

CHANGING IRELAND

SUMMER '08

ISSUE 26

The National Magazine of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 180 CDPs

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THE MIGRANTS' ISSUE

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all the same'**

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integration**

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regeneration'**

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We came, ... we saw,

we volunteered!

A FLOOD OF NEW VOLUNTEERS

1-in-3 volunteers in Ireland today is non-Irish



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



The buck stops here

It is a long time since an evaluation has been carried out into the Community Development Programme. The last one – in 1999-2000 – showed incredible returns on the investment, especially given the high volunteer involvement. However, the Nexus Research report also showed that CDPs were not generally taking on issues regarding new communities.

How things are changing!

Eight years ago, interculturalism and anti-racist work did not feature highly among the eight main priorities named by CDPs. In terms of target group priorities, new communities were rated eighth out of nine key target groups.

A problem at the time was the perception by CDPs that they had a lack of expertise in the area. Now, many CDPs have built up skills and expertise and are ready and willing to pass on their know-how. This edition of 'Changing Ireland' focuses on integration and interculturalism to highlight what is being done and to provide an impetus to those community groups who have not engaged with immigrants and refugees to date.

The Community Development Programme is part of a movement in Ireland that empowers, expresses solidarity with, and belongs to the marginalised in society, including vulnerable immigrants and refugees. Thankfully, today, the most reputable organisations working towards integration take a Community Development approach to their work –

from Partnership Companies to the Migrant Rights Centres Ireland.

While local groups may wish they had more resources, we can't look elsewhere for someone else to do the work. The State has welcomed 400,000-plus immigrants into the country. The buck stops here with us at community level. There are many initiatives already happening around the country and we've highlighted what we believe are good examples that demonstrate a community development approach.

We all have a duty of care to the community we live in, including short-stay residents. Integration work opens your community up to a wealth of talent and resources. Bear in mind that 1 in 3 volunteers contacting Volunteer Centres Ireland today are non-Irish nationals.

Also, a minority of immigrants are illegal, undocumented, vulnerable and at a distance from mainstream society. However, they are within the reach of community groups, as are asylum-seekers.

Our diversity is not a passing thing. It is permanent. And remember, migrants are active agents in bringing about positive change. More aid goes to Africa from migrants' remittances than from official development aid.

Community development principles

- COLLECTIVE ACTION
- PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALISED PEOPLE
- INCLUSIVENESS
- IS EMPOWERING AND ENABLING
- THE PROCESS IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE TASK
- IT IS NON- SEXIST, NON-SECTARIAN AND NON-RACIST
- WE FOCUS ON SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY
- WE START WHERE PEOPLE ARE AT
- WE EMBRACE EQUALITY
- WE THINK GLOBALLY AND ACT LOCALLY
- PROMOTES SELF-DETERMINATION

COVER PHOTO:

Photographer: Ruby Wallis.

Caption: Voluntary members of the Bangladesh Association and the Galway Intercultural Forum at Galway's first annual Intercultural Barbecue held at the Spanish Arch on June 28th. Westside CDP were instrumental in providing us with the photograph.

Incidentally, Galway is unique in Ireland in having adopted a city-specific anti-racism strategy. It has won recognition in Europe as a model for other cities to follow.

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Community groups welcome gay people

- Code of Practice launched in West and Midlands

SENATOR David Norris has paid tribute to community groups in the West and Midlands for the work they are doing to include members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

"This work is not based on academic claptrap, it is informed by the genuine experiences of real people in local communities," he said.

Senator Norris was speaking at the launch in May of a Code of Practice to ensure that CDPs and Family Resource Centres (FRCs) are friendly to members of the LGBT communities. The launch also included the distribution of posters in English, Irish and Polish.

The materials were published on the back of

work by over 20 groups - by local CDPs, FRCs, West Training and Development and the Gay, Lesbian and Equality Network (GLEN).

The work was prompted in part by the suicide of a gay man in a rural community.

Meta Ui Mhaille, co-ordinator of Plearaca Teo CDP in Rosmuc, one of the groups involved, outlined why the work was important: "Our groups were aware of the difficulties facing LGBT people, particularly young people in rural communities, but no CDP or FRC had all the answers on its own."

Jim O'Brien, chairperson of West Training, the regional support agency involved in the work, said that "very often documents and codes like

this are prepared and published in an organisational vacuum: they are meant for everybody and ultimately impact on nobody. This Code of Practice is developed for concrete situations and has a ready home in the network of FRCs and CDPs."

Since the launch, other groups around the country have sought copies of the guide and posters.

For more information, contact: West Training, Mayoralty House, Merchant's Road, Galway. T: 091-567827. E: info@westtraining.ie

The Code is available for download in the 'Resources' section of: www.westtraining.ie

Project-launch in Roscommon



On May 13th, Clodagh McDonnell, recently-appointed Principal Officer with the Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, officially launched the Roscommon Womens's Network CDP and opened the project's new offices in The Old Mill, Castlerea. The Network had its genesis back in 1997 with the Women's Coalition and it joined the Programme in 2005. It is currently expanding its outreach services. (For more news from the Network, see page 15). Clodagh McDonnell's new role involves overseeing the Community Development Programme.

EARS seminar for Sept 11th

THE Equality and Anti-Racism Sub-Committee (EARS) runs an annual seminar for community organisations to discuss issues, share information and examine best practice.

The fourth annual seminar organised by the Equality and Anti-Racism Sub-Committee (EARS) is scheduled for September 11th.

The theme is: 'Integrating equality and anti-racism work into the practice of community development organisations.' There will be 4 workshops (running parallel) on

disability, ageism, racism and sexual orientation.

EARS can be contacted through Mathews Thayil, a Community Development Worker with Tallaght-based CDP, the Special Project on Long Term Unemployment (SPLTU).

T: 01-4623222.

E: mathews.equalaccesscdp@gmail.com

EARS does not have an office of its own. It has been in existence since 1998 and is supported by CDPs, FRCs and community development support agencies.

20th famine walk

THIS year's Doolough Famine Walk, organised by Louisburg CDP and Afri, focused on the theme of conflict and war over scarce resources including water.

The walk took place in May, the 20th occasion of the event, and each year it aims to remind people that famine and hunger is the norm for millions of people.

Tuam book launched

TUAM Resource Centre CDP launched a book on July 18th cataloging the experiences and lifestyles of non-Irish residents of the Galway town. Volunteers carried out the research, calling

door-to-door for information. 'Tuam: A Town of Many Nations' was launched by Conor Lenihan, Minister for Integration.

The research findings were collated by Ann Irwin.

Drugs taskforce visit

A GROUP of volunteers from community groups in Limerick, including CDPs, visited Dublin in April to see how their counterparts in the capital are leading the way in tackling drugs through their Community Policing Forum.

The Limerick group attended a forum meeting in Store Street

Garda Station and were pleasantly surprised to see around 20 Gardai attending, a sign they took that the forum works and is taken seriously. A similar forum will be set up in Limerick shortly, under the guise of the Mid West Regional Drugs Task Force (which incidentally has launched a new website: www.mwdrdf.ie)

Plan now for Oct 17th

"WHEREVER men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty."

This was the key phrase pushed by the late Joseph Wresinski, founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, and across Ireland today people are being urged to sign up to the statement in advance of ceremonies on October 17th to mark the UN's International Day For The

Eradication Of Extreme Poverty.

Plans are currently being put in place at local and national level to mark the UN day.

If you would like to help mark October 17th, contact: ATD Fourth World, 31 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. T: 01-8558191. E:

atdfourthworld@eircom.net
www.oct17.org/en
www.atdfourthworld.ie/
www.atd-fourthworld.org

Volunteer Profile: Paddy Loughnane

Paddy Loughnane is a voluntary management committee member of Thurles Action for Community Development CDP, based in Co. Tipperary.

What are you reading at the moment?

The Tipperary Star and I'm on the computer at the moment too, that's reading. I'm reading a book called 'Memories of Scoil Alba 1949-1999'. It's about where I went to school.

What's the last film you saw?

I don't really watch movies. I don't even watch telly. The last movie I watched was 'The Warriors' about gang-wars in New York in the 1970s.

Person you most admire?

My wife, Mairead. She helped me change from what I was to what I am. Outside the family home, I'd admire the late Pope John Paul II. I went to see him in 1979 and was amazed to see how thousands of people turned out to see one man in the hope they could make a change in their lives. When he was shot he went into the jail to forgive that person. I'm not a religious man but he's a fella I had to admire.

The top 4 issues in Ireland today?

Number one is the environment, global warming and so on. Number two is the recession and it's hitting a lot of people in this neck of the woods. People are outspending their incomes and giving their children the habit of having everything they want. I wonder will the children cope when they grow up. Number three is hidden records, like the Church record, Bertie's record. If an ordinary man did what Bertie done he'd be doing time. There's no equality.

We need more

...volunteers to try and build the communities and the towns because to be honest the politicians only talk about it. They just put the red tape in front of us. And opportunities: People who have lifelong experience working voluntary with people on the street should be given an equal chance at jobs as people with degrees.

We need less

... red tape in organisations. A lot of volunteers have great ideas, they send the



ideas up the line, but they can't go further because of red tape and bureaucracy. Volunteers do put a lot in but they get drained by the politics of Community Development.

How long are you working with the CDP?

A year and a half. Before this, I was with other groups.

How and why did you get involved?

I felt people like us were needed to bring back the community spirit to Thurles. We've built a lovely community back around us again. We got Loughtagalla Park back up and running for example. Ten years ago, the older people were trying to close it down after vandalism and anti-social behaviour. We formed a new committee and I brought in six teenagers to make their points and they formed into a sub-committee and they worked with the older people. Everyone listened. Instead of breaking trees, the young people are now planting them.

What difference has being involved made to you?

I'm on a few boards of management at the moment, but I'd rather not be, I'm more a man of the street. I give people on the streets time. I'd sit down with the winos and ask them what can we do

together.

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

The community has become a little stronger now and we look out for each other more. The older people are respected now and we don't leave them put up with hassle. And we give the young people an equal voice.

What motivates you as a volunteer?

My own background. I've seen both sides of the law.

How do you get new volunteers?

Well, they're trying to start a Tidy Towns committee here and they advertised a meeting in a hotel. I said, 'Why are ye calling meetings in a hotel?' We have to go into the housing estates and meet people there and they're doing that now. They're meeting with residents on the streets and that's the best place to go. You need to show your face.

- For more information about Thurles Action for Community Development, contact them at: TACD Ltd, Kickham St, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.
T: 0504-90666.
E: tacd@eircom.net

One volunteer's story

OJO Kayode registered with Carlow Volunteer Centre in July 2007 and has been involved in numerous once-off volunteering projects over the last year.

Why did you decide to volunteer?

As a Christian, I have a belief that I should help others and do what I can to give back to the community. I read about the Volunteer Centre on the internet, and as I had been a volunteer in my own country, Nigeria, I decided to volunteer here also.

What kind of volunteering did you do in Nigeria, and is it different to what you are doing here?

In Nigeria, I was a boy scout which is different to being a scout here – in the evening we would patrol as a group, act as wardens at the main gate, and protect the community. Here it is very different! I have



Ojo Kayode

volunteered with Comhlámh (an Irish global justice group) distributing magazines for them. I have done some fundraising, put up posters to advertise events for Carlow Volunteer Centre, helped with the Irish Heart Foundation's information stand during Healthy Heart Week, and helped paint a playground at Open Door CDP.

As a once-off volunteer, how much time does your volunteering take up?

It doesn't take up too much time – just an hour here, two hours there – or whenever I am free.

What do you like about volunteering?

You get to meet people. You improve your confidence. It has a cultural benefit as you learn so much by doing different things – it is enlightening! I would recommend it.

1 in 3 new volunteers are non-Irish

- Volunteer Centres Ireland sees a rise in volunteering generally

ONE in three of the 2500 people who have registered so far this year with Volunteer Centres Ireland (VCI) are non-Irish.

Nigerians are the leading ethnic group after Irish volunteers.

VCI, the national body for volunteering in Ireland, has seen a 35% increase in the number of non-Irish nationals on their books since last year. Overall, one quarter of volunteers registered with VCI are non-Irish nationals, 850 of those being new recruits who signed on between January and mid-June of this year.

The figures are "surprising", says VCI boss, Yvonne McKenna: firstly because so many non-Irish residents are volunteering and, secondly, because most of them are from Nigeria. The latest Census figures shows there were 16,300 Nigerians living here in 2006, the fourth largest ethnic group after British (112,548), Polish (63,276) and Lithuanian (24,628) people.

STEREOTYPES

"You would think the English or Polish would be the top ethnic groups for volunteering, but it is, to their credit, the Nigerians. This turns stereotypes about Nigerians on their heads," says Yvonne.

She said the 1-in-3 finding was worth noting because some Irish people hold negative attitudes towards foreigners living here.



"We to maintain this momentum and actively attract new recruits," she said.

NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN

Three volunteers – from France, Nigeria and Malawi and based in Carlow, Sligo and South Dublin – have agreed to spearhead VCI's campaign. The nationwide recruitment drive is being managed through VCI's 17 regional centres and is being promoted online through VCI national and local websites and facebook and bebo pages.

"Volunteering allows non-Irish nationals to adapt to the Irish culture, work with locals in the community and use their skills to become a part of something which will benefit everyone," said Yvonne.

VOLUNTEERING IS UP

"Volunteering has changed in Ireland and people are getting into it in different ways. If you're not born and raised here, you might not know about Vincent De Paul for instance.

Our Centres make it easier for people to volunteer and when you volunteer with us it is for definite tasks or events."

Interestingly, foreigners who are not working do more volunteering than Irish people who are unemployed.

Yvonne noted that volunteering, contrary to media reports in recent years, is actually on the up. The Census 2006 showed that 1 in 6 adults in Ireland volunteer regularly. Most volunteers registering with VCI want to work with children, the elderly, in an office or doing skilled work.

For more information, or to get involved, log onto: www.volunteer.ie

To make contact directly: Volunteer Centres Ireland, DMG Business Centre, 9/13 Blackhall Place, Dublin 7. T: 01-799-4519. F: 01-799-4501. E: info@volunteer.ie

Why people volunteer

THE top 5 reasons why people volunteer according to VCI are:

1. To do something in the community.
2. To give something back.
3. They have some free time.
4. To gain skills or experience.
5. To make new friends.

Toxic toothpaste supplied to asylum-seekers

- community worker says it is "symptom" of bigger problems

By ALLEN MEAGHER

THE owner of the Eyre Powell Hotel in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, has refused to identify the source of toothpaste distributed to residents and containing toxic ingredient, DEG. Joe Germaine would only say it "came from a supplier in Dublin."

The 60 adult and 30 child residents, all asylum-seekers, are long-stay and they found after using 'Cool Mate' that their gums bled and they suffered toothache. 'Cool Mate' contains a 9.8% concentration of the toxin, DEG, which if ingested in sufficient doses can cause death or serious injury. It attacks the liver and kidneys. The Australian authorities have banned the toothpaste, as has the USA, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Austria, among others.

Conditions in the Eyre Powell Hotel - as the direct provision centre is called - were so dismal generally that a public meeting was called recently to see what could be done. At that time, the residents were unaware the toothpaste they were using was dangerous.

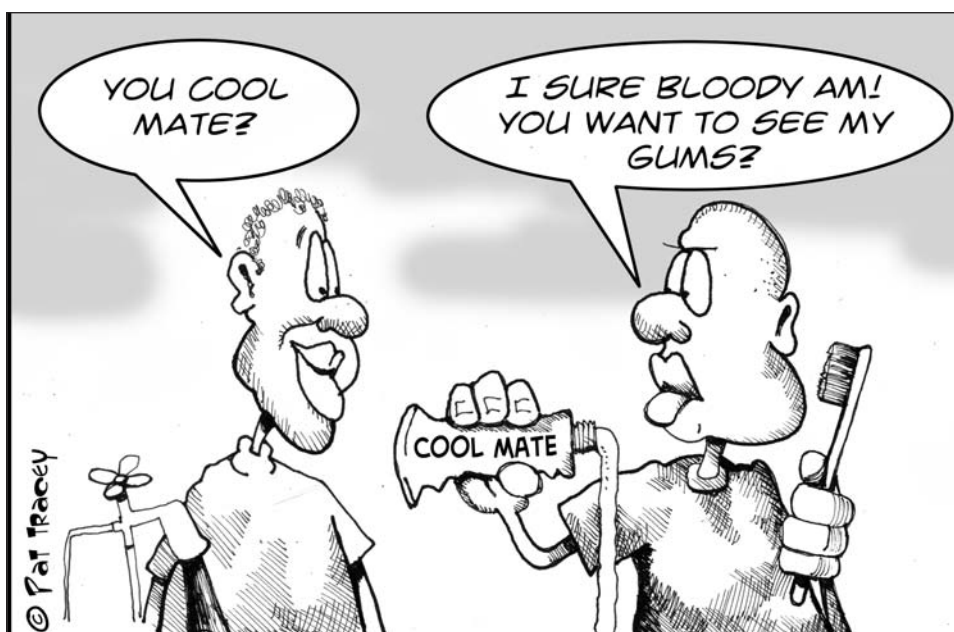
RAISE THE ALARM

Efforts by the Newbridge Asylum-Seekers Support Group (NASSG) to raise the alarm have met with little obvious co-operation, to date. Mick Power, chairperson of The Bridge CDP, wrote on behalf of the NASSG to the Minister of Health, Mary Harney, on June 9th. The group asked for Minister Harney's Department to:

- chemically analyse the product;
- carry out a health screening of residents, and;
- see if the product is being used by other direct provision centres.

They also asked the Minister to "ensure that no residents are dispersed to other centres until such time as the above has been completed."

Asylum-seekers who complained too loudly in the past have been moved to other centres, far away from where they had made friends. It keeps them mute on many issues, which is where The Bridge CDP (in Newbridge) and the Kildare Partnership come in: they can speak up and be a voice for the vulnerable and voiceless. Both CDP and Partnership have actively supported the asylum-seekers group for some years. Anne Daly, the Partnership's Community



Participation Programme manager, has worked very closely since 2004 with the NASSG and with residents of the Eyre Powell. She liaises with the CDP co-ordinator Mary Hennessy.

ENOUGH WORRIES ALREADY

The Irish members of the NASSG were the first to discover the toothpaste was a banned product in many countries and they thought hard before voicing their concerns to residents in Eyre Powell. "The average asylum-seeker has enough worries to contend with and might not react well to being told that the Government-funded accommodation centre was, inadvertently, supplying them with toxic toothpaste," said Anne Daly, a community worker with the Kildare Partnership.

"Also, it would do asylum-seekers no good if the media and public got the impression that the main issue in asylum-seekers's lives was the type of toothpaste they use," she said.

However, the local members of the NASSG viewed the problem as primarily being about public health. Without delay, they made their concerns public and after six weeks of being supplied with 'Cool Mate', an alternative cheap toothpaste was provided by the Eyre Powell.

Meanwhile, the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) responded by accusing the complainants of "scaremongering" and a war

of words broke out, with Mick Power writing back to the RIA in late June to say:

CLASSIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"People living in the Asylum Process, and in particular in Direct Provision, are denied a lot of rights within that system and should not be denied information about a product which may be adversely affecting their health."

This is a classic case of Community Development in action, where collective action achieves results and where participation by those directly effected is key.

As a result, at local level, the toothpaste was promptly replaced (with Tesco own-brand) and general conditions in the Eyre Powell are reported to have improved somewhat.

"However, there is still a fear that other direct provision centres may be using 'Cool Mate'. The general public may also be at risk because it seems it is legal to sell the product despite the toxins," said Anne Daly.

The toxic toothpaste was only "a symptom", said Anne, of the wider issues facing asylum-seekers and of the way Irish society treats them. She pointed to the fact that the Minister had yet to reply (as we went to press) to the NASSG's concerns.

After five years work, man almost fled country

- thought he owed money to HSE



FOR ten years now, many people from ethnic minority communities have had a poor experience accessing supports in time of sickness. A survey has found that 44% of callers to the new Health Information and Advocacy Centre based in Dublin had problems gaining access to basic health services.

The main item causing confusion is the complicated process of applying for a medical card/ GP visit card. Complicated application forms, an unclear process and long waiting times for the decisions were among most common problems.

In some cases, the Centre has seen asylum seekers denied an application for a medical card from their local health centres on the grounds that they would not be entitled to a medical card anyway, because they are living with friends and not in direct provision centre.

The difficulties are further exacerbated if a person "falls out" of the immigration system,

and this often happens not by their own fault. In one case, a woman's work permit lapsed because of inaction of the employer. Soon after, her GP suspected she might have a brain tumor. The proper diagnosis warranted a series of tests which, in her situation, she could not afford. For this ill person, trying to secure another work permit with a new employer became a first priority; her health – the second.

In another case, a man resident in Ireland and working for five years broke his leg and received a hospital bill for several thousand euro. The immigrant almost left Ireland, because he could not afford to pay the bill. Lucky for him, the HIAC were able to inform him that with a relatively simple administrative procedure (where he has to present the evidence of his income, residential and employment status to the hospital) he could reduce his bill to a mere €60 euro or possibly the bill could be waived altogether.

Profit-making through direct provision

THE Government's system of direct provision for asylum-seekers (they get bed, board, secure accommodation and €19.10 a week) means valuable work for dozens of contractors nationwide. Companies who are awarded contracts seek naturally to be efficient and to make a profit. In 2004, the payment for the contracted services was in the range of €189 to €222.60 per person per week. Profits are generated by keeping

costs per head at a minimum.

"The direct provision system is flawed," says Anne Daly, a community worker with the Kildare Partnership. She says that it keeps people in limbo for years without rights and those that benefit most from the system are the companies who won contracts for direct provision centres.

She believes that, "The residents are seen as a commodity."

No manufacturer details



'CHANGING Ireland' has received a sample of 'Cool Mate' toothpaste product in its packaging from an asylum-seeker in the Eyre Powell. There are no company details, no country of manufacture, and no reference to the toxic DEG substance that led Australian authorities to ban 'Cool Mate' last year.

The packaging carries the useless claim that it is 'Designed in Germany' (this possibly refers to the packaging, rather than the product). Some, though possibly not all, ingredients are listed on the packaging, and none is listed on the toothpaste tube. Instead of ingredients, the tube bears the slogan "Natural Taste & Super Clean." Nowhere on the tube or packaging is there any information about the company or where it was manufactured or who the Irish supplier is.

The only reason people buy 'Cool Mate' is because, one presumes, it is cheap and available. In Eyre Powell, the residents were supplied with the toothpaste for around six weeks before it was withdrawn.

DEG in toothpaste – according to an internet report - killed 107 people in the USA before being banned in toothpaste in 1937 (it is still used in paints and solvents).

If you find 'Cool Mate'

IF anybody knows where 'Cool Mate' toothpaste is being sold or distributed, let 'Changing Ireland' know and we will pass the information onto the Department of Health and Children. **Contact details: page 2.**

Foreigners miss out on Ireland's health services

- though Dublin is working to reverse trend

IF you had a cold, or a twisted ankle, or worse still a suspicious lump, would you step into an office advertising itself as a 'Surgery'? An Irish person might in Ireland, but no sane foreigner would, unless they were led through by a trusted friend.

It would take more than a sore throat or bleeding gums to propel me through the door to meet the "GP", worse still the "General Practitioner", in his "Surgery".

Surgery here means a doctor will look at you for four-to-five minutes, prescribe a dose of tablets or recommend a trip to hospital, and charge you €60. But, in other people's English, the word 'surgery' indicates a place they might cut your leg off or operate on you.

SURGERY SIGNS CONFUSE PATIENTS

Said one former patient: "In my language, 'surgery' means a place where the surgical operation is performed. So when I saw 'GP surgery' sign I never thought that this is the office of local family doctor."

So, who knows how many sick immigrants went without treatment when they had a health problem?

A decade of immigration has educated the authorities and they have – to the great relief of thousands of immigrants – opened an information centre aimed at plugging the gap for non-Irish people living in Dublin city. It took time:

Step 1: 20 years ago, a community development organisation was set up called Cairde (it came to life during a crisis in the health service).

Step 2: A decade passed and Cairde established an Ethnic Minority Health Forum. At Forum meetings, citizens from over 20 nations sit at one table and discuss health issues affecting their compatriots resident in Ireland.

Step 3: The Forum set up the Health Information and Advocacy Centre (HIAC) upon securing funding from Dublin City Council and the HSE.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Today, the information centre is staffed and busy working – crucially, from a community development approach – to produce relevant, accurate and culturally appropriate health information (and advocacy) for people from ethnic minorities.

Hopefully, in future, people new to Ireland can make more use of the health system funded partly by their own taxes.

The HIAC has produced a number of easy-to-understand guidebooks on health and on Monday, June 16th, Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, officially opened the Centre. He explained that the main aim of HIAC was to improve ethnic minority take up of primary care.

While this is of course a commendable aim, it is says spokesperson Tommy Byrne a "stop-gap" measure in Dublin: "Nonetheless, the successful opening of the Centre is a clear illustration of a collaborative approach as a way to deal with complex health needs sensitively and effectively."

RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

In the future, the HSE hopes to mainstream the provision of accessible information on a national basis. In the meanwhile, anyone in the country can ring the Centre and there is also a useful website: www.healthfacts.ie

The website lists every hospital in the state and every doctor's surgery in Dublin, and 'Changing Ireland' recommends this website to anyone seeking information about the public health system and / or about their own personal health. The website has the potential to serve hundreds if not thousands of visitors daily.

The need for the HIAC is very obvious. In the first six months, and despite having minimal resources and almost no promotional budget, the Centre had to carry out nearly 1,500 actions on behalf of over 1,300 people. These actions involved dealing with hospitals, GPs, the HSE and the Department of Social and Family Affairs on behalf of ill clients.

CEO of Cairde, Paddy Connolly, remarks: "The main issue which users of the Centre have raised with us is the barriers they have encountered when accessing health services. This is often illustrated by rigid bureaucracy and a lack of available information."

The Health Information and Advocacy Centre is based alongside its sister-organisation Cairde on: 19 Belvedere Place (off Mountjoy Sq. NE), Dublin 1. Queries to the community health nurse are welcome over the phone and the number to call is: 01-8552111.

Polish clinic in Limerick

A PRIVATELY-RUN health clinic for Polish immigrants opened in Limerick city last October.

The staff of the Medipol clinic on John Street speak Russian, Czech and Slovak as well as Polish and include doctors, a

paediatrician and a gynaecologist.

Pat O'Sullivan, president of the Irish Polish Cultural and Business Association, said it changed people's lives: "Polish people living here had to go over and back home to attend to routine medical problems, often due to language difficulties."

Patients pay €50 per visit and can recoup this money from their Polish health insurance. There are up to 10,000 Polish nationals living in the greater Limerick area. Not everyone, of course, can afford private health care.

Support

- THE National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) has a Community Development Support Unit which freely gives assistance and technical support to community groups working on integration and interculturalism. It aims to "bring added value to the supports provided by other organisations" and to "highlight the collective issues and needs of ethnic minority groups to relevant government bodies, policy-makers and service providers at all levels."
- For more information, call Carina Fitzgerald at the NCCRI on: 01-8588002.
- The NCCRI is ten years old and is an independent expert body on racism. Its website features a 'Racist Incidents Report Form' which people can download: www.nccri.ie

Tap for information

THE following organisations and methods will yield a lot of useful information, whatever your query:

- Central Statistics Office website: www.cso.ie
- Reception and Integration Agency: www.ria.gov.ie
- Citizens Information Centres: www.citizensinformation.ie
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment: www.entemp.ie
- The Equality Authority: www.equality.ie
- Nasc, the Irish Immigrant Support Centre: www.nascireland.org
- Cairde, which tackles health inequalities among ethnic minority communities: www.cairde.ie
- Immigrant newspaper: www.metroeireann.com
- Local health centres.
- Word of mouth – for example, from direct provision hostels.
- Schools and local authorities.
- Find out who is living in the local area. Collect data. For example, volunteers from ethnic minorities helped Tuam Resource Centre CDP to survey the town and the project launched a book on the diverse make-up of the Tuam's population.

Things to do!

WONDERING what kind of event to organise. The following are recommended by those with experience, though try not to run a one-off tokenistic event. Plan for a follow-up:

- Welcome Events
- International Sports Day
- Coffee mornings-meet and greet
- Organise social evenings where people from new and existing communities could meet in a social context and share their culture, food, stories and music
- Mainstream learning opportunities - promote inclusive participation on courses
- Promote events in ethnic minority languages as well as English
- Day trips to museums, parks and places of interest
- Organise a Mother & Toddler Group
- Challenge stereotypes and misinformation by organising awareness raising events. Some tips: (a) Use existing forums/groups as a medium to speak to the community. (b) Invite a person from a minority ethnic group to speak. (c) Organise diversity training for voluntary groups, service providers, sports clubs.



Olusola Ekeh signing people in at the opening of Clondalkin's Intercultural Centre which is supported by the Clondalkin Partnership.

Who are the main players at Community level?

THE main players at community level in promoting integration and interculturalism include:

- 70 Local Partnerships, 180 Community Development Projects, 100 Family Resource Centres, many local refugee and migrant support groups and religious groups.
- Local Citizen Information Centres.
- 250+ ethnic minority groups around the country. The Immigrant Council of Ireland (www.immigrantcouncil.ie) has a directory of groups around the country.
- Integrating Ireland has regional fora

(www.integratingireland.ie).

- National organisations supporting communities include the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (www.nccri.ie) the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (www.mrci.ie).
- The NCCRI's Synergy Initiative is based in Border Counties.
- Local Partnerships, Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, local refugee and migrant support groups.

What's the challenge?

"WHILE many existing community development projects have identified the need to engage with new communities in their areas, and want to work on interculturalism and anti-racism, not many have actually done so," says Alice Binchy of Tallaght Intercultural Action.*

"Most projects find it difficult to engage and make contact with ethnic minority groups in their area in a realistic and meaningful way for lack of financial support, resources and knowledge," concluded reporters at last year's EARS seminar. **

Projects feel:

- They don't know what to do;
- Their main priority is the long-term residents of their community;
- That the work is specialised and someone else should do it;
- That they don't have the staff or the funds to do this work.

* ** Alice made this point to 20 community groups from the east of Ireland attending a seminar last November organised by the Equality and Anti-Racism Sub-Committee (EARS). Much of the advice quoted here flows from that EARS seminar.

Why are 'new communities' a priority?

- One word – racism. One catchphrase - Interculturalism – which is essentially about interaction, understanding and respect.
- "We all have a role to play - integration is not just something done by government

policy - we as members of local communities and organisations have a vital part to play," says Carina Fitzgerald, the NCCRI's Community Development Support Officer.

8 ways to promote integration through community development

FROM Roscommon to Cork and Tallaght to Mayo, CDPs take a community development approach to promoting integration and to protecting the rights of migrant workers and asylum-seekers. NINs are now part of many local community groups and often lead by example.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Change attitudes with a series of myth-killing workshops. | CORK |
| 2. Encourage fellow-NINs to volunteer locally. | GALWAY |
| 3. Organise knitting groups. | MAYO |
| 4. Hold an intercultural fun day. | LONGFORD |
| 5. Start up a quilting group. | ROSCOMMON |
| 6. Network with others and open a drop-in centre. | TALLAGHT, DUBLIN |
| 7. Ask for a course in 'Inter-Cultural Awareness'. | CORK & KERRY |
| 8. Nominate people for awards. | NEW ROSS |

Encourage NINs to volunteer *says Eunice Ofoegbu*

Westside CDP, Galway city



COMMUNITY Development plays an important role for people in the community, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. I have been involved in community development for the past four years with a special interest in non-Irish national groups and single parent families. I served as a board member in the Kiltimagh CDP and launched several educational and recreational programmes for the refugee community in County Mayo.

Currently, I am involved with the Westside CDP as well as on the Board of Management of the Westside Resource Centre. My two and a half years with the Project gave me a broad understanding of

the issues that affect people living in the Westside and many people throughout Ireland. We share many of the same experiences.

For example, I am a single parent raising a small child, struggling to get an education in order to participate fully in society. It is a challenge, sometimes it can almost seem overwhelming. I know that I share the

same difficulties with many other single parents. It is still nearly impossible to find childcare that is affordable, flexible and of a standard that meets the needs of my child.

I have met many non-Irish nationals who are struggling to integrate into Irish culture and to learn English to communicate effectively. I encourage them to get involved with Community Development groups in their local area. It can help them to build the social networks that are so important for themselves and their families. It helps them to highlight the issues that affect their lives and to work together with other people and groups to bring about change and positive

outcomes for everyone in our community.

Sometimes people ask me how I find the time and energy to get involved with a voluntary committee when I am struggling to get an education and raise my daughter. I tell them that it is important for me to show other people in situations like mine that you should never give up hope. Keep fighting for a better life for you, for your family and for other people in your community.

- Eunice Ofoegbu lives in Galway with her four-year-old daughter. She is a member of the voluntary management committee of Westside Resource Centre and is also involved with Westside CDP. She was an activist with Kiltimagh CDP for four years.

A guiding light

"EUNICE has been a guiding light, a spirit of hope and a symbol of what is possible. The skills, enthusiasm and optimism which she gives us has kept our Project going through some tough times. Also, she has entertained us, for instance, with her childhood memories that have us in hysterics."

- A comment emailed in, without Eunice's knowledge, from Westside CDP Voluntary Committee

Start-up a knitting group

- it builds confidence and eases worries

Kiltimagh CDP, Co. Mayo



A VERY successful 12-week Intercultural Craft Circle is nearing completion in Kiltimagh CDP, Co. Mayo. Most of the knitting yarn/wool and needles were donated by the local community and the participants included women from Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Bangladesh and Ireland.

The course made a real difference.

For instance, one woman, **Sibongile Svusvu from Zimbabwe** found the knitting therapeutic. She has a daughter living in Zimbabwe and life is not easy on her. Since she learned to knit, she now has to knit

every evening because it "stops me from thinking and worrying".

Lou Brennan taught embroidery and cross stitch techniques for six weeks, then **Mary Dempsey** taught knitting for a further six weeks to a mix of women from the Mayo Railway Hotel (direct provision centre) and the local community.

The women enjoyed both sessions and picked up the sewing and knitting techniques very quickly.

"It was great to see the interaction between all the women and as the weeks went by they became more comfortable with each other, joking with each other and helping each other with the different stitches," said Mary.

Every week new women joined the Craft Circle after they saw the knit-work that their friends produced. They made and embroidered cushions and they knit scarves, lace wraps, dolls, teddies and

blankets. None of the women from Kiltimagh's direct provision centre did needlework or knitting before but some of them proved to be naturals with needles.

"A few struggled at the beginning, especially with the knitting, until they found their rhythm and a comfortable hold. It was very gratifying for the participants and facilitators, to see confidence grow along with their knitting," continued Mary. "The Craft Circle gave them much more than a new skill, now, instead of just sitting in their rooms they can knit or do some needlework. And they made friends."

Everyone made at least one piece in each session, some completed two or three pieces. To end the Craft Circle, Kiltimagh CDP organised a visit to the Museum of Country Life in Turlough, Castlebar to view the exhibition of early 20th century Aran knitwear. The museum arranged an Aran knitting workshop for the group on the day.

"The women requested that we continue the Craft Circle again in the autumn and we hope to attract new participants," added Mary.

Hold a day for intercultural fun

Acorn CDP, Co. Longford

SEAN Ward got involved with Acorn CDP in Longford town while on placement from the Addiction Studies programme at Athlone Institute of Technology. He decided to remain on with the project as a volunteer and here he outlines the project's importance in County Longford:

The Acorn CDP is a unique organisation in County Longford and the opportunities it offers to new communities are vital for the

.....

"The project also provided training in conflict resolution – it organised training in Glencree."

.....

integration of different cultures. It hosts Acorn United FC, provides computer classes and facilitates free access to the internet

and to computers. The outcome: it enables people to learn new communication skills.

Classes are also provided in arts, crafts and sewing. One outcome: it enables people to feel more part of Irish society.

Earlier this year, volunteers gathered to build an Acorn CDP float for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The project has also provided training in conflict resolution – it organised training in the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

The real highlight of the year is Intercultural Family Fun Day which was held on July 19th. It was a tremendous success last year and won the project a national award.

One key difference between Acorn and other drop-in centres is that Acorn always



has a counsellor to hand, while in other centres you may only get the opportunity to seek professional help on a weekly basis.

For more information, contact Acorn CDP on 043-48373 or email cdpacorn@eircom.net

Change attitudes with myth-killing workshops

Mahon CDP, Cork city



FOR three years, Mahon CDP has been running equality awareness workshops in two local schools.

Each year, an asylum-seeker or refugee visits from Nasc, the Irish Immigrant Support Centre based in Cork. They speak about their personal experiences, how they came to be in Ireland and what they were fleeing from, and they field questions from the young people, including queries about the freebies, from cars to prams, that asylum-seekers are rumoured to receive.

The workshops are successful in dispelling myths and stereotypes young

people believe in. The project has learned that the most prejudiced beliefs held by locals are aimed less at asylum-seekers and refugees and more towards economic migrants, most notably Polish people. On foot of this, the organisers added an equality element to the awareness programme.

"We now get a Cork woman in to talk to the pupils. This woman had to leave Ireland in the 1980s to find work and lived in England for many years. She talks about racist comments she received, such as being told, 'Ye're only here to take our jobs - go back home Paddy!' Then we get in a Polish woman whose experience in Ireland mirrors that of the Cork woman in England. This has overturned the stereotypes. The response from the children is incredible, it's stopped a lot of the young people in their tracks," explains Viv Sadd, Mahon CDP co-ordinator.

"It's stopped a lot of the young people in their tracks."

The awareness workshops also include talks by a lesbian and a gay man, Travellers, people with disabilities, and older people.

It is a CDP initiative in collaboration with Mahon Youth Development Project and builds on earlier work when both organisations brought a group of Mahon youths on an educational trip to Poland, (following which a DVD was produced).

The youth worker is Denise Callanan.

For more information, contact: Viv Sadd, co-ordinator, Mahon CDP, Unit 7, Community Resource Centre, Avenue de Rennes, Mahon, Cork. T: 021 4359070. F: 021 4359084. E: info@mahoncdp.com W: www.mahoncdp.com

Network with others

- intercultural network marks 10th year whild parent body celebrates 21st

West Tallaght Resource Centre, Dublin

WHEN the West Tallaght Resource Centre (WTRC) was established 21 years ago, it chose to be "a small 'enabling' organisation rather than a large 'managing' organisation," recalled Anna Lee recently in a report to mark the Resource Centre's achievements.

Anna was the first project leader and she was joined on Thursday, June 19th, by staff and volunteers, past and present, and Minister of State John Curran for the Centre's official 21st party.

So what has WTRC done to support asylum-seekers and refugees over the years? Quite a lot - it is over ten years since the first concrete action was taken:

WTRC's work in this area coincided with a Tallaght Partnership initiative to establish the Tallaght Refugee Women's Group 1997. Both initiatives converged and became Tallaght Intercultural Action (TIA) in 1998.

TIA is a community development organisation working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It provides a drop-in facility, support and computer training for members of new communities. The Drop-in

Facility, with the support of the Bridgine Sisters, and WTRC, is based in St. Maelruan's Parish Centre. It provides a meeting place for refugees, asylum seekers and Irish nationals to get together and participate in multi-cultural activities. Information and training are also provided.

WTRC was responsible from the beginning for employing TIA's staff and administering their budget. This relationship continues today and staff numbers have grown to five. WTRC is currently working to enable TIA to become self-managing and independent. The TIA is 10 years old.

"The WTRC was always committed to the growth of local groups, to building their capacity and supporting their development," recalled Anna Lee. The TIA



is the proof of the pudding.

For the record, the WTRC started as one of nine projects (out of 150 applicants) funded under the Second EC Programme to Tackle Poverty(1985-1989). Soon after, it became part of the Community Development Programme.

Call SHEP for a course in 'Inter-Cultural Awareness'

SHEP CDP, Counties Cork & Kerry



THE Social and Health Education Project (SHEP) operates in Counties Cork and Kerry. It supports community groups by providing trained tutors to conduct courses in social and health education. For many years, intercultural awareness training has

been one of 12 main courses offered by SHEP.

Working in partnership with the Eastern European Association (EEA), SHEP developed and facilitated a 'Culture Club' programme in 2006 which facilitated 45-50 people from abroad and from Ireland to share and reflect on their respective traditions. The Culture Club programme has continued with ongoing support from the EEA and now meets regularly in the South Parish Community Centre in Cork.

Meanwhile, in 2007 SHEP developed and delivered 10-week intercultural dialogue programmes for immigrants. The courses were held in Blackpool, Wilton and Cork city centre.

"The community development approach adopted in the programmes has left those

involved feeling confident in their own ability to sustain their groups. Also, through these programmes, SHEP facilitators have gained valuable new experience of intercultural work and the capacity of the project has grown," says Dr. Paul Doherty, Director, the Social and Health Education Project.

The courses lead participants to ask questions about Irish culture as well as to examine the diverse cultural traditions represented in the immigrant population itself.

SHEP commenced its work in 1974. As well as community training services, the project provides counselling, advocacy and organisational development support.

For more details of SHEP's intercultural work, contact Liam McCarthy. T: 021-4666180 E: socialandhealth@eircom.net. SHEP is based in Village Chambers, The Village Centre, Station Road, Ballincollig, Co. Cork. Information about the project, including its International Partnership Programme in Nepal, can be found on the website: www.socialandhealth.com

Nominate people for awards

- our nominee won a national award



REZA Mirfattahi is an Iranian asylum-seeker, living in the Old Rectory Hostel, in New Ross, Co. Wexford. On June 19th, he was one of two Iranians presented with a World Refugee Day award.

He lists his place on the Voluntary Board of Management of New Ross CDP as his number one community contribution. There are many others - including his involvement in the local credit union, civil defence, Community Voice Group, and RAPID newsletter.

"As an asylum seeker I am facing many

limitations as part of the asylum process," says Reza. Against the odds, many asylum-seekers manage to integrate very well, as Reza's example shows very well.

While denied access to third level (as are all asylum-seekers unless they can pay the fees), Reza has completed courses through local organisations such as the County Wexford Partnership. His completion rate is indicative of the choice that is available to people who can engage with the community: English, suicide-intervention, lifeguard training, FETAC fitness, health promotion, mental health, swimming for teachers and child protection.

Mayor of New Ross, Cllr. Ingrid O'Brien, described Reza's civic spirit as being "clearly imbued with a keen sense of social justice, decency and fairness." She said she was impressed by the way he visited local schools, discussing the position and difficulties facing refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland, and breaking down barriers of ignorance between the different nationalities in our town.

Another Iranian man, Mojtaba

New Ross CDP, Co. Wexford



New Ross CDP staff members and volunteers and the Mayor of New Ross traveled to Dublin to support Reza Mirfattahi at the World Refugee Day Awards ceremony.

Pouladpour, living in Co. Longford, won a Refugee Award this year in the Health and Welfare category.

Reza's award-win is featured on pages 18-19.

Bring people together to quilt

Roscommon Women's Network



THE co-ordinator of Roscommon Women's Network CDP has been cursing 'Changing Ireland' for the "huge" reaction her project received to a report on their intercultural quilting. We reported how the quilting ticked many boxes in adopting a Community Development approach: collective action, an anti-poverty aim, partnership, empowerment and sustainability.

"We barely have time to answer the phone," said Nora, exaggerating a little. "While the women were making the quilt, I said we should write up an evaluation, describing how it worked, and I'm sorry we didn't now because everyone who rings

asks the same questions."

The project co-ordinator is part-time, as is the administrator Maria Harris and CE participant Lorraine Campbell and they have been under pressure to deal with enquiries following press coverage of the Network's

success with 'intercultural quilting'. A novel element was that the Network organised for the quilt to tour the county.

Calls came from around the country, including one on a Friday afternoon from the PAUL Partnership in Limerick.

"They had me on the phone for an hour, and I was cursing 'Changing Ireland' because I wanted to get home. But really it's great, I could talk about the quilt all day."

Others making enquiries include Dublin City Council, the October 17th committee and Roscommon County Council.

Nora said that 60% of the 26 quilters who came from many countries had "never sewed a button before" and they are very

proud. The quilt was produced to raise awareness of October 17th, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and it was funded by Combat Poverty and the Roscommon County Development Board.

A local young parents' group since went to work to produce a quilt of their own, but funding was an issue: "We asked Combat Poverty for money for them but they said they don't provide funding just like that," said Nora. "Six weeks later they got back to us and said they were getting tired of seeing newspaper clippings landing on their desk about our quilt, so the board had decided to give us €1,000. The young women were over the moon and they made their own quilt. We call it the 'sister-quilt'," said Nora.

To keep the staff and 14 volunteers in the Roscommon Women's Network on their toes, give them a ring. They would love to hear from you. Seriously!

T: 094-962-1690. E: NFahy@rwn.ie or MHarris@rwn.ie

Ethnic communities deserve their own CDPs

- says Combat Poverty Agency

THE Combat Poverty Agency believes the Community Development Programme should be expanded with more projects set up locally by and for people from ethnic minorities.

The new projects should be focused on specific groups within an area, as there already are Traveller groups in Kerry or in Clondalkin for example. In reaching out to non-Irish ethnic minorities, the group project approach could suit working with people from the larger ethnic groups such as Nigerians or Poles.

Combat Poverty identified the need in its Submission late last year to the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs on the future development of the Community

Development Programme. It was one of over 110 submissions received on the Programme's future.

It named some specific issues relating to the inclusion of ethnic minorities in CDPs:

- Work is needed with women and young people. Generally, young people from ethnic minorities are not engaging in activities within communities.
- Adequate resources will be required to ensure language was not a barrier. The inclusion of language training under the heading of 'literacy' by the VECs was not helpful.
- Work with a group focus (as well as individual) would be required, i.e.

support for group formation and development.

- The CDPs should work with existing ethnic-led organisations in communities – in recognition of the fact that many ethnic-led organisations are nationally rather than geographically oriented.
- Relationships would ideally be developed at national level with national organisations, though the Programme's lack of a national office inhibits this at present.
- Advocate on behalf of ethnic-led organisations regarding lack of funding.



Most foreigners here are British

A REPORT released on June 30th by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) shows that most Non-Irish Nationals (NINs) living in Ireland in April 2006 were from Britain. The ten largest ethnic minority groups in Ireland are from:

- 1 Britain (112,548)
- 2 Poland (63,276 resident + 10,126 Polish visitors on census night).
- 3 Lithuania (24,628 + 1,168 visitors)
- 4 Nigeria (16,300)
- 5 Latvia (13,319)
- 6 USA (12,475)
- 7 China (11,161)
- 8 Germany (10,289)
- 9 Philippines (9,548)
- 10 French nationals (9,046)

If you feel the statistics are not reflected in your area, you may be right. For instance, two-thirds of all Chinese people resident in Ireland live in the greater Dublin area (the city and its suburbs). By comparison, four of every five Latvians live outside the Pale.

A TIP!

The CSO report includes revealing profiles of the 10 largest non-Irish groups which should help to guide policy-makers at local as well as national level. The profiles show where in Ireland people from the ten largest ethnic groups live, who they tend to live with, what kind of work they do, their marital status, their religious beliefs or lack of, their economic status, and so on. Log onto www.cso.ie, wait a few seconds, then click on 'Census 2006'.

The official word on our 'Migration Nation'

ON May 1st, the Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, issued a policy statement termed 'Migration Nation'. It was a major piece of work undertaken over a ten-month period by the new Office of the Minister for Integration. The 73-page statement outlines eight key actions of policy and four key principles towards promoting integration in Ireland. Among the points it makes are:

- "In order to consolidate our position of affluence, continued inward migration must be accompanied by a renewed

investment in social stability with its demonstrable link to productivity gains. The societal gains from properly managed immigration are obvious and the demographic profile of the migrants we have attracted to Ireland to date illustrates this rather vividly.

- "The key challenge facing both Government and Irish society is the imperative to integrate people of much different culture, ethnicity, language and religion so that they become the new Irish citizens of the 21st century.

Major conference due for Dublin



- theme: *Community Development and Interculturalism*

THE International Association of Community Development (IACD) and Combat Poverty, in association with a number of other agencies including Pobal and the NCCRI are hosting an International Conference on Community Development and Interculturalism on 6/7th November 2008 in Dublin Castle.

The conference is to mark 2008 as the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Treaty of Rome.

Over 200 people are expected to attend, say Combat Poverty.

"Issues of migration, poverty, social inclusion and human rights are transforming both rural and urban social contexts in Europe at unprecedented speeds. We are interested in providing an international forum to highlight, explore and reflect on the contribution that community development makes to intercultural dialogue and what intercultural dialogue means for the values and practice of community development," say the organisers.

The other agencies involved include the Community Development Foundation, EANR, New Communities Partnership, the European Anti-Poverty Network, Integrating Ireland, Pavee Point, CEBSD and the Centre for Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth, and Dublin City Council.

Conference aims:

1. Use the theme of intercultural dialogue to explore contemporary migration and

poverty in Europe.

2. To explore and explain the role of Community Development in this context.
3. To increase solidarity with and share understanding between European networks, activists, migrants, ethnic and indigenous communities and policy makers.

Objectives:

1. To promote the role of community development in challenging racism and in shaping an intercultural and equal society.
2. To include a focus on poverty and social inclusion amongst migrants and ethnic and indigenous communities in Europe.
3. To promote the EU year of intercultural dialogue.

"This conference is envisaged therefore as a place where delegates will benefit from the rich learning across Europe and be a place to experience and envision new forms of intercultural dialogue through conference papers, keynote speeches, project visits and a showcase of poetry, music and film from within the migrant community in Ireland and further afield," says **Tara O'Leary of the International Association of Community Development**.

For more information, contact Michelle Griffin (T: 01-6026630).

E: michelle.griffin@combatpoverty.ie or Tara O'Leary (T: 0044(0)131-2082005. E: info@iacdglobal.org).

On Census Day, April 23rd, 2006 . . .

- 420,000 non-Irish people were resident in the State, coming from 188 different countries.
- There were 44 countries - from Anguilla to Western Sahara - represented by fewer than 10 people.
- Some 17 per cent of Lithuanians aged from five to 19 could speak Irish.
- Over half of the Nigerian people in Dublin lived in Fingal. By comparison, on the city's

Southside, only 1% of Nigerians in Ireland lived in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

- Non-Irish groups are dominated by people in their 20s and 30s, with significantly more men than women. There were few children and older people among them.
- 80% of Chinese said they had "no religion", by far the highest per cent of any group, while 6 per cent said Buddhist and 1 in 20 indicated Catholic.

- People from countries outside Europe had higher overall educational attainment than Irish people in the same age brackets.
- While Nigerians were heavily urbanised, British nationals lived mainly in rural areas, Polish people were largely here to work, and most Chinese were here to study. Such distinctions are significant for policy-making.

'Migration Nation' - Government seeks civil society partnership



Minister Conor Lenihan

- "Professional surveys of attitudes, conducted at both European and domestic level, indicate that Irish people have a high level of day to day contact with our newcomer population and a lower incidence of racially-motivated attacks on migrant individuals.
- "Integration policy in Ireland will be a two-way street involving rights and duties for those migrants who reside, work and in particular those who aspire to be Irish citizens.
- Minister Lenihan says there is a need for

"a partnership approach between the Government and non-governmental organisations, as well as civil society bodies, to deepen and enhance the opportunities for Integration." Also, there should be "a strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives."

'Migration Nation' which is available for download at:

www.justice.ie/en/JELR/print/Migration%20Nation%20Launch

Do we cast our net wide enough?

asks DECLAN WEIR, CIC manager

WE talk a lot about being inclusive. Our community projects work with vulnerable people who are excluded or marginalised, while Government legislation exists to make sure we don't discriminate against certain groups considered to be particularly vulnerable.

Yet, when we consider or define vulnerability, do we cast our net wide enough or ensure that we are aware of changes in circumstances that might lead to more people becoming vulnerable? Is it enough for us to focus our attention on people with disabilities or older people, for example? And if it is enough, does that mean we fail to notice a whole new group of vulnerable people, with the result that little or nothing is done to help them?

The first half of this year has seen a significant shift in Ireland's economic fortunes, and we are all feeling the pinch. The unemployment figures for the summer of 2008 were last seen during the grim old days when we left in droves to find work that simply did not exist here. This downturn has affected us all, but it looks like it's having a particularly negative effect on many of those who came here since the EU was significantly expanded four years ago. Are we, at national and local level, doing the best we can for our fellow EU citizens who have been working here, living here and contributing to our country's coffers since 2004?

ILL-INFORMED RUMBLINGS

Notwithstanding the ill-informed rumblings that are often heard when significant numbers of immigrants arrive in any country, these people have quietly gone about the business of living their lives. Now, though, the shadow of an economic downturn looms large over them as more and more jobs are lost, and, while many are returning home or going elsewhere, many others have made their lives here. Their

families have joined them, their children go to school here, they pay rent or mortgages, they have their networks of friends around them and have opened shops and started businesses providing themselves - and everyone else - with valuable services and goods. They were contributing to the system and suddenly find that, through no fault of their own, they now have to turn to that system for help and support.

Our social welfare system is confusing enough for those of us who speak English as our first language, but it must be all but

Opinion

unintelligible for many of these recent immigrants. It's encouraging, then, to see examples of local community projects providing information and translation services to those who find it difficult to decipher the cumbersome forms needed to claim Jobseeker's Benefit or Family Income Supplement.

FUNDING SHORTFALLS

As always, much of this work is limited by funding shortfalls, and there's a sense that community groups are being left to respond in their usual 'fire-fighting' style. It seems somewhat of an underachievement by Government for a recent press release to herald a statement on Integration and Diversity Management from Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, as "the first document of its kind from the Office since it was established in June 2007." **

There appears to be a yawning gap between what is happening on the ground and what is happening in the corridors of power. And, while positive statements on integration are to be applauded, perhaps increased funding for English classes or a multilingual campaign to clarify social welfare entitlements for the unemployed would be a better allocation of resources.



Each time conversational English classes are made available in certain areas, they are massively oversubscribed leading to large numbers of disappointed applicants. Those who want and need to improve their English are frequently on low pay and cannot afford private lessons. And so the circle continues, with the vulnerable becoming increasingly vulnerable. They lose their jobs and cannot understand the social welfare system; they cannot afford to learn English so they never find out that they can combine Irish social insurance with those from other EU countries to be eligible for Jobseeker's Benefit. Instead they are bounced between the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the HSE, always unsure as to what they are entitled to, or who they should ask.

HUGE WORK DONE

There is no doubt that our CDPs have already done a huge amount of work to include and involve those who have come to Ireland, and a flick through past issues of 'Changing Ireland' reveals how much has been achieved to date. As a whole new group of vulnerable people begin to emerge, it looks like, once again, CDPs will be found where most of the hard work is undertaken. As they try to help migrant workers and their families come to terms with the effects of unemployment and surviving on low income, they'll be looking to the Minister for Integration to come up with something a little more concrete than a press release over the next twelve months.

* Declan Weir works as a manager with Clifden Citizens Information Centre in Co. Galway. He previously worked as Disability Information Outreach Worker with FORUM CDP in Connemara and has reported on development issues west of the Shannon for 'Changing Ireland' since 2002.

** NOTE: The policy statement referred to by the writer is explained in more detail in a separate report and is available for download.



Reza Mirfattahi from New Ross and Iran, speaking at the World Refugee Day awards ceremony.

Repression in an international context

IRAN (or Persia) was renamed the Islamic Republic of Iran by revolutionary Islamists who seized power in a 1979 coup mounted against the US-supported and autocratic Shah. Repression of one kind was replaced by repression of another.

Iran's oil reserves mean it is geopolitically important and there has been war and conflict since oil became the new gold. As recently as June of this year, the 'New Yorker' magazine reported the US government had allocated \$400 million this year for a supposedly secret war that includes abductions and

assassinations within Iran, with the aim of destabilising the Iranian regime.

While US military intelligence agencies have reported publicly that Iran's interest in nuclear power appears solely for civilian use, the Bush administration continues to push the story that the Iranian regime is bent on developing nuclear weapons.

Repression within Iran takes place against a backdrop of geopolitical wrestling. In recent years, opposition party activities are tolerated less and less.

- Editor

'Show solidarity with us in Ireland'

- urges award-winning refugee, Reza Mirfattahi

REZA Mirfattahi made an impassioned speech on being presented with a World Refugee Award at a ceremony in Dublin on June 19th. He dedicated his award to people persecuted in his home country of Iran and appealed for Irish people to work in solidarity with the oppressed.

Among those listening was Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan. Reza's speech focused on the positive virtues to be found among refugees and asylum-seekers. He was also openly critical of the regime in Iran:

"Asylum-seekers and refugees can contribute hugely and can be valuable assets to their new communities. As people who have fled injustices, we are now safe in the hands of new hosts in this country. These communities deserve our deep and genuine gratitude and appreciation. This can be manifested by engagement with civic society and contributing to our new adopted communities in Ireland.

"As we face our challenges, we must not turn our backs on them."

"Since coming to this country I have been committed to integrating fully into Irish society. I have attempted to achieve this by getting involved across the spectrum of community organisations."

As an Iranian, he said he was "deeply honoured" to see that Tomi Reichental was at the ceremony.

"Tomi is a survivor of Holocaust living in Ireland. His meaningful presence is a very clear message to those ignorant back in my home country who tried during the past three decades to portray a very different picture about (Israeli-Iranian) history."

Reza said the Iranian regime ignored the long history of good relations between Persians and Jews, something you're unlikely to hear about through the media.

"Ireland could take the initiative and show the world that a freedom-loving Persian community living in exile is willing to integrate with their Jewish and other neighbours and work to overcome the current

Reza: Award will not win my case

REZA Mirfattahi believes it "unlikely" that his award-win will contribute anything to his case which is pending (for close to three years now) and is due to be heard by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

"The award just helps me to highlight the human rights abuses of the fundamentalist Islamic regime in Iran," says Reza. "The whole asylum-process in Ireland is some kind of lottery. There is no sense to it. How do they assess someone in a 30-

minute interview and by googling you on the internet?"

Reza feels himself changing inside and sometimes is "depressed, a bit jumpy, and under pressure" as the waiting drags on.

"I don't know why I've to wait so long," he says, echoing the experience of many other asylum-seekers.

He singles out for criticism the performance of Jim Nicholson, a controversial former member of the three-person Refugee Appeals Tribunal. Mr. Nicholson, according to documents lodged with the courts, granted asylum on just

solidarity Iranians!'

enza Mirfattahi

challenge threatening both their futures," said Reza.

"Iran and Iranians should not be confused with the clerical regime. Iran's culture has suffered from the fundamentalist yoke, but it is alive and defiant," he continued, asking for the "free world" to help.

"There are hundreds of young Iranian dissidents who are sitting scared in places from Jordan to Turkey, or in refugee camps in European cities. With a little help from the free world, they can become the building blocks ... for democracy. As we face our oppressors, do not turn your back to us."

He went on to bravely dedicate his award to "the scared and desperate wives and children of workers arrested in demonstrations throughout Iran, the cut tongues of the Iranian trade union leaders in

prison, Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi, the beaten and arrested workers who are flogged in the public places simply for peaceful demonstrations, to the desperate mothers of young political prisoners under torture in jail, to the women of

oppressors, do
ck to us!"

Iran oppressed by the Sharia rules who are treated as second class citizens to be ashamed of being born female, to the entire hostage nation, the people of Iran, imprisoned in a jail as vast as the country itself."

Reza had begun his speech by thanking the people of New Ross "for their kindness and generosity", in particular supporters (who had travelled by mini-bus with him) from New Ross CDP.

He finished with an appeal for solidarity from the audience.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We describe Reza in our headline as a refugee, which he is by virtue of the fact that he has fled persecution in his native country. It is of course another matter as to whether he is legally recognised as such by the authorities here. His current legal status is as an asylum-seeker (someone seeking official recognition, status and protection as a refugee).

for me

two occasions in over 400 appeal hearings. He has since resigned from the post and the Refugee Legal Service has called for a review of up to 1,000 rejected asylum applications.

The Refugee Appeals Tribunal is due to be replaced by another body under proposed new legislation.

After Reza's appeal hearing takes place, he anticipates a further 8-to-9 month wait to hear the outcome. That's if he's lucky - he knows people who have waited a year and more, including people who were then turned down.

Kerry resident denied award after handshake drama

CONTROVERSY erupted at the Refugee Awards ceremony in Dublin when a proposed award-winner, of Muslim faith, was demoted from the honours list. Metro Eireann reported that the Kerry resident "indicated he would not shake hands with the female presenter."

A refusal to shake hands with another person is nothing new in Ireland, apart from the fact that this time the antagonist was of a non-Christian faith.

The Kerry-based asylum-seeker had been selected for his work with the Kerry Volunteer Centre and as a fundraiser for Amnesty International.

However, as Metro Eireann reported, he informed organisers prior to

the ceremony that arrangements needed to be put in place so that he would not have to shake hands with any female.

The person due to present the award was Benedicta Attoh, a Nigerian woman who intends to stand as a candidate in next year's local elections.

Metro Eireann reporter, Catherine Reilly, interviewed the man and found he would not shake her hand either. The would-be winner expressed confusion, said he did not want controversy and said he had been happy to be nominated.

There are mixed views among Muslims on the issue of shaking hands with members of the opposite sex.

World Refugee Day award

THE United Nations' World Refugee Day is observed on June 20th each year. The event honours the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

Organised by the African Refugee Network at the Africa Centre, the Refugee Awards ceremony in Ireland aims to recognise the positive contribution that many asylum seekers and refugees make locally and to highlight the efforts of local people who extend the hand of friendship and solidarity towards them.

There are ten different awards



under five categories including Community and Environment, Health and Welfare, Arts and Culture, and Sports and Leisure. There are two awards in each category, with one going to a local person and another to a refugee/asylum-seeker.

The highest-profile winner to date is former Ireland manager BRIAN KERR who was honoured last year for promoting soccer among migrant communities. He advocated sport as a tool for integration.

This year's ceremony - and drama - took place on June 19th in the Dublin City Council's Wood Quay offices.

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

New Programme being shaped from top and bottom

By ALLEN MEAGHER

THE future direction taken by the Community Development Programme is being led by the bottom-up as well as the top-down, as it should be. The Programme is 18 years old and the projects within it - all working in areas of disadvantage - bring positive change to hard-pressed communities throughout the country. Around 2000 local volunteers are part of the Programme and it is a key part of the new NDP. Last year, a consultation process was begun and it has taken on a life of its own.

When regional CDP conferences promised for early this year did not materialise, projects sought and got a half-dozen meetings at regional level with then-Minister Carey and with senior officials. The Eastern Region Network meeting with the Minister, for example, was hailed by projects as being "very positive." The Network has followed it with a July 15th meeting with the new Minister of State, John Curran.

The catalyst for calling regional meetings was the ending of contracts with Regional Support Agencies and a perceived lack of full consultation with projects about what would replace them. The regional meetings also provided a space for projects to make their views known about the Programme's development.

Sometimes, in face-to-face meetings, more can be conveyed. Projects had already contributed to the 110-plus submissions made to the Department late last year (which are now publicly available and fill a good-sized box).

Currently, the old model of contracting Regional Support Agencies to assist projects on corporate governance, legal and human resource issues is being replaced with a new

News in brief

- *Old support agency model being replaced*
- *Consultative panel members resign*
- *Projects have regional meetings with Dept.*
- *Tender out for new support to projects*
- *Separate tender for community development training*
- *New networking arrangements on the way*
- *Projects working towards setting up a national office*
- *Conference promised*

model - the tender has been issued. New centralised support arrangements should be in place by the end of September. A separate tender competition is due to be held for community development training and support. In the interim, the Department says it will provide and pay for support as appropriate to the needs of projects.

Meanwhile, on the ground - in Ballymun to be precise - a CDP has written to every project seeking funding support for a feasibility study to show how and why the Programme would benefit from having a national office. The Community Action Programme CDP say they have got a positive response from projects and that the study should be complete by December.

However, there was fallout over the way the model for supporting projects was changed by the Department without, say project representatives, proper consultation. In May, the volunteer and staff

representatives on a national consultative committee resigned. They said they felt "excluded" from the process of developing the Programme.

However, Minister John Curran argues that over 2007 the consultation process - including the "contribution" from the project representatives - proved "very beneficial to the Department in its efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme."

He said it has led to better budgeting arrangements for projects and to a new 'Governance and Good Practice Checklist' for projects. And, over the summer, he promised new procedures in respect of corporate governance, financial management and control.

Significantly, from a participation viewpoint, the Department is proposing to introduce "formal networking arrangements at local, regional and national level as part of the future support structure for Projects."

This is likely to be very much welcomed by projects. In the meantime, the Minister has written asking the members of the National Consultative Panel who resigned to consider engaging with the new networking arrangements once they are put in place.

Furthermore, a national conference is promised by the Department (a date has yet to be set).

The volunteers and staff in the Programme's 180 projects and the Ministers and their officials will work together, over the coming months, to map the way forward for the Programme. It will be interesting to see how the mapping unfolds and in which direction the Programme goes. If anyone is looking for further reading, the 110-plus submissions on the matter are publicly available. They fill a good box mind!



John Curran is new Community Minister

DUBLIN Mid-West TD, John Curran, is the new Minister of State with special responsibility for Drugs Strategy and Community Affairs at the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs. Taoiseach Brian Cowen appointed Pat Carey, who held the position for 11 months, as his new 'Chief Whip'.

John Curran's base is Clondalkin and he was first elected to the Dáil in 2002 and was returned last year in a landslide win.

He graduated from UCD with a degree in

Commerce and ran his own business for almost 20 years. He rates his work with a number of youth projects and charity fund-raising ventures as "amongst my proudest achievements."

John is married to Shauna with two school-going children.

You can contact Minister John Curran by writing to him at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. T: 01-6473042 (Department) and 01-618 3792 (Constituency).

Integration Minister of State

IN June, 2007, Conor Lenihan from Dublin South West was appointed Minister of State with special responsibility for Integration Policy at the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. He was re-appointed to the position in May of this year.

Volunteer reps resign from Panel

By Maurice McConville

REGIONAL representatives – staff and volunteers – of the National Consultative Panel (NCP) have taken the very difficult decision to resign from NCP. The reasons for our actions are laid out in the letter we sent to Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, Junior Minister John Curran and Department officials informing them of our decision.

The representatives are appalled by the Department's decision to make major changes to the Community Development Programme without the input or knowledge of the NCP representatives. Despite having agreed to a collaborative process, the Department chose to undermine that same process, by taking an arbitrary decision to make major changes to support structure to projects.

FELT LET DOWN

We had worked closely with officials on the content and process of the consultation and we had also encouraged regions and project to engage with the process. Representatives felt let down by the Department's action.

It was agreed by representatives that the Department's action had made the process of consultation meaningless. It would be wrong for us to remain within a process where our input as regional representatives is not respected. We did attempt to meet with the then Junior Minister, Pat Carey to put our case for a fair and open consultation process, however we were not afforded this opportunity. We therefore had no other option but to resign from the NCP.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

In their letter of resignation, the representatives said:

"The National Consultation Panel was set up with the purpose of shaping the new programme for the Community Development Programme 2007 -2013... and we met with staff of the Community Development Unit Dept, of CRAGA formally 3 times in 2007.

"A cornerstone of Community Development is consultation with those affected by policy and programme changes. However, after the initial engagement with the Consultation Panel in relation to the scope of the consultation we have neither had access to the responses nor any role in moving the consultation process forward.

"(We now) withdraw our representation and this letter is to confirm to you that we are resigning from the National Consultation Panel.

"We feel that the Panel has not been put in a position to fulfil its role and we do not wish to continue and thereby give credibility to a process from which we have actually been excluded."

The letter was signed by Mattie Sheridan, a volunteer with Larchville/Lisduggan CDP in Waterford, on behalf of the other volunteer and staff representatives on the national committee.

Tender out for new support services



Sean McLaughlin

- as Department provides for interim support

THE Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs wishes to establish "three multi-operator framework agreements over a four-year period for training and support services" to CDPs.

In a new tender document issued on June 16th, the Department seeks "expressions of interests for training and consultancy support services" to projects funded through the Community Development Programme."

The tender names three lots of support, in the areas of: Corporate Governance, Financial management, and Human Resources.

TWO TENDERS

The tender specifies that the eventual service providers will have to "provide quality support in the form of direct and indirect training and development support to volunteer board members and staff of Projects. It will be possible to provide support on a regional or national basis," it adds. The tender is open to regional support agencies that worked with the Programme before as well as other interested parties.

There will be a separate tender competition for the community development training and support. In the Limerick area, for the time being, CDP co-ordinators are discussing the idea of providing training to volunteers in neighbouring projects.

NEW NETWORKING STRUCTURE

Meanwhile, the Department's Assistant Principal Officer, Sean McLaughlin, has written to projects, saying: "Considerable skills and talents of both volunteers and staff

that have been developed over the years. As part of the overall support structures, we intend to harness this experience and learning through formal networking arrangements at local, regional and national level and I will advise Projects in this regard at a further date."

In addition, the Department is progressing towards the introduction of formal networking arrangements at local, regional and national level, as part of the future support structure for projects. He said that plans are being laid by the Department for a national conference.

"We remain fully committed to the development of volunteers and staff of Projects and to providing support services where needs are identified," he added.

PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Sean has confirmed the Department will step in to provide support, including funding to CDPs, in the interim period while a new support structure is being put in place.

"We are positively disposed to project's needs, once they specify what those needs are," declared Sean.

"New centralised support arrangements should be in place by the end of September. In the interim, projects have been afforded some flexibility by providing them with, albeit limited, resources to procure services that meet their training and development needs.

He urged people "not to hesitate to contact your Departmental contact if you have any further queries, particularly where any matter arises that you consider may require additional assistance."

Keep challenging us, says Minister at launch

- *Moyross magazine is a "voice" for the sector*

The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, has praised 'Changing Ireland' for providing community development workers and volunteers around the country with a "voice" and a "central forum" for debate on issues relevant to the sector.

Minister Ó Cuív, whose Department funds the magazine, was in Moyross, Limerick on April 24th, to launch the web and print versions of the 25th edition.

"'Changing Ireland' not only gives people working in community development a voice, it also provides a central forum for the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas," he told a 40-strong group.

HUMOUR

With humour, he described what happened most publications he receives, but assured everyone that 'Changing Ireland' was one magazine that does not hit his waste-paper basket as soon as it comes in.

The articles were "very readable, they are interesting, they relate to ordinary people's lives and they are practical, they talk about the way it is. And yes, you sometimes say things we mightn't agree with, but... as a politician, when somebody really challenges you, it does perk you up and maybe make you think in a new direction and that needs to happen all the time."

STRUCTURAL DIVIDE

During his speech, the Minister talked of "a big divide in our society" and, in reference to

urban deprivation effecting young people in particular, he said that education and activities were key. He drew attention to the way society is "very much structured against" young people from urban disadvantaged areas going on to third level education.

He also spoke of achievements under RAPID, the full country coverage by the Partnerships and about the Community Development Programme's permanent place in tackling disadvantage within communities.

HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

Editor Allen Meagher said, "It is a sign of a healthy democracy and a credit to Minister Éamon Ó Cuív and his Department that they fund a magazine that sometimes reflects critical views on local and national social policy. They value communities having a voice. 'Changing Ireland' is proud to be the voice for many of the so-called 'disadvantaged' communities. And when we name a problem, we can also name a proven solution."

PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Over the years, he said 'Changing Ireland' had highlighted "proven responses to suicide, antisocial behaviour, rural isolation and many other solutions to supposedly impossible problems".

The launch took place at the AGM of the Community Development Network Moyross, which manages 'Changing Ireland' on behalf of the Community Development Programme. During his visit, the Minister met with CDP volunteers and packers from the area.



Rebecca Carey (packing team), Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, editor Allen Meagher, CDN chairperson Tracy McElligott, and Lindsay O'Connor (packing team) at the launch of the 25th 'Changing Ireland'.

Dublin CDP pushes projects for national office

A CDP in Dublin is pushing hard to set up a national office for the Community Development Programme and has asked each CDP to contribute to a fund that should help make it happen.

"A national office would give the Programme a voice on national issues, such as the recent finding that there was a 30% price differential in shopping baskets north and south of the border. Issues like this hit the marginalised in society most and we should be saying something about it," said Emma Freeman of Ballymun.

For years, projects in the Community Development Programme talked of the need for a national office, but this time there is movement.

Tender documents will be drawn up in early July, the steering group will then be established, and the tender will be advertised by late summer.

Project co-ordinator, Emma Freeman is doing the leg-work and Emma's employer, the Community Action Programme in Ballymun, has agreed to manage the finances and report back to the steering group if the idea takes off.

There have been "a lot of enquiries" from people interested in joining the steering group and Emma says she has only had one negative reply to the cash appeal to date.

Emma hopes the study will be launched by December (and not September, as she initially hoped for).

Each management committee in the country was asked to discuss the proposal, so Emma's argument needed to be strong. She wrote to say a national office is required as a matter of urgency:

"Despite a 'review' of the Programme having taken place, there is no indication that a clear understanding of future development priorities has emerged. This is even more serious given the important developments taking place in the local development environment overall (through the cohesion process for example). Given its long-standing history and acknowledged impact, the Community Development Programme should provide a very strong and informed voice in this process. Instead of this it remains silent."

She says the sense of powerlessness arises, to some extent, from a lack of understanding of both the nature and significant contribution made by community development: "Even though the last evaluation of the Programme (by Nexus in 2000) clearly demonstrated the very positive impacts of CDPs, there was no effort since, at Programme level, to follow through on this report's key recommendations."

According to Emma there is now a very real danger that the programme's future may be shaped by a misunderstanding of its key strengths and that any chance of addressing these challenges rests in the hands of projects.

A national office would mean the Programme has some say at national policy level and the office would help to promote the Programme's achievements.

Emma invites projects to pay €200 each towards the cost of a feasibility study to see how best to move the proposal forward.

For more information, contact: Emma Freeman, Programme Manager, CAP, Axis Community Centre, Ballymun, Dublin 9. T: 01-8832162.

F: 01-8832161. E: info@cap.ie

W: www.cap.ie

Concerned for Programme's future

- constantly changing operational environment not a help

By GLYNIS CURRIE
Framework Support Agency*

OVER 15 years of involvement with the Programme, Framework and Projects have had to manage and adapt to constant changes in the ongoing life span of the CDP. This has, I feel, often been a fruitless and additional burden distracting us away from the real work with communities on the ground. These changes have been influenced by both internal structural changes as well as the impact of a wider political, economic and operational environment. The following points demonstrate how lack of consistency at the top has created the 'poor relation' status that the Programme has been experiencing over the years.

- There has been too much changing of key staff within the various departments who have been managing the CDP. Since Deaglan O'Briain left the Programme in 1999 there have been six other Principle Officers, and changes too numerous to mention among the other civil servants. There have been five Ministerial changes, and the Programme has now been allocated its third Junior Ministerial position in four years. This has led, in my opinion, to a lack of leadership and drive at Government level.
- The Programme was originally managed by the Department of Social Welfare, then the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs and was moved to the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2003. This has meant that key relationships at local level between Department personnel, Support Agencies and Projects have been lost and the breadth of knowledge of the Programme has not been replaced within the current management structure. The change to the DCRGA has contributed to a distinct lack of vision for, and acknowledgement of, the Programme's capabilities and potential to contribute to government policy.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PROGRAMME?

The picture that is emerging now is of a Community Development Programme where the original vision and potential has been eroded. It has been a lost opportunity and sad failure not to acknowledge, champion and take pride in the work that Projects have achieved in communities that experience the



Glynis Currie, Framework Support Agency

highest levels of disadvantage in the country. This Programme has been a unique model for promoting social change and active citizenship within Ireland. Yet instead of putting it at the centre of Government development policy and anti-poverty approaches, the Programme has been sidelined. As yet there is still no clear information as to what the future plans are for the Programme despite two national consultation processes being initiated in the past 5 years.

Due to a lack of leadership and inconsistency in management, what we have now is a fragmented, low key and individually based Programme. In addition, I believe the Department's lack of will, to date, to provide adequate resources for additional core staff or proper supports for regional and national networking has contributed to the current low status of the CDP at national level. The implication being that the voice of those communities most experiencing struggle and disadvantage has effectively been silenced.

What adds insult to injury for volunteers who have been involved over the years is the lack of joined up thinking. DCRGAs is now funding the development of "Active Citizenship" and the "Volunteer Centres". As one level of support for volunteers is being dismantled within the CDP, another is being established around the corner with a new group of volunteers with new structures and staff.

One of our regrets is that we have not been in a position to influence any of the developments or events of recent years. For Projects as well as Regional Supports Agencies this has been a hugely frustrating experience. Despite our long sustained involvement with and commitment to CDPs we

have ended up without a voice or an opportunity to contribute to the Programme's overall development.

However, our experience of the work at local and regional level has always been a very positive one and we wish all of the Projects in the South East, and in all areas of the Programme every success and hope to continue to build on a new relationship moving into the future.

Finally, Framework Regional Support Agency became involved in the Community Development Programme in 1993, starting out with six CDPs and ending up providing support to 28 CDPs and 18 FRCs at the end of 2007. The staff and volunteers consider it a privilege to have been involved in the Programme and were constantly inspired by the projects as they brought about positive change to their communities.

* Glynis writes on behalf of the management and staff of Framework Support Agency based in Waterford City.

LETTER

Volunteer Management

June 9th
Waterford

Dear Editor,

I am very concerned that this Government has taken away the very thing that us Volunteers need - the training provided by support agencies. Believe me, as a Volunteer of over 35 years, I know how much we need training, even to keep-up with all the new rules.

However, with all the Dáil Questions that have been asked, no answer has been given as to why this is happening.

With all the money that we the Volunteers are saving the Government, you would think that they would be doing all they can to help us to support our Communities. We the Volunteers have been taken for granted for far too long, and we are getting fed-up, and most of us are thinking very hard before taking on those responsibilities for very much longer.

The Ministers say that they want to support the Volunteers in the community. We could do so much for our community with all the money that they are wasting.

Regards,

Paddy O'Sullivan,

Volunteer, Larchville/Lisduggan CDP
and the Men's Development Network

Hopes for fresh start despite McNamara pull-out

- struggle continues for St. Michael's Est., O'Devaney Gdns. and Dominic St.

"IT'S a grass roots community protest," said Rita Fagan, Lena Jordan and Gerry Carney in advance of the June 9th march, the second march in protest at the collapse of three massive regeneration schemes in Dublin city. An appeal went out to political parties urging them to "respect our protest space" and so they did, keeping party political banners in the background.

At 6pm on June 9th, for the second time in a month, a large crowd marched on City Hall. Many were from the affected communities, others emerged onto the streets in a show of solidarity. And they were loud – the organisers had called on people to bring along pots and pans. Poignantly, many wore black to symbolise the death of the communities' hopes and dreams.

The next day Rita Fagan was beaming once again and pleased to see they had made half-a-page in the Irish Times. They were keeping the story in the public eye.

The bad news first broke on May 19th when three inner city working class communities had their hopes, dreams and expectations shattered – the developer who had committed to regeneration in the three communities was pulling out. The areas are St. Michael's Estate, O'Devaney Gardens and Dominick Street flats.

In the case of St. Michael's Estate it was their third time to experience disappointment having developed three different plans for their site over the past seven years.

In all three communities, the Department of the Environment and Dublin City Council enforced Public Private Partnership (PPP) as



Rita Fagan urges people to make their voices heard outside Dublin City Council offices on June 9th as the Council met to discuss problems with the city's regeneration schemes.

the model to deliver their homes and facilities.

In a statement issued in response to the pull-out, reps from the communities, Rita, Lena and Gerry wrote:

"The living communities in all three areas had no choice but to work with the State to ensure within the PPP that they got the best deal for their communities. They joined their Regeneration Boards and worked extremely hard to draft up plans not only for the bricks and mortar but ones that included a social agenda that would address the deep inequalities which affect these communities. Each community crafted their land to match their needs. St. Michael's Estate fought hard and won to be participants on the assessment

panel."

As it happened, developer Bernard McNamara's company was chosen. He was also the favoured tender for regeneration in O'Devaney Gardens, Dominick Street, a 14 acre site in St. Michael's Estate along with Sean McDermott Street and Infirmary road.

"Promises were made by the State nationally and locally to our communities," said the community reps. "The collapse of the PPP model is not our problem and we as communities will not be silenced."

They demanded that Dublin City Council follow through with the regeneration plans.

For more check:
www.stmichaelsestate.ie

Mostly good news for Ballymun

THE good news from Ballymun – and good news from regeneration projects in Dublin is especially welcome in these troubled times – is that almost 80% of new homes are complete, 24 of the 36 blocks of flats are history and, in four years' time, all the old flats will be gone and a total of 2,400 new homes will be occupied.

Ballymun Regeneration says the next phase of its plan is to focus on social and economic issues and to move the areas from a cycle of dependency to becoming a self-sustaining community in its own right.

Plans are also understood to be progressing to provide proper facilities for



BCON steering members Emma Freeman, Máirín O'Cuireain, Dermot King and Audrey Meehan who campaigned, with considerable success, for better community facilities in Ballymun.

existing community groups. More community sector involvement should be a feature of future regeneration in the area that was once the country's largest flat complex and greatest heroin dive.

And the bad news is . . . the regeneration of Ballymun will cost double its original estimate of €442 million (how do such overspends happen?) and will take six years longer than planned, according to a report published in March by the State's spending watchdog.

Incidentally, there has also been a doubling of costs in a regeneration scheme in Cork city.

Determination to end "dire conditions" for residents

REGENERATION in Dublin is sorely needed, says Rita Fagan, co-ordinator of St. Michael's Estate Resource Centre.

"Limerick might be in the papers but communities in Dublin are as bad with anti-social behaviour and shootings and gangs. We have people in O'Devaney Gardens and they are living in dire conditions."

Things have got worse since the collapse of the regeneration schemes in Dublin and criminals have gathered in large numbers in the abandoned housing complexes at weekends. It's not a place to live, but some people have no choice.

"We have been on our knees so many times," Rita says. "We signed off on January 14th and then the developer McNamara wanted €8 million saying the land was toxic. He wanted the land, but he didn't want to deliver."

O'DEVANEY GARDENS MIGHT PULL THROUGH

"It looks somewhat hopeful for O'Devaney Gardens as McNamara had signed the legal contract," said Rita on June 9th. "But it doesn't look so good for the other two communities and there is a great value for us keeping ourselves in the media. Dominic Street is small and collective action is needed to support their struggle."



"There is a lot to be said about developing relationships with journalists to promote the issue. We are at the bottom, on our knees, but we will fight to the end."

"Meanwhile," she pointed out, "our work on the ground in St. Michael's continues, supporting after-school groups, summer

projects and so on."

The depth of disappointment in the communities is immense, and the battle for fair play will continue. "The government don't control us, they can't tell us what to do. Local people are leading and we appreciate the solidarity of other groups," added Rita.

Dublin City Council statement

DUBLIN City Council released a statement on June 9th expressing optimism that the regeneration of O'Devaney Gardens may still go ahead. It said it was putting in place a "Special Housing Development Unit specifically to progress the regeneration of St Michael's Estate, Dominick Street and O'Devaney Gardens, including developing alternative plans as necessary."

After a meeting on July 7th, the Council said it hoped the regeneration schemes for St Michael's Estate, and for Dominick Street would go to the second bidder. They intended to invite mediation between the Council and developer McNamara & Co. over the regeneration of O'Devaney Gardens.



Nonie Ewe: 'Thanks, but no thanks!'

Dear Horace!

Isn't the no vote a hoot? Thanks for all the dough but we have to say no. What happened?

- Nonie Ewe

Dear Nonie,

This is a new departure in politics for the island of Ireland and a change from Ulster says NO! The trouble is we have no 'Big Man' with a big voice to back it up. Most of our politicians were at a loss for what to say.

The politicians' favourite answer seemed to be "The people didn't understand". Well, when the Taoiseach admits to not having read the whole

treaty, is it any wonder?

If we are given another go at getting the answer right, maybe CDPs will be expected - under cohesion - to run workshops in "Understanding the Lisbon Treaty and why plebs need to tick yes." I am putting the application together right now. I might be able to tender for the whole country as a Support Agency.

Happy Days!

Horace

The cheek of them NINs

Hello Horace!

I hear the NINs - Non-Irish Nationals - are big into volunteering and especially that lot, the Nigerians. Well, I've been reading the daily newspapers for years - never mind that 'Changing Ireland' propaganda - and I happen to know the Nigerians come here to help the crime-wave.

If it is true about this volunteering lark, then we'll have to get onto our TDs about it. I mean, who do these people think they are, coming here and taking our volunteer places. The way things are going, there'll be no volunteer places left for us Irish. Bloody NINs!

Paddy Notoeverything Cromwell
Chairperson, Too Many Challenges Community Group

Dear Paddy Notoeverything,

The Nigerians are only the tip of the iceberg. We now have Estonians volunteering, Polish volunteers, why even the French over here are volunteering. We'll have to put a stop to it alright or the NINs might start settling in, integrating and the like and decide to stay or something. We'll need to start a group to put a stop to this. Just need a few volunteers.

- Horace

The code is out

Hi Horace!

I'm writing from the West of Ireland to let you know that we devised a Code to encourage our projects to be friendly towards gay people. Just letting you know.

Frank Friendly,
Helping Out CDP

Hello Frank,

Ok, a Code. Think I know what you mean, is it like a secret password? Code X - gay woman approaching, everyone smile! Write again, let me know the code-word and I'll pass it on.

- Horace

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

2008 - key UN dates to come

Aug 06	Hiroshima Day
Aug 09	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Aug 12	International Youth Day
Sep 08	International literacy Day
Sep 19	International Day of Peace
Sep 26	Declaration of the Rights of the Child
Oct 01	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
Oct 05	World Teachers Day
Oct 06	International Day for Children
Oct 16	World Food Day
Oct 17	International Day for the Elimination of Poverty
Oct 24	United Nations Day
Nov 01	International Volunteer Managers Appreciation Day
Nov 16	International Day for Tolerance
Nov 20	Universal Children's Day
Nov 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
Dec 01	International Aids Day
Dec 03	International Day for Persons with a Disability
Dec 05	International Volunteer Day
Dec 10	Human Rights Day

Slave-like labour

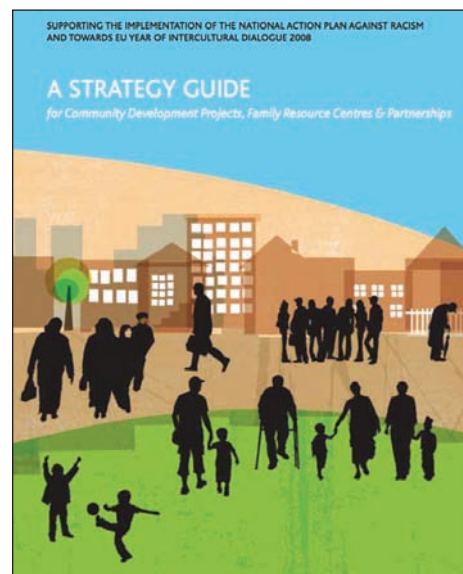
"WHEN you are undocumented the feeling is that you can be sacked at any moment ...The person who employs you has all the power. You do whatever he wants. You feel that the employer knows about your position and is taking advantage of you and there is nothing you can do about it."

- 'Life in the Shadows', an exploration of irregular migration in Ireland, published by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and downloadable from the organisation's website: www.mrci.ie

Here's how to do it!

- tips for involving immigrants in community events

- 1) Organise events at a suitable time, e.g. evenings and weekends for migrant workers. Sunday is often the most commonly free day, though some minority ethnic groups have Sunday services.*
- 2) Acknowledge the differences in the situation and needs of both women and men and the fact that migrant workers are not a homogenous group.
- 3) Address barriers to participation, e.g. poor public transport and lack of childcare.
- 4) Do not arrange social events in pubs.
- 5) In the initial stage it may not be necessary to pay full commercial rates for translation of leaflets to advertise events. Ask local leaders if they can help in translating flyers that simply say, e.g., 'A welcome night, an information session on migrant workers' rights'.
- 6) Post leaflets and flyers where people meet or go, e.g. the Post Office, shop windows, internet café, local library, local churches.
- 7) If the majority of migrant workers in the town/area speak one particular language, e.g. Polish, try to have some translation. It is important to have some idea of the languages spoken by migrant workers in the area. For non-EEA migrant workers it is possible to begin a rough profile of nationality by checking the DETE website www.entemp.ie
- 8) Get sufficient copies of the free leaflets on migrant workers' rights. These are available in 11 languages from the Employment Rights Information Unit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Check titles on www.entemp.ie/employment/rights/publications.htm
- 9) Invite local CDPs, FRCs or Partnerships to introduce their work and initiatives in support of migrant workers and their families.
- 10) Be strategic, ensure that a community development worker is present at



meetings, define opportunities for collectivising experiences, invite people to meet to reflect on the issues that have been raised in previous meetings and to help organise a follow-up as appropriate.

- 11 Migrant workers who work long or untypical hours often cannot access the CIC, the library or public services that only operate during 'office' hours from Monday to Friday.

Source: A Strategy Guide for Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres and Partnerships. The report was published by Pobal and the NCCRI to support the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism and also the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The author was Siobhán Lynam.

Hard copies are available through the NCCRI, Third Floor, Jervis House, Jervis Street, Dublin 1. T: 01-8588000.

F: 01-8727621. E: info@nccri.ie It is available for download from: www.nccri.ie/pdf/StrategyGuide.pdf



THE Migrant Rights Centre Ireland has plenty of experience in running events for members of ethnic minorities and here, Helen Lowry, shares three tips to add to our melting pot of knowledge:

- 1) Notable international dates offer opportunities to hold events aimed at migrants in the local community. Some dates include – UN International Day for Migrants on December 18th, International Women's Day on March 8th, Africa Day on May 25th.

Plus 3 extra tips

- 2) Translation of information and flyers is important to remember and makes it much easier for migrants to access information.
- 3) A great of information is spread through word of mouth - identify potential leaders or those active in their communities and ask them to spread the word or invite them to get involved in the organisation of the event.

- For more advice, contact: Helen Lowry, Community Worker, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, 55 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1. T: 01 8897570. W: www.mrci.ie

CHANGING IRELAND

The Green Issue - creating sustainable communities.

How green is your office, your project, your community?

Call us now! *

Next edition goes to print in mid-September.

* Calls welcome from Community Development Projects and other community-focussed groups and organisations working at local, regional and national level.

Make sure your work includes the following ingredients before calling. Your work is focused on:

- * Collective action
- * Participation of marginalised people
- * Inclusiveness
- * Is empowering and enabling
- * The process is as important as the task
- * It is non- sexist, non-sectarian and non-racist
- * We focus on solidarity not charity
- * We start where people are at
- * We embrace equality
- * We think globally and act locally.

These are Community Development principles.

'Changing Ireland' is part of the Community Development Programme which funds 180 projects in Ireland. Contact details: See page 2.

Call for more intercultural centres

IRELAND should set up more intercultural centres at local community level and the NCCRI boss, Philip Watt, has called on the Government to support their mainstreaming.

Speaking at the opening on June 10th of Clondalkin Intercultural Centre, he stated: "This is one of the first such centres in Ireland. As Ireland becomes increasingly diverse, we need more such centres to facilitate dialogue, understanding and interaction at a local level. We would call on the government to support similar initiatives across the country."

Services the Clondalkin Centre provides include being a focal point for minority communities in the Clondalkin area, providing information, English language classes, integrated summer youth projects, employment and training courses.

Interculturalism, as an approach to integration, is promoted by the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) and in Clondalkin, ethnic minorities have been very involved in the Centre's set-up. Throughout, the Partnership has taken a community development approach to the work, taking the lead particularly from women from ethnic communities (who run a number of thriving groups locally).

The Partnership has supported an ethnic minority women's forum with about 200 women on the database and it meets monthly. One outcome was they developed a training for trainers programme on anti-racism and interculturalism.

There was so much happening that the women's forum agreed the ideal thing was to open an intercultural centre and now the dream is a reality.

As Clondalkin Partnership's Equality Coordinator, David Lynch, points out, "Through previous integration and outreach



Loretta Ristic, Communications Officer and Miriam McNamee, Education Access Officer, outside Clondalkin Intercultural Centre.

work, the Partnership was successful in developing a solid ground for the Centre".

However, David notes, "All intercultural centres are pilots because there is no mainstreaming of funding in this regard yet."

Over the last few years, funding was provided to dozens of groups from the Pobal-run 'Fund for Initiatives to Support Legally Resident Migrants' (applications are now closed). A new EU-supported funding stream should be launched in 2009 – though the criteria has not been publicised as of yet and is by no means guaranteed to include funding for intercultural centres. However, interested groups should watch for advertisements and keep an eye on the Pobal website.

For more advice, contact the Clondalkin Intercultural Centre or the Canal Communities Intercultural Centre (CCIC). The CCIC has, for example, received funding from a range of sources, from the local Partnership company, the Dormant Accounts Fund, Pobal, and Dublin City Council to the One Foundation.

Clondalkin Intercultural Centre:
Ovidiu Matiu, Intercultural Centre
Co-ordinator, 15 Tower Road,
Clondalkin, Dublin.

Opening hours: Mon-Fri, 9-4pm.

T: 01-4577213.

E: intercultural@clondalkinpartnership.ie
Canal Communities Intercultural Centre,
3/4 Ring Tce, Inchicore, Dublin.

T: 01-453 7239. M: 087-132 4115.

Other centres

The Canal Communities Intercultural Centre was set up in 2004 by the Canal Partnership to integrate the international community in Inchicore, Rialto, Bluebell and Islandbridge with local Irish people.

Its top three achievements, according to manager Patricia Higgins are:

1. The Centre's steering group includes a genuine mix of people.
2. The Centre was very successful in getting Irish people involved.
3. The health programme delivered by the centre was devised after research work led by volunteers from ethnic minorities.

Patricia says, "We have plenty of reports that show the work we've done, but all you've to do is see the hundreds of photographs we have of people laughing and enjoying themselves."

The following either run intercultural centres from larger premises or are looking at setting one up in their area: Tallaght Intercultural Action, the Jesuits, the Christian Brothers (on Synge Street, Dublin), the North West Inner City Network, and the Ballymun Partnership.

Intercultural centres offer empathy

"INTERCULTURAL centres are very important as an initial point of contact for migrants," says Bernie McDonnell, speaking as Equality Programme Manager with Pobal.

"It means they can go somewhere they feel safe and secure and where the surroundings are familiar and the people they meet there will have experienced similar difficulties to their own at one time," she says.

She added that it was important for traditional community centres to have an equality strategy and to be open to all. It is not the case that migrants should go solely to intercultural centres and not to local community centres. The two are complimentary.

Pobal administers a range of programmes that have promoted integration at local level in Ireland, with for example funding of €2 million being dispersed through the Fund for Initiatives to Support Legally Resident Migrants.