

CHANGING IRELAND

WINTER '06

ISSUE 20

The National Newsletter of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 180 CDPs & 10 Support Agencies

€2.25

Speak no evil?

OR TELL IT LIKE IT IS!



Nan addresses UN
PAGE 3



Finglas confronts suicide
PAGE 4



Tips on going legal
PAGE 13

CDPs with a critical voice on:

• judge's comments • criminals in the community • alcohol ruining families • poverty • discrimination

ISSN 1649-5985



This publication and most projects featured inside are part of the
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

EDITORIAL



Telling it like it is!

"THE only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing," said Irish philosopher, Edmund Burke, two centuries ago.

Nan O'Brien of Southside Travellers Action Group CDP is not someone to stand by and let poverty go ignored. She is a

prime example of what a volunteer and development worker in the Community Development Programme can achieve.

She made history recently by becoming the first Traveller to address the UN, but that was not as important as her message:

She outlined why poverty is "hell" and called on the UN to pay attention to the poor who live in the 'developed West' as well as the majority poor in 'undeveloped countries'.

She gives voice to her community's concerns. She speaks

from experience. She cannot read or write, but that certainly does not stop her getting her message out.

In this issue, there are a number of other professional community development voices who express concern that perhaps the Community and Voluntary Sector has been almost silenced through fear of losing funding from Government. They suggest that Social Partnership is quelling radical voices.

Nan has not been silenced, and neither have many CDPs. From Donegal to Dublin and south to Limerick, as stories in this issue show, CDPs take part in local partnerships, but will speak out too – as the voice of the poor and vulnerable, or on behalf of them.

Significantly, most CDP voices are raised at local level. If funding was sourced for a national office for the Community Development Programme, the voices of the most marginalised in our society would be heard on a national stage.

CONTENTS

Voice of the poor	3
'On the ground'	4-5
Volunteer's 4-month battle for votes	6
Ennis 'tasters' attract shy parents	7
Help me Horace!	8
Resource page: build a community centre	9
North Dublin CDPs in the Mansion House	10
NUI Maynooth and Community Development	11
Thumbs up for 'Changing Ireland' - mostly!	12
Taking the legal route	13
If only we had a Well Fair State	14-16
Going public on criminal behaviour	17
Dublin Projects - Southside	18-19
Limerick Traveller Development Group	20
Project news	21
Social Partnership - like 2 bad kissers	22-23
Achievements made under Partnership	24
Think big! Think national!	25
Community Development: Current issues & challenges	26-27

Published by: 'Changing Ireland' is published by the Community Development Network, Moyross, Limited, Limerick, Ireland, with funding from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Address: 'Changing Ireland', Community Enterprise Centre, Moyross, Limerick. Tel Editor: 061-458011.

Tel Administrator: 061-458090.

Fax: 061-325300.

E-mail: editor@changingireland.ie

admin@changingireland.ie

Website: www.changingireland.ie

Editor: Allen Meagher

Editorial team: Sharon Browne, Niamh Walsh, Gerry McKeever, Viv Sadd and Allen Meagher

Design: PrintZone, Limerick.

Printed by: Walsh Printing Services, Castleisland, Co. Kerry

Cover Photo: Siamang Gibbon Monkey from Fota Wildlife Park, County Cork. Check the website: www.fotawildlife.ie

THANKS TO . . .

'Changing Ireland' thanks everyone involved in the production of Issue 20.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author concerned. They do not, by any means, necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the editorial team, the management committee of the Community Development Network, Moyross, Ltd., or the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

PRODUCED IN MOYROSS
BY THE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



Nan tells UN of 'hellish' poverty



- Nan O'Brien: Mother, estate resident, lifelong-learner, Traveller and development worker

NAN (Anne) O'Brien is a mother of nine, aged 47, and cannot read or write (though she is learning). She has six grandchildren and her upbringing was on the roadside between Wexford and Dublin. She is a Traveller and has been settled in Ballybrack for 20 years.

Nan works as a dedicated volunteer and a development worker with Southside Travellers Action Group (STAG) CDP in Dublin.

And another thing - on October 17th this year, she found herself in New York to address the United Nations on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

She made history by becoming the first Traveller to address the UN in New York. Has a Traveller ever addressed Dail Eireann? Don't think so.

Nan knows from experience what she is talking about when it comes to poverty and exclusion in Ireland. She told the UN:

"My name is Ann O'Brien. I am a Traveller from Ireland. I have nine children. I grew up on the side of the road in a tent. I am here to talk about the people who are left behind, who are not just living in poverty but living in hell".

"Poor people don't have enough money. They don't have rights. They haven't got an education. They are not included in the society because they can't get a job and they don't have money.



Nan O'Brien called on the UN to look at poverty in western countries as well as in the developing world.

"People think that they have no future and goes for the drugs and drink. There is not enough help and support to get them back together as a family. When you are down people push you aside even more.

"People who are not living in poverty, who

were never hungry, who never slept rough, never understand what it feels like.

"We need to let people know that they can stand up for themselves, that they have rights and that they can do it for other people.

"I understand what other people are going through because I went through very hard times myself", she said.

Nan made her speech at a commemoration ceremony on the lawn of the UN headquarters, which was also addressed by the President of the UN General Assembly, HE Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa and by the UN's Deputy Secretary General, Mark Malloch Brown.

Her involvement with STAG CDP goes back eight years when Nan started doing training courses with the project. She then moved on to doing outreach work for the CDP as a volunteer. She became involved with a human rights organisation, ATD Fourth World, two years ago and began giving human rights talks. This led to her being invited to the UN.

"The problem for me is I was let down in my own country. There was no education for me. So I can't read or write, though I'm trying. I don't want to be on social welfare, but for most jobs you need to be able to read and write, and there's a lot of barriers and discrimination too because I'm a Traveller. Most of the work I do is voluntary work," said Nan.

UN report on Ireland no use to Bord Fáilte

YOU can safely say that the UN's latest hammering of Ireland for the extent of its rich-poor gap will not be highlighted by Bord Fáilte in its attempts to lure visitors here.

The UN's rich-poor statistics are compiled by looking at the number of households whose income is below 60% of the average income.

In Ireland, there are a significant number of families falling below this level, meaning we come second-last in the league-table of developed countries (next to the USA). Ireland has held this lowly

position for the past number of years.

While Rory O'Donnell of the National Economic and Social Council accepts the figures as factual, he says it doesn't paint an accurate picture.

"If you take those figures on their own, without knowing any other thing about Ireland, they paint a picture of a Latin-American country during one of the dictatorships when a tiny cabal got hugely rich while the rest of society suffered absolute poverty. Now, Ireland clearly isn't like that," said Rory.

Our poor performance in the UN survey is not necessarily because there

are so many poor families in Ireland, but because there are so many households with two or three incomes coming through the door (which drives average household income up).

"We haven't nailed down that explanation for sure," he acknowledges. "But we do accept the figures, the (UN) data is accurate," added Rory.

It is considered by the UN to be unhealthy to allow the gap between rich and poor in any country grow to too great an extent.

To see the UN report, go to: www.un.org

Finglas: responding to suicide in the community

RECENTLY, in one week in Finglas West, there were five suicides – four of them men from the same gang of friends.

The multiple-suicides created a fear within the neighbourhood, so much so that the community got together and organised an open-air community event on 'The Green'.

At that gathering, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and friends of the deceased spoke of their grief in public. The Joe Duffy Show on RTE radio covered the issue on/off for a fortnight.

The 'gathering on the green' was organised through Project West CDP, particularly Jenny Harris.

"It showed there were people in Finglas dealing with the issue," says Sean Cartright, chairperson of Finglas Suicide Network (FSN).

A long-term approach was needed to handle suicide.



Needs-based

Sean traces FSN's recent origins to the day last year when a Catholic sister took him aside and vented her anger and frustration at the lack of bereavement support services in the Finglas area. Sr. Ignatius Kelly had just returned from visiting yet another family bereaved by suicide.

When Sr. Ignatius found Sean was a development worker with Finglas South CDP, she urged him to take action.

"She nailed me," recalled Sean. "Really, what she said struck a chord with me."

Up to then, local religious leaders were the only people that Finglas people bereaved through suicide could turn to.

Afterwards, Finglas South CDP launched a booklet on suicide and, at the launch, the most powerful speaker was a local woman, Marie Whelan, whose husband had died by suicide. She delivered such a strong speech that afterwards a queue of people formed to put their names down on a list of those willing to help.

The Finglas Suicide Network (FSN) was born and later a committee, including volunteers and paid workers, was formed. It includes: residents bereaved by suicide, members of Finglas South CDP, a HSE community worker, the Parish Sisters, Dublin City Council, home school liaison teachers, Community Gardaí, people from the Optin Program, and 'Rainbow' members.

Mandated action

The committee soon forged strong links with a national organisation called Console which runs a National Freephone Helpline and provides a range of back-up counselling services for individuals and outreach services for communities faced with suicide.

"Forming the link with Console helped to legitimise our work," said Sean.

Identifying local needs

FSN worked on their Aims and Objectives, and Mission Statement.

Their aim is simple: to provide a community based response to Suicide.

Objectives are:

1. To establish a locally based support service for people bereaved by suicide.
2. To promote positive mental health



Sean Cartright.

3. To ensure integration and co-ordination of services in Finglas through information provision, research and mapping of existing services.
4. To gather information on the issue of self harm and para suicide (repeat suicide attempts).

Mission statement

The Finglas Suicide Network is a community based initiative supporting individuals, families and communities concerned and effected by suicide in a professional and culturally appropriate way.

Collective action

The FSN committee looked at improving the skills and knowledge they had on their committee.

"We brought into the committee a HSE area coordinator, youth workers from Finglas Youth Resource Centre, and members of the Finglas Addiction Support Team. We didn't want to be limited in our vision," said Sean.

FSN with Console set up a counselling service in Finglas for one day a week.

"We felt that was a big thing – there was now something in the area," recalled Sean.

Meanwhile, all the committee members of committee undertook a 2-day ASSIST training course with the HSE.

"It taught us that it is best to talk to people feeling suicide, and what to say," continued Sean.

After that, six sub-groups were set up to work on specific areas.

Premises and outreach work

FSN started off holding meetings in a room in Rivermount Parish centre, then moved temporarily to Finglas Youth Resource Centre. Third time lucky! They finally found a permanent premises in a central location at Mellows Court.

"It's ours now and we can operate anytime of the day or night from there," said Sean.

FSN now also holds an outreach clinic once a week in Project West CDP. This helps the Network to grow and reach more people because, as the committee found, it is better to bring the counsellor around to different areas of the suburb.

Sustainability

Community involvement is essential to FSN's development and the Network's future plans, particularly on suicide prevention, include:

- o Organise ASSIST training for professionals (eg teachers, doctors) and members of the community.

- o Increase awareness of suicide at community and professional level. FSN hopes to hold awareness days, distribute leaflets locally, engage the media, etc.

- o Hold drama workshops and productions for youths (with support from Smashing Times Theatre Company). As Sean says, "We have recognised that theatre is a very powerful tool for examining suicide. You can recreate a suicide situation or dramatise a potential suicide situation. And the best thing about a play is that you can freeze a situation, discuss it, pull one person out of the picture and put in another person and see how that changes the outcome."

- o In the new year, FSN are going to run a Suicide Prevention Programme with the support of Pieta House, based in Lucan, the country's first community-based centre for the prevention of suicide and self-harm.

- o Set up a youth forum where issues such as suicide can be discussed, starting at a local level and building to a national level.

Increase self esteem among young people. Eg by organising personal development courses.



Travellers in Limerick learning to prevent suicides

By ALLEN MEAGHER

THERE were four Traveller suicides in 2005 in Limerick city and a recent CDP survey found that both suicide and depression is on the rise among Travellers in the city.

"Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly common in the Traveller Community that young men and women are taking their own lives," said Amanda Milne, a development worker with Limerick Travellers Development Group.

"There are no warning signs; if there is a cry for help, no-one is picking up the signs," said Amanda. To counteract the phenomena, Amanda and health service staff who work closely with Travellers in the city recently completed suicide prevention training

with the Traveller Health Unit.

They have provided counselling for families affected by suicide and support groups were set up. This year, LTDG ran suicide prevention training for Travellers themselves.

"The demand for this training has been coming from the Travellers themselves," said CDP co-ordinator, Vanessa Buswell. The training was provided with support from the HSE's Traveller Health Unit.

The aim was to equip local Traveller women with qualifications in Primary Health Care, raising the healthcare skills-level within the community.

For more information, contact Amanda at Limerick Travellers Development Group, 30 Castle Park, Moyross, Limerick. Tel. 061-371722. Fax: 061-321340. E-mail: cdp@limericktravellers.com

Report launched on suicides in Tallaght - understanding suicide among Travellers

THERE have been 35 suicides in the Travelling Community in West Dublin in the last 18 months and it has had a devastating effect on the Traveller community in Tallaght.

Margaret Wall from Tallaght has lost family members through suicide. She said: "Despite the fact that there seems to be a lot of talk about suicide in general, and its effects on our young people, there was very little information available to help Travellers tackle the issue."

As a result of the deaths, research was carried out with 52 Travellers in Tallaght over one year. It was initiated by Tallaght Travellers Youth Service, (a special project of Catholic Youth Care) and a report of the findings was launched on November 10th.

'Moving beyond Coping' highlights the importance of the role education plays in helping young Travellers and young people generally in having a fair chance in life. It also demonstrates the role alcohol plays in suicide.

Report findings

- Depression and other mental health issues were a major factor in the causes of suicide.
- Family break up and alcohol and drug abuse were other important factors.
- Common factors in male and female attempted suicide were serious level of depression, self-harm and having experience of a previous suicide in your family.
- The signs that someone may be contemplating suicide were not picked up by members of the community.
- The most common age for suicide was in the mid-20s for both male and female members of the community.

Report recommendations

- Greater access for Travellers to counselling services.
- Better access to Mental Health services.
- Increased support for children who have

experienced suicide or attempted suicide in their family or community.

- Increased information and education service within the Travelling community on the issue of suicide.

The research was funded by a numbers of agencies including ElectricAID, People in Need, Society of St Vincent de Paul, Accenture, Unilever, South Dublin County Council and the National Lottery through the Health Services Executive.

- For further information or for hard copies of the report 'Moving Beyond Coping - an Insight into the Experience and Needs of Travellers in Tallaght Dealing with Suicide', contact: Andy Doogue: Education Officer, Tallaght Travellers Youth Service, Tel: 086-254-7873 or Paul Duffy, Information Officer, Catholic Youth Care, Tel: 087-235-7220.

The report is also available on the website: www.cyc.ie

Console Helpline 1800 201 890



CONSOLE was established in 2002 and is a national service with offices in Dublin, Galway and Limerick

It is a professional organisation, responding through counselling and outreach work to the needs of those bereaved through suicide within the community. It offers specialised counselling for individuals, families and children.

Console's National Freephone Helpline number is: 1800 201 890.

It offers a confidential listening service and callers are offered details of Counselling Services / Support Groups in their area.

Console has a number of publications which should be of use to any CDP or community group concerned with suicide. Their suicide-prevention DVD 'A life 2 live 4' is especially recommended (by Sean Cartright of FSN).

For more information, contact: Console, All Hallows College, Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8574300. Fax: 01-8574310. E-mail: info@console.ie Addresses for Console's offices in Clondalkin, Galway and Limerick are available on their website: www.console.ie

Pieta House offers free service

PIETA House in Lucan, Co. Dublin, is a free service for people effected by suicide (it is funded by private donations). It provides one-to-one counselling by psychotherapists for the first week or 10 days and, as a person improves, therapy is gradually reduced during the next four to six weeks.

As well as providing intensive support to individuals, the service aims to reach out to families and teach them how to deal with a family member in crisis. It also trains local volunteers to provide ongoing family support.

For more information, contact Sean Cartright at Finglas South CDP. Tel. 01-864-0285.

Volunteer's 4-month battle for votes



Marie Dunne (centre) with Minister Dermot Aherne as he cuts the tape to open Southside CDP's new community centre in Drogheda earlier this year.

By GEARÓID MacGÍOBÚIN

ARE you on the register of electors? Have you been taken off the register of electors? Will you vote? Who cares? 69-year-old super volunteer, Marie Dunne from Drogheda does, passionately. From the end of June to mid-September, Marie worked at least four days per week, calling to over 2000 houses in the south Drogheda area.

Nothing had been done on the voter registration project on the Southside CDP's workplan when Marie decided to take the bull by the horns.

According to co-ordinator Mary McClory: "It was Marie Dunne who suggested it. All her life she has been involved in local politics with Fianna Fail and is a great believer in the importance of voting."

"I didn't do it as a party-political person," said Marie, "but as a Southside CDP person. It was vital for us to complete our workplan, we have so many important projects depending on the money we get from the Department."

"I rang Seamas Kirk, the local Fianna Fail TD and asked him for the register. He sent down copies of all the registers for the local estates. There are 5 council estates and 6 new estates in Drogheda," she said.

According to Margaret McClory: "She did the whole route in numeric order, without skipping any. She knows this area like the back of her hand."

The whole summer long, with a copy of the voting register in one hand and with her copybook in the other, Marie Dunne called door-to-door.

"I had to do it all on my own, apart from the CDP receptionist (a local Community Employment Scheme worker) who gave a hand a few days. It was hard work, sometimes you had to go back to a house three times. And then when you came home in the night, you had to do more. I hadn't time to bless myself," laughed Marie. "I hadn't even a holiday this year, I didn't even buy clothes, and I had to throw away my old runners at the end of it!"

Marie found a good few houses rented out to non-nationals. Other houses had people registered that were dead, while in one estate, there were 70 locals who were not registered. An awful lot of the young people were not registered. In some cases there were boyfriends living with girlfriends, or people who were supposed to be lone parents or separated, afraid to register in case the local authority saw that they were living together.

"They still won't get the register right, even this time round. There are so many new houses, and the boundaries are a mess. In several estates in Drogheda, half the houses are in Louth, and the other half in Meath," said Marie.

Marie, who lives in St. Finian's Park has been active in the community all her life. She was to the fore in a successful campaign to get a 9.4 million refurbishment grant to fix up 'cardboard' houses in the estate.

"Some people almost come to expect you to do it," she said, talking of volunteer work, "but you don't work for thanks, you love what you do, and if you love what you do, you keep on doing it."

Active Citizenship Courses for Community Groups

THE Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice provides on-going active citizenship/voter education workshops to community groups around Leinster. The workshop involves 3 or 4 facilitated sessions of about 2.5 hours. It is strictly non-party political, is 85% participation and 15% presentation.

The programme is also available as a training for trainers workshop and is presented in a manual and set of charts, which are available on a non-profit basis.

For more information, contact: Carina Fitzgerald, Development Officer, Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, Ozanam House, 53 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. Tel. 01-878-0425.

E-mail: vpj@eircom.net

Website: <http://www.vpsj.ie>

Kilbarrack CDP Active Citizenship Training

KILBARRACK as a community experiences high levels of economic and educational disadvantage. As with other areas of Dublin, it is also disadvantaged in terms of playspace and sports amenities, as well as having high levels of ill health, writes Gearóid MacGíobúin.

So what does this have to do with setting up a voter registration/active citizenship project?

Kilbarrack CDP co ordinator, Cathleen O'Neill explains: "The youth services and CDP receive great support from local people in terms of fundraising and volunteering."

"However, there are men and women and young people who have not been either encouraged or empowered to take an active role in their community. Our active citizenship course, 'The Community & How It Works' seeks to educate people about the voter education and to empower locals to participate in local democracy and governance."

The course will take a hard look at our community: what it needs and how to ensure that these needs are met. The idea is to encourage this target group to develop a 'change agenda' and to become involved," she said.

The course will also give participants a chance to do a module on local governance with a view to training them to take up places on the boards of local community organisations.

Adds Cathleen: "We have high hope that this course and our encouragement and direct contact will lead us to work with more people who can make a difference."

Kilbarrack CDP Active Citizenship course is funded by the One-Off Grants recently announced by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

Travellers in Third Level - Literacy essential

FIGURES from 2002 tell a lot about the core facts of Traveller education in Ireland:

- 5500 Traveller children in primary schools.
- 1608 Travellers in post-primary schools (only 40% of all Traveller children of post-primary age).
- 16 Travellers attending third level education (and 16 is not a misprint).

According to Dr. Peadar Cremin, President of Mary Immaculate College (Mary I.), Limerick, "There are serious blockages preventing a flow getting through to third level. Without high levels of literacy and general education attainment, Travellers are automatically excluded from further or third-level education, and from the very professions that service their own

communities, including health, education and accommodation."

Five years ago, Mary I. initiated a project called "Moving On" to raise awareness around routes into third level for minorities through community-based education. Last year, the university followed up with a study on the issue as it effects Travellers.

Ennis 'tasters' attract shy parents with low education

By GEARÓID Mac GIOBÚIN

ENNIS CDP are very impressed with the response to 'taster' workshops. Numbers of participants who joined up for courses were subsequently much higher than normal thanks to the 'tasters'.

They work the same way a bakery does when you pass – the aroma may lure you in.

Ennis CDP's Barbara Ní Chonchúir explained: "Often people with little or no, or bad experiences of mainstream education can be put off by the prospect of long term commitment to a course. For this reason, Ennis CDP promoted a programme aimed at the Traveller community by starting off with three 'taster' workshops on family learning issues."

Such was the success of this approach that it led to 24 Traveller parents completing two VEC Family Learning Courses.

"We managed to get Traveller parents from the general community to participate in education, their own and that of their children," said Barbara. "It was difficult at the start, but we employed a Traveller community liaison officer to encourage people to take part."

Over the summer, nine Traveller parents from Ennis received certificates for the Foundation Course in After School Support, a course developed and administered by Mary Immaculate College in Limerick and delivered in Ennis by local professionals.

Among the nine who received their certificates were:

- a tutor at the homework club.
- a childcare worker as well as a homework club tutor.
- a special needs assistant to Traveller students at a local secondary school.

"We would like to continue with our training & education opportunities for Travellers," said Barbara. "We want to



Front: Catherine McCarthy, Norah Donavan, Mary Sherlock. Middle: Julia Faulkner, Winnie Mongans. Back: Teresa McDonagh, Maggie McDonagh, Winnie McDonagh, Ann Delaney (participated but unable to complete the course). Missing: Shirley Ward.

develop a mentor programme between Traveller parents, to help them become proactive in their children's learning. We also want to continue with parenting courses,

family learning, literacy and computer courses."

However, the training is under threat at the moment, as funding from the Department of Education & Science ends in December.

"We're looking for new funding opportunities," added Barbara.

All the participating parents have young children at home, so the programme supports them with childcare so they can attend.

Both the Traveller Homework Club and Parent Support Program are managed by Traveller parents and a partnership of agencies including: Ennis CDP, Clarecare, Ennis West Partners, St. Joseph's Training Centre, Department of Education (Visiting Teacher Service), and Colaiste Mhuire.

- For more information, contact Ennis CDP, Unit 2, Mill House, Mill Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. Tel. 065-686-9026. Fax: 065-686-9052. E-mail: enniscdp@eircom.net

Aims and funding

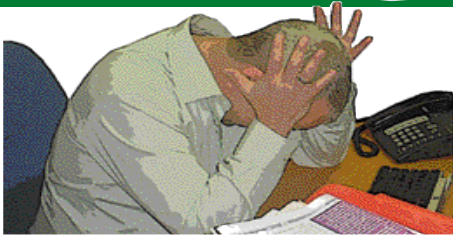
THE Traveller Homework Parent Support Programme was established as a follow-up to the Traveller Homework Club (established in 2003). It aimed to:

- support Traveller parents with their children's homework;
- involve parents in a voluntary homework support service for Traveller children;
- and support Traveller children in mainstream education.

Funding was secured through the Department of Education and Science's 'Education Equality Initiative' in mid-2004 and development worker, Barbara Ní Chonchúir was employed by Ennis CDP.

HELP ME HORACE

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



In a Riddle

Help Me Horace!

IN this era of equality how come we have a STAG CDP but no HEN CDP?

While I'm at it - which came first, Acorn CDP or OAK Partnership?

Sincerely,
Con Undrum,
Humdrum Support Agency,
Dundrum

Well Con,
In answering your HEN CDP question, Con, I

don't know why, but it seems totally unreasonable.

The second question drove me nutty, but without a HEN CDP it's interesting there is no Edenderry Growing Greater (EGG) CDP either. Sorry I can't solve these mysteries.

'Status Quo' quandry

My Dear Horace,
MY favourite band of all time is 'Status Quo', but I am also a big fan of 'Changing Ireland' and feel something isn't right.

Yours truly,
Con Tradition,
Fighting for Peace CDP

Dear Con,
Yes, I think you'll have to change your musical tastes. My favourite band is 'Something Happens' because in this work I'm not always

sure what's going on, but I know something's happening.

Keep fighting!

No doubt about Suir CDP

Help Me Horace!

I'VE heard word there's a bit of a split in Le Cheile CDP? Could this be true?

Rume R. Monger,
Ceart Go Leor CDP

Dear Rume,
Of course not! Other rumours I want to quash now are that:

Harmony CDP are having 'The Clash' for their Christmas party.

There is some doubt about Suir CDP.

That due to vandalism Open Door CDP is changing to Closed Steel Shutter CDP.

None of these are true.

ONCE-OFF GRANTS

€1m extra for once-off grants

GEARÓID MacGÍOBÚIN reports

MINISTER of State, Noel Ahern, announced in August the allocation of €1.066m in once-off grants to 169 projects funded under the Community Development Programme.

The additional funding, in grants of between €1000 and €16000, is for a wide range of project activities and will also facilitate premises refurbishment and the purchase of office equipment and computers.

Minister Ahern said, "Projects in the Community Development Programme have been supported by Government for sixteen years now, during which time they have made an invaluable contribution to the communities they serve, particularly in terms of the social inclusion work undertaken. I have witnessed at first hand the work of many of these projects and I am delighted to be able to contribute further to this work by approving these grants which will hopefully enable the CDPs to provide an even more effective and comprehensive service locally."

Grants in Mayo go seven ways

IN Mayo, €46,780 was allocated to seven CDPs, including Kiltimagh CDP which, for instance, received a typical grant of €6,300.

Although this is just a quarter of what Kiltimagh sought, the money will be stretched to fund three separate projects:

1) Providing leadership training for a youth peer group from the local secondary school one evening per week.

The training will cover issues such as drugs, alcohol abuse, citizenship. The aim is to help the young people become positive role models and help develop a local youth committee that can input into the CDP's work

2) Setting up a small Intercultural Festival, with a family afternoon exploring different cultures and guest speakers to take part in a seminar.

There are up to 70 foreign national refugee applicants staying in a local hostel, some with children attending local schools. "The festival will be sort of a small scale Dun Laoighre," says CDP Chairperson Rita Hopkins.

3) Setting up a Community Partnership Forum to get local groups (including the youth peer group) to work together to respond to and anticipate the needs of the community.

"Just this year both the Foróige Club and the Basketball club have closed down due to lack of community volunteers," says Rita, "We want the community forum to bring in new ideas and volunteers."

For more information, contact: Kiltimagh & District CDP, Main Street, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo. Tel: 094 9381506. E-mail: kmcdpl@eircom.net. The chairperson is Rita

Hopkins.

Finglas filming drug addiction

PROJECT West CDP in West Finglas, Dublin, got a special grant of €10,000 towards making a video about addiction. Project West has been running a mainstream-funded Drugs Information Community Education Course since 1997.

The course is aimed at people in the general Finglas/Cabra area including the general public, users in recovery, people related to drug users, and Gardaí.

According to CDP chairperson Patricia Bourke, "We have a section on the course called 'Family Systems' where we used a video to show the process and impact of addiction. Unfortunately, the video is quite Americanised, so didn't really connect with people here. A group here had recently done a drama on addiction that had a really strong impact, so we decided to make a video as part of a creative assignment course. It's all local people, showing the process of addiction, co-dependency and enabling."

For more information, contact: Project West, Unit 2, Barry Complex, Barry Road, Finglas West, Dublin 11. Tel: 01-8643847

Build a Community Centre!

- Tips by Sharon Browne

THE most important thing about building or renovating a Community Centre building is to see this as a core piece of work. It now is the work plan, not just an addition to it.

Developing community resources is a core function of CDPs and Family Resource Centres. By providing basic community infrastructures you can attract other services and thus become more sustainable yourselves.

Plan the building carefully. Decide who the users will be and what activities they will be involved in. Obviously no matter how well you plan, the needs of your community will change over time. So you also have to think multi-purpose! Aim high. You may never get the chance to do this again.

General Matters

- Involve local people
- Use local labour. The electricians, carpenters and so on who build your building will know it best. You may need them again down the road. SO make sure they are local.
- Pick the right architect. Plan for future usage
- Make sure rooms are big enough
- Maximum storage/ lockable cupboards for groups
- Put in solid floors. This will reduce the level of noise between floors.
- Put glass panels on all your internal doors (frosted glass on the toilet doors). This is very important for child protection and other reasons. Obviously make sure only safety glass goes in.

Outside

- Bike rack
- Ample car park spaces
- Near the front door reserve some disabled driver spaces
- Wheelie Bin Storage for two bins.
- Out door play area
- Fire assembly point at a safe distance from the building.

Access

- Universal design principles
- Use 'Buildings for Everyone'. But remember the legal minimum is not always best practice.
- Get access right. Ramps are very often too steep for people with mobility impairments. You need to think beyond the wheelchair user.

Cost Issues

- Agree costs at the beginning, in writing.
- Allow for an increase in costs
- Have regular finance meetings while the project is going on.
- If using grants to build / kit out, make sure that you clarify at the start what is and what is not eligible spending.

Management Issues

- Strong premises committee.
- Organise site meetings with the builder to monitor progress. Or at least get minutes of all their site meetings.
- Co-ordinator and Administrator time demands are huge.
- You will need to prepare a whole set of policies about your new building...for example, what is the criteria for using the building? Can any group ask for a room? What are your charges? (need to project and work out your running costs). Internet & telephone use policy. Health & Safety. Recruitment & Selection. Etc. etc.
- Have you thought out the usage – service plan.
- Have you got a staffing plan to resource

Electrical & IT

- Plenty electrical points. More than you need now.
- Plenty of internet access points other than in IT/PC room
- Put in the wiring for a computer server and Broadband. Plan for a minimum of 18 people/computers. Think minimum class size for FAS requirements etc. Think about hiring an IT Consultant / trouble shooter on a maintenance contract.
- Put in a phone system large enough to take extra lines in the future.

Security & Caretaking

- Put in a floor or wall safe for storing cheques.

Make sure it is big enough.

- Magnets on doors and codes for keypad access.
- Care-taking/sustainable night time usage.
- Have good lighting outside for night time usage.
- Coded Grouped Keys – can be handy for giving people a key that will open sets of doors and restrict access to other areas. This will impact on your caretaking / security arrangements. We got ours from Total Iron Mongery Solutions, Cork.



your service plan? If not start now. For example have you applied for a CE scheme.

Health & Safety

- Make sure you have a good fire alarm system wired into the electrical set up. Also install flashing beacons linked to the fire alarm system in every room for deaf people.
- Pick a company to supply and service all your fire fighting equipment. Do fire training, keep records of regular fire drills.
- Safe access/ egress of children/ older people. Do a very careful safety audit and take all necessary steps to address potential hazards.
- Health and Safety training & policy. Safety statements are really important. Make sure you get a Safety File from the builder when they are finished.
- Pick a hygiene company that you will maintain a relationship with. Get them to kit out your toilets, hand dryers etc.
- Don't forget to build a space as a Janitor Store Room. Where are you going to lock away detergents, mops, Hoover, buffer etc.

- If you are using shutters, put them on the inside of the windows/doors. Ones on the outside send the wrong message for a community project. You don't want to look like you're in the middle of a war zone / ghetto.
- Have you thought about CCTV? While you don't want to over do it you might want just one camera on the front door?

Insurance

- Make sure that you have adequate public liability insurance when you are ready to open the doors.
- Check the status of your insurance during the building works. At this stage it is usually the builder who insures the site. But your own insurance must kick in on hand over day. You will need buildings, contents, public liability, maybe payroll, what about crèche, groups, outings etc. Give it thought and shop around.
- If you have a lift you will need Engineering Insurance.
- If you have a PC lab / IT room you will need Data Insurance.



North Dublin CDPs showcase their work

- 'Making a Difference' conference in the Mansion House

THE average CDP attracts in 150% more funding on top of the core grant they receive from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

"CDPs are the fundamental building blocks in local disadvantaged communities," pointed out Noreen Byrne of Doras Buí CDP. She was speaking at the 'Making a Difference' Conference held on November 15th, in the Mansion House.

The conference brought together community workers and policy makers to look at responses at neighbourhood level to issues facing disadvantaged communities.

"CDPs offer a variety of footholds for other agencies wishing to work in an area, and they help shape the implementation of some national programmes at local level. It has been seen that new initiatives introduced to an area have a much greater chance of survival if there is a CDP in the community," added Noreen, who chaired the event.

There are 33 CDPs in North Dublin involving around 350 volunteers and about 70 staff, and, as Noreen said, they play a key role in identifying and filling needs – childcare facilities; community buildings; intervention projects; local training initiatives, and so on.

The conference was addressed by Dublin's Lord Mayor, Vincent Jackson, and included presentations by Susan Fox of Blakestown CDP, Sean Cartright of Finglas South CDP,

and Noel Kelly from the Priorswood Taskforce on Joyriding.

Sean outlined how Finglas South CDP set up a local support network for people effected by suicide and linked with Console, the country's first community-based centre for the prevention of suicide and self-harm.

Noel explained how, over eight years, Priorswood CDP was heavily involved in a local taskforce to combat joyriding and, since the taskforce was set up, there has been a 32% reduction in stolen cars in the estate. Noel said some of the reduction had to do with their work while more of it had to do with the fact that cars built since 1998 are harder to steal. Nonetheless, Gardai in North Dublin identify the work of the Priorswood Joyriding Taskforce as a key achievement by a CDP. They would like to see it replicated in other areas and cities.

Specialised contributions were given by: Rory O'Donnell, director of the National Economic and Social Council, and two UCD academics - Aogán Mulcahy, a sociologist who specialises in policing and the community, and Mick Rush who presented a range of statistics showing how the family in Ireland is changing.

The conference was organised by Tosach Regional Support Agency to show how CDPs are making real and vital progress as they seek to 'Make a Difference' in their localities.

CDPs' turnover

"THE average turnover for CDPs in North Dublin in 2004 was €278,000. The minimum (for a new CDP in start-up phase) was €30,000, the max was €3.5 million."

- Noreen Byrne of Doras Buí CDP

Is joy-riding aptly named?

A NEW report on joy-riding points out that many commentators have proposed that so-called joy-riders' should be referred to in ways that capture the human costs associated with this activity – as 'death riders', 'grief riders', and 'murder riders'.

"However, it can also be argued that joy-riding is aptly named, being rich in excitement and a dramatic break from the boredom of being wage-less and wealth-less.

The report goes into considerable detail in outlining the factors that motivate young people to engage in joy-riding.

Youths who engage in joyriding don't call it by that name – they set off to 'flash' a car.

Profiling typical joy-riders

ACCORDING to established research, males are six times more likely than females to have ever stolen a car. Most car thieves embark on their criminal career at a relatively young age. Starting ages of as young as 10 years are not unusual.

Many of those engaging in different categories of car theft share a common demographic profile characterised, by "a socially-deprived home life, poverty, unemployment, underachievement and low aspirations located within a lower socio-economic environment," says a new report titled: *'The Nature and Impact of Joy-riding in Priorswood – A Report to the Priorswood Task Force on Joy-riding'.*

Copies of the full report are available through Priorswood CDP.
Tel. 01-848-6458.
Fax: 01-867-1182. E-mail: mary.outreach@oceanfree.net

'From the margins to the mainstream'

- Maynooth celebrates 25 years of professional community work formation

JUAN CARLOS AZZOPARDI reports

OVER 25 years, the National University of Ireland (NUI) in Maynooth has educated hundreds of community development and youth workers, a great many of whom have contributed hugely to the Community Development Programme. A conference celebrating the endeavours of its graduates to work for change in Irish society took place in mid-November.

The conference opened with perspectives from past pupils Rita Fagan (St. Michael's Family Resource Centre in Inchicore, Dublin – a CDP), Siobhan O'Donoghue (Migrants Rights Centre), Davy Joyce (barrister), and Vincent Jackson, current Lord Mayor of Dublin. All identified their grounding in critical social analysis as a key learning that they carried with them from Maynooth.

'From the Margins to the Mainstream' reflects the fact that since 1981 community work and youth work have moved from marginal activities into mainstream government initiatives and programmes. The discussions focussed on the changes to the

nature of the work and the challenges to keep the principles of human rights and social justice at the heart of community and youth work practice.

The President of Ireland Mary McAleese gave a rousing address to those assembled and this was followed by a lecture in memory of the late John O'Connell on 'Racism: Global Issues, Local Challenges' delivered by Doudou Diene, UN Special Rapporteur on Racism and Xenophobia.

The conference set about reclaiming the radical agenda amid the contemporary challenges and opportunities for community and youth work. The matter was discussed in a series of mini-seminars, including the question CDPs have grappled with "Cohesion, Co-operation or Control?"

It proved a timely opportunity to reflect and review on the education received and the work achieved over 25 years. The conference sent people away with some analysis towards best policies, best practice, best projects and best education for the future. Credit must go to Anastasia Crickley and her team for the success of the event.



Juan Carlos Azzopardi.

CDP critical?

writes JC Azzopardi

AT the conference in Maynooth, Susan Shaw of Triskele Support Agency asked:

"What type of critical analysis applies to the Community Development Programme? Are we critical in terms of providing severe judgements and evaluations of public policies or are we ourselves closer to serious illness and in need of intensive care?"

Susan was responding to a presentation on 'Reclaiming the Radical Agenda' from Professor Margaret Ledwith, St. Martin's College, Lancaster, England.

The question we must all pose to ourselves is – 'Am I making a difference?'

Susan also speculated on whether or not the Programme's emphasis with local volunteers was now focused on the development of management skills, at the expense of the passion for social justice among those very volunteers. She asked, does the programme set up to support volunteers actually crush them?

These are questions we must constantly ask. Having worked in the Programme for 10 years I can certainly say we have made a difference. Have I made a difference? For definite. Right now, with everything that is going on, am I / are we making a difference. I don't know. Will we in the future? Absolutely!

I would be more worried if the Programme was being described as in a stable and comfortable condition.

Labour wants €3.5 billion

LABOUR leader, Pat Rabbitte, has demanded a €3.5 billion "war on poverty" in the 25 most disadvantaged areas of the State.

The "war" should be waged over the next six years. The plan is outlined in a major policy document titled 'A Fair Deal: Fighting Poverty and Exclusion in Ireland.'

While admitting that poor communities have benefited from the 'Celtic Tiger', and hailing the economic upturn as "a cause of celebration", Pat pointed out that major pockets of disadvantage still exist.

He said the RAPID areas – initially promised billions of euro in development aid – were "starved of resources."

The Labour leader criticised the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,

saying: "Having Éamon Ó Cuív travelling the length and breadth of the west coast giving out cheques for €5,000 and €10,000 may be great for politics, but it is not a war on poverty."

Minister Ó Cuív's Department does not have the high media profile that other Government Department's do (such as Health) and he is not often singled out for criticism.

"What we need is a targeted assault on a small number of areas. They are relatively few in number, but poverty remains a deep-seated problem within them," said Pat.

Acknowledging that a "war on poverty" would not be popular with voters, he said, "These areas have the lowest turn-outs in the country, 30% in some areas. But it is a moral question at the top of our priorities."

Maynooth's radical edge

MAYNOOTH is seen as one of the great seats of conservatism, having trained priests and bishops of the Catholic Church for over 200 years. So some may be surprised to find that so many community development workers in the Community Development Programme came out imbued with their left wing liberal ideologies after completing courses with the

Department of Applied Social Studies of NUI Maynooth.

The university has the distinction of having the highest percentage of students from disadvantaged communities of all third level colleges, the highest participation rate of Travellers and 18% of the student body are mature students from 58 countries and every

county in Ireland.

The first Traveller to graduate from third level in Ireland was Thomas McCann with a Diploma in Community Work from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. In the same year that this course began, no Traveller transferred from primary to secondary school.

Thumbs up for 'Changing Ireland' - mostly!

CHANGING IRELAND

- Readers' evaluation - 2006

FOR our evaluation this year, the fifth and most comprehensive since the magazine was established in 2001, we sent out 1600+ questionnaires to our readers. We received close to 200 replies which represents around 9% of our circulation. The following are among the main findings:

Overall, the results were very encouraging:

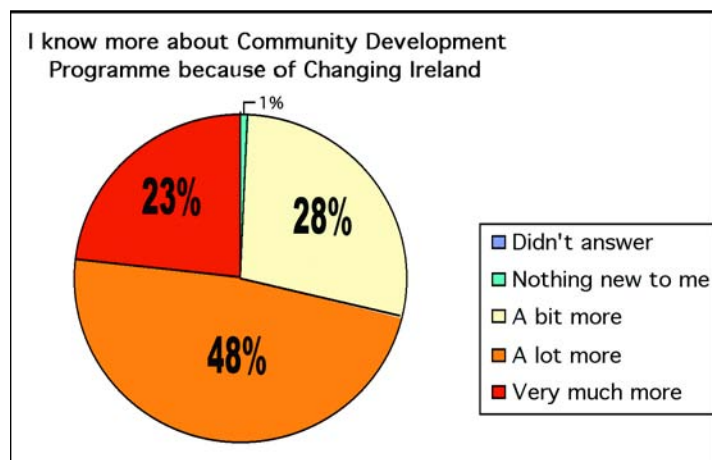
91% of readers voted that Changing Ireland was doing a good job of covering the relevant issues. Less than 10% could point to anything boring about the magazine.

Readers found the magazine to be informative, relevant, a good source of community development information, and also to have a healthy measure of humour.

Our readers regard the magazine as a good way of finding news, ideas, and contacts about Community Development work.

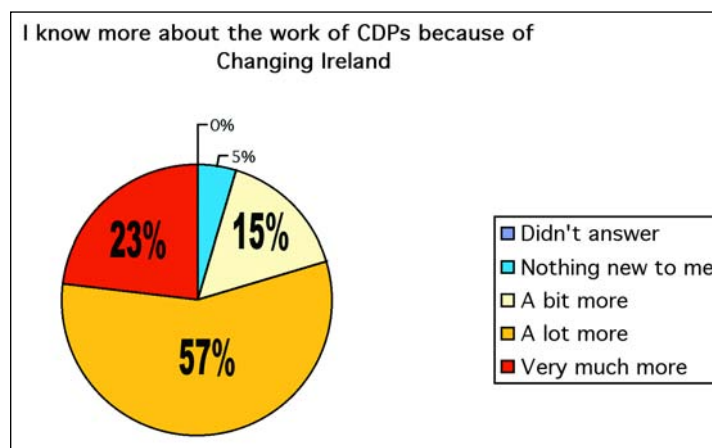
This vindicates the reasons for setting up the magazine, and it supports the opinions of CDPs expressed in all previous surveys that 'Changing Ireland' was doing a good job of promoting their work.

'Changing Ireland' increases knowledge of the Programme



Note: A further question found that 81% of Non-CDP respondents say they know more about the Programme as a result of 'Changing Ireland'.

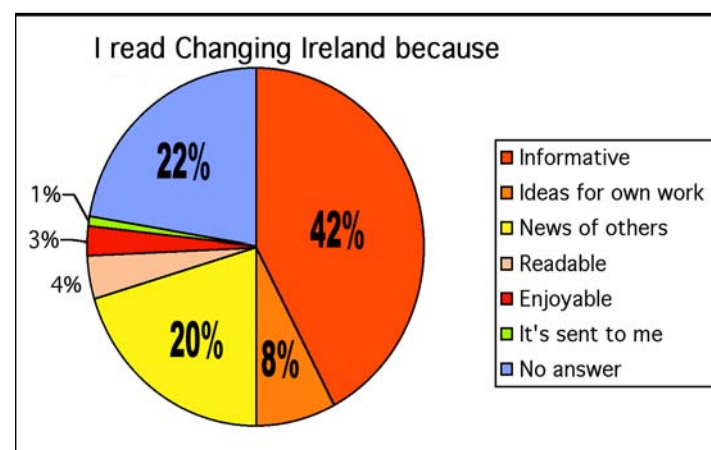
Shock! Horror! Readers now know more about CDPs!



There was an interesting breakdown between people working in CDPs and those working elsewhere: the level of learning among readers from CDPs was significantly higher. In fact, 48% of readers from CDPs know "Very much more" about the work of CDPs because of 'Changing Ireland'. (Presumably, staff and volunteers working in CDPs read articles about other CDPs with a very keen eye).

Similarly, in 2003, 94% agreed they felt "more a part of a national programme because of 'Changing Ireland'."

Why do people read 'Changing Ireland'?



As a source of community development information – and it would be a problem if this was any different – 90% of readers rate 'Changing Ireland' as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. Among readers from CDPs, that figure stands tall at 96%.

Asked "What is the most boring thing about Changing Ireland?" 90% of respondents wrote 'Nothing!' or left the space blank (indicating the same). We are looking at the 10% of responses that did find cause for complaint. (Some think the magazine is too positive or focuses too much on Departmental issues or that 'Help Me Horace!' is boring).

Humour: Overall, the humour of 'Changing Ireland' rated well, with 70% rating the humour as good or very good, and 14% rating it as excellent. Horace hits the mark.

The most popular themes/issues suggested for future coverage were: funding, education, volunteers, new CDPs and rural issues. (Most people (37%) made no suggestion).

A quarter of respondents recommended someone new for the mailing list.

Thanks to everyone who took part in our survey. Full 16 page copies of the detailed evaluation report are available from the 'Changing Ireland' office (see page 2).

Some common legal issues for marginalised groups

- Lack of rights and standards within public services e.g. housing
- Lack of a right to advocacy and representation
- Negative effect of discretion within services e.g. social welfare and housing
- Lack of the statutory right to family reunification
- Lack of rights for undocumented workers
- Discrimination in service provision as experienced by Travellers
- Exploitation of the elderly who have lost all legal entitlements to their property
- Social welfare issues and lack of access to entitlements
- Lack of knowledge of the legal system and how to impact on it.

Promoting trade union membership

A NEW campaign to promote trade union membership in the community sector was launched at a conference held on November 21st, in Dublin.

Responding to presentations from workers in the sector, trade union leaders acknowledged that while they have had some notable successes, they have not managed to establish decent standards of employment across the sector.

Both Shay Cody of IMPACT and Jack O'Connor of SIPTU addressed the conference.

The next stage is to increase trade union membership so that the unions can leverage maximum influence on behalf of workers in the sector.

For anyone wishing to a copy of the conference report or to get involved in the future - leaflets, posters and badges are available from Dublin Employment Pact, 7 North Great George's Street, Dublin 1. Tel. 01-878-7900.

E-mail: jsomers@dublinpact.ie.



Consider taking a legal action strategy!

- community groups could unite to fight cases

THE law is a tool that Traveller CDPs in particular make good use of. However, many CDPs shy away from adopting legal strategies to achieve their communities' aims, or they do not recognise that they are using legal strategies already.

Recently, a number of volunteers and staff in CDPs in urban and rural areas were interviewed as part of a new initiative to encourage community groups to take more legal cases.

In 2005, CAIRDE, Ballymun Community Law Centre, Irish Traveller Movement Legal Unit, Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland, Northside Community Law Centre came together to see about working more closely on legal issues affecting marginalised groups. They also wanted to see how community participation within legal processes could be strengthened.

"CDPs and community groups in general could be doing more if they adopted legal strategies," said Grainne O'Toole, one of the researchers leading the new initiative.

Nineteen organisations were contacted which included a mix of rural, urban and issue based organisations. CDPs including Doras Bui CDP in Dublin and FORUM CDP in County Galway. Kildare Travellers Action, who are currently applying for CDP status, were also interviewed.

The main issues they found were:

- Marginalised groups are very vulnerable and there is an overall lack of

support for such groups to engage with the legal process.

- There is a lack of access to quality legal advice and high legal costs ensure that claiming legal rights within the courts is prohibitive.
- People acceptance of discrimination and lack of enforcement of their rights is widespread. This stems from the fact that many people are unaware of their rights and/or how to go about securing them.
- There is a lack of strategy building as the legal system is based around individual cases so cases that are won and precedents set are not shared on a practical level. Also, as a result of successful cases little change occurs in policies or attitudes of the state.

Now, the CLAS group hope to set up a network, starting with a conference seminar in January. The venue will be Dublin, the date has yet to be set. The early recommendations of the CLAS group include the following:

- Groups could work together within the CLAS network on common themes to give force to the issues being worked on.
- CLAS could develop a strategy to tap into legal resources.

- For more information, contact Grainne O'Toole, Talbot Mews, Vernon Grove, Rathgar, Dublin 6. Tel. 01-496-5736. E-mail: grainneotoole@gmail.com

Summary - for the reader in a real rush

It's time to give the poor some decent help and sort out our wider society's problems. Not necessarily because it would be a nice thing to do, but because otherwise the economy is shagged (not immediately, but soon).

The world looks with envy at our economic model. No-one looks up to our social model, but a few changes could make the social model a super success. This is what one of the country's biggest think-tanks (the NESC) say:

Basically, give to society and people what business gets - income supports, decent back-up services and innovative ideas. What's good for Kerry Butter is good for you and me!

Meanwhile, everyone's suffering somewhat, including the middle classes stuck in traffic thinking of mortgage rate rises. And everyone would benefit from better social services.

That's just a taste of what the Developmental Welfare State means to us, if it ever comes to pass. Currently, the Government is weighing things up.

PS There are still 20% of working age people in Ireland living off state benefits. 20%! The 'Celtic Tiger' didn't sort everyone out, no more than it is to blame for every problem we have.

Public sometimes approves higher taxes

HIGHER taxes are not always unpopular, but where public services are poor, the public debate runs against higher taxes - with people saying, 'Why would we want to put more money into this?'

In Sweden, a tax revolt some years ago subsided when the Government got stuck into improving their public service systems.

Face up to social problems

- new Developmental Welfare State could be as good as

THERE are plenty of talks, but the NESC only gives a big report every three years. And this is one group the Government, for a change, do listen to.

The NESC is the National Economic and Social Council. Here's what they're saying!

Give people and communities what business gets - a few bob with a smile to get them started and to keep them going, services to back up what they're doing, and finally, keep trying out new ideas all the time.

Kerry Butter was available in supermarkets in West Africa when unemployment in Ireland was still in double figures. The farmer didn't bring it there himself.

Business in Ireland got grants and was left to work away without paying taxes, they got free training for managers and could talk to science-heads for free. Well, the same model of supports should be offered to people, to communities, to Irish society in general.

Basically, give to society and people what business gets - income supports, decent back-up services and innovative ideas. What's good for Kerry Butter is good for you and me!

Then we may be going somewhere once again.

Stop blaming the cat!

At the same time, stop blaming the 'Celtic Tiger' for all our woes - it ain't all the cat's fault, there are other reasons too. Like the 1980s hit us hard, and we aren't over all that yet.

Yeah, we've got the sexiest little economy in the world - everyone's looking to us with envy and wonder.

The truth is we've currently got a pretty ineffective social welfare model. The UN call a spade a spade and they say we've the worst rich-poor gap in the rich world (if you leave out the USA which is so bad you can now be fined in one city, Las Vegas, for giving food to the homeless). The Government, by the way, says the UN haven't got their glasses on and are not seeing things properly, but either way the social welfare model in Ireland is no match for our economic model. Time it was!

Economy will hit a rock, if poverty ignored

So, what would we have to do to make our social welfare system the envy of the world? Well, first off, you wouldn't just do it for the craic and to impress other nations. The thing is we have reached a stage where the economy is shagged if we don't deal with all our social problems. That's what the NESC dudes say.

ALLEN MEAGHER puts the N



How so? Well, the social problems are going to start slowing us down.

And, if you think we're talking about just a few thousand poor families in Darndale and Ballybeg and the like, think again! Yes, we're talking about neglected people living in neglected areas, but everyone else comes into it too.

If you're middle-class and have stopped drinking yourself silly every weekend (ah, the carefree life!) and have a family now, you probably pay a tonne of cash in childcare, sit in traffic for hours on the way to work and only meet neighbours when your kid has a birthday party.

Eldercare issues effect all of us

And you don't know what to do about minding your elderly mother who is getting shook. You dare not rely on the State to help her after all her years, but you won't ever get to go on hols again if she comes to live with you.

Come to think of it, you wouldn't like to be reliant on disability benefit if you were in her shoes - what life would that be? They don't advertise disability benefits like they advertise Daz or the latest Ford car. Not exactly a status symbol to be living off the dole these days, or off any other State handouts.

Well, it might shock you then to know that 20% of the working age population are still on benefits of some sort (yeah, dole numbers are down, it's more people on lone-parent 'handouts' and disability 'handouts' and the like now).

Three things in our welfare

That's another thing. We shouldn't see them as handouts - or as charity for so-called lazy people. It is mega-important that the welfare system does three things (and it doesn't do all

ems, save the economy!

popular as 'Riverdance'

NESC's idea in plain language



these yet):

- Give out income supports/benefits, but in a nice manner. Think grants for business.
- Provide training, back-up social supports and encouragement for people to make changes in their lives. Think training for companies.
- Start up little pilot projects (through local community groups, for example) and if they work, set up more of the same projects all over the place (the jargon word here is 'mainstreaming', God help us!). Sometimes too, a pilot project may just suit one area, well leave it at that, but keep it funded. Think research in the I.T. sector and marketing supports.

Long-term, as we said, the economy is shagged if the social system isn't given a right kick up the arse so it finally gets around to dealing properly with childcare, eldercare, lifelong-learning, education disadvantage, transport... things Ryanair and Tesco can't do for us and the Government can.

Now's our chance

We had no choice years ago – the country was smashed broke. Now, we're loaded, so let's get started. For once (if it was not always the case), there are selfish reasons for wanting to

help the poor. Help the poor, you help the economy. That's it in one line.

One other thing! Stop thinking of the social system as purely taking from the taxpayer and giving to the poor (and stop calling people on benefits 'lazy' because they don't do paid work!). Thing is, the penny is finally dropping with the big boys that the health of your wallet and the health of your body are connected. A society's health is its wealth. If society is ill, the economy won't work.

Since the 1980s, governments in the Republic fixed the economy, the people in north Ireland found a peace, and now it's time to reinvent the social welfare system.

So forget all our old ideas about the welfare system.

The NESC heads are calling their brainwave the 'Developmental Welfare State'. It's not exactly tripping off my tongue just yet, I'd prefer if they called it the Well Fair State, something we'd all understand quickly! But like Riverdance, some day it might be known worldwide and we'll all be smiling.

That is presuming the Government take the NESC advice.

PS

Environment didn't get much of a mention in their report last year, but the NESC are pushing that as an issue too right now.

PPS

Does this summary make it any easier to understand? What do you think? What would work for your community? Can you see CDPs getting stuck in, especially with running pilot projects?

Email:

editor@changingireland.ie

Causes of Ireland's current problems

The NESC report outlines what the Council see as the three major causes of Ireland's current problems:

1. The legacy of the past, the long past of failed development, but also the much more recent past – the deep crisis in Irish society, politics, culture in the 1980s that left an enormous legacy of inequality.
2. Economics of Ireland in the last two decades: required huge focus on job creation and competitiveness.
3. Underlying cause is the organisational challenge of providing quality services in an era in which problems are complex, where problems vary from area to area and from family to family, and indeed person to person.

"Tracing our problems to those three different causes cuts through some of the debates that this is all the shadow side of success, that it is (supposedly) all the shadow side of the 'Celtic Tiger'. What's going on is the long legacy of the past, and there are huge challenges about what would constitute good services," said Rory.



Getting to know the Developmental Welfare State

- From the horse's mouth: Rory O'Donnell's presentation



Rory O'Donnell

WHERE does the Developmental Welfare State proposal come from? Who is Rory O'Donnell? What is the NESC? Where can I get the full report?

Dr. Rory O'Donnell is the director of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC).

The Council is an advisory body to government on which sit representatives of trade unions, employers, farm organizations, civil servants and, since the mid-1990s, representatives of the community and voluntary pillar (on equal terms with the other pillars).

The task of the Council is to try and find agreement among those very diverse interests on the strategic direction of economic and social policy and to advise the Government through An Taoiseach.

The NESC's three-yearly overviews feed into social partnership programme negotiations and agreements.

The Council's 2005 report pushed the idea of 'The Developmental Welfare State'. The report's findings and recommendations could change the look, shape and feel of Ireland as we know it.

If Government does not follow their recommendations, the economy is in danger of deteriorating, warn the NESC. If, on the other hand, the report is acted on, people currently experiencing poverty and disadvantage should see their lives improve significantly in the near future.

The report aimed to re-describe (1) Ireland's social deficits, (2) our employment and income trends, (3) the cause of these problems and (4) the relationship between the economy and society.

Rory says the report "has had significant impact on the shape of the Partnership Programme 'Towards 2016'."

Outlined here are some of the main points made by Rory for changing Ireland's Welfare State. He was speaking at the 'Making A Difference' North Dublin CDP conference held in the Mansion House in Dublin on November 15th:

- **For more information and to download the report described above: www.nesc.ie**

Economy now depends on new social policies

"The central argument of our recent reports is as follows: **The long-term strength of the Irish economy now depends on more effective social policy** (eg in childcare, eldercare, lifelong-learning, education disadvantage, transport, etc)," said Rory.

"For a few decades, the economic constraints of our

situation set limits to the social possibilities.

Now, we have almost reached a situation where the social constraints are setting the limits to the economic possibilities," he warned.

"Equally, social policies must share some responsibility for economic performance. We shouldn't think of social policy as purely the redistribution of surplus, taking economic performance for granted, for the two are more deeply entwined than we understood in the past. And that is a key argument in unhooking us from some of the polarising debates.

"The (NESC) report re-describes the relationship between the economy and society, to get beyond that debate about the economy versus society – where you have two polarised groups cancelling each other out (with their arguments)," he adds.

20% are still Welfare-dependent

Ireland's employment miracle is complex in that it has seen a rise in the number of low, middle and high-paid jobs. However, while there are plenty of jobs in Ireland, not everyone has the opportunity to take one, and we still have a high benefit dependency.

Rory expands on this theme:

"Benefit dependency is the percentage of working age adults who are dependent on weekly transfers from the State for their livelihood. That percentage has continued at about the same level as when at its peak in the 1980s – 18 to 20%. Now it has changed from people who were unemployed to other groups – lone parents, people with disabilities, etc. **There are still about 20% of working age adults dependent on State transfers for their livelihood.**

"But that combines with increased incomes, even in the lowest social categories. The bottom 20% of the Irish population have experienced increases in their incomes significantly faster than the bottom 20% in Sweden for example which is a much more equal society than Ireland. So we have a complex picture of income and employment opportunities," he pointed out.

Social deficits hit middle class too

Ireland's social deficits have an impact on nearly every member of society, the middle

classes, included, believes the NESC.

"Our social deficits are truly ours. They impact in some way on nearly every family, obviously very acutely on some and less acutely on others," said Rory.

He outlined our three major social deficits:

1. A significant minority of the Irish population experience multiple-disadvantages and present policies are not adequate to address them.
2. There is the wider social deficit whereby people well above the socially-marginalised group are struggling with childcare, with their own career development, with eldercare, and with transport problems.
3. There is a deficit in the provision for people in need of more intensive care, such as people with severe disabilities or in need of eldercare.

Support model for business will work in social sector

Rory O'Donnell of the NESC said that, if you cut our welfare system down to the bare bones, it has three elements:

- Income supports;
- Services;
- Innovative measures.

Rory urges people to "look at the way the State interacts with business" because it is on exactly the same terms.

"The capitalist welfare state consists of income supports (Ireland is a great grant-giver), services (training supports, managerial development supports, marketing supports) and innovative measures (think of I.T., software, biotechnology).

"So, the Developmental Welfare State says to develop each of those three elements, reforming them and linking them more closely in ways that are identified in particular as economic and social. (They should be more segmental than they are at present).

Rory and the NESC are asking people to "rethink what we mean by the welfare state and the welfare system."

"Let's forget the debate about (international) models of welfare, and instead ask regarding the three elements of the welfare system: 'How well do they address social disadvantage?', 'How well do they support participation and innovation?' and 'How well do they identify and tackle unmet needs?'

The State should provide the social sector with the same supports that are given to the business sector.



©Austin Creaven 2006

Going public on criminal behaviour

- Mahon resident, CDP co-ordinator and city councillor Chris O'Leary interviewed

"THE term 'anti-social behaviour' is becoming the catch-all for a lot of what is really criminal behaviour," says Cork's Chris O'Leary, a resident of Mahon, co-ordinator of Faranree CDP and a Green Party city councillor.

He knows only too well. As reported in the Autumn edition of 'Changing Ireland', the O'Leary family home was attacked by arsonists and the family had to move out for nine weeks. Chris was convinced the attack was linked to his outspokenness about anti-social and criminal behaviour in communities.

Many people are too afraid to speak up, but Chris publicly supports evictions and other measures. When he speaks out, he says he does so as a resident and local activist, as a councillor and as a CDP co-ordinator and he condemns anti-social and criminal behaviour in both Mahon and Faranree.

Booklet for victims

Chris is currently putting together a booklet for victims that shows ways of overcoming victimisation.

"I don't believe in violence or vigilantism," Chris notes. "I am against ASBOs ('anti-social behaviour orders') too by the way. There are enough laws in this country, if only they were all used.

Even though he is an elected member of Cork City Council, he is critical of local authorities.

"Local authorities have a lot to take responsibility for. They actually reward the neighbours from hell by not doing a thing about them. In one estate I know, the people in 29 out of 32 housing units have put in for transfers.

"If evictions are needed, they must be



Chris O'Leary

followed through on. I have publicly supported evictions in the past.

"I work in Faranree and live in Mahon and the neglect over the years has been very damaging to the communities. If we were really serious about eradicating poverty, there would be a lot more money put into it. Anti-social and criminal behaviour are symptoms of a wider problem.

"I would be very critical of the Gardai. They pass the buck. Those who really need their support say 'Why go to the Gaurds when there is nothing done?'

Chris knows he is not always loved for being so outspoken.

"All too often when you raise an issue of anti-social and criminal behaviour, you get accused of giving a place a bad name. You are damned either way. A recent article in 'Changing Ireland' (about Mahon in Cork being given a bad name) was aimed at me, without mentioning me.

"My outspokenness comes from the fact that people come to me complaining about the anti-social behaviour in their areas and they are afraid. It's about mobilising their community to improve their community and get the city council to improve things for them.

"If people do not speak up, they become victims of their own silence. Then nobody knows about their problems, no-one can help them, they live in fear and their health deteriorates."

Mixing party politics with CDP work

Chris is one of a half-dozen or more CDP volunteers / staff around the country who mix

party politics with community development work. Asked are the management members of Faranree also members of the Green Party, he replied:

"No, they are not. There is no party politics in the CDP," says Chris. "It doesn't matter what party I am in, I am first of all an activist. We actually allow all the political parties here to use the CDP premises to hold clinics.

"I represent the area I live in and not the area I work in, though I will be going forward as a Dáil candidate in the next elections.

"When I speak out, I make the distinction to speak as a councillor," he said, adding that he regularly reminds people when he is at work with the CDP that he cannot deal with their queries there and then.

Faranree CDP have taken a number of initiatives in the area of anti-social and criminal behaviour – trying to engage with gangs and also supporting residents to speak out.

"We take on people forwarded to us by the probation service to work in the CDP and very few of them go back to re-offend," said Chris.

Recently, the CDP held a photo exhibition as part of the October 17th UN day marking efforts to eradicate poverty. The exhibition – featuring vandalised houses in Faranree – linked local and global poverty.

"Some local councillors who saw it said it was very negative, but as I said to them, 'How do you dress up poverty to look good?'"

• For more information, contact Faranree CDP 98 Knockpogue Ave, Farranree, Cork. Tel. 021-4211822. Fax: 021-4211823. E-mail: fareecdp@indigo.ie

Arsonist jailed

A 17-YEAR-OLD involved in the petrol-bomb attack on the home of the Chris and his family at Loughmahon Road, Mahon, Cork, at around 4 am on July 14 last, has received a seven-year jail sentence. The youth pleaded guilty to a total of six charges including the arson attack.

Chris said afterwards that it shows the courts will not tolerate anti-social and criminal behaviour.



The owners of this home in Faranree, Cork city, were forced out by a gang earlier this year.

Bawnogue Women's Development Group,
Bawneogue Youth & Community Centre,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Chair: Marie O'Brien
Co-Ord'r: Emily Smartt
T: 01 4577382
F: 01 4577382
E: bwdg@eircom.net

Bluebell CDP
1 Bernard Curtis House,
Bluebell, Dublin 12.
Chair: Vincent McLelland
Co-Ord'r: Mags Laffan
T: 01 4601366
F: 01 4601367
E: Bluebellcdp@eircom.net

Clondalkin Travellers Dev't. Group,
Clondalkin Enterprise Centre, Neilstown Rd.,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Chair: Bridget O'Reilly
Co-Ord'r: Barney Joyce
T: 01 4575124 or 087 4175075 or
086 8283497
F: 01 4573904
E: ctdg@eircom.net

Clondalkin Women's Network,
Quarryvale Community & Leisure Centre,
Greenfort Gardens, Quarryvale. Clondalkin,
Dublin 22.
Chair: Rita Hansard
Co-Ord'r: Valerie O'Carroll
T: 01 6434922
F: 01 6434856
E: cwn@indigo.ie

An Cosan CDP,
Kiltalown Village Centre,
Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Chair: Philomena O'Hehir
Co-Ord'r: Liz Waters
T: 01 4628488 or 01 4628491
F: 01 4628496
E: info@ancosan.com L.waters@ancosan.com

Ballybrack CDP
The Scout Den, Coolevin,
Ballybrack, Co. Dublin
Chair: Brenda Creighton and Tanya Breen
Co-Ord'r: Tina Pomphrett
T: 01 2351521
F: 01 2351521
E: Ballybrackcdp@eircom.net

Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project,
Unit 2, Iceland building,
Le Fanu Road, Grange Cross,
Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
Chair: Breda Berry
Co-Ord'r: Paula Madden
T: 01 6264166 or 087 6412557
F: 01 6259651
E: btap@eircom.net

Crumlin CDP
Unit 1, Goldstone Court,
Clogher Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.
Co-Ord'r: Harry Murphy
T: 01 4736404
F: 01 4736388
E: crumlinedp@gmail.com

Dolcain CDP,
Bawneogue Enterprise & Community Centre,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Chair: Ann Corrigan
Co-Ord'r: Michelle Kearns
T: 01 4576053 / 5
F: 01 4576293
E: swccdp@iol.ie

Dolphin House CDP
227 Dolphin House, Rialto, Dublin 8
Chair: Jim Lawlor
Co-Ord'r: John Kiely
T: 01 4733834 or 087 7910991
E: dolphincda@eircom.net

Drimnagh CDP
John Bosco Youth Centre, Davitt Rd.,
Drimnagh, Dublin 12.
Chair: Peter Burke
Co-Ord'r: Kevin Byrne
T: 01 4087751
F: 01 4652065
E: Peter.burke@iol.ie
cdpdrimnagh@hotmail.com
drimnet@eircom.net

*(One CDP on the North Dublin list should
have been on this list for South Dublin
CDPs):*

Holly House CDP,
86 Holly St., Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin
Co-ordinator: Dairín West
T: 01-272-2613.
M: 087-793-0946.
E: hollyhousecdp@eircom.net

Inchicore CDP
197 Tyreconnell Rd.,
Inchicore, Dublin 8
Chair: Brian Keenan
T: 01 4531903
F: 01 4163260
E: brian@inchicorecdp.com,
pat@inchicorecdp.com

Jobstown CDP
49 Bawnlea Ave., Jobstown,
Tallaght, Dublin 24
Chair: Mary Dalton
Co-Ord'r: Anne Fitzpatrick
T: 01 4597393
E: cdppjobstown@eircom.net,
annmfitzpatrick@eircom.net

Link CDP,
Orchard Community Centre,
Cherry Orchard Grove, Dublin 10.
Chair: Ann O'Reilly
Co-Ord'r: Alan Trimble
T: 01 6235204
F: 01 6235204
E: linkcdp@eircom.net linkalant@eircom.net

Markiewicz Community Centre
205 Decies Road, Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10
Chair: James McGouran
Co-Ord'r: Billy Mangan
T: 01 6260118
F: 01 6260789
E: billy@markiewiczcentre.com

Matt Talbot Community Trust
Rear of Assumption Church,
Kylemore Rd. PO Box 8372,
Dublin 10.
Chair: Bridget Kenny
Co-Ord'r: Garret Brady
T: 01 6264899
F: 01 6234021
E: mtcommtrust@eircom.net

Mountwood Fitzgerald Park CDP,
71-73 Maple House, Fitzgerald Park, Off
Mounttown Rd.,
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Chair: Susan Stevenson
Co-Ord'r: Marion White
T: 01 2845722 / 2842332.
F: 01 2802096
E: mfcdp@gofree.indigo.ie;
marionwhite@eircom.net

North Clondalkin CDP
Christy Melia House, 24 Neilstown Park,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Chair: Noreen Byrne
Co-Ord'r: vacant
T: 01 4571744
F: 01 4575325
E: cmelia@indigo.ie

Partners Training for Transformation,
24 Northbrook Rd., Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Co-Ord'r: Tony O'Grady
T: 01 6673440
F: 01 6673438
E: partners@eircom.net

Quarryvale Community House
46 Greenfort Drive, Quarryvale, Clondalkin,
Dublin 22.
Chair: Karen Johnson
Co-Ord'r: Rosetta Dempsey
T: 01 6232540
F: 01 6261470
E: Quarryvalecommunityhouse@eircom.net

**Razvojni Projekat
Bosanske Zajednice**
40 Pearse St., Dublin 2
Chair: Slavica Becirovic
Co-Ord'r: Zdenko Zdenko
T: 01-6719202
F: 01-6719202
E: bosnian_cdp@hotmail.com

Rialto Community Network,
568 SCR, Dublin 8
Chair: Tony McCarthy
Co-Ord'r: Ann Swords
T: 01 4732003
F: 01 4732003
E: Rialtonet@connect.ie

Ringsend Action Project CDP,
Regal House, 28 Fitzwilliam St., Ringsend,
Dublin 4.
Chair: Charles Murphy
Co-Ord'r: Joe Grennell
T: 01 6607558
F: 01 6607558
E: Jgrennell1@eircom.net

Robert Emmet CDP
Mendicity Institution, Island St., Dublin 8
Chair: Bebhinn Nic Liam
Co-Ord'r: Laura Hastings
T: 01 6708880
E: laura@recdp.ie

Ronanstown Women's CDP
43 Collinstown Grove, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Chair: Rita Sweeney
Co-Ord'r: Anne Troy
T: 01 4570687
F: 01 4570373
E: rwcddl@eircom.net

Rowlagh Women's Group
Aras Rualach, Neilstown Rd., Clondalkin,
Dublin 22.
Chair: Susan Foley
Co-Ord'r: Bernie Beatley
T: 01 6230574 or 087 9776229
F: 01 6230574
E: oliveadmin@oceanfree.net

Shanganagh CDP,
Shanganagh Park House,
Shankill, Co. Dublin
Chair: Georgina Potts
Co-Ord'r: Anne Traynor
T & F: 01 2824210
E: shanganaghcdp@eircom.net

SICCDA,
90 Meath St., Dublin 8.
Chair: Liam Fenlon
Co-Ord'r: Fr. Michael Mernagh
T: 01 4536098
F: 01 4540745
E: info@sicdda.ie

Southside Travellers Action Group,
Unit 5, St. Kieran's Enterprise Centre, Furze
Road, Sandymount Industrial Est., Dublin 18.
Chair: Alice Binchy
Co-Ord'r: Goretti Mudzongo
T: 01 2957372
F: 01 2135932
E: taisteal@eircom.net

Southside Women's Action Network,
57 Ennel Court, Loughlinstown,
Dublin 18
Chair: Ann Cannon
Co-Ord'r: Pauline Davy
T: 01 2825932 or 086 1744850
E: pauline@swannetwork.ie

**Special Project – Long Term
Unemployment,**
Office 1, Brookfield
Enterprise Centre, Brookfield,
Tallaght, Dublin 24.
Co-Ord'r: Germaine Lloyd
T: 01 4623222
F: 01 4628412
E: spltu@iolfree.ie

St. Michael's Family Resource Centre,
St. Michael's Hse., 118 St. Michael's Est.,
Inchicore, Dublin 8
Co-Ord'r: Rita Fagan
T: 01 4533938
F: 01 4734375
E: frc@gofree.indigo.ie

Tallaght Travellers CDP
Unit 1A, Killinarden Enterprise Park, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.
Chair: Mary Cassidy
Co-Ord'r: Orla McCaffrey
T: 01 4664334 or 087 2998047
F: 01 4664344
E: ttcdp@gofree.indigo.ie

Vista CDP
Donore Youth & Community Centre, Donore
Ave., Dublin 8.
Chair: Mary Warren
Co-Ord'r: Paul Ringland
T: 01 4543074 or 086 2888226
F: 01 4543409
E: vistacd@eircom.net

Women Together Tallaght Network,
Unit 2, Brookfield Enterprise Centre, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.
Chair: Helen Murray
Co-Ord'r: Marie O'Donoghue
T: 01 4627741
F: 01 4623433
E: tallaghtwomen@eircom.net

West Tallaght Resource Centre
16 Glenshane Lawns, Brookfield, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.
Chair: Marie Greene
Co-Ord'r: Mary Daniel
T: 01 4522533 or 01 4522486
F: 01 4621740
E: wtrc@eircom.net marydwtrc@eircom.net

CDP funding also goes to:
Cherry Orchard Equine Centre
Cherry Orchard Green,
Cherry Orchard, Dublin 10
Co-Ord'r: Adeline O'Brien
T: 01 6209160
F: 01 6262702
E: adeline@cherryorchardequinecentre.ie

Contact Programme and Ministers:

The Minister and Minister of State at the
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht
Affairs, are based in: 43-49 Mespil Road,
Dublin 4.
T: 01 6473000
F: 01 6473051
E: eolas@pobail.ie
LoCall: 1890 474 847

The Community Development Programme is
administered by the Department's Community
Development Unit, based at:
Teeling St., Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.
T: 071-9186700
F: 071-9186760
E: nwalsh@pobail.ie

Clarification/ correction:

*The following projects have contacted
us regarding changes or corrections
since their details were published in our
Autumn issue.*

New Ross CDP,
Barrack Lane,
New Ross,
Co. Wexford
Chair: Joan Whelan
Co-ord'r: Conor Dervan
T: 051-420664
Email: newrosscdp@eircom.net

Limerick Women's Network,
5 Verdant Crescent,
Kings Island,
Limerick
Tel. 087-328-3746 (new phone no.)
Co-ord'r: Liz Price
Chair: Geraldine Clohessy

Tullamore Traveller Movement CDP's
correct phone number is 057-9352438.

Our anti-trespass laws condemned by Europe

THE anti-Traveller trespass laws which many CDP volunteers and staff protested against when they were introduced in 2002 should be reviewed immediately, according to the Council of Europe.

The laws are used to stop Travellers stopping on public land for more than 24 hours.

The Council's advisory committee on the protection of national minorities said it was "particularly disquieting" that legislation that criminalises trespass has

been used against families waiting for local authorities to house them.

It noted that "the lack of appropriate halting sites continues to be one of the key problems."

The Council recommends the Irish authorities to "ensure Travellers' representatives' effective participation in various bodies dealing with Travellers."

More funding for the Equality Authority was also called for.

In addition, the Council called for the

urgent reform of Ireland's unfair work permits system. Many families are split because of the rules.

Meanwhile, the Council described as "impressive" the Government's National Action Plan Against Racism introduced last year.

Thousands marched in Dublin after the contentious anti-Traveller trespass laws were introduced.

Families don't want wall through their homes

LIMERICK Traveller Development Group led a protest in late October outside Limerick city hall after the council looked ready to push ahead with a plan to build a wall through Traveller family homes.

The 13-foot concrete wall may have gone right through the spot where at least one family's caravan is located in Clonlong Halting Site. The Casey family were told to move on, towards a road, and a question mark hung over the order as caravans are prohibited from trespassing on public roads.

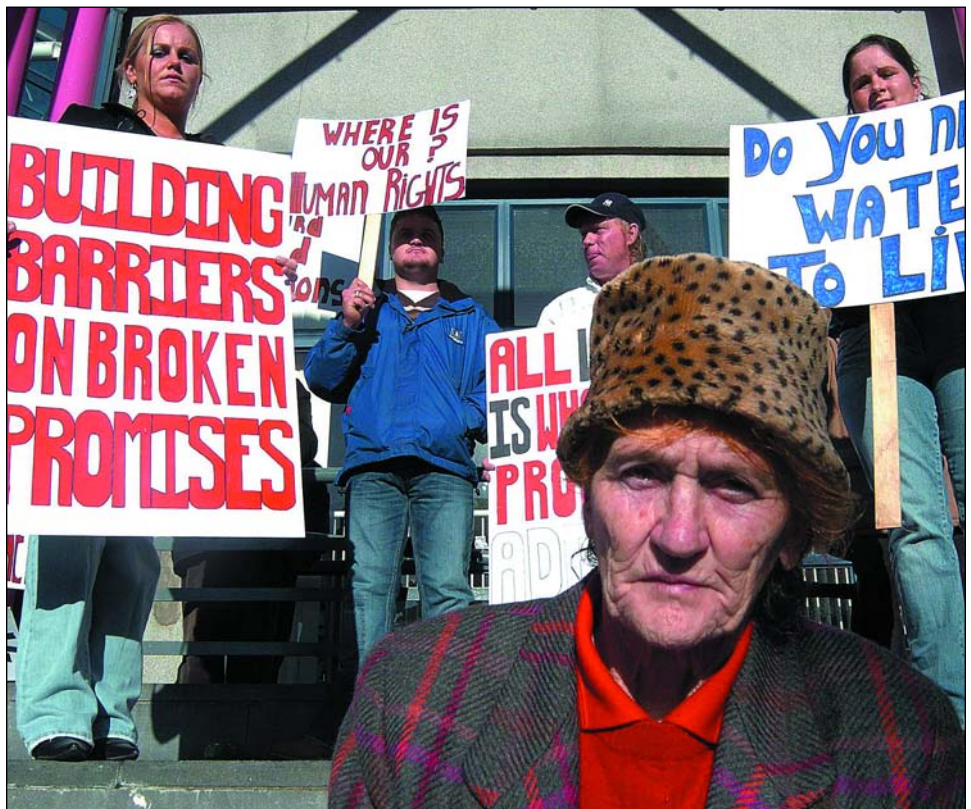
Less than 50 people attended the protest, but it highlighted the plight of the families concerned and succeeded in attracting the attention of the national media.

After the protests, further meetings were arranged between the local authority, the local Traveller CDP and the families.

Bridget Casey of the Limerick Traveller Development Group said the halting site had been built to accommodate four families, "but now there are 25 adults and 30 children living on a site with no proper sanitation."

Geraldine Casey – eight months pregnant at the time of the dispute – said the stress was unreal.

A spokesman for Limerick City Council said they had been given planning permission to build a wall around an industrial area



The protest outside Limerick city hall.

PIC: BRENDAN CROWE

bordering the halting site. The wall was to provide better security for local industry.

Further meetings between the stakeholders were planned to resolve the issue.

New booklet on human rights - aimed at one-parent families

FORMER Irish President, Mary Robinson, says the "basic human rights" of thousands of one-parent families are being denied.

"One in six families in Ireland remain disadvantaged – legally, financially and socially," she pointed out.

Mary made the remark in the introduction to a new booklet on

how human rights law can be used to improve the life-chances of one-parent families.

Hard copies of the booklet are available through the One Family organisation, formerly Cherish, (tel. 1890-662-212) and from their website: www.onefamily.ie

Donegal co-ordinator says judge's comments 'hurtful'

THE co-ordinator of Donegal Travelers CDP, Siobhan McLoughlin, has condemned as "horrendous" the comments made by a District Court judge, Thomas Fitzpatrick, about women in general.

He said it was usually women who "make serious complaints and then withdraw them."

"This is the second time this week and I cannot help but notice that they are mostly made by women," he said.

Judge Fitzpatrick made the remarks while

ticking off a woman at Letterkenny District Court for withdrawing an assault complaint against her fiancé.

He allowed the charges to be withdrawn, saying they appeared to have been "spurious". "What are you women doing?" he asked.

The CDP co-ordinator was quoted in the media condemning the Judge making "generalising and hurtful comments against women."

Donegal Travellers CDP was in the midst of the '16 Days of Action Opposing Violence

Against Women' when the comments came to their attention.

"We are trying to organise this campaign and then someone in a powerful position is saying insulting things about women," said Siobhan.

Siobhan - who will be a candidate in the next elections - said people should consider the level of fear and intimidation that women feel in a situation of domestic violence.

"There are 125 women dead in the last 10 years from domestic violence," she pointed out.

20th anniversary of Doras Buí CDP



DORAS Buí CDP (formerly the Parents Alone Resource Centre) in Coolock, Dublin, celebrated its 20th anniversary, on Friday, September 29th. Noel Ahern, Minister of State, at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was present to mark the occasion.



Doras Buí is a self-directed and self-managed organisation that started work in 1986. From modest beginnings, the project raised funds for a purpose-built centre, which opened in 1992. It was the first locally based resource centre for lone parents in Ireland, managed by lone

parents themselves, which promotes a sense of solidarity in the project with a strong self-help ethos.

Hundreds of local people use the centre for information and support regarding social welfare entitlements, legal rights, housing, training, second-chance education and employment. The project provides 50 crèche places and also provides counselling for children from 4 - 12 years.

Minister Ahern said, "It is my belief that it is only through a combination of local community initiatives on the ground, and support from statutory agencies that we can achieve the best outcomes for communities. Only by having your community on board can you ensure that you are genuinely meeting their needs."

Minister Ahern said his Department has seen the benefits that its funding has brought about in the innovative work that Doras Buí has been involved in over the past 20 years.

In addition, the project has successfully gathered the support of other government departments, statutory agencies and funding groups.

Doras Buí in a very practical way has supported many people who come for the first time to the centre at a time of crisis or with practical difficulties, for example, looking for support with housing or children suffering bereavement or loss following marital breakdown.

Projects were undertaken over the summer to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this centre. For instance, single parent families went on a number of outings and a day's celebration was organised for children involving clowns and entertainment.

For more info, contact: Doras Buí CDP, Bunratty Drive, Coolock, Dublin 17. Tel. 01-8481872 / 4811. Fax: 01-8481116. E-mail: info@dorasbui.org



Anne Traynor, co-ordinator, and Georgina Potts, chairperson of the new Shanganagh CDP in Dublin, presenting Nadine Plunkett with her prize for designing the project's logo.

New CDP in Shanganagh

THE newest project to join the Community Development Programme, Shanganagh CDP, in County Dublin, held its official Launch on Monday, December 4th.

Shanganagh CDP is only a few months old and was temporarily hosted by SWAN, (Southside Women's Action Network) CDP.

In June, the project took on their first co-ordinator, Anne Traynor, and within a month opened their office in Shanganagh Park House.

"We have a very busy Management Committee, representative of all aspects of the Community," said chairperson, Georgina Potts. "At present we have linked in with most of the groups and agencies in the area."

The CDP got their logo through a competition in the local Scoil Mhuire, Rathallagh (the winner was Nadine Plunkett).

For more information, contact: Shanganagh CDP, Shanganagh Park House, Shankill, Dublin 18. Tel. 01-282-4210. Mob. 085-735-7724. E-mail: shanganaghcdp@eircom.net

North Wall Women's Centre is 21

NORTH Wall Women's Centre in Dublin celebrated its 21st year in existence by hosting an awareness and fundraising event called 'Relay For Life', on October 7th.

Held in conjunction with St. Andrew's Resource Centre, Kilbarrack CDP and the Irish Cancer Society, 'Relay For Life' was an overnight event designed to celebrate cancer survivors and it raised funds for palliative care treatment for cancer sufferers.

Cancer survivors are guests of honour at the Relay and are invited to begin the event by walking the first lap of the course, cheered on by family, friends and teams from the community. Begun in the USA, it has already been in ten other European countries, but this was the first time it came to Ireland.

For more information please call North Wall Women's Centre, Lower Sherriff Street, Dublin 1, Tel: 01-8365399, Fax: 01-8365452. E-mail: geraldine.odriscoll@nwwc.ie

Learning the jargon: Social Partnership

- it's like two bad kissers moving in together, long-term



By ALLEN MEAGHER

OVER the last decade and more, there are a lot less strikes in the country – and increased prosperity – thanks to regular negotiations between the Government (also referred to as the State) and wider society. By 'wider society' is meant trade unions, farmers organisations, employers organisations, community development organisations and various national representative groups in the Republic of Ireland.

The negotiations have led to national agreements on things like labour laws, salary scales, social inclusion programmes and so on. These agreements are given names such as 'The Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness' or, the current one called 'Towards 2016'. They influence the aims and contents of the National Development Plan. (We've all seen the NDP logo on the back of a bus, at the start of a new road, or on a community bus).

The process that leads to these national agreements is called Social Partnership. It's like moving in together, long-term. Or a marriage you renegotiate every few years.

If it broke down, farmers, trade unions, community groups, and so on, would, most likely, return to street demonstrations and strikes as a method to seek what they want for their members or communities.

Successful economically

However, the Social Partnership approach is now running successfully (for the economy anyway) after it was first launched in 1987 when unemployment was in double-figures nationally and emigration was raging. Co-operation was promoted by politicians as the best way forward.

Since then, Social Partnership has been applauded as being to a large extent responsible for Ireland's continuing economic success.

The process of Partnership (accompanied by a focus on 'Cohesion' and 'Consensus-building') is now a part of every county and city council's local development planning. Most community groups that are funded by Government are obliged to co-operate with local

Partnership structures. In truth – so long as the local Social Partnership structures give them a fair deal – local community groups are glad to co-operate as they enjoy having more influence on policy matters.

Only 30% get 'a real say'

But, and there is a but, Social Partnership has not been as successful in dealing with poverty and exclusion. At local level, in terms of community development work, this is a problem; the so-called local Partnership structure is often only a token talking shop. That's not the case everywhere, but it is common in enough places to mean hundreds of thousands of people who should be looking forward to better lives are not.

A report in 2004 found that nearly 30% of community development activists felt the community and voluntary sector had "a real say in decision-making in the Partnership process."

What about the other 70%, you might ask?

The report's authors (Powell and Geoghegan) found that most felt that local Partnership arrangements tended more to reinforce and to extend the power of State

officials than to benefit communities.

Nationally, in 2002, the Community Platform felt obliged to walk out of a session of the Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness conference because policy changes they campaigned for were not implemented.

Some criticisms

There are some more core criticisms of being in Partnership with Government (local and national) and with being funded by Government: On the one hand, you could say there are less street protests because all the 'partners' are sorting issues out in meetings. On the other hand, you could say there are fewer voices raised publicly against Government policy because projects (and some national organisations) may fear having their funding pulled if they complain.

Once they complain or speak up on behalf of the communities, they can do no wrong from a community development point of view. Perhaps, organisations get carried away with self-censorship and say too little.

Two researchers recently wrote reports for the Combat Poverty Agency. Anna Lee said you cannot just blame the government. Community and Voluntary Sector

organisations are also themselves to blame for not doing the right thing by their communities. The second researcher, Brian Motherway, says that groups have to decide whether to 'Stay in or step out' of Social Partnership.

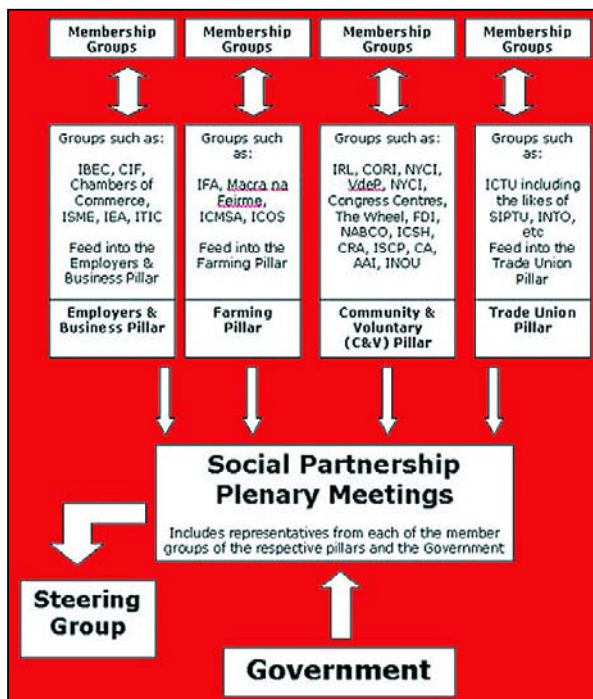
For the moment, as Brian points out, "Partnership remains at the heart of Government policy, both nationally and locally."

It will continue to do so even if a few local groups 'step out'.

Unless there is a mass exodus, locally and nationally, the term 'Partnership' will remain, for some time to come, a by-word among politicians and community development volunteers and workers for the way things are done.

Examples of Social Partnership at local level include the following:

The Social Inclusion Measures committees that give advice to City / County Enterprise Boards of local authorities throughout the country. County childcare committees are also an example of Partnership at local level.



Partnership good for the economy

- but is it silencing radical voices?

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

THERE is a down side to the partner-like relationship between the Community and Voluntary Sector and the State. According to academics and researchers, this is some of what Social Partnership has led to:

- The State has "mutated from generous benefactor to stern assessor."
- The push to find consensus "quells radicalism and protects established interests."
- Some consultation processes undertaken by State agencies are only tokenistic and are characterised by a lack of respect for communities.
- Community groups should decide "whether to stay in or step out" of Social Partnership with the State.

Bad as the above claims make things sound, so far groups are staying put within local and national Partnership structures. (Tell us if you know any different!). It may be that the Sector has lost its balls (radicalism, if you like), or that projects genuinely see more advantages in continuing to co-operate with the State.

The debate is summarised in a new report published earlier this year as part of the Combat Poverty Agency's 'Having Your Say!' programme. The report was written by Dr. Brian Matherway and is a review of literature published in recent years about 'The Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty in Ireland'.

The main discussion in the 'Current Debates' section focuses on the tension between the positive impacts of the national programmes in terms of stability and funding set against the risks of losing radicalism and energy.

On causes of poverty

In the report, Brian quotes Rosemary Meade, from UCC, who says there is now a tendency to associate poverty and exclusion with certain groups rather than attribute them to structural causes.

He quotes the CDP handbook (published in 1999) which states that one of the core principles of community development is "to challenge the causes of disadvantage/poverty and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources."

He points out that not everyone agrees on the causes of poverty: "Many versions of the national partnership discourse tend to assume that it is a rational managerial project to eliminate 'errors' in the system and work together for solutions that benefit all. This is to explicitly set aside issues of structure, power or interests as causes of poverty."

He says many people "lament what they see as a lack of political radicalism in the community sector."

It is not as if it was partnership between the C&V Sector and the State was predicted to be trouble-free. There were fears expressed early on over the "deradicalizing impact of partnership."

Partnership has quelled radicalism

According to Rosemary, the dependence (of Community groups on the State for funding) and problems associated with that have worsened in recent years due, she says, to changes in the Community Development Programme where "the state has mutated from generous benefactor to stern assessor and with its reconstruction of the terms of project funding has reminded community organisations of their own vulnerability."

In his report, Brian summarises Rosemary's views, claiming she: "goes so far as to say that the autonomous community sector exists no more, that all that remains is a body of state-dependent service providers."

It sounded like an overly bleak view. Rosemary, in a phone call with 'Changing Ireland' said, however, that Brian has



Source: www.indymedia.ie

exaggerated her view. While she believes the independence of the Sector has been eroded and that there is "a great blurring between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector" she would not, for example, describe CDPs as "state-dependent service providers."

On the contrary, what is clear to this writer is that community groups attached to various Programmes – including CDPs – have shown their ability (some, not all of them) to protest when necessary as well as engage in 'partnership' arrangements.

Returning to Brian's report, T. Collins wrote on how the local partnership era was "preceded by a period of worsening relationships between the state and disadvantaged communities. This led to a growth in radical politics, including the burgeoning of Sinn Féin as a working class voice." Local partnership, he argues, could be seen as "a sophisticated process of State building".

Meanwhile, the importance placed on finding consensus can be responsible for quelling radical voices and minority voices, thereby protecting the powerful.

Charges of tokenism

The most common charge levelled against the Irish model of partnership is that it is tokenistic. One commentator (R. Loughry) observed from experience that consultation processes undertaken by state agencies were characterised by - lack of respect and lack of empathy for the communities and an overall feeling of tokenism.

Rosemary Meade puts it like this: "The sector has been afforded a tokenistic form of recognition: a presence shorn of influence, participation without power."

Many also refer to the lack of resources to support communities in their attempts to participate.

The future - stay in or step out!

These concerns, writes Brian, "are the fuel for the fiery debates about the future direction of community development in Ireland."

He says that much of the debate is about "whether to stay in or step out" and says the dilemma for community groups is whether to stay within partnership, accepting its imperfections but working towards removing them, or to step outside and adopt a more radical stance. (There is much more on this issue in a 2005 article by Powell & Geoghegan in the Community Development Journal, reference bsi062)

"This debate will continue indefinitely," stresses Brian, "There is always a tension between radicalism and pragmatism focused on the sector's relationship with the state."

"But the core project should not be forgotten: Community development needs, above all else, to enable the voice of those who are excluded to be heard."

No guidance on 'stepping out'

Unfortunately, Brian's report does not elaborate on what 'stepping out' would mean in practise for a CDP or Partnership company or the like. More importantly, it does not elaborate on what it would mean, in both pros and cons, for the communities that projects and organisations seek/claim to work with and/or represent.

And until these matters are clarified, and until it is clear the 'pros' outweigh the 'cons', it is unlikely there will be any major rush among activists, volunteers and community groups to step away from State funding and co-operation.

Rosemary Meade was with Glen CDP

ROSEMARY Meade, a UCC lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies, was a member of the voluntary board of management of Glen CDP in Cork from 1999 up to last year.

Achievements made under 'Partnership'

COMMUNITY development has in many ways succeeded in informing and influencing policy-making in Ireland through Social Partnership and collaboration.

Positive developments in this regard are occurring at all levels of Irish society, for example:

- (i) effective local partnerships and RAPID groups,
- (ii) the reform of local government has given a formal role to the community, including people living in poverty, on County Development Boards,
- (iii) the work of the Community Platform in relation to national partnership agreements,
- (iv) the acceptance of NESF recommendations that have been advised by the voice of people living in poverty.

However, as Anna Lee describes in her recently published report 'Community Development: Current Issues and Challenges':

"The place of community development in Ireland could be viewed as close to that of the President – important, influential but not powerful!"

While the past 15 years in Ireland have seen achievements, Anna believes there is "a growing disenchantment, among activists, (a) with the view that community development is an important influence on public policy and (b) an awareness that this disenchantment is linked both to (i) the sector itself and (ii) to the wider context."

Activists are conscious of a double-edged sword, the State now gives the sector status, but has this neutered the sector's ability to push for radical social change?

Anna says activists are asking: "Is the commitment to community development (as a means of achieving positive social change) being undermined even from within the sector itself?"



Her report notes the following changes, carrying a mix of pros and cons, over recent years:

- A shift towards partnership and consensus-building models
 - Emphasis on the local level
 - The programme approach
 - A focus on the short term
 - A reliance on public funding
 - Staffing: a move towards managerialism
- Anna concludes by pointing out many positive changes that have occurred.

Local partnership

REMEMBER the word 'partnership' has been around a long time, and 'Social Partnership' is not its only usage in community development. The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) funds 38 area-based partnerships, 31 community partnerships and two employment pacts working in deprived urban and rural areas across Ireland. Eg The PAUL Partnership in Limerick city.

National programmes supporting communities

THE number of national programmes funded by Government to combat social exclusion and poverty has increased in recent years. There are three main programmes that engage in community development or are guided by community development principles. These are the Community Development Programme (CDP), the Local Development Social Exclusion Programme (LDSIP) and the Family Resource Centres (FRCs).

In addition, other programmes include: INTEGRA; New Opportunities for Women; the Peace and Reconciliation Programme; LEADER; URBAN; RAPID; Clár.

Each of these have put Social Partnerships structures and philosophies at the heart of their way of work.

The Partnership agreements have many positive impacts on the national programmes in terms of stability and funding. And such funding is an important statement of the Government's willingness to be criticised and to hear the voice of those who experience poverty and disadvantage.

On the other hand, there is an inbuilt conflict when the Government funds organisations who say their aim is to change the State.

Good resource, but not reader-friendly

'THE Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty in Ireland - A Literature Review', by Dr Brian Motherway, is a good resource, though it is not very reader-friendly.

It covers in-depth the issue of evaluating community development work. It also looks at the nature, value and history of community development; definitions and concepts; and, national community development programmes; and current debates.

Everything is well referenced, which is ideal for anyone studying community

development or seeking to get to grips with the Community and Voluntary Sector's past and present.

However, it is not written in easily understood English. Surely, it should be accessible if it is part of the 'Having Your Say!' programme.

Proponents... proliferates... benign... posits... neo-corporatist... are all words that it is possible to replace. At the same time, the summary at the beginning is clear-cut.

The language used in Anna Lee's report is generally easier to read (an exception being one 48 word sentence!). The layout is more

helpful.

Anna's report was also commissioned as part of the 'Having Your Say!' programme, a three-year initiative (2005-2007) that has the overall aim of strengthening the policy voices and practices of people and communities living in poverty.

For copies of either report, contact: Combat Poverty Agency, Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Tel: 01-670-6746. Fax: 01-670-6760. E-mail: info@combatpoverty.ie Website: www.combatpoverty.ie

5 good reasons for a national office

THE advantages of operating at a national level – of CDPs setting up a national office, are numerous. Here are a few, *WRITES MAURICE MCCONVILLE*:

- 1 National policy, which creates barriers to inclusion at a local level need to be addressed at a national level.
- 2 Working together on policy issues addresses isolation and creates solidarity and makes us stronger.
- 3 Knowledge and experience can be shared between projects. There is no need to re-invent the wheel.
- 4 We can pool resources and spread the load when we work collectively.
- 5 The Programme needs to develop a National Profile and to have voice on National Issues.

There are many more reasons for CDPs to start thinking nationally. We need to organise more within our regions and

developing ways to feed our ideas and aspirations onto the national stage.

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) exists as a national focus and we should use it. We also need to develop our own mechanism and methods for networking and creating a National Office. The need is there; the expertise is there all we need is the motivation.

Think Big, Think National!

CDPs united could be a real force for change

CDPs have matured and now need to address policy issues. To do this we need to come together and open up another front in our war against social exclusion. We need to engage more on a national level. It is a natural progression and should be informed by the work we are doing at a grassroots level.

There are thousands of volunteers and hundred of workers involved in the Community Development Programme. If all that experience, skill and knowledge could be harnessed at a national level it would be a force for real change and social inclusion.

CDPs need to come together for mutual support. Increasingly we come up against barriers in the shape of regulations, which



writes MAURICE MCCONVILLE

are handed down to state organisations.

Whether it is the rules around the numbers needed to qualify for VEC funding or the restrictions on qualifications for a FAS training course, these policies are often barriers to many people engaging with certain courses or programmes. CDPs must work more to effect change in national policies.

Small may be beautiful and it does certainly have advantages but it is a bit of a drawback if you need to challenge big organisations or vested interests. CDPs are small fish in a big pond and sometimes have to swim with sharks, who hunt in packs. It would be better if we could swim as a shoal.

'We cannot be passive bystanders'

GEARÓID MacGÍOBÚIN reports

DR Michael Hardiman, counselling psychologist and author of 'Healing Life's Hurts' and 'Children Under the Influence', was the key speaker at a seminar organised by Iorras Le Cheile, CDP in Belmullet, Co. Mayo, on November 30.

"We cannot be passive bystanders in a community (like many other communities in Ireland) where families and generations are being ruined by the affects of alcohol," said Rose Conway-Walsh, CDP Co-ordinator.

The aim of the seminar was to examine how alcohol and drug abuse can affect whole families and communities.

"The suffering experienced by children and adults who have lived with alcohol and drug abuse can have a devastating affect on their quality of life unless they get help and support," said Rose.

"Often people are not aware of the



Iorras Le Cheile CDP in Mayo are actively combating alcoholism in the area.

supports and professional help that is available to them. Others feel too ashamed to get help. This sense of shame can prove to be a heavy burden over many years. Shame for something they had no control over and no responsibility for.

"We all know someone who has been affected by alcohol and we have a responsibility to make sure that we understand the wider effects of its abuse," Rose added.

Iorras Le Cheile CDP, based in Belmullet, serves the Erris area, which has a population of about 10,000 people. Professional services, related agencies and organisations concerned with alcohol and drug abuse were also represented at the seminar.

To find out more about holding seminars on alcohol or to learn more about how CDPs can respond to the issue of drug abuse, contact: Iorras Le Cheile, American Street, Belmullet, Co. Mayo. Tel. 097-20828.



Special award for Knockanrawley

IN Tipperary town, Knockanrawley Resource Centre – which includes a CDP under its roof – received a special award for 'Community Care' in this year's Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place awards announced in October.

The special award category was given in recognition of the support, services and resources provided to individuals of all ages, gender and ethnic background within the community.

Catherine Sharpe, chairperson of Knockanrawley centre, said everyone was "very proud" of the achievement.

To contact Knockanrawley CDP, Knockanrawley Resource Centre, Tipperary town, Co. Tipperary. Tel. 062-52688. Fax: 062-52206.

E-mail: knockanrawley@eircom.net

Good news! Fall in numbers at risk of poverty

THERE were less older people and lone parents at risk of poverty last year, as a result of social welfare and pension increases, new figures from the Central Statistics Office show.

However, Ireland still has one of the highest rates of people at risk of poverty in the EU.

The proportion of people at risk of poverty dropped from 20% in 2004 to 18.5% last year. Among older people, the figure fell from 27% to 20%. The risk for lone parents fell from 48% to 41%.

Other high-risk groups include unemployed people, the disabled people and the ill, all of whom are at slightly less risk of poverty now than before.

CDPs work with all of these target groups within their communities.

The European Anti-Poverty Network said the Government still had a long way to go to reach its target of reducing consistent poverty to 2% by next year.

Meanwhile, the Labour Party called for a €3.5 billion 'War on Poverty' over the coming six years in the country's 25 most disadvantaged communities. The proposal is outlined in a policy document called 'A Fair Deal: Fighting Poverty and Exclusion in Ireland'.



Interview with:
Anna Lee

'We can unite around single issues'

ANNA Lee has plenty of advice for the Community and Voluntary Sector. In an interview with 'Changing Ireland' she spoke her mind on a range of topics:

Regarding the Sector, Anna commented: "We know what divides us, less so what unites us."

Are there any natural leaders within the sector who could steer the Sector towards more radical action and a collective approach to seeking change? For example, the Community Platform, the Community Workers Co-op, Planet, The Wheel?

"Pick any one of those four, and they will be able to tell you what is wrong with the other three. The sector is divided," continued Anna.

She said that for a leader to emerge, that organisation would have to gain the support and respect of the entire sector before it could speak on behalf of everyone else.

"The Combat Poverty Agency came close a few times, but each time it was when they worked on particular issues, and when the campaigns were over, the influence decreased."

One campaign that did for a time unite a cluster of groups was the End Child Poverty Campaign, which Anna described as a serious attempt to make changes.

"I know for a fact that it needed government departments," she said, adding that officials were forced to acknowledge – much as they disliked doing so – that social welfare allowances were excessively mean.

Activists should unite around and work on specific themes and issues, one at a time, says Anna: "That is best. It may be unrealistic to expect the sector to achieve unity, to get it to speak (continually) as a totality."

One concrete achievement by the Sector in the past decade is that the authorities are now obliged to consult people before making decisions affecting them.

"They cannot anymore defend not having consulted. If nothing else changed, that has."

She said the quality of consultation is another story – it varies greatly.

"But the fact of consultation is now embedded," she added.

"Rigorous case-making is required to address issues. Any argument you make in community work (be it to local or national

government) needs to be without holes. You should have your back planted against the wall, because the State is more powerful than you."

Anna sees plenty small examples of groups doing this, but especially at the local level.

"You see examples, in 'Changing Ireland' and in 'Poverty Today' magazine, and it is slow and particular work. If we worked more collectively and agreed on our problems, we would get further," she said. "We operate

within the status quo and it is hard to work and exist as an organisation outside it."

"People starting into community work expect to make changes, but get caught up in doing what's doable. When, in

our work, we meet people who need services (eg childcare), how do you manage that along with having a radical approach? I don't have a straight answer to that question," she admitted.

Short term focus

"Programme support for community development is generally provided on a short-term basis in cycles of three, or fewer, years. There is, however, no short-term solution to poverty issues."

- Anna Lee

Who is Anna Lee?

ANNA Lee is manager of the Tallaght Partnership in Dublin and is also a former chairperson of Combat Poverty Agency (CPA).

Originally, Anna qualified as a social worker, "but I couldn't see the point in asking people to change when they were overwhelmed by chaos not of their own making in their lives."

So she got stuck into anti-poverty work and community and local development work.

After she made a hard-hitting speech at a CPA conference a year ago, Anna was asked to produce a publication based on her research. The result – now available from the CPA's website and in hard copies from the CPA directly – is 'Community Development: Current Issues and Challenges'.

Anna's report discusses current issues and also proposes ideas for more effective community development and advocacy work.

It is available for download from the website: www.cpa.ie

CDPs strive to keep balance

- between political action and service delivery

"MANY community development organisations have become involved in the delivery of services as a mechanism to secure resources to support their work for social change," says Anna Lee in her report 'Community Development: Current Issues and Challenges'.

"It is difficult, however, to sustain both types of activity in a single organisation. Service delivery is generally easier to see, is more likely to be funded and its impact is easier to measure.

"While the putting in place of programmes such as the Community Development Programme and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme has been an important support for community development in Ireland, it has also created difficulties. Programmes have the potential to significantly strengthen individual projects. They can facilitate the sharing of learning; the identification of good and poor practice; the building of a wider collective voice; the more effective use of resources; a more thorough input to public

policy debates.

"It is questionable, however, whether either of the two programmes mentioned above has realised this potential.

Don't blame the locals!

"The factors that give rise to poverty are generally neither created nor solved at local level."

- Anna Lee

"The programme approach has contributed to an increase in specialisms and the development of separate issue-based and geographically-based projects.

"The management and accountability obligations of programmes can, and do, divert and dissipate the energy required for direct community development work. The recruitment

and effective deployment of staff is time-consuming and challenging, particularly if difficulties arise.

"It is, of course, essential that there is clear accountability for the use of public resources.

"Current community development practice is struggling to maintain a balance between a focus on process, where 'the way the work is carried out is as important as the programme of development being undertaken' (Kelleher and Whelan 1992), and the development and delivery of services to communities.

"It is important that this balance is found," stresses Anna.

The Combat Poverty Agency

The Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) is a centre for the provision of information and training on community development.

Since its establishment in 1986, the Combat Poverty Agency has supported and promoted community development as a way of tackling poverty.

The agency's headquarters is in Dublin, though they work nationwide.

For instance, to find out how to... (a) Build relationships with policy-makers, (b) Work with Joint Oireachtas committees, (c) Analyse policy, and so on... log onto: www.combatpoverty.ie/havingyoursay

Community development still to realise its potential

"COMMUNITY development's role, above all, is to advocate for radical change in the structures that keep people poor. The sector is not realising its full potential," claims Anna Lee.

"If we think of community development as a significant tool for change, it has not realised its potential."

But there are ways forward!

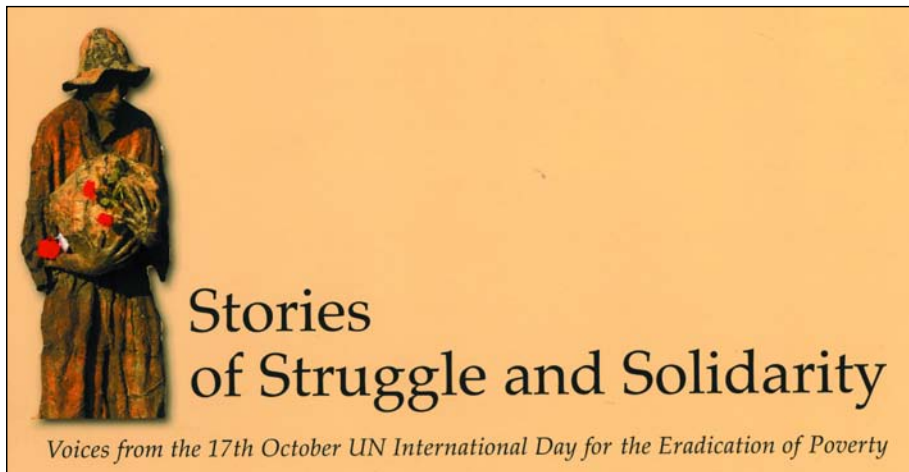
In her report, Anna explores a number of alternative approaches that can be adopted to build the effectiveness of community development as a powerful force for social change. They are:

- Emphasise the collective
- Invest in the acquisition of skills
- Be certain about your mandate
- Develop the 'authentic' voice and the representative voice
- Build relationships with the political system
- Achieve a balance between political action and service delivery
- Focus on new models of service delivery
- Strive for the practical application of empowerment.



P.T.O. ⇐

In solidarity with the world's poor



IN 1992, the UN General Assembly declared October 17th as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, designating it as a day to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries.

October 17th was marked in Ireland by South West Wexford CDP, Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group in Dublin, Farranree CDP in Cork, ATD Fourth World, the Combat Poverty Agency, and the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, among others.

The Blanchardstown CDP asked local Travellers to photograph the issues and experiences they meet in their daily lives, culminating in an exhibition and slideshow.

Farranree CDP held a one-day workshop and a photo exhibition. The workshop was for young people to discuss poverty in their local area and how it could be eradicated in Ireland and globally.

Meanwhile, South West Wexford CDP hosted a theatre/drama project for transition year students from The Ramsgrange Community School, Ramsgrange and The Good Counsel School in nearby New Ross.

The project developed a participatory drama involving young people to express friendship and solidarity with people who have to live with poverty and social exclusion every day of the year. The drama was performed on October 17th, naturally.

The preparatory work, performance and workshops were filmed to be used as a training tool by other groups.

For the past 7 years, commemorations have also taken place in Dublin at the Famine Memorial on Custom House Quay. A book 'Stories of Struggle and Solidarity' was launched at this year's event by ATD Fourth World. It is an inspiring book and worth getting if you wish to take part in the future and want ideas.

"The fight against poverty is a fight for human rights. People who struggle against

poverty are the first defenders of human rights," said an ATD Fourth World spokesperson.

If you are thinking of joining in next year, check out the website www.oct17.org or email 17October@eircom.ie.

Further information on the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is available from www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/poverty_link3.htm.

Or if you are looking for ideas to engage youth, talk to:

Sharon Kennedy, Project Co-ordinator
SWWCDP, Ramsgrange, New Ross, Co. Wexford. Tel. 051-389418. Fax: 051-389264. E-mail: swwcdg@iol.ie

Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, tel: 01-820 7812 or e-mail: btdg@eircom.net

Farranree CDP, tel: 021-421 1822 or e-mail: fareecd@indigo.ie



Want a flat screen this Christmas at no extra cost

IF your loved one is looking for a flat-screen television this Christmas, and you are a bit short of dosh, 'Changing Ireland' has just the answer.

For further details, P.T.O.