

# CHANGING IRELAND

SPRING '07

ISSUE 21

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

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who her number one  
heroes are  
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solutions, not just  
your complaints!  
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and the Community  
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## Burning social issues

- See inside!

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

# The burning issues



## In this issue,

- Mary McAleese reveals what people have most impressed her in her role as President of Ireland to date;
- Minister of State Noel Ahern outlines what impresses him most about Community Development Projects and the volunteers and staff who run them;
- And people in New Ross reveal why they think so much of their local CDP.

There are also contributions from volunteers and staff in Ballybrack, Dublin, about why they do what they do.

You can find out why Peadar Kirby tried to talk people in Costa Rica out of trying to emulate the 'Celtic Tiger' success.

And our former diarist and current agony uncle, Horace, struggles with your many letters.

However, the most important articles are based around a new report called 'Rekindling The Fire'. When it was launched, the report made the RTE six-o'clock news.

'Rekindling The Fire' shows that CDPs triple the financial investment made in them by government by attracting further funding support for their communities. The report also highlights the real work that projects do to better their communities. The RTE crew broadcast from Ringsend, but it could have visited any of the 65 areas in and around Dublin with CDPs and seen the needs and witnessed solutions being put into action.

CDP successes are incredible, and 'Rekindling The Fire' shows how Dublin projects are tackling the burning issues of our time.

## What CDPs are:

'CHANGING Ireland' highlights the work of Community Development Projects (CDPs). There are 180 CDPs, each of which is locally and independently-managed. They are funded by the government's Community Development Programme.

### The projects:

- Have an anti-poverty, anti-exclusion focus and promote the participation of people experiencing poverty and exclusion at all levels of the project.
- Work from community development principles and methods.
- Provide support and act as a catalyst for community development activity.
- Act as a resource in communities.
- Provide co-ordination between community, voluntary and statutory groups in their areas.
- Involve representatives of groups which experience poverty and social exclusion in their management committees.

### Location:

The projects in the Community Development Programme are based in disadvantaged communities within:

- inner-city areas;
- rural area;
- small towns.

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### DISCLAIMER

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Dunbrody at sea



## Ups and downs for Ross

NEW Ross was known as an 'unemployment black-spot' during the 1980s and some shop-owners in the centre of the town remain shy to this day of painting their premises, as if lacking confidence in the future. Yet, property prices have shot up and so has the town's population. The town is a designated RAPID disadvantaged area.

The River Barrow on which New Ross is built exerts both a positive and negative pull:

Since the town sits on the edge of an electoral boundary, marked by the river that divides counties Wexford and Kilkenny, New Ross has gone many decades without a TD to truly represent it.

On the other hand, the port of New Ross is always busy and thousands of people stop to visit the main tourist attraction, 'The Dunbrody' ship.

## Zero points: no to Fair Trade

ASKED why New Ross CDP - which serves up hundreds of cuppas each week - uses tea and coffee from exploitative multi-nationals such as Nescafe and Maxwell House, Annette Ellis said it was down to cost.

"We can't afford the Fair Trade coffee and tea," she said.

# "This place has changed my life big-time"

- Measuring the worth of a local CDP

By ALLEN MEAGHER

"THIS place changed my life big-time," declared Vincent Canning, a frequent visitor to New Ross CDP since shortly after it opened its doors five years ago.

For many years, the old Viking town had nothing to offer men like Vincent but picturesque spots for outdoor drinking.

"We had nothing to do but hang around town. You'd find me on every corner," said Vincent. "I only drink cans at home now."

In January, this year, Vincent showed President Mary McAleese around a photography exhibition that resulted from one of the projects undertaken by the CDP's Men's Group.

She had spoken movingly during her visit about the ordeals facing people who cannot read or write. Thankfully, this was never a problem for Vincent, but not because formal schooling was such a success:

"I learned to read and write in the bookie office," he said.

He and many like him - lacking opportunities and failing to benefit to any great degree from the recent boom times - were largely ignored until the CDP arrived, adopting an open-door policy.

Vincent and his brothers Des and Pascal were informed about the project through the project's outreach programme.

"I am in the CDP three years. Me and Paddy Clear met John and Nicholas (outreach workers) in the L&N carpark and I told the (other) boys about it. They said it was a place to go for a couple of hours each week where you could get tea and sandwiches."

So, one Friday morning, Vincent

dropped in to check the project out and he hasn't looked back since:

"This is the greatest committee I ever came across," he testifies. Once Vincent became involved, so too did his brothers.

"It's the best thing that happened me. Put it this way, I haven't been in trouble for six years now," he said.

However, the project is by no means focusing solely on older men, Vincent points out: "They have computers and indoor soccer for the young people." He nods to the room where there are a dozen computers linked up to the internet.

Not that he's all that bothered with computers, but the interaction between young and old, men and women and all cultures in a safe friendly environment cannot be matched anywhere else in town.

To give a measure of how supportive people in the CDP are, he remarks: "If you are stuck for the price of a bag of coal, they would try to help you out here. If you're stuck in any other way, there's always somebody here to talk to."

And of course, there's always time for a laugh, or a whole day for laughing:

"We went horse-riding once (through the CDP) in Courttown, it was the best craic ever. Ten of us went and two of us fell off our horses, Kevin and my brother Des."

Des Canning interjected: "I got my foot caught in the stirrup and it wasn't a bit funny at the time. Anyway, I got back up on the horse again afterwards and kept going."

Sometimes you get more than you bargained for when you become involved in a CDP.



Vincent Canning

# Open-door policy makes



Michael Kane



Sharon



Paddy Caulfield

## President declares New Ross CDP 'a republic within a republic'

**New Ross CDP was declared "a republic within a republic" by President Mary McAleese, during a visit to the town on January 23rd.**

The declaration came after project co-ordinator, Conor Dervan, welcomed her by saying they thought the President's role must be "to cherish all the children of the Republic equally", as it says in the Constitution.

"Well, that is very much the ethos of this project," said Conor, hoping he was right to say the statement is contained in the Constitution. "Everybody in this town is welcome to the CDP be they settled, Traveller, emigrants or someone whose

family has been here for hundreds of years. It's a safe space where people from different backgrounds can sit down and have tea together.

"We also look at identifying with the people what are the issues in this town, and see how we can improve the quality of life in New Ross," added Conor.

President McAleese pointed out that the phrase about cherishing-our-children-equally "comes from the 1916 Proclamation, which is probably more important than the Constitution."

"A republic is a place where the children of the nation are cherished equally and you are the people who make it happen," she continued.

"What you do here in reaching out to individuals is more about the business of creating the Republic than anything else. I am very grateful to the people who create this space - this is a republic within a republic."

She said the CDP's work was about overcoming the obstacles and gaps in society.

"That's when a republic emerges and people believe in themselves and their country," said the President.

In the lead-up to the President's visit, some people said to Conor that it was great the President was coming "to meet the ordinary people", but Conor doesn't see it that way. He said they aren't ordinary, they're extraordinary, especially those who volunteer.

CDP chairperson, Joan Whelan showed President McAleese around the premises - formerly a squash court attached to a public house - and introduced her to people.



**NEW Ross CDP has adopted an open-door policy from the beginning, something that has helped the project greatly in reaching its target groups.**

"Most CDPs go for (organising) various groups of about eight people. We go for an open door policy," said project co-ordinator, Conor Dervan.

One of the coarsest measures of the CDP's success is the abuse that was directed at the project.

During a recent local fundraising campaign for the CDP, some locals dismissed the fundraisers, saying: "That place is only for blacks and scumbags."

"There are people in town who would be quite happy to see our lads back on the street drinking," noted Conor.

The need for a drop-in centre in New Ross was identified as a top priority in the CDP's first workplan and the search began for a suitable premises. The early years, therefore, saw the project move from Mary Street (not central) to South Street (up a tight stairs) to Barrack Street (perfect).

### Collective action:

The volunteers' other priority in those early days was to get community development training for themselves. Conor said the project has always put its energy into getting people into the project and encouraging volunteerism.

While there is always a cup of tea on offer, there are three things that really work in enticing people in, according to New Ross' experience:

- Word of mouth.
- Having free newspapers to read.
- Having the internet.

"For €40 a month, you can run 12 computers on-line," remarked Conor. The computers didn't cost the project too much either: "We got a grant to buy the first two and the others are second-hand ones that people or businesses had finished using."

### Needs analysis:

**Identifying where the needs are greatest is one of the things CDPs are expected to excel at.**

Annette Ellis, development worker, noted: "There are a lot of women over-60 who are separated from their husbands and find it hard to go out."



Conor



# ... this project different

The CDP has been working to support women, especially through funding from the national programme - the Equality for Women Measure - and a women's group has been engaged in a variety of activities. However, funding is to end soon, something the group are up in arms over.

There was an obvious need for a men's group in New Ross and the group that has been set up seems to reach people that no other agency does:

"Three men I know said they wouldn't be here only for the CDP. Everybody coming in here gets the same greeting: 'How are you today?'" said Annette.

The men's group meet three days a week and hope to extend this to five days weekly soon.

## Participation:

Currently, two men in the 50-plus bracket - who left school early - are now doing computers and woodwork at VTOS level.

Participation at all levels of society is one of the project's key aims:

"Only last Friday, we had a right spread of ages, from a baby up to a 72-year-old. Generally, we try to keep it to over-16s and on Fridays it's for over-18s, because the older people need a place to chat and relax (without too much noise)," added Annette. (The project has at least four volunteers/staff present when the doors are open to the public).

Some of the men the project engages with might live in a cold house, or without electricity, or without literacy skills. This is not surprising, given that nationally, 1-in-100 urban dwellers of working age have no hot water at home and 1-in-20 lack central heating. Among rural people, there is significantly more hardship, especially among older people. (Source: Economic and Social Research Institute, 2007)



Dervan

## Empowerment:

Enda Hennessy, a CDP volunteer (and in his paid work - a health worker with a Traveller men's health group) said the project succeeded recently in facilitating fathers to spend quality time with their children. The project organised a bus-trip to see Santa



Annette Ellis

with the proviso that it was Dads-only and their children and they had to have had a previous involvement in the CDP (or otherwise they might have needed a fleet of buses). The idea worked a treat and now there are plans to set up a Saturday Morning Club for fathers and their children.

Work continues in other areas too, empowering people. Two years ago, New Ross CDP conducted a survey of issues and needs and realised that mental health was very important. Demonstrating the progress the project has made, during her visit, President McAleese presented certificates to around 20 participants for completing a course in Mental Health Awareness.

## Target groups/ Volunteerism:

Michael Kane He came to the project some years ago to see what it had to offer and is now on the voluntary management committee, encouraging others to become involved.

"All the lads I grew up with started drinking when they were about 14: some stopped. I stopped ten years ago," he said matter-of-factly.

Michael sees great value in the CDP's work: "I find that we can meet and talk with different nationalities, it broadens our minds as well as theirs. Wednesday nights are the main night and the place is buzzing. On the table-tennis or the pool-table, you could have an Iranian playing a Ross lad."

Groups that now hold meetings in the CDP include: the Polish Association, Traveller groups, intercultural groups, AA, among others.

## Outreach work:

**New Ross CDP has been very successful in its outreach work, as highlighted elsewhere in this report.**

And **Conor** doesn't accept that every project that claims to have tried to get Travellers or men involved has a valid excuse for not succeeding: "You hear people saying, 'Oh, our project is open to Travellers (or men let's say) but they don't come in.' We say it's actually about going out and getting them to come in. You have to try different approaches."



Enda Hennessy

**Annette** had an example in mind: "The health board have a huge budget for mental health and it's not good enough for them to say men or Travellers are not using the services and to leave it at that."

**She added:** "It's also your own approach too - you have to welcome everyone you see coming through that door. I believe everyone deserves a chance. Just because someone did something five years ago... well, they might be a different person now."

## Critical Issues / Priorities:

**To anyone who believes that men don't ever talk, the staff of New Ross CDP say 'rubbish'!**

"We find that when men trust you and relax, they will tell you their troubles. It's rubbish this idea that men won't talk, they will if they trust who they are talking to," said Conor.

He is angry the health system fails so many people and then blames people for being reluctant to go for cancer-checks: "We say why don't you hold health check-ups here? Going to hospital for an appointment is a middle-class cultural thing. For example, the MABS come in here on Fridays, so why can't the health board?"

One of their committee volunteers happens to be a drugs awareness worker. Says Conor - "Say you've got a question you want to ask. You can make an appointment and call to him at the office, or you can have an informal 'consultation' with him over a game of pool. Which would you go for?"

This appears to be where New Ross CDP's open-door policy gives them an edge.

"Lads would bring a fella at risk of suicide around here instead of to the official health services," added the project co-ordinator. It is not something they either encourage or discourage, but it is nonetheless part of the job.

Though it takes its toll: "It can be hard on staff," agreed Conor and Annette. They gave details of individual cases that caused them stress, though they are glad if they can provide support or point someone in the right direction.

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# We want to hear not just complain

- Minister of State, Noel Ahern

**Nick:** Minister how would you grade the Community Development Programme?

**Minister:** The real success of the Programme is the work done on the ground. 'Changing Ireland' is one of the few vehicles we have to push the boat out so to speak. There are enough other groups out there who talk a good game, as a programme we are probably reluctant to let the world know the good work we are doing. 'Rekindling the fire' launched last week was another attempt to let the world know what we do. I don't want to give the impression that the emphasis should shift to talking rather than doing but at the same time we should all be looking for ways to let the world know what we do. It might well be that a lot of people might not know the good solid work that we are doing.

**Nick:** There are a lot of CDPs involved in local housing regeneration schemes. As Minister of State for both community and housing is there anything you can do to make life easier for CDPs engaged in regeneration?

**Minister:** As I go about the country, while I might be visiting an area from a community perspective, I am also looking out for what's happening on the housing side. I have seen CDPs which were very well linked to regeneration and others which were not so well linked.

**Nick:** But the two sides don't always work well together on the ground?

**Minister:** Getting joined up government on the ground isn't always easy. In Saint Michael's Estate (in Inchicore, Dublin) for instance, the local CDP has been very involved in

representing the people and articulating their view and pulling together the different strands. Because there's huge mistrust between the individuals in an estate like that and the establishment and there can be a lack of understanding by the professionals, of how community people think. It's great to see the CDP being involved, being central, acting as the bridge between the two, using their knowledge and their experience to deal with the professionals, but very much representing, collecting and presenting the core view of the people.

We're spending about €240 million a year on the bigger regeneration schemes and as well as that we have the smaller schemes, what we call remedial work schemes, in many respects putting right the mistakes of the past, the sixties for instance, when we went for numbers of houses. Now it's all about sustainable development. Of course there were different pressures at the time.

It's very important in doing these things that there is cooperation of local communities and involvement of local communities in the process to agree what the objectives are, what local people see as improving the quality of their lives. In some places the consulting and negotiating has been a bit painful but it's not right to be suggesting that one or the other side might be at fault.

**Nick:** There are around 2000 volunteers in the Community Development Programme. Name one volunteer or group of volunteers that really impressed you in recent years. How have CDPs impressed you?

**Minister:** It's not for me to single out one volunteer or one group. I like the



Minister of State, Noel Ahern, with Minister Éamonn Ó Sé, Minister of State, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

CDP that acts as a resource. One that recognises the problem and says 'this is what we are doing to improve our area'. I like the people who are changing things in a positive way by actions and plans and who are acting as a catalyst, encouraging other groups to get active and get involved, while accepting that they have to lobby and articulate the problems of an area at the same time.

We can all get publicity talking about the problems like drugs or burned out cars in an area but what's important is what we do about it. You have to think about the hardworking decent individuals in an area. Constant negative publicity doesn't do them much good.

Initially (CDPs) might have seen their role as articulating the issues but I think that after a while, and the good ones are very good at this, they have moved on to making things happen, promoting

# solutions, nts

## Interview: Nick Murphy



on Ó Cuív, Department of Community, Rural and

coordination and cooperation between statutory groups and local groups.

**Nick:** *Following on from that do you think CDPs should be doing more to highlight central government and local Government inaction and gaps in policy? Should they be working harder to highlight changes?*

**Minister:** It is a matter for each CDP to decide what they think about highlighting issues of concern. Going back to what I said earlier, a certain amount of advocating, lobbying and campaigning has a value but for government agencies it's not always talking about the problems that gets you listened to, it's when you start talking about and recommending solutions. We have a system of open government and we're not suggesting that because the government funds you, you can't exercise your voice. But if you want to be listened to you have to come forward with your solutions and fit your

local solutions into the national plan.

Government doesn't have all the answers and that's why we have local development groups who are in a better position to identify and put their finger on what is wrong, to influence it at a local level. I feel that's the essence of a community development programme so that people can not just tell you what's wrong but feed into the system and tell you how to put it right.

**Nick:** *Why do CDPs not have a representative on the Taskforce Committee on active citizenship?*

**Minister:** Not everybody is on that committee. There were loads of groups who wanted to get a representative on but couldn't. Our secretary general, Gerry Kearney, is representing the department on it, so through the department there is a rep on it to some extent.

**Nick:** *Minister do you think poverty in Ireland is gone?*

**Minister:** Poverty now is more relative poverty than absolute poverty. The standards by which we judge such things have changed and people's expectations have changed. Poverty is not so much about lack of money now. With social welfare increases, the difficulties come more from inability to manage money through inadequate budgetary skills or through substance dependency.

**Nick:** *Some €861 million is to go to CDPs and FRCs over the next seven years if your new NDP goes ahead. What proportion of that figure is for CDPs and how much is for FRCs?*

**Minister:** What level of funding CDPs and FRC can draw down under the new NDP cannot be fully answered. I think this is dependant on what CDPs can do in harnessing funding for projects for their communities. What is clear is that

the new ndp presents opportunities for local communities that was not there before. I think the figure is something like 170 million but that's just core funding for the CDPs. The real value of CDPs is not what they get for their own core funding but what they can get from other government departments and agencies for their communities. We're talking about two things. What the CDPs get for their own funding and what they can leverage for their communities. The second figure is the important figure.

**Nick:** *When you look back over your involvement with CDPs what are the biggest achievements you and minister O'Cuiv have made over the last few years? What things remain to be done?*

**Minister:** The achievements of the Programme are more about what has been achieved on the ground. Last year, I was glad to be able to provide grant-funding of one-million euro for equipment and programme costs in the Once-Off Grants Scheme. The Traveller Work Placement Scheme was started in a small way and is now on a firmer footing, there were certainly more groups going for it this year. In relation to our own achievements, getting the programme into the new National Development Plan needed a lot of work. We got the programme through a slightly rocky time in 2002 and 2003 and the special niche that CDPs have has been recognised and has been built on and the fact that the Programme is in the new NDP is an indication of this.

**Nick:** *Finally Minister, you told 'Changing Ireland' around the time you started the job that you liked to go for a couple of pints after work. Are you still getting time?*

**Minister:** I won't be having time for too many of them for the next couple of months.



# Billions promised

- But, is social inclusion really a big part of the new NDP?

By PAUL GINNELL, EPAN\*

THE new National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 received a high tech, high publicity launch on 27th January. The plan has a total budget of €183.7 billion, the biggest of the four NDPs which began in 1989.

The NDP 2000-2007 had just over €57 billion.

The pre-launch publicity for a number of weeks had highlighted that for the first time the NDP would include a specific chapter on social inclusion with a budget of €49.6 billion. This is on top of the budget for social infrastructure which has a budget of €33.6 billion.

But what exactly is in the NDP to address social exclusion?

Not all of the elements in the social inclusion and social infrastructure budgets are really addressing social exclusion - for example, those related to the justice system or health services. A government estimate is that 27% of the budget is targeted at social inclusion measures. This is approximately the same as in the last NDP.

Although the budgets seem large the reality is that the NDP mainly outlines budgets for existing programmes with little opportunity to fund new areas or initiatives. However, this is good news for those involved in such areas as the Community Development Programme, Family Resource Centres and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme who see their funding guaranteed.

There is also a budget to roll the Rural Transport Initiative out on a national basis and there is a new budget of €190m for volunteering and volunteers.

The Plan does include some concrete targets on areas such as childcare, youth, housing, employment and health, but in general the NDP is a 'high level document'

## The new NDP: in 100 words

- It is the fourth NDP. The first began in 1989.
- €183.7 billion is promised from now to 2013.
- For the first time, Social Inclusion gets a chapter.
- The budget for social inclusion is a staggering €49.6 billion.
- But, when you look more closely, all isn't what it seems.
- Unfortunately, the plan was not poverty-proofed.
- Nonetheless, it's looking good for community development.
- Yet, there is a weakness in the system for monitoring spending.
- Though Government will keep a close eye on spending.
- You can learn more about this subject at [www.ndp.ie](http://www.ndp.ie) or [www.eapn.ie](http://www.eapn.ie)

and is therefore vague and lacking in detail in many areas. This makes it hard to analyse and it is difficult to know what exactly the Government is committing itself to and how this relates to what is required to address social exclusion.

While social inclusion has its own chapter and is a key objective it is not a cross-cutting horizontal theme as it was in the last NDP and therefore does not impact on the whole NDP. Also, the fact that the plan was not poverty-proofed is evident in missed opportunities.

For example, the area of energy does not address fuel poverty and large budgets to support the development of enterprises make no mention of supporting excluded groups to participate.

In relation to monitoring how the NDP is delivering on what it promises, there will be one Central Monitoring Committee and all social partner pillars, including the Community and Voluntary Pillar, will be represented on this. This does not guarantee a representative from a social inclusion organisation.

The NDP outlines some details of the new

and potentially very significant single monitoring and reporting system being put in place to oversee the implementation of social inclusion measures in the NDP and other policy areas. All relevant stakeholders, including community organisations are to be involved in this process and it is to get attention at the highest levels of Government. This single process is to be co-ordinated by the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI).

Other policy areas include the Structural Fund Programme 2007-2013 (€1.82 billion) and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016.

An important part of the work of EAPN Ireland over the next few years will be trying to ensure that this monitoring process is as open, transparent and as effective as possible in addressing issues of poverty and social exclusion.

For more detail on what is in the NDP, you can read the EAPN Ireland\* Briefing and other related information on the EAPN Ireland NDP webpage: [www.eapn.ie/policy/1581](http://www.eapn.ie/policy/1581) There is also a link to the full and summary NDP and comments from other organisations.

\* The EAPN Ireland is the European Anti-Poverty Network in Ireland, with whom Paul Ginnell works as Policy and Support Worker. Paul previously worked as project co-ordinator with Limerick Travellers Development Group CDP.

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# Make poverty a central issue for voters!

**THE Europeann Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is reaching out to allies in the Community and Voluntary Sector to see that the eradication of poverty in Ireland becomes a central issue in the general election.**

The EU-backed network can provide community groups with expert support: it has started a web page on the topic and has published a publicity manual.

To start with, and to avoid duplication, EAPN want to know if other organisations are running local 'hustings-type' meetings to raise questions over poverty and related issues. If so, EAPN are up for joining in.

A 'hustings' was originally a physical platform from which representatives presented their views before a parliamentary or other election. The term may now refer to any event,

such as debates or speeches, during an election campaign where one or more of the candidates are present for public questions.



In those areas where nothing is currently planned, EAPN is seeking to work with local groups "to roll out a series of nationwide hustings to ask what the various candidates or parties will do to eradicate poverty in the next Dáil."

EAPN could help by co-coordinating such meetings, providing independent chairs where necessary, and helping with publicity.

The network has produced a simple publicity manual for use by local community/NGO groups. It is aimed at those who might have little or no experience in media work.

Finally, you can post your demands on their election 2007 website page: [www.eapn.ie/policy/1352](http://www.eapn.ie/policy/1352)

**For more information or for copies of the publicity manual, contact: Séamas Devine, Project & Policy Coordinator, EAPN Ireland, 18 Celtic Apartments, Pearse Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal Tel. 074-9164750. Mob. 087-2639155. E-mail: [seamas@eapn.ie](mailto:seamas@eapn.ie)**

# Wexford women seek to shape election issues

By SARAH-BETH WATKINS

**KEY concerns for women in County Wexford ahead of the 2007 General Election are health issues, childcare, access to education and community policing. This was agreed upon at a meeting of CDPs, Family Resource Centres, local women's groups and statutory agencies.**

The lack of women in politics, housing shortages and the lack of services for people with disabilities are also high on the agenda. Approximately 50 women participated at a recent event organised by the County Wexford Community Women's Collective with a view to influencing the local elections.

Key speakers discussed how to challenge the government and opposition party election candidates on key issues.

Mary Rushimbi from Tanzania has been working for over 13 years to influence elections and increase women's leadership.



*Mary Rushimbi from the Tanzanian Gender Network, spoke at the Wexford Women's Collective.*

She is the Director of the Tanzanian Gender Networking Programme. Since 1996, its work has included: the democratisation of political processes, acting as an election watch-dog for gender sensitivity, producing election manifestos, and gaining media support to promote progressive public debate.

Mary was visiting groups in Ireland by invitation from Banulacht, the organisation for feminist development education.

Ailbhe Smyth, Director of Women's Education, Research and Resource Centre, UCD, facilitated the workshops that identified the key issues affecting women in Wexford.

The Collective are now organising a county-wide campaign to make politicians aware of the issues. A report of the day is available on request.

**For more information contact Angela or Sarah at Templeshannon CDP: Tel. 053-9237511.**

## Sligo CDP discuss €183.7 billion plan

**A workshop titled 'The NDP 2007-2013 and Social Inclusion' was held in Sligo, on March 13th.**

It was organised by the Sligo Northside Community Partnership CDP and the

European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland and was the second such workshop to examine the issues in a community setting. The Community Workers Co-op has been to the fore in examining the small print in the plan.

The CDP's premises at Northside Resource Centre, Forthill in Sligo town, was the venue for the two-and-a-half-hour morning workshop.



# Planning for a new Community Development Programme

By MAURICE McCONVILLE

**THE Community Development Unit in the Department has initiated a consultation process with CDPs and relevant organisations.**

A consultative panel has been set up and according to its 'Terms of Reference' its role is "to support the formulation and implementation of the consultation process for a new programme."

The Panel, which is made up of former

representatives from the Programme's National Advisory Committee, held its first meeting in Dublin on February 27th.

As stated in the Terms of Reference, the Panel will, "... assess and evaluate reports and submissions ... evaluate existing programme practices and structures ... consider changes that are required for the improved operation accountability and governance of the programme ... encourage dialogue with stakeholders and ... provide opportunities for relevant organisations to contribute to the consultation process", along with other functions. The Consultative Panel

will have regard for the National Development Plan 2007- 2013 and the NAPinclusion and will operate within 'Reaching Out' Guidelines on Consultation for Public Sector Bodies.

The consultation is planned to run until June 30th of this year.

It is expected that a variety of methods will be used to consult including meetings, reports and online submissions.

**Projects will be contacted soon by the Community Development Unit and advised on how to participate in the consultation.**

## Number of FRCs to increase by 42

THE Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan, in February, unveiled details of an investment package of almost €190 million that will be targeted directly at increasing the number of Family Resource Centres (FRCs) countrywide from the current 100 locations to 142 inside the next seven years.

Under the €187 million plan, the aim is to increase the number of FRCs by six per year - increasing the total number in the country by 42, by the year 2013. The funding will be drawn the new National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the centres will continue to be based in communities experiencing disadvantage.

Minister Brennan announced the expansion at



a special conference in Dublin to mark and celebrate Ireland's 100 Family Resource Centres. The event, organised by the Family Resource Centre National Forum and the Family Support Agency, showcased the work of FRCs.

New figures show the full extent of the numbers of people availing of the services and supports. For instance, in 2005:

- There were 850,000 visits to use centre facilities.
- Some 16,000 people completed training courses.
- Almost 140,000 people received advice and information

The first FRCs were funded 22 years ago. Direct funding for the programme has increased from €300,000 in 1994 to almost €19 million this year and the programme is

## Bizarre!

A BIZARRE anecdote emerged during court coverage of a dangerous driving case against a Dublin Bus driver involved in a collision that left five people dead. Some of the evidence in the trial (the driver was acquitted) went as follows:

"In a witness statement read to the jury, Joao Philippe, an Angolan asylum seeker told gardai how an elderly woman screamed at him 'get back to your own country' when he shouted at her to call an ambulance.

Mr. Philippe told the court he saw the bus driving on the pavement with its front left wheel "going over a Chinese girl's leg".

"I was screaming at the woman to call an ambulance, but she was shouting at me to get out of the country."

- Excerpt from the 'Irish Times'



## Alive, Alive-o!

IN a letter to Horace (page 12) it is pointed out that there are seven areas in Dublin whose names end in the letter 'O'. For the record, they are: Rialto, Marino, Portobello, Phibsboro, Monto, Casino and Pimlico.

## New social finance agency launched

A NEW scheme to help local communities and development groups to benefit from loans was announced, in February, by the Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen.

Community groups often experience difficulties getting finance from mainstream banks, but the new fund of €25 million in low-cost loans should ease difficulties in this area. The loan-fund will be administered by the Social Finance Foundation and their capital is being funded through the main banks. To date, community groups look chiefly to credit unions for loans.

The Social Finance Foundation has been established on a not-not-for-profit basis to act as a wholesale supplier of loans to support

social and development projects and social enterprise in local communities.

The foundation will be chaired by businessman and former GAA president, Peter Quinn, and intends to commence its lending activities by mid-year.

Minister Cowen said he saw the initiative - two years in the making - as "a catalyst for deeper participation by private finance in the area of local and community development and social finance projects."

Joan Burton of Labour - who has pressed for more information about when the Foundation will become operational - generally welcomed the news. However, the Green's Dan Boyle was more cautious, saying: "We must

remember that while banks have supplied the finance for this fund, for the organisations involved, it is repayable finance. Financial Institutions need to do much more than this if they are to be seen as acting socially responsible."

The new Foundation will work in co-operation with existing social lenders - such as Clann Credo, the Western Development Commission, and First Step.

For more information, contact: Brendan Whelan on 01-619-0043. E-mail: info@sff.ie Also, the Foundation intend to have their website up and running by the second half of March: www.sff.ie



## Kiltimagh CDP celebrate 10 years

**KILTIMAGH CDP in Mayo celebrated its tenth birthday recently by showcasing its work and by running a children's poetry and art competition.**

Located on the town's main street, the project supports local youth, women's and men's groups, international community groups, sports groups, and elderly and active retirement groups in Kiltimagh, Kilmavee, Kilkelly and Bohola.

The CDP runs many services and programmes, including:

- an information office for people wanting to find out about social welfare, education, rights and entitlements.

- short-term courses such as stress management, art, computer skills and driving theory preparation courses.

Its premises support outreach work by the Money Advice and Budgeting Service, Citizens Information Service and Mayo Womens Support Group.

The CDP's main aim is to address poverty and social exclusion within the community, to support local groups and to raise public



**Organisers and winners of the poetry and art competition in Kiltimagh.**

awareness of social issues.

**For more information, contact: Kiltimagh CDP, Main Street, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo. Tel. 094-9381506. Fax: 094-9381948.**

**E-mail: kmcdpl@eircom.net, or ritahopkins1@eircom.net**

# 56 studying community development in rural Scariff

**A UNIVERSITY in Scariff, County Clare. Never say never! In fact, it's already happening as the National University of Ireland, Galway, are running a Diploma In Community Development Practice in the rural community.**

Imagine the university's surprise when double the numbers expected signed up for

the course, 56 people in all.

**Tutor, Jackie Murphy**, said the university was "so impressed with the take-up" that they agreed to run the course without charging extra for the extra participants.

East Clare Community Support CDP, are core to the running of the course, as **Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs**,



**Éamon Ó Cuív**, learnt during a visit in mid-January.

The Minister also heard the CDP are seeking funding for a purpose-built, wheelchair-accessible, 'Youth and Community Centre'. According to a press release from the CDP, the Minister "expressed surprise that Scariff does not have a parish hall and that the youth do not have access to such facilities."

The CDP, in its report, continued: "The Minister stated that his Department could fund Community Centres through LEADER and mentioned a figure of €400,000. He said his Department would not fund a site, but if the group could acquire a site then applications to three Government Departments could yield €100,000 for a community centre for the area. He suggested that the group look to the smaller funders to provide equipment."

**Pat McGough**, project co-ordinator, commented afterwards: "All we need now is a kind benefactor to give us a two-acre site!"

**For further information on how to entice an university to run a course in a rural community, contact: Pat McGough, co-ordinator, East Clare CDP, Derg House, Scariff, Co. Clare. Tel. 061-640977. Fax 061-640764.**

**E-mail: eastclarecdp@eircom.net**



**Minister Éamon Ó Cuív is very eager to see a community centre open in Scariff.**

# HELP ME HORACE



## Horses in my garden

Dear Horace,

There are four horses in my garden, I rang the Gardai about it but they said it was a matter for the local authority. But the council said it was nothing to do with them. What can I do?

Sad El

Horace replies,

Don't be sad El, it's the same here. The only horses I like to see are horses from Templemore with Gardai on them. Once the local newspapers have taken their photo, they are gone.

## RE last report: 'No doubt about Suir CDP'

Dear Horace,

We were a little uncertain here in Suir CDP about what to do with your report in the last edition. You reported there is 'No doubt about Suir CDP'.

The only vagueness we have is over global warming. It seems that soon the River Suir might become a lake, and a little after that, a coastal inlet.

Do you think we can put in an

application for funding for a boathouse? We're not sure which department to apply to - Community or Environment. We can't decide, can you help?

Deffo Heffernan,  
Suir CDP,  
Co. Tipperary (for now)

Dear Deffo,

The experts are only 95% sure about global warming, so don't worry about it!

- Horace

## 'Changing Ireland': Can you change it a bit faster?

Dear Horace,  
'Changing Ireland', is that right? Well, I'm here to complain that you are not changing it fast enough.

For starters, I would like you to change my house, my car and my job. And I'm thinking about a new husband too. I would also like to win the lottery (the Euro Millions, forget that local lark) and to buy a James Bond-style speedboat.

If there's more you could do for me, I would like another development worker for our project and a new administrator (I will be resigning after the

Write to:

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

lottery win).

Let me know when I've to pack up my belongings,

Yours sincerely,  
Demanding Dorothy,  
Administrator,  
Mad CDP

My darling Dorothy,  
I will write to the Minister. In the meanwhile, you may have saved me a lot of hassle because I've been looking to get married for decades, and I see you like boats.

The woman I'm looking for has to be a keen boat enthusiast, preferably with her own boat, ideally 16 foot long, with an outboard engine. Marriage duties would include digging worms and cooking fish. Dorothy, could you please send me a photograph (of the boat) and we'll see if we can get hooked.

Love

- Horace x x x

## I want my money!

My dear Horace,

I had a letter penned to the National Advisory Committee of the Community Development Programme and I'm going mad they shut themselves down. Have you any advice now on where I can go for advice?

The question I want to ask is: How much of a salary rise am I getting again?

- Annie Moore Monet,  
Fighting Hard CDP,  
Somewhere-Around-The-Place,  
Co. Wicklow

There is good news Annie More,

The National Advisory Committee have not really shut down, they've just gone into hiding as a way of getting some badly-needed attention for themselves. And don't worry about your salary increase, it should come through by 2027 and, fingers crossed, will be back-dated. Just hold on in there.

- Horace

## Dubliner seeks advice

Help me Horace!

I'm trying to find out the names of the seven areas in Dublin city ending in the letter 'o'! Apparently, fewer than one in 20,000 Dubliners can list them off by heart. If I get more than one, my friend said he'd buy me a pint. Please Horace, what are the names?

Dreary O'Leary,  
Pimlico,  
Dublin

Hi Dreary,

I dunno, get a life!

- Horace

## Appalling vista

Dear Horace,

My administrator keeps nagging me about updating our computers. Fair enough, they're a bit old - one runs on coal - but I find it hard to keep up with developments.

The latest thing is called Vista. I don't know my Windows from my door panels and the only Mac I trust is my raincoat.

I looked up Vista in the dictionary - it didn't inspire me with confidence, more likely it's something I'll stare at for hours.

I spent ages last year on courses trying to figure out the current system and I fear I'll spend most of 2007 grappling with the new one. Should I go back to 'Post-It' notes and the abacus?

Terry Fayed,  
Luddite CDP

Horace helps!

Terry

You really don't know much. Even I know Windows has nothing to do with doors, it's got more to do with Gates.

I recommend you do a car maintenance course, so you'll have some idea what to do when your computer crashes. And, if you get lost poking around under the bonnet, the search engine will always find you.

- Horace



# *Launch of 'Rekindling The Fire' had everyone gasping*

I was at the launch of the Eastern Region Network's document 'Rekindling the Fire' in Buswell's hotel (opposite Leinster house) in Dublin, on February 6th. I have to say I was struck by the easygoing atmosphere and lack of unnecessary formality.

Minister of State Ahern's arrival among us went unheralded. In fact his arrival was so low-key that I turned from a casual inspection of one of the displays of CDP work, to find myself nose-to-nose with the man himself. Not a great start to my evening – to find I had allowed a multiple minister to creep up on me!

So, I downed two glasses of wine in one go and a development worker standing nearby muttered, quite audibly, "typical bloody journalist". Well, he had me and my fellows all wrong. I hope you're sorry. You know who you are!

The proceedings were formally kicked off by Tony O'Grady of Partners CDP who, after telling us a cliff-hanger of a story about a "senior politician" whose department staff didn't know what CDP stood for, and then refusing to name the politician in question, handed us over to journalist Justine McCarthy who was to formally launch the report.

Justine began by explaining she intended to read her speech from her notes as she was afraid her memory might let her down. She told us statistics, she expressed our funding as a percentage of GNP and compared it to other countries. She spoke in billions. Justine assured us deals were done at race meetings and on golf courses. I don't doubt a word of it, but I've never played golf or been to a race meeting and I have to take my socks off to count to twenty.

The next speaker was Rita Fagan from Inchicore, a passionate CDP worker. I'm going to leave talking about Rita's speech for a moment to make a point.

The mood was lightened when Tony called on a member of a CDP to present the Minister with a copy of the document. The



**NICK MURPHY reports**

lady ambled across the room and, completely without ceremony, dropped the report into the lap of an extremely surprised and embarrassed Minister who, up to this point, had been proudly clutching a copy of the report he had been given at the door, and which he was now trying to stuff unobtrusively down the seat he was sitting on.

**"It just shows the dangers of rushing two glasses of wine"**

The Minister took the podium and "recognised" (his word) two other politicians, Pat Rabbitt and Mary Upton, who had also managed to join us without being noticed. I suppose you have to expect this sort of thing if you're going to lay on free food and drink within strolling distance of Leinster House.

Somewhat predictably, the Minister assured us that his department knew what CDP stood for and then surprised most of us by saying he had never graced the golf and race courses Justine mentioned. He did, however, say that now he knew it was expected of him, he would soon.

He touched on funding, he mentioned there were a lot of CDPs – even in his own area and he said they did all kinds of good work.

To be honest he really only sounded comfortable with his subject when he started talking about the importance of the volunteer and of the guidance and support of the management committee and development workers. He sounded to my ears, then, like someone who knew how community development worked on the ground. When he said "we are pleased to work with you though we don't always agree with you," I almost, just for a second, believed we were in a true partnership – the government and the CDPs. It just shows the dangers of rushing two glasses of wine.

Now I want to return to Rita Fagan's speech because it was the words of a worker on the ground that did more to motivate me and send me back revitalised to the project the next day to face the setbacks and disappointments which wait for us all each day than any words of praise from ministers and journalists.

Rita said, "What we do throughout the country on a daily basis is reach out to those in our society who are on the margins, disadvantaged and excluded, often very vulnerable people. We build relationships with them, support them, work with them, involve them in groups. We build their skills and their ability to analyse the issues which affect them and their communities and we develop their voice to take up these issues. We come in all forms - networks, direct projects, communities of interest - but we all work from the same method, community development which is about social change."

I think that no matter how well meaning the politicians, the journalists, the government departments and the funders, the only people who can really give our Programme a voice is us.



## Better than any bookie

OF a total of 65 projects in the Eastern Region, the 'Rekindling The Fire' report looked at a sample of 36 CDPs to demonstrate the range of activities engaged in, impacts and challenges. The report also measures their income-generating ability and CDPs are a better bet than any bookies – because they triple the money they get.

Using 2003 as a baseline, the 36 projects received just over €1.1m in core funding from the Community Development Programme (representing an average of just over €87,000 per project). The projects went on to generate more than twice that amount in other funding for the same year.

Two-thirds of these projects are geographically-based, while 12 are issue-based and work directly with particular communities of interest (eg women). Here's an outlay of the money they brought into their communities and it shows that FAS were the major source of additional funding:

### Eastern Region Project Funding in 2003 (36 Projects)

Funding Source	Amount(€)
CDP Funding	€3,133,810
Health Board	€368,927
FÁS	€2,969,674
Partnership	€155,984
VEC	€186,349
Local Authority	€340,018
National Programmes	€533,895
EU Funding	€111,749
Other Funding	€2,101,380
Total	€9,901,786

# Report shows what CDPs are up to



*What CDPs do and how they do it is often best explained by examples and the new 'Rekindling The Fire' report provides plenty to choose from.*

## Promoting volunteering

IN some cases, people who volunteer to help out in on a specific issue, or people who join a course or group set up by the CDP, go on to become Voluntary Management Committee members of the project. Here's how that works from a project perspective:

"Many of the members of our Board of Management's initial contact with the organisation was through using the resources of the organisation. (As a result, there are) two lone parents on our fundraising sub-group, two on the steering committee for the Teen Parent Support Initiative and one co-facilitating activities with a staff member."

- Doras Bui CDP

"We have supported three Traveller parents, two of whom now volunteer their time for the project. This has led to greater involvement by Traveller parents in their children's educational progress."

- Tallaght Travellers CDP

## Establishing new groups

**FACT:** CDP projects in the Eastern Region were directly involved in establishing 84 new groups or initiatives in their communities in 2003 alone. In over half these cases, the projects were mainly responsible (or the lead agency) in the new initiatives.

The level of achievement reached in establishing new groups, initiatives or networks in their local communities shows how very important it is for CDPs to engage in the woolly-sounding yet crucial work of 'capacity building' (rather than just providing services). Many of the new groups progress to be self-sustaining projects in their own right – frequently securing funding and support from mainstream services and programmes.

Here's how it happens:

"Two people that participated on a voter workshop have gone on to set up an action group to address issues that have arisen

within a local school. Three local people have joined this group."

- Blakestown CDP

"We have recruited residents as members of working groups and management committees to work on a variety of issues concerning the area, such as a childcare committee to work on a (funding) application to the Department of Justice to establish an affordable and quality childcare centre in Cherry Orchard.

- Link CDP

"The CDP has worked with the parent and toddler group and has assisted them in setting up regular meetings of the parents. Two local women have taken lead roles in this group and have opened a bank account, applied for funding and have drawn up rules for the group."

- Blakestown CDP

## Policy work can reap rewards

CDPs in the Eastern Region – as elsewhere – network and participate in various conferences aimed at contributing to policy debate. In some cases this leads to direct responses from services and agencies. For example:

"There were very successful outcomes in 2003 to this work with Dublin City Council agreeing to change their original plans considerably in response to the expressed wishes of the community for the provision of serviced bays and community facilities."

- Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project

CDPs in the regions are also typically involved in a range of partnerships with local service providers. It works both ways:

"It helps that there are other services which can support us, and to whom we can refer people, as we have access to so many people on a daily basis."

- Ronanstown CDP



# Evaluation findings fed into report

**REKINDLING The Fire** was largely compiled from yearly evaluations (under an internet-based evaluation system called SPEAK). Most of the content outlines and describes the activities and work-practices of 36 sample projects in the eastern region.

By far the most important factor – as identified by projects in their SPEAK returns – is CDPs' capacity to become

and remain familiar with local organisations and individuals. Continuous outreach is seen as essential across the whole range of working methods – allowing for the project to remain familiar with local issues and local groups; as well as for local organisations and people to become and remain familiar with what the CDP is doing.

A number of projects specifically refer to the need to maintain 'trust' in their local working relationships.

The report was drawn up following discussion between representatives of Eastern Region projects in the Community Development Programme.

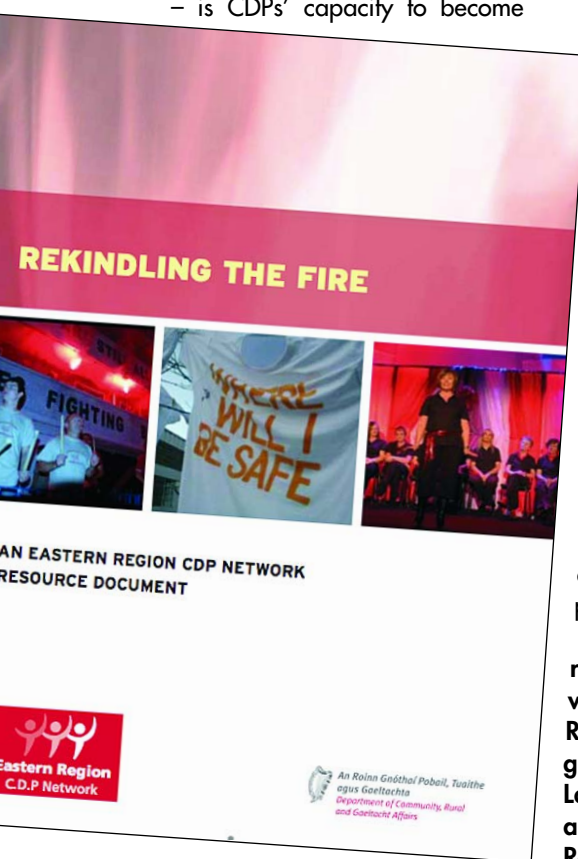
Brian Dillon of Nexus Research and Tony O'Grady of Partners CDP did the bulk of the writing.

The group who worked on the report also included: Joe Grennell, Jennifer Flynn, Eve O'Connor, Sarah Kelleher, John Kiely and Sean Lambe.

Allen Meagher of 'Changing Ireland' provided editorial advice.

The Community and Voluntary section of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs financed the printing and launch of the report.

**The Eastern Region Network meets regularly and consists of CDP staff and volunteers. Geographically, the Eastern Region comprises Dublin City and the greater Dublin area including Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, parts of Kildare and Wicklow. There are 65 CDPs in the Region.**



## If there were no CDPs

CDPs are at the centre of the 'social inclusion development infrastructure' in Ireland. Without them, according to 'Rekindling The Fire', the following would happen:

- opportunities for social participation and progression for a large number of people would be lost;
- a range of programmes aimed at including the most excluded would

become impossible to deliver;

- a range of other local organisations and projects would cease to exist;
- very important lessons on the causes and responses to disadvantage would be lost.

The Community Development Programme, since its inception in 1989, has undergone significant change and has grown from 15 projects to 180 projects.

## Recommendations for 2007-2013

'REKINDLING The Fire' argues that many community development projects need access to funding for extra staff.

And since community development is a long-term process, the document recommends contracts based on 5-year plans.

It argues for the establishment of a national office which would create a national profile that the Community Development Programme sadly lacks.

'Rekindling The Fire' strongly proposes the development of a relationship framework between the community sector and the Government which respects the values, approaches and practices of each side. In this context, it recommends:

- copper-fasten the independence of the sector and its right to challenge government policy.
- agree the development of a Code of Practice for funding the sector.
- Government would commit itself to consulting the sector on issues likely to affect it.
- a commitment to an annual appraisal of the relationship between Government and the community sector would be agreed in a 'Compact' between the community sector and Government.

By far the most important factor – as identified by projects in their SPEAK returns – is CDPs' capacity to become and remain familiar with local organisations and individuals. Continuous outreach is seen as essential across the whole range of working methods – allowing for the project to remain familiar with local issues and local groups; as well as for local organisations and people to become and remain familiar with what the CDP is doing.

A number of projects specifically refer to the need to maintain 'trust' in their local working relationships.

## Projects hosted 3,500 meetings in one year

**PROJECT workers and volunteers are, for the most part, working directly with people who are frequently isolated and marginalised from even basic social interaction.**

So, project premises are being successfully used as a 'safe' and friendly environment which often act as a first point of contact for the most excluded.

Even though projects spend less than 22% of their total time commitment in providing resources, advice and information, levels of activity are extremely high. For example, in a single year, among the 36 groups surveyed in Dublin:

- There were 81,603 visits by individuals, and 5,698 visits by community groups to use the facilities of 36 projects in the Eastern Region.
- Project premises and meeting spaces were used 3,501 times by local community groups for meetings.
- Projects gave information or advice to 23,060 people, and referred approximately 8,655 of these on to other services or agencies.

## What's the point in having an 'equality year'?



*"We see this as an opportunity, eight years into our own existence, to celebrate what's been achieved, then, going forward, renew our commitment to tackling inequality. Through the proposed actions for the year ahead, we want to give a new dynamism to the equality agenda and leave a legacy for change into the future."*

- Niall Crowley, CEO of the Equality Authority.

## 'European Year of Equal Opportunities for All'

2007 has been identified by the European Commission as European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

They have established four objectives for the year:

- To raise awareness of **rights** under the equality legislation.
- To promote the **participation** of under-represented groups in all sectors.
- To encourage a celebration of **diversity** in society.
- To support **social cohesion** and good relations between groups.

The Equality Authority has been appointed as the National Implementation Body for the Year in Ireland, and has completed a consultation exercise to shape a strategy for the Year. A key part of the strategy will seek to support non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and

community groups to take initiatives to achieve progress on burning issues for groups experiencing inequality.

The Equality Authority is a statutory body mandated to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education.

- **For further information, contact:**  
The Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2.  
**Public Information Centre:**  
Locall 1890 245 545.  
**Main Tel:** 01-4173333.  
**Business Queries:** 01-4173336.  
**Text Phone:** 01-4173385.  
**Fax:** 01-4173331.  
**E-mail:** [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)  
**Website:** [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

# Equality is looking

INTERVIEW WITH: N

REPORTER:

*What are the equality authority's main priorities this year?*

1. We want to help organisations to gear up to tackle inequality. We want to help them examine how they operate, look at their training needs, and take a more planned and systematic approach.
2. The second priority is in tackling the burning issues which we identified in consultations, with over fifty organisations – non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social partners, government departments, state agencies and media organisations. We will be seeking to support NGOs to take initiatives to achieve progress on burning issues for groups experiencing inequality.

*What is the importance of the community & voluntary sector in tackling inequality?*

We see the sector as key players in the equality agenda. Community groups and CDPs engage directly with groups that are experiencing inequality, so we would see them as having a role in articulating their interests and negotiating change.

*What are the main points of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All?*

We've come up with six priority areas: Information and advocacy, equality mainstreaming, equality competence, equality debate, multiple discrimination, and 'the burning issues'.

We will be seeking to get institutions to look at how they can engage and adjust for change, and we'll be supporting policy and training in that respect. We've found the public and private sector very enthusiastic - FAS and the HSE will lead a learning network in the public sector and IBEC will do so in the private sector.

As regards the community and voluntary area, a key event will be the sector review. We will then organise a conference to look



# Equality Authority Working for you!

Niall Crowley, Equality Authority director, about the  
European Year of Equal Opportunities for All  
Pádraig Mac Giobúin



at how barriers can be removed and equality further enhanced.

## **What kind of events are you organising this year?**

Public awareness campaigns will take place during the European Year. These will focus on work life balance, ageism, cultural diversity in the workplace and people with disabilities.

It's crucial to build the confidence of individuals to exercise their rights under equality legislation.

Comhairle and the Office of the Ombudsman will work together to see if better ways can be found to get information on rights effectively to the public.

There will also be conferences on '30 Years of Gender Equality Legislation', and on 'Equality and The Irish Constitution' marking the 70th anniversary of the Constitution.

## **What are your hopes for this European Year of Equal Opportunities for All?**

The motto for the Year is "Play Your Part". We hope the community & voluntary sector will take up the challenge during the year, both nationally and locally. We will be there to advise and assist them in this, though we won't be providing direct funding.

## **Does the Equality Authority recognise exclusion and inequality based on class/socio-economic status?**

The nine grounds of equality discrimination under which The Equality Authority operates (gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of Traveller community) doesn't include social class. We would support broadening the grounds to include discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status.

## **Where are we today in relation to Traveller's rights?**

As regards Travellers' Rights, we're at a standstill, or even going backwards. Travellers have been the group who have taken the most actions under the Equal Status Act that we operate under. At the moment, 1 in 5 of our case work involves discrimination against Travellers in schools, either in terms of access or victimisation.

We no longer deal with cases involving Travellers being barred from public houses. This is now dealt with in the District Courts under the Intoxicating Liquor Act. Far fewer Travellers are inclined to take on cases, as they perceive they're less likely to get a fair hearing, and have much more to lose if costs are awarded against them. It's a burning issue.

**(Editor's note:** At least two of the successful cases taken last year against publicans who discriminated against Travellers were supported by CDPs, in Cork and Limerick).

**Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, has said that inequality was an inevitable**

## **part of this "society of incentives": can you comment on that?**

Inequality is a product of a range of different processes, it is created by society, and Irish society has chosen to try to address and eliminate inequality through legislation and other measures. (Niall was quoted previously – in the Irish Times – saying that equality is "not a soundbite issue").

## **What's the foundation of equality as a value?**

Equality is something we make choices about. Globally, choices have been and are made, as can be seen in the rights-based conventions of the United Nations. Ireland's equality legislation is also a choice. It is important to embed equality as a value, as it influences all the other values we have. That's the mission of The Equality Authority. We do this on three fronts: 1. individual attitudes and behaviours, 2. institutional practices, and 3. cultural attitudes.

## The burning issues

**These are the 'burning issues' this year in terms of dealing with inequality in Ireland:**

- The sharing of caring responsibilities between men and women, the status and standing of those who play caring roles and the role of the State in supporting caring.
- Gender conditioning in men and the role of men in pursuit of gender equality.
- Recognition for transgender people.
- Family diversity in Irish society.
- Provision of accommodation to meet the needs of lone parents.
- Developing a national strategy for carers.
- Negative stereotyping of young people.
- Access to health services for older people.
- The experience of people with disabilities in institutions.
- Supporting service providers to ensure accessibility of their services for people with disabilities.
- Partnership rights for same-sex couples.
- Integration for minority ethnic groups and the emergence of an integrated intercultural society.
- Majority community attitudes to Islam and the Muslim community.
- Achieving educational outcomes for Travellers

# Ireland lags behind Europe supporting voluntary work

**INTRODUCTION:** *The Irish voluntary sector remains one of the least developed in Europe. On most of the key indices, we run below the rest of Europe. For example, the density of voluntary organisations (here) is about half that of Northern Ireland. In a speech delivered to community workers and volunteers at a conference in Tralee, Brian Harvey appealed to people to draw inspiration from Europe and to reclaim a sense of Civil Society.*

*He said that all the analyses of social policy show that where the state invests well in voluntary and community organisations and civil society, we get a better quality of social policy. Conversely, where the state does not do so, we get a poorer outcome and that is what we have here.*

*Here is an edited version of his speech:*

## Guest speaker Brian Harvey



**Brian Harvey was a guest-speaker at the conference 'Community development - a tool for anti poverty work in Ireland', hosted by the South and Mid-West Community Development Support Agency, Brandon Hotel, Tralee, on January 30th.**

## The law (elsewhere) says to consult

A recent study of the voluntary and community sector working with older people in Ireland shows that such organisations are rarely consulted by the state. In most European countries, they have to be by law.

This is not to say that there is not a community development movement in Ireland. Clearly there is, it is effective in anti-poverty work, committed and good people work therein and the language of anti-poverty community development work has achieved a certain level of recognition and acceptance. But only a certain level.

## Programme good enough to copy

The Community Development Programme is undoubtedly a good model and it has inspired the setting up now of a similar programme in Northern Ireland. (However), the programme, having expanded hugely and beyond anyone's best hopes has been declared closed, as if community development can ever have finite boundaries.

One of the hard lessons arising about the experience of community development and anti-poverty work is just how limited an impact community development can have when state economic and social policies do not also address and confront policy.

## Cohesion was a curious exercise

The cohesion process launched several years ago to coordinate voluntary and community services was always a curious exercise, if indeed it was about cohesion at all. But if it was about control and reminding those voluntary and community services of their place then it is easier to understand.

At the risk of reminding ourselves of the obvious, Ireland has one of the highest rates of relative poverty in the European Union, the lowest proportion of spending on social protection, the only primary health service not free at point of first use, some of the worst social indicators in the Union and one of the highest rates of income inequality.

This is no accident, for it is the outcome of economic and social choices made by government and, it has to be said, the people who elected and re-elected them.

Especially in our health services, our



**Veronica Bon, support agency worker, deep in discussion with Joan O'Flynn of Combat Poverty.**

government perversely looks to the model of the United States, a country which has achieved the worst social outcomes in health in the western hemisphere, although the highest profits.

## Community development marginalised

In the face of these realities, community development can offer only marginal improvements (for) groups and communities living in deprivation. That does not mean that community development has not achieved something, it has, those humanitarian gains have been important and they hold out the promise of what more can be achieved.

By contrast, if we look at successful European countries, community development and enlightened social policy have gone hand in hand. Eg Scandinavia.

So, what hope is there that anti-poverty work here can emerge from its dark valley?

## Draw inspiration from Europe

There is abundant inspiration to be drawn from the example of community development anti-poverty work in other parts of the European Union. There, they have been greatly helped by the re-emergence of the concept of civil society.

Such territory has not yet been won here: We recall the brief work of the Centre for Public Inquiry which was a non-governmental organisation investigating corruption in Irish society. The Minister for Justice not only, in American military parlance, took out the



# Europe in work

Centre for Public Inquiry, but several members of the Oireachtas of different parties made it plain that there should be no role for such a non-governmental, civil society organisation in Ireland.

## Civil society is valued, abroad

Contrast Irish intolerance with the European Union's white paper on governance which not only affirmed the value of civil society but welcomed the role of non-governmental organisations as a channel for protest. We are still a long way from that here. In anti-poverty work, our failure to define a space for civil society has cost us and cost the poor. (Brian was dismissive of the new NDP, despite it having a chapter on social inclusion).

## Reclaim civil society here!

The community development movement must move on to a new phase in its evolution, one in which it connects to the relevance of politics. Time to start 'reclaiming civil society'.

A first step, is to break this country's and this government's infatuation with American social policy. Europe, even with its faults, has so much to offer us - the best economic performance in the world, a diverse media, rich culture, how to manage diversity, equality, social policy, environmental protection, the best public services in the world, the most hopeful approach to sustainable development.

So perhaps, with these approaches in mind, we can emerge from the dark valley and reach the sunlit uplands.



Ann Galvin and Breda Ryan-Long of Cumann na Daoine CDP, Youghal, at the conference.

## We're so disorganised, the German Army feared to invade

**WORLD** War II politics came into the discussions at the conference in Tralee. The question was why was there no national body to speak for the community and voluntary sector.

"Our own poor level of organisation has been a problem," declared guest speaker Brian Harvey, with deliberate understatement. "One is reminded of what was called Operation Shamrock in which German military intelligence assessed the state of Ireland in 1940 prior to a prospective invasion: They concluded that Irish people were quarrelsome, reluctant to join together, indisciplined and as a result would be hard to rule effectively."

What was he on about, everyone wondered. "Apparently dissuaded from an unwinnable war, the German army invaded Russia instead," said Brian to some laughter.

Perhaps, the real reason the German empire-builders were afraid to invade was that, only decades earlier, the world had witnessed a determined population push the British Empire out of most of the country.

But that would not have got as good a laugh, and Brian wanted to make one point: the sector is terribly disorganised.

"We have no national body to forcibly represent the voice of the voluntary and



community sector to government," he said, highlighting the obvious.

By contrast, he pointed out, there is one in the north - the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA).

"NICVA is not just an assembly of civil society and voluntary organisations, but includes a formidable element of community development and anti-poverty groups and as an organisation has always made it plain that it believes in social change," said Brian.

He had earlier demonstrated that the Irish government's much-ignored White Paper on the sector had taken 25 years to publish.

"With such an equivalent organisation here, would it have taken our government a quarter of a century to design a policy for the voluntary and community sector?"

He said that the voluntary and community sector in this state "hardly needs to handicap itself" by remaining disorganised, by continuing on without an equivalent to NICVA.

Incidentally, Brian's claim that there is "no national body to forcibly represent the voice of the voluntary and community sector" was accepted without protest by the large attendance. There were no cries in favour of the Community Platform, or the Community Workers Co-op, or even the Wheel. You got the sense he would have dismissed any protest easily.

## Northern Ireland leads with manifesto

THE Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) launched its election manifesto in mid-January. The document set out the views of the voluntary and community sector in 23 policy areas and put pressure on political parties in Northern Ireland in the run-up to Assembly Elections. Nothing like NICVA exists in the Republic of Ireland. In turn, no manifesto on behalf of community and voluntary sector in this state has been launched in the run-up to the General Election.

For more information, check out: [www.nicva.org](http://www.nicva.org)



## Unexpressed anger

"THERE is a lot of anger, but it is not expressed. The negative media angle of coverage of public protest is very off-putting. In other countries, people-power is respected."

- Viv Sadd, Mahon CDP co-ordinator, speaking at the conference in Tralee

# *Ireland's power handed over to global capitalism, without protest*

- Peadar Kirby, the man who urged Costa Rica not to follow our example

**PEADAR Kirby has been trying to talk people in Costa Rica out of trying to copy Ireland's formula for economic development. Do they really want to see hundreds of people on hospital trolleys, he asks.**

The former journalist now lectures in international studies and is well-known as the author of a number of key books on development in Ireland and globally. He was a guest speaker\* at a conference held in Tralee at the beginning of the year, where he addressed the issue of poverty in a time of boom.

He recognised the positives in the Celtic Tiger, discussed why there is little protest over the negatives, and pointed to a people-centred approach for future development:

"This time last year I was in San Jose in Costa Rica for a conference titled 'Can Costa Rica become Ireland?' What I said to them was, 'Should Costa Rica become Ireland?' and I told them about the hundreds of people lying on hospital trolleys."

He said his audience wouldn't believe him.

"Ireland is seen worldwide as a model of economic success. But the reality for us here is more ambiguous. Is it success or failure?"

## **AMBIGUITIES**

The successes (there are three): growth, prosperity and jobs.

The failures (again, there are three):

"Firstly," claimed Peadar, "we have the worst level of relative poverty of the 25 countries in the EU, which means we have rising inequality. Secondly, we have grave failures in social provision, especially for the most vulnerable people, which is appalling in a society of so much wealth. Thirdly, our quality of life is characterised by pressures, fears and insecurities."

## **THE PUZZLE**

"The puzzle of the Celtic Tiger," he said, "is that the two come together - economic success and social failure:

- (a) Social spending is up but, as a percentage of our overall wealth, it is worse than a lot of poor countries in Europe.
- (b) Our tax system has transferred money from the poor to the rich (up to the last two budgets). This is scandalous.
- (c) Government increases in welfare



**Peadar Kirby.**

entitlements lags behind the rising prices of goods and services."

However, the failures are not inevitable.

"They result from action or inaction by the state who usually bow to the needs of global capitalism rather than looking after the needs of our vulnerable citizens. That shift in power characterises the failure of the Celtic Tiger," continued Peadar.

## **WHY?**

"A bigger question is why is this happening - why is the Irish state so happy to hand over power to global capitalism. Since the late 1980s, according to Garret Fitzgerald, there has been 'a very marked swing to the right in the broad policy stance of Irish governments as the influence of American economic liberalism became much stronger'.

"It's not to do with the moral quality of our politicians, but it is because we brought in low tax rates on corporate profits which are an essential part of the Irish model to attract and keep multi-nationals. But this model is a race to the bottom as other countries try to compete with the Irish success.

"We have low taxes on profits, wealth, capital gains. And there is no tax on property ownership, which is astonishing to people from other countries. Low taxes mean low government spending and poor public services. Meanwhile, what is extremely high is the tax on consumption, a tax that hits the poorest the most.

"We've made a choice for individualism,

for greed and self-interest, in place of a robust society. We have recreated something akin to the aristocracy of British rule. For example, many big property owners live overseas, to avoid paying tax at all here," he said.

## **WHY SO LITTLE PROTEST?**

The second puzzle is why is there so little protest?

"Protest has been episodic. Fianna Fail had their lowest votes since 1927 in the last local elections. It was a vote of protest. The next thing the Taoiseach declares himself a socialist. So, these protests do have their effects," said Peadar, adding from personal experience: "I had two close relatives die in the last couple of years and their experiences in hospital were appalling."

"Potential source of dissent are bought off. There is the need for an alternative - we need to build a counter-power, a power that will hold the market to account. And you CDP and FRC people are one actor in building this counter-power. Trade unions, for example, are another. We have to give voice to our values which are hidden beneath the false 'consensus' of social partnership. As long as ordinary people remain disorganised, the politicians benefit."

## **WE HAVE THE ANSWER**

Peadar believes the past provides the blueprint for moving forward now: "One hundred years ago, our state had its birth in a remarkable social movement. We had the Irish language revival, a farmers' movement, the women's movement, sports revival, class movement under Connolly. At the same time, we had international protests here against the Boer War, which are a bit like the protests against Shannon being used in the US war now."

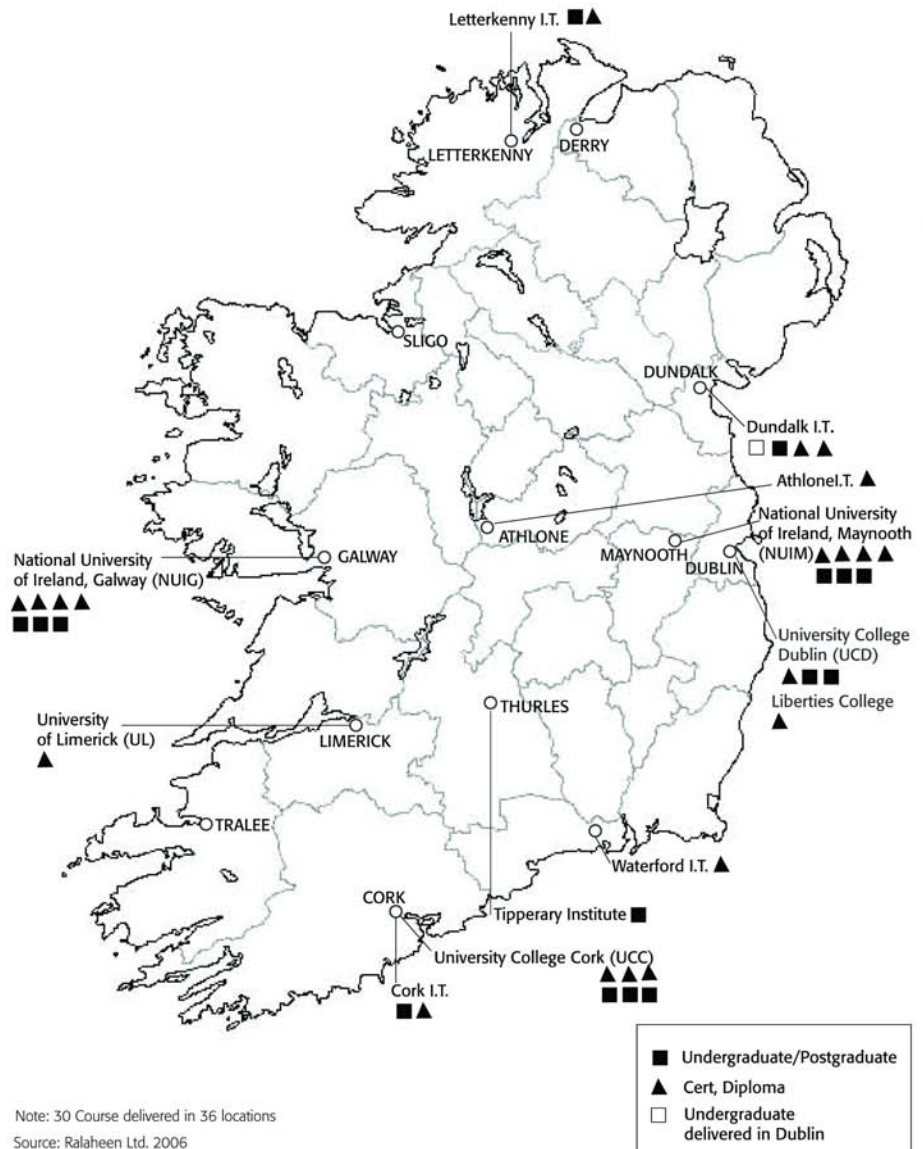
He believes a resurgence of a range of protest movements could move Ireland forward in a way that would benefit people more equitably.

**\* Peadar was speaking at the South and Mid-West Community Development Support Agency's conference 'Community development - a tool for anti poverty work in Ireland'. It was held in Tralee at the beginning of this year. Peadar is the head of the Centre for International Studies in Dublin City University.**



## Check out Community Development courses in Ireland!

### PRINCIPAL LOCATION OF 30 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COURSES IRELAND, 2006



**COMMUNITY Development courses at higher education level in Ireland have been documented and mapped as part of Combat Poverty Agency's 'Having Your Say' programme. The work was carried out by Ralaheen Ltd and the company identified a number of factors that people thinking of signing up for a course should consider. They are:**

- Courses were both full-time and part-time, some were offered on the campus of a University or Institute of Technology while others were offered as outreach programmes in the community. The study revealed a very dynamic picture, with courses regularly closing, opening and moving from place to place.
- The cost of courses varied greatly, even where they were of similar duration and academic level. In some cases, course providers and learners had created

interesting ways of off-setting some of the cost to the individual learner.

- The Community Development courses were offered at different levels, from Certificate to Masters Degree. Some of the courses were located on the National Framework of Qualifications; others were not. This has implications for students who may wish to progress to a higher level at a later stage.
- Work placement was an important part of some of the courses. However, in some cases where students were already working in the community and voluntary sector, supervised work placements were not provided.

A recommendation of the study was that the Having Your Say programme would publish a list of all third level Community Development courses in Ireland. In 2006 a directory of courses was published. Now, in 2007, an up-dated list of courses, colleges

and contact details for the courses will be placed on the Combat Poverty website in due course.

New research is also being carried out to identify Community Development courses available at 'Further Education' level. Further Education in Ireland encompasses a very broad range of programmes from Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses to Adult Literacy classes to Apprenticeships.

**The study is on-going and researchers at Ralaheen will present their findings shortly. To contribute to the study or to find out more information, contact:**

**Combat Poverty**  
 (Tel. 01-670 6746.  
 E-mail: [info@combatpoverty.ie](mailto:info@combatpoverty.ie).  
 Website: [www.cpa.ie](http://www.cpa.ie) or  
 Ralaheen Ltd (Tel. Helen O'Leary on  
 01-679-3400.  
 E-mail: [helen@ralaheen.ie](mailto:helen@ralaheen.ie)).

## Introduction: Volunteering in Ballybrack

THERE were 3182 people living in the Ballybrack CDP catchment area in 2006 and the population is declining. Between 2002 and last year, the population decreased by 251 people or -7.3%.

This is unusual for any part of Dublin, however Ballybrack – despite houses there selling for up to €500,000. Ballybrack consists of nine housing estates containing 920 homes, but as a community, it generally misses out on basic services and people have to travel to other neighbourhoods to shop, see a doctor, engage in sports and so on.

The CDP is now up and running and hoping to change things for the better, as chairperson Brenda Creighton fellow-volunteer Tanya Breen, and project co-ordinator, Tina Pomphrett, explained to 'Changing Ireland'.

# 'I volunteered out of curiosity'

### Why volunteer?

FIRST of all, out of curiosity. I had no understanding of what Community Development was about, it's still sometimes a bit blurry to me. But Ballybrack had always missed out. It was left out of RAPID, for instance. And community services are rarely placed here.

But the CDP proposal did look possible and I wanted to make sure it was supported.

### Did you do any voluntary work before this?

I'd always been involved in summer projects, I was on the committee for summer camps for five years. I work part-time for the last two years with the Youth Services (Dun Laoighaire CYS) which works with young people aged 10 to 21.

### How local are you?

I live across the road and I've three girls, aged 19, 16 and 13.

### Did you ever avail of community-based education yourself?

I worked outside the home, then did nothing



Brenda Creighton, voluntary management chairperson

for a couple of years, but when the home-school liaison teacher encouraged me, I did a personal development and assertiveness course.

### What paid work are you engaged in?

Now I teach drug-education among primary school children. Some of that work is paid, some is voluntary.

### Name one problem here:

The dual-carriageway cuts the community in half. It's a community split by roads.

What's the most difficult thing about setting up a CDP?

The amount of really good people that got fed up with the slow wheels of motion and dropped off the committee. Tina contacted them all (when the CDP was being launched) but they'd had enough.

### Are things getting better in Ballybrack?

When I was aged 13, there wasn't even a bus to Ballybrack. Now, we have a supermarket, church and primary school. And a CDP!

# 'I don't want this to fail'

### Why volunteer?

I was very nosy. I heard Brenda and another girl talking about it. I am the only person here who grew up their whole life in Ballybrack. Bar the summer projects, everything that came to Ballybrack went away again. Nothing ever lasted, it would always dwindle off. There are 920 houses here, but no local facilities.

### Is there anything for people to do in Ballybrack?

Besides the youth services and the soccer club, that's it here.

### What was it like when you were growing up?

I was in Ballybrack Running Club years ago and we hounded the Council for a track . . . but we grew up while we were waiting for them to reply and the club folded. There's a gravel track there now, alright.



Tanya Breen, voluntary management

### What about facilities in neighbouring districts?

Cabinteely GAA is within walking distance.

### Are you glad you volunteered with the CDP?

I didn't know what I was leaving myself in for. Sometimes I go home and say 'I'm not going to do this anymore', but who else is going to do it? And also, I don't want it to fail like everything else did here. And, finally, in ten years time, we might see some of the benefits from the CDP's achievements.

### What would you hope to see?

I'd love to see the community work together because it is very divided, road by road. I hope in ten years time that the CDP is well-established, well-supported. We could be the catalyst for bringing all the services, agencies and projects into the area.



# 'Ballybrack is a pocket of disadvantage

**What makes Ballybrack different?**

The difference is that the services weren't put into Ballybrack in the first place and unfortunately, it missed out on being listed as a RAPID area also, though we are working to change that.

**Are there other disadvantaged areas nearby?**

Loughlinstown, Ballyogan and Ballybrack are all pockets of disadvantage in county Dublin surrounded by affluent areas.

**Have you done much volunteer work yourself?**

I'm from (nearby) Ballyogan, a council housing-estate. I've worked voluntary there since 1996.

**Have you completed any training courses?**

I did the Maynooth Community and Youthwork Diploma part-time over three years (while also working a 35 hour week with Catholic Youth Care).



Tina Pomphrett,  
co-ordinator

**What is the most recent piece of work you did locally?**

I supported a group of twelve local young people who attend after-schools activity. They designed a logo for our CDP.

**What motivates you?**

I'm at work here since March, '06: Ballyogan CDP is very overdue, because the area is disadvantaged and has seen nothing put into it in 30 years. We hope to change that.

**What are your priorities right now?**

We urgently need a new premises and to involve new members.

The temporary premises I met Tina in was cold and did not have a letterbox: here's hoping a suitable premises turns up soon for Ballybrack CDP!

# 9-year birth of a CDP: Ballybrack, Co. Dublin

**BALLYBRACK CDP is ten years in the pipeline and – after securing funding and taking on a co-ordinator last year - is now finding its feet. Here is how the CDP was born:**

**1997**

Ballybrack was one of three communities in the Dun Laoghaire area, proactively targeted for inclusion in the Community Development Programme.

The work began in 1997 when Southside Partnership carried out an area action plan for the partnership area, and submitted it to the relevant department then (the Department of Social Welfare).

**2002**

In 2002, Dunrath the then support agency – Dunrath – began working with existing and new groups in the Ballybrack community. They brought the groups together to develop a workplan which was submitted to the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to fund a CDP.

**2004**

By 2004, due to changes in policy, CDPs could no longer set up as legal companies, so Ballybrack was advised to find a 'host'

organisation and they did in the Southside Women's Action Network (SWAN) CDP.

**2005**

In early 2005, SWAN CDP agreed to be the host organisation for Ballybrack CDP and the application was approved. Now a funded group, the voluntary management of Ballybrack CDP and SWAN worked together to recruit a co-ordinator and to begin implementing the work set out in the

**'Hosting' labelled as 'a strength' and 'a weakness'**

THE voluntary management and co-ordinator of Ballybrack CDP recently carried out a 'SWOT' (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and used the findings in developing aims and objectives for the Strategic Work Plan.

It is worth noting that the hosting arrangement was listed as both 'a strength' and 'a weakness'. The voluntary management committee hope the CDP will become independent in time.

workplan.

**2006**

In March 2006, Tina was appointed co-ordinator. She has linked up with many groups in the area and the project had its official launch some months later.

**2007**

The next move for Ballybrack CDP is to find a suitable premises and to boost local involvement in the project.

Also, the voluntary management committee is working towards developing their capacity and skills towards becoming independent of the hosting arrangement. They feel this is also a priority for Ballybrack and are working and training to achieve this.

They hope too to secure funding from the Department to recruit a part-time project worker to work alongside the co-ordinator in delivering programmes locally.

**For more information, contact:**  
**Tina Pomphrett, co-ordinator, Ballybrack CDP, c/o SWAN CDP, 57 Ennel Court, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18.**  
**Tel/Fax: 01-235-1521.**  
**E-mail: ballybrackcdp@eircom.net**

# Give voice to your community

- Don't fear the media, use it!

By ALLEN MEAGHER

**BOTH Moyross and Southill in Limerick city have been in the media a lot for, as the saying goes, all the wrong reasons.**

But that's not quite true – much of the coverage has been steered, influenced and informed by community representatives. Community-approved solutions to problems here in Moyross were the ones being banded about at higher level, at political and funding level. This is an achievement.

The 'talkers' in the community were a mix of volunteers, people who were volunteers and are now development workers, anonymous residents, and adult relations of Millie and Gavin who are recovering from burns after an arson attack on the car they were sitting in.

If 'official' Moyross had not engaged with the media, where would we be now? A lot worse off.

As a result of the media work:

- The media and politicians know it is a place that will stand up for itself in public.
- Grants and other supports are more forthcoming than before.
- Moyross voices have been heard nationwide, the people living here are heard to speak and are not spoken of as if they are mute and powerless.
- Residents have learned how to use the media to get their message across.
- There is still, against the odds, substantial pride among people from Moyross.

## Here's what I know:

A key part of community development work is to give voice to the needs and views of disadvantaged communities. Doing so through networking meetings is one half of the job.

The remaining voice-work may be done through the media.

Yes, it feels as risky as coal-mining, the roof could collapse on you at any moment.

But I understand that many community groups have an overly-healthy respect for the media, with most CDPs avoiding the spotlight a lot of the time. Once bitten, twice shy.

Well, as with mining, if adequate precautions and training are in place, the likelihood of anyone being hurt falls to near-zero.

Already, some readers are probably saying to themselves that it's best to continue as you are, saying nothing to or through the media. It is easy to dismiss the media, saying "No-one reads that 'paper'" (or listens to "that station") when you are dumped on in the press or on radio.

Nonetheless, when communities do respond, the media will adjust their focus. Recently, a racist article was published in the 'Limerick Leader' and, following eight complaints, the editor reacted and the racist-minded author no longer writes for the newspaper.

Sometimes you owe it to the community you work with to engage with the media.

## 12 steps to widespread coverage

Your community can use the media in ways you might not have imagined. Here are 12 tips to get you going:

1. The media is not a mad dog looking to savage you. **Look at the media as a resource tool.**
2. **Find out how many of you in your project (paid and volunteers) and in your community are up for media work.** Workers or residents who are shy of speaking on radio can be encouraged to work on press releases for the print media.
3. **A day's training would go a long way.** Find out how to write a press release, and the do's and don'ts of interviews. You wouldn't pick up a kango-hammer without knowing how to use it, though a quick lesson and trial would go a long way.
4. **The media can be easy to use.** Call them up, tell them what you want to say and it's said. Run a novel event and invite them along. Who do you know in your local radio station?
5. **The media can be difficult to work with.** They don't see your story as a news story everytime. Remember, not everything will get published.
6. Engage with the media in a simple way. **Facing a radio interview, list THREE POINTS you wish to make and no more.** The first two might be facts you wish to highlight, the third being a solution you are proposing (and perhaps need support or resources to put in place).
7. You are undoubtedly highly motivated about your work and passionate to see your community prosper and **to ensure your community comes out fighting anytime it is slandered in the media.**
8. **Go with your heart, with your conscience, in saying what you say.** Don't say any more than what you set out to say, unless it is to elaborate.
9. **Do take care about the words you use to describe your community** and groups within the community. Don't be shy of being critical of ineffective government initiatives or lack of them.
10. **Be honest. But you still don't have to answer every question you are asked.** Say what you are there to say to the listeners, no matter what you are asked.
11. **Start off with a positive press release** to the local media about an event you are running. Or phone Joe Duffy.
12. Run a media-training workshop or course in your community and **publish a local newsletter.**

## The effin meedja!

- Free skills training and advice

'CHANGING Ireland' media skills training workshops are available to all CDPs – on a county or regional basis. CDPs or the local Support Agency are expected to organise the event, provide a premises and lunch. The facilitator(s) come without charge (saving €1000 - €1500). See page 2 for contact details.

Currently, projects in the South-East, North-West and Mid-West are preparing for 'Changing Ireland' Media Skills Workshops. The mid-west training is geared specifically towards CDPs who wish to learn basic skills so they can cope in a crisis situation, such as when crime brings an area under the national media

spotlight.

The courses are delivered by Allen Meagher, editor. He has facilitated media training in Ireland and abroad since 1996.

You can also contact Allen Meagher at any time if your CDP finds itself in a dilemma over the media, or in need of advice on how to deal with the press, radio or tv on a specific issue. Recently, he has worked with STAG CDP, Tosach Support Agency, Limerick Travellers Development Group and the CDN Moyross on various media matters.

An excellent website that aims to boost PR skills within the community and voluntary sector in Britain is: [www.mediatruster.org](http://www.mediatruster.org)



## CDP changes of address, etc - Issue 21:

**Tralee CDP** has changed its email address from [tcdp@iol.ie](mailto:tcdp@iol.ie) to [traleecdp@eircom.net](mailto:traleecdp@eircom.net)

The Galway Travellers Development Support Group CDP has renamed itself the **Galway Travellers Movement CDP**.

**Pobail le Chéile CDP** has moved website to [www.pobaille.com](http://www.pobaille.com). The e-mail address [pobaille@eircom.net](mailto:pobaille@eircom.net) remains the same.

In the last issue, Brian Keenan was listed as the chairperson when in fact he is the co-ordinator of **Inchicore CDP**. Pat Carolan is

the chairperson.

**NOTE:** Kindly call 'Changing Ireland' to notify readers of any changes you have made to your contact details.

T: 061 458090.

E: [admin@changingireland.ie](mailto:admin@changingireland.ie)

## CDP Support Agencies contact details:

### Regional Support Agencies

#### Framework Support Agency

30, O'Connell Street,  
Waterford City  
Chair : Liz O'Dea (Acting)  
Co-Ord'r : Glynis Currie, Catherine Drea  
T : 051-876122 F : 051-843106  
E : [frame@iol.ie](mailto:frame@iol.ie)  
W: [www.frameworknet.com](http://www.frameworknet.com)

#### South & Mid-West Community Development Support Agency

Block 1, Floor 2,  
Ashbourne Business Park,  
Dock Road, Limerick  
Chair : Toni Gleeson  
Co-Ord'r : Fiona O'Grady  
T : 061-225711 F : 061-225712  
E : [info@mwcdsa.ie](mailto:info@mwcdsa.ie)  
W: [www.mwcdsa.ie](http://www.mwcdsa.ie)

#### West Training and Development Support Agency

Mayoralty House, Merchants Road,  
Galway  
Chair : Jim O'Brien  
Co-Ord'r : Breda Lymer  
T : 091-567827  
F : 091-562305  
E : [info@westtraining.ie](mailto:info@westtraining.ie) W: [www.westtraining.ie](http://www.westtraining.ie)

#### Triskele Support Agency

Carrickmacross Workhouse,  
Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan  
Chair : Emma-Jane Hoey  
Co-Ord'r : Temporarily vacant  
T : 042-9663706 F : 042-9690872  
E : [info@triskele.ie](mailto:info@triskele.ie) W: [www.triskele.ie](http://www.triskele.ie)

#### Tosach Support Agency

Nelson Mandela House,  
44, Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1  
Chair : Bernie Walsh  
Co-Ord'r : Temporarily vacant  
T : 01-8171911 F : 01-8874888  
E : [info@tosach.ie](mailto:info@tosach.ie) W: [www.tosach.ie](http://www.tosach.ie)

#### Draiocht Support Agency

'An Tobar', Elm Court,  
Kiltalown, Tallaght, Dublin 24  
Chair : Anne Troy  
Co-Ord'r : Noel Fitzgerald & John Davies  
T : 01-4146979 F : 01-4146981  
E : [info@draiocht.ie](mailto:info@draiocht.ie)

### Specialist Support Agencies

#### Pavee Point

Travellers Centre  
46, North Great Charles Street  
Dublin 1  
Co-Ord'r : Ronnie Fay

T : 01-8780255 F : 01-8742626

E : [pavee@iol.ie](mailto:pavee@iol.ie)

**Pavee Point is a partnership of Irish Travellers and settled people working together to improve the lives of Irish Travellers through working towards social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights.**

**Pavee Point aim for the appropriate inclusion of Travellers and the Traveller agenda in the focus and work of CDPs and other initiatives.**

#### Women's Aid

Everton House, 47, Old Cabra Road,  
Dublin 7  
Co-Ord'r : Margaret Martin  
T : 01-8684721 F : 01-8684722  
E : [info@womensaid.ie](mailto:info@womensaid.ie) W: [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)  
Helpline: 1800 341900

**Womens Aid aims to support our projects to respond to the issue of violence against women.**

#### DESSA (Disability and Equality Specialist Support Agency)

Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane,  
Dublin 8  
Chair : Jacqui Browne  
Co-Ord'r : Alice Griffin  
T : 01-4163548 F : 01-4536861  
E : [info@dessa.ie](mailto:info@dessa.ie)  
W: [www.dessa.ie](http://www.dessa.ie)

## UN Days: March to June 2007

THE following United Nations days and weeks – which will be marked worldwide – take place between March and June '07:

### March

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

### April

- 7 World Health Day
- 23 World Book and Copyright Day

### May

- 3 World Press Freedom Day
- 15 International Day of Families
- 17 World Telecommunication Day
- 21 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
- 22 International Day for Biological Diversity
- 25 - Week of Solidarity with
- 31 the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories
- 29 International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers



- 31 World No-Tobacco Day

### June

- 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- 5 World Environment Day
- 17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 20 World Refugee Day
- 23 United Nations Public Service Day
- 26 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

The UN's days, weeks, years and decades help focus the world on various issues of importance locally and globally. The UN calls on member states and other organisations to mark these days.

# People proud, despite discrimination

- research report on Travellers in Galway city

A REPORT launched by the Galway Traveller Movement CDP has found that people are very proud to be Travellers, despite the discrimination they face.

16-year-old, Debbie McDonagh, in a moving speech at the report-launch, said she had a "right to keep her identity", a "right to be respected as a Traveller" and a right "to be treated equal in the education system".

Travellers were involved in all stages of the 'Galway Traveller Movement Baseline Report', from planning, to research, collation and presentation.

The report found that people were very proud to be known as Travellers. Even though - for example - Travellers are less nomadic than before, they value this attribute of their culture highly.

A new photo exhibition - running for a week in March - proves the point with positive snapshots of Traveller life in the city (for details, see accompanying story).

However, there are times when Galway city Travellers are forced to deny their identity. These are times when people believe that they may be discriminated against because of their identity. Discrimination and racism are themes that run through the entire report and the research shows that almost all Travellers in Galway city have experienced discrimination and racism and these incidents regularly



Niall O'Brolcháin, Mayor of Galway, Hannagh McGinley, Galway Traveller Movement development worker, Margaret Ó Riada, GTM co-ordinator, Niall Crowley, director of The Equality Authority.

occur in all aspects of their lives. For example, it is common for Travellers in Galway City to be followed around shops or to be subject to racist abuse, both verbal and in some cases physical.

The report also analysed the results of the 2002 National Census of Population and according to the author of the report Ann Irwin, the results were stark.

The report adds its voice to that of the national Traveller organisations, the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission in calling for the conferring of ethnic status on the Traveller community.

Also, as the National Plan Against Racism points out, one size does not fit all and services must acknowledge that Travellers, in common with other minority groups, can experience services differently and rise to the challenge that this poses.

Kathleen Sweeney, chairperson of Galway Traveller Movement CDP said, "The report poses challenges to us all".

The report was launched in early December

as part of the national Traveller Focus Week by the Mayor of Galway, Councillor Niall Ó Brolcháin, and the keynote speech was given by Niall Crowley, chairman of the Equality Authority.

Niall said it was disturbing but not surprising to read that 96% of the Travellers in Galway City have experienced racism. He suggested that Ireland is building a culture of compliance and that, despite the challenges of the Equality Authority (it can take 3-4 years to take a case) positive change depends on individuals coming forward to take a case and being supported to do so.

Eamon Ó Cuív, Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, commended the report and pledged that it will be discussed at a government level and will not be left to gather dust on a shelf.

As part of the launch Michael Collins performed an extract from his one-man play "It's a cultural thing! Or is it?"

The Galway Traveller Movement CDP was established in 1994.

## 'African Voice'

MALCOLM Eremionkhale - who has worked closely with CDPs in Waterford city over recent years - is part of a team preparing to launch the first issue of 'The African Voice', a registered national (tabloid) newspaper, established with the aim of promoting cultural diversity and integration in Ireland.

The newspaper will particularly focus on African and African-Irish people in Ireland, along with more general news coverage.

Individuals or organisations interested in submitting articles, news reports, features, true life experiences, ideas, etc. for publication should contact: 'The African Voice', mob. 087-2618184.

E-Mail: infoafricanvoice@yahoo.ie

## Three recommendations

Ann Irwin, the author of the report, made three main recommendations.

Firstly, she called for Travellers to be recognised as a distinct ethnic minority group.

Secondly, there must be a recognition that, as the Anti-Racism Strategy puts it, "One size does not fit all" and services should be tailored to suit different types

of people.

Thirdly, Travellers must be placed firmly on the top of the agenda in Galway City and must remain a priority for all services.

For more information, or copies of the report, contact: Margaret Ó Riada, co-ordinator of the Galway Traveller Movement CDP, tel. 091 765390.



## Few Travellers live to collect a pension\*

IRELAND would be near the bottom of the UN league in many categories of poverty if the Traveller community in Galway were surveyed by themselves and the UN believed these figures were typical of the broad Irish population.

In a research project, the Galway Travellers Movement CDP have found that:

- The unemployment rate among the Traveller community in Galway is 77%, compared to an overall population figure of 5%.
- 49% of the Traveller population in Galway City is made up of children between the ages of 0-14 years, compared to 16% in the overall population.
- 60% of the Traveller population in Galway finished school with no education or primary education only. At the report launch, Breda McDonagh of the Galway Traveller Movement CDP argued that education was "the key to achievement, power and freedom".
- Only 1% of the Traveller population is made up of people 65 years or over, compared to 8% in the overall population, strongly indicating that Travellers die at a younger age than their settled counterparts.

*Note: The Social Welfare Law Reform and Pensions Act 2006 has changed the name of the Old Age Pension to State Pension. The new name came into effect on 29 September, 2006.*

## Positive snapshots

GALWAY Traveller Movement has decked out the City Hall with a photographic exhibition displaying positive snapshots of modern Traveller life and the strong family values that underpin it. The main theme is 'Travellers as an ethnic group' and the work is a follow-up to the recent launch of the 'Galway Traveller Movement Baseline Report'.

The guest speakers scheduled for the

opening on March 20th were Hannagh McGinley, Galway Traveller Movement, and Dr. Joshua Castellino from the Irish Centre for Human Rights. The exhibition is open to the public from Monday to Friday, March 19th-23rd.

The exhibition was a collaborative effort: the photos are by Derek Spiers and the text by Travellers from Galway, and the exhibition was planned as part of Intercultural and Anti-

Racism Week (which incorporates the UN designated International Day Against Racial Discrimination on the 21st March).

Members of Galway Traveller Movement CDP also took part in the city's Saint Patrick's Day Parade. The entry mixed aspects of Traveller culture such as recycling, nomadism and flower-making with a colourful magic machine.

## Sisters and best friends

- part of an exhibition by Galway Travellers Movement

"We love one another from the bottom of our hearts and we never want to be separated. If we couldn't live beside each other we wouldn't want to live. She's my sister and she's my best friend."

- Nora Delaney



MARGARET and Nora Delaney are two sisters living in a group housing scheme in Galway City. Each summer they take to the roads for their long-awaited trip to Connemara where they meet up with other members of their extended family. They have been welcomed into the local community in Connemara but return to their houses in the city for the Winter. As much as they draw strength from their close supportive relationship, sometimes they feel the walls of their houses closing in, and dream of one day living in a halting site in the country.

- Photo: Derek Spiers

## 'Who's the most famous person you've met, Mary?'

**PRESIDENT Mary McAleese is asked one question with regularity, especially by children: 'Who is the most famous person you've ever met Mary?' She prefers, however, to talk about the two people she has been the most impressed by, neither of them world leaders. She told the audience in New Ross CDP who her heroes are:**

"One was a woman with five children who had problems at home and dropped out of school early. She lived a very poor life, she couldn't read bedtime stories to her children. She was very clever though, more clever than she realised. The children never found out that she couldn't read or write, she hid it very well.

"A low point for her came when 'Yellow Pack' food was launched - you know where everything was in yellow wrapping and cheap. She thought she had bought beans,



but it was dogfood. She felt useless.

"Another low point was when one of her sons went to Germany for work as a young man. He wrote letters to her, but got no reply. In his third letter, he wrote saying, 'Mammy, you obviously don't care about me, I'm dying of loneliness and you won't even write to me.' Well, that broke her heart.

"She went to NALA (the National Adult Literacy Agency) and enrolled in literacy classes, then went on to sit her Leaving Cert. She later did a degree course in Trinity College, Dublin, and is now studying for a Masters.

"Her children were so pleased with this

new super-confident Mammy."

The second-most impressive person the President met was a man who overcame literacy difficulties and transformed his life. She said these people, and others like them, were lucky there were organisations like NALA and the CDPs to help them.

President McAleese is NALA's patron.

**For more information about overcoming literacy and numeracy difficulties, contact the National Adult Literacy Agency at:**  
**76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1.**  
**Tel: 01-855-4332. Fax: 01-855-5475.**  
**E-mail: literacy@nala.ie**  
**Website: www.nala.ie**



*President McAleese was speaking during a visit to New Ross CDP - see pages 3-5*

## What did the Brits ever do for us?

### - the history we were never told

**WHAT did 'the Brits' ever do for us? According to Brian Harvey, community development began in Ireland on August 5th, 1891, to be precise, when the British government established the Congested Districts Board.**

The Board was "yet another in a long line of attempts to respond to the poverty" and it was very successful. He said what was even more interesting, from our point of view, was not just its aims, but its methods.

The Congested Districts Board for Ireland, was staffed and led by some of the leading Victorian social reformers of its day, and used methods that would fit neatly in with any modern-day community development theory, for example:

- The board started with a compilation of 84 baseline reports, describing in rich detail the economic and social conditions in each of the designated districts.
- The board then set in train a broad set of measures for the economic and social improvement of the districts.



*Brian Harvey and Peadar Kirby were among the guest speakers at a conference held by the South and Mid-West Support Agency conference held in Tralee.*



*- see pages 18-20*

Simultaneously, the board pushed economic investment, physical infrastructure, social supports, agriculture, rural industry, science, education, housing, sanitation, poor environment and health services, believing that all these fields had to move forward in parallel.

- The board promoted the establishment of committees in every parish, with the brief of banishing at least the most repulsive and demoralising effects of poverty.
- The board emphasised that it would not support short-term efforts to relieve poverty, but only those calculated to address its root causes and promote long-term outcomes. (Does this sound familiar?!)
  - The board chose, in the face of strong political opposition, to invest in the rural co-operative movement as a means of confronting the predatory behaviour of the financial institutions on people of low incomes.
  - Community-based nursing services were introduced, bringing preventative health services to the people.
  - Community organisers were appointed to lead the organisational development of

districts.

"Significant improvements were achieved as a result of its work," said Brian. "So whatever about our understanding of the links between community development and anti-poverty work that we discuss today, that relationship was very well understood and practised by a state development agency at the tail end of the 19th century."

**PS: One of the first things the new Irish government did in the 1920s was to abolish the Congested Districts Board - it didn't suit their political interests and angered some of their wealthy supporters.**

### How to move a buffalo, or a government



**THE mosquito style of protest is the best way to move a buffalo, or a government.**

So, how do you move a buffalo? He won't feel a big stick, he'll take no notice of you roaring at him. If one tiny mosquito bites him, he will not notice much. But if a cloud of mosquitos attack at the same time, he will become very uncomfortable and quickly retreat.

"You should be imaginative in your forms of protest," suggested Peadar Kirby.