

CHANGING IRELAND

SUMMER '07

ISSUE 22

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

€2.25

Happier than if they got paid!

Learning
from
Tanzania



Gender Festival
page 26-27

Famine
Walkers



& Shell
back page

Wexford



Men will build
anything...
pages 14-15



Volunteering with An Siol - Arbour Hill, Dublin

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ANTI-RACISM IN NAVAN... REGENERATION...
KERRY VOLUNTEERS... PEACE III...and HORACE!

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



Stop wondering

YOU might wonder . . . is there any way to get more men involved in community projects and in self-development. Just get them to build something, a boat for example, like the South West Wexford CDP has. Before you know it, men will be beating down the door of your local community centre roaring to be left in.

You might wonder . . . how on earth can you link your local work with global issues. Get out the paint-buckets and make a few calls! An Siol CDP has ingeniously linked the painting of some senior citizens' homes with a project that is helping to build schools in India.

You might wonder . . . what would be the point in asking someone addicted to drugs onto a committee. Crumlin CDP see it the other way around – you go in search of people who have experience of drug abuse so they can feed into policy formulation. It means your local drugs strategy will make sense.

You might wonder . . . how a walk in scenic Mayo can speak more than a history book about our past and indeed our present.

Louisburgh CDP's Famine Walk brings the politics of today and yesterday alive in a way that everyone - young and old, literate and poor at reading - can understand.

You might wonder . . . don't Travellers just keep griping about their problems without ever doing anything about it themselves?

Go to the halting site at St. Margaret's Park, Ballymun, and you will meet a community ready and willing to pay bills, to admit where the faults lie among their own people, to speak in human rights language about the rights denied to them by others. This is an empowered community that is urging the authorities to co-operate with them. Media stereotyping might have you thinking it is always the other way around.

And you might wonder . . . how do CDPs get involved in changing things. How do they act as a catalyst for social change? Some take to the streets in protest, most work behind the scenes and all work from community development principles. If you really want to find out, read this issue!

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.

Correction: Susan Fox spoke

EXCERPTS from a speech delivered by Susan Fox, co-ordinator of Blakestown CDP, were attributed in error to another person in our coverage of the "Making a Difference" conference, held in the Mansion House, Dublin (Page 10, issue 20). To readers who thought that Susan did not address the conference, we would like to make clear that, in fact, she did.

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DISCLAIMER

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HIGHLIGHTS



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BUSINESS in the
COMMUNITY
Ireland

Business contacts in the community

THERE are a number of ways for community groups to link up with local businesses and professionals in the private sector.

The Rotary Club is an ideal starting point in your local area. They are currently, for example, running a Youth Leadership Development Competition.

Information on local meetings and contact details are available from: www.district1160.org/clubmeetings.php

You could also consider Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI), which is a national organisation for linking businesses to community interests. It is "the only business-driven network in the country specialising in corporate responsibility and community involvement."

For example, the organisation has helped over 600 offenders back into the workforce. It also advises companies on how to establish successful employee volunteering programmes. And they help companies become involved in educational and social employment programmes across the country.

For more information, contact: Business in the Community Ireland, 32 Lower O'Connell St., Dublin 1. T: 01-874-7232. F: 01-874-7637. E: info@bitc.ie W: www.bitc.ie



Ten professionals give a day's work

- to benefit of people local and global

By BREDA McNAMARA, An Siol CDP

AN Siol CDP has been successfully running a Senior Citizens Service in the Stoneybatter area for approximately seven years. We recently developed a new initiative, a painting project in conjunction with a local businessman, which resulted in four senior citizens having their homes painted by professional painters on a voluntary basis.

An Siol was approached by a local businessman Brendan Doyle, who is heavily involved in school building projects in Calcutta on a voluntary basis. Each year transition year students from the local school travel to Calcutta to help Sr. Cyril Mooney, an Irish Loreto nun get building projects started. Sr. Cyril and her team of development staff and local labour then see each project to completion. He began thinking that while doing voluntary work abroad is very commendable and worthwhile, but what was he contributing to his own community?

Brendan was aware of An Siol's work with senior citizens. A member of his family had been a client of the service, so he approached us with an idea. Brendan really wanted to find

a way to link his voluntary work in India with the painting project in Stoneybatter. The idea was to link the local with the global so the painting project would create links between

"While the senior citizens settled down to watch Casablanca with a cup of tea in the warmth of the common room, the painters got to work!"

communities in two different continents. Brendan proposed that he would recruit ten professional volunteer painters, get the paint sponsored and seek sponsorship from business people, with all funds raised going towards the cost of building materials in Calcutta.

An Siol recruited the senior citizens and ensured they had help if necessary to prepare their homes for the painters and we organised activities for the older people who would be out of their homes for the day. We decided to recruit four senior citizens from the same



Joe (65) glad of Ireland

JOE Doran – a retired 65-year-old resident of Arbour Hill, Dublin – was trying to get senior citizens he knew to think about having their homes repainted, for free. A local businessman had made the offer and the local Community Development Project were putting the word out. To make things even more interesting, the painting project was linked to a scheme to help build a school in Calcutta.

As Joe did the rounds looking for candidates, he never thought of his own one-roomed home, which was crying out thirstily for a lick of paint. The landlords – Dublin

City Council – had not painted the place in the 8 years he has lived in St. Bricen's Park.

"I never thought of myself, until Breda in An Siol asked why wouldn't I get my own done. You know you don't want people to be saying 'Ah, look at your man,'" explained Joe.

He's glad now.

"It's smashing! It's a palace compared to what it was like before," said Joe, "and it was great it helped out towards India."

Joe's heart goes out to young people. He feels the quality of the housing being built today is poor and feels sorry for young

Professional painters work



The volunteer painters relaxing after a hard days work!

Dublin City Council sheltered housing complex and to paint all four homes in one day. While the senior citizens settled down to watch Casablanca with a cup of tea in the warmth of the common room, the painters got to work! An Siol also got local businesses to sponsor refreshments and snacks for the painters, to enjoy on their well earned break.

The day was a great success, €6,000 was raised for building projects in Calcutta, the senior citizens got their homes painted and both the volunteers and senior citizens enjoyed the experience immensely. The success of the project was for two main reasons. Firstly, as both An Siol and Brendan were very clear about what they were responsible for organising, the project ran very smoothly on the day. Also we kept it

simple, recruiting four senior citizens in one sheltered housing complex, with all ten volunteers painting on the same day, rather than dealing with the logistics of trying to do a wider geographical spread over a number of weekends.

An Siol will definitely be involved in another painting project, but even more so I think it has opened our eyes up to the possibilities of what we can achieve by teaming up with the business community.

• For further information contact,
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India link - THE SENIOR CITIZEN

couples "having to hock their life away for 40 years to pay for a home."

His own children are living in England, where Joe worked for 30 years of his life (chiefly as a telephone engineer). He enjoys travelling over to see them and his grandchildren. More immediately, he is looking forward to July 2nd, when An Siol CDP are taking senior citizens on a fishing trip. He will skip the trip that follows "to some stately home or something like that."

You never guess from all his plans that this man is recovering from a heart attack a couple of months ago. For this

reason only – and while wishing he could take the paint job with him – Joe is hoping for a new home with two rooms.

"Living in one room isn't easy, you know when visitors call around and they have to sit on the bed."

At least, while he is waiting for a TD to come bearing good news – and no doubt he will be showing them this article – his four walls are gleaming brightly with fresh magnolia.

Modest Brendan credits good karma



- THE BUSINESSMAN

BRENDAN Doyle is in the accountancy business, yet he had the contacts to track down ten professional painters willing to give up a day to paint the homes of senior citizens in Arbour Hill.

"Instead of hassling people, you offer them an opportunity," he said.

But how did he happen to know ten professional painters?

"I do the accounts for a lot of painters – maybe it's a karma thing! They were eager to help, they'd like to do it again next year," he continued.

And where did he come up with the idea?

"I was doing a course with Landmark Education on how to ask people for things and how to be on top of your life. And this was the project I did out of the course.

"Landmark are a controversial crowd, there were people ringing up the Joe Duffy Show complaining about them, but I found their stuff good."

Through the painting project, thousands of euro went towards a school-building programme in Calcutta.

Brendan's children attend John Scotus School and it was through them that Brendan became aware of the programme. Each year, students from the Donnybrook school travel to India and link up with Sr. Cyril, an Irish nun who left the country in 1957 and has remained in India since.

"She is on a par with Mother Theresa, just not as well known," said Brendan.

In effect, Brendan – through his unique project in collaboration with the school and An Siol CDP – has established a local-global link between senior citizens in inner-city Dublin and young people in Calcutta.

Marry before you're 18

- THE STUDENT

CULTURE shock can be a great educator and Transition Year students from John Scotus School in Donnybrook, Dublin, learn a lot each year when they travel to India to help build schools.

Emmet Kiberd, in his blog on the scoilnet website, explains why some Indian girls have red dots on their foreheads.

"We held a long conversation (through our translator) with a class of students of around our age. They laughed out loud at western

ideas, such as the choice to marry whoever you want and the custom of marrying over the age of 18. We soon realised, from the red dots on the foreheads of about 12 girls in the room, that these girls were already married.

"We returned from India after 3 weeks, still shocked!"

The blog gives a great insight into the learning both Irish and Indian students gain from each other: www.scoilnetprojectindia.blogspot.com



First time volunteering

- THE PAINTER

PAINTER, Paddy Foy, from Kirwan Street in Stoneybatter, Dublin 7, has done voluntary painting work before and is very familiar with An Siol CDP since his sister Grainne works there.

However, it was a first for his colleagues – they normally work together as a team – to give up a day's work and volunteer.

"It was good for them, and they want to do it now at least once a year. And they're good painters," he said.

The professionals volunteered once businessman Brendan Doyle explained the project to them: give up one day to paint the homes of senior citizens in Arbour Hill and help raise money for schools in India.

"It's handy when it's a job you can do in one day," Paddy pointed out. Now, he is wondering where he and his colleagues, armed with brushes and paint-buckets, will target next.

It could be you!

- University on the hunt for mentors

DID you ever think: "If only someone younger than me or someone wanting to learn how community development really works was with me now on this difficult job, they would learn so much"

If so, there is a university looking for you!

Galway's university is seeking workers in the community and voluntary sector to mentor students in the field.

"Mentoring is an idea some might associate with the business world but it has equally interesting possibilities in the community-voluntary sector."

So says Dr. Brian McGrath, the Director of the Masters in Community Development Programme at NUI Galway.

He hopes, from January of next year, to have the mentoring project up and running and he is now looking for candidates to take on students. It should be an empowering experience for them.

The traditional way is for the student to 'shadow' the worker, accompanying them as they go about their work.

Mentoring can be also organised in other ways: A single meeting between worker and student; Regular one-to-one meetings; or a structured programme of meetings.

You are the worker, so you get to choose, and if it works you will receive a certificate from NUI Galway at the end of mentoring.

"We will provide support and it should be a rewarding experience for both parties," said Dr. Brian.

The mentoring initiative is being organised in association with the university's Career Connect Mentoring Programme.

It means workers have a chance to pass on their experience, expertise or advice to a student. The university expects to see students return to class feeling a sense of empowerment (and not, one hopes, bewilderment!).

To register as a potential mentor, contact:

Dr Brian McGrath, Department of Political Science & Sociology,
NUI Galway, Newcastle Road,
Galway.
T: 091-493405.
E: brian.mcgrath@nuigalway.ie



www.changingireland.ie

When was the last time you visited the 'Changing Ireland' website? Well, it's midway through a revamp and you can expect a lot more from it from now on. What should you expect? At www.changingireland.ie you will find all the news and views you expect from 'Changing Ireland' as well as added features including:

Archive

PDF versions of current and previous issues and selected articles from back issues.

News

Features and news hot off the press and on to the web on how community development - and particularly the 180 nationwide projects in the Community Development Programme - is changing Ireland for the better.

Embedded links in stories that bring you to the contact details for the CDP /organisation mentioned.

Resources

Handy things to look up, including: A map of CDPs; How to Build a Community Centre; Fundraising; Development Education; Media Skills. Plus Full and up-to-date Project and Support Agency contact details.

Horace!

Best of Horace, Ireland's only Agony Uncle, as he shares his thoughts and answers your queries.

Changing Faces

Has your project got a new Co-Ordinator/Chairperson? The "Changing Faces" section is where you can let everyone know, and we'll upload a photograph so people can put a face to the name.

Surveys

Surveys and opinion polls (under development).

Got a story?

How to submit a story to Changing Ireland. Deadlines, tips, etc. Let us know your news!

Three young Travellers die from suicide in Ennis

- CDP joins in grieving and the search for answers

THREE young Travellers took their own lives in the space of two weeks in May, in Ennis, Co Clare, and another at least three others tried to kill themselves during the same period.

The local CDP took the lead from Traveller representatives on its management committee and contacted a range of agencies to see how to prevent more suicides. Staff and volunteers attended the funerals and provided the best support they could. The CDP has a staff of three and it works specifically with Travellers and ethnic groups in the Clare town.

"Suicide is increasingly becoming a major public health concern. No single factor triggers suicidal behaviour and no single intervention is likely to prevent it," said Deirdre Toomey, co-ordinator, Ennis CDP.

Her view was echoed by other agencies who have formed an umbrella group and

called – through the media – for more action.

Deirdre expressed sympathy to all families who have recently lost loved ones through suicide. She said suicide is always a tragedy for the life that has ended and the family, friends and community left behind.

Pavee Point, support agency to CDPs nationwide, said Traveller support groups should be given resources to combat suicide rates, which are growing in line with those in the settled community.

Two of the dead, a man and a woman, were 18 years old, while the third victim was 22. The three who survived their attempts at suicide were two men in their late teens and a man in his late 20s.

"Over the last eight to 10 years there has been an increase in the number of Travellers taking their own lives," said Pavee's assistant director Martin Collins.

"Pavee Point and other Traveller groups

are extremely concerned, and there is an onus on the public services to respond to this, put in the necessary support and give resources to Traveller organisations.

The organisation offered its condolences to the grieving families.

Mr Collins said Travellers were facing isolation as the traditional extended family started to break down while the community faced discrimination and hostility, causing mental distress.

Bishop Willie Walsh, said: "There would be a certain reluctance among Travellers to approach for help and we would try to break that down. The other question, a more deeper and dangerous question, is has this anything to do with how we in the settled community regard Travellers?"

Nationally, a website - www.spunout.ie - has been set up to support young people who may be at risk of suicide.

Crumlin: Supporting drug-users on committees

- CDP supports crucial work

By ALLEN MEAGHER

"CRUMLIN never really had anything, only drugs," says the co-ordinator of Crumlin's relatively new CDP, Harry Murphy. He was speaking half in jest and half-seriously.

"Having a CDP is a definite benefit to the community, you've got paid staff that can go out and organise things and link up with groups. And we concentrate on pockets of Crumlin that are neglected," he said.

Action speaks louder than words and, in recent months, the CDP played the lead role in starting up two new residents' groups. However, the project's most innovative and challenging work is on the issue of drug abuse.

For instance, the CDP provides support to a drug user who has agreed to be a representative for other drug users.

"We have a drug user who attends the Drug Users Forum meetings. For example, he'll say if there's bad heroin, or if there's the need for a new needle exchange. Or he'll say if people in certain areas are having problems going for treatment locally - most of them don't like going to their own area... they want to break the link with dealers and break the habit... But the dealers know that if they hang out around the local treatment centre, they can meet people they are looking for.

"Now, you don't have barmen going to AA meetings with baseball bats looking for pints

you put on the tab and didn't pay for. The vintners mightn't like that comment, but there's a similarity.

The drug-user representative on the Forum gets paid. Preparation for, attending and reporting back from the Forum meetings takes 8 hours. CDP staff sit down and write the report with him and then the outreach worker passes the information onto the Local Drugs Taskforce. It is valuable information.

"That's how we found out that the type of methadone being used in the clinics was the wrong type," said Harry. "It was leading to rotten teeth, so they changed it."

The HSE, besides paying the drug-users representative, also funds the position of a Community and Family Support Worker. This worker shares a building with Crumlin CDP staff and is a member of the CDP's management committee. He works in outreach, leaving the office with a backpack full of condoms, new needles and swabs.

The condoms - to stop the spread of AIDS among drug-users.

The needles - to exchange with heroin-users for old needles.

The swabs - so users can clean up before injecting.

"It is a form of harm reduction, as in there are no needles being left around the area anymore," noted Harry.

Discarded needles were once a big problem in Crumlin.

"This doesn't mean we're promoting drug-use," continued Harry. "The thing is - drug abuse is an addiction and an illness. We go wherever they are and replace their dirty equipment for them. By making contact and by earning their trust, it means there is more chance of getting them into an addiction treatment centre."

Harry described as "diabolical" the fact that there are not enough treatment places to match demand.

The CDP staff and the HSE's outreach worker do their best to support families of drug-users.

"The families have a terrible hard time," said Harry. "For example - they can't leave money or jewellery lying around or the user will sell them for drugs. We go into schools and explain to people what to watch out for."

• For more information, contact:
Harry Murphy, co-ordinator, Crumlin CDP, Unit 1, Goldstone Court, Clogher Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.
T: 01-4736404. F: 01-4736388.
E: crumlincdp@gmail.com



Drug-users carry out community development

IT makes perfect sense - from a community development perspective - to have drug-users on committees passing advice up the line to the government-funded drugs taskforces.

The drug-users have a good insight into gaps in services, and are good at offering practical solutions to these gaps.

Drug-users forums help to shape the future. For instance, a needle exchange was opened in North Clondalkin after the local drug-users forum

highlighted the need for one and recommended the preferred location.

The forums are a form of community development for drug users: By attending forum meetings, the drug-users' representatives can feed information from the ground up and can influence policy changes at a higher level. Their personal experiences and the issues they have in their lives help drugs taskforces and other organisations to identify the issues.

Members are recruited in many ways. Drug-users hear about the Forum through outreach workers, training courses they might attend, workshops on harm reduction, as well as word of mouth, poster campaigns and leaflet drops.

The drug-users representatives receive training in, among other things, how to work through problems and come up with solutions. The representatives may be actively addicted, stable, or drug-free. Meetings usually take place on a weekly basis.

There's nothing like Methadone for cocaine-addicts



HARRY Murphy of Crumlin CDP is not surprised at the recent spate of cocaine-related deaths around the country: "Well, for instance, if someone's been locked up for a time and they get out, they think they can start off again on the same dose, but they can't, and they overdose."

"Cocaine is seen as a recreational drug, people don't see themselves as drug addicts. It's a huge problem locally because people look at it like having a pint. At the same time, people look at heroin addicts as the scumbags, believe it for not. They'll say 'Film stars and all use cocaine, so I'll do the same.' But then they become addicted, they start robbing and snatching handbags, maybe end up homeless. It's not uncommon for some users to spend €1000 a week on cocaine."

"And a day comes when they can't get cocaine, and at that stage they'll take any drug instead. Next thing they're on heroin."

"Most of the clubs my young lads go to - they would find it as easy to get cocaine as it is to get a pint. It's not looked on as a dirty drug."

"Attitudes are slowly changing, but we're still going to get a cocaine epidemic and it's going to be a lot harder for people to get off cocaine because there is no alternative like we have Methadone for heroin users."

Ireland's first cocaine-treatment centre opened in Galway in early June and the new government promises that more are to follow. The drop-in centre on Dominick Street has been set up in response to the growing number of people seeking help.

Crumlin focuses on range of issues

CRUMLIN CDP in Dublin, which works hard on supporting drug-users and raising drugs awareness, works equally hard in a range of other areas.

To give one example, the project has worked with the local **RAPID** team to find funds for two projects: (a) to upgrade the playground in Sundrive Park, (b) to provide free fork-lift training and Safe Pass courses for unemployed people and those on social welfare.

Crumlin CDP was set up in April 2005 and - in a mark of its progress - it held its first AGM this year at which six new people applied to join the committee. As it happened, nobody resigned, so the CDP is thinking of taking on two new voluntary management people, while asking four people onto a sub-committee for the time being.

The CDP works from comfortable, though rented, offices. It does not yet have a premises for activities, so it has to go seek out venues anytime it wants to run an event or a training programme. Getting premises is the next thing on the agenda for management.

In staffing terms, the project wants to expand and they have applied for funding for a part-time development worker.

The project is hosted by the Lower Crumlin Community and Youth Project Ltd (LCCYP).

"The hosting works excellently for us because it's strictly community work that they are interested in. Draocht is our support agency and they're particularly a help too," said Harry Murphy, co-ordinator.

Drug abuse 'coming to boiling point' in rural Ireland

- North West Roscommon rises to the challenge

BALLAGHADERREEN is a football-mad town of around 2000 people situated on the Mayo/Roscommon border. The First President of Ireland, Dr. Douglas Hyde, came from Ballaghaderreen. Nowadays, it is the headquarters of the Western Development Commission.

It is such a rural place that many of the people in the town still own small farms or plots of land near the town. The nearest city - Galway - is 54 miles away.

Nonetheless, it is - like so many small towns dotted around the country - beset by alcohol and drug abuse.

As anyone will tell you, drugs are everywhere nowadays and community organisations are doing what they can to highlight the issue and educate people.

For instance, North West Roscommon CDP ran four drug-awareness information evenings in March in the Phoenix Centre, Ballaghaderreen. This is typical of the events being organised nationwide to combat the growing popularity of drugs.

This awareness course was open to all and 15 people took part.

"That isn't a bad turnout, given what we hear from projects around the country," said John Tonra, Roscommon CDP development worker.

"It is something that people need to get on top of now, rather than waiting for problems to happen," he said.

He believes that, while drug-awareness courses do not solve the problem of drugs, they help put the problem on the map.

"The abuse of alcohol and drugs in this country is coming to boiling point - drugs are the main chosen social outlet. People say there's nothing else to do, and they think drugs are cool. It's got a lot worse since I was a teenager," said John.

MICKY FINNS

"Gone are the pints of Guinness. Today it's all about concoctions like Mickey Finns, and mixing drinks leads to greater problems, it leaves people more vulnerable late at night," he pointed out.

On the positive front, regional taskforces have been established around the country in recent years.

And John and many others are glad to see



that - at last - the drugs taskforces nationwide have recognised they must also deal with alcohol and nicotine addiction. Strangely, neither of these drugs were on the old taskforce's agenda.

Now, concerned people in Roscommon, Galway and Mayo are coming together under the umbrella of the Western Regional Drug Taskforce (established in 2003). The overall aim is to significantly reduce the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research.

CORK TO DONEGAL

The taskforces are setting up county-focused committees on drugs so people can raise local issues.

To find out more, log onto:

www.drugawareness.ie

www.ndc.hrb.ie

www.wrdif.ie

You can contact North West Roscommon CDP at 094-9862565 and the project has a new email address: northwestroscommoncdp@yahoo.ie

Triskele launch volunteer handbook

TRISKELE Support Agency has launched a 'Community Development Programme Induction Handbook'. They are following in the footsteps of other support agencies – in the last couple of years, a range of guides have been produced for volunteers in the different CDP regions.

In the northern region, the call for a handbook came at a Regional Networking Day, when voluntary management groups from across the Northern region met up.

Some of the newer volunteers at that meeting said they felt "a little lost" and so the guide was born. Not everyone – indeed only a tiny minority – of new volunteers can be expected to know things such as how to run a limited company, or how company law works.

Focus groups guided the early design stage, outlining the key elements they felt should be included.

The handbook – launched in March – gives volunteers an overview of:

- The Community Development Programme
- Their own project
- The Role of Directors and members of the Voluntary Management Committee
- Information on what they can expect from their project, support agency, and the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

To launch the handbook, Triskele ran training workshops for CDPs across the Northern Region in both Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan and Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal.

"I had very little understanding of the Community Development Programme before this," said one volunteer who attended, adding that they were now illuminated.

The handbook explains everything from Community Development principles to the roles and responsibilities of management committees.

The handbook is available from the website: www.triskele.ie

Volunteer profile:

- Breda Brennan, Southwest Kerry Women's Association

By GER FITZGIBBON

BREDA Brennan is a voluntary management committee member and former chairperson of the Southwest Kerry Women's Association CDP, based in Caherciveen, Co. Kerry. She was one of the founding members.

What are you reading at the moment?

Too Much Too Young by Kerry Katona.

What's the last film you saw?

It's been a while! The one about Bridget Jones!

Person you most admire?

Mary Robinson.

The top 4 issues in Ireland today?

Access to education . . . transport in rural areas for women . . . childcare /care of the elderly . . . the elderly should be allowed stay in their own homes.

We need more Funding!

We need less Paperwork, less answering the same questions every year we apply for funding.

How long are you working with the CDP?

Over 16 years, we became a company in 1993.

How and why did you get involved?

I got involved after doing a leadership course. Together with some other women on the course, in similar situations, we decided to organise ourselves. We felt women in rural areas needed support.

What difference has being involved made to you?

It has made a huge difference. You need to communicate with other women. We were able to get childcare if we went on a course. We did courses on personal development, other courses, and outreach courses with UCC.

Have things changed for women today?

Women are much different now, much more articulate. There are also lots more



Breda Brennan and one of her fellow volunteers.

things going on, women have greater choice in terms of classes and things to do. But women still have the same needs. It's still usually women who're left to mind the kids. Even though people have more, some people are very isolated. You need to get out. If you move to an area, it can be hard to get to know people, so we still need to keep doing what we're doing, putting on courses and organising women's groups.

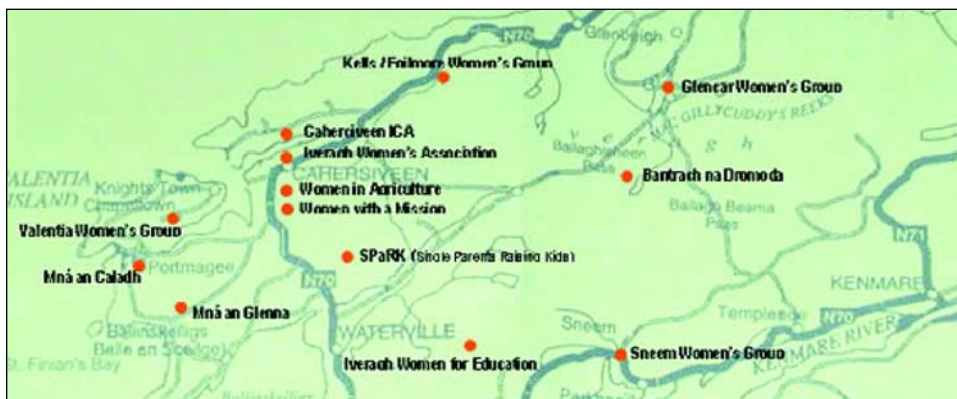
What motivates you as a volunteer?

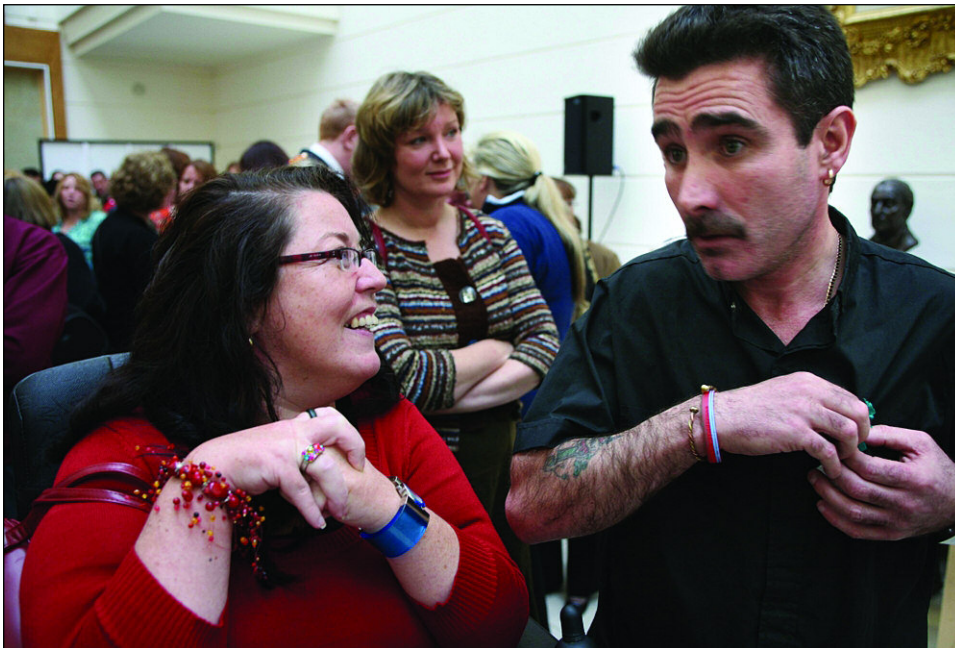
Volunteering on our committee takes a lot of commitment, but I always feel that it's time well spent, when you see what comes out of it. It's still the case that if women don't do it for themselves, no one will do it.

How do you get new volunteers?

We're always looking for new volunteers, and that can be hard, as people are too busy. We often attract new volunteers from events we run, for example, our project for rural women, or International Womens Day. Often, you have to ask people personally even if you advertise well and put up posters.

• For more information about the Southwest Kerry Women's Association, contact: project co-ordinator, Mairead Lynch at the O'Connell Centre, Carhan Road, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry. Tel. 066-9473397. E-mail: admin@skwa.net Website: www.skwa.net





Rosaleen McDonagh and Martin Collins from Pavee Point.

Community worker stands in Seanad election

By NICK MURPHY

A COMMUNITY development worker is running for election to the Seanad.

Rosaleen McDonagh - a Masters graduate, a Traveller woman with a disability and an activist for the last 15 years - has circulated a letter asking for support in her bid to be elected to the upper house of the Irish parliament.

The vote takes place on the 24th July.

Rosaleen currently works in Pavee Point in the area of domestic violence.

She is seeking election by the panel of graduates of Trinity College Dublin. Voting in the Seanad election is restricted to university graduates and to nominations from An Taoiseach and from some select bodies.

There are 60 members of the Seanad: 11 are nominated by An Taoiseach, 43 are elected by local authorities from panels representing Culture and Education, Agriculture, Labour, Industry and Commerce and Public Administration, while 6 are members elected by graduates of the National University of Ireland and by the University of Dublin.

If you graduated from Trinity College and are an Irish citizen you can vote for any of the 11 candidates in the University of Dublin constituency, which includes Rosaleen. Among the well-known candidates are David Norris and Shane Ross who are seeking re-election and Labour's Ivana Bacik, a candidate in 2004 in the European Parliament election.

The following is Rosaleen's case in her own words:

Dear Friends,

As you may have heard I am running for election to the Seanad in the University of Dublin Panel (Trinity College Dublin).

We Travellers weren't named in the General Election.

Maybe that is a good thing. They normally use Travellers as a way of getting votes, by stirring anti-Traveller sentiments.

Anyway I could really do with your support. I am a Traveller woman with a disability, I have been called a Traveller leader for the last 15 years. I consider myself more of an activist rather than a leader. It saddens me greatly that not many Travellers can vote for me if any.

But there are other ways that you can help me get into the Seanad. Mostly by telling people, as in Settled people who might know someone who can vote, but also you could leave a message on my website about what is going on in your local area and what issues are affecting your life. Please tell other Travellers about my website and campaign. My website address is <http://www.rosaleenmcdonagh.com>

I don't claim to represent every Traveller's point of view but I do love Travellers and I am very proud of my Traveller identity. Over the last 10 years I have worked in the ITM, the Women's Forum and now Pavee Point. I work in the area of domestic violence but I also have a brief on health, education, drugs and suicide.

I want to prove that Travellers do and can contribute to this country. Please show me some support, it is very scary moving into very settled circles.

**Look forward to hearing from you,
Rosaleen McDonagh BA M.Phil.**

Spirit is rising in poorer parts of Dublin

RESEARCH by Dublin City Council shows that community spirit is getting stronger in poorer parts of the city, but decreasing in middle-income areas.

In places such as Ballyfermot and Darndale, 31% of people surveyed said they were more involved in the community compared to 10 years ago (while 22% said they were less involved).

More than 400 people were surveyed.

The report said the strengthening community spirit in poorer areas was due largely to the level of investment in community facilities, refurbishment projects and the establishment of new community groups.

The research was commissioned by Dublin City Council as part of an initiative aimed at increasing the levels of social capital - such as volunteering - across the city.

For the city as a whole, there seems to be a decline in community spirit with fewer people overall getting involved in their community.

The researchers found that community spirit is declining in middle-income areas. In places such as Cabra, Inchicore, Glasnevin and Whitehall, 36% of respondents said they were less involved in the community compared to 10 years ago (just 18% said they were more involved).

In these middle-income areas, the decline was blamed chiefly on issues such as lack of time, family duties, work patterns and changing values.

The council has developed a master-plan to encourage people to become more involved.

Croker for cocaine conference

A CONFERENCE - 'Cocaine Response: Sharing Good Practice' - is scheduled for Croke Park Conference Centre on Thursday, June 28th.

The conference will examine rehabilitation, treatment and harm reduction in Ireland and abroad.

The conference has been sponsored by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pobal's Dormant Accounts Fund and the North Inner City Drugs Task Force. The National Drugs Strategy Team and the Saol Project are the organisers.

To book, log onto the website of the above task force: www.nicdtf.ie and click 'Resources' and then 'News'. Or phone 01-8366592.

For coverage on work to curb Ireland's growing drug-abuse problem, see pages 9 and 10.

Combat Poverty is 20 years old

- Peace blooms, jobs aplenty, but poverty persists

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

COMBAT Poverty was established 20 years ago to advise the Government on economic and social answers to poverty.

And how Ireland has changed:

- From 17% unemployed 20 years ago to less than 5% today.
- From 28,000 people emigrating in 1986, to thousands flying into the country today for work.

Not to mention the peace on this island.

There are pockets of unemployment in rural areas like Inishowen, Co. Donegal, and in some council-built estates in our cities, but the national figure is remarkably low. Some people still emigrate, though they are not forced to leave the country for work.

It looks like Combat Poverty's advice over the last 20 years was spot on, or at least the Government's policies were well-chosen. Even consistent poverty has become history for most people - down from almost 20% to just under 7%.

WEALTHY IRELAND

A cause for celebration? Not quite.

At an event to mark Combat Poverty's 20th anniversary, the guest speaker said the 7% figure was "obscenely high in a country as wealthy as Ireland".

The statistic means that over 250,000 people in Ireland struggle financially to make ends meet, to cover basic needs such as warm clothing, nutritional food and housing - people, for example, who may use hot water bottles rather than central heating to keep warm.

Fr Peter McVerry emphasised that "10% of children are still in consistent poverty, which means that their families cannot afford the basic necessities of life without getting into debt."

He said the Government should also deal with what is called relative poverty, which is when people are excluded because they do not have the choices others have. He gave the example of a child with a disability - he/she will be assessed within days, if the parents can afford to hire a private assessor.

"If they cannot afford it, they may be waiting years for assessment, to the detriment of their child's development," said Fr. McVerry.

CLAIMS OF DISADVANTAGE

The outspoken cleric pointed out that many lone parents cannot afford creche charges and are excluded from the workforce.

He lamented the fact that some people could not afford private schooling for their children, and he claimed that these children would be "disadvantaged in their education."



"Relative poverty affects almost 20% of the population. Governments like to call it 'at risk of poverty', which suggests that it is not yet real poverty, it is only potential poverty. And since it is not real, we don't need to worry too much about it."

"The solution to relative poverty is to create a more equal society, one in which equality of opportunity exists, especially in education, health and housing."

The value of the work undertaken by the Combat Poverty Agency was underlined by Fr. Peter McVerry: "The role that Combat Poverty is playing in defining poverty and in devising policies to tackle poverty is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago."

Fr. McVerry was speaking at the launch of an exhibition of photographs by Derek Speirs recording poverty and actions taken to eradicate it over the last two decades. The Combat Poverty Agency works with many organisations, at local and national level, to measure and track poverty trends and to implement new approaches.

For more information, log onto: www.cpa.ie



One in four NI kids are poor

THE child-poverty situation in the Republic is better than in Northern Ireland where one in four - more than 100,000 children - are living in poverty. This is according to figures released by Save the Children in May.

However, things are improving - eight years ago, there were 130,000 children living in poverty in the North.

Eradicating child poverty should be a key priority of the new Northern Ireland Government, say Save the Children.

Amnesty member is Community Affairs minister



THE new Minister of State for Drug Strategy and Community Affairs is a member of Amnesty International.

Kerry-born Pat Carey has been given the Junior Ministry portfolio for Drugs Strategy and Community Affairs.

Representing Dublin North West, he was first elected in

1997. He has served as Chairman of the British Irish Interparliamentary Body and as a member of the National Economic Social Forum. It notes, on the Fianna Fail website, that he is a member of Amnesty International.

Minister Ó Cuív re-appointed

MINISTER Éamon Ó Cuív was re-appointed as Minister of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, following the recent formation of the new Government.

A Dubliner by birth, representing Galway West, Minister Ó Cuív was first appointed in July 2002 as Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, then a newly-created portfolio.

The Cabinet has changed little. The biggest change was that coalition partner, the Green Party, secured two positions – Environment, Heritage and Local government, and Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Peace III fund for border counties

MANY community groups and agencies made their voice heard during public consultations about the next programme of EU aid to border counties.

The EU will help fund the Operational Programme for PEACE III which runs from this year until 2013.

The consultation period for public comment and suggestions concluded in April and was conducted by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) at the request of the Irish and British governments.

Responses can be viewed on the SEUPB website:

www.seupb.eu/consul_responses.htm

History for New Ross

HISTORY was made in the General Election when, for the first time in the history of the state, a candidate from New Ross town was elected TD.

Cllr. Sean Connick – who has a disability and uses a wheelchair – was elected to the Oireachtas on the fifth count.

'Changing Ireland' had pointed out in our Spring '07 edition (looking at the work of New Ross CDP) that the town missed out for decades because it sits on an electoral boundary.

Smiles in the sunny South-East



Volunteers and project staff in the South-East Region get a chance to network and discuss common issues at their regular forum meetings. Included in the picture are: Debbie Marshall, volunteer, Independent Mothers Project in Waterford; Amy Kearney, co-ordinator Independent Mothers Project (Waterford); Glynis Currie, co-ordinator, Framework; Mattie Sheridan, chairperson, Larchville/Lisduggan CDP; Volunteers Martin Kelly and Anne Kelly, The Bridge CDP; Carmel McKenna, co-ordinator, Suir CDP; Helen Walsh, chairperson, FAB CDP; Catherine Brasil, co-ordinator, FAB CDP; Lisa Kavanagh, volunteer and Breda Murphy, co-ordinator, Waterford Women's Centre CDP; Mary Byrne, Larchville/Lisduggan CDP; Ruth Smith, community development co-ordinator, Knockanrawley CDP; Sharon Kennedy, co-ordinator, South West Wexford CDP; Joan Mooney, Framework support worker; Liam Bolger, co-ordinator, Men's Development Network; Mary Hennessy, co-ordinator, The Bridge CDP.

National office for Active Citizenship

THE Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship was launched in March by The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, who said the Government is establishing an Active Citizenship Office to oversee implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations.

The Taoiseach established the Taskforce in April of last year to examine trends in citizen participation across the main areas of civic, community, cultural, work and recreational life in Ireland.

The main recommendations concern:

- increasing participation in the democratic process;

- improving the interaction between citizens and state institutions at local and national level,
- measures to promote a greater sense of community;
- further education on the issues around active citizenship;
- increasing opportunities for the inclusion of ethnic and cultural minorities in an increasingly diverse society.

A copy of the report can be obtained from the Taskforce website: www.activecitizen.ie, or by contacting the Taskforce at 2-4 Merrion Row, Dublin 2 (T: 01-6194330).

Build anything and men will take an interest

JANE Caulfield, development worker with South West Wexford CDP, is getting used to men stopping by the community centre to ask her "When are you building the next boat?"

South West Wexford CDP is based in a coastal area. The project wanted to pull in more men and somewhere along the way someone suggested boat-building.

Andy McGarry, community artist and boat-builder, guided the men on a day-to-day basis. Jane oversaw the project, making sure everything was okay. But it was the men who answered the project's advertisement who built the 21-foot, seven-seater and launched it successfully onto the high seas.

The idea originated with Andrew O'Doherty, a

development worker.

And the result? A superb boat was built, the project got national and widespread local media coverage and, yes, now men are calling in regularly to the Ramsgrange Centre to see if there is anything there that interests them.

It seems that if you say you are going to build anything, then men will take an interest. Just don't mention capacity-building!

For more information, contact Jane Caulfield or Sharon Kennedy (co-ordinator), South West Wexford CDP, Ramsgrange, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

T: 051 - 389418. F: 051 - 389264.

E: swwcdg@iol.ie

The surprising diary of a boat-building project

By JANE CAULFIELD

BUILDING a boat proved to be a very creative and innovative way to get men into the project.

On November 6th, last year, three men attended an information meeting regarding the boat building project.

The meeting actually took place outside on the project's doorstep. The men chatted about boats and the proposed project for about half an hour. While they chatted, I tried to coax them inside saying there was a warm room with tea and coffee. They just carried on talking and decided to meet the following week where they would try and bring along more people. ... and that was it. They wouldn't come in.

NINE MEN TO START WITH

One week later, nine men came to SWWCDP to the second meeting that we held to inform them about the boat project.

Boat-building in Cork and Limerick

A MEN'S group in Mayfield in Cork built boats as an exercise some years ago. It was led by local man John McDonald.

Meanwhile, King's Island Youth Maritime Project in Limerick is working to renovate a boat as part of a training programme for disengaged youth who are at risk from drugs. They received €150,000 from the Dormant Accounts Fund towards the work.

FAS have also, in the past, run boat-building courses in the HSE's southern region.

Then when the boat-building started, they used bring their own flasks of tea and sandwiches and I'd be saying 'C'mon lads, we've a canteen upstairs', but it was no good.

Eventually, I ordered sandwiches for the men from the local Centra and asked the men to collect them and bring them up to the canteen. Once they came in once, they came back the next time to the canteen.

The pressure was on because we had money for the project and it had to be spent by a certain date.

THE MEN GROW ANXIOUS

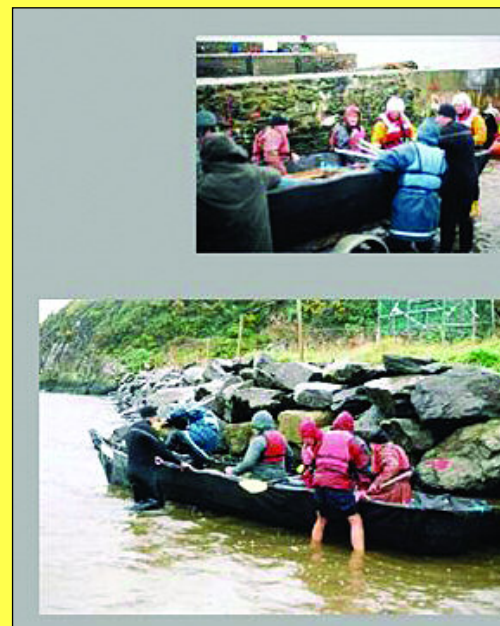
Community artist, Andy McGarry, planned the details of the project with the men and asked them for their ideas. The group had a lengthy discussion about when they would like to get started and were very anxious about the project as they couldn't see how you could make a boat out of the materials we proposed to use. This initial meeting lasted about two hours. The men raised all their issues and concerns and left with a start date.

The boat-building started on November 27th with seven participants. As time went on, artist Andy noticed that the men did not need much guidance as they worked really well on their own initiative and also had their own ideas.

The men got to work. They finished the frame for the boat and placed the canvas and the seats inside. Then they painted the canvas of the vessel with a tar paint to seal and protect it.

IT WAS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT

The idea of the boat building project was to get men into the project and maybe to use the centre either by joining a course or starting



their own group. This was going to be difficult as men were not using the facilities.

When the men completed their Bronze Age style boat, it was 21ft long and had 7 seats, complete with a (traditional busty) mascot. The local newspapers covered the story. From this, South East Radio asked the group to go on air and talk about the processes involved in building the boat. The men went live on air on December 8th.

SEA-TRIALS WITH LIFEBOAT ON STANDBY

Another week passed and the boat test took place, again with the press following on their heels. Fethard lifeboat crew came on board

A half-serious guide to working with men

By OMAR SANYANG

MEN and women are different, not better or worse, just different. So say best-selling authors Allan and Barbara Pease.

Their book, 'Why men can only do one thing at a time... and women never stop talking!' aims to improve communications between men and women, particularly couples.

So what tips might the Peases have for women in community development aspiring to work with groups of men? Something like this:

- For men, not talking is perfectly natural. Men have shorter vocabularies than women.
- Men can't fib their way out of a paper-bag (whereas women are good fibbers).
- Men cannot detect emotion through tone of voice. (You have to tell a man how you are feeling, it will take him too long to guess).
- Most women can multi-task, but men can only do one thing at a time.
- Spatial ability is one of a male's strongest abilities. Most men can point north, even if they have no idea where they are. Luckily for women, they don't



mind asking for directions.

- Why did Moses spend 40 years wandering in the desert? He refused to ask for directions.
- A man's brain is organised for a 'how-

do-I-fix-it?' response to life. When a woman is upset, she will talk emotionally to her friends, but an upset man will rebuild a motor or fix a leaking tap.

- Female awareness is focused on communication, co-operation, harmony, love, sharing and our relationship with one another. Male awareness is concerned with getting results, achieving goals, status and power and beating the competition.
- A man's sentences are shorter than a woman's and are more structured. (A woman would be best advised to present only one clear thought or idea at a time to a man).
- Dealing with stress: Uptight women eat chocolate and invade shopping centres. Uptight men drink alcohol and invade other countries.
- When a man says he's hungry, he means he is hungry.

Note: The Peases base their writing on scientific studies and they acknowledge their general observations do not apply to all men and women. For instance, some men will ask for directions occasionally, so long as their missus isn't in the car with them.



covering safety aspects.

Before the men tested the boat they officially christened it 'St. Louis' and asked one of the men's family members to break a bottle of stout over the bow. The men's families showed up that day to support them; they were delighted the men were involved in something that they had a real interest in.

This was a great chance for the development worker to talk with the families. One man's wife has now become involved with a group in the CDP and his daughter helps out with the youth groups.

RTE ARE AFTER US

After the christening day, the men put the boat into storage (during bad weather) and made plans to go on a series of journeys, one on the River Barrow and another on the River Slaney. 'The Mooney Afternoon Show' and 'Seascapes', both on RTE Radio 1, got wind of it and want to cover these journeys live on air.

From getting involved in the boat building project the men as a group have gelled really well together and the transference of skills from one to another has been tremendous. The men are keeping active with SWWCDDP by getting involved with other groups. We are also looking into training programmes that the men are interested in, for example - carpentry and computers.

THE MEN ARE ALL AGES

The men are from all different ages. There are retired business people and retired farmers, active farmers, part-time workers and returned emigrants, but each one was involved at some stage in their lives in boats or fishing.

They found this experience to be a great one and can't wait for the next adventure that the boat project will bring them on.

The SWWCDDP's hope was to get more men who are isolated as a result of living in a rural area into the project and this has happened.



NOW THE PHONE KEEPS RINGING

With the publicity that the boat project has received so far, there have been many more men ringing up or stopping to have a look at the boat and then they are introduced to SWWCDDP and the services we offer.

In March of this year, two of the boat-builders from the group did a computer course and a third man joined our horticultural group. The rest remain very much involved and meet regularly to discuss their boating plans.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

South West Wexford CDP held their Inaugural Project Open Day for the community, on May 19th, to welcome people in and introduce them to the programmes and services within the Ramsgrange Centre.

In June, the men are due to take a day-long trip down the river Slaney from Enniscorthy to Ferryarraig.

I don't know what we will build next, but no worries, the men in Ramsgrange have plenty of ideas.

HELP ME HORACE



Write to:

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

'Changing Ireland' on the internet

Dear Horace,
I see that 'Changing Ireland' is now available on the internet. I wonder if they've fully thought through the extra burden that puts on the readers. How am I going to lug the PC into the kitchen for tea break?

N.E. Wunder
Nuffinbedder CDP

Dear Mr. Wunder,
I'm worried about the internet edition myself. Besides the usual queries, I'm sure to get e-mails offering me increased manhood, boob size, and a share in the dormant account of some deposed Third World dictator in return for emptying my own account. As for

your lunchbreak reading, you should apply for funding for a laptop.

Builders packing bags and shaking buckets

Dear Horace,
Every time I go to the local supermarket, there's either school kids packing the shopping to fix the leaky prefab, or someone shaking buckets for the local hospital. It's nice to see the community spirit, but what if the private sector cops onto this revenue-source? It could become a new type of Public-Private-Partnership at your local store. So, will we see road construction companies at the checkouts soon, packing our biscuits and bread in return for a donation towards a bypass?

Bonnie Boyler
Phelangruevie CDP

Dear Bonnie,
Are you kidding me? Imagine the gridlock at the tills. The shopping would take four times as long to be packed, and the donation they'd shake us down for would be about 5 euros instead of 50 cents. Better leave these things to the veterans.

Solemn Novena dilemma

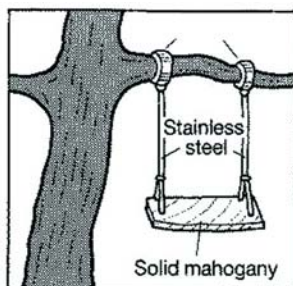
Dear Horace,
Can you put on your community development hat on and give me some advice?

The Redemptorists are holding a Novena in my neighbourhood right now. I'd like to go but why does it always have to be a 'Solemn Novena'?

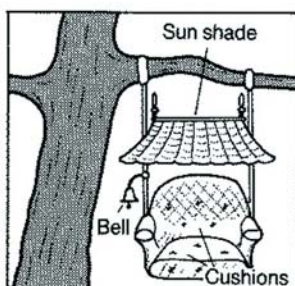
- Miko Tochurch,
Thenagaimightnot CDP

Hi Miko,
Hmmm, not so sure about mixing religion with community development, but of course you're right - it's time the Redemptorists conducted a needs-assessment. The community should have their voices heard. And adjust to our increasingly diverse society. There could be demand out there from teenage girls for a 'You're A Star-Prayer Novena', from tired fathers for a 'Pretty Relaxed Novena'. We should stick up posters for a 'Mega Rock 'n' Roll Novena', see if we can pull in a few punters.

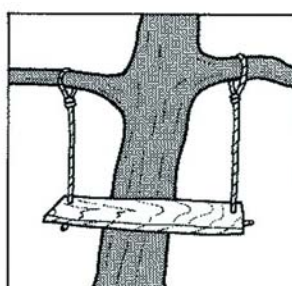
Development theory in practice



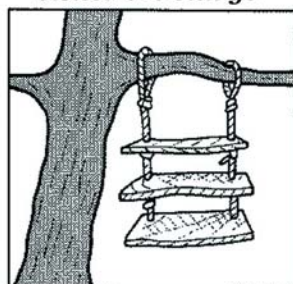
As understood by field-workers who visited the village



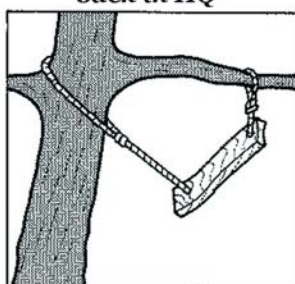
As recommended by development experts back in HQ



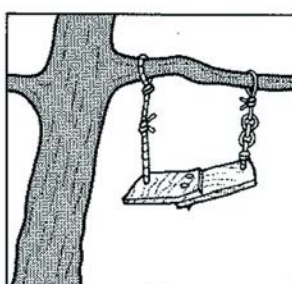
As modified by the finance committee



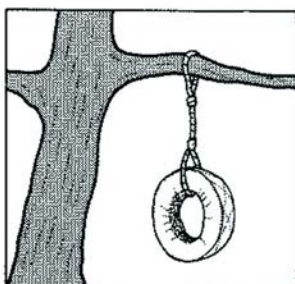
As re-designed after a phone call on a bad line to the village



What was eventually delivered to the village



After costly consultants re-installed the facility



What the villagers actually wanted



Members of the Voluntary Management Committee of Iorras Le Chéile CDP at the launch of their report 'Growing Up In Erris 2006'

Keeping the door open in a divided community

- an interview by ALLEN MEAGHER with:
Rose Walsh, project co-ordinator, Iorras Le Chéile CDP

THE local CDP in the Erris area – where protests are ongoing against the Government and Corrib Gas over a controversial gas pipeline – has made a point of not taking sides in the dispute.

"We wouldn't have the resources to start with. We have a part-time administrator and a part-time receptionist (on a Community Employment scheme) and we have an area to cover that is bigger than County Louth," said Rose Walsh, project co-ordinator, Iorras Le Chéile CDP.

The project – based in Belmullet – decided from the beginning that they would remain neutral on the issue in order to keep their doors open to everyone in the community.

"Both sides use the project if you like," said Rose. The anti-Shell side sometimes use the photocopying facilities and, while the pro-gas side have the resources to cover things like photocopying, the people who support them have their needs too: "The people who need the project on the (pro-Shell) side would be the spouses of people working for Shell," said Rose.

The closest the project came to getting involved was in the run-up to the General Election, when it facilitated a question-and-answer session where local people could put election candidates on the spot and the gas issue loomed large.

"The message we have got across is that the project belongs to the community," said Rose.

Even if the project was to consider taking sides, Rose fears funding could be cut. She says she is "under no illusions" in that regard. In any case, the management members each have their own personal views which would make agreement difficult.

"Our board is made up of people of all types of political persuasions," said Rose.

She personally, as a member of Sinn Féin, opposes the gas project as it currently stands, while some members of the management have more favourable views towards it. It is something each person with a strong view pursues in a private capacity.

The gas issue itself is therefore not on the CDP's agenda. However, the ripple-effects of the dispute are, particularly the hatred that has emerged from the divisiveness.

"There have been family arguments and friendships have broken down. You can see the pain in people's faces. These people were friends and neighbours and they helped each other out whenever one needed a hand. Now, there is absolute hatred between some people."

"Rights have been violated on both sides. Though both sides will deny there is intimidation, it is happening on both sides. It's all down to a lack of leadership within the community."

"How do you go from the great excitement at the finding of the gas to this where the community is divided and people disappointed?" asks Rose, who notes that depression is higher now than before.

The project received a small amount of funding for conflict resolution, but emotions in the community remain raw and it will take a long time to mend the broken fences. In the meantime, the CDP is involved in a range of activities – to empower women, improve facilities for young people, promote mental health and combat drug and alcohol abuse.

At present, the project is also trying to get a more suitable building in order to set up a youth centre. Like youths anywhere in Ireland, Erris youths say the main issues facing them are drugs, alcohol, crime, family problems/family breakdown and suicide. On a practical level, they have no place to meet.

Changing attitudes in Erris

NOT many CDPs cover a geographical area the size of a small county. Iorras Le Chéile CDP is an exception. The project is four years old and delivering real change for people. It is actively trying to change attitudes to drugs, alcohol, mental health, bullying and domestic abuse, as well as providing support services to groups and individuals:

DROP-IN CENTRE

Over three thousand people have used the 'drop in' resource centre.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The CDP:

- runs two rural homework clubs.
- compiled and published 'Growing up in Erris 2006' which has 20 recommendations for improving life for young people.
- hosted workshops for 350 senior cycle students to raise the awareness of mental illness and depression
- organised a Hip Hop Culture Day and film production weekends for young people.

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

The CDP:

- make referrals to HSE and front line services.
- held two suicide intervention workshops
- helped set up a local group to promote positive mental health. The group identifies gaps in services and combats the stigma attached to mental health.

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

The CDP:

- work with and make referrals to support services for women who have been raped or abused.
- run courses to combat violence against women.
- work with women's groups to promote social inclusion.
- ran training in DIY for women.
- promote women's rights.

DRUG-AWARENESS

The CDP:

- facilitated a community response to drug and alcohol abuse.
- ran a seminar for 300 students.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

The CDP:

- organised positive parenting programmes in local community centres.
- works for a zero tolerance against bullying in schools. It held an anti-bullying seminar last October.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

The CDP:

- provides practical support for community and voluntary groups.

FRESH START

The CDP:

- runs a 30-hour 'Fresh Start' programme for 15 people.

Iorras Le Chéile CDP works on the basis that it belongs to everyone living in the Erris area and its work is based on equality, inclusion and the promotion of human rights.

To contact Iorras Le Chéile, write to the chairperson Bridie Meenaghan or co-ordinator Rose Walsh at: American Street, Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

T: 097-20828. E: erriscdp@eircom.net

Gearóid Mac Giobúin seeks out catalysts for social change

COMMUNITY development seeks to act as a catalyst for social change. It engages in a process of collective action to challenge the causes of poverty and disadvantage:

- Collective action means involving disadvantaged people directly in a democratic process of planning and managing of projects and in campaigning for social change.
- Community development is about working with people in partnership so that they can change their world.

So where, if anywhere, do Community Development Projects stand publicly on controversial community-related or human-rights-related issues that have received widespread national media coverage? Do projects have stances on issues that do not



directly affect their communities? How do they challenge the powers that be when they have to?

'Changing Ireland' asked a number of project co-ordinators for their own personal views on the subject.

Projects cannot solve all local problems at local level. Sometimes, projects need to link with others to campaign for change – for example when there was a threat of cutbacks to the Community Employment Scheme.

That said, projects do not rush to embrace controversial subjects: except for one project which is expected to as part of its work! Our thanks to those who gave their views.

'Don't want to rock the boat too much'

Project Co-ordinator:

Billy Mangan

*Markiewicz Community Centre,
Ballyfermot, Dublin*

ROSSPORT/CORRIB gas: One of the people from the Shell To Sea campaign came to Ballyfermot to speak and Shell would seem to be the aggressor there in not listening to the local community.

National Policy, eg Shannon: In terms of national policy, the US military use of Shannon Airport doesn't figure largely for our members.

Health: As regards health, most people in Ballyfermot use the public health service. Often we can act as go-between with residents groups to lobby local TDs and councillors to use their influence.

Political Independence: Traditionally we probably have been too quiet but organisations do have a survival instinct to maintain what they have. We would be slow to mention anything too divisive, it's a natural process.

Role of the CDP: We can take a wider view on issues. We have people who need our services, who we try to facilitate. We don't want to rock the boat too much. We're not radicals and we're not the voice of the community. But we can keep an eye on the plans of Dublin City Council, and bring issues to the attention of residents groups. Our committee lives IN the community. Occasionally we get councillors who are not into or fully aware of the partnership process, or who confuse local development with community development.

Local controversy: Recently our community was divided. There was an issue with a local councillor whose view seemed to leave community out of it. We spoke with local people. Our concern was in getting the people's voice heard and having proper consultation. Sometimes councillors need to be reminded of the community development process.

Taking a stand: However, a few years ago we helped organise a big campaign to oppose threatened cuts to the community

employment scheme. Community Employment is a huge resource for Ballyfermot. It is a way back into work and education particularly for the early school leavers, unemployed and lone parents. Together with other CDPs and community groups, we organised a march to the Dáil and managed to get the cuts reduced.

Planning Issues: People at tenants and residents groups often only deal with local issues. When larger problems arise, we can help them respond. Recently we co-operated with another CDP Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project to object to Dublin City Council siting a waste management facility near a halting site. Dublin City Council were taking advantage of the Traveller's lack of voice. With an industrial estate already on one side, we felt they were going to be completely hemmed in. We helped make an official objection in the planning application process. Unfortunately, planning was approved (with some conditions), but that is an example of political action on a local level.

'I would still do battle'

Project Co-ordinator:

Emily Smartt

*Bawnogue Women's Development Group,
Clondalkin, Dublin*

THIS CDP focuses on childcare and women's education.

Rosspport/Corrib gas: My gut feeling would be that the Shell To Sea campaign is right. But I don't know how I'd deal with it if I were involved up there and my board were saying that jobs were needed, etc. It would be a minefield. But really I can't say as I'm not on the ground. In theory, a CDP should be leading the charge on issues but communities

can be divided on issues.

Political Independence: Well the Department gives the money, so really that does clip our wings. A couple of years ago, we got flack from the VEC and Department of Education. The VEC stopped funding a literacy course we were running. The Finance Minister at the time Charlie McCreavey was on the Late Late Show defending the "adjustments" he was making. I was in the audience and I confronted him and said they were cuts, not adjustments. I found it very intimidating. A junior minister came out and said we were lying. And the Department of Education stated in the Irish Times that we

had been offered funding but turned it down!

We were a bit green, definitely. I actually considered leaving my job at the time.

It definitely affected how we went about things. I would still do battle with the Department but I would shy away from the media, and wouldn't speak off the cuff now. You do get excited and sometimes your mouth runs away with you. The Government tends to be very cute with the media.

Regarding the proposed CDP mergers in Clondalkin, we decided not to go to media but deal directly with the Department, which is still ongoing.

'CDPs ask challenging questions'

Project Co-ordinator:
Michelle Kearns
Dolcain CDP,
Clondalkin, Dublin

ROSSPORT-CORRIB gas/Shannon issues: I'm not that familiar with these issues, so I don't feel I can comment.

National Issues: CDPs are there for local issues. At our meetings there isn't much talk of national matters. Our voluntary management often find they've a lot on their plate just becoming familiar with the working of the CDP as a company.

Controversial local issues: We mainly deal with issues that come into us. In our areas that means crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour. Issues like water or bin charges didn't come into it. At the same time, because we deal with the people most marginalised in society, there will be politically contentious issues.

Effecting Political Change: You would be able to act differently if you were totally independent and not reliant on funding, but there are different ways of effecting change. Dolcain CDP is part of a wider South Dublin Community Platform. We developed a submission paper on anti-social behaviour for the Platform.

Some issues call for a different approach. A few years ago, at the time of the cuts to the Community Employment Scheme by Minister Mary Harney, we formed a lobby group and met the Minister. Unfortunately we lost half the CE projects we had.

Role of the CDP: CDPs are about equality, about everybody having a voice, and building up peoples skills to deal with issues. When controversy comes up it can frighten people. People can be nervous about taking a stance. For us it's about creating discussion, so people can better decide how to go forward.

Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: As a CDP you look at causes. The levels of anti-social behaviour are actually similar in private and local authority estates. We don't think ASBOs solve the problem.

CDPs operate by asking challenging questions: Why is it happening? Are there enough youth resources? What will change behaviour?

CDPs look for long-term solutions. We don't take sides, but point people in the direction of where their concerns can be addressed. Some issues can be divisive internally also.

We have helped set up a Community Safety Forum which brings together elected and community representatives, gardai, HSE, housing associations, people suffering anti-social behaviour, people working with drug users and others. Opinions can be aired before a crisis escalates. Argument can get very fractious. People feeling intimidated want action and often it is Dolcain CDP's target group who are causing the problems! The Community Forum allows residents look for responses directly from the agencies.

'No difficulties challenging Minister'

Project Co-ordinator:
Pat Walshe
Connemara Community Radio, CDP,
Letterfrack, Co. Galway

IT'S different for us being a radio station: we air issues, give people a say, and interview the people involved or responsible. We don't have an editorial line. We don't even have full-time journalists. We have 60 volunteers and some staff on CE schemes.

Rosspport/Corrib gas or Shannon issues: We don't have a particular line on these issues. But we try to ensure that coverage is balanced. So if we perceive that national coverage is biased, we might seek to re-balance that in our coverage.

Taking a stand: We take stands on issues that affect people locally, for example, planning issues, issues to do with the elderly, the need for a sewerage treatment plant for west of Ireland, local and general elections.

Dealing with Controversial issues: We deal with a broad range of issues, from gay and lesbian matters, European issues affecting sheep farmers, drink driving (disappearance of the pub trade in Connemara), the decline of North-West Connemara. The village of Caiseal has lost its pub, priest, shop and school all in last 5 years.

Political Independence: We have no difficulties challenging Minister Ó Cuív, who is both our TD in Galway West and the Minister whose Department funds us. The nearest thing you'd get to a reprimand is being asked for a list of question before an interview.

We have come out strongly against An Taisce on planning matters. They seem to want to preserve the area only as a beauty location.

We've also got the cold shoulder from Galway County Council after we gave them a grilling on an issue of local water quality in Clifden.

We've also had no problems giving airtime to a local TD who went independent after her party tried to silence her. She felt she had more freedom to speak in opposition that on the government backbenches.

Balance: During the election we might have appeared anti-government, but if you looked at the time allocated, it was fairly balanced.

Getting answers from politicians: I was amazed at the standard of debate during the recent general election. I find that politicians don't have qualms about differences, and are very willing and able to discuss opposite views.

However, I'm also surprised at how



Minister Ó Cuív

polished they are these days. Before they would knock lumps out of each other. Now even local politicians can come on and very smartly say nothing. They nearly all have the knack of not answering question, or of praising each other. They must all be going to Bunny Carr's school.

Sometimes I wake up at night at realise how a politician I've interviewed has completely avoided a question!

Influencing Politics: There is influence in what we do. An argument that took place on one programme about the Clifden town plan led to a call from the County Council and a meeting between parties. There's a power in what we do, to expose inadequacies or wrongdoing.

Burning issue: North-West Connemara has only a population of 10,500. We have very little voice. The housing stock has increased by 50% in the last few years, even though the local population is in decline. Actual numbers have been staying steady only due to the influx of foreign workers and people from outside moving into the area as a beauty location. Local young people find it very difficult to either get planning or afford the prices. People from outside can get planning by employing expensive architects, whereas ordinary local people often fail to get planning.

Navan gives racism the Red Card

- project hosts seminar

By AISLING O'NEILL - development worker

MEATH, as one of the fastest growing counties in Ireland, has become home to many nationalities.

Unfortunately, racism has raised its ugly head and Navan CDP actively opposes racism and acknowledges that it is time to recognise diversity and challenge racism in Meath.

The CDP took action locally in April by running a high-profile seminar on the issue.

Over 140 people from schools, general public, government agencies and voluntary groups attended. The speakers came from trade unions, sports organisations and community groups. A key theme was 'Giving Racism the Red Card'.

Frank Buckley from Sports Against Racism Ireland (SARI) talked about the need to recruit what he termed 'New Irish' into sports clubs in Ireland. SARI organise soccer tournaments that are made up of teams from different



Back: Mary Brennan, Eddie Dewar and Joe Reilly – all three are Navan CDP volunteers; Dr. Livingstone Thompson, migrants rights co-ordinator with Cultur; Maureen Cahill, Navan CDP administrator; Eileen Dewar, Navan CDP chairperson; Frank Buckley, Mary Ikeana and Eloho Egwuterai of S.A.R.I. Front: Sandra Okome, Health Promotion Dept.; Rose Englishby, Navan CDP volunteer; Aisling O'Neill, Navan CDP community development worker; Mary McMahon, Navan CDP volunteer; Angela O'Toole, Navan CDP co-ordinator; Alice Davis, LIR; and Ciara Murphy, Navan CDP volunteer.

parts of the world.

Des Tomlinson of the FAI noted the lack of recorded data on just how much racism there is on the soccer fields and urged the GAA to follow the FAI's lead in tackling racism in sport. He explained how the FAI have developed a 10-point action plan to challenge racism.

The seminar was opened by the Claremont Stadium Choir and the newly appointed CDP Chairperson, Eileen Dewar. Jennifer Wallace of the National Consultative Committee on Racism in Ireland chaired the seminar.

Making a strong impact, Dr. Livingstone Thompson explained the origins of racism and dispelled some of the myths and presumptions people make about those of different colour and/ or ethnic origin. He was followed by equally passionate speakers:

- Anton McCabe (SIPTU) showed a video and although short was extremely poignant and highlighted how anybody, from any background can be affected by racism or exclusion from social places or their workplace. He went on to discuss diversity in the workplace in further detail.
- Alice Davis (LIR) introduced some statistical evidence of the trends of immigrants and refugees coming to Ireland over the past few years.
- Yemi Ojo who is president of the Integration of African Children in Ireland (IACI) network highlighted the challenges facing ethnic minorities/migrants in a multicultural Ireland.
- Eamonn Matthews from Excel Print, talked of the positive contribution new Irish communities bring to the workplace.
- Brian Havern, Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer explained how the Gardai were adapting to embrace the new changes in Ireland.
- Martin-Joe Joyce, of the Navan Travellers Workshop, gave a personal insight into how it feels to be at the receiving end of racism and discrimination.

- Pastor Morris Ndiyo, of the Jesus House Christian Church, Navan, looked forward to building a society that was for the common good of everyone.

Song followed when the Navan Educate Together National School performed their 'Assembly on South Africa' which celebrated the life of Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa.

The seminar was part of a programme by Navan CDP to support cultural integration and promote social inclusion and to address the increasing levels of racism in Meath.

Community Development Project Navan – to use the official title – is Meath's first and only CDP.

The project's origins go back to 1997.

Volunteers applauded in Navan

NAVAN CDP was among the hundreds of groups countrywide that celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th. Hosted by chairperson Mary McMahon and co-ordinator, Angela O'Toole, more than 100 people from the local community gathered in Claremont Stadium, for a discussion with prominent local businesswomen and female community leaders.

In addition the unpaid time and leadership given by the Navan CDP's own management committee was recognised when female members received a surprise presentation. Acknowledged for their contribution to the success of Navan CDP were; Mary McMahon, Helen Callan, Rose Englishby, Eileen Dewar, Kay Kearns, Deirdre Gorman and Julie Churchill and Eileen Dowdall.



Mary McMahon, volunteer manager with Navan CDP.

New Programme by year's end

- views invited from projects & individuals

THE Community Development Programme, established in 1990, and represented by projects throughout the country is entering a new phase. Members of the public from disadvantaged communities are among the stakeholders being asked to give their views on how a new Programme should look.

All areas of poverty, exclusion and disadvantage can be addressed under the proposed programme.

Ten questions are being asked, though people are welcome to comment on any aspect of the Programme and its work. The idea of the questions is that, by using a common approach, this will aid the evaluation of the responses and allow for feedback at a later stage.

The aim of the consultation is to clarify a range of matters of a strategic, operational, and implementation nature to guide the work of CDPs from now until 2013. The Programme was first established in recognition of the role played by community development in tackling exclusion, poverty and disadvantage.

QUESTION ONE

The first question, asks, in three parts: "How does your project see its role in promoting national objectives of equality, anti-poverty and social inclusion locally? What are the key challenges for your project in doing this and how might they be overcome? How can your project best work within the community and with other agencies to address these objectives?"

T.J. Fleming, the Department's Principal Officer responsible for Local & Community Development, said, "Individuals, either

members of Projects, staff or of the communities served are free to respond to these questions either by making a submission themselves or collectively working with others in their project or other projects."

By the end of this year, a new Programme Framework will be agreed to point the way forward – fitting in with the aims of the new National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013.

CONSULTATIVE TEAM

A Consultative Panel made up of people from the projects, Pobal, the Combat Poverty Agency and the Office of Social Inclusion has worked with the Department to devise the consultation process. Following the July deadline, regional meetings will be held with projects to further discuss plans.

Stakeholders are not confined to the questions posed and are asked to provide additional comments and material if they so wish. Neither are people or organisations submitting their views required to address each question individually.

TIMETABLE

In the coming months, the Department, together with the Consultative Panel, will consider and evaluate the submissions and develop a possible outline for the new programme. It is expected that this part of the process will be completed by September or early October.

A series of regional seminars and discussions with Projects or groups of Projects, and with other relevant stakeholders are proposed for October and November. These seminars will gather additional views

and inputs from CDPs and other stakeholders and will be used to respond to matters that are expected to arise as a new programme is developed. A final framework for the new programme should be in place by year-end.

For a list of the questions, or to submit your views, the Department requests you to email: Imoore@pobail.ie

For those who do not use email and wish to make a contribution, write or phone: Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Tubbercurry Offices, Teeling Street, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo. T: 071-9186700.

NATIONWIDE

The Programme is administered by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and provides funding to designated CDPs in communities experiencing social and economic disadvantage. Communities can be broadly defined by geography (neighbourhood-based) or by interest group (issue-based). The Projects provide a range of supports, development opportunities and services to groups of people and individuals within their areas of operation.

There are up to 2000 volunteers and 400 staff involved in the Programme. 'Changing Ireland' is the Programme's magazine, managed by a Limerick-based CDP – the Community Development Network Moyross.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The Programme is guided by a set of shared values that enshrine equality, inclusion, collective action, empowerment and a strong anti-poverty focus in the work undertaken in support of the communities served.

These values are underpinned by local accountability and democratic arrangements:

- Projects work against discrimination in all its forms and challenge any practices or activities that tolerate discrimination in their communities.
- Projects have a particular focus and contribution to make in tackling the twin issues of social and economic exclusion arising from poverty.
- A key strength of Projects has been their ability to actively target and engage with people experiencing poverty to participate in a collective and meaningful way.





Introduction:

Noel Ahern, while Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, said earlier this year that, "it is only through a combination of local community initiatives with support from statutory agencies that we can achieve the best outcomes for communities."

A Traveller-focussed CDP based on a halting site in Ballymun is a case in point.

St. Margaret's Travellers Community Association – whose offices are in a green area at the centre of the overcrowded St. Margaret's Park – have published two reports highlighting issues that the residents on their own cannot fix.

However, with the outside support that Minister Ahern spoke of, solutions are available.

The reports – one looking at why there are so many power cuts to the park, and the other showing how residents wish to see the place developed – were officially launched on May 10th.

Ballymun families want end to power-cuts

- Travellers in Ballymun propose solutions

By NICK MURPHY

HOW do you charge your mobile phone without electricity? Can you watch television and still hear it using a petrol generator to supply the power? How do you wash your clothes? What do you do if the power fails and you are ill and reliant on an electrical-operated oxygen supply?

Some Ballymun residents have to put up with a lot given how developed most of Ireland is. Now, they are looking for action:

St. Margaret's Park is a halting site that was built by Dublin City Council to house 30 families. However, there is not enough official accommodation for Travellers in the Council's area and throughout St. Margaret's history, the site has suffered from overcrowding. Currently, 48 families live there.

The problem is that the electricity supply has never been adjusted to accommodate the actual population of St. Margaret's and when the system gets overloaded, as happens every so often, it fails.

The issue – and solutions – have been published in a report 'Electricity in St. Margaret's Park'.

LIFE OR DEATH

This has become a life-or-death situation for one resident who has an illness. A young child is oxygen-dependent and needs electricity to power the oxygen supply. On at least one occasion when the electricity failed, the parents had to rush their child to hospital.

This family are particularly stressed, not knowing when the next power cut will occur.

Parts of the estate can get cut off while others still have power. In trying to help blacked-out neighbours, residents with power sometimes make the problem worse and get cut off themselves.

"During cold weather some type of heating is essential and for safety reasons some residents



Two young residents of St. Margaret's Park.

are unhappy using gas or solid fuel heaters. And when the power fails during a winter's night," explained a resident, "it's very hard watching your neighbour freezing, so you let them plug into your supply if it's still on."

SHARING POWER

Unfortunately, this neighbourliness means that the electrical load is thrown onto fewer and fewer fuses and the problem can spiral until large sections of the site or even the entire site goes off.

Power cuts are frequent: In a three-month period last year, from October to December, there were 9 power outages at St. Margaret's, including on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (until 6pm). A lot of Christmas dinners were ruined.

The newly-published report by the local CDP outlines a further problem - there is only one electrician contracted to carry out repairs to the site and he cannot be available at all times.

Sometimes the power is not restored for days

or weeks. On March 2nd, the electricity failed to 15 caravan bays and was not fully restored until March 20th.

The report examines the causes of the problem, noting that it is a group scheme. It points out that the Council knows there are "several individuals who are illegally connecting to the system".

"Whatever the cause the residents suffer what they feel is an unacceptable level of hardship," says the report.

INDIVIDUAL METERS

DCC spends around €200,000 per year repairing faults, an expense it says is not sustainable. An ideal solution would be to install an individual meter in each bay and charge families accordingly (as is the norm in most places). The Council refuses, however, saying it would cost €2 million.

However, the residents say that, since the vast majority of people have meters, why shouldn't they? Residents believe that individual meters would reduce or eliminate illegal connections to the supply.

An ESB spokesperson told 'Changing Ireland' that while there are several halting sites in the greater Dublin City area which operate the group scheme there are also a number where individual meters are installed.

"The ESB is always ready to discuss steps which may help overcome problems," said the spokesperson.

Siobhan Curran, development worker, said: "Our report outlines several suggestions by those living there. These are short-term measures such as the provision of emergency generators during failures and a proper emergency response plan with staff available out of hours."

She urged the Council to refurbish the electricity supply in consultation with the residents.

The report was launched at the Equality Authority head office in Dublin.

Estate Regeneration in the UK: Lessons and experiences

By Keith Kintrea

Department of Urban Studies,
University of Glasgow, Scotland

The outcomes of regeneration:

- Housing conditions objectively better
- Higher rates of satisfaction
- More effective management
- More areas better supplied with facilities and services
- From council estates to 'council-built estates' - insertion of home ownership and housing associations

But...

- After 30 years of initiatives and billions of pounds of public spending, the list of the most deprived areas has changed little, and is dominated by former council estates.
- Surveys show a consistent link between council estates and poor neighbourhood conditions.
- And many of the the problems are the same too: low demand, poor environment and concentrated poverty.

Current Policy:

- We have used a 'Social exclusion' diagnosis since the late 1990s.
- £5 billion is being spent (from 2001 to '08) on a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.
- High level objectives are agreed.
- The new strategy was welcomed as better defined, better resourced, with more sophisticated thinking.

What now? Keith advises the UK to:

- Look to promote a more spatially integrated society across all residential areas using the planning system and available capital spending.
- More radically re-shape social rented areas, allowing for more private development.
- Don't assume that everywhere can and should be regenerated.



The horses may stay but the tower-blocks will go.

Bye-bye to Ballymun blocks

- and hello to a Regenerated Ireland

ANOTHER tower block in Ballymun was torn down as 'Changing Ireland' went to press. It is three years since a demolition crew pulled down the first one, the 15-storey Pearse Tower, marking an historic moment in the multi-billion euro regeneration effort. On that day, in June, 2004, a large crowd turned out. Local people had grown fed up with delays in redevelopment programme, but this was a day to remember.

That day, the weather was glorious and outdoor speakers blasted out U2's Beautiful Day. The song was appropriate, but not back in the 1980s, when Bono looked at the squalid high-rises and penned a song about the devastation of drugs and of inappropriate urban planning. He sang bleakly back then, "I see seven towers and I only see one way out."

On that first demolition day, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was in attendance, though the most popular man of all was undoubtedly the crane-operator. With each balcony he knocked, a great cheer went up from the assembled crowd, many of whom had lived in or had relatives living in the tower block. There were tears too - some people had even been born in the towers so emotions were mixed.

An Taoiseach said it was the start of a new future for Ballymun: "This has been a huge project, turning around years of difficulties and problems."

He recalled when the towers were built in Ballymun in the late sixties and the social problems that had followed them.

The towers continue to come down, with smaller crowds watching. The question is - will the regeneration work? The police have

their doubts - see our accompanying article - and have joined in setting up an inter-agency response. They are now going to concentrate over 3 years on cutting crime, anti-social behaviour and drug abuse in Ballymun.

If Ballymun, however, was the beginning, where is it to end? Sligo, Cork, Waterford and many of our towns are embracing regeneration as the way forward.

In Britain, regeneration is all the rage, and lessons are being learnt there too (see attached article).

In the Irish Republic, projects within the Community Development Programme, and indeed other programmes and within the Family Resource Centre Programme - are gaining a wealth of experience and lessons are being learnt here in Ireland also.

For example, the CDP in St. Michael's Estate and the Family Resource Centre in Fatima Mansions - both in Dublin - have engaged in regeneration, have produced publications, run tours and launched DVDs to show what they have learnt. Volunteers from CDPs in other parts of the country often visit these areas to see how they have managed the process.

Of course, if regeneration is to work, the plans agreed with the communities need to be carried out in full. As Ballymun develops, there are some concerns over anti-social behaviour. Meanwhile, in Moyross and Southill in Limerick, more extreme forms of violence show the need for the regeneration programmes to commence as soon as possible.

In our Autumn edition, we will look at how the community development approach ties in with regeneration programmes.

Ballymun must be made safer

- make or break for regeneration scheme

A Minister of State has said anti-social behaviour is the biggest threat to the further regeneration of Ballymun on Dublin's northside.

His views were amplified by an Assistant Garda Commissioner who believes that if the suburb's anti-social antics continue then "the whole regeneration will have been a complete waste of time."

The rebuilding of Ballymun began in 1998 and is more than half completed, with more tower blocks scheduled for demolition early this summer.

The Assistant Commissioner - Al McHugh - and the Minister of State - Noel Ahern - were speaking at the launch, in early June, of a 3-year 'Ballymun Community Safety Strategy' to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and drug abuse locally.

The Assistant Commissioner said: "What has occurred in the past cannot be allowed to continue in the future or the whole regeneration will have been a complete waste of time."

Assistant Commissioner McHugh said that, while Ballymun does not have a huge problem with headline crime, the anti-social behaviour could have a huge bearing on how the area developed.

Minister Ahern, whose brief was housing, drug-prevention and community affairs, was more diplomatic: "The development of Ballymun, without the development of a safe environment, well, I won't say the building work would be pointless, but it would be questionable . . . Basically, the issues of crime and antisocial behaviour and messing will have to be reduced."

The new Ballymun Community Safety Strategy sets measured targets, including:

- 24-hour Garda-monitored CCTV,
- increasing the seizures of illegal drugs by 5 per cent,
- employing 10 per cent rise more community police,



- reducing burglary, car theft, and firearms offences by 2 per cent.

- there will be "zero tolerance of graffiti" to use the New York policing term.

Minister Ahern said, "This strategy will tackle the greatest problem Ballymun faces and the greatest threat to its building programme, that of anti-social behaviour."

The strategy will involve continuous input from the community, Dublin City Council, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd (BRL) and the Garda. The strategy will be constantly monitored, according to Ciarán Murray, managing director of BRL.

Ciarán said, "We're not just building buildings here, we're building a sustainable community. A place people will want to stay, not leave at the earliest opportunity."

Ballymun almost two-thirds complete

ALMOST two-thirds of the new housing in Ballymun is now either complete or in construction. A further 20% is at the tender/pre-construction stage.

To date:

- 568 flats have been demolished including four of the seven towers
- Over 1000 social housing units have been completed.
- 774 new private homes and 130 affordable, cooperative and voluntary homes have been built.

Community facilities have been built, transforming the heart of Ballymun: The AXIS

Arts Centre opened in 2001, the new Civic Centre in '03, and the Sports and Leisure Centre in '05. A landscaped park, Coultry Park, opened in '05 and two more parks with new playing pitches and playgrounds are on the way.

Ballymun now has two hotels, the Days Hotel and the Ballymun Plaza, notable additions to the local economy.

Ballymun Regeneration Ltd., a company set up by Dublin City Council in 1998, is charged with fulfilling the original masterplan that was developed in consultation with local residents.

Residents devise 'Community Manifesto'

A RESIDENTS' redevelopment committee at St. Margaret's Park in Ballymun has published a report - 'Community Manifesto for Change' - which outlines the community's views on possible future regeneration work.

The publication proposes some short-term solutions and the committee are also working towards an overall redevelopment in the long-term.

Already, committee members are working with staff from Dublin City Council and things are changing. For instance, rubbish is no longer the problem it once was:

"There was a problem with illegally-dumped rubbish," explained a member of the redevelopment committee.

"Eventually (this problem) was solved largely through the efforts of one resident who made his truck and other equipment available. Then, working with Dublin City Council, the rubbish was removed and we carried out landscaping works along the road and on the site," he said.

Last year, St. Margaret's launched a DVD titled 'Traveller Accommodation in Ballymun'.

For more information, contact Siobhan at: St. Margaret's Travellers Community Association, St. Margaret's Road, Ballymun, Dublin 11. T: 01-8622144.

E: saintmargarets@eircom.net

For the full story on St. Margaret's, turn to page 22.

Jargon-buster: Regeneration

THE aim for regeneration projects is to build sustainable communities through a combination of social, educational and economic initiatives and also by rejuvenating the built environment by a mixture of demolition, construction and refurbishment of dwellings having regard to urban design guidelines.

Limerick: Regeneration agencies up and running

TWO agencies are now up and running to oversee the regeneration on the north and south sides of Limerick city.

In June, the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley, announced the membership of the board of directors, which includes community leaders and

representatives, to oversee the work of the two agencies.

Former assistant manager on Dublin City Council, Brendan Kenny, has been appointed chief executive of the new agencies. The board-members will serve until 2012.

Limerick projects quick to welcome regeneration

- Fitzgerald urges them to maintain pressure

THE five area-based Community Development Projects in Limerick City reacted promptly to the Government's approval of a 9-point plan for the city's disadvantaged communities.

The plan was devised by former Dublin city manager, John Fitzgerald, and the CDPs backed the plan within days of the announcement and called with a united voice for all-party support and for immediate action.

RTE, national radio stations and the local press covered the CDPs' first ever press conference in the city when the call was made. Mr. Fitzgerald joined the CDPs for the event and urged them to keep up pressure on the authorities to fulfill the promises made.

"It's important," Mr. Fitzgerald told the projects, "from the community point of view that you keep up the pressure."

"After many years as a public official, I know of the horror of over-promising and creating unachievable levels of expectation. The relevant bodies know that these can be acted upon and must be acted upon for the sake of young children within these communities.

"And you who are at the core should keep up the pressure," added Mr. Fitzgerald.

It was the first time CDPs in the city made a public statement together.

"We ask the government to begin implementing without delay everything in the



The 'Changing Ireland' premises were once derelict. This is an example of local regeneration.

report that can be acted upon immediately," said Kay Flanagan, development worker with Our Lady of Lourdes CDP, an area which includes the beleaguered Ballinacurra-Weston part of Limerick city.

Helen Flanagan, chairperson of St. Mary's CDP said the communities were united: "This call is being issued on behalf of the volunteers in Southill CDP, Community Development Network Moyross, Our Lady of Lourdes CDP, St. Munchin's CDP and St. Mary's CDP."

"We wholeheartedly welcome this report," said Catriona McNamara, the chairperson of St. Munchin's CDP on the city's north-side. "It will be the crown on Limerick city's development when the disadvantaged communities are turned into places where people can enjoy the same quality of life as people elsewhere in Ireland."

Expertise within the Programme was also emphasised: "Ballymun, Inchicore and Fatima Mansions in Dublin have successfully managed the regeneration of their communities and Limerick is ready to do the same," said Allen Meagher, editor, 'Changing Ireland'. The programme will be one of the biggest regenerations in the country, promising radical changes to the city's council built estates. While hopes have been raised, residents within the communities of Moyross, Southill, St. Mary's and Ballinacurra Weston are maintaining a healthy scepticism. Most people are adopting a wait-and-see approach.

The united front presented by volunteers from the city's five disadvantaged areas was a first step to ensuring the communities get what is promised.

New regeneration guidebook

"It is often said that the 'Celtic Tiger' has left a lot of people behind: Travellers, people with disabilities, and people with certain notorious addresses in cities and towns around Ireland."

So say the publishers of 'Things Can Be Different'. However, they claim that Dublin's Fatima Mansions has changed completely thanks to regeneration.

"In fairness, Fatima is a success story," say the Community Action Network. "In ten years, this community - synonymous in the mind of the general public with drugs, crime, poverty, poor housing and low educational achievement - has become a vibrant community full of hope and promise. The new Fatima has quality housing, excellent locally-run services, and a strong community spirit."

"And if it can happen here, surely it can also happen in all the other blighted communities around this country."

CAN say the secrets to Fatima's success are revealed in full in their

new book. It is aimed at development workers, volunteers and planners throughout the country who hope to see communities turned around through regeneration.

'Things Can Be Different' tells how it was done - and it does the telling in a way that other communities can learn from. It shows that the key to change is not just in the hands of governments and local authorities, but in the hands of the community itself!

The book was launched on June 7th in the Mansion House, Dublin, by Pat Bennett of the Family Support Agency.

If your community group wishes to get a copy of the book (priced €15) or see a workshop held in your area - to explore the book's contents more closely - contact: CAN, 24 Gardiner Place Dublin 1.

T: 01-8788005.



Flying south for 'a global angle to our local work'

- Six project women off to Dar es Salaam

By SARAH-BETH WATKINS

SIX women from the Community Development Programme and other community projects are travelling to Tanzania this September.

They will participate in the **2007 Gender Festival** in the capital, Dar es Salaam. Next year, Tanzanian gender specialists will visit their Irish counterparts for a fortnight.

The exchange is with the **Tanzanian Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)** an organisation that works for gender equality, social transformation and women's empowerment.

The lucky six from Ireland - Aoife Cooke - **Tallaght Intercultural Action**, Breda Murphy - **Waterford Women's Centre**, Jo Lambe - **Open Door Network**, Niamh Farren - the **Media Co-op**, Sarah Oates - **Tuam CDP** and myself - **Templeshannon CDP** - will be making presentations at the Gender Festival.

Over the course of two weeks, we will be talking to women's organisations in Tanzania about the issues facing women in both

countries including health, domestic violence, interculturalism, women in poverty and community education.

The exchange will look at how women in Ireland can work in solidarity with women in the South to promote human rights. On coming home, Breda and her companions will report back to a wide variety of groups and women's networks they are involved in and get media coverage for the issues.

The exchange should help raise awareness of gender and development issues.

In 2008, Banúlacht and TGNP will organise a return visit for women in Tanzania.

• **For more information, contact any of the above CDPs or Banúlacht (T: 01-872-3039. W: www.banulacht.ie)**

Also, check out: www.tgnp.org

NOTE: A follow up report on the exchange will appear in the next edition.



"This exchange will benefit our organisation by giving a global perspective on the work we do and getting some new ideas," says Breda Murphy, co-ordinator of Waterford Women's Centre.

"Our Women's Centre works with many African women who live in Waterford and supports the African Women's Forum and this exchange would deepen our understanding on how to support these women."

Waterford Women's Centre work through capacity building programmes for women in order to encourage and support activism and Breda is receiving great support from everyone in the centre.

"It is seen very much as a project visit and one that will enhance and broaden the work we do. A table quiz is being organised to raise funds for the visit and the support I have received in relation to this is enormous. Everyone wants to be part of and contribute to the exchange and is as excited about it as I am."

What is a Gender Festival?

THE 2007 Gender Festival in Tanzania will be held in the capital, Dar es Salaam, with the theme "Gender, Democracy and Development: African Feminist Struggles in the Context of Globalisation".

Last year, the conference attracted over 2000 women throughout the course of the four-day event.

Discussions at this year's Gender Festival will focus on corporate-led globalisation and 'free-market' ideology. It will look at the impact of globalisation on development and democracy in Africa and the world over.

The Tanzanian Gender Festival is an open forum for like-minded individuals

and organisations to share experiences, knowledge, build capacity and plan collectively for social transformation with a gender perspective. The four-day event brings together gender focus groups, civil society organisations, activists, government sectors and other actors working at various levels.

The activist-style Festival combined speeches, paper presentations, case studies and workshops with art performances and an exhibition.

Countries represented in the past included Kenya, Sudan, South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Uganda, the USA and Britain.

And now Ireland.

Child-murder provokes protests

MODERN Ireland occasionally reels in horror as the media report on parents who murder their children. Depression is frequently cited as a factor. In Tanzania, the context is different, but the outcome the same - parents occasionally murder their children or order their killing.

In May of last year, Sooi Sadira, a village girl of 12, was murdered on her father's orders after she refused an arranged marriage with a 30-year-old man. She was raped on the first night with her new husband. She ran away but was caught by her father and beaten to death by local youths with sticks.

Six months ago, two local NGOs organised a 300-person demonstration to condemn the killing. Sooi's father went on the run.



Women's human rights situation in Tanzania

THE following table was assembled by 'Changing Ireland' from facts gleaned from a lengthy human rights report by the US Government for 2006. For the US view on any country's human rights practices (excluding the US), log onto: www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/

X	✓
1) Only 5% of rape cases result in court proceedings.	1) The law provides for life imprisonment for persons convicted of rape.
2) Society considers wife-beating to be an acceptable practice.	2) The courts now recognise domestic violence as grounds for divorce.
3) Domestic violence against women is widespread and most women are afraid to report it.	3) Last year, one woman - Agnes Mbuyamajuu - broke the taboo and went on television, and to the courts, publicly condemning the police for being slow to take complaints seriously.
4) A minority of women still practise circumcision (or Female Genital Mutilation) on young girls.	4) The practice - known by critics as Female Genital Mutilation - is gradually becoming less popular if reports are accurate. Though culturally acceptable in many areas, it is illegal.
5) The extent of sexual harassment of women in the workplace is unknown.	5) The law prohibits sexual harassment of women in the workplace.
6) Inheritance and marriage laws do not consistently provide full equality.	6) The law provides for equality of women.
7) Traditional customs remain strong and include some that subordinate women.	7) Several NGOs organised workshops and seminars, and some ran legal aid clinics, addressing a wide range of women's rights issues. Another plus - traditional customs remain strong and many are good.
8) Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be a problem in refugee camps.	8) There is a Ministry devoted to Community Development, Women, and Children.



Tanzania Gender Networking Programme

THE Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) aims at socially transforming Tanzanian society. It was established in 1993 and is a non-governmental organisation.

"We promote gender equality and social equity through the empowerment of women and other marginalised sectors of the community. Our organisation strives to enhance the mainstreaming of gender at all levels of society from grassroots communities to the highest levels of national policy making and legislation," says the network's mission statement.

The network puts its muscle into:

- Activism, lobbying and advocacy;
- Training, capacity-building;
- Action-oriented research;
- Networking.

For more information, log onto: www.tgnp.org



Irish Aid funding flights

BANÚLACHT, a national organisation for women working in development, is organising the visit by Irish women to Tanzania and the trip is funded by Irish Aid.

Maeve Taylor and Eileen Smith of Banúlacht are part of the Irish delegation. "We are delighted to facilitate this exchange between women in Ireland and Tanzania," said Maeve. "There is a huge amount we can learn from each other about community development approaches and about the situation of women in each country."

"In particular, we hope the trip will deepen our understanding of the links between women's lives and situations locally and globally, and the ways in which women in Tanzania."

Famine Walk in solidarity with Shell To Sea

LOUISBURGH CDP, which with Afri, organises the annual Doolough Famine Walk in Mayo, this year held it in solidarity with the Shell To Sea Campaign.

Shell To Sea opposes a gas pipeline originally destined to pass through a residential community and protected environmental area in the barony of Erris.

"Multinational oil companies will go wherever maximum profit leads them," said Breda Ruane of Louisburgh CDP. "They are often aided and abetted by Governments who, as in the case of Ireland, gift them the nation's natural resources free gratis."

Breda – who was walking her last Famine Walk as Louisburgh CDP co-ordinator (she is moving to a VEC job) said the courage of people such as environmentalists in Ogoniland in Nigeria and the 'Rossport Five' in Mayo was "an inspiration."

The annual famine walk from Doolough to Louisburgh took place on Saturday, May 26, and highlighted the theme 'Voices in the Wilderness: Erris, Gas and Global Warming'. The topic was chosen, said Breda, "as the threat posed by global warming and climate change has seeped into public consciousness like never before."

The walk-leaders were Choctaw tribal leaders, Gary White Deer and Dr Janie



White Deer, Dr Mark Garavan, spokesperson for the Shell to Sea campaign and author of the recently-published book, 'The Rossport 5', and John Hoban, musician, singer, songwriter and poet.

The ten-mile walk from Doolough to Louisburgh commemorates those who died in 1849 along the route and the organisers also use the walk as "an act of solidarity with those who suffer injustice in today's world."

Before the walk, six paintings were

unveiled in Louisburgh Parish Hall. They were inspired by the Shell to Sea Campaign and featured work by artists Tom Meskeel, David Gearty, Isabela Basombrio Hoban, John Mulloy, Mick Smyth and Clare Griffen.

After the Walk, Gary and Janie travelled to North-West Mayo to meet with anti-Shell protesters.

Louisburgh CDP has engaged in numerous development education events over the years, often with the involvement of Afri.

Choctaws gave us \$710 in 1847



Janie White Deer pins a white rose to the famine memorial at the foot of Croagh Patrick in Mayo.

GARY White Deer and Janie White Deer, of the Choctaw Nation in the US, joined the Doolough Famine Walk this year.

The Choctaw people made a donation of \$710 at the height of the Irish famine in 1847 and at a time when the Choctaws were being hounded like animals around their own country by European invaders.

The Choctaw contribution would be worth around €1 million in today's money, according to one estimate.

Irish people walked in the 500-mile march from Mississippi to Oklahoma in 1992 to mark the 150th anniversary of the donation.

"As people of that time, we were both oppressed. It was an act of solidarity, of one poor, dispossessed people reaching out to help another," said Gary.

Donations to help the Irish during the Great Famine came from distant and unexpected sources - from Calcutta and Bombay in India, from Florence in Italy, from France, Jamaica, and Barbados. The Quakers and Jewish synagogues also contributed generously.

The Famine killed an estimated one million people as it ravaged Ireland in the mid-1840s and led to 1.8 million people taking the emigrant boat to England or America.