

CHANGING IRELAND

MAY-JULY '08

ISSUE 25

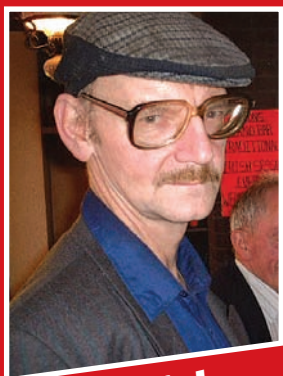
The National Magazine of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 182 CDPs & 10 Support Agencies

€2.25

INSIDE



Cherry Orchard rocks



Grateful for the lift



Donegal alcohol-free zones



Rural transport: it's not rocket science

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



Rural Transport is not rocket science

RURAL people's lives have changed for the better due to the spread of rural transport schemes. Close to 1,000,000 journeys took place through the Rural Transport Programme last year and 76% of those journeys were from door-to-door.

The schemes are community-led and community managed by local volunteers. The driver is likely to be your neighbour.

Rural transport has given people with the free travel pass something to use the pass on. Some people rely on the new rural services to get to work or to college. Yet, a significant number of particularly older people take the bus just for the journey, to meet other people, to feel part of a community once again. The Programme has taken on a life of its own.

During the initial set-up stage some years ago, the local delivery of rural transport schemes was helped by the fact

that the Community Development Programme had a presence in at least half-a-dozen areas targetted. Some CDPs remain involved.

The Community Services Programme has also been integral to the scheme's ability to operate smoothly. Ten schemes directly benefit from the CSP.

By the end of this year, the Rural Transport Programme itself will have a presence in every county. It has spread relatively quickly from a few pilot projects in 2001. We look in this edition at two CDPs involved in rural transport from the early days and at another CDP that is lobbying for a service in their area. In fairness, it's not rocket science.

* * * * *

This is our 25th issue, a cause for celebration and an opportune time to say to everyone who has been involved over the years . . . Thank you! Abaraka!

Key focus on: Women, men, Travellers and local communities

THE Community Development Programme is currently supporting 182 projects which can be loosely categorised as follows:

- 105 Geographically-based projects
- 22 Traveller projects
- 33 Women's projects/networks
- 2 Men's projects/networks
- 20 Other supported organisations

Most of the projects funded by the Programme are geographically-focused, for instance, Ballybeg CDP in Waterford city or North-West Roscommon CDP. The figures are from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, as of April 18th.

What CDPs are:

'CHANGING Ireland' highlights the work of Community Development Projects (CDPs).

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.

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DISCLAIMER

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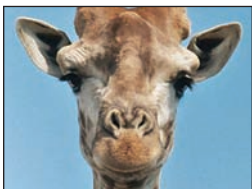
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COMMUNITY participation and consultation will feature as a theme in an edition of 'Changing Ireland' later this year when we look at how important participation is, how it works in practice and new ways to approach it.

Recently, the management committee of a Community Development Project in Dublin 5 sent us this article, reflecting their experience of poor consultation. The article was written by Kilmore West CDP's project co-ordinator, Martin Hamilton. He wrote it "to spell out to local and national groups the reality of being ignored in consultation."

Consultation did not work for us

- Dublin 5 facilities shifting to Dublin 17

By MARTIN HAMILTON

IN 2004 this community project was approached by a company, Urban Capital, who, amongst other attributes, offer what can be described as 'conceptual planning'. They had been commissioned by Dublin City Council to examine the feasibility of a public private partnership to redevelop the lands around the Northside Shopping Centre and over the main Oscar Traynor road into lands within the Kilmore West estate.

Happy days: We were delighted because we believed if the re-development was recommended and went ahead we could secure much needed community facilities for Kilmore West.

Following several meetings over the next two years with 'Urban Capital' where all active community groups attended, we set out our list of requirements for this community should this re-development go ahead. We stressed the need for a large community centre that would enable provision of child-care, second chance education, personal development, literacy, programmes for those with disabilities, services for senior citizens and so on.

We had been campaigning for these facilities since 2000 and were highly motivated to attend these 'consultation' meetings to ensure the needs of this community were heard loud and clear. Fast forward to 2006, the redevelopment was recommended, plans were drawn up and a scale model of the proposed redevelopment put on public display for observation and comment. The local authority engaged in what they describe as a 'public consultation exercise' which in fact is a statutory requirement but we describe it as a sick joke. Why would we be so negative and sceptical?

To explain, when the final draft of the proposals were put on display, Kilmore West will have over 1000 housing units built on the land where the present (admittedly inadequate) community facilities exist and the only sop to the community is the provision of 400sq m

Kilmore West

KILMORE West CDP serves a community of just over 7000 residing in 1600 households. Kilmore West is an estate built in the early 60s on the north-side of Dublin 5. It has minimal community facilities and has been historically neglected.

The few community facilities that do exist came into existence only through the energy and endeavours of local activists over the years but even these facilities are now due for demolition.

The Kilmore West area is surrounded by the estates of Artane & Beaumont on one side of the busy main Oscar Traynor road and on the other side by Coolock/Clonsilla estates where the main landmark is the 'North-side Shopping Centre'. Kilmore West CDP was established in 1999.

accommodation to house a youth project. In fact, this is only a replacement for accommodation that already exists but is located in a large old recreation centre that is being demolished to make way for some of the house building.

We had and have made it clear to the planners and the local authority that we desperately need proper community facilities in Kilmore West. We have attended various 'consultation' meetings historically and in the recent past and it became very clear at these meetings that the local authority's concept of consultation is to tell you what and where they are going to build and the views of opposition did not matter one jot.

The local authorities and the planners argue that they will be providing the facilities we requested, not where we know they are needed, but in a location over on the other side of the busy main Oscar Traynor Road and that this or these facilities can be accessed by members of this community by way of a footbridge over this main artery cutting this community of Dublin 5 from where the community facilities will be located, in Dublin 17.



This is madness and makes no sense and is objectionable in that all community groups in Kilmore West and the community members in particular have strongly stressed the need for local community facilities.

POPULATION MAY RISE BY 50%

We can expect upwards of 4000 extra residents in this community when the house building is completed, bringing the population up to a minimum of 11000 residents. Mums and dads will not allow their kids to travel to Dublin 17 to access after-school childcare.

- Imagine the mothers and dads with small children and prams negotiating the footbridge to access crèche/childcare.
- Senior citizens will be afraid of crime and anti-social behaviour if they have to access facilities via a footbridge in evening hours.
- Local educational courses that residents are comfortable with will not be 'local' and that special feeling of 'community' will be totally diluted and replaced by a concrete jungle that only stores up social problems for the future.

I could go on and on but am confident that the readers of 'Changing Ireland' know only too well that when local authorities and planners say they believe in local democracy, they really mean it, providing they are doing the democracing.

Our experience and determination ensures that we will continue to campaign for local community facilities. The main reason for this article is to spell out to local and national groups the reality of being ignored in consultation and we now believe that we can only depend on their own strength to secure goals. Approaching politician's, local authorities and planners, arguably, is a necessary but unsatisfactory experience but what is not arguable is that consultation, as described above, is a very sick joke.

For more information, contact: Kilmore West CDP, St Luke's Parish Hall, Kilbarron Park, Dublin 5. T: 01-8473333. F: 01 8488194. E: kilmorecdp@eircom.net

Volunteer Profile: Seamus O'Boyle

Seamus O'Boyle is a voluntary management committee member of Sligo Northside Community Partnership, a CDP based in Sligo town. He is currently the treasurer.

What are you reading at the moment?

My favourite book is 'Strumpet City'. The last magazine I read was 'The Big Issue'.

What's the last film you saw?

Goodfellas.

Person you most admire?

Nelson Mandela obviously. And I admire a lot of people from the time of the Easter Rising and the foundation of the State. I admired Willie Bermingham who set up the charity Alone and Fr. Peter McVerry who works with the homeless. I experienced homelessness myself as a young fella.

The top four issues in Ireland today?

The economy, housing, the underclass and social infrastructure. I believe there's a huge underclass in Ireland and the slowdown of the economy will make it more visible now. Our Celtic Tiger economy is built on clay. You can feel the sense of an underclass outside the courthouse. The underclass will become more pronounced as time goes by and that has implications for the rest of us. There are 50 or 60 locations in Ireland where it is very obvious.

We need more

I'm always watching what's happening with urban renewal, but there's never any renewal of communities, that's what we need more of. In the North-West, there is no investment in CE workers bar a few pound.

And you can't have just one community development worker for 5000 people, it's not enough.

We need investment in youth clubs: Our youth activities in Sligo Northside cost us €67,000 last year but the funds came from Dormant Accounts which is drying up and now the people working with youth are being put on protective notice. We've a Minister of State for Youth Work but the government is only paying lip-service.

And, over the years, a lot of FÁS people pick up the slack in communities. Here we had 16 FÁS workers at one stage, now

we're cut back to ten. It's more we need, not less.

We need less

Tax breaks to people who don't need them. I understand the needs of commerce and business and I understand the need for a sound economy, but there is no point in giving tax breaks to people with



€20 million, they don't need another million. The Government talk a lot about sharing and caring, but they have developed a society of me-me-me.

How long are you working with the CDP?

I'm there for the last five years. I'm one of the treasurers.

How and why did you get involved?

I saw the shortcomings in the system when I was growing up and I've been involved in youth and community activities for 15 years now. I live in the community, my family, my children live here and everyone wants a better community.

What difference has being involved made to you?

It's opened my eyes to the lack of proper infrastructure here and in other parts of the country as well.

Have things changed for (your community, eg women, older people) today?

They haven't changed a lot. They have done up some of the houses. There should be more equality. I see some people living in terrible squalor. There's also the mental squalor for people stuck in houses they

can't get out of either because of health or economic reasons.

What motivates you as a volunteer?

Nobody gives a crap about the old people in certain areas, in working class areas. Maybe it's because they don't vote. I hope someday that if we all keep chipping away, something will change.

How do you get new volunteers?

We got five or six new volunteers this year, we were lucky. You'll always find there is expertise on your doorstep, just don't overburden new volunteers, though it's almost impossible not to do that. And while it's great to have procedures for CDP work, there's a lot of procedural work involved for the volunteers. People get burnt out volunteering after about ten years.

And finally!

Next to family celebrations, the greatest moment in my life was when Sligo Rovers won the league in 1977 led by Tony Fagan.

•For more information about the Sligo Northside Community Partnership.

T: 071-9147097.

E: sligonorthside@hotmail.com

'Controversial' guide launched in Dublin

DUBLIN north inner city volunteers and development workers have a 72-page 'Good Practice Guide to Community Participation' to learn from since April. Written by Ger Doherty on behalf of the Community Participation Project, the guide is aimed at showing how to get more people involved, engage them in meaningful work and keep them involved.

It was published by Dublin's Inner City Organisations Network and the North West Inner City Network and was launched by the Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey.

"It's a great guide promoting activism in the community with really good tips for engaging people as best as possible," he said.

The guide may be "controversial" for some readers, warned the Minister who noted that nowadays there is "an enlightened Community and Voluntary sector who need to be engaged with."

He advised, "Let's all avoid using buzzwords (when talking to prospective volunteers) because it really puts people off."

He said there is "always the danger that we unwittingly set barriers" between ourselves and others interested in improving the quality of life in communities. That said, he noted the presence at the launch of Community Gardai, adding that there have been "huge advances" in the statutory sector in terms of



Ger Doherty, author of the 'Good Practice Guide to Community Participation'.

working with the Community and Voluntary sector.

The Minister thanked everyone involved in the launch and hoped more activists would emerge from communities as a result of the publication and the work of the networks. He particularly thanked Dr. Joe Barry for his "very significant contribution on a public policy level and for his work on the drugs taskforce."

The guide was funded by the North Inner City Local Drugs Task Force.

Ger Doherty, the author and researcher, modestly played down the guide's significance: "If the guide comes across as preachy, sorry! We wanted the guide to be clear and easy to understand."

"The guide is just paper and words. The idea is to put it into practice and some groups already have offered to pilot the suggestions in the guide.

"About 90% of it seems blindingly obvious now when I look back on it and you'd think you could write it in a weekend, but it took a long time," he added.

The guide is not one person's view, but views of many organisations who talked to the author and who took part in workshops.

Mary McCann, Lourdes Day Care Centre, a subsidiary group of the Lourdes Youth and Community (one of a number of CDPs in the area) told the story of her volunteer participation:

"LYCS had a drop-in morning and it started me on the road to community involvement. It was a life-saver for me," she declared, though without elaborating exactly why. "I became involved with the Wednesday night women's group and signed up for a personal development course."

Ms McCann did many courses over the 30 years she has been a community activist, the latest being a course in leadership.

She was most recently involved in carrying out a needs analysis study with senior citizens in her area.

"It is very rewarding work, the senior citizens are very appreciative and so long as they don't have a voice of their own, I will do the shouting for them. Yes, there are a lot of barriers to voluntary work - the time you are away from family, and the frustrating and disheartening work seeking funding - but I love the work of making my community a better place."

Twin project launch for Westside

TWO projects set up by Westside CDP in Galway city were launched in April.

Westside's Computer Training Suite and a 'Driver Theory Test Project' were officially launched by Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, on Friday, April 18th. Marian Harkin, MEP, also attended. The event featured music, ethnic food and storytelling for children.

Award win for Dungarvan CDP

DUNGARVAN CDP was the winner of the Glanbia Social Support Community & Voluntary Award 2007.

The Glanbia award recognised the valuable work being done by Dungarvan CDP. The project worked last year on, among other issues, the Back to Education Initiative, men's development, the Women's Support Group, the County Waterford Childcare Initiative, and the Presentation Resource Centre.

It was the third year in which the Co. Waterford Community and Voluntary Awards took place.

Chairperson, Nora Delaney, accepted the award on behalf of the CDP's management and staff.

Management Committee members of Dungarvan CDP were presented with a framed certificate from the Waterford Community Forum in February to further mark their achievement.

Teen band launches 'Orchard Groove'

by: COLM WALSH

A CD of original material has been produced by a group supported by LINK CDP and it is hoped another similar project will be organised this year.

'Orchard Groove' performed songs at their launch night in the Orchard Community Centre in December and the CD sells for €5 from local outlets.

The 'Orchard Groove' was a pilot project undertaken by Link CDP to encourage and support music in the community. The aim of the project is to get young people in Cherry Orchard involved in playing music.

The shared experience of playing music and contributing to a collective creative process has

huge potential to strengthen community bonds and to build up new community relationships and strengthen existing ones.

The project involved workshops where song writing and musicianship was developed collectively with the encouragement of professional songwriters.

In Cherry Orchard, the youth population (those aged 19 or younger) as a percentage of the overall population (47.6%) is much larger than the average percentage for Dublin city (22.8%) as well as for the country as a whole (29.1%) (Source: 2002 CSO Census Data).

While youth facilities in the area are quite well developed, there has been little emphasis to date on activities directed towards young people with an interest in music. The "Orchard Groove" initiative seeks to address this deficit.

There has been a large body of research carried out into the area of "community music"-learning music in the community setting- and its potential for both personal growth and development, and for community development. It gives people an opportunity to learn music outside of the confines of an institutional setting, meaning the learning environment is the local environment. It is process-driven, in that participants are encouraged to have direct input into the learning process rather than simply being consumers of learning. (Koopman, 2007).

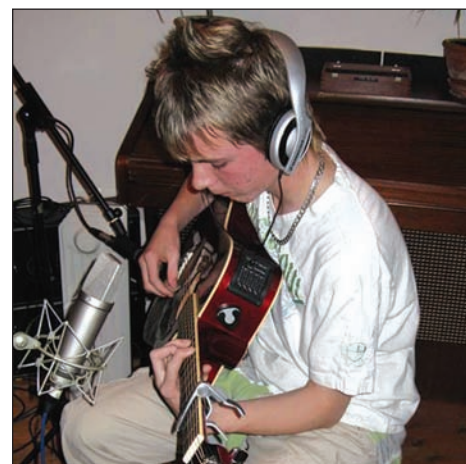
The process of learning being employed is activity-based and aims to work to a practical

and collaborative model, rather than an academic one.

There has for many years in Ballyfermot been a wealth of musical heritage, and this spark is being kept alive in the younger generations by community and youth groups who actively encourage the local youth to pick up instruments and play music for fun.

The age of the young people who took part in this LINK project ranged from 13-19 yrs and their talent and creativity shows the huge potential that we have in our local community.

For further information, contact Colm Walsh, Development Worker, Link CDP, Orchard Community Centre, Cherry Orchard Grove, Dublin 10. T: 01-6235204.



LINK CDP has 15 years' experience

THE LINK CDP is a company limited by guarantee and is also a registered charity. The project was established in 1992 following an application made by the Cherry Orchard Development Council and the Orchard Community Centre and is the only CDP operating in Cherry Orchard.

LINK networks with a broad range of community projects and initiatives to promote the positive development of the area. Its remit is to build the capacity of Cherry Orchard in partnership with local community, voluntary and statutory groups.

The project, which is based in the Orchard Community Centre, has had a central role in the establishment of a number of successful projects in the area, including the Equine Centre, the Local Employment Service, the Cherry Orchard Festival Committee, Residents Network, St Ultan's School along with the Cherry Orchard Community Childcare Service Ltd.

The Project is managed by a Voluntary Management Committee consisting of the project coordinator and local people. Members are elected on an annual basis at the AGM.

Show domestic violence 'The Door'!

- sculpture commemorates great loss

ON March 9th, Ringsend Action Project showed domestic violence 'The Door' with the unveiling of a major piece of public artwork, the first of its kind to raise awareness of domestic violence against women in Ireland and commemorate the lives of the 140 women in Ireland killed by domestic violence since 1995. Unveiled by John Gormley, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and commissioned by Ringsend Action Project and Ringsend & Irishtown Domestic Violence Working Group, the bronze sculpture entitled 'The Door' was unveiled at Library Plaza in Ringsend.

Aileen Foran, Community Development Worker with Ringsend Action Project, explains the significance of the sculpture; "We chose the symbol of a door because it could be anyone's hall door behind which victims of domestic violence feel trapped. Our sculpture of 'The Door' has been left ajar deliberately to symbolise that there is always help for those suffering from domestic abuse, literally on the other side of the door. By leaving it open we're saying to women in our community that there's always a way out of domestic violence, that there are services in place to help and that women must not feel alone or afraid to come forward."

"If its presence encourages even just one woman to stop and think about getting help, then it will have fulfilled an important



function," Aileen Foran added.

Cast in bronze and wood by local sculptor, Joe Moran, from East Wall, 'The Door' is intended as a beacon of hope for women in the South East Dublin community seeking

sanctuary from physical, sexual or mentally abusive relationships.

About Ringsend Action Project

Ringsend Action Project, founded in 1990 by a group of local residents to help bring about social change through community development, employs three full time members of staff and provides a range of community services, including after schools projects, women's educational programmes and activities for the elderly.

The Origins of 'The Door'

The origins of 'The Door' can be traced back to 2002, when the Ringsend Action Project formed a local Domestic Violence Working Group as part of the UN campaign "16 Days of Action against Violence against Women", which every year seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence as a Human Rights issue at local, national and international level. The Working Group's contribution to the UN campaign was the installation of a simple wooden door on International Women's Day 2002. This street sculpture, although only temporary, proved a talking point in the community and marked the beginning of a much bigger project for the Working Group.

With the original door gone, the Group felt a permanent sculpture would help raise awareness of domestic violence against women locally.

Network reaches 15,000 people weekly

MEMBERS and supporters of the Donegal Women's Network have raised health awareness, and indeed eyebrows, by writing for the Donegal Democrat.

'Donegal Women's News & Views' features weekly in the Thursday edition of the 'Donegal Democrat' (approx. 15,000 readership).

The columns are seen as a key part of the project's work and media skills workshops have been held to train the Editorial Group and other members.

The authors have addressed issues such as

living with a disability, living with MRSA, family issues, and problems with crime. They have also encouraged Donegal people to consider going to Belfast for cancer screening.

Finola Brennan, project co-ordinator wrote about 'Living with MRSA' and 'Living with disability- an everyday challenge' and about how 'Early detection saves lives'.

Evelyn McGlynn interviewed Ann Marie Keogh who comes from a mixed background – Traveller and settled. Maureen Lowndes who writes a monthly article on 'Family Matters'

and has written about crime from a victim's viewpoint.

"We are deeply indebted to Michael Daly, editor-in-chief of the Donegal Democrat and his predecessor Martin Mc Ginley," says Finola Brennan. "Through Donegal Women's Network they have afforded women an opportunity to share the reality of their everyday lives and to raise awareness of the issues for women in Donegal."

One of the Network's stories features in this edition.

Painting partnership: Mark II

ONE year ago, An Siol CDP in Dublin broke new ground by building relationships with business, new volunteers and a school in India. The work revolved around one project – to paint the homes of a small number of senior citizens locally.

The work made the front cover of 'Changing Ireland's summer 2007 edition and now An Siol have done it again.

The second painting refurbishment project took place in Aughrim Court in December.

Aughrim Court is the kitchen/dining room or communal area in a Dublin City

Council (DCC) sheltered housing complex for older people. An Siol manages a meals service in the complex and also provides activities there. However, the building itself is owned and managed by DCC and the Council would not paint the dining room. So, An Siol collaborated once again with businessman Brendan Doyle.

Mr Doyle organised volunteer painters and got local businesses to sponsor the paint. The link with projects in India was also a feature this time. An Siol provided the venue, refreshments and snacks for the painters.



Volunteer painters in Dublin.

For further information, contact: Breeda McNamara, Manager of Senior Citizens Service, An Siol CDP, 19 Manor Street, Dublin 7. T: 01-6775741.

Newly published: guide to intercultural work

PARTNERS has published a resource book showing ways to work with intercultural groups and how best to work with groups of children or adults on sensitive cultural issues.

The guide is intended as a follow-up to Partners' Companion to Training for Transformation (2001).

It was officially launched by Conor Lenihan, Minister of State with special responsibility for Integration Policy at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Education and Science and Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Over 100 people attended the launch in Dublin on February 13th.

"This publication will be of particular interest," said Tony O'Grady, director of



Frank Naughton, author, speaking at the launch.

Partners, "to anyone who works in formal or non-formal settings with groups involved in community development, community education, adult education, development education and overseas development. It will also be of interest to those whose lives or work situations involve a significant intercultural dimension."

The book 'Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation' is a compilation of the exercises, processes, resources and reflections designed, developed or adapted and used by Partners facilitators over several years. The content – all 166 pages, in A4-size – includes reflective pieces on topics such as understanding culture, identity and culture, racism, culture and communication, cultural values, development interventions, power, language and many other areas of intercultural work.

Maureen Sheehy, who compiled the first PARTNER's book, was also one of the three authors of this latest publication, alongside Frank Naughton and Collette O'Regan.

Partners, which is an independent training agency based in Dublin and supported through the Community Development

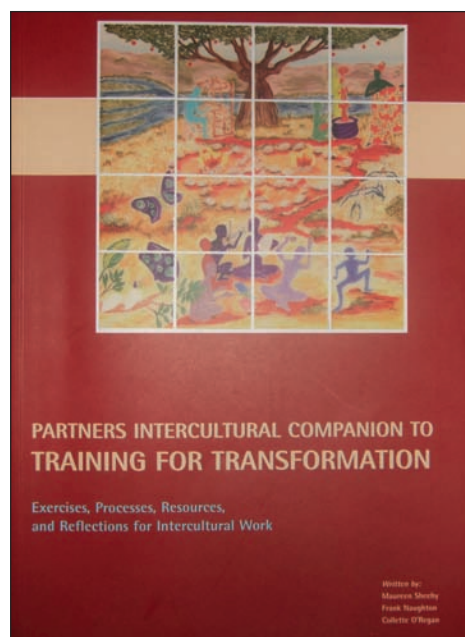
Programme, has been in existence for 20 years. It bases its revolutionary work with communities on the writings and theories of the late Paulo Freire from Brazil.

The book draws mainly from the experience of PARTNERS' work in Ireland, Wales, England, Scotland and in a European Grundtvig Learning experience. It also draws on the experience of PARTNERS' facilitators who have been associated with Training for Transformation programmes in several African and Asian countries.

The book adds to what is already available in Partners' Companion to Training for Transformation (2001) and in the four Training for Transformation Handbooks by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel (Training for Transformation Institute, Box 80 Kleinmond, 7195 South Africa, 1999).

The new book received funding from Irish Aid and Trocaire.

'Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation' is available from the PARTNERS' office priced at €25.00 plus postage. For a copy, please ring PARTNERS on 01-6673440 or email partners@eircom.net



How to put a giraffe in the fridge

HERE'S one to share with colleagues and indeed loved ones!

Are you a good Development Worker? An experienced activist? Perhaps you are familiar with Africa?

According to Very Worried Altogether (Worldwide), a new Irish NGO, around 90% of the Development Workers and Programme Co-ordinators tested with the following questions got them all wrong. But many of the kids tested in community crèches around the country got several correct answers. It conclusively disproves the theory that most development workers have the brains of a four year old.

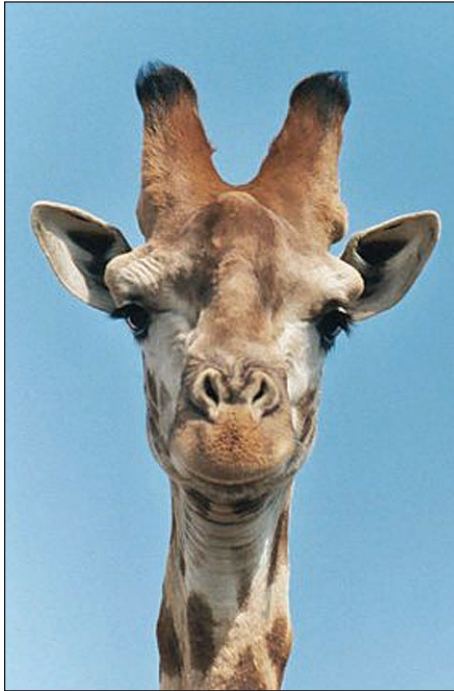
Think about your answer each time.

1. How do you put a giraffe in the refrigerator?

The correct answer is: Open the refrigerator, put in the giraffe and close the door.

This question checks if you tend to make simple things complicated.

2. How do you put an elephant into a



refrigerator?

Wrong Answer: Open the refrigerator, put in the elephant and close the

refrigerator.

Correct Answer: Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, put in the elephant and close the door.

This question tests your ability to consider the implications of your previous actions.

3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals attend except one. Which animal does not attend?

Correct Answer: The Elephant. The Elephant is in the refrigerator.

This tests your memory.

OK, even if you did not answer the first three questions correctly, you still have one more chance to show your abilities.

4. There is a river you must cross.

There is no bridge, no raft and no boat, and it is inhabited by crocodiles. How do you cross?

Correct Answer: You swim across. All the crocodiles are attending the Animal Conference.

This tests whether you learn quickly from your mistakes.



Is it expensive?

Dear Horace,
What is 'Housing Estate Enhancement'? Is it expensive?

- Auntie Jargon
Bewildered Terrace

Horace helps!

Dear Auntie,

You've heard of plastic surgery and bust enhancement. Well, estate enhancement is a bit like that - at the end of it, your estate should come out looking better, though not necessarily bigger.

Holy Communion costs

Dear Horace,
The First Communion in the school is gone

crazy. The expense, the extravagance is way out of hand. I'm particularly worried in our disadvantaged community where people are going into debt to pay for limousines and horse drawn carriages to bring their mini brides to the Church. What can be done?

- Holly Mary,
Mother of God CDP

Horace helps!

Dear Holly,

Fear not about those families going into debt. As you know you've got to spend money in order to make money. Last year my nephew arrived to the church in a stretch limo and then arrived to my house hours later in a Securicor Van having done his rounds of relations and friends. It's comforting to see that in all the materialism around us that old fashioned values still hold. Your first communion is something that stays with you forever - if you invest in it wisely.

An Post and the English language

Dear Horace,

I work for a little known community sector publication. Every month we send our newsletter out to our faithful readers. It's a long and repetitive job, but we take pride in it. We just got this letter from An Post telling us they're now using Optical Character

Recognition computers instead of people to read the envelopes we post. We have to use a ruler to check that the main address, return address, etc are the right distance from the edge and we have to stop using punctuation because it confuses their OCR. Do commas not have rights? If this letter does reach you, should we embrace this technology or demand the return of humans to the sorting office?

Ed Minstraiter
Altering Eire CDP
Baileganainm

Horace helps!

Well Ed, maybe OCR isn't OTT, but such is progress, 'tis like the automatic checkouts in the supermarket, someone loses a job, but it's generally quicker, until the machine can't tell the difference between a carrot and a bag of washing powder. On the other hand, sometimes you win, like the ATM that malfunctioned recently and gave out double the money for a whole day. Thank God I was passing that day!

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

Programmes in unison: Rural Transport and Community Development



THE Rural Transport Programme (RTP) is expanding its coverage and aims to have national coverage. It began as a pilot initiative in 34 areas in 2001 and needed the support of existing community groups to set up local transport schemes.

Projects within the Community Development Programme were among the local community groups that were able to lend the crucial support in certain rural disadvantaged areas. (Leader and Partnership groups lent equally valuable support in areas where they had a presence).

In County Cavan, for instance, Rural Lift began life as part of the workplan of Community Connections CDP. It has since become independent. A perfect example of how a CDP operates and of how the Community Development Programme can work to support the launch of new national initiatives. The work continues to this day, as our focus on links between three CDPs and the RTP shows.

Here we feature three CDPs around the country, one in Co. Sligo which in 2003 set up the first successful rural transport scheme using volunteer drivers and cars, another in South West Wexford which has expanded to reach two counties and a third CDP in West Limerick which hopes to bring a rural transport scheme to its area for the first time.

There is greater cohesion within the Community and Voluntary Sector nowadays than there was in 2001 and this should pave the way for the Programme to expand.

For more information on the Rural Transport Programme, log onto: www.pobal.ie/live/RTP

One millionth passenger

IN early 2005, Ellen McCole of Meath became the one millionth passenger on the transport provided under the Rural

Transport Initiative.

Just short of one million passenger journeys took place last year alone.

40km of roadway, and no bus

- by Ed O'Connor, Development Worker, West Limerick CDP

THERE was a time when every house in a rural area needed a car, now it's everybody. It is not unusual to see a house with five cars in the yard as different people in the house need to get to work, training or college, or to access goods and services that are not available in their locality.

Last year a report attributed higher cancer mortality rates in the west to, amongst other things, insufficient transport infrastructure to get sufferers to hospitals. For college students the cost of car insurance and keeping a car on the road can be crippling. For parents the thought of their children driving at such a young age is a constant worry.

Jane Stackpoole, one such young person, said she "had to buy a car to get to my first job, which I couldn't afford at the time."

The 2007-2013 National Development Plan understood the need to improve rural

"Last year a report attributed higher cancer mortality rates in the west to, amongst other things, insufficient transport infrastructure."

transport as a way of reviving declining rural economies. Meanwhile, the current government campaign on climate change says we must consume less fuel.

So where's the public transport? A generation ago, north-west Limerick had a daily CIE bus to Limerick and Shannon but the service was suspended when the regular driver retired. I kid you not.

To say that the rate of car ownership has increased dramatically since then is an understatement. Now, Bus Éireann (the descendent of CIE) feels that 'the level of



Paddy Griffin from Athea Community Council and Ed O'Connor hitching. Ed comes from a family of hitchhikers.

current services in the area is adequate' when it provides a once-a-week service between Athea and Listowel!

"I have a free travel pass but can only use it one day a week," said local resident, Pat Brosnan.

West Limerick CDP is trying to secure a daily bus service for the northern part of its target area, incorporating the areas of Athea and Carrigkerry. It realises that its target area is not alone in this public transport desert and is co-operating with North Kerry Together to lobby for a daily bus that will connect the villages and hinterlands of Ardagh, Carrigkerry, Athea, Moyvane and Knockanure with Limerick and Tralee (taking in 40 kms of road without a daily bus service).

We have the support of Rural Bus, North Kerry Flyer and Kerry Community Transport (Rural Transport Initiatives) and of Athea Community Council (the only community council in all of these villages).

But it seems we do not have sufficient political support to direct NDP money to these transport companies in order to put

the service in place. Public representatives cannot claim to be unaware of the need. Thanks to a very effective media course given by Allen Meagher (my words, not the editor's) we were able to communicate this

"West Limerick CDP... realises that its target area is not alone in this public transport desert and is co-operating with North Kerry Together to lobby for a daily bus."

need on all the local and county newspapers and radio stations, as well as on television in the RTE 1 programme, 'Pobal'.

What more can we do to get ourselves connected? We would appreciate any suggestions.

Our e-mail is
westlimerickcdp@hotmail.com

West Coast Wexford Rural Transport: going 5 years

- West Coast Wexford Rural Transport Programme (WCWRTP) began in 2003, under the auspices of South Wexford Community Development Project, running six services a week to link rural areas to the town of New Ross and the city of Waterford.
- By the end of 2007, this had grown to 50 services a week, in addition to services transporting children to four primary schools.
- The main aim of WCWRTP is to improve transport services and the quality of life for those who are currently isolated from access to services and supports in the main urban areas.

All of the routes are designed with the users in mind.

- All of WCWRTP's services accept free travel passes, under 5s travel free and there is a standard fare of €3 return for children and students. Other fares vary between €5 and €8 for a return journey, depending on the destination.

For more information about how the project works contact:
Mary Trehin, RTP Co-ordinator, South West Wexford CDP,
Ramsgrange, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
T: 051-389418. F: 051-389264.
E: wcwruraltransport@eircom.net
W: www.wexfordruralbus.com

Shortening the long road to work from South-West Wexford

WEST Coast Wexford Rural Transport Programme (WCWRTP) recently launched a daily service to the secondary schools and third level training centres in Waterford city. Since then the project, which is supported by and based in the Ramsgrange offices of the South West Wexford CDP, has received further requests for transport into Wexford town.

"Due to the increasing awareness of the RTP we are receiving more requests for flexible and accessible transport from a wider age group to training, education and job opportunities in New Ross, Waterford and Wexford," said the transport project co-ordinator, Mary Trehin.

They are now investigating the need to expand their services for rural dwellers in the south-west of the county which includes the Hook Head peninsula.

Saves people money and keeps communities young

Passengers using the WCWRTP college link

can save up to €50 per week on travel alone, when you count up the increasing costs of petrol and diesel, parking and car maintenance. Savings are even greater for students who choose to use the daily service rather than paying for costly accommodation in Waterford. Students can study away but live at home, keeping the community young and healthy.

Rural transport schemes are greener

West Coast Wexford Rural Transport Programme (WCWRTP) advocate that in addition to the monetary savings there are environmental benefits to using the bus service rather than individual travel, in terms of reduced exhaust missions, less car congestion and less stress for the individual driver.

The project is currently looking into the feasibility of running more routes to meet demand from workers, students and others.

A typical week in Wexford

WCWRTP currently provides weekly services from various areas within the community to urban centres such as Enniscorthy, New Ross, Waterford and Wexford.

- The Tuesday service to New Ross is linked to the Health Centre for clinic appointments.
- The Wednesday service to Wexford is linked to Wexford General Hospital for clinic appointments (dermatology and diabetic).
- This means that the Health Centre in New Ross and the clinics in Wexford General Hospital can arrange patients' appointments to suit the service timetable.
- On Tuesdays there is a service to the elderly day hospital in Wexford General Hospital. This service must be booked in advance.
- There are also daily services to four local primary schools in the area.
- Finally, there is a Community Links Bus Service on Fridays. This is a pre-booked, door-to-door service that operates every Friday. Passengers are picked up from their homes and taken to their local village where they have time to visit the post office, local shop or health centre, before being taken home again.



West Coast Wexford Rural Transport promoting their services at a summer fair.

Piloted new way to use a car

CLASP Community Transport set up a dedicated community car scheme in 2003 using voluntary car drivers.

This was the only social car scheme funded in the pilot phase of this Rural Transport Initiative. It was hugely successful, say CLASP, and is now a model of good practice for other groups that wish to incorporate a car scheme into their service plans.

Local delight

THE rise and rise of the Rural Transport Programme has seen the establishment in every county of professionally qualified and certified transport operations, which are not-for-profit and geared towards meeting social objectives rather than reaping financial reward.

An early report by CLASP CDP in County Sligo found people who used their rural transport service were delighted with the change in their lives:

- "It has been the most significant development in the area," said one.
- "We can now use our travel pass," said another, echoing the thoughts of many.
- "Hospital and clinic appointments do not cause the worry they once did as we can get there," said a third.

CLASP manages six core projects

CLASP was established in 1997 by a group of local people who grew concerned for their community. They recognised the anxieties of older people living alone, the lack of childcare facilities and the poor state of community facilities and applied successfully to join the Community Development Programme.

Today, there are several large scale projects operating from the office base in Gleann Community Hall.

- The Quality of Life project
- CLASP Community Transport
- CLASP Youth Project
- The Active Age Clubs
- FÁS Community Employment Scheme
- The Rural Social Scheme

In 2005, the project employed 24 people on a full and part-time basis and managed in excess of €600,000.



CLASP voluntary drivers from left to right: James Byrne, Kathleen Candon, Mary Fowley, Martina Small, Charlie Kane

CLASP: Running rural transport before anyone else

WHEN the Rural Transport Initiative was first advertised, there were over 60 applications from local groups around the country.

And one thing that really helped in south-east Sligo from the word 'go' was that CLASP had established a home support service in the area for older people and had set up a small rural transport scheme as part of that service. In other words, the area had a track record.

CLASP stands for the Community of Lough Arrow Social Project and it is one of the two CDPs in County Sligo.

CLASP had set up a 'Quality of Life Project' aimed at assisting older people to live at home in comfort and to live more independent lives. There is no large centre of population in South East Sligo and shops and post offices had gradually closed down making transport a crucial issue for residents particularly older people. So, a limited rural transport service for older people was provided through the Quality of Life project, though demand very quickly outstripped availability.

The Rural Transport Initiative came along at just the right time and, in January 2003, CLASP Community Transport was put on a formal footing as one of the 34 pilot projects funded through the new pilot initiative.

The service is now well-established and covers the catchment area served by the CDP: approximately 100 square miles of County Sligo with a population of just over 2,000.

In 2006, the project officially received its transport operative license and therefore had the ability to develop its own services in the area.

The announcement nationally that the Rural Transport Initiative would have ongoing funding from 2007 was very much welcomed by CLASP. It meant the project could plan long-term and look at new ways of providing

the service.

Following the announcement, CLASP purchased a new fully accessible minibus. This was a major achievement and allowed the service to expand and include its main target groups in 2007.

Also, CLASP secured support from Sligo County Enterprise Board and a business development support worker was appointed to the project to assist in restructuring the service and also in drawing up a number of business plans.

Widespread community consultation, including workshops held with local community groups, service users and target groups, have helped to shape the project's direction. A Health & Safety audit has also been carried out.

The new minibus supported the transportation of older people to four active age clubs throughout the week and also provides accessible transport for older people to health related appointments and shopping outings on a weekly basis. A garage for the new minibus was built last year.

The integrated nature of the CLASP project ensures that the project is constantly reviewing and developing services to meet the needs of its target groups. For instance, the establishment of Keash Active Age club meant more passengers began to avail of the service. CLASP community transport project now provides older people from the Keash area with transport to the club and facilitates them in accessing more social outlets.

For more information, contact: Liam Dennedy, CLASP, Gleann Community Hall, Drumnacool, Co. Sligo.

T: 071 9165708. F: 071 9165533.

E: clasptransport@eircom.net

Rural Transport in Ireland: 2001-2008

LAST year, the Rural Transport Programme was mainstreamed from an initiative to a full programme. The Programme has wide support and over 500 local volunteers are involved in managing and developing rural transport schemes around the State.

The total 2008 allocation for the Rural Transport Programme is €11 million, up from €9 million last year and €4.5 million the year before. The national organisation, Irish Rural Link, had asked for €12 million to be invested this year, saying that the scarcity of rural public transport is "one of, if not the greatest obstacle facing rural communities."

The Rural Transport Initiative (as it was first known) was launched in Athlone in 2001 by the then Minister for Public Enterprise, Mary O'Rourke. In September of that year, 34 community groups were selected as suitable for funding under the initiative. In the first three years, some 1800 new transport services were operating on some 300 new routes in rural Ireland.



The RTI was re-named the Rural Transport Programme in February of last year and is administered by Pobal. The Programme is now operational in parts of almost every county, though not every rural area is covered.

The Programme seeks to build on existing local development structures and experience where possible and appropriate. Areas with rural transport needs, but which lack a strong local community organisation to lead the way will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In areas that already have a rural transport scheme, weekly mid-morning services are most frequently provided, with Friday being the most popular day for travel, particularly amongst older people. Evening time services are also popular. Around 60% of passengers hold a free travel pass. For years, the pass meant little or nothing to rural dwellers.

Recently, work began on introducing advanced scheduling and vehicle location technology to assist with the co-ordination, monitoring, reporting and delivery aspects of the services.

Rural transport and social inclusion

- "The provision of (rural transport schemes) plays an increasingly important role in accessing services and in the social integration of people living away from service centres. ...The absence of an adequate public transport service... is a major contributing factor to marginalization.
- "In terms of future policy development, recent efforts by the Government to promote "joined-up" approaches and locally integrated service areas are directly relevant to rural transport. Of particular relevance in this regard is the 'Cohesion Process'."
- "The Government's 1999 White Paper on Rural Development was one of the first formal discussions of the rural transport issue."
- Excerpts from 'Progressing Rural Public Transport in Ireland - A Discussion Paper' produced for the Department of Transport in July 2006.

7 pilot areas have night-time rural transport

SEVEN areas nationally are this year in receipt of funding for a night-time rural transport scheme. The one-year pilot scheme was initiated by Éamon Ó Cuív, Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. It means people can get to evening masses, bingo, hospitals and pubs.

The Pilot Night-Time Rural Transport Scheme is additional to the existing Rural Transport Programme (RTP), run by the Department of Transport.

Although the media framed the Minister's initiative as a response to the clampdown on drink driving, he said the new scheme would be "community-led and will have an important role to play in tackling rural social isolation."

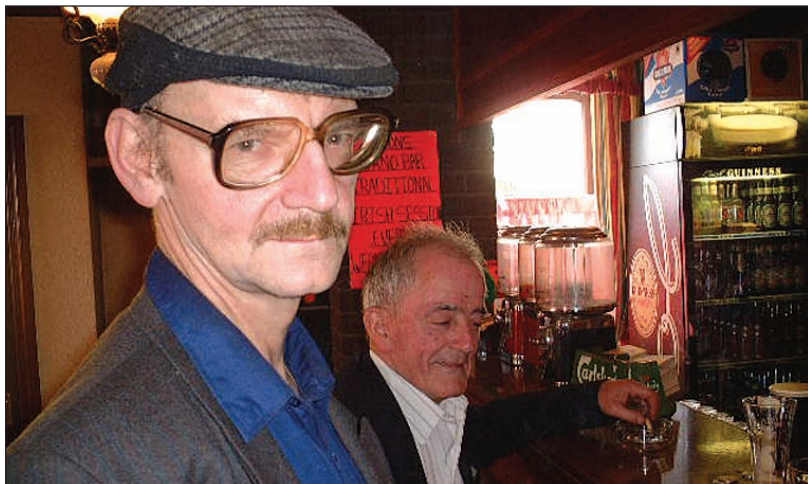
The pilot areas are in Sligo, West Cork, East Cork, Meath/Cavan, Roscommon and Laois.

There is criticism

"THE Rural Transport Programme is a first attempt to address rural transport needs, but it is inadequate and effectively abdicates responsibility to rural communities, who are incorrectly treated as a homogenous group and who should not be expected to deliver the best solutions even if they are in a position to identify them."

"As many as 380,000 rural dwellers in Ireland had unmet transport needs, according to the 2002 National Rural Transport Survey. This figure could increase to 450,000 rural dwellers by 2021."

- Dr. John McDonagh, National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway, addressing the Comhar seminar on rural transport and social inclusion, in September of last year.



Sláinte!

'Sláinte!' say the men in a pub in Blacklion, Co. Cavan. The photograph was taken in November, 2001, long before getting to the pub in rural areas became an issue of national importance. The two friends photographed said they would not have been there if it had not been for the Rural Lift service. The West Cavan and Leitrim area was lucky to be one of the earliest to benefit from a good rural transport scheme, made possible by the existence of a CDP in the area, Community Connections (which first carried out a study on the rural transport needs in the area as far back as 1995).

The community develo

- though 182 projects does not make a Programme

PROJECTS in the Community Development Programme can rest assured their work will receive all the support they need, according to Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey.

However, the Minister suggested that the Programme, which includes 182 projects nationwide, had flaws:

"There are some weaknesses in the architecture surrounding CDPs and though we refer to it as a programme, what it is basically is 182 or so separate projects."

The Minister dealt with a number of questions in an interview with 'Changing Ireland' editor, Allen Meagher, on April 8th.

The non-renewal of support agency contracts had raised concerns among CDP volunteers over what might follow.

"There is no question of a reduction of any resourcing, there is no question of closing places down," declared Minister Carey. "What we are trying to do is find the best and the most appropriate community development vehicle for groups and strengthen them, because there is a lot more good practice than poor practice out there."

There had been somewhat of an outcry in recent months with changes to the support structure for the 182 projects in the Programme. A number of regional fora had sought meetings with the Minister over the changes.

MORE SUPPORT

"Any projects that are weaker and need support, we will give them more support. Sometimes it might require more detailed hand-holding at early stages, using other support groups, and again I'm not talking about dumping existing valuable support organisations, but we want to re-engineer the thinking by some people around the whole



Minister Pat Carey

community development process that it is a bottom-up approach and it's for (local) people to make decisions about what they require rather than any big organisation, whether it is a department of state or indeed another group that regards itself as having all the wisdom that's required.

"Sometimes people make mistakes and it's important that people learn from their mistakes," he said. He added that he was not alluding to anything in particular.

"I am hoping for as near as possible a seamless transfer (of support from the existing agencies to the new support structures). The projects will be able to shop around and they can decide."

"Organisations sometimes try things that don't work and then sometimes because they are afraid to admit it, they stick with the mistake, when it might be time to take a different direction."

CLONING IS INAPPROPRIATE

"There has been a danger of projects tending to copy each other. Just because something worked in x-area doesn't mean it'll work in y-area. In community development, you don't have a one-size-fits-

all. And I don't want to see clones of projects all over the place, I want significant initiatives that are locally originated and I think it will then be stronger. And there can't be a shortage of resources."

SUPPORT AGENCIES & COMMUNICATIONS

AM: Regarding the Support Agencies – most people don't hugely mind where they get their support from so long as they get it. However, they would like to be informed about changes:

"Well, it should have been perfectly clear to the Support Agencies that the contracts, which had been extended, were coming to an end. Otherwise we would have been up in front of the public accounts committee in a short space of time."

'SEAMLESS TRANSFER' TO NEW SUPPORT STRUCTURES

"The tender documents are being prepared and I'm hoping for as near as possible a seamless transfer (of support from the existing agencies to the new support structures). The projects will be able to shop around and they can decide.

"The issue with regard to contracts is a legal one and unfortunately we would have had to go down the same route regardless."

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

AM: Someone, be it in the Department or

the Support Agencies should have told volunteers that changes were coming, that the existing support contracts were coming to an end. Volunteers usually only meet once a month:

"There are some weaknesses in the architecture surrounding CDPs and though we refer to it as a programme, what it is basically is 180 or so separate projects. I would like my contribution to be to try and get coherence around the general principles that should underpin any Community

Development process is key

says Minister Carey

Development Project. Starting with, there will be a need for people to have a lot more training, to have a lot more input, to have more time for thinking out exactly what it is they are doing. And in some cases, it will be they need to go back to the drawing board after achieving a, b and c and identify a new agenda. That's what we will be trying to assist them to clarify."

CONFERENCES/ARRANGING MEETINGS

ALLEN – This year, there were going to be a number of regional conferences. Will

"It's a policy of our Department to avoid having organisations or anybody needing to resort to using the Freedom of Information Act."

there be a conference this year?

The Minister indicated no dates had been set.

"I met in a successful gathering with some of the CDPs here in the east coast area and I thought it was quite useful and I certainly would like to be able to do more of that kind of work."

"I'll do my level best to try and accommodate people, but they need to give us a bit of notice about meetings."

"The problem is the people in the drugs area are much more organised and much more proactive (than people in the community sector)," said the Minister.

He pointed out that sometimes when he wishes to visit projects, his preferred timing does not always match the time when volunteers are available.

DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"I think CDPs feel under threat because various community initiatives seem to be powering ahead. There's no need for them to feel any threat at all. For instance, I have visited a number of CDPs that are the drivers of everything else in the community," he said, referring as he did in a previous 'Changing Ireland' interview to Tralee CDP, Co. Kerry and to Edenderry CDP and the local area partnership, in Co. Offaly.

He said CDPs had "far more positives than weaknesses" and added that he is constantly

"preaching to the Drugs Taskforce people that you have got to be driven by the community development process. And if the CDPs stand for anything it is making sure they strengthen the whole understanding of community development and of the process of community development."

FLOUNDERERS

AM: Should projects that are doing little or nothing, and there may be a tiny number, be closed down or have their funding taken from them?

"The evaluation of the drugs projects showed that the vast majority are very good, there are some that are quite weak and some that certainly should be transferred to another agency and I expect the same would apply to the CDPs."

"I think that a project which is unable to

deliver on its contract shouldn't be surprised, after being given an opportunity to present their case and after doing so unsatisfactorily, that a contract should be awarded elsewhere in the community."

He said he was not referring to "weak projects" which is a different matter. He was talking about projects, if there are any, "where they simply have made no attempt at all to engage the community either in a consultative process or to lead the community in some significant initiatives."

SUBMISSIONS

AM: The Consultative committee asked to see the 110 or so submissions. They received a summary document, but they wanted copies of the whole lot.

"They are welcome to the lot of them. It's a policy of our Department to avoid having organisations or anybody needing to resort to using the Freedom of Information Act."

AM: How can projects look forward to a better-shaped type of support that would work appropriately for them? What's your plan?

"There will be a range of support agencies out there that will continue to be there. It's for them to decide if they want to become part of the support process, but we need to let projects decide what they want. They might need some upskilling and training to decide their needs, but that shouldn't take forever."

JULY ONWARDS

"I'll be devoting a lot more time from early July onwards to the Community Development area broadly once I have the consultation phase of the national drug strategy completed. I'm hoping to devote myself at a high level to the Community Development area."

Listen to CDPs! - Minister Ó Cuív urges local authorities

LOCAL authorities don't always pay heed to CDPs. In Waterford, the local authority would not at a certain stage, late last year, talk to or meet with representatives from the local Traveller CDP. In Cork, City Hall engaged in regeneration but did not want to meet at times with 'We The People' CDP. There are other cases also where local authorities and CDPs have difficulty engaging. 'Changing Ireland'

asked Minister Éamon Ó Cuív did he see any way around this?

"I do. It is very important that CDPs and Partnerships have a strong voice and that it is heard," he said.

"City councils should use CDPs as a very useful vehicle for dialogue and consensus building. I would always say to a CDP that if the local authority is not heeding them, they should come to the

Department and if necessary to the Ministers. Go to the Department first and if you are still not satisfied there are two very active Ministers and we would try to rebuild dialogue where dialogue has failed. Because that dialogue is absolutely vital.

"There is no point in the State funding a CDP on the one hand and another State agency totally ignoring it," he added.

Where to now for support with Community Development Prog

- Asks Morgan Mee, writing on behalf of the Regional Support

THEY say a week is a long time in politics, maybe so. In any case, the publication of *The White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector* in September 2000 now seems like an eternity ago. Back then, the support element within the Community Development Programme was described as "a very successful model...that can serve as a useful approach to supporting local groups in other funding programmes in the state". Today, Regional Support Agencies are busy tying up loose ends in advance of their contracts terminating at the end of May.

Regional Support Agencies are not disputing the fact that their contracts have run their course and that any future support contracts should have to be won through tender. It is only proper that public contracts should have a fixed-term and that all interested companies should be able to compete to win these contracts. This is the best way to ensure that the company offering the most comprehensive service at the most competitive price gets the job.

All Regional Support Agencies have been through a tendering process with the funding Department before they were looking forward to responding to a new invitation to tender before the current support contracts came to an end (unfortunately, despite what the funding Department has previously indicated it no longer seems possible for a new tendering process to take place before the current support structure is dismantled).

What is of concern is that the Department has given no indication that the future support model will be anything like as comprehensive as the

"The current model of support... is regional, it is independent and it is delivered by companies that have a longstanding involvement."

current model. If anything, all indications are to the contrary. This, despite the much heralded *Report to Government of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship* recommending that "[government] funding schemes be strengthened to support capacity development amongst community and voluntary organisations particularly in the area of training at both national and local level".

The current model of support has a number of key characteristics. It is regional, it is independent and it is delivered by companies that have a longstanding involvement with community development organisations. Having these characteristics at the heart of the support model has been of

"Last year a Consultation Panel was convened... this Panel has not even been furnished with copies of the written submissions received as part of the Consultation Process."

great benefit to the programme.

Given that the Community Development Programme is currently under review it is not surprising that the current model of support should be appraised and improvements sought after. However, there seems to be a number of difficulties surrounding how this is being done.

Last year a Consultation Panel was convened by the funding

3 key features of regional support model

- Being based in the Regions has meant that the support needs of Projects can be addressed on site and face-to-face. Typically, management committee meetings take place outside of normal business hours and being based in the Region allows the work of Support Agencies to reflect this.
- Being independent of the Department has meant that Support Agencies can be approached by projects without fear that this may affect their relationship with their funders. Being independent of Projects has allowed Support Agencies to identify support needs within Projects that Project Volunteers and Project staff have often been unaware of.
- Having a longstanding involvement with community development organisations has allowed for a wealth of experience to build up within Support Agencies. Support Agencies are familiar with the aims of the Projects, their approach to the work and the challenges associated with the unique management structures found within Projects.

- Morgan Mee

Minister replies with promises of tende

MINISTER of State, Pat Carey, replied to Dáil questions as follows, on April 3rd and February 19th respectively:

"My Department cannot extend these publicly procured contracts on an indefinite basis and tenders for support services will be advertised publicly in the very near future as part of the development of future support services for the Programme. A key objective of my Department is to ensure that the skills and talents of the volunteers and staff of Projects are recognised and developed to enable the objectives of the Programme to be realised. To this end, Projects have recently been afforded the opportunity and

resources to determine their own particular support requirements in addition to those supports provided and funded centrally by the Department."

On February 19th, the Minister had explained some of the background, as follows: "The Department publicly tendered for the provision of support services to Projects in 2004. Six companies... were chosen following a public tender process to provide services on a regional basis for the period June 2004 to end May 2007. These contracts were extended, initially, to the end of 2007, and then, to the end of May 2008, in order to complete a consultation

thin the gramme?

t Agencies



Morgan Mee.

Department to oversee a consultation process designed to inform changes to the Community Development Programme. Members of this panel were surprised to hear that changes are to be made to the support model, given that support within the programme has never been discussed at a Consultation Panel meeting. It has since emerged that **this Panel has not even been furnished with copies of the written submissions received as part of the Consultation Process.** In February, a letter signed by all Project representatives on the Panel was sent to Minister Carey stating that Project representatives are "completely dissatisfied" with the process to date and seeking a meeting with the Minister to discuss their concerns. No meeting has been agreed.

It would be ludicrous to suggest that all Projects enjoy positive working relationships with their Support Agencies. This arises out of a number of reasons including a lack of clarity on roles, clashes of working styles, perceptions on different power relations and even differing understandings of what it means to seek support. Nonetheless, it is clear from the response of Project representatives on the Consultation Panel to proposed changes to the programme's support model that they would welcome a genuine say in how their support needs are defined and what model should be in place to

"It would be ludicrous to suggest that all Projects enjoy positive working relationships with their Support Agencies."

meet these support needs. Existing Support Agencies would also welcome the opportunity to input.

In the absence of any indication to the contrary, Projects might be excused for imagining that money is the prime motivating factor behind proposed changes to the support model. But will changes to the support model be motivated by the wish to achieve greater value for money or just the need to cutback on Department spending?

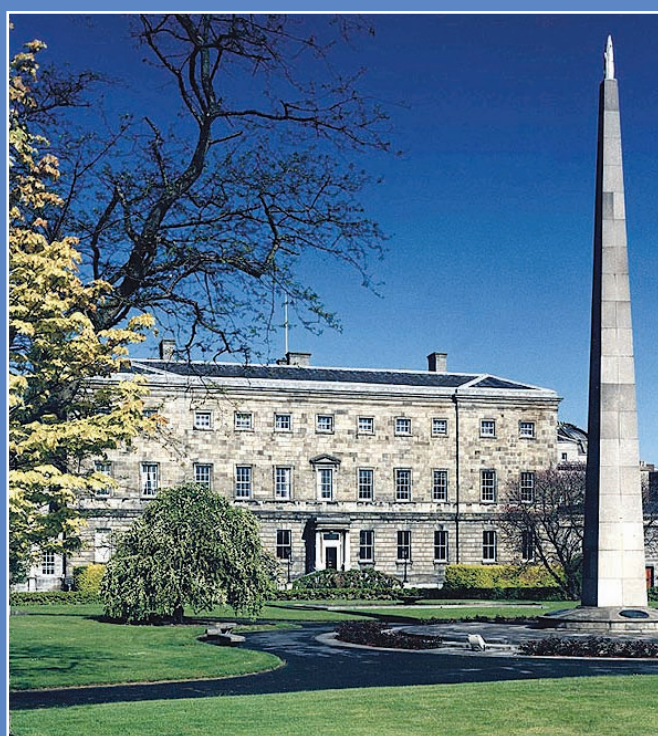
Support Agencies won their current contracts by responding to a request for tenders to provide Projects with a particular support model. If the funding Department has now decided that Projects no longer need this support model then the least they should do is make people aware of what model, if any, is to replace it and what reasons have informed their decision.

* Morgan Mee joined West Training & Development in 2001 as the Regional Policy Worker. He has written a number of articles for 'Changing Ireland' over the last 12 months.

er details

process with Projects on the future of the Programme. The Department is considering the results of this consultation process and developments under other Government programmes targeting disadvantaged people.

"Some improvements identified by Projects have already been implemented, including allowing Projects to have a greater say on procuring support and training appropriate to their own needs. As part of the development of a new Programme, arrangements for the provision of future support services for Projects are under consideration."



Dáil questions over support to volunteers

DÁIL questions over support to volunteers

Nearly a dozen TDs raised in the Dáil the issue of the non-renewal, or "termination" as some termed it, of contracts between the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Regional Support Agencies.

Six agencies are responsible, until May 31 of this year, for providing back-up support, training and advice to the 180 Community Development Projects funded through the Community Development Programme. After that date, a new system of support will be put in place.

Most of the Parliamentary Questions sought background information, asked for details of what future support will look like and demanded a statement from the Minister on the matter.

In February and March, deputies Brian O'Shea and John Deasy asked on behalf of Waterford projects what

would happen the projects' support without Framework Support Agency.

Deputy Phil Hogan, on March 11th, asked to know "the rationale" for the changes.

On April 2nd, Paul Kehoe voiced concerns on behalf of a Wexford project.

Bernard Allen said the decision will leave CDPs, which he pointed out were run by unpaid voluntary management committees, without the support they have had. Michael McGrath then raised the issue. Jack Wall, on March 11th and April 3rd, asked a couple of questions, particularly regarding Framework, and on behalf of a CDP in Co. Kildare.

Aengus Ó Snodaigh, on April 3rd, sought "a clear explanation" for the "abandoning" of the existing regional support model. Deputies Ciarán Lynch, Paul Gogarty and Deirdre Clune also asked questions of the Minister over support for CDP volunteers.

THE STORY BEHIND

'Changing Ireland' is based in Moyross, Limerick and being part of the community means being involved locally. The following story comes from pupils of Corpus Christi Primary School in Moyross.

Horse school

THE most educated young people in Ireland about horses are the pupils of Corpus Christi Primary School in Moyross.

"There are more horses in Moyross than anywhere else," said Jeffrey Payne. "We had a farrier and specialists about horses here from the Curragh in Kildare to teach us how to care better for our horses, how to tie good knots, how to clean a saddle and soften it up," explained Jeffrey, ably assisted by his class-mates, Tony Stanners, Conor and Colm Cantillon, Christopher Higgins, Eric Ryan, Martin Payne, Lee Quinn, John Stanners, Evan O'Keefe and Paddy Llewellyn.

"You stay on the horse easier with a saddle," added Jeffrey.

There is some debate among the pupils over whether saddles are really useful.

The Irish Horse Welfare Trust ran the course after home-school liaison officer, Tiernan O'Neill, set it all up.

"I was so happy when I got my certificate," said Martin Payne.

Twelve pupils completed the course, including Ger and Christopher Walsh and Danielle Tuite. It took place in February and March over six weeks and the pupils ranged in age from 8 to 12.

"We've even taught our teachers about horses. They were clueless before they met us," said the class. "For example, they now know that horses like to eat oats, grass, nuts, potato skins and apples. We knew this even before the experts from the Curragh came down."

• This report was written by the boys named above as part of a 'Changing Ireland' local media project. In May, the editor will work with the senior classes to produce the school's first magazine.



Our first certificates: Eric Ryan, Ms. O'Sullivan, Lesley Jones of the Irish Horse Welfare Trust, Tony Stanners, Ms. Browne, Ger Walshe, Paddy Llewellyn, John McCarthy, Colm/Conor Cantillon, Lee Quinn, Evan O'Keefe, Christopher Walsh.

'CHANGING IRELAND' is an independent community development magazine published quarterly and located, quite appropriately, in a disadvantaged community where positive change is taking place, in Moyross, Limerick.

This is the magazine's 25th edition and it was launched on April 24th by the Minister of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, whose Department funds the project. He visited Moyross to meet with all those involved locally in the production.

'Changing Ireland' began life in 2001 with a front-cover photo of a real-life nun dressed as a man (part of a campaign by a community group to challenge stereotypes). Seven years on and the magazine is well-



Our first edition of 'Changing Ireland'



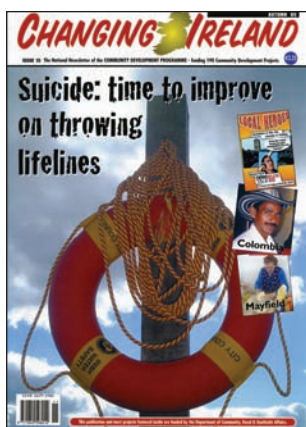
December 2005 - We were first to highlight areas where homes sell for below €30,000.

established. Recently, the magazine has begun to make national headlines each time it is published. The Irish Examiner picked up on our last edition's coverage of work by community artists attached to Mahon Community Development Project (CDP).

Over 25 editions, the magazine has focused on every social issue affecting people in Ireland and the positive work being done, often beneath the mainstream media's radar, on these issues.

The stories have focused mainly on the work of volunteers and staff in CDPs such as the one in Mahon. There are 182 CDPs in total funded, as the magazine is, by the Department through its Community Development Programme.

There are around 2000 volunteers and 400 staff currently working in the Programme to



Issue 15 covered suicide prevention.



The Des Bishop edition, issue 17, a sell-out thanks to the contents which focused on solutions to anti-social behaviour.



Issue 13 - the cover proved very popular.

'CHANGING IRELAND'

fight the causes and effects of poverty and disadvantage in urban and rural parts of Ireland. The projects, managed by the volunteers, also work to improve local services in their communities. The volunteers themselves know best – they are often the ones who suffered from the lack of services, or from discrimination or disadvantage and their personal experiences of tough times mean that the projects really 'belong' to the community.

CDPs are autonomous in that the volunteers locally decide what the work priorities are and they receive Government funding subject to a number of conditions, including that they respect community development principles such as inclusion and equality. The funding pays for up to two staff, office rent and basic expenses.

Most projects employ a development

worker (whose official title is project coordinator) and an administrator. Some have more staff, usually funded through other programmes.

'Changing Ireland' is managed on behalf of the projects in the Programme and on behalf of the Department by the Community Development Network Moyross Ltd (the local CDP). The magazine employs an editor and an administrator and the posts are currently held by Allen Meagher and Tim Hourigan respectively.

Poverty and exclusion are real problems in Ireland, as elsewhere, and the causes and effects need to be tackled. If you want to know more about the problems, and about how Community Development is successfully used as a tool to solve or ease many social problems, check us out in print or on the web: www.changingireland.ie

Mission Statement:

'Changing Ireland' aims to enable projects to network more effectively and to assist in promoting the profile of the Community Development Programme and of community development generally. It is intended to be readable and interesting and written by community workers in various parts of the country - so that it reflects the experience of tackling poverty and exclusion at community level. The magazine is non-profit making and is distributed freely to community development workers and volunteers among many others in Ireland and abroad.



Suitably located in Moyross

'CHANGING Ireland' is probably the only magazine on sale in Easons that originates from a housing estate.

In 1999, the Community Development Network (CDN) in Moyross, Limerick applied to the Department of Social, Family and Community Affairs (as it was then) to set up and manage the national newsletter for the Community Development Support Programmes. The Department felt it was good thinking idea to locate the newsletter in one of the communities which most stands to benefit from community development work.

Given CDN's success in producing a popular local newsletter 'Moywrites', as well as other initiatives, they were awarded the project. The people behind the application were primarily Tony Lynch, voluntary management member, Juan Carlos Azzopardi, project coordinator and Geraldine Clohessy, development worker, supported by the voluntary management team and a journalist Billy Kelly.

One of the Moyross proposers' chief aims was that the magazine would be written by people working in community development in various regions of the country. The newsletter had to be readable and representative.

"We didn't want it to be all jargon. We want it to be about the people in the projects. It has to grab the interest of those working on the ground," said Mr. Azzopardi.

In 2001, Allen Meagher was appointed editor and shortly afterwards 'Changing Ireland' was born.

Four years later, funding was increased and Tim Hourigan joined the project as 'Changing Ireland' administrator. He has been responsible for the re-launch of the website: www.changingireland.ie

"'Changing Ireland' would be just another magazine and would not have the same ethos if based outside the community," says CDN chairperson, Tracey McElligott. "It belongs in and is ideally situated in a vibrant community. The magazine gives communities around the country a voice. It highlights the tremendous work carried out by the Community Development Projects in helping residents to identify and respond to their own needs."



CDN chairperson Tracey McElligott.

Who produces 'Changing Ireland'?

The bulk of the articles are written by community development workers or volunteers. Production is overseen by an editor and part-time administrator, by voluntary management from the Community Development Network Ltd, Moyross, and by an editorial team representing projects and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The layout is by Printzone and printing by Walsh Colour Printers. The project is funded, as previously outlined, by the Department.

Finally, and most importantly, the magazine is packed in Moyross by local teenagers.



'Changing Ireland' is part of Moyross community

'CHANGING Ireland' is part of Moyross. It is important to the 'Changing Ireland' project to be involved in the community in which it is based.

In the past month, for example, 'Changing Ireland' has brought journalists from the New York Times, RTE's Morning Ireland programme and the Sunday Tribune, on tours of Moyross to see and hear what the community is doing to better itself.

Moyross has been in the media spotlight and journalists have sometimes written about the area without visiting and meeting residents or people from the community. For example, a photograph showing the street where the 'Changing Ireland' office is based also showed the dashboard of the photographer's car – he had been too nervous to step out of his car to take the photograph.

'Changing Ireland' plays its part in countering the stereotyped view of the area, along with other groups in the community.

The media often focus on the visible dereliction, but rarely highlight key

ingredients in the community's difficulties such as the high number of lone-parent families housed in the area by the local authority. Latest figures show that two-thirds of households here are headed by a lone-parent.

In our tours, we have been able to show there are over 40 active local community groups and most (though not all) residents like or indeed love the area. We highlight the positives while acknowledging the challenges and the number of positives is on the increase. Last year, Moyross was included as part of a major regeneration scheme for the city's disadvantaged areas.

On a practical level, 'Changing Ireland' also provides regular paid work for some local teenagers. The magazine's packing and distribution could have been subbed out to a company outside the area, but instead we employ local teenagers to work on the Packing and Distribution Team. For most of them, it is their first experience of paid work. The magazine is packed in Unit 3, The Bays, Moyross, with the co-operation of the local

enterprise company.

Also, the magazine's editor and administrator are involved in local initiatives such as working with children in Corpus Christi Primary School to produce the school's first ever newsletter, working with the local CDP to produce the local magazine 'Moywrites'.

LETTER

Grateful!

MON, April 7th, 2008

Roscommon Intercultural Project

Dear Editor

Thank you for the wonderful article in the last edition of 'Changing Ireland' on the Roscommon Intercultural Quilt. We at Roscommon Women's Network CDP and the Roscommon Intercultural Team were very happy with it and have received many emails and telephone calls from other projects who were either hoping to initiate similar projects in their area or who were inspired by our project.

We are only too happy to give them the benefit of any knowledge we have attained and lessons we may have learned through our intercultural project and maybe we can also learn from them. So thanks for putting us in touch with each other.

Congratulations on a wonderful Magazine.

Regards,

Nora Fahy,

Project Co-ordinator,

Roscommon Women's Network CDP



'Changing Ireland' editorial team members, Viv Sadd, co-ordinator of Mahon CDP; Niamh Walsh from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Allen Meagher, editor of 'Changing Ireland' editor and Tim Hourigan, project administrator. The photograph was taken at the magazine's annual review meeting earlier this year.

Learning through Training for Transformation



THE Iceberg of Culture is a model or framework through which we can understand what culture is. It is useful in demonstrating that what is visual and on the surface of any culture is just a fraction of the whole story of that culture.

If we were sailing in icy seas and suddenly saw an iceberg ahead, we would know that what we saw was only 10% of the iceberg, as 90% of icebergs lie below

the surface.

So is the case with culture. While some aspects of our culture are open and easy to recognise, most of what culture is about is beyond or below our conscious awareness. We can see what lies above the surface, we are aware of it. However, behaviour which may seem very normal within our own culture may be strange, amazing or amusing to those of other cultures.

In 'Deep Culture' there is a level closest to the surface in which *rules are unspoken*. A person from the culture knows the rules and takes them for granted. As one goes deeper into a culture the *rules are unconscious* and members are often totally unaware of the value and norms which are guiding their daily behaviour.

Guidebook launch: see page 9.

Cur Chuige Úr ag Donegal Youth Arts Alliance

le GEARÓID FITZGIBBON

THIS is a busy year for staff and volunteers at Pobail Le Chéile CDP and for young people from the surrounding area. The YARD, a new base for youth and arts work, is due to open in a few months time and the youth of this West Donegal Gaeltacht area are growing excited about the arrival of a computer suite, health café, widescreen television and games room.

Y.A.R.D. stands for Youth, Arts, Recreation and Drama and the project is going to move into an old goods yard known locally as McCarthy's.

Young people are currently painting and decorating the premises (and other derelict buildings in Falcarragh) having secured

"After seven years work, (Paul Kernan) is now seeing a pattern develop that works. This involves varying youth work between short-term (eg two-month) programmes, and more relaxed once-off or drop-in events."

€20,000 funding this year from the National Youth Council's arts programme and the Arts Council's residency scheme to fund artists to work with youth. The CDP also plan to present a multi-media exhibition at this year's Errigal Arts Festival. The exhibition will be called 'Inniú/Amárach' and will document young people's experiences in the modern Gaeltacht.

Profile:

The CDP

The Pobail Le Chéile CDP covers the district of Cloughaneely including the islands of Tory & Inishboffin, an area with a population of nearly 5,000. Its area covers three Gaeltacht electoral districts, within the Clár programme due to high levels of disadvantage. Its offices in Gortahork include meeting rooms and a community swap-shop and bookshop.

The Area

It is a rural area with few employment opportunities, large-scale emigration of the skilled, young and talented for careers and education in the relatively affluent south and east.

Ealaíne na hÓige

The €20,000 grant went to Pobail Le Chéile, along with a number of artists, youth organisations and other agencies who have formed **Comhaontas Ealaíne na hÓige (or Youth Arts Alliance)**.

The aim is to develop a youth arts partnership for the district between the CDP, youth groups, Cosa Meata (which is a local carnival and community arts project) and local visual artists Tomasz Madajczak, Ewan Berry, Caren Ní Bhléine.

Working with young people, three community-based Youth Arts Projects (YAPs) have been set up to design and decorate the YARD.

Dar le Paul Kernan, co-ordaitheoir Phobail Le Chéile, tá an tábhacht ag baint le modh oibre Chomhaontaí Ealaíne na hÓige:

"Séard atá i gceist ná comhaontú idir gníomhaireachtaí eagsúla, ealaíontóirí, oibrithe deonach, daoine óga agus oibrithe phobal. Níl ach vóta amháin ag gach duine timpeall anmbord. Mar sin, tá an comh-oibriú riachtanach mar modh againn."

Is í Fál Carraidh lár ionad an obair don aos óg. Freastalaíonn sí ar Port na Bláiche, Dún Fionnachaidh, agus Gort a'Choirce. Sin ráite, tá a ionad buail-isteach fhéin ag Gort a'Choirce.

Kernan stresses the need to connect with younger people. This, he finds is a continuous learning process. After seven years work, he is now seeing a pattern develop that works. This involves varying youth work between short-term (eg two-month) programmes, followed by more relaxed once-off or drop-in events. The drop-in serves to back up the courses.

Mar a bheifeá ag tnúth leis i gceantair atá lastigh den Ghaeltacht Oifigiúil, tá polaitaíocht an teanga fíor chasta: "Cé go bhfuil sé lonnaithe 3 mhíle lastigh de teorainn Ghaeltacht Ghaoth Dóbhair, ceapann daoine áirithe nach Ghaeltacht muid anseo in aon chur," deirteann Kernan. "Ní labhrann na daoine óga an Ghaeilge ach amháin nuair atá siad ag caint lena dtuismitheoirí ar an guthán. As Béarla, an chuid is mó dá gcomhrá. Deanamid iarracht fuaim an Ghaeilge a chur isteach inár dtionscadail do dhaoine óga, agus dhátheangach atá roinnt mhaith dena ranganna a cuirimis ar fail."

With all this going on it is hard to see where Kernan and his colleagues find the time for other work. Kernan also serves on the board of Donegal Youth Service, Donegal Community Workers Co-op and a cross-border group. He is a director of the Guth Gafa International Documentary Film Festival – based in Gortahork. The CDP also manages

Youths want adults to do as they do

YOUNG people from Dunfanaghy and Cloughaneely created a film drama after completing an eight-week, cross-community drama workshop run by the Balor Theatre (and funded by Peace & Reconciliation under the Social Inclusion Programme).

Domestic violence, child neglect, drink driving and financial difficulties were some of the issues portrayed by young people in the DVD.

Dunfanaghy Family Resource Centre's

Carie Lainchbury and Kathleen Gallagher, Pobail Le Chéile's alcohol education worker collaborated together on the project.

Said Kathleen: "The young people wanted to put across the message that although adults preach to them about the dangers of drink they don't seem to heed their own advice. We need to take an honest look at the way we use alcohol if we want to encourage our young people to have a healthy respect for this drug".



A bunch of lads at the Karting Centre in Castlefinn, Co. Donegal, as part of an outing with Tionscnamh Oige an Phobal



Documentary film club director and community development co-ordinator Paul Kernan with Martin McElhinney.

an action research project funded by Combat Poverty on behalf of the nine Donegal CDPs. It has also convened a research and development group to develop an arts and crafts centre in Falcarragh (Ionad Ceardaíochta).

Training & Supporting Volunteers

With so many pots on the boil, the project needs to attract large numbers of volunteers. Pobail Le Chéile CDP has recognised this, and has made special efforts to ensure that these active citizens get the training and support they need. So far the project has 35 registered volunteers, and 14 new volunteers, which include parents and older youths.

According to Kernan: "People said that the volunteers weren't out there, but people will come if they are given times, and if they know they're part of a team. The secret is good support."

Support comes from Donegal Youth Service who despatch a youth worker one day each month. People are Garda-vetted and do 'Keeping Safe Training'.

As further support and incentive to volunteers, the CDP has designed two new training courses in community and personal development, delivered by experienced tutor Helen McHugh.

'Confidence to Question' is a FETAC certified six-week course (two hours per week), dealing with communication, confidence and self-esteem. "Confidence to Act" is delivered over ten-weeks (two hours per week) and deals with becoming a more effective member of your own community.



The 'Trash Fashion Show' was designed to capitalise on new skills learned by boys in girls in two courses – Fashion Design, and Sound & Lighting. Both boys and girls took part.

Running the Yard

THE Yard in Falcarragh is designed as an alcohol-free, drop-in youth and arts centre. The centre is going to serve as a lunch-time and after-school venue and a centre for drama, music, sports and recreation, planned by and involving young people in its work.

It will house a youth project worker with Tionscnamh Óige an Phobal (TOP), an alcohol-related harm reduction worker (funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund) and

local volunteers, trained and supported by the CDP staff. The steering group will be made up of youth work volunteers, CDP reps and young people from the community school, the TOP project, the youth club, and from the YouthReach centre in nearby Gortahork.

For more info on the Youth Arts Alliance (as Gaeilge - Comhaontas Ealaíne na hÓige – CEO) contact Paul Kernan. E: pobailc@eircom.net. T: 07491-80111.

Changing attitudes to alcohol

'CHANGE For The Better' (CFB) is a community-based alcohol education initiative targeting rural communities of Dunfanaghy and Cloughaneely. These are dispersed areas lacking in viable alcohol-free activities and venues. The aim is to reduce alcohol-related harm.

Pobail le Chéile CDP, working with Dunfanaghy Family Resource Centre, won funding from Dormant Accounts to develop the programme over a two-year period.

Change For the Better focuses on three aspects:

- developing an alcohol free venue for the youth population (12-25);
- educating local groups to discuss issues relating to alcohol
- offering training in Responsible Serving of Alcohol to workers in the hospitality sector

The project produced a workbook on Alcohol Awareness to aid teachers in delivering this SPHE module to 2nd and 3rd year classes. Its 6 lesson units explore attitudes



Press Gang: In this journalism project, the teenagers pictured above (receiving their certificates) linked up with the Gort a'Choirce Documentary Film Festival and produced a newsletter for the festival.

to alcohol, effects of alcohol on the body and harm reduction strategies that students can employ, and includes printable worksheets and additional information for teachers.

It also provides a list of local support agencies and services for those affected by alcohol abuse. The module is being piloted by teachers and pupils of SPHE in Pobail Scoil Chloicheannfhaola, Falcarragh.

A volunteer's life: Mary Doherty, Inishowen

CDP volunteers who stick with the work, the committee meetings, the jargon and the training often emerge with confidence and a passion for their community. They make representations to ministers, are comfortable to talk in public or on radio and recognise a role for themselves as a voice for their community, particularly when their community is a disadvantaged one. Ideally, such volunteers or activists have personal experience of poverty or disadvantage. It is the CDP's job to support such people.

Donegal woman, Mary Doherty, a mother of eight and one grandchild, is an active committee member of Inishowen Women's Information Network (an all-volunteer group). She represents her group on the management committee of the Donegal Women's Network and was interviewed by project co-ordinator Finola Brennan, who writes:

By FINOLA BRENNAN*

MANY young women left school early in Donegal to work in the clothing industry, but now with the closure of factories, many women are unemployed, have no formal education and limited skills.

Mary Doherty was born and reared in Gleneely, a small rural area in north Inishowen and was one of five children who lived with their mother, aunt and two uncles. This experience of extended family life is now a rare experience in Celtic Tiger Ireland.

Mary's family lived on a small farm and times were difficult economically. They had no inside toilet or running water.

"Everybody pulled together and always looked out for one another," said Mary.

Mary left school at 14 and went to work in a shirt and pyjama factory and, in 1981, at 18 years of age, Mary married Barney and they lived close to her family home.

Mary continued to work in the factory as well as rearing her young family, but seven years later tragedy struck. Her husband Barney died of cancer and Mary suddenly found herself a young widow of six beautiful children.

This was a devastating time for Mary but her extended family provided vital support and she was able to continue working in the factory.

"I kept thinking of how Barney would like me to rear the children and that kept me focused," recalled Mary.

In 1989 Mary met her present partner Bernard and had two more children. The changing economic circumstances in Donegal and the closure of many factories proved to be another big change in her life. She sought other work, which ranged from mushroom picking to hotel hospitality, but always felt exploited by her experience.

In 2004, Mary saw an advertisement for a course being run by Inishowen Women's Information Network. The course was titled 'Time for Me'. The eight-week course incorporated a range of topics from personal development to learning how to text on a mobile phone.

"It was a fabulous experience and the taster courses provided me with something I would never have experienced in the factory," testified Mary.

During this course a facilitator met the group to inform them about 'Femme' a cross border project funded by the EU and Mary



Mary Doherty, Inishowen Women's Information Network.

was among eight women from her group who signed up. The Femme Project – titled 'Women and Power' – included confidence building, drawing up CV's, mock interviews and visits to Stormont, the Dail and finally a trip to the European Parliament in Brussels.

"That experience gave me great confidence and broadened my thinking," said Mary.

Since then, Mary has achieved top marks in her first year in Community Studies with the Letterkenny Institute of Technology.

"My first thought was 'Wow! I never thought I had it in me'. It has been a great year," she said.

"Since joining Inishowen Women's Information Network and Donegal Women's Network it has given me a new outlook to women's lives in Inishowen and Ireland, especially rural living".

Mary now helps run the 'Time for Me' and 'Moving On' courses for other women and also organises the women's darts club in her area. "Something that I was reared with was always help your neighbours and friends."

This story is one that many women when can relate too. It also highlights the value of community and development work.

Note: Inishowen Women's Information Network was set up with the support of Donegal Women's Network and has been in existence since June 2000.

* **Finola Brennan is Co-ordinator of Donegal Women's Network, 10 Donegal Street, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal.**
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Cancer campaigner calls for CDP colleagues' support

A VERY active campaign is being run in the North West for the development of a Centre of Excellence in Sligo General Hospital. The campaign group is made up of cancer patients, cancer survivors, their families, friends and politicians from all the political parties from South Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo.

Ann McGowan, project co-ordinator with Atlantic View CDP, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, was one of those patients and is heavily involved in the campaign.

Now, she is calling on all CDPs to join the campaign by signing letters of support.

Ms McGowan says that one possible reason why the Government "opposes us having cancer services in Sligo General is because it plans to build a private hospital and get rid of the public hospital."

She writes:



Ann McGowan (left), Co-ordinator of Atlantic View CDP, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal at a local community event.

THE Government has decided not to site a Centre of Excellence above a line drawn from Dublin to Galway. This is causing a great deal of hardship and trauma to cancer patients in the North West.

Currently, there are waiting lists of 12 weeks and more in Sligo General for women with symptoms of breast cancer. It is not thought to be urgent, you might wait for over two years.

I was one of those people who weren't thought to be urgent and after 12 weeks waiting and fighting in the media and eventually going on Joe Duffy's Live Line it was discovered I had cancer with three glands infected.

The Government wants to close down the assessment and surgery services in Sligo General Hospital and send cancer patients to Galway where there is already a waiting list and cancer patients cannot get a bed. Cancer Patients already have to leave their small children, teenagers or elderly parents and stay for five-to-seven weeks in Dublin or Galway to receive therapy treatment.

Women in the North West have to opt for radical mastectomies because they

cannot leave their families for these five-to-seven weeks to receive the radiotherapy. Now the Government also wants them to go for assessment and surgery in Galway, making the time away from their families even longer. Can you imagine being on your own hundreds of miles from home in an impersonal room having to deal with cancer diagnosis, its treatment and its side effects?

Cancer patients have to travel to Galway with open wounds and suffering from the effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy sitting up in an ambulance/mini-bus which stops ten or fifteen times on the journey there and back on bad roads. These journeys last anything from early morning to late at night with no arrangements made for toilet breaks or meals.

Mary Harney told us we should go to Belfast for cancer services. Belfast can only take fifty people a year. We may as well be travelling to Dublin or Galway as it takes at least a four hour round trip from the nearest point to get there.

Politicians from the North West claim they are not being listened to in Leinster House when they fight for the cancer

services being retained in Sligo General. We are being fobbed off with comments by An Taoiseach such as 'It's up to Professor Keane'. Professor Keane says it is not in his remit to decide where the Centres of Excellence are put. That is decided by the Government.

Sligo General Hospital has a superb multi-disciplinary team with specialist surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, breast care nurses and they are fully supported by dedicated outpatient nurses and a clerical team. Unfortunately the Government have failed to recognise this and want to stop all cancer services in Sligo General. Why? That is the question all cancer patients and survivors are asking in the North West. We demand they stop this crazy action immediately. We now also ask for the support of all the CDPs in the country.

A protest letter campaign is being run at the moment and anyone who would like to sign one of these letters should get in touch with Ann McGowan, Project Coordinator or Siobhan McGloin, administrator /finance Worker. Email atlanticview01@eircom.net and we will email the protest letter onto you.

More information:
www.saveourcancerservicesligo.com

Latest trends in development

PATRICIA Wall from Middleton, Co. Cork, has spent most of her adult life in Africa, starting off as a volunteer in Namibia and going on to become a professional development worker.

Ms. Wall is currently the director of Dtalk based in Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin.

"There are a lot of people in Ireland working in the Community and Voluntary Sector who started out as volunteers in the South," she says.

"And there is great solidarity between poor people in the North and the South."

She gives the example of women from a poor part of Dublin's inner city who have identified with women in developing countries. The poverty there is on a greater scale, but in both situations the fact that the people are poor has a lot to do with their gender. Through this understanding, solidarity is forged.

"The global economic system is promoting inequality. There is a decline in trade unionism, short work contracts are replacing permanent jobs, employers are seeking to remove pension and other benefits from employees. That is happening North and South."

Dtalk is the last stop for people from Ireland before they depart to countries in the 'South' to engage, either as paid professionals or volunteers, in development work. (For more information, check out: www.dtalk.ie).

Here, the Dtalk director names the latest topics to stir debate among NGOs internationally and also identifies features of the 'aid industry' that are no longer considered appropriate:



Patricia Wall, director of Dtalk with Selam Desta, administrator (who job-shares with Niamh Brennan).

said their staff are no longer to take flights within Europe, but to travel overland instead and other NGOs may follow their lead. Are we as NGOs to prepare in the future for implementing long-term development programmes or should we prepare to deal with emergencies (which will become more common due to climate change).

2. New aid architecture, for example **South-South relationships** (rather than the old-fashioned North-South relationships). The idea of new aid architecture is reflected in what's known as the Paris Declaration which is about coherence, alignment and local ownership of development. It's very aspirational, but it is driving donors now. Through partnership, we are trying to harmonise our efforts and avoid duplication. It's about looking at the efficiencies of aid, where previously we looked at the effectiveness of aid.

There is a big conference in Accra, Ghana, in September, to see are Southern countries seeing this in the same light. For more info, log onto: www.betteraid.org

3. Capital moves easily, so do products, but people do not. Now, **migration and urbanisation** are two of the main issues we must face. How do we deal with this in development?

What's not!

1. **Charity.** People increasingly want justice, not charity.
2. **Aid pornography** is on the way out, meaning we should be seeing the end of photographs of people from the South that helped raise money but stigmatised and labelled people, particularly Africans, in a helpless, weak and negative frame.
3. **'The Third World'** as a phrase is very old hat now. The 'South' is preferred. The **South** refers to the group of mostly former colonies that have over the years been called The Third World, Developing Countries, or Underdeveloped Countries. Each term has its problems.

Go South!

"I volunteered to go to Namibia as a volunteer with the Quakers," says Ms. Wall. "As I child, I always wanted to go to Africa."

1. It will be a life-changing experience. That's a fact.
2. You will experience a better quality of relationships.
3. You can't beat the music, the colour and the social life, certainly in West Africa.

What's hot!

1. How is **climate change** going to effect how organisations work? For example, NGO staff do a lot of traveling. Christian Aid have



This cartoon was drawn by Peter Rigg. It originally appeared in black and white. To see more of the British cartoonist's work, check out his series challenging cultural myths and prejudices in an urban setting at: www.pendlelife.co.uk/roundabout/opencms/Residents/Lifestyle/Myths.html