away, you'll only cause trouble.' Of course the reason young people start messing in the first place is that there's nothing to do. It's like they'd prefer if we just disappeared."

People complain about anti-social behaviour, about 'menacing youths' hanging around, yet rarely if ever look beyond that to see why that is the case? This concert was not a pretty event. Thrown together by a handful of young teenagers desperate for a public space in which to share their creative interests with their peers and blow off steam during the school holidays, the concert started and finished late, was completely disorganised and there was no supervision of any kind.

**Some local youths showed up with bottles of beer, unsupervised 12 and 13 year olds ran amok, throwing water and sniffing aerosols cans and for a while the whole event teetered on the brink of anarchy.** Luckily no-one was hurt or injured. A number of interested 'adults' showed up unannounced and managed to rescue the situation.

Yet despite everything that went wrong, it was inspiring to see a group young people trying, against all the odds, to do something positive with their free time. **If this is what young people can achieve with no support or training, just think what could be done if there was a government-funded Youth Service or CDP in the area to help out.** (Such as in Scarriff, Co. Clare. See attached report. - Ed).





## Out of it on alcohol and drugs

**THERE are problems in East Clare as in every rural area.**

"Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night, we have groups of youngsters gathering at the edge of our housing estate and roaring and shouting all night. They are out of it on alcohol and drugs, boys and girls aged 14 and up," said local volunteer, Tracey Doyle. "And every second Friday night, there is a teenage disco in a hall here. There is no alcohol served at the disco, but the problem is that parents come along in their cars and

drop off their children, but they don't all go to the disco. Some of them just hang around outside here getting drunk.

"The EMC hasn't solved that problem," said Tracey. "But my hope is that the next generation of kids will have something to do now and will develop a greater sense of self-worth. In the meanwhile, there are three schools in the area - Youthreach, the VEC school and the Alpha Project - and I am hoping we can organise alcohol and drug awareness work with these schools."

## Youths feel excluded



*Youth club members spin the discs in Scariff, Co. Clare.*

## EMC beats the frilly knickers

A JUNIOR youth group has been established in Scariff by volunteers working with the support of East Clare CDP. Quite coolly, it's called 'EMC Youth Club' where E, M and C stand for 'Every Moment Counts'.

It took three months for seven adults and 25 young people from Scariff to agree on the name," said Tracey Doyle, a management member with the CDP.

"We had lots of discussions. Some early suggestions were quite funny, for example 'The Rockin Rabbits' and 'The Frilly Knickers' (which didn't exactly appeal to the boys) and D'n'A (as in 'Devils and Angels' /DNA). EMC was the winner."

"We started the group in Brian and Joe's Coffee Shop with weekly meetings and got support from the Brothers of Charity," she reported.

"So far we have held a photography workshop - the best photos are displayed in the coffee shop. We then held a fundraising Halloween disco for national schools in East Clare which was a great success on lots of levels, from one of the group being the DJ to the amount of work the whole group put into it.



*An EMC meeting at Brian and Joe's Coffee Shop.*

"Now, we are moving into our local GAA hall where we will have access to a multi-function sports hall and a stage. And there is a chill-out area which at present is a blank canvas so the young people are very eager to be let loose with paints and other materials to make it their own," she added.

The reason the EMC Club is targeted at the 12-16 years age-group is because Scariff already has a 'Fishbowl Youth Group' for 15-

€149m  
for youth  
under  
Facilities  
and  
Services  
Fund

**THE Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF) - set up in 1998 by the Government - targets those young people most at risk from substance misuse in disadvantaged areas.**

By developing youth, sport and other recreational facilities, the YPFSF seeks to attract "at risk" young people away from the potential dangers of substance misuse, into safe, non-threatening and constructive environments.

Since 2000, the YPFSF has been allocated a total of €149 million under the National Development Plan and its spending on social inclusion has so far included the following:

- \* €56.4 million to the 14 Local Drugs Task Force (LDTFs) areas;
- \* €1.9 million to 4 urban areas (Galway, Limerick, Carlow and Waterford);
- \* €0.6 million to Voluntary Organisations;
- \* €9.1 million to the Springboard Initiative.

25 year olds.

"The majority of younger ones had nothing to do, unless they were into hurling, camogie or Irish dancing," continued Tracey. She has four children herself and grew tired of watching them often sitting in at home with little to do.

It is not as if Tracey sees no merit in sport; she coaches the local under-10 camogie team. No surprise then that, when Tracey got involved in the CDP, the first target group she identified with was the youth.

"I asked what was happening with youth and the committee said they hadn't got to that yet, so I said I'll get it going.

"We now have seven trained youth club leaders - all volunteers - and we have all been trained and vetted by the Clare Youth Service," she concluded.

As well as having family at home and now the youth club, her paid work is as a part-time playschool assistant. A good thing Tracey likes working with young people!

**If anyone would like to get involved on any level offering workshops, ideas or themselves contact Tracey Doyle on 087-2620011/061-640764.**

# Urban Regeneration process criticised at TCD conference

**THERE was heavy criticism of the lack of an effective community role in the Public Private Partnership model of Urban Regeneration at a recent conference in Trinity College hosted by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies.**

Representatives from the Community Forum in O'Devanney Gardens questioned the accuracy of the claim from Claire Feeney from Dublin City Council when she said that the Regeneration Board for the O'Devanney Gardens project had already been set up.

"The Regeneration Board has not been set up as a separate company as was the case in Fatima Mansions," said Lena Jordan from the O'Devanney Gardens Community Forum. "We also query the status of the community charter agreed by Dublin City Council because the Regeneration Board has no teeth, and the developer will put pressure on to get more private apartments and retail space at the expense of community facilities."

The €280million O'Devanney Gardens development is one of the biggest undertaken by Dublin City Council through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) process. The tender process is almost complete and the developer will be announced shortly. Grainne Foy, Development Worker with An Siol CDP was critical of the way existing community structures such as the Community Forum were by-passed in the consultation process.

"The Community Forum had been working on this issue since 1997, but at a critical time when the Community Charter was being



GERRY McKEEVER reports

agreed, they were effectively by-passed," she said.

Michael Punch from the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, was also critical of the process undertaken within O'Devanney Gardens. A good regeneration process, he said, requires two things in order that there is an effective delivery of community gain - a period of capacity building for the local community groups, and a regeneration board with legal status and an independent chair.

Summarising a research paper based on the O'Devanney Gardens experience, he said the recommendations at community level were to:

- develop an independent and strong local structure,
- don't get divided,
- keep asking questions,
- and learn from elsewhere and seek advice from groups such as the local CDPs working in your area.

Several contributors at the Trinity College conference commented that there now seemed to be 'definite rowback' in Dublin City Council policy since the experience of Fatima Mansions. (See story below).

Joe O'Donoghue of Fatima Groups United admits there is a lot of drawbacks with the PPP process but says that as a result of the local organisation of community groups and the effective use of media and lobbying, the local community has been able to gain significant concessions in the regeneration process.

Earlier in the year CDPs working in several Dublin City Council areas were concerned that they were being purposefully 'bypassed' by Dublin City Council officials in consultation processes linked to urban regeneration.

According to the CDPs, Dublin City Council seemed intent on regarding the CDPs as an 'external layer' and wanted only to deal with tenant groups directly. In a later meeting with Dublin City Council the CDPs were reassured by DCC representatives that their role in consultation and regeneration was fully recognised.

Further doubt has been thrown on the PPP process in a recent article in the Irish Times by Dr Eoin Reeves of the University of Limerick.

"The economic case for PPP is weak," he said. A project to contract and build schools was recently subject to a review by the Auditor and Comptroller General who found the cost was 8% to 13% higher than using the conventional approach of direct state expenditure.

## President fan of Fatima people-power

President Mary McAleese visited Fatima Mansions United CDP in mid-November to congratulate the local regeneration board for "setting an agenda for disadvantaged communities everywhere."

"There is an air of optimism and excitement in the area as the work of Fatima Groups United and The Fatima Regeneration Board, under the chairmanship of Finbarr Flood, reveals itself in one of our country's most ambitious regeneration projects," she said. In Fatima Mansions, the Regeneration Company was set up as a separate company with an independent chairperson and CEO employed by the Regeneration company. A Social Regeneration Agenda forms a major part of the local plan in achieving 'community gain' from the Public-Private Partnership process.

"When I last was here, your plans were just that - a book of ideas, born out of very bleak times and a strong determination that things were going to get better. Your faith, resilience and commitment are as incredible as they are inspirational, for few communities experienced such overwhelming problems as you did," said the Republic's President.



She hoped that community spirit is "soaring with pride", adding: "This is people power at its shining best."

"A community knocked down by so many adversities has fought back, taken control of its landscape, its future and the future of its children. You have said loud and clear that tomorrow's Ireland is going to be a place where people care about one another, where children grow up in safe neighbourhoods,

where their talents blossom naturally and where poverty and disadvantage are under constant attack until they disappear from our history books for good."

The first phase of the redevelopment, the completion of 110 houses for Dublin City Council tenants, is finished and Phase Two is due to start soon. Some of the old flats remained to be demolished.

Once finished, there will be homes, gardens, a Luas stop, shops, a community centre, a swimming pool, gym, crèche and outdoor football areas.

"The people who live here will, I hope, find here the happiness of a peaceful community free from the scourges that threatened their peace of mind for so many long years," said President McAleese, adding: "Fatima has set the standard and awakened the ambitions of other neighbourhoods that yearn for regeneration. Fatima is now the place that others are looking to for advice and guidance - what a transformation - what a credit to the people of Fatima Mansions."

She thanked CDP members Gemma McKenna and Joe Donohoe of the Fatima Groups United for their invitation to Fatima.





# Riots in Paris: that could never happen here, but then again, it might!

By PHILIP MUDGE

**TEN homeless people 'stormed' Leinster House on November 30th, getting as far as the front door of Dáil Eireann in an attempt to hand their petition to An Taoiseach, Bertie Aherne.**

Unlike the French 'banlieu' protesters, the homeless Irish campaigners were 'armed' with hundreds of sheets of paper containing 20,000 signatures demanding action on homelessness. Not for them the petrol bombs and stones used in the recent French suburban riots.

However, the Taoiseach warned that similar riots could happen in Ireland ('Sunday Business Post', November 13th) if our society did not take action to prevent them and he warned about 'ghettoisation' and 'social dumping' of immigrants.

So what were the causes of the riots in Paris and could similar riots happen here? 'Changing Ireland' asked CDP staff and volunteers, most of whom - sadly - were unwilling to have their name published. This despite the fact that they had clear and well-thought out opinions on the subject.

**Our sample were evenly split on what were the causes of the riots in Paris:**

Some thought that the riots were caused by the alienation of young members of immigrant communities, others that the riots were about poverty and not really to do with race.

"Poor people will become disaffected if society doesn't listen to them, it makes no difference whether they are black or white, from Dublin, Limerick, rural Ireland or North Africa," said one development worker from Dublin.

Another said that they didn't know what was the cause of the riots in Paris. "We are relying on what we see on the television, so we don't really know the background or what is really happening," complained one volunteer.

A CDP worker in the South-East thought that the story "isn't appropriate for a magazine like 'Changing Ireland'!"

**'French-style' rioting could happen here, said some community workers:**

"If the riots were caused by immigrants responding to racism then of course they could happen here. Everyone knows that Ireland is a racist society. Bertie Aherne and Michael McDowell may disagree, they wouldn't they, but everyone talking to ordinary people in communities knows that racism is everywhere," argued one CDP co-ordinator.

Other interviewees were **certain that race riots were not likely** in the near future.

Said veteran CDP worker, Seanie Lambe: "The numbers of young people immigrating into Ireland are too small for ghettos to form here. Don't believe the stories that you hear on the news, the numbers of immigrants to Ireland are so small compared to other countries that we will not have immigrant ghettos in my lifetime."

"We can learn from the mistakes of England and France and make sure that we don't have these types of problems in 20 or 30 years," added Seanie.

A co-ordinator in a Limerick CDP believes that the issues in France are not about race but about poverty but we don't need to worry about disaffected youth rioting as its not in our psyche: "We're not as militant as the French," she said. "I'm not promoting rioting, but sometimes I wish people would be more concerned, get angry about the issues. Then maybe society would listen to us. **The Celtic tiger has turned us all into pussy cats.**"

Yet other CDP staff felt that **the issues that contributed to the Paris riots are not issues here.**

One volunteer said the communities in Ireland that could become ghettos for immigrants have already become ghettos for Irish people on the margins of society, but projects like CDPs are working in those communities.

"If we do our work properly then we can ensure that these communities do not become ghettos," said yet another volunteer, adding: "Everybody knows what needs to be done for youth in the marginalised communities, we need youth clubs for all young people, Irish and immigrants, but volunteers don't want to run youth clubs anymore and most staff working in the state agencies knock off at half five or six o'clock and then they aren't working when the kids need them most. We also need accessible services for health, drugs and employment."

Added another: "We need to really listen to young people, not just pay lip service to them."

So the jury is out amongst CDPs . . . What do you think were the causes of the Paris riots? Do you think they could happen in Ireland?

**Ed's note: Unless there are special circumstances for a witness/spokesperson needing to retain anonymity, we do not in the future intend on publishing anonymous quotes. It possibly allowed for some straight-talking on this occasion.**



## Limerick becomes Fairtrade City

LIMERICK has won Fairtrade City status after a ten-month campaign. The certificate was accepted on behalf of the city by Mayor Diarmuid Scully at a ceremony in the city centre on November 22nd.

Fairtrade is about justice - not charity - and aims to improve the lives of producers and workers throughout the developing world. It ensures the producers receive a fair and guaranteed price for their produce while workers in plantations and factories receive a fair wage.

Limerick is one of a number of Irish cities to earn the Fairtrade City status. It took collaboration by retailers, catering outlets, schools and community organisations to win the award.

There are now eight places with Fairtrade City/Town status, the others being: Clonakilty, Cork City, Kilkenny City, Kinsale, Waterford City, Galway City and Thurles.

While retail outlets mark-up the prices of Fairtrade-labelled products as they do all products, at least now consumers in the Mid-West have a choice.

Nonetheless, it pays to shop around when buying Fairtrade products. In Limerick, 'Café Direct 5065' can cost up to €5.85 in a Londis store, while Dunnes Stores sell the same product for €4.

## Collins criticises 'cheap' talk

FINE Gael reaction to the Ward manslaughter/Nally conviction was "short-sighted, cheap and dangerous", according to Martin Collins, Pavee Point's assistant director. Collins claimed some Fine Gael politicians were guilty of incitement to hatred, but refused to name names. He said the Incitement to Hatred Act needed to be reviewed also. It is judged weak and convictions under it are rare.

A Fine Gael spokesperson responded to the criticisms, saying: "Fine Gael is not anti-Traveller. When we were in government we brought in equal status legislation."

Mr. Collins said the political and media hype around the Ward manslaughter/Nally conviction have "set us back five years" when it comes to developing relations between Traveller and settled communities.

As part of its work, Pavee Point is a Specialist Support Agency to projects funded by the Community Development

## CDP in campaign for 'POW' releases

COISTE na nIarchimí welcomed the release in November of two prisoners, Kieran Kiely and Michael Nugent, whose sentences had been served in full. A function was held in Cork to welcome the men home.

However, the project wants politicians to "take seriously" the issue of quickly releasing all remaining IRA members still in prison.

"Let them know that this is not an election issue, it is a natural consequence of the ending of armed conflict. It is outrageous that our prisoners will not be at home with their families and friends again this year. Make sure that those in power know this," Coiste urged its newsletter readers.

Not all CDPs are geographically-focussed on particular neighbourhoods. Many cater for sectoral communities and Coiste na nIarchimí, based in Dominick Court, Dublin 1, was established to support groups and individuals working for the social, economic and emotional well-being of republican ex-prisoners, displaced persons and former activists and their families. People with Republican backgrounds who served time can experience discrimination and there are now 19 local groups established.

## Clondalkin: Once-a-day is not a 'bus service'



YOU can catch a 76B bus from Clondalkin Village to Tallaght Hospital any morning before 8am. After that, the 'service' ends and there is no direct bus back to Clondalkin.

The one early-morning bus to the hospital was only put on the route recently after a long-running campaign by the South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum.

However, resident and other members of the Forum are angry that one bus is all the community got from Dublin Bus. Patients and hospital visitors have to fork out for two buses each way, take a taxi or walk/cycle.

Dolcan CDP is trying to highlight the issue. It argues: "Dublin Bus has been repeatedly asked to provide a proper bus service for the people of South West Clondalkin to their local hospital. Their solution is to provide one early morning bus. What about getting home from the hospital? What if your appointment in the hospital is in the afternoon? One bus is simply not good enough."

The CDP urges residents to complain in writing to Dublin Bus if they agree, and, in the meanwhile, the area's safety forum continues to negotiate with the company to increase the level of service.

**For more information, contact:**

**Dolcan CDP, Bawnogue Enterprise and Community Centre, Bawnogue Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.**

**Tel. 01-457-6055. Fax. 01-457-6293.**

## Social Economy

# Looks like a Happy New Year for Social Economy

**NICK MURPHY reports**

**THE Social Economy Programme will receive a new name. From January it will be called the Community Services Programme and in future will lean towards social rather than commercial benefits.**

And the Programme will move from FAS control to administration by Area Development Management (ADM) starting from New Year's Day 2006. ADM will administer the programme on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaelteacht Affairs.

Senior civil servant David Brennan made the announcement on 23rd November 2005, at a Seminar in Mullingar (organised by the Wicklow Social Economy Network).

Close to 200 people attended the seminar and they elected delegates to form a group to set-up a national network and to consult with the Department during the changeover. Up to now, FAS have administered the Programme on behalf of the Department of Trade and Enterprise.

At the seminar, Mr Brennan announced a number of welcome changes to be implemented immediately. He assured projects that:

- The enterprise element which is central to some projects will remain.
- The stipulation that participants be over 35 years of age and 3 years unemployed will be scrapped.
- Clearer easier reporting processes similar to those used by CDP's will be introduced including alignment of audits with projects financial years.
- Movement to multi-annual funding will happen over time.
- There are no plans to cut budgets. All projects will receive funding in January. ADM hope to make all payments to projects by the first 15 working days in January. All payments outstanding from FAS at 31/12/05 will be honoured by ADM in '06. Payments will be quarterly in advance from January.

Mr. Brennan also said discussions are taking place with the Department of Finance with a view to (a) revising social economy managers' wages which have not increased in four years and (b) building in an element to keep pace



**David Brennan.**

with inflation for participant wages.

He said that new Employment Criteria may only require about 70% of participants to be from the live register.

In addition finance may be available for a small number of additional projects, no more than 20 to 30 nationally, later in the year.

In answering questions from workshops, Mr Brennan speculated that adjustments may be made to the programme to reflect the wide range of projects in the programme and that projects presently funded through the Social Economy Programme might in future move to other funding streams if that seemed appropriate.

CDPs around the country may take the opportunity to lobby the department to slant the new programme criteria towards areas of social need. Now is the time to do so.

**ED's NOTE:** On November 29th, ADM was renamed Pobal. The above story concerns statements made a few days prior to the change; however, readers should take note that Pobal is the name that will be used for ADM from now on.



# 2nd pub punished . . .



## . . . all because of a cuppa

JOAN COURTNEY reports

**WHAT** is described as a landmark case against a pub in Listowel, Co. Kerry, took place in October.

The 'Mighty Dollar' bar in Market Street was ordered to close down for two days because of discrimination against Travellers. It is hoped the ruling may help to improve the situation for Travellers wishing to go out, as it was the second time a pub in the Cork/Kerry region was punished by a Judge in a District Court for discrimination.

Tellingly, in both instances, the victims were experienced in CDP work and had the backing of a project behind them as they lodged their complaints.

At 12 o'clock in the day, on February 2004, Karen Gearon and Leonard Evans, the former a Traveller project co-ordinator, the latter a member of the Travelling community, went into the Mighty Dollar. They asked for a cup of coffee and an orange juice.

They were refused. Ironically the meeting they had come from was about discrimination against Travellers by publicans in Listowel.

The discrimination case first came before the court in March of this year, when Judge Aingeal Ní Chondúin sent both parties away to see how they would get on. She was taking six to seven months to deliberate. Two weeks after the first court case Leonard was again refused service in The Mighty Dollar.

## Equality cases now in District Courts

**THE Equal Status Act 2000 came into force on the 25th October 2000.**

It was amended by the Equality Act 2004 on the 19th July 2004.

The Acts relate to discrimination based on the following 9 grounds: Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Membership of the Traveller community.

The Acts apply to people who: (i) Buy and sell a wide variety of goods, (ii) Use or provide a wide range of services, (iii) Obtain or dispose of accommodation, (iv) Attend at, or are in charge of, educational establishments. (v) There are separate provisions on discriminatory clubs.

All complaints must relate to at least one of the 9 discriminatory grounds listed in the previous point.

When the case came before Judge Ní Chondúin again in October this year, she took this into consideration when she made the order of closure.

The Judge found that the public house had discriminated against both parties under the Equal Status Act, 2000, as amended by the Intoxicating Liquor Act, 2003.

The ruling was greeted with delight by the Travelling community and the ruling was reported in both local and national newspapers and radio.

"This will send a strong message to publicans around the country," said Karen. "Discrimination is not acceptable and they will be held accountable for breaching the Equal Status Act."

"It can be very intimidating to have to appear in court," Karen continued. "You also have a cost implication as well because you need to employ a solicitor. Because of this lots of cases of discrimination don't get reported."

The support of a CDP seems to be crucial when taking these discrimination cases to court. CDP's can provide information on the Equal Status Act and can get people in touch with a solicitor.

Karen explained: "Compensation is not what most travellers want when they take a case. They want justice. It is a matter of principle and the publicans are breaking the law. In fact when compensation is ordered in most cases the money is donated to a charity."

In 2003 the publicans lobbied to get the act changed. The publicans have a strong lobby group so the act was amended as part of the intoxicating liquor act.

Since this change all cases involving publicans must come before the district court.

*The three rulings that can be made for breach of the act are:*

- withdrawal of licence
- compensation
- order of closure

If you think you are discriminated against by a shop, school or cinema, a different process is followed (not involving court cases). Contact the Equality Authority for more information: [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

The two day closure of the Mighty Dollar in Listowel is the first such order in the country.

## Robert Emmet CDP know what's needed

ROBERT Emmet CDP are making sure the community is fully included in plans by Dublin City Council to provide a community centre in their area.

In Spring, the CDP published a report that (following a year's research) identifies clearly what the locals want most in a community facility. The CDP has drawn up a detailed plan for how the facilities should be developed which was delivered to all residents in November.

A 'community facility' is proposed by the council as part of the Bridgefoot Street Redevelopment. This will see the sale of some undeveloped council-owned land to a private developer. The developer will then be commissioned to design and deliver the community facility as part of the overall development (which will include both public and private housing).

The CDP's key findings are that the community needs: both indoor and outdoor youth facilities (37% of those surveyed voted this as their number one priority), a creche (16% said this was number one), senior citizen facilities (13%), a medical clinic (11%). Other needs include: adult education courses, a community café and a gym.

Robert Emmet CDP serves the geographical area of Winetavern Street to Watling Street, south of Thomas Street to the quays with particular emphasis on Bridgefoot St./Island St., Robert Emmet Buildings, Oliver Bond House and St. Audeon's House.

For more information, contact: Robert Emmet CDP, St. Audeon's House, Cook St., Dublin 8. Tel. 01-474-3093. E-mail: [info@recdp.ie](mailto:info@recdp.ie) Web: [www.recdp.ie](http://www.recdp.ie)

## Strong feelings on drugs

"I FEEL frustrated, angry and sad that intelligent young people of this community are allowing themselves be manipulated by the drug-pushers and are being slowly weaned into being the next generation of drug addicts, by not recognising the different stages of becoming a drug addict. Dealing drugs is done openly in our community. When a deal is going down, I can see death, death of young people, our families and our communities."

- Margaret McLoughlin, North Clondalkin CDP, urging young people not to feel afraid or alone and pleading with them to use the support services in the community and help stop the manipulation of our children and our future. As published in the October 2005 edition of the CDP's magazine, 'North Clondalkin Buzz'.

## Discrimination doesn't stop for Christmas

Christmas is coming, writes JOAN COURTNEY, and we are looking forward to parties and celebrations.

We are choosing where we would like to go, getting lists of venues and picking the most suitable.

If you are a Traveller it is unlikely you will have this option.

"It is very difficult to book a venue for any kind of a social gathering for Travellers here," says Karen Guerin, co-ordinator of the Kerry Travellers Development Project.

## Zimbabwean co-ordinator tells of Ireland-shock

- Goretti says public officials need more education

THE Co-ordinator of the STAG CDP is Goretti Mudzongo (pictured extreme right) who joined the project in 2004 after waiting seven months while paperwork around a work permit was sorted out. She is from Zimbabwe.

"My first reaction when I visited a halting site was, 'How can a country which claims to be democratic treat some of their citizens like this?' My background in Zimbabwe was as a programme manager for a human rights organisation. I had never seen such basic toilet facilities before coming here."

After getting over initial shocks, Goretti has got used to things here, but can see plenty room for improvement, especially in the way public officials are trained and educated.

"Government officials often don't see it as their job to support the rights of minorities. If it's not their job whose is it? Officials need to know what people's rights actually are."

She said, "We have worked to gain the support of the politicians, and we believe the political will is there, but the actions of officials sometimes block progress. There seems to be a lack of accountability if something the politicians decided should happen fails to materialise."

"Traveller accommodation is a huge problem for instance. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council's accommodation policy called for 118 housing units to be provided, but only 18 were built."

"The officials said there were problems with land acquisition and this was causing delays. One of the sites earmarked for traveller accommodation is presently occupied by a council depot. The chairperson of the Local Traveller Consultative Committee, Cllr. Dennis O'Callaghan, has written to Council officials to ask them to move, but without success."

The Council does some things well and the challenge is to recognize their strengths and work to correct difficulties" she said.

"STAG believes you should give a voice to the voiceless, not seek to become that voice," said Goretti, explaining: "Therefore nine of the 13 members of the management committee are Travellers."

"With the help of the funding the Minister [Noel Ahern] mentioned, we have been able to put very worthwhile programmes in place. Our Youth workers help about 170 young people. The programmes include horse riding and ice skating. They have also set up a handball team, which we hope will compete against other teams under the auspices of the GAA," said Goretti.

"We hope to increase the youngsters' self-confidence and encourage them to go to youth centres local to where they live, alongside children from other cultures."

"We also have a primary health care programme which employs Travellers as link workers with the community to encourage people to take better care of their health. And we also plan a homework club for early 2006," she added.

JOAN COURTNEY reports

THE willingness of people to work towards enhancing the quality of life in their communities is "one of our major national assets," according to Minister of State Noel Ahern.

The Minister was speaking at the official opening of the Southside Travellers Action Group Premises in Sandyford on Thursday 11 November.

"I have always been impressed by the commitment and vitality of community organisations," he said, "and that community strength is well represented here in the form of the management committee of Southside Travellers Action Group".

The Minister praised the activities and achievements of the group in the service of their community, which in 2004 included two traveller women who



## Brother Bertie opens centre in heart of C

**A NEW €1.25m Traveller centre was opened in the heart of Cork city on November 27th. Local CDP - the Traveller Visibility Group - will run the centre which was officially opened by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern.**

In his speech, Mr. Ahern announced that the project is to receive a further grant of €143,718 from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs towards refurbishment work in the John Street premises.

Located bang in Cork city centre, the TVG centre will be a focal point for Travellers from far and wide.

"The opening of this new centre is a prime example of the efforts being made on the ground to bring the ideal of a fully inclusive society to reality," said Mr. Ahern.

Congratulating TVG CDP, An Taoiseach remarked: "I hope that you take pride in the manner in which you have achieved your goals - namely Traveller and settled people working together, side by side, with a common purpose."

Mr. Ahern detailed the many millions of euro that have been spent by various Government departments in 2005 in relation to Traveller accommodation programmes, the National Traveller Health Strategy and in the education sector.

"In 2005, a total of €108 million is being allocated," he said, adding, "I believe that this level of funding is justified."

### ON CHILDCARE

Of course, there are many other sources of support for traveller projects. One grant he focussed on came through the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) which had enabled the purchase and renovation of this building and the equipping of the new childcare facility in the centre.

"This new service will provide 20 much needed childcare places for children whose parents are in employment, education or training. In addition, facilities such as this will help to ensure that children can develop emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically through play."

In Cork City and County as a whole, childcare projects are availing of over €41 million in funding under the EOCP, leading to the provision of over 4,000 new childcare places and supporting over 3,000 existing places.

On anti-Traveller discrimination, An Taoiseach said, "There is a need for continuing work to combat discrimination" acknowledging, "Of course, legislation will not solve everything."

He said he knew that, as with other elements of society, there is criminal activity among a small number of Travellers, but pointed out: "The most immediate victims of this behaviour are often other Travellers. It is essential therefore that agencies can take concerted actions against crime with the support of the



# Southside Travellers centre



progressed into employment as co-ordinators of the Youth Programme and the Women's Training Programme (and two others who were engaged as assistant co-ordinators). The assistant co-ordinator of the primary Health care programme is also a woman who passed through STAG training programmes and three link workers on that scheme are also Traveller women.

Minister Ahern said he was pleased that the Department was in a position to make €110,000 available through the Young People's Facilities & Services Fund to help develop the project.

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs supports the employment of the Southside Travellers Action Group CDP staff as well as supporting (along with the Department of Education & Science) the employment of two youth workers.

## s Traveller ork

law-abiding majority in the Traveller community."

### ON ADVOCACY

Talking about TVG and other Traveller groups, he said: "As well as continuing to provide effective advocacy for Travellers, I would very much like to see [these] organisations taking an active part in supporting the delivery of services in a more co-ordinated and focused manner."

He looked forward to "an enhanced partnership between the State and the community and voluntary sector in helping to improve opportunities and delivering practical results for all Travellers."

The opening was followed by Mass celebrated by the Bishop of Cork, Christy Buckley. Afterwards, actor, Michael Collins performed a one-man play, and a book of images of Travellers was launched.

"Over time, we hope to build this centre into a well-resourced and meaningful place that will help create genuine opportunities for Travellers to make concrete positive changes in their lives," said the CDP in their Traveller News magazine.

The centre includes a creche, education and training facilities, and - in time - will also house a resource library. Primary health care and other health initiatives will become a main focus of the work carried out in the new centre. A specific section of the building is designated for young Travellers in particular, so they have their own space.

- For more information, drop in to TVG's BRAND NEW OFFICE at 25 John Street, near the city centre, in Cork. Chrissie O'Sullivan is the Project Co-Ordinator. Tel. 021-450-3786. Fax. 021-450-3693, E-mail: tvgcork@gmail.com Web address: <http://groups.msn.com/TravellerVisibilityGroup>

## Need a driver

STAG CDP in Dublin has received funding to buy a mini-bus and pay for insurance. However, they are in need of drivers. Some travellers are undergoing training but will not have their licences for a while yet.

If anybody with a current clean D1 licence could volunteer some of their time, this would help greatly. Volunteers should contact STAG on 01-295-7372.

## Taoiseach on Traveller children

"It is vital that all our children, including Traveller children, have equal opportunities to participate and develop their individual talents."

- An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, November 27th, TVG CDP, Cork.

## Rural Lift launches car scheme

RURAL Lift - having begun by providing marginalised people with a mini-bus service - has launched a 'Social Car Scheme' in west Cavan.

Rural Lift is a rural transport service set up by Community Connections CDP six years ago. It has since become an organisation in its own right. Throughout Ireland, subsidised rural transport schemes set up by local communities have transformed lives, particularly the lives of older people.

The novel car-lift scheme in Cavan is available especially for those experiencing social exclusion, including older people, lone parents, women in the home, youths, people with disabilities.

The idea is that approved voluntary drivers from the local area provide the use of their car to transport passengers to and from the passenger's chosen destination. Passengers must first become members of the scheme and for each lift they pay a small nominal fee.

The drivers are paid mileage expenses and given training. Lifts must be booked a few days in advance.

Many over-65s in rural areas lived in isolation and had no use for their free travel passes until the rural transport schemes now found in every county in Ireland were born.

For more information on the 'Social Car Scheme', contact: Clare O'Shea, Rural Lift, tel. 071-964-3933.

## Community centres will be more accessible

THE Programme's Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA) and the PAUL Partnership Equality Sub-Group held a training seminar in November on making community facilities more accessible to people with disabilities.

The seminar, held in the new St. Munchin's Community Centre, in Thomondgate, Limerick, aimed to support participants in using the DESSA accessibility guidelines 'Access Inside Out', which were published earlier this year.

Participants' awareness was tested through small group discussions and interactive exercises that were intended to be thought-provoking, stimulating and fun. It seems likely that, in the future, community centres will become more accessible to everyone in the community.

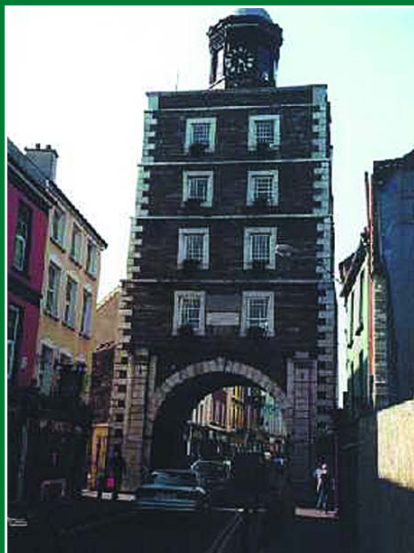
Similar workshops were held by DESSA in Tralee and Cork.

## Youghal CDP gets the 'Eco Eye' from Duncan

'ECO EYE', RTE's environmental tv show presented by Duncan Stewart, visited Cumann na Daoine CDP, in Youghal, Co. Cork in the Autumn.

RTE will air the programme in January, which will focus on the CDP's promotion of a Global Action Plan on environmental issues. One of the results of the work has been the establishment of a weekly Farmer's Market in the town.

The Global Action Plan involved a series of workshops delivered by environmentalist Mike Holden dealing with issues such as Energy, Waste, Consumerism and Community Activity. The workshops were very successful and the idea has spread throughout East Cork.



Cumann na Daoine CDP have made the Global Action Plan available to the local people (with support from ECAD, Cork Environmental Forum and the Department of the Environment).

The Eco Eye programme will also feature the story of Youghal's Farmers' Market. A group of people who did the Global Action Plan at Cumann na Daoine got together to form a food group because of their common interest in food issues. They wanted to promote healthy eating and access to local food. After intensive research, they worked with the Chamber of Commerce to launch a Farmers' Market. The market has been welcomed by the people of Youghal who are turning out every Friday at Barry's Lane by the Clock Gate to support it.

The only difficulty Cumann na Daoine CDP now have in getting their message out is that 'Eco-Eye' clashes with Coronation Street! You have been alerted!

For more information, contact: Eanna Dowling at Cumann na Daoine CDP, tel. 024-91900.

## St. Munchin's



St Munchin's CDP is now accessible to everyone.

# New premises, new way of working

By PHILIP MUDGE

**WHEN St Munchin's CDP in north Limerick city were preparing to move to new premises after spending many years in an old first floor office over a shop, the staff and volunteers looked forward to the increased comfort and accessibility of the new offices. What they did not expect was that the new premises - which are shared with the local Action Centre, Local Employment Service, and health services - would also change the way the CDP works with the community.**

Susan O'Neill, project co-ordinator, says, "We knew that the new premises would be an improvement because it is purpose-built and in the heart of the community. Our old offices were right at the edge of the community and the two flights of stairs meant that the project was almost inaccessible to older persons, parents with buggies and many people with physical disabilities.

"Most importantly the new building is completely accessible. We are now a CDP for the whole community!

"What we weren't expecting was the added value to our work that has come from being in a building that is shared with the other community agencies. The St. Munchin's Community centre has become the hub of activity for the whole community, so the profile of all the projects has increased.

"People involved in the CDP are using the other services such as the Local Employment Service and we are making contact with some of the more difficult-to-reach individuals who are coming to the centre."

An example of the increased visibility of the CDP is the third level education bursaries scheme which the CDP administers. In previous years, there were about six-to-eight applicants; this year there were over 20. The CDP project is sure this is because more

people are aware on a daily basis of the CDP and are accessing its services more often.

"Obviously this means more work for our staff and volunteers," says Susan, "but we're getting a buzz out of responding to the community. **In the past it sometimes felt like the project was leading initiatives - now the community is leading us.**"

Sharing the community centre has also enabled the various projects to work together on joint initiatives. For example, the CDP obtained funding for information technology equipment through the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the RAPID initiative and the Health Service Executive (HSE). This equipment is now being used to upskill participants identified by the CDP and the other service providers sharing the new premises.

The CDP had also planned a support programme for older persons in partnership with the HSE that was to include a drop-in programme, outreach service and educational programme. Now it is hoped that the service will be enhanced with the provision of an outreach worker and drop-in programme worker through a Community Employment initiative that is being jointly sponsored by the partners in the community centre.

The CDP expects that many initiatives in the community will be joint developments in the future.

"A co-ordinated approach works best," says Susan

Sharing the new centre also means that back up services such as receptionists, security staff, cleaners and the centre manager are not the responsibility of the CDP.

"We can get on with our real function, supporting the community and assisting individuals to get involved in programmes and activities."



# Limerick groups show there is a solution

- as 1,000 kids nationwide miss out on secondary school

**PHILIP MUDGE reports**

**LIMERICK has become the leading player nationwide in showing how a school-enrolment policy can be adopted on a city/county-wide basis to ensure every child is offered a place in second-level education.**

It is believed there are up to 1000 children annually spread throughout the country who are denied places in second-level education, but their plight is ignored. Limerick city's experience is becoming a lesson in how to approach the problem.

In 2004, over 50 children attending disadvantaged schools in the city were denied places in second level. A campaign was launched, led by the Community Development Network (CDN) Moyross - the local CDP - and the Northside Education Committee, the Social Inclusion Measures Group, and the Community and Voluntary Forum.

As a result, the then Minister Noel Dempsey visited Limerick and forced secondary schools to offer places to the excluded children and a system was established to ensure that in future all children would be offered second level places.

Juan Carlos Azzopardi co-ordinator of CDN Moyross recalled:

"Last year, after a campaign that ended up on the television and radio news, the Minister for Education promised that never again would children be left without places in schools just because of where they lived."

However, this year, children again did not

get places, but this time they were not from disadvantaged city schools but mainly from the city's hinterland and County Limerick. While all the children were eventually offered places, yet again some children were not given their constitutional right to be cherished equally in our society.

As Juan Carlos explained: "With intervention from the Department of Education, the schools expanded the enrolment procedure to ensure that every child would get an offer of a school-place."

Trish Forde Brennan, PRO of the National Parents Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges said that although every child was eventually offered a place, the effect on the child who is not offered a place when the first offers are made "cannot be underestimated."

"We believe that notification should be offered to all children at the same time, because when some children have offers and other are waiting it creates a perception of inequality," she said.

Added Juan Carlos: "We will find out early in 2006 if everyone gets a place under the new system and we will be monitoring progress on the promises."

Though Limerick has piloted a system that is beginning to work for every child, it is crucial that there is ongoing monitoring by those who originally launched the campaign for changes.

Now, perhaps other groups in other counties will follow suit.

## ***Once-off grants very popular***

MINISTER Noel Ahern announced, on November 21st, the allocation of over €680,000 under Phase 2 of the Community Development Programme's 'Once-Off Grants Scheme'.

Over €750,000 was approved by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, in the initial phase of the Scheme, based on 162 applications from CDPs nationwide. Under the second phase of the Scheme, a further 59 applications with a value of over €680,000 have been approved.

Minister Ahern was delighted with the take-up under the Scheme. He said that the allocation of over €1.4m under both phases of the Scheme would significantly benefit communities throughout the country experiencing disadvantage.

"The additional funding will enable CDPs working in these areas to provide a more comprehensive range of services at local level," he said.

*The scheme provides grants to local CDPs for:*

- Programme Activities including training;
- Equipment, and;
- Refurbishment of Premises.

CDPs have been advised to submit grant applications for 2006 along with core budget applications (due to be submitted by mid-December). It is expected that decisions regarding grants for 2006 will be made much earlier next year (March-April) to facilitate better planning in respect of programme activities over the course of the year.

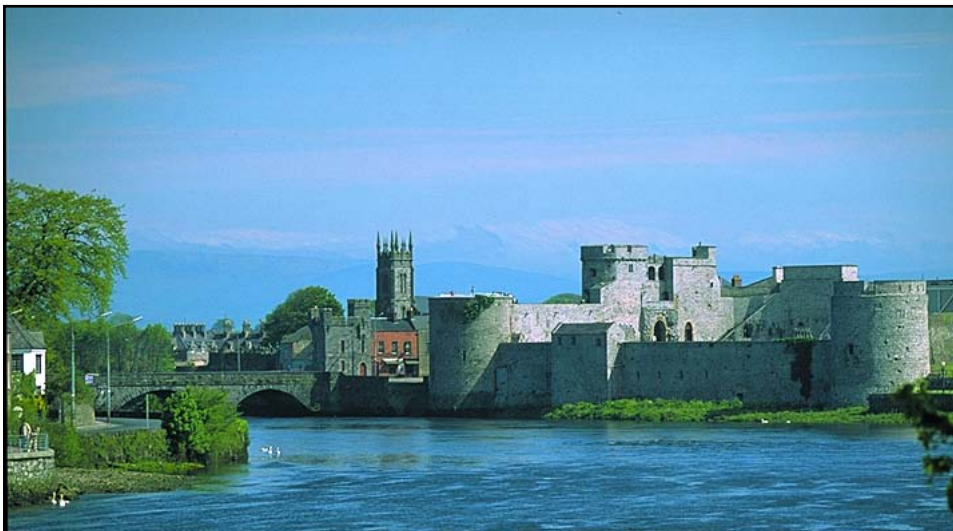
## ***New DVD: 'Fitness for All'***

THE Kerry Network of People with Disabilities have produced a DVD called 'Fitness for All'. It was put together by Paul Audley (from the Tralee Institute of Technology), Ursula Barrett and Margaret O'Shea, CDP project co-ordinator.

## ***21 Wicklow families have no loo***

"IN County Wicklow, there are still 57 Traveller families living on the roadside. And out of the 57 families, 21 have no sanitation. This is in 2005. Even a lot of CDPs don't know much about Traveller issues and facts."

- Jim O'Brien, Bray Travellers CDP



*Limerick shows the way.*



**1. Turn up.** The biggest error is not going to an office party that is a 'must-attend' event. If someone else doesn't make it, you can then keep everyone busy trying to guess where the missing person is.

**2. Don't forget the Boss.** Remember: the boss is grand, nothing wrong with the boss. You may even have a number of bosses present. Avoid trying to snog him/her and particularly them. Actually, better not snog anyone in your party. You'll enjoy 2006 better.

**3. Don't talk about work.** Some young professionals let ambition drive them. They don't know how to enjoy conversation unless it is about business. So, if you overhear young professionals talking like this you should get back to your community group party.

**4. Don't be** flatulent, indolent, omnipotent, abrasive, uninhibited, incontinent, don't sing (badly), snore, snort, smell, slide under the table or do anything that would make the evening a memorable and enjoyable one for everyone else.

**5. Enjoy the party.** When you get home, drink two pints of water, eat an onion and sleep in a room on your own with a chimney and an open window. If you stuck sensibly to orange juice, you can ignore this advice.

These survival tips have been mostly approved by Pdraig Kelly of West Training, who was again this year unanimously elected as chair, secretary and treasurer of his staff Social Committee.

# Government 'fear' of community development sector raised in Dáil Éireann

**MINISTER of State, Noel Ahern, was questioned in the Dail in November as to whether or not the government were afraid of the 'community development sector'.**

Dan Boyle, Green TD, on November 9th, asked, "Does the Minister share the opinion of many in the community development sector that part of the reason there is not ongoing support from the Government is the fear that the sector represents an alternative to politics?"

"Rather than the old approach of cumainn and branches, people can now effect development in their own communities, discover the nature of their own difficulties and seek to find their own resources. It is because of this threat that the Government is not responding adequately," Deputy Boyle argued.

Minister Ahern replied: "Regarding Deputy Boyle's question, people on different sides have different expectations as to what can be achieved. Much progress has been made and significant funding has been provided, which



Green TD. Dan Boyle

was one of the Department's key objectives."

Deputy Boyle then asked the Minister if the definition of "community" within his Department is strictly geographic; and if support is forthcoming from his Department on community groupings formed on any other basis.

Minister Ahern stated: "Under the Community Development Programme, funding is targeted at the support of disadvantaged and socially excluded communities.

The network of 185 community development resource centres and projects consists of both locally-based communities and communities of interest. A number of projects with a national remit are receiving funding under the programme, including the National Traveller Women's Forum, the Bosnian CDP, the Senior Citizens Parliament and Interaction. In addition, funding is also provided to Women's Aid, Pavee Point and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism towards the specialist support needs of projects in the programme."

## Lynch warns: tough times ahead

**KATHLEEN Lynch, activist and professor of equality studies, warned the Community and Voluntary sector to be ready for tough times ahead.**

"The problem of neo-liberal politics is here and at full tilt: people now believe they are fully responsible for their own problems and situations. The sense that we have an obligation to other people is being eroded. Some people say you are a fool to be working for your own community."

Referring to the quiet struggle by many older people to get by on non-contributory pensions, she said: "The flip-side of the SUV lifestyle of overt consumption is the concealment of poverty."

Ms. Lynch said the Community and Voluntary sector should fight for statutory funding or local groups would end up spending half the time just trying to fund-raise.

She drew attention to the fact that funding to the Equality Studies section of University

College, Dublin, had been cut as the university sector becomes more capitalist and profit-orientated.

"I, as an academic, already have to spend up to 50% of my time writing funding proposals, because of the neo-liberalism," she said.

Ms. Lynch was speaking at the launch in November of a new Development Education guidebook published by Lourdes Youth and Community Services CDP in Dublin.



# Many uneducated young people are out of work



**SOCIAL and Family Affairs Minister, Seamus Brennan, asked earlier this year why there were still 150,000 people on the dole when so many immigrants are getting jobs.**

In the last issue, we answered part of the question: people with disabilities find it very hard to get jobs and, in places, face up to 80% unemployment.

Here, NICK MURPHY, asks some CDP people and the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE) who they believe is 'still on the dole'.

**Mary Good of PIECE CDP** in Snowdrop Walk, Dublin feels that young people in their late teens and early twenties who have left school with little qualifications are a group who are particularly in need of support.

"Young people who perhaps have never worked but have taken training such as our Office Skills Course find it difficult to get employment. They have no previous experience and little chance of getting any if somebody does not employ them. There appears to be no firm out there willing to give them a chance," she said.

Those with mental health problems in their past, those from new communities and people with disabilities all need support according to the co-ordinator of the **Special Project for the Long Term Unemployed**.

**Brenda O'Neill from the Rialto Community Network** points to the difficulties experienced by those on welfare/disability payments who

wish to move into a work situation. Extra income immediately affects the payments these people receive making it difficult to move slowly into a work situation by taking on only a few hours per week. Other difficulties such as affordable childcare make it difficult for those needing to upskill in advance of seeking employment as funding is not available to them.

**Meanwhile, the INOUE** mentions people such as those working only one or two days a week and legitimately claiming a payment for the rest of the week as well as those signing for credits. The INOUE also said jobs are hard to find by those who are often discriminated against, such as Travellers and migrant workers.

**Indeed, An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern,** drew attention in late November to unemployment among Travellers in a speech he made in Cork:

"At a time of unprecedented economic success, Travellers should be able to share in the benefits of our increased wealth. Unemployment levels amongst travellers are at an unacceptable level. I believe that State agencies can play a more pro-active role in supporting Travellers to develop skills and access employment, in the public and private sectors," he said, speaking at the opening of the new Traveller community centre on John Street, Cork.

## Invest in drug-rehab projects -demand Citywide

### - drug-seizures not a full solution

WHILE the media and public spotlight focuses on multi-million-euro drug-seizures, the measures required to help addicts off drugs and to get their lives back on track get scant attention.

A new campaign from **CityWide Drugs Crisis Campaign** is highlighting the fact that while there were 7,637 people in drug treatment, FAS was only able to sponsor 1,120 work rehabilitation places.

**CityWide** wants the Government to deliver more resources for rehabilitation programmes to get people back to work.

At the launch of a report titled - 'Drug Rehabilitation, A View from the Community' - the Citywide co-ordinator, Anna Quigley, called for increased investment in rehabilitating former drug-users.



**A child's soft toy (a tiger) torn up for use by a heroin addict. The drug is inhaled from the foam.**

The statistics she provided spoke for themselves: "We have 7,500 people on methadone, and the vast majority don't have access to rehabilitation places. On its own, methadone is not a treatment and we need to have investment in rehabilitation."

SIPTU is supporting Citywide's campaign for more investment in rehabilitation for drug-users.

Ms. Quigley also called for an inter-agency approach to combat drug abuse nationwide. Ms. Quigley pointed out that drug users can have multiple-needs, for example regarding housing and childcare, but the inter-agency action this required was not always forthcoming.

She emphasised: "As well as all that action around cutting the supply of drugs, we need to see the resources invested on the ground."

**Citywide celebrated its 10th anniversary** earlier this year. It is one of the Programme's six Specialist Support Agencies and provides support to CDPs around the country who wish to work on the issue of drugs in the community. Adopting a community development approach to the drugs problem means involving the people who are most affected by the problem in dealing with the problem - drug users, their families and communities.



## A 'clean' burn

ONE aspect to note regarding the Wicker Man, is that it was a 'clean' burn. No tyres or other such toxic items were used therefore the fire did not produce any pollutants.

## Is this 'real' community development?

LOCALS applauded what they said was the biggest bonfire in Dublin for 500 years, crying "Wicker....wicker.....wicker" as the flames devoured the Wicker Man in the Liberties.

But what on earth are CDPs and other community interests doing burning wooden men outside derelict buildings in inner-city Dublin, some readers might ask. You could argue that these locally-led development groups should have enough 'real' work to be doing given the levels of deprivation, disadvantage and plain hardship facing many Liberties residents. On the contrary, the reclaiming of Bonfire Night by local communities is at the heart of what Ireland's 190 projects in the Community Development Programme aim to do.

Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of inequality and to offer new opportunities to those lacking choice, power and resources. It involves people in the community making the changes they identify to be important.

Halloween is a traditional festival, which has been celebrated in Ireland throughout the centuries. Our Celtic ancestors celebrated their new year at this time, at the Festival of Samhain. Over recent years, the Halloween period and how people choose to celebrate the festival has resulted in negative publicity; under age drinking, illegal fires and general anti-social behaviour.

# Liberties people reclaim Bonfire

-Discovery Channel film 40' Wicker Man burn

By ALLEN MEAGHER

IN THE Liberties, Dublin, local community groups have beaten the assumption that Bonfire Night spells trouble and reclaimed Halloween as an event that can be celebrated by young and old. The biggest Wicker Man burnt in Dublin - reputedly - in 500 years had people coming to see from all directions.

The burning of the 40 foot Wicker Man - against a backdrop of derelict flats - thrilled a 500-strong crowd and a 'Discovery Channel'.

The Halloween Night burning was a joint initiative between a youth intervention project managed under the umbrella of the South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) and the School Completion Programme. Student volunteers and a host of local projects and state agencies worked like clockwork to see that October 31st, 2005, would not feature the usual - dangerous and disorganised - Halloween mayhem.

"It shows other community groups that stuff like this can work and be a roaring success (no pun intended)," said Kevin Roche who works for the School Completion Programme in Dublin 8 (Liberties, Inchicore area). For three weeks in the run-up to Halloween, Kevin

was surrounded by Wicker Man ingredients, students, community development workers and the Eblana artists that led the construction.

"It was a really successful night with no trouble," he said.

## HUMAN SACRIFICE

Before anyone started building, a UCD lecturer called in to give the full history. In Celtic times, when a Wicker Man was set alight, a human sacrifice was burned in the structure. This was a focal point of much interest to the student-builders.

The Man took three weeks to assemble and Eblana artists, two CDPs (SICCDA and Robert Emmet CDP) and children targeted under the School Completion Programme. On the night, the Civil Defence, Order of Malta and Gardai were present to ensure safety.

"This is our history! Tonight is history, I'm proud to be here!" cried one father proudly as the Wicker Man went up in flames. Liam was not normally happy leaving his children out on Halloween night, but this time he felt secure. The organisers had done their homework on fire- and crowd-safety and Liam's appreciation was typical.

On the same night, riot police made up to 30 arrests at bonfires in other parts of the city.



Wicker Man under construction.



# e Night

Even two blocks away, Gardaí were called to an illegal bonfire, as the safety of those at the fire had become threatened by anti-social behaviour. Down to the final cinder, the crowd at the Wicker Man revelled in the experience, without incident!

"It is not a case of banning bonfires - they are social gatherings - it's about organising such traditional festivities in a safe and organised environment, involving the local community in the process," said Sarah Williams, one of the organisers.

## FUTURE PLANS

"The success of this event was due to the dedicated hard work and goodwill of people who work and live in the Dublin Liberties area. If this event is resourced properly in the coming years, it will not only provide a safe environment to celebrate Halloween, but would also reduce the negative press and publicity usually surrounding this time of year," added Sarah.

It didn't cost the earth - around €3,500 in cash which came from the Irish Youth Foundation and the Youth Intervention Service.

"The voluntary input was worth double that,



at least," noted organiser Jim Gilsen.

**Any CDPs who feel they deal well with Halloween, turning it from a showcase for anti-social behaviour into a true community event are urged to contact 'Changing Ireland' with their approach. Other projects and communities may appreciate your tips. Telephone/e-mail details are on page 2.**

**Check out the Liberties' Wicker Man on 'Discovery Channel's 'Six Degrees' travel show. The burning will be the final scene of the hour-long show, due to air this December (date unavailable as we went to press).**

## How to build a Wicker Man

**THE Wicker Man idea was initially discussed in early 2005. However, the actual mechanics were set in motion a mere five weeks prior to the burning date. All aspects of preparation and organisation were initiated and completed during this short time-frame.**

Materials used to build the Wicker Man were; willow rods, hazel branches, recycled wood, dried brush and copper for the eyes.

Eblana artists presented sessions on the engineering aspect of the project. Then the manual work began.

Students from a local secondary school came after classes to soak, weave, chop, hammer and saw the wood. A group of community workers, volunteers and friends were drafted in on the evenings and weekends, to ensure that the structure would be ready for Halloween night. The man himself took three and a half weeks to create.

## Halloween works in Clondalkin

**Community groups in Clondalkin this year held organised Halloween events including a scary film night, a haunted house and a fireworks display in St. Cuthbert's Park.**

The fun was organised by an umbrella

group consisting of Dolcain CDP, local schools, the local youth service and other groups. They took place in both Bawnogue and St. Ronan's community centres and it is hoped to make the organised Halloween celebrations an annual event.



## UN days: December to March

THE following are United Nations international days for action and remembrance taking place from mid-December to the end of March '06. The organisations - if not the UN

### DECEMBER

- 10 Human Rights Day
- 11 International Children's Day
- 18 International Migrants Day

### JANUARY

- 1 World Day of Peace (Vatican)

### FEBRUARY

- 21 International Mother Language Day

### MARCH

- 8 International Women's Day and United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21-28 UN Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
- 22 Water Day. Note: Water is going to be a big issue from now on. Yet the UN and the World Health Organisation (WHO) both celebrate water on different days. WHO called their event the 'World Day for Water' and hold it on March 23rd.

The year 2006 has been named by the UN as 'International Year of Deserts and Desertification'.

We are also in the middle of a number of 'Decades', including:

- 2001-2010: International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.
- 2001-2010: Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.
- 2003-2012: United Nations Literacy Decade: Literacy for All .
- 2005-2014: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

# 20 projects throw weight behind prevention

By Padraig Kelly, in the West and Midlands

IN the last edition, 'Changing Ireland' looked at some of the responses by government nationally and projects locally to the social phenomena of suicide in Ireland today.

As funds are at last invested into tackling this long-ignored scourge, 'Reach Out - the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention' was published by the Government on September 8th. The Strategy identified a role for Voluntary and Community organisations:

*[The office and team responsible for implementing the Strategy aim]: "To develop formal and structured partnerships between Voluntary and Community organisations and the Statutory sector in order to support and strengthen community based suicide prevention, mental health promotion and bereavement support initiatives."*

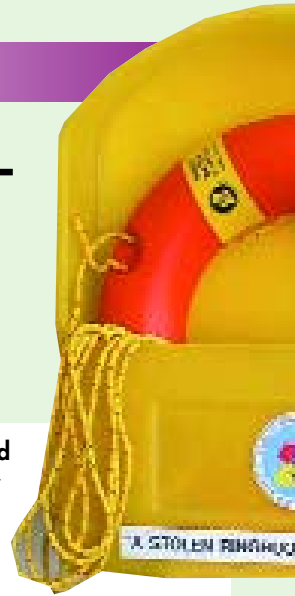
On November 14th, West Training and Development hosted a seminar on Suicide Prevention. Mary O'Sullivan, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention with the Health Service Executive (H.S.E.) in the Western Region, addressed 20 project representatives from

Family Resource Centres in Galway/Mayo and CDPs in the West and Midlands region. Mary explored with Project representatives:

- The work Projects have carried out already in this area
- What research tells us about suicide
- Myths about suicide
- Responses to the issue of suicide in both the statutory and voluntary sector

The seminar then planned for the future by discussing:

- The availability of future training for Project staff and volunteers on suicide issues
- West Training and Development in conjunction with the Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention would draft a 'policy & procedure' template that would be a guide to projects in addressing issues related to suicide and self-harm



## Frank discussion broke the mould - a letter from the Samaritans

Dear Editor,

Dropping you a line to thank you for discussing in frank terms the suicide issues in Ireland and how this relates to Community Development Projects and other community organisations (Issue 15, 'Changing Ireland').

I think the point you made in your editorial, echoing the warnings for such groups about trying to take too much on in supporting people who are suicidal, is especially relevant. It leads to a key part of the Government's new 'Reach Out' strategy that suggests more awareness needs to be spread about help that exists from voluntary and other agencies.

This strategy will reduce duplication of effort and the burden this places on the already hard-pressed community sector. In the current climate of debate, it seems strange to talk about duplication because the impression is that there's nothing out there for suicidal people and those who support them.

Suicide became a widespread discussion topic about 5-6 years ago. Anyone who says that it's a taboo subject that needs more airing is no longer accurate because it's hard to open a newspaper or turn on the radio without hearing it mentioned in some context or another.

The trouble is that we're not very good as a nation at having effective discussions about suicide and other emotional health issues. There's no longer a taboo, but we have not yet burst the myths.

The media is leading a lot of this discussion

and there have been many examples of low-quality reporting and portrayal of suicide. Also the media has neglected related issues - such as self-harm, depression, stress, anxiety and a plethora of emotional health issues which The Samaritans argue cannot be treated in isolation.

For the majority of our media, news is inherently negative. I find that too often it is repeated and repeated that there's 'nothing out there' for suicidal people, that 'no services' exist, that 'no help was available'.

While not wishing to comment on the levels of psychiatric or psychological services we have here - I don't know enough about them to say anything good or bad - I feel that we underplay the role of community-based organisations and charities. For example, The Samaritans, AWARE (which got a mention in the article on page 20/21), Mental Health Ireland, GROW and the many, many bereavement support organisations.

I think that CDPs and other local groups could link heavily into these groups and find that these expert organisations can provide a lot of advice, training, support and accept referrals.

This will help combat duplication of effort. If services which already exist are replicated, it could prevent us in Ireland from implementing the best range of services to help reduce suicide because, literally, we're doing too much but doing the same thing.

The Samaritans believe that no one should feel solely responsible for 'rescuing' anyone else

from suicide. Those who have the tough role of supporting someone who says they feel suicidal should themselves access support available from the organisations listed above. Samaritans for instance, is available 24-hours and is often recommended to patients by clinicians as a mechanism to provide out-of-hours and weekend support. Samaritans is very happy that they do this because it's what we're here for.

Commentators have said that responses to suicide should not be left in the hands of well-meaning charities and - of course - they cannot. Well-meaning charities have a lot of very valuable experience though (The Samaritans have 50-years' worth) and dedication is second to none from many committed volunteers. Charities like The Samaritans are often able to operate at a very high level and we feel we want an active place doing what we do best in the development of the responses outlined in the government's new strategy.

Sorry for the long letter, but I wanted to illustrate the ways in which existing charities such as ourselves can help CDPs and the people in communities they serve in a very practical way.

And we are glad to support journalists in their efforts to cover the issue in a way that educates and informs.

Paul O'Hare, PR Manager - Ireland,  
The Samaritans, Dublin  
More info: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)



# 7 suicide deaths in Clondalkin in 2005

- Buzz says 'Let's stop suicides' and shows how

## Signs of suicidal behaviour

- Increased alcohol or drug consumption.
- Disinterest in possessions - giving away prized belongings.
- Withdrawing from friends and social involvement.
- Sleeping pattern changes - may have difficulties in getting off to sleep; have interrupted sleep; early morning awakening; feeling tired after sleep; sleeping too much.
- Self-mutilation behaviour, eg cutting/gouging.
- Sudden and striking personality changes and mood-changes.
- Risk-taking and careless behaviour.
- Sudden happiness after a prolonged period of depression.
- Apathy. May stay indoors, stare at the tv. Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities.
- Repetitive medical conditions - feeling nauseous, frequent headaches, injuries.
- Death or suicide themes dominate written, artistic, musical or creative work.
- Unrealistic expectations of self.
- Excessive promiscuousness, or loss of interest in sex.
- Overly dependent, clinging behaviour.
- Changes in eating patterns - not eating, over-eating, changes in weight.
- Verbal expression of suicidal intent or depression. Direct statements, for example, "I wish I was dead!", "I'm going to end it all."
- Indirect statements such as, "No-one cares if I'm dead or alive", "Does it hurt to die?"

The 'Buzz' magazine is published by the North Clondalkin CDP.

To contact the 'Buzz', write to:  
Christy Melia House,  
24 Neilstown Park, Dublin.  
Tel. 01-457-5616.  
E-mail: cmelia@indigo.ie

THE 'North Clondalkin Buzz' magazine highlighted deaths in the community from suicide in its September edition.

'7 young people from North Clondalkin died through suicide in 2005' stated the front page headline with the number '7' standing large and alone at the top.

"Let's stop suicides" called the magazine, urging people to "talk more to family, friends, doctors and others." North Clondalkin now has a 'Community Action on Suicide' group that people can contact (through Rowlagh Parish Church).

The Buzz listed examples of suicidal



behaviour and pointers to help out in a suicide crisis. We reprint the tips here. The information comes from Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand. SPINZ is a non-governmental organisation. For more information, check out: [www.spinz.org.nz](http://www.spinz.org.nz)

## BEHAVIOUR

**There are five aspects of suicidal behaviour:**

- 1) suicidal thoughts. A person doesn't become actively suicidal suddenly - the process is an accelerating one. A person begins by thinking, "It would be better if I wasn't around." Never ignore what may be a message of a suicidal thought. The person needs to be listened to and taken seriously.
- 2) suicidal threats. This is anything that a person says or does that indicates intent to self-harm. Suicidal threats are sometimes not recognised and can be overlooked. All threats should be taken seriously.
- 3) suicidal gestures. These are generally regarded as extreme forms of

communication calling attention to the person's plight. They can involve physical injury to oneself or others, or reckless behaviour like overdosing, alcohol abuse, dangerous driving. All are indicators of emotional distress and a cry for help. Not all such gestures, however, can be interpreted as suicidal.

- 4) attempted suicides. Attempted suicide is a serious and potentially lethal event. It can leave the person emotionally and/or physically devastated, possibly for the rest of their life.
- 5) suicidal death.

## Helping in a suicidal crisis

**MOST people who have died by suicide have done so when they have been alone. The risk of suicide is greatly increased if the person has been drinking, is alone, and has ready access to the means. In this state, the person may act impulsively. Here are things to do in a suicidal crisis:**

- Assess if the person is at risk of suicide.
- If the situation is life-threatening or dangerous, call 999 for emergency services or take the person to a hospital emergency department.
- If help has been called, stay with the person until help arrives.
- If emergency services are not needed, encourage or assist the person to get appropriate professional help.
- Encourage the person to talk - listen without judgement. Be polite and respectful.
- If the person is consuming alcohol or drugs, try to prevent them from taking any more.
- Try to ensure the person does not have easy access to some means to take their life.
- Give reassurance about the short-term nature of feeling suicidal.

# New manual on Development Education

By ALLEN MEAGHER

**IT'S one thing for the voluntary management committee of a local CDP to attempt to understand and come up with answers to the problems facing their own community. But, Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS) CDP go a step further - for ten years the project has been educating people about development issues globally.**

That's going too far, you might say, and you'd be wrong!

In learning about the plight of poor children in Afghanistan, people soon begin to reflect on the challenges facing children in their own communities, for example. The degree of challenges faced may differ, but the causes of inequalities are often the same, people find.

Around Sean McDermott Street, groups consisting of older women, drug users, street traders and community workers have explored human rights, world trade, violence against women, poverty and many other issues from both local and global perspectives.

In October, to satisfy continuing demand for information on how to run these workshops, LYCS published a highly-readable guidebook to Development Education so other projects may adopt the same approach. The publication is targeted at the thousands of people working with adult learners in hundreds of community education and community development organisations.

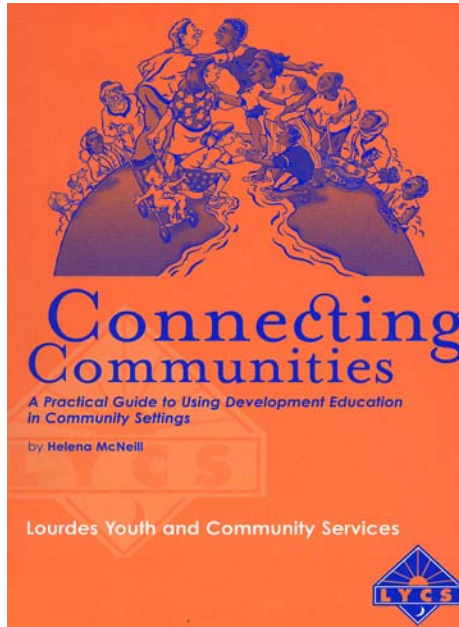
Titled 'Connecting Communities: A Practical Guide to Using Development Education in Community Settings', the manual includes ten sections, each with recommended group-exercises and facilitator tips.

The guidebook aims to encourage those working with groups to introduce a global view when examining the basic things that effect their own marginalised communities.

As LYCS co-ordinator, Sarah Kelleher - standing on a crate at a podium - explained at the launch: "We do Dev. Ed. because it works."

"Why we produced the book is because there wasn't any book like it in Ireland. And it had become labour-intensive explaining to people what Development Education is and how it works. With this book, you can pick it up, walk into a workshop and conduct exercises.

"The purpose of any community development work is to introduce change in people's minds and in the community. How do you make people think differently? Well,



Development Education, or Dev. Ed. as we call it, succeeds in doing that.

"Dev. Ed. makes people think: What we have got in common with other people in the world? What are the differences? It forces people to think about who holds power, who gets to make the decisions that effect their lives. Dev. Ed. therefore has an impact on the individual and on communities."

LYCS received funding to publish the book from Development Co-operation Ireland which is concerned that, there are (as Sarah explained) "very few community development organisations doing Dev. Ed. and they want to see that change."

Ms. Kelleher praised the author, Helena McNeill, as "the new Maeve Binchy of the community sector", adding, "She put two years of huge energy, time and work went into the book. It reads very well, flows like silk and is basic and simple."

Other speakers at the launch included Kathleen Lynch, author, activist and Professor

of Equality Studies in UCD, Dier Tong from the Africa Solidarity Centre, the book's author, Helena, and John Farrelly, LYCS Chairperson.

Mr. Farrelly, said, "It is great to see a Dev. Ed. guidebook coming from the Community Development sector - there are strong links between the two."

Dier Tong noted: "Dev. Ed. is trying to correct the influence of the media. This book helps you think critically about things like power-relations."

Incidentally, LYCS runs four distinct programmes: the Community Training Centre, the First Steps Creche, the Adult Education Programme (which includes the Dev. Ed. work), and the Youth Programme. LYCS celebrated its 21st anniversary this year.

**The guidebook is available for €15. If you want a copy or want information on running a Dev. Ed. course in your area, contact Riona (who is employed specifically to assist CDPs all around the country to run courses) or Helena (who works with CDPs and community groups in Dublin) at LYCS, Lower Sean McDermott St., Dublin 1. Tel. 01-836-3416. E-mail: [lycs@eircom.net](mailto:lycs@eircom.net)**

## 10 workshops in one book

THE 184-page pack contains a range of informative material and 10 workshops covering such areas as

- global inequality;
- causes and consequences of debt;
- housing, a human need;
- a look at health inequality;
- exploring work and the economy;
- gender and development;
- drugs and the international drugs trade;
- human migration;
- understanding racism;
- people and power.

## 'Ireland from Below' magazine

**'IRELAND from Below' is a new publication reporting from and for community struggles around the island of Ireland and beyond.**

The first issue includes a four-page spread on the Rosspoint community's struggle against Shell and the Government; a report on local resistance to privatisation in Ballymun; and an interview with incinerator company boss John Ahern, who describes how his

company was "terrified" of the communities opposing the Ringaskiddy incinerator.

The magazine is looking for articles and information from communities.

For more information, contact:

**'Ireland from Below', 20 Scarlet Row, Essex St West, Dublin 8.  
Tel. Laurence Cox at 087-9851029.  
E-mail: [irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie](mailto:irelandfrombelow@yahoo.ie)**



## Disabled campaigners decide to be 'DAFT'

A GROUP of disabled campaigners featured in the previous edition of 'Changing Ireland' have set up a group and called themselves DAFT, meaning Disability Awareness Forum Theatre.

As one of the group, Nora Malone explains, DAFT is comprised entirely of people with disabilities.

She explains:

Since DAFT began performing groups of people with disabilities in Donegal, Sligo/Leitrim and Galway have begun to explore the possibility of setting up similar groups in their regions.

Nobody knows better than people with disabilities the social impact of living with disability. If we don't raise awareness then who else can?

Forum Theatre offers the opportunity to 'tell it like it is' in a way that evokes empathy, sparks debate, challenges attitudes, stimulates people to explore their role in solutions and have some fun while their doing it.

DAFT aim to use Forum Theatre Workshops to empower people with disabilities to actively seek their rights and to challenge non-disabled people to explore their attitudes and policies to ensure that they are facilitating people with disabilities to pursue their rights.

DAFT is launching a recruitment drive in January and intends to engage trained disabled Forum Theatre practitioners to capacity build the Group's performance and Workshop skills.

DAFT would like to acknowledge the administration, technical, mentoring and community contact support secured from a number of agencies including Le Cheile CDP, Peter Kearns & Yvonne Lynch of the Forum of People with Disabilities, Louth Leader Communities Connect Mentoring Programme and DANE.

**Editor's Clarification:** In a story on page 6 in the previous edition of 'Changing Ireland', a caption on page 6 indicated that the people in the photograph were acting if they were disabled to learn how discrimination work. In fact, the people pictured have disabilities.

# Straight-talking Corkmen and women

**THREE CDPs were among a dozen Cork community groups who made films as part of the Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture.**

Mahon CDP, the Travellers Visibility Group and Mahon CDP (through their involvement with the Mahon Employment Action Project) swung into Hollywood action to produce films that have had gala nights, been launched on DVD and been shown on television.

The films cover a range of issues from education, housing, traveller issues, youth issues, cultural identity, disability, immigration, community development, the gay community, anti-war campaigning and local history.

'From Mahon To Warsaw' was shot in an observational way over the course of one week in July 2004 as a youth group travelled from Mahon in Cork to the small town of Kielce in southern Poland. The film includes footage of the group's visit to Auschwitz concentration camp and the young people's reaction.

The story focuses mostly on the Mahonians as they travelled around Poland with young people from other European countries exploring the theme of the family. The film was a collaboration between Frameworks Films and the Mahon Equality and Anti-Racist Youth Group based in Mahon CDP.

'Straight-Talking' involved the Traveller Visibility Group CDP and the film received its premiere screening at the opening of their new premises on Lower John Street.

This short documentary film follows a group of Traveller women as they give talks to various organisations and schools, to raise awareness about Traveller culture. As part of

these talks the women answer questions about Travellers and the film provides a sample of some of the questions they are most commonly asked. These include questions around Traveller life, education and work but the film also addresses commonly asked questions around violence and refuse collection.

'Making Mayfield' is a short film exploring the theme of community and it was produced by Frameworks Films in collaboration with the Mayfield Employment Action Project (MEAP).

It asks what does this term 'Community' really mean. We hear from people on the ground in Mayfield and this is contrasted with a sociological look at the term community. In a sense this film presents the audience with the theory and the practice of what 'community' means.

MEAP offers support to unemployed people in Mayfield. Ironically, they lost two of their own workers recently due to a cut in funding.

One film was screened each month in the community where it was made and, on December 11th, the final six films were screened at a Gala Night Screening in Cork City Hall. For Christmas, a compilation DVD of all 12 films has been launched and the films will also be broadcast over one week on the local cable channel Chorus, starting from December 26th. The films were all made as part of the Cork WideScreen project.

**For more information,  
tel. 021-432-2454.**

**E-mail: [info@frameworksfilms.com](mailto:info@frameworksfilms.com)**

**Websites: [www.frameworksfilms.com](http://www.frameworksfilms.com)  
and [www.corkcommunitytv.ie](http://www.corkcommunitytv.ie)**

## Community and voluntary healthcare examined

**ON October 11th the Health Spoke of The Wheel launched its recent review entitled 'Scoping the Community and Voluntary Healthcare Sector in Ireland'.**

Dr Orla Hardiman, Consultant Neurologist, Beaumont Hospital strongly welcomed the launch of the scoping document and referred to it as an important and invaluable tool to assist in empowering the voluntary and community health sector in Ireland.

'The Wheel' was set up five years ago, mainly with money provided by Irish-American millionaire and philanthropist Chuck Feeney. While, it has since attracted Irish government funding and support, the Health Spoke's recently-launched report does not let the state off the hook.



**Des (Gus) North**

Des North, Chair of the Health Spoke when the report was launched, criticised the slow pace of development in Ireland between the Healthcare sector and the Health Services Executive (HSE)

"In 2001, Dr. Fergus O' Ferrall, member of the Health Spoke and with us today on the podium wrote that: 'The voluntary Health care

sector is the sleeping giant in Healthcare in this country.' Four years later, this is still the case," he said.

He also spoke about the need to develop a structured interface between the Community and Voluntary Sector and Statutory Health Services. And he called for the activation of Voluntary Activity Units (VAU's) promised by government in 2000 that have since failed to materialise.

**The report's executive summary is available for download at: [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)  
For a hard copy of the report (e-mail: [dee@wheel.ie](mailto:dee@wheel.ie)) or contact: The Wheel, Irish Social Finance Centre, 10 Grattan Crescent, Inchicore, Dublin 8. Tel. 01- 454-8727. Fax 01- 454-8649.**

## Creative approaches to health issues

BLUE Drum, the Arts Specialist Support Agency, has been investigating creative community development approaches to health issues.

*This has been done through:*

- Three local arts-based projects with Ballyphehane/Togher CDP, South West Wexford CDP and Pavée Point (the Traveller-focused Specialist Support Agency).
- Research into wider examples of appropriate community based work in Britain and Ireland.
- A national seminar held in June 2005. The work was carried out as part of the Combat Poverty Agency's 'Building Healthy Communities' scheme. In November and into early December, Blue Drum held a series of regional workshops where participants:
  - Heard the experiences and learning from this work to date;
  - Added their own experience to the pot;
  - Took part in a practical creative workshop;

The workshops included community development, health and community arts practitioners and were held in Cork, Galway, Tralee and Letterkenny, all for free. Blue Drum workers networked with the participants and are considering options for future developments.

For more information contact Gillian Keogan, Blue Drum. Tel. 01-877-1446. E-mail: [info@bluedrum.ie](mailto:info@bluedrum.ie)

## Projects won publicity (but no cash!)

IN September, two CDPs logged it out with other Dublin community groups on NewsTalk 106 to see who could attract the most text-votes from the public and win prizes of €10,000.

Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP and the North Wall Women's Centre CDP were among the hopeful groups who took part.

The 'Local Heroes' competition - while cruel on the losing entrants - was good publicity nonetheless for all concerned. This was one of the attractions to entering, said Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP co-ordinator, Marion White.

Newstalk 106 donated the revenue from the text-votes received for each organisation to that organisation and sponsored the four €10,000 prizes.

## Campaign against violence against women

# Women's Aid march on Dáil

**WOMEN'S Aid activists marched on the Dáil on November 25th denouncing the Government for mostly ignoring the plight of women abused in the home. The action took place on the UN's International Day Against Violence Against Women, the first day in the global 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women.**

The protest outside the Dáil was to highlight the fact that hundreds of women (often with their children) are turned away from women's refuges because the Government have not provided the spaces they promised in the past.

Only 60% of women who sought emergency refuge last year were accommodated. In people-numbers, of 2813 women who needed refuge, 1687 were accommodated; the remaining 1113 women had to go elsewhere or were left with nowhere to go.

Women's Aid itself (one of the Community Development Programme's six Specialist

Support Agencies) does not have the resources it needs. Around 40% of the 20,000 calls to its helpline last year went unanswered.

The agency wants to get the message out that one in five Irish women have suffered some form of domestic abuse. This year's publications to mark the campaign also acknowledges, for the first year, that 8% of the perpetrators of abuse of women are other women. However, men are responsible for 92% of the abuse and also for the most violent and oppressive types of abuse. Marriage remains the most common context for domestic violence.

National Freephone Helpline Statistics from Womens Aid reveal the main types of abuse disclosed by callers: emotional (50%), physical (30%), sexual (9%), economic (11%). Many women call after experiencing multiple forms of abuse.

**More info: [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)  
Freephone: 1800-341-900.**

# No missing the banners in Ringsend

**CDPs are among the wide variety of community groups who took part in the '16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women'. Here's a flavour of what Dublin CDPs engaged in:**

- **Ringsend Action Project CDP** took on a community artist to work with a local group. They created a series of anti-violence banners and the banners went on display on prominent buildings in Ringsend and Irishtown.
- **St. Michael's Family Resource Centre** (a CDP) held a seminar in late November, in conjunction with Inchicore Women's Outreach, to revisit community responses to domestic violence.

- **Ballymun Men's Centre CDP** held a big breakfast as part of the campaign.
- **Ronanstown CDP** were involved with Clondalkin Domestic Violence Service in holding a Community Conference entitled 'Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence'.
- Speakers included Women's Aid, Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation, SIPTU and An Garda Síochána.
- The support agency, **Pavée Point** have their own 'Violence Against Women Programme' and for December they launched a new leaflet titled 'Challenging the myth of violence against women of minority ethnic groups in Ireland.'

# Vagina Monologues - a community performance

**RINGSEND Action Project CDP facilitated the Ringsend & Irishtown Domestic Violence Working Group to stage a community performance of 'The Vagina Monologues' at the Mansion House, Dawson Street, Dublin 2, on December 6th.**

A group of 13 women who live or work in

Ringsend & Irishtown, and range in age from 35 to 75, performed the play.

"The Vagina Monologues" is a play by Eve Ensler that was developed through discussions with women in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia about their views and feelings about their own bodies and their

experiences of violence. It is a powerful tool for raising awareness of issues pertaining to violence against women and it is intended that its performance encourages participants and audience to take action against domestic violence (against women and men) in all its forms.





## Mid-West women hold numerous events

**IN the country, CDPs were deeply involved in the campaign against violence against women.**

Here's a sprinkling of the work undertaken to tackle domestic abuse by a handful of CDPs in the country. In many cases, CDPs and other groups network to reach a greater audience.

A 'Pampering Day' offering treatments such as massage and beauty treatment was held at West Limerick CDP in Abbeyfeale and information was distributed on services for women who may be experiencing domestic violence.

On December 7th, the Limerick Local Area Network on Violence Against Women held an Information and Awareness Day in the new St Munchins Community Centre. The day included art, drama and music.

On the same day, the 'Don't Say a Word' award-winning play depicting the dynamics of domestic violence was performed in the Millenium Theatre, Limerick. The play was also scheduled to be performed at the Glor Theatre in Ennis, Co. Clare the following night. CDPs were heavily involved in its promotion.

Also in Clare, six information leaflets with information on domestic abuse and the nearest available services were launched by the West Clare Women's Forum.

In North Tipperary, the Local Area Network on Violence Against Women also launched two information leaflets for local women.

Meanwhile, Cosgallen CDP, in Mayo, organised an awareness-raising event in the Charlestown and Swinford area in conjunction with Mayo Women's Support Services.

# Launch of Code of Practice on Domestic Violence

By DECLAN WEIR

**A CODE of Practice on Domestic Violence has been adopted nationwide by both the Community Development Programme and the Family Support Agency. It was launched in Dublin in December by Minister of State, Noel Ahern.**

The code instructs CDP staff and volunteers about what to do should a victim of domestic violence call at a project. It outlines both internal and external measures that projects should take in responding to domestic abuse and violence.

With an estimated one in five women believed to be victims at some stage in their lives, the code is needed. Among its key points are:

- Community development responses to violence against women must be developed and implemented in the context of close working relationships with frontline organisations.
- Community development responses must seek to identify achievable and measurable goals for its work and be able to demonstrate clear outcomes.
- Ownership of responses to violence against women must be at organisation level and requires the involvement of management, workers and volunteers.

The violence influenced Tuam Community Development Resource Centre (TCDRC) to commission research into the prevalence of

domestic violence in their area back in 1996, and the issue has been named in their work plan ever since.

In 2000, the West's Community Response to Domestic Violence Network was established, and one of its first tasks was to establish a Code of Practice for projects in the West. The fact that it is being extended throughout the state bodes well. Among the projects (besides Tuam) involved in the Network from the beginning were: Ballybane/Mervue CDP; Galway Travellers Support Group; Kiltimagh CDP; Louisburgh CDP; Pléaráca Teo CDP; and the Regional Support Agency, West Training. Membership has since extended to include more CDPs and the Family Resource Centres (FRCs) in the region.

Speaking at the launch, the co-ordinator of Tuam Community Development Resource Centre (TCDRC), Loretta Needham, said:

"Our project has worked over many years to raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on women and children and the extent to which it exists in local communities. Addressing the issue of violence against women in the community is difficult and challenging work that requires courage, commitment and knowledge."

She said 'breaking the silence' on the violence against women was most important.

The implementation of the Code nationwide is being supported by Women's Aid.

## West Link: Violence against women and poverty

**A NEW research report - 'Women, Poverty and Violence in the West of Ireland: Exploring Economic Abuse' - is helping women's groups in Mayo and Galway to highlight domestic violence issues. The report was launched earlier this year by Minister Frank Fahey.**

The women's stories illustrate how abusers take control of and access to financial resources, household budgets and disposable income. The researchers found this is common where violence is taking place in the home.

The report was commissioned by the Community Response to Domestic Violence network comprised of CDPs and community groups.

Said Loretta Needham, Tuam CDP co-ordinator: "Many women feel so disempowered and violated by the experience of violence that they are unable to address the problem or confide in family or friends. As a community, we must recognise the woman's need for appropriate supports and services and appreciate that it may be a very long

time before she is in position to deal effectively with the situation."

The report details the stories of women in Mayo and Galway who have been abused and starkly shows the impact domestic violence has on women's and children's lives.

Down south, meanwhile, the West Cork Women Against Violence Project held a national conference titled 'Exploring Rural Domestic Violence' in Bantry, Co. Cork, on November 24th.

Domestic violence continues to ruin lives. Over the past decade, 111 women have been murdered in Ireland. Where cases have been tried and a conviction gained, 70% of the perpetrators were known to the women and 47% of them were current or former partners/husbands.

Over 130 countries take part in the annual 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women.

**For more information, contact:**

**Tuam CDP, Bishop St., Tuam, Co. Galway.  
Tel./Fax: 093-25340.**

# HELP ME HORACE

Please write to:  
Help Me Horace,  
'Changing Ireland',  
c/o CDN Moyross,  
Community Enterprise  
Centre, Moyross,  
Limerick.



## Held for questioning

### I can't handle it!

Dear Horace,  
MY Administrator keeps parking her bicycle in my space. If we put both bikes together then visitors get poked in the ribs by handlebars. Should I puncture her tyres?  
Yours, Bike Blues

Dear BB,  
Have you spoke to her about it as obviously you feel you've been saddled with a big problem. Tyre puncturing will not solve it. Sawn off handle bars would seem more appropriate and could start a new craze. You could get cross and bar her bike or you could apply for a refurbishment grant to make space but that could start a whole chain of events you might regret.  
Horace

Help me Horace!  
WORKING in the Community Development Programme is tough enough but over the last number of months I've been inundated with questionnaires from the

Support Agency, the SIM Group and CDB, Government Departments, consultative bodies, college researchers and every organisation compiling a data base of services. Even 'Changing Ireland' sent me a so-called '60-Second Quiz'. Who do they think they are working for, Larry Gogan? [Ed's note: Can you kindly return it? Or else!] I feel like someone detained for questioning because that's all I'm doing. What can I do about this?  
Sincerely Con Sulted of Swing CDP

Con,  
What you must realise is that when you write a report nobody reads it and that when those to whom you gave the report are looking for information they are faced with going through it to find out the information or asking you for the specifics they want. What would you do? I mean if you ask "Mam where's me socks?" you don't want her to tell you - "They're in the sock drawer" - but you

want her to go and get them and give them to you. So don't blame this on bureaucracy.

You have some options however:

1. Ignore them and don't return them.
2. If a prepaid envelope is provided send it back empty and tell them later you did send it back and don't have time to do it out again.
3. Get a student on placement to devise a questionnaire asking them why they want this information and promising to fill out theirs if they fill out yours first.

Now please circle the option that most suits you:

Please give reasons for your choice.

How did you find this advice?

Rate as follows:

- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Extremely helpful
- ☐ Couldn't be more helpful

Tick Target Group:

- ☐ Archer
  - ☐ Gun Club
  - ☐ Darts Club
  - ☐ Other (Give details).
- Horace



## Happy Christmas from the boys!\*

THERE was shock in political circles when the Leitrim Observer exclusively broke the news that Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, was friends with a turkey. No ordinary turkey of course, but Dustin!

In fact, Dustin the Turkey and Minister Éamon Ó Cuív have been good friends for many a year, often chatting on the phone for hours on end about community development and how things are going in Leitrim (both are big fans). Sometimes, Dustin goes on a bit much about his CD sales, but the Minister can usually knock him back with a bit of 'Cohesion' progress talk.

The two boys are pictured here celebrating Christmas in Leitrim. No better place to have it!

\* 'Changing Ireland' is grateful to the Leitrim Observer for the photograph (taken last year) and to Minister Ó Cuív and Dustin for their sense of humour (though neither should swop jobs). Happy Christmas to Dustin, the Minister and to all our readers!