

CHANGING IRELAND

WINTER '09

Issue 30 & 31

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THE END

ANY QUESTIONS?



Croke Park, Dublin, November 25th: Two anti-poverty programmes are to be superseded by one new programme; it marks the beginning of the end for local voluntary management of up to 180 Community Development Projects.

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Good news in dire circumstances

Good news, in dire circumstances! Next year, there's a better chance to switch this country's irrational focus on saving banks to saving something much more valuable – people, communities and jobs.

That battle has been fought all year by Community interests campaigning to retain essential resources and jobs in communities. Now, with good timing, the EU is offering a 12-month opportunity to highlight the issues because 2010 is to be the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion'.

It was supposed to be a year marking successes, because Governments across the EU swore in Lisbon in 2000 to "make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" by 2010.

Our Government thought we had it sorted.

Yes, we made gains. We introduced equality legislation, we brought in a minimum wage, we increased social welfare and pensions, we welcomed in hundreds of thousands of immigrants without racism becoming a big problem. And, for a time, we reduced unemployment to the lowest level possible.

Meanwhile, whole sections of society missed out: women, Travellers, the long-term unemployed, older people, rural people, lone parents, residents of many crime-beset local authority estates, to name but some. The unemployment blackspots persisted and the rich-poor gap became the 2nd largest in the Western world.

Now, the achievements of the last ten years are unraveling or being dismantled in front of our eyes.

The crisis is in your face, but we have advantages that weren't there in the 1980s. The employment equality legislation and recognition for minorities wasn't there last time around.

Yet, one suspects that the Government is depending on the global economy to rise so that people can emigrate rather than revolt.

For those who cannot emigrate or choose not to, it is better they live at least with more dignity than people had in the past when to be extremely poor carried great stigma and shame and attracted sympathy and handouts rather than empowering interventions.

2010 is a crucial year in changing Ireland's direction. We need to recover our sense of honesty, humility, empathy, outrage, humanity and our tidy little democratic system needs whatever it takes to dislodge the limpet-like elite in this country from their rock and to smash their shell so they don't lock on again.

Right now, the Community Sector is suffering and the EU's Year provides communities and interest groups with an opportunity to highlight what causes poverty and what it will take to solve it.

The Sector – with trade union support - has shown it can

stand up for communities. For instance, the McCarthy report provoked a strong reaction nationally (see our inside pages). McCarthy's proposals remain a live issue.

Also of major interest, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is making changes (covered in this edition). The Community Development Programme (to which magazine this magazine belongs) is to be integrated into the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme to form a new programme, the 'Local and Community Development Programme'. As part of that process, most of the 180 CDPs are likely to disband as companies and to integrate their work with local partnership companies. As we went to press, we learned that up to 30 CDPs will cease to be funded under the new programme.

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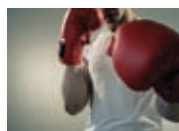
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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author concerned. They do not, by any means, necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the editorial team, the management committee of the Community Development Network, Moyross, Ltd., or the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

Front cover photo: Seated at the top table in Croke Park for an 'information meeting' about the new 'Local and Community Development Programme' were principal officers Clodagh McDonnell and Seamus Jackson of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Jerry Murphy of Pobal. Photo: A Meagher

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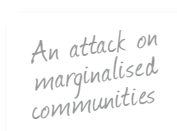


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Up to 30 CDPs will lose funding

Up to 30 CDPs received the bad news coming to the end of the year that funding from DCRGA for their work is to be "discontinued."

As 'Changing Ireland' went to press, we learned of the number. Projects can appeal the decision in which case their funding will be continued to the end of January while the review – by an independent body – considers their case.

For the 150 remaining CDPs, there is good news in that funding for 2010 is to be continued at 2009 levels.

Minister of State John Curran has also ringfenced CDP funding for all of 2010.

"In few other areas of public spending has it been possible to do this," he said.

In a Seanad debate on December 9th, Minister Curran noted: "Before proceeding to establish a single programme across the CDPs and partnerships, my Department undertook an evaluation of individual CDPs, many of which span two decades, with quite diverse activities. The objective (was) to identify those projects that produce tangible, appropriate benefits for the communities they serve. The vast majority of projects fall into this category and funding will be available... through the new programme in 2010."

First community boxing development officers appointed

Five Community Development Officers Boxing posts were created in Dublin during the summer, marking a first for Ireland.

"Each of these officers will be a valuable asset to the development of sport as a medium to engage with young people at risk and steer them into a safe and healthy lifestyle," said Minister of State Barry Andrews.

The scheme was developed by Dublin City Council in partnership with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association and the Department of Health and Children.

- The community boxing officers aim to:
- Support the development of local clubs and expert coaching,
- Engage marginalised young people in positive activities and channel their energies into sport,
- Increase participation in boxing,



- Identify young talented athletes from Dublin.
- Irish boxing heroes Katie Taylor, Kenny Egan, Paddy Barnes, John Joe Joyce and John Joe Nevin attended the launch of the initiative.

Still working: combatpoverty.ie

The Combat Poverty Agency has been disbanded, but some of the work continues and the website www.combatpoverty.ie remains online.

The website includes the full archive of 'Action on Poverty Today', first published in 1987 as 'Poverty Today'. This was the quarterly journal of the Combat Poverty Agency. The website also had hundreds of publications, reports, research reports going back to the early 1970s. All are available for free.

CPA's remit was handed over to the new Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Social and Family Affairs earlier this year. Former CPA staff are now based in offices at Gandon House, Amiens Street, Dublin 1.

Community Workers' Journal sells well

Copies of 'Working for Change - The Irish Community Workers Journal' are reportedly selling well.

This is the first Irish journal of community work and is an important milestone in the journey to having community work and community development recognised as a skilled discipline that warrants documentation, debate and analysis. The Journal contains a diverse range of articles from contributors north and south.

The journal is priced €21.50 (including post and packing). Cheques should be posted to: CWC, Unit 4 First Floor, Tuam Road Centre, Tuam Road, Galway.



EAPN aims to fill information gap

The European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland has relaunched its website www.eapn.ie

"We hope to develop the new website as the definitive Irish resource on poverty in Ireland and Europe," said a Mark Byrne, Information and Awareness Officer. Feedback on the newly revamped site is invited.

EAPN also uses facebook, twitter and youtube.

E: Mark@eapn.ie

Active Citizenship Office deactivated

Minister of State Pat Carey announced on September 22nd that the Office of Active Citizenship would no longer be a separate office.

This year, the office spent €20,000.

Emmet Stagg (Lab, Kildare North) said €200,000 had been provided for the office in 2008, but it did not spend any money at all, so he presumed it did nothing.

Deputy Stagg said An Bord Snip recommended it be abolished and that they might be right.

Source: Dail Debate, 22nd September 2009.

Note: Dailbrief is being discontinued by the Office for Social Inclusion which took over the work of the Combat Poverty Agency last year.

Irish equality complaint lodged with EU

A complaint and petition has been lodged with the European Commission signed by nearly 200 organisations by the Equality and Rights Alliance over the closure of the Combat Poverty Agency, the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and budget cuts last year of 43% to The Equality Authority and 24% to the Irish Human Rights Commission.

New programme to be set up during 2010

- CDP voluntary management boards are to go



The Community Development Programme, first established in 1990, is to be absorbed into a new programme that also incorporates the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme.

The announcement was made on Friday (Sept 18th) by Minister of State (MOS) John Curran and the plan relies on co-operation from projects and personnel to be implemented.

All 180 CDP voluntary management boards are to be disbanded.

The move was defended by Minister Curran as a way of saving the best of the Community Development Programme "in light of budgetary restraints".

On the other hand, the move has been anticipated for at least two years by people working in the Community Sector and was first flagged by Minister Eamon O'Cuiv in 2004 when he announced the start of the 'cohesion' process whereby all community-related supports should come under one roof.

However, the "merger" plan is meeting resistance and local projects and national representative fora have lobbied for it to be dropped. It has been dismissed by critics as robbing poor communities of a voice, as an insult to volunteers and as an attack on Community Development work.

At the same time as the Programmes are being "aligned", above-average cuts this year and the threat of more cuts has added to the challenge facing communities as resources may disappear while demand for services is rising.

But Minister of State Curran insists this is the only way to save what can be saved as the State is cash-starved.

The Minister of State – who has responsibility for Drugs as well as Community Affairs – first broke news of his "alignment" plan to 400 people at a Community and Voluntary Forum conference in Co. Cavan.

"I am seeking improved alignment and focus across the range of programmes for which I have responsibility in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. In this regard, I have been giving particular attention to the redesign of the Local Development Social Inclusion and the

Community Development Programmes," he said.

"I have to say that I am not convinced that two separate programmes and two separate delivery structures is the best way to serve the community. In the current economic climate, the case for a single focussed effective programme is, in my view, indisputable and I will be fighting for resources for the measures covered by the programmes on this basis in the context of the 2010 Budget."

An accompanying press release, which described the process in terms of the "integration" of the 2 programmes, quoted Minister Curran as saying: "We will continue to do everything we can to improve efficiency and prioritise the provision of frontline services to those who need them the most. One single, focussed programme will ensure that services will be more streamlined and will best serve those who use them."

"We are currently undertaking a thorough review of the Community Development Programme and will shortly have a full report on the findings and recommendations that arise from that review."

"Programme redesign work by the Centre for Effective Services is underway. Overall, we are preparing for a roll-out of a single, redesigned programme in 2010, in the context of the budgetary position," he added.

Management committees of CDPs and Partnership boards received official confirmation of the plan at a meeting in Croke Park, Dublin, on November 25th.

Prior to that, the Department had issued a helpful series of 10 written questions and answers on behalf of Minister Curran. (See pages 24-25). Since then, the timeframe and some minor details have changed.

Deserted wife laments end of CDP

A one-time client of the Community Development Programme who went on to become a volunteer and in recent years a community worker wrote on Sept 24th to lament the demise of the Programme. Cathrina described how the Programme changed her life and said no other programme or agency worked the way the CDP does.

"I was first introduced to the Programme in my area 10 years ago. I was a deserted wife left with two children to bring up on my own in a difficult area, I tried other agencies and was left feeling inadequate as a person and just a number at the top of a page. (But) the Community Development Programme supported me to do what I had to do for myself I was treated as a person and allowed to keep my dignity."

"The Programme works on a bottom-up approach supporting people to do for themselves, NOT giving them what someone thinks they need. That is the Key to the success of the programme."

"If the people deciding these things really wanted to know the value of the Community Development Programme they would have asked BUT like everything else in this country its US who will suffer."

"He (Minister of State Curran) can say what he wants but its the end of the Community Development Programme as I know it. Save the banks and destroy our communities, we're only people."

NATIONAL FORUM SAYS 'NO!' - says plan undermines volunteering

"This scheme will disempower the most marginalised of local communities across Ireland," said Larry McCarthy, a volunteer with Le Cheile CDP in Dundalk and chairperson of the National Community Development Forum, set up earlier this year. "It's an attack on the poor."

The NCDF has met with Minister Curran to make their criticisms known and NCDF representatives urged the Minister of State to take more time in his attempt to implement the changes and to consider alternatives.

Four NCDF representatives appeared in front of an Oireachtas committee on December 2nd to make their case and it appears the process will be slowed down, more consultation will take place and Minister Curran has been asked to appear in front of the Oireachtas committee to answer questions.

"This move by Minister Curran will terminate the involvement of 2000 voluntary board of management members in deciding a little of what happens in their own communities and that undermines everything that Community Development stands for," said Mr. McCarthy.

The NCDF wishes that CDPs would retain their autonomy and the boards would be left with the power to decide the work their staff engage in and to retain ownership of properties and services they currently are in charge of.

SIPTU officials – representing most workers in the CDP – also held a meeting recently with Minister of State Curran.

Separately, in mid-November, stakeholders taking part in a "validation" process organised by the Centre for Effective Services refused to "validate" the plan. The Centre for Effective Services has the task of proposing how the new amalgamated programme might work and has employed a programme expert, John Bamber, to steer the work.

The main aims and goals of the new programme were made public on November 25th at a meeting in Croke Park with CDP and LDSIP representatives. The implementation process is expected to take a full 12 months, and possibly longer for larger CDPs with a number of service level agreements with different funders.

Grassroots outline their misgivings

'Changing Ireland' set up a blog of 10 questions and answers about Minister of State Curran's 'merger' proposal so people could see where he was coming from and let those hoping to

implement the plan know what people on the ground thought.

We emailed CDPs and asked a small number of Partnership companies to spread the word.

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs issued the series of questions and answers on Sept 22nd on behalf of the Minister

John Curran, three days after he announced his plan to 'merge' the Community Development Programme with the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme and form a new "streamlined" Programme..

The Q&A we uploaded for comment covered issues such as:

- What about the communities, the project, the volunteer management, the jobs?
- How would the merger will take place between CDPs and Partnerships?
- When would it happen?

The comments are online for anyone who wishes to look and an edited selection of the comments are published on pages 24-25.

Some praise for Minister John Curran

Sinn Féin town councillor Gerry McMonagle has praised the Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, John Curran, for the way he has resisted cuts.

"He has done a good job ensuring that this

ministry is not cut. I think he deserves the support of this council for that stand and I would like to acknowledge the work that he has done."

At the same meeting, Cllr. McMonagle proposed successfully that Letterkenny Town Council write to the Minister for Finance demanding he does not implement "savage cuts," to CDPs

Minister Curran acknowledges new programme concerns

- Seanad report, Dec. 9th, '09

Fine Gael's Jerry Buttimer from Cork questioned Minister of State John Curran in the Seanad on December 9th about the wind-up of the Community Development Programme.

"I would like to hear the Minister of State expand on his proposition regarding the integrated structure and the removal of autonomy from local boards," said Jerry.

The plans for a new programme, he said, needed to be slowed down and he urged the Minister to consult the National Community Development Forum and the Community Workers' Co-op.

Minister Curran replied: "I am aware there is opposition to these among some CDPs.... I am aware that CDPs have concerns about assets, the impact on local service delivery, local buy-in and accountability. Every one of those issues, and any other issues arising, can be addressed fully in the implementation process I have outlined. There will be time to address all of this in 2010. It is also important to note that no decisions are required on any of these issues until mid-2010 at the earliest and even then the objective will be to secure local agreement on all issues before any final decisions are taken or implemented.

"The way forward is for CDPs to sign up to the new programme. In this way they can take the real opportunity they now have to continue the good work they are doing in their communities and to have a positive influence on the delivery of the new programme. Those who have at heart the best interests of the communities we serve will recommend early sign-up.

He said continuing as before was not an option: "From 1 January 2010, we will have one integrated programme and for that we need integrated service delivery and structures.

He pointed out that the new programme "will be underpinned by four high level goals" about which you can read more on pages 8-9.

"I encourage all groups to accept this is about community development."

Jerry Buttimer had "two problems" with the Minister's reply: "The availability of funding is conditional upon signing up; if groups do not sign up they will not get their funding, which is wrong. (And) there has not been proper dialogue and consultation with the CDPs. There is also the outstanding question of the removal of the voluntary boards and assets."

What happens next!

Allen Meagher reports from Croke Park

Two hours of questions flowed in Croke Park on November 25th when plans were outlined for a new 'Local and Community Development Programme'. The new programme – to be launched in 2010 – will replace the Community Development Programme and the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP). The funder – the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs – proposes that up to 180 Community Development Projects be wound up as part of the process. Allen Meagher reports from Croke Park:

Ballybeg CDP in Waterford, in one of the most disadvantaged communities in the country, may shortly find itself left to its own devices.

So it appears for now.

The management have said they do not want to 'integrate' into a new programme the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is backing, not says Ballybeg if it means losing control over local resources.

As the new programme's rulebook was explained at a national meeting held in Croke Park, it seemed to spell 'the end' financially for Ballybeg CDP and perhaps some other projects.

In fact, the words 'The End – Any Questions?' sat in foot-high lettering on the back-wall behind Departmental representatives, Clodagh McDonnell and Seamus Jackson and Pobal's Jerry Murphy during a fiery morning of debate.

In attendance were hundreds of representatives from projects in the two programmes that are to be merged/integrated/taken-over (choose your own wording) during 2010 and beyond.

The Department's Seamus Jackson – known to the LDSIP people present for having steered their companies through previous amalgamations (aka the 'cohesion' process) – was blunt about the situation: "If CDPs want to go their own way, we have no problem with that."

"And so we will," interjected the Ballybeg spokeswoman, saying local people had fundraised to build a community hall and they weren't giving it away.

The information meeting was like a cross between chess and an anger-relieve class: Departmental spokespersons repeatedly assured projects that everything would be ok while projects insisted the opposite.



Clodagh McDonnell, principal officer, said the new programme had goals that included promoting volunteering and active citizenship. Projects argued the 2000 or so volunteer management board members were being treated with "disrespect."

While there may yet be room for agreement, it wasn't evident on the day. Projects were angry and are in the midst of a campaign against community cuts and the 'merger'. The word was out that TV3 News with Vincent Browne was that very evening to focus on the CDP issue (which it did, rather lamely).

The Partnership people by comparison were almost silent, they seemed resigned.

The key to it all was that if CDPs and indeed LDSIPs wish to receive funding from 2010 onwards they and their staff must sign up – from January – to co-operate in the roll-out and implementation of the rather unpopular new programme.

(On that note, a week later (on December 2nd) an Oireachtas committee agreed to call in Minister of State Curran to explain to the committee the pre-conditions to funding, to ask him to start consultations with CDPs and to consider slowing down the signing-up process).

The top table emphasised positives. It's not all bad news, pointed out Clodagh McDonnell: "The majority of projects will be given the opportunity to join the new programme in 2010."

She was referring to a 'review' process that will see (up to 30) CDPs cease to be funded under the new programme.

The morning seminar marked the first time that CDPs nationally – and indeed LDSIPs – had met with the Department in an open forum. It came on the heels of 15% cuts this year, McCarthy's ridiculing of Community Development work, internal reviews and, to cap it all, the announcement by Minister of State Curran that the Programme was to go, so there was some tension.

The urgency in calling the meeting was real for the Department. As Minister of State Curran (who wasn't present) and his officials have indicated, the Department appeared to be under pressure to show their colleagues in the Department of Finance that the programmes they administer can be proven to work, or to use the lingo, have "measurable outcomes."

The Department has now made clear its desire to "prioritise" funding to work with measurable outcomes. As Clodagh McDonnell put it: "If you can't measure it you can't manage it!"

However, little went unchallenged and she later clarified to say she accepted that some outcomes do not become obvious for up to 15 years.

To many questions, the reply was the same: we need tangible evidence that Community Development works and that's why we need a new programme.

Jerry Murphy said: "We are not saying the programmes are outcome-light."

However, people argued that the new programme was going to push away 2000 volunteers currently engaged in community work. The new programme would include local advisory councils to replace the CDP volunteering element, replied the Department. Seamus Jackson, a Principal Officer in the Department with responsibility for Change Management, declared: "This is a straightforward process."

Pobal – which is a funding and monitoring agency – will concentrate its supports on assisting with the move over to the new programme.

The financial accounting system will be "a more simplified one", the attendance were promised.

There were some murmurs of disbelief.

"There have been a lot of misunderstanding about this," remarked Seamus Jackson Seamus.

"It's not a takeover..." – He was cut off by a woman who stood up in from the audience and shouted, "This is the first time you spoke to us."

David Cullinane, Larchville/Lisduggan CDP volunteer, added: "We are told this is a merger, but the CDPs are becoming subordinate to the LDSIP boards. The effort of the CDP boards is not being respected here. A lot of the objectives of the new programme are laudable, but Community Development is about bottom-up and this is a top-down imposition."

Clodagh McDonnell promised that the voluntary input will be "enshrined" in the new programme and hot debate followed whether or not that was going to be the case.

Rita Fagan from Inchicore in Dublin said: "You're taking people's power away, you're not honest, you haven't honoured 20 years of volunteer work."

Seamus Jackson replied: "We want the CDPs fully integrated and functioning in this. A lot of CDP activity is very positive for fairly small

(cont. page 33)

FROM DESIGN to implementation

The programme's name

The name has been decided and suggestions on November 25th that the term 'social inclusion' be added did not win over. The name was presented as follows, to quote:

The name should reflect its distinctive contribution and the LDSIP's and CDP's commitment to working in and across localities, and to 'bottom-up', participative and empowering processes.

- **Local** refers to the area based nature of the programme.

- **Community** reflects reach into neighbourhoods, work with particular social groupings, and communities of interest.

- **Development** signals gains in knowledge and skills and broader abilities for individuals and groups, and progressive social change.

Programme aim

The new 'Local and Community Development Programme' will aim to: "tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and people in disadvantaged communities."

Four goals

1) **Promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services:**

- (a) Raise awareness and knowledge of services in the local community. Also, develop and sustain strategies and mechanisms for (b) improved access to, and (c) better coordination of local services.

2) **Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural development activities and resources:**

- by (a) "working with providers to improve the access", and (b) to "increase awareness and support access to opportunities for learning and development."

3) **Increase peoples' work readiness and employment prospects:**

- by (a) developing and sustaining a range of services to support, prepare and assist people to enter the labour market, (b) developing and sustaining strategies with local enterprises to enhance employment prospects.

4) **Promote engagement with policy, practice and decision-making processes on matters affecting local communities.**

- by (a) promoting dialogue between funders, providers and local communities, and (b) developing and sustaining opportunities for communities of place and interest to identify

issues and voice concerns.

Objectives

1. The new programme should have clearly specified objectives that:
2. Are realistic in terms of resources
3. Are achievable in a given planning period
4. Express the distinctive contribution of the programme
5. Provide a clear focus for activities.

Monitoring

Things to be considered for accounting and monitoring purposes:

- How to concentrate only on those things that are important.
- How information about performance can help in achieving objectives.
- The need for processes to be a proportionate part of work.
- **And remember if you can't measure it you can't manage it!!**

Work to-date

- In 2008 CES were engaged to redesign the Department's two main Social Inclusion Programmes.
- Other Inputs- 'Value For Money' review, work of Katherine Baxter etc.

Two recommendations from the 'Value For Money' review:

1. Future funding contingent on a refinement and re-articulation of Programme goals, objective and strategic focus.
2. Objectives to be revised substantively for the period up to 2013 to reflect new national policy objectives and organisational context/ need for greater clarity.

Next steps

- The Department will establish an Advisory Group which will advise it on issues relating to implementing the new Programme. *(It was agreed – after a suggestion from the floor – that the make-up of the advisory group will include representation from the National Community Development Forum).*
- Separately Pobal will commence its work on the provision of technical assistance.
- Indicative funding allocations will be notified asap after the Budget.

Overview

- The implementation of the LCDP will be based on the need to offer clear delivery of the programme goals.
- Pobal is conscious of the many complexities which will influence the early days of the movement to the new programme.
- In light of these complexities, the movement from LDSIP to LCDP will involve a major emphasis on simplified systems.
- These simplified systems will aim to support both practical delivery and programme accountability.
- This simplification will be evident within

all key programme aspects.

- In the coming months, it will be most immediately displayed within the financial systems.
- Reporting, monitoring and other systems will equally move to more simplified processes.

Financial systems – brief overview

- Company allocations for 2010 will be made know after the budget
- Letters of offer will be issued by Pobal to each ILDC/UP
- Each company will then be asked to complete a budgeting process
- Budget proposals will be assessed and contracts issued
- Payments will be made in tranches
- Companies will be requested to submit quarterly returns

Definition of actions

- Each 2010 budget application will request the definition of the actions to be delivered by an ILDC/UP
- Each named action will need to address an agreed programme goal
- Details given of each action will include clear naming of levels of activity and expected outcomes
- All further reporting will be baselined against the actions agreed
- During 2010, flexibility will be offered to reflect and amend actions to ensure full strategic alignment with programme goals.

Pobal Supports

- Pobal will, on behalf of the DCRGA, offer support to all companies in their delivery of the new programme

These supports will concentrate on assistance in the move to:

- The new programme's goals and working methods

- new programme systems and processes

- Pobal is also working with the DCRGA to develop technical supports on Human Resources issues for companies
- Pobal will continue to support companies, as in the past, in the practical completion of financial, reporting and monitoring requirements

Conclusion

- The move to the new programme will involve an evolution of systems and allow moves to simpler processes.
- These will involve changes to financial, monitoring and reporting systems.
- These changes will initially be most apparent in the 2010 budgeting and financial management systems.
- We are conscious that this work will be happening within a context of complex other changes.
- Pobal will be available to support Companies in their transition to the new programme and ways of working.

Minister Curran says 'merger' now to take longer

Interview: Allen Meagher



Minister of State John Curran in Limerick with Aljeff's Billy Fox.

'Changing Ireland' met up with Minister of State John Curran on Friday, November 27th, while he was in Limerick to open Aljeff's new centre (see report online) and interviewed him briefly. Events are moving quickly and within a week, an Oireachtas committee meeting had met and decided to call on the Minister to start consulting with CDPs, slow down the integration process and appear before the committee.

The questions we put to the Minister were:

What points made by CDP protesters have you taken on board in relation to your merger plans?

In response to that, the merger plan won't happen on day one, it'll take up to a year, because of the complexity of the situation.

Delivering a single, integrated programme, avoiding duplication, with streamlined, clear objectives and measurable outcomes will be the way we go forward. But it won't happen on a given day, it will take a year to implement.

You see yourself as a defender of Community Development, of the projects' work at any

CDP integration process

2010 Arrangements

- LDSIP & CDP programmes superseded by new LCDP
- LCDP roll-out 1 January 2010
- CDP review process
- Subject to Budget, CDP funding ring-fenced and current structures retained for 2010
- The first quarter payment in 2010 for CDPs will come from DCRAGA
- After the first quarter, funding will come through relevant Partnership companies.

2010 Funding Conditions

- The funding conditions for 2010 involve a written sign-up/ agreement by the voluntary boards of management (VBOM) of CDPs to sign up to the new programme and the implementation process including:
 - An undertaking by the VBOM to agree work-outputs by the end of March 2010 with Partnership company.

- VBOM agreement to report on programme implementation to the Partnership Board.
- Full cooperation of staff of the CDP with Partnership management.

Post-2010 Funding

- Conditional on full integration and VBOM/CDP wind-up
- CDP Advisory Councils will be created (one per former CDP, or one for a number of CDPs if their interests are shared).

Supporting the Implementation Process

- The Department and Pobal will support Partnerships and CDPs during the implementation process.
- There will be ongoing engagement with representative groups and companies
- There will be cross-departmental engagement where multiple funders are involved
- The LCDP National Advisory Group, when set up, will support the process.



rate. Can you explain how merging the programmes may, to your mind, be better for CDPs?

CDPs are now afforded the opportunity to effectively deliver frontline services without being bogged down by huge administrative burdens and to deliver effective programmes and that's the challenge we're facing.

The Minister added: It is important in areas where you deliver multiple programmes for Community Development – and LDSIP delivers a Community Development - and it is important that the (two programmes) deliver in partnership, that they avoid duplication.

Do you think you've saved some of the work of CDPs?

If we did nothing and McCarthy's recommendations were imposed in full, (the two programmes) would lose €44 million out of €74 million, so doing nothing was not an option.

The Department of Finance must be aware that thousands of volunteers marched.

This budgetary process is a process that goes back and forwards and you get a lot of questions from Finance. Yes, they're aware of the range of projects and programmes.

Would you accept communications has been poor? You announced the 'merger' at a meeting in Cavan where there were only two CDP people present. And projects complain that there hasn't been a letter sent to the CDP management committees yet to explain what's happening.

I understand that as a result of the Croke Park meeting, the individual CDPs will be contacted next week for a further update on the implementation.

I made the point as I announced it that we were still working on the redesign of the programme. This is happening at a fairly quick pace, (we need) to end up quickly with a viable, sustainable, single, integrated programme where we have clear objectives and measurable outcomes and (we're) trying to get that delivered in time. And there is a budgetary imperative. We're living in a different Ireland. The scale of the €4 billion cut is very substantial. But without addressing it (he didn't say what) in a real way, we could have had a big reduction in this area which would leave the programme unsustainable at all.

Was it a good idea to publish the Bord Snip report?

If nothing else, it showed the scale of what we were facing and that we're working with a finite amount of money

Roscommon: lone parents become authors

The Roscommon Women's Network (RWN) writers group officially launched their very first collection of work over the summer at the network's offices in the Old Mill, Castlereagh.

The book entitled 'Mirror to the Soul' is an impressive collection of short stories and poems written by eleven women.

The writers group started out at the end of 2007 as a lone parent support group and have evolved into a team of women with a newly discovered passion for writing.

Funding for the creative writing classes came from the Roscommon Integrated Development Company.

For further information on how the group evolved or to get your hands on a copy of the book, please contact Roscommon Women's Network CDP on 094-9621690.

Crumlin CDP's healthy focus

Crumlin CDP in Dublin has been organising family swimming classes for €1 per person in recent months. The project is focused on health and ran a free 6-week 'Stop Smoking Course' in September/October. Meanwhile the boxing and youth club remains as busy as ever. [Editor's note: Also see 'Help Me Horace!' on page 23]

Blakestown wood-burners

Members of Blakestown Men's Project – supported by Blakestown CDP – are very proud of their work in wood-burning classes.



Rural award for Wexford CDP

Earlier this year South West Wexford CDP won an Irish Rural Link award for their outstanding contribution to Community Development in rural Ireland.

Blanchardstown Bonus for Volunteers!

Volunteers who work at the Vincent De Paul shop in Blanchardstown got a pleasant surprise recently when members of the local Traveller



Community Employment scheme presented them with a variety of organic vegetables. The vegetables were grown on the Travellers Allotment.

Our picture – from CE worker Tom Toner – shows Geraldine Collins of Blanchardstown Travellers CE (right) presenting a basket of mushrooms to shop manager Marie Murray (left) surrounded by shop volunteers and one of the gardeners.

The CE scheme is sponsored by the local CDP, the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.

Racism in Limerick; anti-racism in Longford

In November, the Mayor of Limerick, Kevin Kiely, called for immigrants without jobs to be deported. The call was labelled racist and provoked outrage and a climbdown by the Mayor. However, the Mayor also received much support from people who view immigrants as a "problem".

The incident should lead to an invitation to the mid-west for Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS) who are working with community groups to combat racism.

While Mayor Kiely was making headlines in Limerick, LYCS was in Longford that same week to launch the first in a series of one-day workshops titled 'On The Move'. The workshops are aimed at equipping community development workers to deal effectively with debates and conflict around the issue of migration during the

recession.

It looks at global inequality and migration, intercultural relations during recession and debunks myths about global cultures.

The workshops are aimed at people working in community development, adult and community education and others working in community based settings around the country.

LYCS is a CDP based in Dublin's North East inner city which has a strong focus on Development Education and can be contacted by any group around the country for advice.

At the same time, Crosscare Migrant Project has warned that Irish attitudes towards immigrants are hardening as people search for someone to blame for the worsening economic situation.

For people wanting to help, a booklet for immigrants produced by Crosscare giving practical information on education, healthcare, accommodation, culture and society is available in several languages online at www.livinginireland.ie

More info on LYCS - T: 01-823-0860. E: racheldempsey@lycs.ie

SHEP returns to Nepal

Eight representatives from the Social and Health Education Project (SHEP), based in Ballincollig, Cork, travelled to Nepal in late November, to learn from a partner organisation in the Himalayan country.

They travelled mostly at their own expense and the visit follows SHEP playing host to three Nepalese trainers in October.

The Irish Aid-supported partnership began in September 2006 when SHEP linked up with a Nepalese NGO called 'Sahakarmi Samaj' (meaning 'Interdependent Community').

Like SHEP, 'Sahakarmi Samaj' specialises in the training and deployment of skilled facilitators in the community. The work is very important as Nepal is emerging from a deadly ten-year civil conflict and villagers are now learning to manage their affairs through democratic deliberation and planned collective action.

Separately, earlier this year, SHEP's new Project Centre in Ballincollig was officially opened by Pat Healy of the HSE, the project's core-funder.

The project also receives funding under the Community Development Programme.

More info: www.socialandhealth.com and www.sahakarmi.org.np



'Changing Ireland' online hit: "YOUNG GUNS"



A poem
by John Carmody

Poet John Carmody has had a few close shaves in his lifetime and survived. 'Changing Ireland' filmed John reading his poem "Young Guns" and uploaded it onto our website. We also put it on youtube where it is diverting attention to something positive when people look for a video under the "limerick gangs" tag. It's been viewed over 700 times. Check it out!

John read out 'Young Guns' on Sept 24th as the Bedford Fow Family Project marked its 10th anniversary. The project works with families of prisoners:

Time has become the bond that links us now,
Like crawlers from the wreckage who have survived somehow,
The battles of a life within our neighbourhood
Living on the edge much closer than we should.
We were never close but we've both mutual friends

While walking through the madness burnin' at both ends.

...
As I look back down the years, through all the friends I've lost,
Amid the drugs and drink and violence, tis now I know the cost,
Of all the lies I swallowed about what it is to be a man,

From friends who knew no better than the wisdom in a can,

One by one they fell away, between the prison and the grave,

And all that we are left with now are the stories of the brave,

Yet (there's) no-one to share them with, there's only you and I;

Two young fools who managed to live longer than the lie...

Prison video series nominated for award

'Changing Ireland' has been nominated for an Aontas STAR Award in the Nationwide or all-island reach category.

The nomination is for our 'Visiting Prison for the First Time video series' and related resource material. Over 2000 people have now viewed the videos.

The theme of the 2010 Adult Learners' Festival (22 – 26 February 2010) is 'Better Together' and, once again, AONTAS are encouraging adult and community education providers nationwide to celebrate learning in their communities by holding a festival event that week.

For more information, visit: www.adultlearnersfestival.com.

The STAR award winners will be announced at a ceremony on February 22nd, in Dublin, and Aontas received 109 nominations in total.



'Changing Ireland' complains TV3 for slander

TV3's CEO David McRedmond has promised to edit out slanderous claims made in a documentary called 'Crime Capitals' focusing on Limerick.

'Changing Ireland' editor Allen Meagher dismissed the programme – aired in October – as "cheap television" and lodged a formal complaint with the Broadcasting Authority together with local groups in Moyross.

The documentary – produced by Donal McIntyre – falsely claimed that Limerick was the 'crime capital of Europe'.

Limerick's Mayor, Kevin Kiely, also lodged a complaint directly with TV3 and has received an apology.

As Allen Meagher told the Sunday Tribune at the time of the broadcast:

"We in 'Changing Ireland' showed earlier this year that disadvantaged communities can resist factually incorrect and slanderous reporting. We successfully brought a case to the Press Ombudsman in March about 'Irish Examiner' coverage and the newspaper printed a retraction of false claims made about Moyross.

"'Changing Ireland' is here to promote community development nationally but we won't stand idly by when elements of the media publish or broadcast exaggerated reports about our community."

NEXT ISSUE! CHANGING IRELAND

- Can CDP volunteering be rescued? What do volunteers have to say?
- The new Irish Local Development Network. What do Partnerships say?
 - Male unemployment – responses on the ground.
- What are communities crying out for in 2010 and what can be done?

Plus much more.

Meanwhile, keep up to date with 'Changing Ireland's blog and follow us on youtube and facebook.

Wanted: News writers

We're on the lookout for people engaged in community work who have an eye for appropriate stories and an ability to write news. Call us. If we print it, we'll pay for it.

Thank you!

Thank you to the many community organisations – local and national – that emailed in stories in recent times and apologies that we could not – even with 40 pages – print them all.

2010: European year for combating poverty and social exclusion.

With good timing, the EU is offering a 12-month opportunity to highlight issues on the ground because 2010 is to be the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion'.

The background to the EU's themed year is pertinent. Governments across the EU swore in Lisbon in 2000 to "make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" by 2010.

In Ireland, we succeeded in becoming an intercultural society, with better equality laws, a minimum wage, improved social welfare and a better resourced community sector.

Now in deepening recession, civil society organisations locally and nationally are battling to halt the unraveling of social gains we made over the 10 years.

Across Europe as a whole, 17% of EU citizens have such limited resources that they cannot afford the basics.

To promote the year and highlight Ireland's anti-poverty work and the causes of poverty, the EU is making co-funding of €177,000 available to Ireland and the Government has budgeted to spend €660,000 on a programme of events.

Since some Government policies are viewed as having led to increased poverty, it should make for an interesting year.

The EU has instructed Governments that during 2010 they must work with civil society organisations to highlight that:

- All people have a right to live in dignity and take part in society
- The public and private sector share responsibility to combat poverty and social exclusion
- Eradicating poverty for a more cohesive society benefits all
- Commitment at all levels of society is needed to achieve this goal.

Planned activities include:

- Awareness-raising campaigns and studies
- Innovative schemes to promote social inclusion
- Conferences
- Competitions to identify success stories.

The 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is to be launched in Madrid on 21 January.

Introduction

Ireland's national programme to mark the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion' will be officially launched in late



Afri 'active citizenship' campaign for 2010

Afri, the peace and human rights campaigner, will launch a national "active citizenship" campaign in the new year.

A Government-initiated 'Active Citizenship Office' was wound up this year.

Afri made the call as it noted that "traditional sources of authority have proven to be ineffective".

Joe Murray, Afri co-ordinator, said the decade-long attempt to force the Corrib gas pipeline through, no matter the cost to the community, showed "the need for new avenues of civic participation".

He welcomed the recent Bord Pleanála decision on the pipeline: "The ruling vindicates the struggle of the local community over the past 10 years."

In November, An Bord Pleanála issued a critical judgement saying up to half the route proposed by Shell and its partner companies was dangerously close to local residences.

"The Corrib gas dispute in many ways tells the story of modern Ireland," Mr Murray said. "The result has been an erosion of civil liberties and the emergence of corporate rule, where multinationals appear to have greater rights than Irish citizens," he said.

He said the ongoing use of Shannon Airport in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was another example of the voices of ordinary people in Ireland being ignored.

Keep an eye out for Afri's citizenship campaign in the new year.

W: www.afri.ie

January. The draft plan gives some detail of what awaits and 'Changing Ireland' hopes community groups will see opportunities to promote what they do/did/would-like-to-continue-doing during the Year.

Links:

www.eapn.ie

www.socialinclusion.ie

www.2010againstopoverty.eu

www.ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=808&langId=en (The Government's

11-page draft plan for the EU year).

29+ seminars on poverty planned for 2010

A new section will be added to www.socialinclusion.ie by December to promote the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion' and €205,000 has been earmarked for 9 conferences and up to 29 mostly regional seminars/roundtable discussions to look at:

- what works - good practice,
- areas for improvement (weaknesses or shortcomings) in policy and service delivery,
- scope for integration and priority areas for action in the coming years.

The roundtable seminars/discussions will take during February, April, May and September of 2010, with a focus on **child poverty**, **barriers to employment**, **access to services**, **disability access**, as well as covering urban and rural disadvantage, migration, Travellers and homelessness.

One conference will be an international one organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network, in February, and there will be two 'Social Inclusion Weeks' with series of events taking place at local level during May and October.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs will co-ordinate activities in Ireland with the work being specifically carried out by the Department's Social Inclusion Division.

Themes for EU anti-poverty Year

The 29 mostly regional roundtable seminars/discussions scheduled to take place during February, April, May and September of 2010, will mainly focus on:

Child poverty

- focusing on policies and programmes directed at children, including affordable childcare and early education, especially in disadvantaged areas, links between school, home and community, and access to play, recreational and cultural activities

Barriers to employment

- focusing on removing barriers to participation for lone parents, parents of larger families, people

with disabilities and people living in areas of urban and rural disadvantage can be removed, including those that may exist within the social protection system.

It will also focus on improving supports for the long-term unemployed.

Access to services

- focusing on access (and barriers) to services including education, training, employment supports, healthcare, housing and transport. Access will be addressed in the context of child poverty, disability, immigration and life in areas of urban and rural disadvantage.

The main focus, however, will be on services for older people living alone.

As the programme planners say: "Experience has shown that devoting a higher proportion of resources to essential services achieves better outcomes for vulnerable groups, than an over reliance on income support."

Disability access

- focusing on improving access to both employment (through the removal of barriers) and services.

Events on technical themes related to monitoring progress on meeting anti-poverty goals also form part of the Year's programme.

EU Year's draft schedule

The draft timetable for the EU Year begins in January with an official launch in Madrid on January 21st.

January-April

Towards the end of the January, the Irish Programme will be launched at a meeting of the Social Inclusion Forum in Dublin.

In February, there will be a national conference, a seminar relating to UN World Day of Social Justice (February 20th), an international conference titled "Making real progress after 2010" organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network and an event on how to assess the impact of poverty.

Events will be held on March 8th to mark International Women's Day, followed on St. Patrick's Day by events focused on women's rights and how to build a better society.

The organisers will link with schools and local authorities during April.

May-September

There will be a national conference to mark International Day for Families (May 15th) and events to highlight rural and urban disadvantage. The Annual Young Social Innovators Exhibition also takes place in May.

In June, there will be a third national conference, followed by regional seminars in September.

October-December

The focus in October will be on promoting active citizenship and on how to better integrate anti-poverty policies, within local government, between national and local levels, with the community and voluntary sectors, and with

other stakeholders.

October 17th is the UN Day on Poverty which is marked every year in Ireland by local events.

Also in October, a National Journalism Award will be presented for reporting on Poverty and Social Exclusion.

In December, a meeting of the Social Inclusion Forum will mark the end of the EU's Year in Ireland.

Poor people have rights!

Local CDP newsletters (some/many no longer in print due to budget cuts) have for years regularly published 'Know Your Rights' columns, informing vulnerable people of their rights, opportunities and the law where it stood by them.

However, most people are unaware of the range of rights that people in poverty have. By the end of 2010, the Irish public should be more familiar with the likes of:

- EU regulations on social security for migrant workers,
- EU directives on equal treatment for men and women,
- the EU's Article 30 which outlines some degree of protection against poverty and social exclusion,
- the EU's Social Charter,
- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights,
- and labour conventions.

Ireland has signed up to each and every one of these.



€60,000 to go on anti-poverty evaluation

Every State is obliged to evaluate the success or otherwise of their programme to mark the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion' and the Irish Government plans to spend €60,000 on evaluation, which equates to 10% of the programme budget.

The evaluation, among other things will take "into consideration other existing Community initiatives and measures to combat poverty and promote social inclusion" and will look at "the added value created by the European Year."

McCarthy

Community sector takes to streets



Communities against cuts bring Dublin to a halt - 30,000 march against McCarthy cuts

Up to 30,000 people have joined the Communities Against Cuts marches at various dates and locations in recent months, according to SIPTU.

On September 30th, between 12,000-15,000 people marched through Dublin, some marching for the third time, to protest at hefty cuts this year to community resources and the threat of further massive cuts and indeed closures in 2010 and beyond.

"People live in communities, not economies," read one of the thousands of placards displayed by workers and volunteers from FRCs, CDPs, Partnerships, drugs projects, CE and JI schemes and so on.

If there was a general theme running through the march, it was that people saw the Government as helping out 'fatcats' and

developer friends at the expense of poor communities.

The Bord Snip report has become a menu-list for civil servants handed the task of identifying resources to cut.

SIPTU were taken aback at the numbers that marched. At the finale, those at the back of the march which filled up the street across from the Dail missed out on Jack O'Connor's speech as not enough speakers had been set up.

There was a lot of camaraderie and a friendly atmosphere in the march, but there was anger too. It was clear said one of the speakers that people wanted a say in their communities' futures and didn't want to be sacrificed in order to save banks.

A second Communities Against Cuts march - for people from across five southern counties - attracted up to 6,000 people to Limerick on November 5th. (The Garda estimate was 6,000, which may be somewhat high, but the march stretched - for those that know - the full length

of Henry Street).

With traffic in Limerick brought to a standstill, SIPTU organizer, Eddie Mullins, said 6,000 jobs are likely to go across the country if the Bord Snip plan is implemented in full.

"These cuts will rip the fabric of the community apart to the very core. The services provided to the elderly, to children, to youth service and to families throughout the region will be in serious jeopardy if these cuts are implemented," he said.

Liz Price from Limerick won applause with the refrain, "They say cutbacks, we say fightback."

Meanwhile, the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities CDP took to the streets of Tralee as 200 people rallied in the town's Denny Square in support of the project.

And on November 6th, thousands of people from threatened Communities took to protesting in all the main cities as part of the general ICTU day of action





Online, on the ground and EU views

“An Bord Snip’s recommendation that all Jobs Initiatives simply be closed down (is) absolutely appalling. On the one hand the Government are telling us they’re going to spend so much money on regeneration and on the other hand they are taking out whatever supports are already there.”

- former city mayor, Cllr. John Gilligan, who is a team leader of St. Mary’s Aid in Limerick city which runs two Jobs Initiative schemes.

“The absence of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturism (abolished in the October ’08 Budget), the cuts to the Equality Authority and Human Rights Commission and cuts to funding of community groups and civil society pose challenges for ensuring continued protection against discrimination and for raising awareness and furthering rights.”

- Anastasia Crickley, chairperson of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency

“Closure of the Family Support Agency in an effort to save the Exchequer €30 million, would have the opposite affect,” said the Family Resource Centre National Forum which represents 107 Family Resource Centres across the country with 300 direct staff.

“It is unclear as to whether the Government has the ideas, or the political capital to navigate the country through the economic and social crisis. Innovative solutions have been remarkable by their absence...”

Mark Byrne, EAPN Ireland in relation to the McCarthy/Bord Snip report, writing in the latest issue of the EU-backed ‘Anti-Poverty Mag.’

“The summer projects were a big thing for us (growing up). We’d be looking forward to them for months, something to look forward to, something to do.”

- Edel Hannon, Bray resident and client of Little Bray Family, Resource and Development Centre.

“One thing’s for certain and that’s that the independence of the community sector is dead in the water and it’s probably going to set the sector back 5-10 years. Shame really... all that wealth generated and they seem to have been incapable of allocating and/or distributing it in a sustainable way... Still, one learns, presumably...”

- Cozski from Dublin on www.boards.ie



McCarthy

Community sector takes to streets



National volunteer body foresees disappearance of community life

- If McCarthy report implemented in full

“If implemented in full, the McCarthy report would result in the disappearance of community and voluntary life,” said Tom McGettrick, chairperson of the Irish National Community and Voluntary Forum (INCVF), a body that claims to represent 22,000 community and voluntary organisations throughout Ireland.

“Our member groups work with people with disabilities, our older citizens, youth groups, the homeless, poorer members of the community and the unemployed. The McCarthy report totally fails to put a value on these activities.”

Mr. McGettrick said the Government has a responsibility to analyse the true cost of implementing the recommendations of the McCarthy report.

“Our politicians and commentators seem to have fully accepted the general thrust of the report,” he said.

“There are a huge number of programmes set for closure or severe cuts in the report. These include Community Development Projects, Community Employment schemes, Family Resource Centres, RAPID and Clár programmes.

He said such cuts, coupled with the closure of a primary school or Garda Station in a community, devastate a community.

“We will be asking our politicians to change their whole approach towards correcting the public finances,” said Mr. McGettrick. “The very worst outcome for Ireland would be to adopt short-term solutions now that only lead to



greater pressure on the exchequer in future years. The Government must decide whether it will protect the vulnerable.”

About the INCVF:

The Irish National Community and Voluntary Forum (INCVF) is the national representative body for the Community and Voluntary Forums which are attached to city and county local authorities. It was established in 2003.

W: www.incvf.com

McCarthy

DO MCCARTHY'S CUTS ADD UP?

McCarthy cuts would ruin Childcare & JI

Community childcare is to be hit hard if the Bord Snip recommendations are put into action:

"Firstly," says SIPTU official, Joe Kelly, "the Community Childcare Committees are set to be marginalised and enveloped into a local authority in a onsize-fits-all-type of committee for various community-based groups including the Partnership Companies and the CDPs.

"Secondly, the banding structure for parents is to be reduced again which will eliminate parents from the "Band C" group which will limit the parents able to access the community childcare schemes and as such limit the schemes income.

These proposals, in conjunction to changes proposed to CE schemes, could threaten the level of take-up of CE places, which in turn will impact on the ability of community crèches, among other essential services, to continue in



disadvantaged communities.

The winding up of the Job Initiative schemes, which the Bord Snip report called for "as soon as possible" would put 1,400 community workers out of jobs.

"With these cuts we are facing the possible destruction of years of effort, campaigning and struggle to build our communities," said Joe.

Community services in a typical county

Currently County Tipperary has 33 Community Childcare schemes, three Family Resource Centres, 77 Community Employment schemes, six organisations supported by the Community Services Programme, two Partnership and LEADER Companies, five Community Development Projects, CLAR support to District Electoral Divisions, two RAPID coordinating centres, two Rural Transport Schemes and one Job Initiative project.



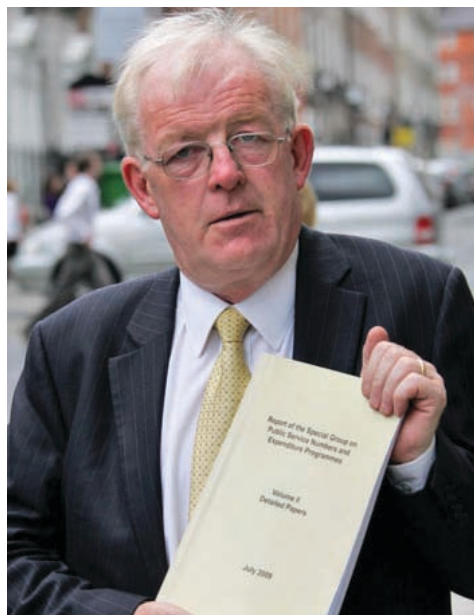
Ballyfermot does the sums locally: 4000 people lose out

A total of 3,897 individuals living in the Ballyfermot Partnership area in Dublin would no longer receive a range of services from community organisations if the proposed McCarthy cuts... are fully implemented. Furthermore, (closure of) a number of these proposed cuts would also adversely impact on the families of many of the 3,897 individuals. A total of 68 jobs will be lost.

The above figures were among the conclusions reached in a 16-page research report into the impact of McCarthy's recommendations on Ballyfermot.

"This could be used as a snapshot of disadvantaged communities around the country who will be affected in much the same way," said Billy Mangan, co-ordinator of Markiewicz Centre CDP.

CDPs' views on McCarthy



Rural transport dilemma

"One of the six CDPs in Co. Wexford provides 40,000 passenger trips per year, just over 60% of these trips are by people over 65 and many have no alternative transport available to access essential services, such as doctor and clinic appointments, getting to the post office and shopping," said Project co-ordinator Marian Donegan outlining the potential impact of cuts on one CDP in County Wexford.

€35,000 bill for an "anti-rural" report

"The proposed cuts to Disability Services, CDPs, FRCs, and Rural Transport would effectively see the dismantling of Community Infrastructure that has been largely build up in a voluntary capacity over the past 15 to 20 years in Ireland. McCarthy's report that he was paid €35,000 to deliver has in our opinion a huge Anti-Rural bias," said Margaret O'Shea, Community Development Worker, Kerry Network of People with Disabilities

Cuts will cost us more

The cuts "will have the opposite effect of saving money for the exchequer in the long-term," according to Abbeyfeale CDP's Ed O'Connor whose employers have called on the Government to abandon plans to disband CDPs.

Energised and inspired

"The great thing about the Community Development Programme is that every project is diverse and they answer the needs of its own community, every project is locally managed by local residents and they come up with the solutions they need in their own communities," said Niamh Hogan, Little Bray Family, Resource and Development Centre.

"I felt energized and inspired by marching because I felt we were being forgotten about."

Engage, stand, defend

"In these days of uncertainty and attacks on disadvantaged communities and projects, it is really important that Community Development Projects engage, stand together and defend their national programme and the community sector," said Rita Fagan, St. Michaels Estate Community Development Project (and Eastern Region CDP Network Core Group member) on October 12th.

Social price is massive

"The social price to be paid for the cuts will be massive and cost far more to put right," said Samantha Kieley, chairperson of Our Lady of Lourdes CDP in Limerick city.

Community Development or Crime

"CDPs are at the heart of many communities in Wexford. They help to hold families and communities together. (If the cuts go through) there will be increased levels of anti-social behaviour and negative impacts on crime, employment, training and education," said Catherine Brazil, on behalf of the County Wexford CDPs Network. The view was echoed in Monaghan where Blayne Blades, Drumlin CDP and Dochas for Women made a similar point.

McCarthy

Ongoing sustained campaign

"You haven't seen anything yet. We provide a very valuable service to those communities and this will be an ongoing sustained campaign," said Martin Collins from Pavee Point Travellers Centre in Dublin as the fight against cutbacks kicked off in June.

Most difficult part

"The most difficult part of these cutbacks are that they are targeting the most vulnerable in society, and we are determined to fight any planned closures," said Tony Jordan, project co-ordinator of Ait na Daoine CDP in Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Left with no alternative

"The proposed cuts would be so substantial that we just wouldn't be able to operate and unlike other urban areas, there are no alternatives here that people can avail of if a programme closes," said Community Connections spokesperson, Hayley Fox-Roberts, in Blacklion, Co. Cavan. The CDP works across three border counties.

Passionate but starved

"We're passionate about our communities but we're slowly and surely getting starved of resources and we're going back to the 1980s. We missed the Celtic Tiger. People are losing their jobs and soon they are going to have nowhere to go."

- Theresa McGouran, Markiewicz CDP, Ballyfermot, Dublin.



Members of the National Community Development Forum (l to r) at a meeting in November: Allen Meagher, Noreen Byrne, Viv Sadd, Susan O'Neill, Larry McCarthy, Siobhan McLaughlin, Maurice McConville, Therese McGouran, Sharon Kennedy, Seanie Lambe, Cathleen O'Neill.

McCarthy

**SOLUTIONS
NOT
INCREASED
POVERTY**

CDP's on streets over McCarthy



Clare, Cork, Limerick, Kerry & Tipp

Between 3000 (media estimate) and 6000 (official Garda estimate) marched through Limerick city in a regional Communities Against



Cuts march on November 5th. CDPs were among the lead organisations to take part.

Wicklow

On September 25th, Wicklow CDPs presented Minister of State John Curran with a position



Dublin: 1500 march against cuts to CDPs

On September 8th, between 1200-1500 people from 180 of the most marginalised communities across Ireland marched in protest at the Bord Snip plan to close most Community Development Projects (CDPs).

Colm McCarthy's board had recommended cuts of up to 60% to the Programme, remarking that there was "little evidence of positive outcomes" to either the Community Development Programme or the LDSIP.

One woman marched with a placard reading "I am a positive outcome" and that was also the rallying cry of one of the speech-makers prior to the march.

The Bord Snip comment probably did more to bring people out on the streets than anything anyone in the Community Sector said and even the main organising trade union, SIPTU, was surprised at the reaction.

The march was preceded by speeches in Liberty Hall, but the turnout was overwhelming and half the people there to protest had to wait outside until the speakers had had their say.

Speakers included Susan O'Neill from Limerick and Cathleen O'Neill (no relation) from Dublin and both spoke passionately about why they were there.

There are only around 350 staff employed through the Programme and the march included

**SOLUTIONS
NOT
INCREASED
POVERTY**

a majority volunteer-to-staff ratio. As one Dublin journalist remarked, "That's a first for Dublin", meaning she had never before heard of employers and staff marching together.

The marchers – from every county – were worried their projects might have been closed down by year's end (although there are assurances now that no project will close until at the earliest the end of February 2010).

The CDP march was accompanied by lobbying of politicians and the cuts threat has been raised in the Dail by various opposition TDs from Fine Gael's Kieran O'Donnell to Labour's Jack Wall and Sinn Féin's Martin Ferris, among others.

It was a symbolic march – marchers brought along a coffin and laid it at the steps of the Department of Finance.

"We're motivated by the likelihood that poor communities will be robbed of the little resources they have to keep the banks afloat," remarked Cathleen O'Neill, one of the speakers on the day.

The campaign has continued to gather pace locally, from Wicklow to Donegal, Sligo to Kerry and so on.

paper on how cuts would hit communities. The people who made the presentation (pictured) are Jim O'Brien, Joan Moorehouse, Niamh Wogan, Fran Berry, Anita Carroll and John Smith.

A facebook campaign has taken off in Wicklow where over 200 people have joined a Save our CDP campaign.

Cork

CDPs succeeded in getting Cork City Council to pass a motion supporting their case. A number of local authorities around the country have pledged their support to CDPs and indeed FRCs and the wider Communities Against Cuts campaign.

Kerry

Kerry County Network of People with Disabilities held a roundtable meeting with politicians on September 7th. The meeting with politicians was a follow-up to a street protest in Tralee in August attended by over 200 people. The KNPd is the most vocal of CDPs in Kerry.

Donegal

Voluntary management committees of all nine CDPs in Co. Donegal held a public meeting on October 19th to outline their work to elected representatives, state agencies' staff, and local media.

Sligo

CDPs in the North-West marched in Sligo on November 6th.

RTE heaps praise on CDPs

On RTE's Drivetime, the station's award-winning health correspondent Sara Burke has given CDPs a ringing endorsement in a 7-minute interview.

Sara described the work that CDPs do as "exceptional value for money" and paid tribute to volunteers' involvement and the ability of projects to do a great many things with very limited resources. While focusing chiefly on CDPs, Sara also drew attention to work done by drugs projects, Family Resource Centres and a range of others.

The interview was broadcast on September 24th and here's what Sara said:

"Little attention is paid to the wide range of services provided by the local community sector which is made up of a extensive array of groups (including):

- Community Development Projects (CDPs)
- Family Resource Centres
- local drugs projects
- groups working with Travellers, victims of domestic violence, lone parents, migrants, people with disabilities.

Specifically this slot was about Community Development Projects but much of what I

the country.

So what do they do?

If we take the example of Lifford in Donegal, the Community Development Project there:

- has a childcare facilities which allows parents time away from their children to take education or training programmes or return to work. So (the CDP) is increasing employment, its providing education and employment opportunities for locals and quality childcare for children,
- It has a Community Employment scheme with 16 locals getting training with a view to re-entering the work force,
- They provides community education,
- It carries out youth activity, after school groups, home work clubs, breakfast clubs and it's working with young people not in school,
- It supports a range of community groups for lone parents, older people,
- It's very involved in the primary care strategy and it is one of the few places in the country to have those much talked about but rare to happen state of the art primary care centres.

Central to all this work is the participation of the local community, in identifying their own needs and responding to them. (All CDPs) are run by local voluntary boards of management.

In terms of money, the core funding for a CDP is about €120,000 a year and this pays for two staff and all overheads and a range of projects. So it's very good value for money.

Also what's interesting about the CDPs is that over the years, they have acted as a hub for a range of other projects. If we take Lifford – the fact that they have a CDP up and running, doing really good work with the community, means that they have attracted funding for a whole load of other services like the childcare project or the primary care centre.

One of the difficulties with this type of work is that if you are doing it well, its hard to measure, this is true of all prevention work and public health work. For example if you are providing parenting supports and that child stays in school and out of trouble, its hard to measure that because they don't become a statistic. It's only the ones who end up in jail or in drug treatment or out of school that become a statistic.

But there have been some evaluations of the CDPs in the past that showed:

- with very few staff they provided a huge amount of services
- they trained a lot of people and reached a lot of people
- they brought in a whole lot of other money and people eg through CE schemes
- and attracted lots of volunteers and very high levels of community participation

In many cases these projects are the first line of call of the most vulnerable, they act as a crucial link to state services, but also they keep people out of the state services by working with them in the community.

More recent evaluation of the Family Resource centres showing similar findings

There is no doubt that these are very good value for money, but also they are an essential fabric to the communities they are working in and for many of these communities.

In terms of the broader economic situation, all the CDPs have (in 2009) had a 12-15% cut, the local drugs task forces have had a 17% cut. More and more people are looking for their support and services and yet their budgets are being cut. Before these cuts they were providing their projects on shoestring value for money projects.

These are projects in some of the most disadvantaged communities that have always lived by their wits juggling funding sources.

McCarthy proposes cutting €44 million out of a €72 million budget – €20 million of this is from CDPs – they've already had a 20% cut over 2 years: In 2008, the CDP budget was €25 million, in 2009, it was €20 million.

The McCarthy proposal of a 60% of the CDP budget would close half the projects in the country.

Maintaining these projects is about maintaining communities that are sustainable. People in the CDPs say their work allows some people in their communities to survive. Taking them away will lead to community collapse. Those involved in these communities speak about the destruction of fabric it has taken decades to create. Like dismantling the railway infrastructure, it's easy to do but it takes decades and millions and millions to reconstruct.

As Mary Coughlan says "it just does not make sense".

Sara Burke

Sara Burke is a journalist, broadcaster & policy analyst. She is the author of 'Irish Apartheid. Healthcare Inequality in Ireland' (New Island, 2009). Sara's blog: saraburke.wordpress.com

She's keen to hear from projects whose work is health-related.



outline is applicable to those other projects too. There are 180 community development projects around the country. It's an area that has been invested in hugely over the last 15-20 years. In 1990, there were 15 CDPs. These projects work with some of the most excluded communities in



McCarthy

National community development forum

National Forum and local campaigns hit home

CDPs across the country have been campaigning since the summer against cuts, mergers and closures to projects, writes editor Allen Meagher.

At national level, the National Community Development Forum (NCDF) which was formed before the summer, has gone from nought-to-sixty and is now having a notable impact.

As Minister Curran acknowledges to 'Changing Ireland' in this issue, the protests have slowed down the 'merger' or 'integration' process.

Now, following an Oireachtas appearance, the NCDF and the Community Workers' Co-op slowed the process further and the Minister is being asked to engage in proper consultations and to appear before the Oireachtas shortly.

The NCDF has no funding support. However, it has united projects and meets regularly. It has been recognised (eventually) by Minister of State Curran, it has met with Partnership reps at national level, it has liaised with SIPTU on its campaign.

It has also won significant national tv, radio and press attention, something incidentally that 'Changing Ireland' always hoped would happen for CDPs and strived to support.

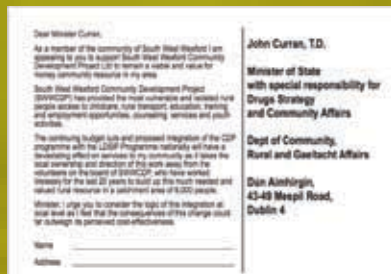
Meanwhile, much of the campaign work around the country has been organised by regional networks of staff and volunteers, acting with or without funding support. See right for just six examples:

NATIONAL

A new organisation called CAMA was launched in Dublin on November 6th. Touted as a better option than NAMA, it was launched with the reading of the CAMA Proclamation outside the GPO in Dublin. For their trouble, the campaigners ended up on Joe Duffy.



CAMA's launch outside the GPO.



WEXFORD

South West Wexford CDP – which won an Irish Rural Link award earlier this year – is running a postcard campaign, among other things.

LIMERICK

Our Lady of Lourdes CDP, one of seven projects in Limerick, gave other projects the lead in calling on all local and national representatives to support the CDP campaign and to support those who are most marginalised. Limerick city's seven CDPs held a meeting with public representatives in City Hall on November 10th.



Helen Flanagan in City Hall



BALLYFERMOT, DUBLIN

"We're passionate about our communities but we're slowly and surely getting starved of resources and we're going back to the 1980s," Theresa McGouran, voluntary chairperson of Markiewicz CDP in Ballyfermot, told TV3. "We missed the Celtic Tiger. People are losing their jobs and soon they are going to have nowhere to go."



CLONDALKIN, DUBLIN

Regular protests by CDPs have been held in recent months outside Minister of State John Curran's constituency office. The Minister has met with those protesting, inviting them inside, on a number of occasions. The protests continue.

McCARTHY: CDPs TAKE TO THE STREETS

Media and politicians on CDPs

"I'd like to ask the Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, 'Are you going to cut those salaries (politicians, university heads, senior civil servants, executives in state agencies) by the same percentage that you're going to cut the Community Development Programme?' Many of these people are on €200,000 per annum."

- Ailbhe Smyth, feminist activist, academic and member of People Before Profit on Newstalk, Oct 15th, '09

"The recent cuts in supports for local and community development projects compromise the ability to harness local



enterprise and innovation which is more vital now than ever."

- Dermot Leavy, Chairman of the Rural Science Association at the Association's Annual Conference earlier this year

"These facilities often open on a Sunday and are used by people at all times of the day and night. They are of benefit to the entire community. We will only survive current difficulties if communities pull together."

- Jack Wall, TD

"There is no doubt that (CDPs) are very good value for money but also they are an essential fabric to the communities they are working in."

- Sara Burke, health correspondent, RTE radio

"The closure of Finglas Parents Alone Support Service (CDP) would have a devastating knock-on effect on local residents and the wider community."

- Dublin People newspaper

McCarthy

"These projects are real lifelines in communities."

- Sybil Mulcahy, presenter, TV3

"CDPs help the most vulnerable people in society by providing childcare, meals on wheels and drug rehabilitation services."

- Irish Examiner, Sept 8th, '09



"We're getting calls from all over the country. I never knew there were so many CDPs."

- Joe Duffy, RTE Radio 1

CDPs: Take 7 in Limerick

Since 1996, the seven CDPs in Limerick have directly employed 53 people with over half from the communities themselves; assisted 66 others with work experience and provided practical services to 6,000 people.

It also assisted 1,000 adults to participate in education and training; distributed €200,000 to support 350 third level students; trained 200 volunteers and facilitated around 2,000 days of volunteer work.

To take one example of the work, from Our Lady of Lourdes CDP:

"We provide one to one help on a regular basis," said project co-ordinator Ann Bourke. "We also provide bursaries for third level students. In my centre, in the middle of the community in Clarina Park, we've had people coming to the door shocked that the service might be cut. We do everything from reading a letter (to someone who cannot read and will not ask anyone they know) to working with local groups to getting basic information for people."



South-West CDPs held a press conference in Cork on December 4th. Meanwhile, in Limerick city, last month, projects held a session in City Hall to demonstrate their effectiveness over the past decade. The Limerick event was held to rebutt Colm McCarthy's claim that there was "no evidence of positive outcomes" regarding CDP and LDSIP work which offended a lot of people.

Take 3 in the Border Region

South West Cavan CDP currently supports over 60 groups over an area of 200 sq. miles, which takes the areas of Crosserlough, Ballymachugh, Mullahoran, Denn and parts of Lower Lavey and Ballintemple.

Community Connections CDP currently run and support a wide range of programmes in North Leitrim, West Cavan & West Fermanagh, all rural areas, including work with the North Leitrim and West Cavan Carers Group, intergenerational projects between Active Age groups and local schools, and anti-racism and cultural diversity awareness programme for young people where groups link with multicultural organisations and use art & sport as tools for change; community gardening, cookery courses for men and youth advocacy skills training.

The North Leitrim

Women's Centre in Manorhamilton currently runs a range of training and development courses for women, along with a drop-in centre, computer training and access, the Well Woman clinic and a domestic violence awareness programme.

All three projects say they are well-used sources for information, advice and skill-sharing.

And 1 in the South-East

"If our funding is stopped it's like the infrastructure of the community is gone," says Catherine Brazil, Co-ordinator of the FAB (Ferndale, Ashfield, Belvedere) CDP in Wexford town.

FAB CDP provides childcare, youth work, education and training, among its supports. The local Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer recently told the project that thanks to their work the number of young offenders from the Coolcotts area dropped significantly in recent years.





People with disabilities fight off return to 'dark ages'

The Kerry Network of People with Disabilities said on November 3rd that the Government had insulted it by taking seriously an "outdated" proposal by Colm McCarthy's board that would push people with disabilities "back to the dark ages" of institutionalisation and abuse.

An Bord Snip Nua proposed that issues involving people with disabilities be moved from the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform to the Department of Health and Children.

The KNPD were not asked for their views, which is something they take issue with. They have always said their clients/supporters have rights to equality and are not to be regarded as charity cases.

The KNPD – a CDP – has regularly over the years spoken out on behalf of the 10% of the population living with a disability. (Ref: See below for back-issue coverage on disability).

Now they fear that people with disabilities will be rendered "powerless" and forced into a fearful situation.

"If (the move to the Department of Health) were to happen, it would be a step backwards in our ongoing campaign for equality as it would put us back to the medical model rather than the social model which we believe we are making progress on at present," said KNPD chairperson Noel O'Neill.

"The medical model is so outdated it beggars belief that McCarthy should even think of putting people with disabilities back to the dark ages of abuse and neglect by the State which only recently made the headlines through the

shocking reports on institutional abuse from our past.

"We have a very good working relationship with the Department of Health and Children and the HSE at present and are part funded by them for which we are grateful but we cannot let the situation arise where they dictate the agenda to suit themselves at the expense of people with disabilities.

"The medical model is we believe where people with disabilities are thought of as people who cannot do anything for themselves and need constant care and protection both from themselves and the rest of society.

"We are constantly told that (others) know best, while we know ourselves what we really want but have no choice in the matter.

"The social model gives us different choices - we can speak for ourselves and lobby service providers and criticize different Government agency's without fear of repercussions.

A typical Wexford project's Work:

According to the Wexford CDP Network, the following is their measure of what CDPs do with approx €120,000 each per annum:

A typical project is open and accessible centre which is free and at the heart of the communities

Volunteers manage and direct the work of the community project.

Provide administration for small local groups that no-one hears about.

Provide affordable childcare facilities.

Volunteers manage and/or operate the local services of Childcare, Youth work, Community Education and family support.

Free and flexible delivery of Adult Education Courses.

Affordable premises for groups to use, such as Youth services, Women's Groups, Bereavement Groups, Dads and Kids Groups, Drugs Family Support Groups, Traveller After school Groups, Men's Health project, Narcotics Anonymous.

A place for many older people to socialise.

Support for families of people with enduring Mental Health problems and substance abuse.

Support for a Community Health Project.

Facilities or resources to upskill people in the hope that Ireland comes out of this current downturn.

Affordable rural transport.

Two workers to support the volunteers and the work.

"Do we really want a society that leaves 10% plus of its population without a voice? We don't want to be put back to the middle of the last century, we want to hold onto freedom of speech, our right to tell people that things are being done wrong. We want to retain the right to explain to service providers the way we want things delivered.

"We also think it an insult to people with disabilities that we have not been invited to the table to participate in the talks on our future, as an independent voice of and for people with disabilities we are calling on both departments to include us in those talks," added Noel.

Over 200 people rallied in support of the project at a demo in Tralee in August.



Past-issue coverage of disability campaigns:

Issue 24, pages 22-23 – Leigh Gath's life-story: Her parents were advised by maternity hospital staff when she was born disabled "to leave her behind." The parents ignored the hospital, as Leigh points out. The back page news story highlighted the KNPD's readiness to help apprehend abusers of people with disabilities.

Issue 19, Autumn '06, page 2: 'We still want rights, not charity' says KNPD.

Issue 8, Summer 2003, various pages: focused on disability as a theme, looking at Community Development work in this area in the Mid-West, Kerry, Connemara and Kildare. The coverage also looked in particular at women with disabilities.

Issue 2, Winter 2001, broke the news nationally that people with disabilities were having sex like the rest of the population, challenging the old myth that they shouldn't. The same issue covered the launch of advocacy networks for and by survivors of mental ill-health. The survivors can do more than sympathise, they can empathise with people attending mental health institutions.

You can search other past issues online in our archive, on any subject: www.changingireland.ie/archive.html

Help Me Horace!



Charlie concerned for Xmas

Dear Horace,

The Christmas hype has begun, but things have never looked so bad. Can Brian Lenihan and the Government come up with a plan to take some of the pressure off us all around Christmas without turning into Scrooge?

Sincerely,

Charlie Dickens
Hard Times CDP
No Great Expectations
Withering Heights
Dublin 14

Horace Helps!

Dear Charlie

I have a proposal going to the EU and UN to fundamentally change the way Christmas is organised. I propose that Christmas be held every four years like the Olympics and World Cup. 30 countries with the best behaved children who make the "nice list" qualify to take part in the Christmas Festival and countries with high numbers on the "naughty" list would miss out. The qualifiers can be divided into continental groupings and children would be encouraged to help their country qualify not by achieving "personal bests" but being their personable best.

This would be a massive help to hard pressed parents in disciplining their demanding Celtic Cubs. This would have many other positive environment impacts including reducing Santa's travel time and carbon emissions.

Every 4 years would really make it special again and it could be sold to the Christian Churches by the Pope announcing that the De Vinci Code proves that Jesus was born in a leap year on February 29th

Trouble taking the mickey

Help Me Horace,

Last year, everyone would know I was taking the mickey if I suggested we close down the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. This year, they'd just call me Colm McCarthy.

I once wrote satire for a living, but now find it hard to stretch my imagination to come up with scenarios that are implausible. Is the Government running a clever campaign to destroy political satire by making it entirely redundant?

Fintan O'Toole,
The Irish Times,
Fancy New Building (we spent too much on),
Dublin One

Horace Helps!

Dear Fintan,

Yes, this country is on the verge of greatness. The Government is asking everyone to work harder than themselves and that includes you. Ye satirists had it too easy for too long.

I didn't read Colm's report in full, but I'm going to now that it's being implemented in full. Who else could have had the vision to turn Cork into Venice overnight (the world's first underwater capital of culture) and to turn the midlands into a giant lake for watersports enthusiasts.

I don't know how he did it Fintan, but the only one to predict that kind of rain was the late Myles na gCopaleen, a renowned optimist.

McCarthy is, mark my words, this country's first 21st century genius and Ireland is going to be overrun in 2010 not by the IMF but by tourists in diving gear.

Farmers will have exciting, new, income-earning opportunities to give guided tours in glass-bottomed boats showing where they used to live. You'll be able to snorkel your way through the back-gardens of boom-time, housing estates built on marshland, and marvel at this country's willingness to embrace anything once.

In the Spring, we can look forward to a spot of inshore shark-fishing as the fish in the Tralee Aquarium jump the rim of their tank into the rising floodwaters. (I understand CDPs in Kerry are currently running FETAC Level 5 shark-evasion classes).

In the meantime, you might like to write about the disaster that's hit Ireland's Community Sector, the Irish soccer team and the Jed Twins, there's a connection somewhere.

Stop smoking in swimming pools!

Help Me Horace,

I see that Crumlin CDP [Ed's Note: see our project news on page 10] are holding swimming and smoking cessation classes. That a super idea, holding the two at once, and it could work for our community, but we'd like more information.

Mr. Benson Hedges,
Tobaki Road CDP,
Co. Silkut

Horace Helps!

Hello Benson,

I've spoken to Harry up in Crumlin and he says to just bring lots of cigarettes and lighters along with you to your local pool. There are various approaches. Some people like to just chuck their fags in the pool, then get on with the swim. But, most people just get in and do the obvious – swim and smoke at the same time. It's fun! If the pool attendant attempts to throw ye out, fight him/her off bravely, tell him get a life, you're trying to save yours. Remember, ye're doing this for yer own health and for the benefit of society.

Iceland deals with obesity problem

Dear Horace,

I hear that McDonalds have closed up shop in Iceland since the country went bankrupt. You can't get a bag of chips for love (no-one has any money). What'ya think?

Howie Telzem
Ballygeyser CDP

Horace helps!

That's breathtakingly clever! So income-challenged Icelanders are now reacquainting themselves with a low-fat fish diet and will all live to be 100. Childhood obesity is a growing problem here too and of course you're right - Ireland should follow Iceland's example.

2010 dictionary leaked

Horace,

Is it true some of the updated words in the 2010 dictionary have been leaked?

Paul Dudderwan
Skeptic CDP

Horace Helps!

You're right Paul Dudderwan. There's been a leak about one word in particular, when applied to Ireland from now on.

Bailout (verb, noun):

(1) to remove water from a flooded house in Cork, Clare or Galway after a river breaks its banks.

(2) to put money into a bank, after it has broken.

The “Merger” plan

– feedback on our blog



Q 1. Why are you cutting the support provided to communities by the CDPs?

Minister of State John Curran replies:

This is not what will happen. The Department will continue to support the provision of tangible resources and supports to communities within the context of a single focused programme and simplified and more efficient delivery mechanisms.

Anon said...

If you cut funding, you reduce resources and supports. Dressing it up in fancy language like “single focused programme” doesn’t change that.

Hayley said...

Inevitably there’s a reduction in service provision: firstly because less staff+less resources = less service provision and secondly because the change-over period (takes time).

Anon said...

We go to the community to see what they need and we work to provide it and nothing could be more tangible, efficient, effective or needed.

Irene from Galway said...

My fear is that the merger will take the CDPs away from the very communities they are being asked to support.

Cathrina from Louth said...

I’d say there will be more CDP staff out of work than moved to central offices - maybe that’s the plan?

Q 2. Why are you doing this?

To provide services to communities in a more effective streamlined way.

Anon said...

Community Development is not about service provision, it’s about people, equality and empowerment. If this has changed since the White Paper, somebody forgot to tell us.

Felix said...

Is the real reason for this ‘merger’ not just to cut funding but also to disenfranchise

and disempower real volunteers in working class areas in order to silence them from objecting to the inequitable programme for Government?

Hayley said...

CDPs are not only about service provision but about empowerment, about social inclusion, about activating the community, especially the isolated and vulnerable. Efficiency is a fine thing, but need not involve abandoning the most vulnerable or the silencing of community voices.

Cathrina said...

The Minister does not understand the Community Development Programme - if he did this would not be happening.

Anon said...

CDPs are able to respond quickly and appropriately to issues. How will this happen now?

Anon said...

CDPs are catalysts for change not service providers...

Q 3. What is the rationale for the Programme redesign?

(The Dept. will draw) on best international practice to provide evidence of what works in this field and to establish and support ongoing evaluation of the programmes leading to greater efficiencies and better impacts for communities and individuals.

Ann said...

Other than to save money, there doesn’t seem to be any evidence that it is going to improve anything for anyone.

Anon said...

The review being conducted by the Centre for Effective Services has not yet been published. Why did the minister make this decision in advance of this report.

Hayley said...

As Anon says, since the CES report hasn’t been published yet, where is the evidence? I don’t believe that the specific needs of rural populations has been addressed, not at all.

Ann McGowan said...

Why is no research done with the groups who are affected by our work in the communities. How can anyone, never mind the CES, know what is happening in the CDPs if they never seek to find out?

Irene Galway said...

Please reference the evidence base for this decision...

Q 4. Is this not an attack on volunteering in communities?

No. We acknowledge and affirm the work of volunteer boards over the years. Those who wish to continue to volunteer on behalf

of their communities will be encouraged under the new programme without the bureaucratic burden of ensuring compliance with company law.

Felix said...

CDP managements are not ‘burdened’ by company law. It empowers them to take on the responsibility to manage and direct a project in their community. The fact is this is an attempt to silence and disempower real volunteers.

Hayley said...

Of COURSE this is an attack on volunteers. To remove all say from them is an act of disempowerment.

Anon said...

Minister as a volunteer on a Board I find your answer very upsetting. There will be no room for the voluntary committee to continue in the new set up. CDP Boards were accessible to all, meetings were held locally and the suits had no place at them. LDSIP Boards are TOTALLY different.

Cathrina from Louth said...

Shame on everyone in (politics). Them in power are the ones doing this and those not in power are letting it happen.

Q 5. When will the new Programme be launched?

The new Programme will be announced and launched in early December for roll-out in early 2010.

Editor’s note: This has since changed and the plan will be implemented slowly over 2010.

Q 6. Will the merger of the two Programmes provide for CDP representation on the boards of Urban Partnerships/Integrated Companies?

Nomination to the boards Integrated Local Development Companies and Urban based Partnerships will remain unchanged.

There will be no automatic membership for CDPs on the boards of the companies arising from the merger, however, the community and voluntary sector is represented on the boards, nomination from that sector and others is subject to compliance with a number of guiding principles and requirements.

Conor said...

This is a takeover not a merger - talk of ring-fencing jobs for 12 months is a smokescreen - no representation = no power.

Anon said...



This decision takes people from disadvantaged areas out of the decision making process. Felix said...

This is the crux of the proposal - to disempower working class voluntary management committees who may challenge Government policy and transfer that power to Partnership boards that are in the main (conservative). Most of these people have no idea what community development is, nor do they want to know. Keep the working class silent.

Q 7. What about providing funding in future to CDPs?

Funding to projects generally will, subject to 2010 Estimates decisions, be channeled through Partnerships. Some CDPs are not dependant solely on funding provided by the Department and may decide to continue in separate existence, outside of the new integrated programme.

Editor's note: This has since changed slightly and CDPs will get their funding as usual for the first quarter of 2010 (once they are deemed "viable" by the Department).

Q 8. Will CDP budgets not simply be absorbed by the partnerships?

No. We will take steps to prevent that happening in the short term. Over time local priorities will be set locally within the context of the overall redesigned programme. The upcoming Budget will determine all available programme funding. In the case of viable CDPs it is anticipated that funding for core CDP staff will be ringfenced for 2010.

Anon said...

What do "viable" CDPs mean?

Felix said...

My project is viable minister. We have created over €30m in investment into our area, created over 90 jobs, trained hundreds of people. Are we viable?

Hayley said...

CES (consultants) must have accountability, to clarify their methods so that community workers and the population can see that the assessment has been fair. Transparency is necessary and warrantable...I'd also like to know the cost of the CES assessments!

Anon said...

The Community Development Programme

has got to be the most viable Programme in Ireland if only the people who are making these decisions understood what COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT was! Ann said...

If we squandered millions we would be seen as viable! Why can they not believe we do the immense work we do on such small budgets?

Q 9. Will all Partnership and CDP employees be accommodated in the new programme?

No. There may be instances where continued support for the services supplied by Partnerships and CDPs will no longer be feasible, for example where the tangible frontline services are not being provided OR where benefits to a community are not evident.

Please note that in the context of future support for CDPs there is a separate review of all Community Development Projects underway which will be completed shortly.

There were nine comments in response that can be read online.

Traveller women thought rape within marriage legal

The Tullamore Travellers Movement CDP shocked local people when they went door-to-door to talk to Traveller women about domestic violence. The women were "shocked" to learn from the development workers that emotional abuse and rape within marriage constituted domestic violence and was illegal.

In the first survey of its kind, the 2007 Research on Domestic Violence and Traveller Women showed that

Traveller women generally did not know that rape

within marriage was a criminal offence.

The research was launched in Tullamore in November of this year and was based on data collected by members of the Travelling community themselves.

Biddy Kavanagh from the Tullamore Travellers Movement told a Domestic Violence Awareness conference: "They see violence as just hitting and that was the only violence they see. They were totally shocked . . . they thought husbands couldn't rape their wives."

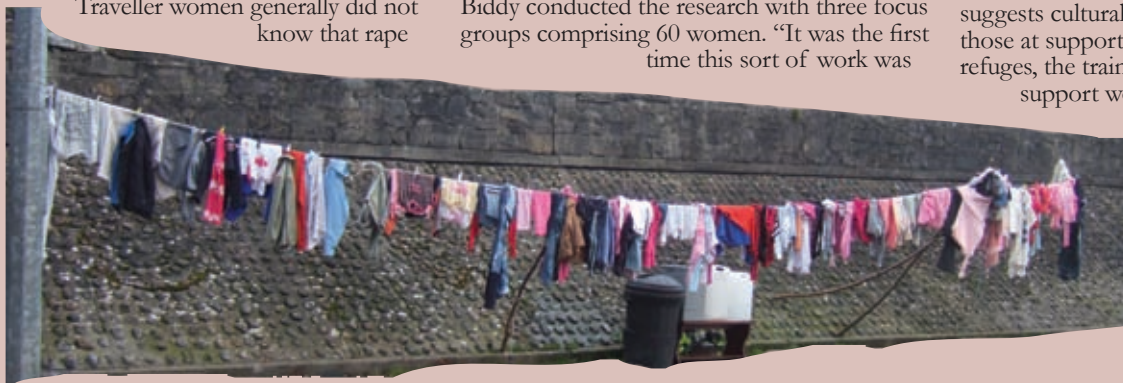
Biddy conducted the research with three focus groups comprising 60 women. "It was the first time this sort of work was

done. And if I hadn't been a Traveller woman doing that sort of research I don't think we would have gotten the facts," she added. The research found that women who suffer abuse within the community are most likely to seek assistance from a priest and there is a lack of knowledge as to the services available. It also found Traveller women were more likely to use women's refuges for respite rather than an escape route or a preventive measure. Biddy said she came across some women who had used refuges for respite for 30 years: "They used them . . . to let him calm down or whatever."

She claimed it was difficult for women from an insular community to break away, even when they were suffering from abuse. Tullamore Traveller Movement has now made a number of recommendations. It suggests cultural awareness training for those at support agencies and women's refuges, the training of Traveller women as support workers and the provision

of accommodation for Traveller children caught in domestic violence.

The research launch was given good coverage by the Irish Times as well as local press.



Volunteer Profile

Jobstown Volunteer -

Gillian MacWilliams



Gillian MacWilliams from Jobstown CDP in Tallaght led out 15,000 people on September 30th when the Communities Against Cuts march brought Dublin to a halt. Gillian (left) carried the banner with worker Ann FitzPatrick and her son Daniel.

Gillian MacWilliams is a voluntary management committee member of Jobstown CDP, based in Tallaght, Co. Dublin.

The top 4 issues in Ireland today?

1. The State of the Economy
2. The Drugs Issue
3. The Budget
4. The Rising Crime

We need more...?

Effective Leadership for the country to counteract the negative impact that the poor performance of the Government has led us to. We need more effective Social Policy that is acted on.

We need less ??

We need less focus on the financial economy, and more focus on the social impacts that the economy is leading to.

How long are you working with the CDP?

A little over a year.

How and why did you get involved?

I went back to do a degree in Leadership and Community Development and was carrying out some research as part of an assignment and have been involved with the CDP since then.

What difference has being involved made to you?

Getting involved with the CDP has given me a bigger picture about the injustice that is out there and has changed me on a personal level in a way that I am more aware of rights. I don't have to believe everything I'm told and would be more ready to challenge issues.

How have things changed for the better in your community since you got involved - up to before the recession hit this time last year? (eg women, older people)

There has been some improvement in infrastructure. The drug dealing wasn't as visible but unemployment has remained very high.

How have things changed for your community this year? Good and bad?

Unemployment continues to sore, drug dealing is openly visible, crime is on the increase and the CDP faces closure. There is very negative for the community.

What motivates you as a volunteer?

I want to give something back to the community and I am more motivated now to see the injustices and want to try to challenge them. And also to challenge them so my kids don't have to face and struggle with those injustices. I believe that kids get sucked into anti-social behaviour because it's there and you face everyday no matter how good parents might be. Poverty drives people and children to act in a way that's viewed negatively by society.

Is it really easier now to get new volunteers?

No, it's difficult to get people involved, but with more people getting angry with the Government people might more willing to get involved.

What are you reading at the moment?

'Influencing Social Policy' – Pauline Conroy

What's the last film you saw?

Ghandi

Person you most admire?

My own Dad, because I have seen how he has transformed his own life and for the work that he has been involved in the community when the Government were ignoring the drugs issue in the 80's.

St. Michael's Estate

dead man walking, or inspiration to a nation?

Rita Fagan, the project co-ordinator who first arrived as a student on a placement, is the public face of St. Michael's Family Resource Centre (a CDP) in Inchicore, Dublin. She is known to women's groups nationwide for anti-violence campaigns such as "Once is Too Much" and to the wider public for leading public demonstrations. As one colleague remarked, he'd never seen Rita without "her megaphone."

Her work has won official recognition. On Friday, November 27th, Rita was one of three people called on by NUI Maynooth to receive the first ever 'John O'Connell Award' for "an outstanding contribution to community work."

But what of the project and what does it do on the ground, based as it is now in a derelict estate which fell victim to the collapse of a regeneration scheme:

St. Michael's was set up by local women in 1986 who were driven to action by the drug addiction, poverty and violence besetting the community in Inchicore. They joined part of the Community Development Programme in 1993.

The name 'St. Michael's Family Resource Centre' is misleading since the project is a Community Development Project and also because it covers an area of Inchicore much greater than the estate it is named after.

The project and community has developed a huge national profile – because the downtrodden residents united to publicly seek full and fair participation in regeneration of their area and were then let down badly three times in five years by Dublin City Council.

But the project is bigger than its name and its reputation. It is multi-funded and employs 18 staff (in the CDP, outreach work, childcare, after-schools).

I visited the estate last winter and it was buzzing with visitors coming to view art exhibits in and around Inchicore that were produced by community groups based on the estate. Inside the corridors of the old flats, where the project is based, two dozen people came and went in an hour, some to collect children, others to attend meetings. If you liked Christmas, it was the place to be – there were more decorations (mostly home-made) than you'd find in a Christmas shop.

St. Michael's Estate should have been knocked

long before now, new housing built and social initiatives up and running as part of regeneration. Since it didn't happen, the place has become more famous than ever. And where despair would have eaten away at the people's spirit in another place, in St. Michael's the sense of community spirit – notwithstanding the desolate outdoors – was so tangible you could almost eat it.

The co-ordinator sat behind a tidy desk and I asked where her computer was. In another room; Rita said she wasn't much into computers. Scented candles were lighting. Were they because of Christmas? No, the candles were normal, she said.

To those engaged in Community Development, St. Michael's is one of those projects most people have heard of. It was always part of the national fabric of activists and development workers who seek to change not just their locality but the nation. This is no accident – the project's workplan for 2001 clearly states an intent to seek change at a macro level.

The project made waves nationally by taking an arty approach, a decade ago, to depict the impact of domestic violence. Lillies representing murdered women (159 since 1996) toured the country in the 'Once is Too Much' exhibition.

Through the project's emphasis on artwork, the community have also openly challenged public perceptions of working class places like St. Michael's as dangerous, no-go areas lacking culture, creativity and core life-skills.

The use of community art as a tool for engagement was partly a stroke of luck, partly fate. The National Museum for Modern Art was a stone's throw away and young student Rita Fagan, came through the door on a placement 20 years ago and stayed, bringing with her a natural affinity for using art as a means of empowerment.

From 1991, every group supported by St. Michael's learned how to use art as a tool and these skills – instilled into the women, men and youth – became a real asset to the community when Dublin City Council attempted to sideline, shaft and silence the tenants.

When the local authority adopted an authoritarian approach, they probably thought 'What have we to fear from glue-sniffing children, school-dropout teenagers and largely

lone parent families?' As events unfolded, the local authority officials, right up to the city manager, were forced to eat humble pie when the community got all 52 councillors to vote against 'Plan B'. It might have done the city manager good – when John Fitzgerald later drew up plans for regenerating Limerick, residents had a stronger role in the process.

However, not one of the plans for St. Michael's was worth the paper it was drawn on...

"Unfortunate", you could say. But the residents clearly showed they knew there was nothing "unfortunate" about it and blamed an unequal power structure that has underpinned Irish society for generations. Just as schools sometimes failed the students, the State sometimes fails its citizens en masse and St. Michael's documented how the State's system favoured profit over people.

In late '08, an exceptionally well-written book giving a blow-by-blow account of what happened was published. Written by a key member of St. Michael regeneration team, John Bisset, 'Regeneration: Public Good or Private Profit' reads like a crime-thriller. It reads like a warning to other communities to beware, be wise and get organised.

The immediate community of St. Michael's Estate was late last year populated by 12 settled and 6 Traveller families and the City Council was pushing relocation as the new word for regeneration. Families were being offered the best of council houses to encourage them to leave.

So is St. Michael's a dead man walking or an inspiration to the nation? Currently there are eight families remaining on the estate. And while plans have been agreed (again) to now build 76 new housing units in 2010, it was supposed to start in '09.

Even if every family goes, people have been coming to use the project's facilities for over 23 years from throughout Inchicore, which is home to over 2,500 families, for over 23 years.

St. Michael's Estate Family Resource Centre CDP does more than its name suggests. It might change its name some day, I would suggest, but it won't shut up shop. Expect to see that megaphone again!



On the ground - St. Michaels Estate



Women's centre opened after volunteer killed

Mary Bailey, a volunteer with St Michael's Estate CDP, was killed during a domestic violence incident.

One key element of the CDP's response to this and other incidents was to set up of the Inchicore Outreach Centre.

The outreach workers offer advice visits, court accompaniment, education and awareness raising and links with other voluntary and statutory agencies. It is also pioneering a response to pornography programme at a community level.

The project employs two outreach workers Kate McCarthy and Anita Koppenhofer

Outreach worker, Kate McCarthy

"Most of the time, when women come in, a different woman leaves, even after one meeting.

"The fact that someone believes her helps. The world outside says: 'Why don't you leave the home? Why don't you go to court? Why don't

you tell the police. Why? Why?' Sometimes women have died trying to do it. But here, they can talk about all the whys and somehow that frees them up.

"There's no excuse people have for coming here apart from that they are being abused, so how we meet them at the door and how we respond to them is so important. They come into the room to disclose the most intimate details of their life and we are able (usually) for an hour or hour-and-a-half, to provide a safe place for that woman so she can tell her story in comfort to people who understand.

"We always work on a safety plan for women. For a woman in an extreme case where you'd really be worried about her, even if she's not ready for the courts, we still give her a safety plan to link her in with people, giving her phone numbers, saying we're here. She should leave, if not transformed, at least a bit stronger in herself.

"I remember one woman who came in here saying 'I never knew I had options'. We offer support all the way through."

Rita Fagan, St. Michael's:

"This service brings everything under the one roof so a woman experiencing violence doesn't have to go to ten different places to escape.

"In other places, women go to refuges whereas in the ten years we're here only two women who came to us have gone to refuges. The believe we

have is that it's women's homes where the crimes happens and where the crime needs to be dealt with (and our focus) is not about encouraging women to leave home and run to a refuge. The research shows that with ongoing support, women can stay in their communities (and don't have to move to refuges)."

Since setting up the Outreach Centre, the CDP has been involved in setting up similar projects in other communities, underpinned by Community Development principles.

For more information, contact: Inchicore Outreach Service, Tyrconnell Road

Inchicore, Dublin 8. T: 01-454 5239 (Mon-Fri, 9.30-5pm).

Coalition against pornography

The Inchicore Outreach Centre was involved in setting up The Freedom From Pornography Campaign (FFPC) in 2003.

The FFPC is a coalition of individuals and groups including St. Michael's, Women's Aid, the National Women's Council of Ireland, the Rape Crisis Network of Ireland and the National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency. For more information, email: freedomffpc@eircom.net

In December of last year, as part of the 16 Days Campaign against violence against women, the Outreach Centre distributed leaflets and symbolic anti-pornography ribbons to statutory/voluntary service providers in the Canals area of Dublin 8. The ribbons were made by members of St. Michael's Young Women's Group.



Poverty shock!

Eilish Comerford, from Co. Kilkenny, has worked as a Community Development worker with St. Michael's since 2001, but coming from the country she was shocked at first by what she saw:

"I remember being brought into two of the 8-storey tower blocks... the stairwells were cold and dreary... Blood stains on the landings indicated drug-taking... I was advised not to touch the handrails in the stairwells.... On one landing, clothing was thrown in a corner, it had been used by someone sleeping rough. The lifts were broken and smelling of urine. The walls were decorated with graffiti, often evidence of an unacknowledged creativity.

"I wondered how people coped and thought to myself 'This is not right. No-one should have to live like this.'

Eilish – like Rita – came on a placement came to St. Michael's and stayed. She wrote the above (and much more) as part of an art exhibition titled 'Awakenings'.



“We are not all in this together!” says Rita Fagan

“The voluntary board of management can’t believe the amount of work the project does in any one year,” said Rita Fagan, co-ordinator, pointing to awards and trophies on display.

There are 18 people employed through the multi-funded St. Michael’s Estate FRC (CDP!) and they work in after-schools work, a crèche, a women’s outreach centre and more.

“In the year 2000, the CDP won the overall prize for Community Development in the Guinness Living Awards. That was like winning the All-Ireland.... We also won the overall award for the after-schools.... But one of our main achievements is that we’re quite radical, we’re not afraid to challenge the injustices that people in communities like this have to live with and experience on a daily basis.”

What did becoming a CDP change?

“It meant we could plan three-years ahead for the serious needs that faced us as a community.

“For instance, you can’t have women coming into local programmes if you don’t have a local crèche and out of that we developed the violence against women model, then we developed a network, out of which grew a counselling centre, and out of that came the drugs team and the youth project.

“So, this CDP has been a catalyst in a lot of ways. A lot of the things in this area have grown from Community Development.”

Can you give us an example of the needs in the area?

“We’ve a really good drugs team for instance – giving information and treatment, they do a fantastic job. The drugs overtook St. Michael’s Estate. We were burying our people. A lot of people died of it. We’ve no monument to their memories, the flats are enough of a monument.

“I don’t know about numbers of dead, but over the years we’ve attended a lot of funerals of people who died before their time.”

Why is the project so art-focused?

“We’ve had over 14 years of working hand-in-hand with our neighbours, the Museum of Modern Art. What did Emma Goldman say: ‘If I can’t dance, I don’t want to be part of your revolution.’ People here mightn’t be able to get by (financially), but there’s a lot of ideas and creativity here.”

How do you tackle the inter-generational nature of drug-dealing and criminality?

“You’ve got to address the issues of poverty. There are some kids out there who are at risk for a hundred reasons. But you offer them a football

as against someone giving them €100 for carrying drugs across, what are they going to go for? You’d want to be very creative in places like this.”

The project is known for street-protests. Why so?

“We’re out there with our campaigns because this community has suffered greatly at the hands of the state. We’re not out on the street for the sake of it. With regeneration, we spent ten years developing plans with the State, sitting on boards, sitting on sub-groups, doing door-to-door work, and developing sub-groups on the social agenda, with local people putting in hundreds of voluntary hours. So you can’t say we are only protesters.

“We also campaign on other issues. If you ask anyone about violence against women, we’ve led the community response (nationally).”

What do you mean by ‘We’re not all in this together’?

“There is money in this f**ing country. Vincent Browne said there are millionaires and there are billionaires and there are people who are rich, and people who are nearly rich and there

are people making out ok, and there are people at the bottom and we’re all being asked to bail the system out together, but we’re not all in it together. And the communities like this are not in it all together.

“And who gives a damn! Lots of people say ‘Ah, it’s great to have the likes of St. Michael’s gone, it’s great to have Limerick gone, but they’re not gone anywhere, they’re dispersed or relocated,” said Rita.

And how is Inchicore generally dealing with the recession?

“Our primary school is losing teachers, we’ve lost the regeneration, there’s cutbacks to the Drugs Taskforce (budget), there are changes with Pobal and the Childcare Subvention. And the Community Development Programme is under threat. They’re punishing the most marginalised. What a shameful society is being created. We won’t lie down – it is our duty to defend our communities nationally.”





Zambia Housing Project – Galway link

The Zambia Housing Project was founded in 2007 when Fr Padraic Kelly talked about it with local people from Cong, Clonbur and Cornamona in Co. Galway where he hails from.

It is a long term project, a registered charity and involves Irish volunteers working alongside Zambian people to build homes for homeless families and street children in the town of Kitwee.

Houses cost approx. €6,000 each to build and, to date, 19 houses have been completed, a further 7 are under construction and 22 more sites have been set aside.

So far over €135,000 has been raised by the project's supporters in Ireland.

All volunteers pay their own way and all funds collected go direct to the project, and therefore to vulnerable families.

W: www.zambiahousingproject.com
E: zambiahousingproject@eircom.net
net T: 087-2210152 & 087-6500176.



Empowerment in a place of extreme poverty

John Moran reports from Zambia

I spent three weeks in Zambia in April with four other volunteers to work with the Zambia Housing Project. It was my first visit to Africa.

Before I left I did a little reading on Africa and the view I got was of a Continent manipulated and misruled, leading to heavy human suffering. I formed the opinion that Western countries exploited the peoples of Africa during the colonial period, and dictators abused them since independence. As I was to discover in Zambia this analysis was as crude as the underlying assumption that all African nations are doomed to victim status.

On arrival in Lusaka, we set off in a mini-bus on a six-hour journey to Northern Zambia where the Project is based. The first thing you notice is the amount of street stalls everywhere and we were struck by how friendly the people were,

A stall seller showed us the Zambian hand-shake and the Bimba greeting 'Muli shani?' (meaning 'How are you?').

Afterwards we were glad we had paid attention as we were stopped regularly by the police during our stay. The police have many unique on-the-spot fines (payable immediately to them) including not having the correct tyre pressure. However, the hand-shake and the 'Muli shani?' worked for us most of the time.

Snakes, Crocs And Dark Roads

Our Project leader, Lazarath, had three pieces of



advice for us: don't walk in long grass (snakes), don't go near the lake out the back of our accommodation (crocodiles), and as most people walk, don't drive after dark.

Along with a local committee, Fr Padraic Kelly, over-see the project in Zambia.

The project provides housing to vulnerable families and when a family receives a house, they in turn take in a street child, who they then cloth, feed and try to access education for them.

All families who get a house or have got a house must work on the site and all work is done manually. No diggers here.

The project is assisted by an Irish volunteer who generally works for a year on the project.

As a result of Irish volunteer work, 14 youths graduated last year in soil preparation, machine operation and block-making.

Smart People

Over three weeks we got to know the people very well, an intelligent smart people who are living with the scourge of Aids and hunger. Many of the workers on site were HIV positive and told us stories of losing family members. Many children have lost both parents to Aids and Zambia has over 630,000 children living on streets as a result.

All workers on site are provided with a dinner, which means that these families are getting at least one meal a day. The meal consists of sweet potatoes and a maize dish known as chama. I tried it one day; the sweet potatoes were beautiful but the chama was like cold porridge.

*"Hunger is a wonderful sauce,
Big John!"*

When I said this, one of the locals, Moses, had a quick reply for me – "Hunger is a wonderful sauce, Big John."

AIDS is the biggest cause of death, followed closely by malaria and diarrhoea, to which children are more prone. I witnessed extreme poverty and appalling living conditions. Nonetheless, they are a proud people and dressed as we would say in their "Sunday best" for our visit. Even with the appalling conditions, all you could hear around you was constant singing, and the smiling children pointing at us and shouting "msonga".

Dignity Pays The Rent

On a personal level it was a great honour and a privilege to work with these people. Despite what is in our eyes extreme poverty, people refuse to accept anything for nothing. Although they have little or no income, all persons who have received a house, have

*"The word empowerment was used
many times at my meetings with
Council Officials."*

insisted on paying some form of rent. These people believe that if you accept something for no return you are taking away your dignity. Rent often consists of goods such as a bag of cement every month.

Football is big and people were able to tell me that Ronaldo was a 'fake' and that Ireland were no good. I agreed with them on both counts.

A Methodist Minister, Rev Aidan Moffatt and his wife, lived beside our accommodation. When they heard that I worked in the Community Development Unit of DCRGA they brought me to visit projects they run.

One was a drop-in facility for street children

"(Everyone has) insisted on paying some form of rent. These people believe that if you accept something for no return you are taking away your dignity."

where they learn literacy and computer skills. They also run a school but they can only afford to pay one teacher's salary. Because of this, they depend on volunteer teachers and have been very successful in attracting volunteer teachers from Europe and America during holiday time.

All the parents I met strive to get an education for their children, they see it as an escape from the extreme poverty.

Community Development

On Community Development, I heard that "Training for Transformation" a course given by one of our CDP funded groups, Partners TtT, is well known in Zambia.

I got to visit the local Council Office and heard phrases I didn't expect to hear in Zambia; such as that their Government's aim is to tackle "not only the symptoms but also the causes of poverty in Zambia." This approach acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of chronic poverty - poverty that is long-term and inter-generational - and seeks to address HIV and AIDS, gender inequality and good governance. The word empowerment was also used many times at my meeting with Council

"A course given by one of our CDP funded groups, Partners TtT, is well known in Zambia."

officials. Hope for the future then!

What I most remember about these people is their intelligence, the beautiful singing as they work, and their constant smile.

"One pebble dropped in the sea of history can produce waves of grace that break on distant shores hundred of years later & thousands of miles away...God had breathed on the waters and made the ripples into waves."

Tanzanian activists enjoying Changing Ireland'



Tanzanian women reading about themselves in 'Changing Ireland' outside our office on October 12th. The women were here through Banulacht, the Limerick Women's Network and Irish Aid, as part of an ongoing exchange programme.

Disability and the South

Around 10 per cent of the world's population, or 650 million people, live with a disability. They are the world's largest minority. The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability, and tend to be regarded in their own communities as the most disadvantaged.

John Moran – volunteer and civil servant

John Moran, who – for some years – was with the Community Development Unit of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, returned recently from a volunteer working visit to Zambia. He travelled with neighbours from his Co. Galway community to work for three weeks alongside Fr. Padraic Kelly from Cornamona in Kitwee, Zambia.

Local builders and project workers christened him 'Big John' on his first day on the site and his impressions of Africa – based on material he had read and television reports – were turned upside down.

John is now with the Department of Social Welfare.

"Well-off Europeans" want action on poverty

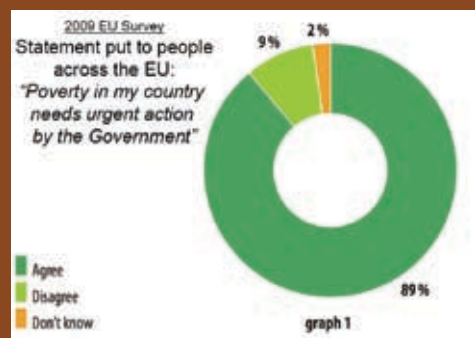
73% of Europeans consider poverty to be a widespread problem in their country while 89% want urgent action by their government to tackle the problem.

This call for action is not only held by those who are struggling to get by; 85% of respondents classified as well-off agree that poverty needs urgent government action.

Nearly 80 million people, or 16% of the EU population, live below the poverty line.

The information comes from a Eurobarometer survey carried out in September.

More info: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion



Gender-related

Conference on violence seeks out the guilty

220 women promise action in 15 countries

A conference held in Limerick on November 26th ended on a high note with an international agreement by everyone present to take action and to make guilty parties accountable for what was described as a "global pandemic".

The 'Violence Against Women – A Global Crisis' conference was five months in the making and involved 220 participants from 15 countries. It was funded by Irish Aid and Trócaire.

Significantly, 3 out of every 10 women at the conference had direct experience of abuse/discrimination.

Keynote speakers included women from Ireland, India and Tanzania and they took a feminist perspective on the challenges to women.

It was noted that domestic abuse and violence was on the rise in Ireland – notably financial abuse – as the recession bites.

"The needs are growing," remarked Elaine Dalton of Clare Women's Network which worked with Limerick Women's Network (both CDPs) to help organise the conference with national body Banúlacht.

She made the point that while poverty might vary in its form from country to country, violence against women is the same everywhere: "There's no difference between being beaten, raped, sexually abused, or indeed financially abused in Ireland or in other countries."

The conference was held as part of the international '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence' and held in Thomond Park.

It looked at the work that organisations were doing in Ireland and the South to eradicate violence against women and featured contributions from: Amnesty International, the National Traveller Women's Forum, Akidwa, West Clare Women's Forum, Women's Aid, Trócaire, Clare Haven House, NUI Galway, Hill Street Family Resource Centre, the Feminist

Open Forum, and the Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence, among others.

Look out for the next Banúlacht conference at: www.banulacht.ie

For the latest news: <http://banulacht.blogspot.com/>

Men never ready to go on the dole

MDN links with projects to meet challenge

The Men's Development Network (MDN) began a National Survey of CDPs in September to measure the extent of men's engagement with projects nationwide. The MDN is seriously



concerned about about the effect of the downturn and unemployment on men.

The survey work is a follow-up to an earlier one looking at men's engagement with the FRCs nationally. Between the two programmes, the survey covers 287 projects across Ireland.

MDN's CDP survey is on men's engagement

with CDPs both developmentally and on health issues. Unemployment and the threat of unemployment can be hugely stressful for men themselves, and for their families, their partners and their children.

Here are some of the reasons why:

- Unemployment and Men's Conditioning: how it hits the individual
- Men are conditioned to be providers: when they lose their jobs they feel guilt at not delivering on their family's needs.
- Men are conditioned to compete: when they lose their jobs they feel shame at not being good enough to be kept on.
- Men are conditioned to be strong: when they lose their jobs they feel unable and weak.
- Men are conditioned to be in control: when they lose their jobs they have no control over any element of their lives.
- Men are conditioned to find their identity from their work: when they lose their jobs they lose their identity and place, in the family, in their community.
- Men are conditioned to find solutions: when they lose their jobs there is no solution, they are at the mercy of things they don't understand; recession, credit crunch, downturn; there is no solution and this brings despondency and depression.
- Men are conditioned to find the solution in themselves: when they can't they become increasingly withdrawn, depressed and isolated.
- Men are not conditioned to be out of work

If you haven't already done so, please complete the e-mail survey now and it will be automatically returned to MDN. If you have not received the survey, e-mail nclarke@mens-network.net and he'll send you one straight away.

For more info, contact: Men's Development NetworkK, 30 O'Connell St. Waterford Ireland Tel. 051-844260/1 www.mens-network.net

EU's most-at-risk are low-skilled Irish

"If you have low skills in Ireland you are more likely to be unemployed than in any other EU country. Currently 30% of the workforce has only Junior Certificate, 10% has only primary level education and a further 25% of adults lack basic literacy skills," said Inez Bailey, director of the National Adult Literacy Agency.

"The amount of low skilled employment is quickly slipping away and these people are most at risk of becoming unemployed, especially with the recent slowdown in the economy," she added.

Inez was speaking in advance of the launch of NALA's new campaign, 'Take on learning. Take on life.'

The launch marked the opening event of National Adult Literacy Awareness Week which ran for a week in September.

To find out about NALA courses and supports, log onto: www.nala.ie



Violence Against Women Conference organisers: Liz Price, Limerick Women's Network, Maeve Taylor, Banúlacht, Elaine Dalton, Clare Women's Network and Eileen Smith, Banúlacht.

State support for community development

(cont. from p.7)

money, we accept that, there is no question of that.”

“We are the champions of the CDPs,” declared one of those on the top table.

In fairness, the Department should be publicly commended for throwing open the floor to a wide-ranging question and answer session and it was remarkable how steady the top table remained in the face of an angry and sometimes technical barrage of questions.

- Where a CDP covers the same area as two partnerships, what happens?

- What about the legal responsibilities our VBOM are involved in?

- How about leases on properties?

However, only the withdrawal threat by Ballybeg seemed to stymie Seamus as he had no clear answer to that one, bar to suggest the project goes it alone.

Criticism in the hall was echoed outside, in that day's letters page of the Irish Times where 42 academics and HSE bosses had written to say: “The CDP programme as it stands is a shining example of self-empowerment and active, ethical citizenship.”

The 42 urged Minister Éamon Ó Cuív and Minister of State Curran “to abandon this proposal and to guarantee the funding and autonomy of the CDP programme.”

The letter was “in the main, inaccurate”, remarked Clodagh McDonnell (and within a couple of days the Department had issued a reply to the Irish Times saying that volunteering was going to be at the core of the new programme).

Not all comments from CDP people in Croke Park were beautifully articulated and few speakers were generous in their praise of Partnerships. One man – who said he has 20 years experience working on partnership boards – condemned an initiative he saw pushing CDPs into having to work with “the kind of people who'd slit a skylark's throat to see what makes him sing.”

The remarkable thing about the Partnerships reps was their near silence.

“They probably all decided beforehand to say nothing,” said one CDP cynic afterwards. If only Partnerships were that organised! This was also their first open meeting with the Dept about the new programme and their people too were known to be unhappy, although they wouldn't be as used to going on the airwaves as CDP people.

The silent Partnership reps were like pupils in second year who were looking at the noisy freshers entering secondary school for the first time. It was as if they had already learnt – though the ‘cohesion process’ over recent years that amalgamated a lot of entities and companies that also wished to stand alone – that resistance was pointless.

Some may have been aghast at how the CDPs were being treated and the noise they were making.

“No, it was even wilder when the Cohesion Process started,” a Partnership rep I knew told me later.

It's not as if Partnership and CDP people are strangers. At local and regional level, in many instances, those involved could possibly work out

a way of doing this that would keep most people satisfied. But communications must be improved at national level.

Not that they were lacking on the day. A TV3 camera crew entered the hall and began filming and that upped the ante more.

People expressed annoyance at the Centre for Effective Services (CES) – the company charged with designing the new programme. CES had taken soundings from CDPs a week earlier but, as Viv Sadd remarked with disappointment, the document presented by the Department in Croke Park did not reflect any of the changes he and his CDP colleagues proposed.

At the same time, the top table promised to keep the door open to considering alternative methods of programme integration.

The Minister has now accepted the new programme design and the Department will implement it (with Clodagh McDonnell responsible for programme delivery and Seamus Jackson responsible for the change management element).

Questions kept coming, but at a declining rate.

“It's a done deal,” remarked more than a few people quietly.

But, leaving the room, I wasn't utterly convinced. The Community Development Programme is on the way out, if not already dead, but the volunteers (and workers) who have poured years into their local Community Development Projects have more to say on this.

The good thing is that there is more listening happening now.

Note: PLANET, the CPN and CLE are being wound-up and a new body has been established called the Irish Local Development Network. More on this in our next issue.

Budget analysis – Communities down at least 10%

Some of the most severe recommendations in the McCarthy Report will not be implemented this year, writes Allen Meagher, but with a similar budget promised for next year and the year after, it's far from over for communities.



Gross funding to the Dept. of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs is down 13% for 2010 which means:

Funding for the combined budgets of the Community Development Programme and Local Development

and Social Inclusion Programme (due to be integrated) are cut by 10% (equalling a cut of €7.1 m).

Community Services Programme reduced by 9% (or by €4.65m)

RAPID cut by 24%

Drugs Initiative cut by 11%

Community and Voluntary Supports cut by 10%

Clar funding is down 53%

Also:

Funding to the Family Support Agency is cut by 9% (or €3.1m); the agency has survived for now.

There will be cuts of €25m to the overseas aid budget for 2010. This follows 2009's massive cut by 24% (€224m).

There's some good news (relatively speaking):

Charities will benefit from the 0.5% reduction in the VAT rate.

Funding will continue to 21 volunteer centres and other volunteering initiatives.

“Employment levels will be maintained at existing levels in 450 community projects under the Community Services Programme (CSP) by requiring projects to generate additional resources from their operations.”

“Increased funding for the EU co-funded Rural Development Programme for Ireland 2007-2013 (LEADER).”

“A revised Scheme of Community Support for Older People will be introduced early in 2010, which will provide security equipment for upwards of 9,000 older people.”

“Capital funding of €33m is being provided for the Gaeltacht and Islands in 2010.” Does this mean the likes of the airfield in Inisbofin will open in 2010? Time will tell.

CDP administrators to meet in January

The first meeting of the National CDP Administrators Network is due to place on January 22nd, in the Community Centre in Rialto, Dublin.

More than just bookkeepers, project administrators say they perform many roles outside the conventional role of administrator.

As Anne Sheehy, Mahon CDP co-ordinator, explains: “This week, I coordinated the computer training initiative which involved organising courses, participants, tutors, funding, FETAC requirements and ECDL exams. I linked the ECDL partners and organises the certificate presentation events.”

Ann hopes for regional representation at the meeting in Rialto and she can be contacted on: admcdp@gmail.com

New Ross researching hosted projects

There is a precedence for CDPs being ‘hosted’ by Partnerships and currently New Ross CDP is understood to be looking into how that has worked. Around ten CDPs are ‘hosted’ by other companies to cut down on administration costs, while allowing for the project management committees to operate independently.

There are hosted CDPs in Dublin, Cork, Offaly and Wicklow and the model is understood to have met with mixed results.

Sharon Tubritt, the administrator in New Ross CDP is gathering information on the experience to date. She can be contacted on: 051-420664.

An attack on marginalised communities

Thu, Nov 10th, '09

Mullinavat,
Co Kilkenny.

Dear readers,
Minister of State John Curran is planning the alignment of the Community Development Programme (CDP) with the local partnership companies. Following a (behind closed doors) review of the 180 or so projects in the CDP, it is anticipated that a majority will cease to exist, with the remainder to be swallowed-up by their local partnership company. I understand the junior minister further intends to instruct those remaining CDPs to dissolve their voluntary boards of management to become advisory boards under the partnership – for one year only. The assets of the – then defunct – community groups are also expected to be transferred to the partnership. These community assets are in many cases sports halls, community buildings and drop-in centres developed over years or decades by many volunteers through sponsored walks, table quizzes, race nights, and so on. At the stroke of a pen, it appears, the junior minister is proposing to commandeer these community properties and transfer their ownership to the quasi-State organisations that partnerships are.

Here we have an agent of the state – the junior minister – under the guise of financial cutbacks - attacking the very independent existence of a vibrant community sector, in the face of stated commitments to the autonomy of the sector in Government white papers and the active citizenship process.

While the Department of Community, Rural Gaeltacht Affairs has the very considerable power to withdraw funding from projects, it is clearly losing the plot in considering instructing autonomous projects to go out of existence. Many of the projects are in existence for longer than the funding coming through the Community Development Programme and many have a wider funding base too.

Of the 180 CDPs, about 20 are local Traveller projects. The proposed development is particularly ominous for them, as many local partnership companies have proved to be useless in supporting Traveller issues, when these come up against vested interests on partnership boards.

Along with the sweeping cuts to the Equality Authority some time ago, this is further proof of a targeted attack on participative democracy and dissenting voices representing marginalised communities.

Yours, etc,

Thomas Erbsloh

Reply from Minister Curran

Thomas Erbsloh's letter was first published in the Irish Times and Minister Curran replied in writing, reiterating many of the points already made in our news coverage of this issue in earlier pages of this edition.

Minister Curran also said:

"The statement made in the letter to The Irish Times claiming that the majority of CDPs will close as a result of the review process is completely inaccurate. On the contrary, I would reasonably expect the majority of projects to be deemed viable and that they would move into the new integrated programme.

"However, some Community Development Programmes are not dependent solely on funding provided by the department and may decide to continue in separate existence, outside of the new integrated programme.

The department cannot instruct these companies, or indeed any independent legal entity, to close.

"The intention is to preserve elements of best practice from the existing CDP/LDSIP programmes in the redesigned model, to minimise structures and to enhance benefits for individuals and communities through significant administrative and overhead savings.

"These developments are taking place at a time of extreme budgetary difficulties," added Minister Curran.

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State support for community development



Economist says CDP cuts

will save nothing

An economist demonstrated on Friday, December 4th, at a press conference in Cork, how closing CDPs is "a zero sum game."

While referring specifically to projects in the South-West, Tom O'Connor argues that the same can be said for closing the CDP Programme.

He said that, in both economic and social terms, the State loses more than it saves.

"The gross saving to the state of closing the 18 CDPs (€6.47 million) in the South-West is almost totally matched by the total costs (€6.31 million) made up of: dole payments to 306 workers; redundancy costs; loss of tax and PRSI; the loss of voluntary management necessitating 6 new public servants as managers (currently done at zero cost by voluntary management) in the proposed replacement local development programme.

"When the social costs are added to the economic, closing down the CDPs will cost the state and its citizens: less workers trained and educated; loss of childcare facilities; loss of facilities which help jobseekers; loss of day care and counselling; loss of meeting places for sporting, mental health and other groups.

"This is likely to: increase unemployment; result in more admissions to hospitals; prevent lone parents and others from working; increase early school leaving; result in an increase in youth crime and anti-social behaviour. This will cost the government economically.

"Childcare is a core activity of the CDPs. Spending of €1 on childcare results in a benefit of €14 to the government: children perform better academically and in subsequent employment; crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced including the cost of prison places; unemployment payments are also reduced; lone parents are reintegrated into the labour force. All these benefits will be eliminated if CDPs are closed."

"There is no economic saving to the state in closing CDPs but they have been singled out as soft targets in the state's knee-jerk reaction to cutting public expenditure."

He said the Bord Snip proposals are "indefensible."

the press also conference heard from a Voluntary board member, a staff member, 2 beneficiaries of the work of CDPs, among others.



SIPTU meet Minister Curran

SIPTU representatives met with Minister of State John Curran in November, on the same day the National Community Development Forum also met with the Minister.

The meeting was to address union concerns over the impending closure of CDPs and the SIPTU delegation raised legal issues about the transfer of undertakings with regard to core staff and with the greater number of other staff employed by CDPs.

The delegation included Gene Mealy and Gerry Flanagan of SIPTU's Community Sector and Darragh O'Connor, Lead Organiser of SIPTU's Community Campaign.

SIPTU expects to have a follow-up meeting with the Minister early in the new year.

REGENERATION



Fatima seeks to dodge Bord Snip bullet

Joe Donohue reports

"The Fatima project has now become a flagship project for other disadvantaged areas who are waiting to be regenerated and it's critically important that it continues to thrive," says Joe Donohue of Fatima Groups United (FRC). He fears the Bord Snip report – if implemented in full – would have "catastrophic" implications for Fatima, after all that has been achieved. Joe writes:

On November 3rd, President Mary McAleese for her third and probably her last visit came to mark the completion of the physical plan and launch Fatima's new community and enterprise facilities.

She commented, "it is ironic that while eleven years ago Fatima longed to be like the more affluent and achieving communities around the city, the transformation of Fatima has made this the place we now look to for inspirational example as we try to find a safe way through

the current economic storms. Fatima has demonstrated that almost anything is possible, if you are solid in your resolve, unstinting in your pursuit of it and if people work generously together for the common good of all".

Three Keys To Success

As a practitioner I have consistently stated that the regeneration of communities will only work if there are three core elements in place. Best practice demands:

1. A physical development plan driven by standards of excellence, both in housing and community facilities
2. A social regeneration plan with dedicated resources for tackling poverty and social exclusion
3. An economic and sustainable strategy that puts enterprise and economic self reliance at its core.

These elements should be built into the process from the outset and continue beyond its completion. Good policy and practice within local authorities alone will not guarantee this – what is required is a strong legislative basis that recognises and deals with power and equality issues and critically recognises the need to have communities at the heart of the decision-making process.

Trust And Respect Won The Day

As shown in Fatima, trust, respect and equality of relationships have played a major part in our success. Things would have collapsed without them. Our experience has much to offer. We can only hope that those in authority who will rightly promote the success of our project, will give other

communities their chance too. While Fatima enjoyed some luck along the way, ultimately our hard work, determination and getting the power balance right were key to our regeneration.

Fergus Finlay

Fergus Finlay, Barnardos CEO recently wrote of his visit to Fatima "Dublin City council, Government Ministers, State agencies, private developers – all have played significant roles in the new village President McAleese will see tomorrow. But what has been built in Fatima, astonishing as it is, owes everything in the final analysis to the leadership shown by a community that had nothing".

Looking Back To The '80s

Looking back, in the 1980's, the Fatima refurbishment programme failed because of the economic reality that the country faced. Today the Government is in the process of making a four billion euro economic adjustment/cuts.

The An Bord Snip Nua report makes recommendations to Government, which included the discontinuation of the Family Support Agency, The Jobs Initiative and changes in the payment of C. E. participants.

If the report is implemented in full, it will have a catastrophic effect on the Fatima project. It is critical that common sense prevails regarding potential cuts that could see the whole Fatima project seriously damaged and undermined.

The Fatima project has now become a flagship project for other disadvantaged areas who are waiting to be regenerated and it's critically important that it continues to thrive.

6 fantastic results for Fatima

Over the last number of years we in Fatima have achieved significant outcomes through regeneration, writes Joe Donohue:

- 1) A fantastic physical plan with mixed housing tenure, private, affordable and public, retail, leisure and sports facilities are now in place.
- 2) An ambitious sustainable plan that strives to give the community the potential to be self reliant in generating its own economic resource base has been put in place. This includes enterprise space and 12 apartments for rental purposes all of which can continue to support social programmes.
- 3) A purpose-built high-standard neighbourhood centre with arts studio, IT training rooms, multi-purpose dance hall, education and homework club rooms, a sport's hall and an outdoor all-weather pitch are now being used by residents from Fatima and the wider area.
- 4) The employment of local people in real and sustainable jobs, including various apprenticeships, has played a vital role in breaking the cycle of disadvantage. It has enabled young people to feel positive about community living.
- 5) Estate management - the days of full-scale drug dealing, prostitution and general chaos have long gone.
- 6) An excellent partnership approach with key stakeholders has developed, particularly with Dublin City Council and the Garda Síochána.

The May 2004 signing of the regeneration agreement with Fatima Groups United (FGU) was the culmination of a long struggle to create an environment where children could grow up in safety and with hope.

In flat 18J, Fatima Mansions, the FGU offices, champagne was opened for the first time in the group's history and people spoke of the stresses of the lead-up to and final days of negotiations, as they celebrated. In the end, the regeneration negotiation was completed relatively quickly.



Limerick Regeneration: €1.5b promise

An announcement was made in early December through the UL student magazine the 'Moyross Voice' (produced in co-operation with CDN Moyross) that over €1.5 billion in private sector investment was on the way to Limerick's regeneration areas.

The news came from Minister Willie O'Dea and details have yet to be released.

To date, there have been many homes knocked but none built and people say they have begun to lose faith.

The Regeneration Agency CEO was also in the media spotlight recently and admitted to bypassing normal recruitment procedures when staff were initially hired to work for the agency. There was an urgency about getting the agency up and running said CEO Brendan Kenny who defended the fact that his daughter was among those recruited.

Ballymun regeneration still to deliver for some - Emma Freeman reports

Walking down Shangan Road, Ballymun one evening, I pass a group of young people around fifteen years old, drinking cans of lager. While their mood was apparently light hearted, I sensed that they could turn at any time. Feeling unsettled, I walked up the stairwell - the lift was broken - to meet a resident on the fifth floor, who agreed to talk to me if her identity was kept hidden.

The stairwell is dark, drab concrete, covered in graffiti and filled with an overwhelming stench of urine.

I knocked at 'Brenda's door, which has an iron grill attached to it. She led me through a large,

bright flat to the balcony. Appearing tired and strained, she lit a cigarette, and looked down at the group of youths drinking below.

"When I used to look out of my flat I saw fields and horses, now when I stand on my balcony, I see a different kind of animal," she said. "I have lived in Ballymun all my life and for the first time I feel like a prisoner in my own home. I have neighbours who have been stabbed, raped and assaulted in the past three months. Only last week a friend of mine was pulled out of her car and beaten up, the scumbags then drove her car into the flats and wrecked it. I am scared to let my kids go out of the house and they are scared living here. The majority of people round here are good, decent people but there is a minority who are making life hell for the rest of us."

Brenda identified empty houses in the area and asked Dublin City Council to move her into one, but they refused. One council official - she said - told her to 'have another baby' if she wanted to be given somewhere else to live.

Ballymun is one of several regeneration projects with an uncertain future. Rory Hearne, a member of Tenants First and community worker in Dolphin House believes the State should adopt a Community Development approach to regeneration, saying it would be far more cost effective than allowing problems to escalate.

NOTE: Emma Freeman formerly worked for CAP CDP in Ballymun. She writes here in a personal capacity.



The 'Merger' – How Could It Make Sense?

Centre for Effective Services says nothing for now



The Centre for Effective Services has declined the opportunity to answer questions by way of interview or email for 'Changing Ireland' readers, many of whom will be directly affected by the outcome of work that CES is currently engaged in.

The not-for-profit consultancy, which is working to produce a plan for merging the CDP and LDSIP programmes, was initially receptive, in agreeing at least to taking written questions. However, it has since written to say it would rather not answer questions right now.

In its work, CES has consulted representatives of the Community Worker's Co-op, CDPs and Partnerships in recent months, but the representatives at CES workshops refused to sign off on the majority of what the company proposed.

CES is to receive €5-plus million over the coming 3-4 years from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and this is being matched by funds from Atlantic Philanthropies.

However, its work has been publicly called into question – most recently on the News on TV3 with Vincent Browne – over its approach to its work.

The questions we put to CES covered the following, among others:

1. Given Bord Snip's view, what had CES found, in brief, in terms of positive outcomes from the CDP and LDSIP programmes.
2. In CES's opinion, what percentage or fraction of CDP work nationally could these days be truly described as Community Development work, as against service delivery work?
3. How does CES show that it gives value for money (given the millions due to be spent by CES)?

We wanted to give CES the space to answer critics and we played devil's advocate in asking the company to demonstrate how it was "above politics" and how it was truly independent. We also enquired, out of curiosity, did CES seek to adhere in its work to Community Development principles (which we would acknowledge isn't always easy).

We also asked if CES would like to say what it thought of Minister Curran's 'integration' plan from a volunteering perspective.

And we asked – as the Community Worker's Co-op has previously done – how CES defines Community Development.

No reply, to date.

Community Worker's Co-op stresses key principles

The Community Workers' Co-operative says it has tried "to engage constructively" with the process of redesigning the CDP and LDSIP programmes.

It issued a critique of the work of the Centre for Effective Services and published a



Position Statement (in October) outlining the key principles that need to remain central to any new programme for it to work. The CWC presented this to the

Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, on December 2nd. Pobal which is charged with implementing the new programme were present alongside representatives from the National Community Development Forum and Dail deputies.

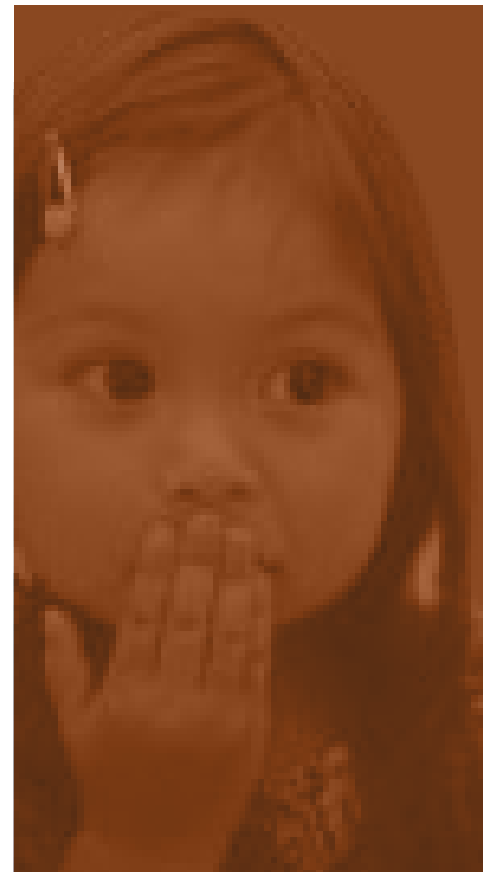
In its critique of CES work, the CWC said:

While CWC would like to be in a position to suggest ways in which the design might be improved it is the considered opinion of our members that the design in its present format is unworkable. For a programme to enable community development at local level it must provide for:

1. Independent, autonomous, self-governing and locally based organisations that have as their core the participation of those at whom policies and services are targeted. The ability to analyse and constructively critique with a view to informing the development and implementation of service provision and policy must be protected.
2. Organisations delivering the programme should remain fully accountable while being permitted a high degree of autonomy within a framework of programme objectives. Accountability to the target groups must be paramount.
3. Community development to be central as an action and be maintained and enhanced

as the lead strand of any redesign of the programme. In addition, empowering and inclusive community development methods need to inform all work with marginalised people.

4. The integrated approaches that have served marginalized communities well in combating social exclusion, discrimination and unemployment must be retained within a remodelled programme.
 5. The management and support of the programme by a support framework that is competent, skilled and capable of providing the strategic tools and support required to enable the programme to meet its goals – social inclusion will not happen without a strong driving force.
 6. Community organizations, as the mechanism that facilitates participation, target group empowerment and effective and sustainable delivery on objectives, need to have a strengthened visibility. Funding for this purpose needs to be ring-fenced at sustainably effective levels.
 7. All proposed changes to be open, transparent, designed and negotiated directly with all relevant stakeholders.
- Ann Irwin, CWC National Co-ordinator.



H5W Mock Press Release

**Ballygoolie Community Association,
Main St., Ballygoolie, Co. Donegal**

Name & contact info

Name and address of organisation

news release news release news release

**Fictitious
Not for Publication**

Date 30 February, 2010
Embargo For immediate release
Contact Barry Bright 086-1234567 (m)
074-765-4321 (office)
Email bbright@ballygoolie.com

Short catchy heading

VILLAGE SAYS STOP SPEED DEATHS (aka 'H5W')

Who What Where When Why How

The Ballygoolie Community Association have called on Donegal County Council to introduce traffic calming measures on the approaches to the village. The call has been made in a letter to the County Manager on Wednesday in the wake of last week's tragic accident in which one local teenager was killed and another was seriously injured by a car approaching the village.

The essential points to the story are all contained in the first paragraph

The Chairperson of the Community Association said that villagers were shocked and angered that this tragedy has occurred. "This was an accident waiting to happen," he said.
"We have been lobbying our local representatives and the County Council for years. It is sickening that it took someone to die before notice was taken of this issue."

Double spacing to allow for reporter's notes

Quote to bring a personal angle to the story

ENDS Shows the end of the release

Copyright: A Meagher

They're serious, we're serious: disband the Army

By Allen Meagher, Editor

It would have been inconceivable a year ago to propose something as drastic as this, but the harm caused by closing down community resources to the degree proposed by the Government's Bord Snip report is greater than the loss we'd incur by disbanding the army, navy and air corps.

Iceland maintains a small coastguard service and is a member of NATO without contributing personnel. The country has neither army, navy nor air corps.

Colm McCarthy missed an opportunity:

The Department of Defence spends €1 billion per annum out of the State's budget total of €45 billion. We've never been at war with anyone, the border is gone, the UN will get by without our military expertise and the banks can hire armed escorts privately.

I don't want to take away from good work carried out by the Defence Forces over the years. I do say, however, that given the near-bankrupt state of the nation's finances, the Department of Defence is not critically important to our development. The Community Sector is.

The people that need to be won over are not Government members, but the general public. We need as a nation to start thinking and acting outside the box, preferably in a collective spirit.

Just like most nation-states like to establish a national museum, a national anthem and a national symbol, most also have a national army. Costa Rica saw the light in 1949 and got rid of its army.

Many armies are of next-to-no practical use and since 1922, we've thrown money at Defence. Today, there is little evidence of positive outcomes for our €1 billion spend on Defence.

Take a look yourself! There are six elements to the 'service' provided by the Department of Defence that everyone from the Minister of Defence to the soldiers' representative body cite to justify the funding. None of them stand up to scrutiny and there is a seventh service neither side likes to mention.

Last year, the Defence Forces provided 2200 escorts for bank cashvans. This is not Defence. Privatised it and let the banks pay in full.*

Last year, the Defence Forces were called out 180 times to deal with explosive ordinance finds. This work should be privatised or handed over to

a special agency.

Last year, we had 760 personnel serving on 14 overseas missions. We should bring them home and offer non-military expertise instead, like Germany did until recently. (Or send out development workers, as we did for over 20 years through APSO).

Last year, the Defence Forces provided 118 prisoner escorts. Again, not the job of an army.

Last year, the Defence Forces provided "732 Public Building Patrols". How many were Defence installations? Once disposed of, we won't have to patrol them. As for every other public buildings, police patrols would suffice.

Last year, the Defence Forces provided "Aid to the Civil Power" functions on an unspecified number of occasions. With regard to the protection afforded to illegal CIA flights through Shannon Airport, as previously documented by the EU, this was never the intended role of our sovereign national army.

And, last year, the Defence Forces provided 113,000 helicopter rides for senior and junior Government Ministers. (I made that last figure up because I couldn't get those stats, which makes enough of a point in itself).

Another couple of points about the army in particular. The Government has paid out close to €50m in 'border allowances' to our troops since



1999. The army has not patrolled the border for a decade.

Despite all this, Colm McCarthy's board recommended a relatively modest cut of €53 million out of the €1 billion budget. McCarthy followed a conservative agenda when someone else might have demonstrated imagination and flair.

By this stage, if you're in the army – and maybe you agree with me on what I'm saying – you should now understand how people volunteering and working their hearts out in the Community

Sector feel.

State support for the Community Sector is being dismantled and many workers face becoming voluntary activists and dole-claimants within a matter of months. Funding, under McCarthy, to the Community Sector will be cut by around €250m out of around €500m (the figures depend on how widely you define Community work).

We don't need a Department of Defence at a time of economic woe, not half as much as we need a vibrant Community Sector.

The OECD already ranks Ireland as one of the worst (22nd out of 27 developed nations) when it comes to poverty and inequality.

If what's threatened comes down the line, there are communities in every county of this State that will become unviable, no-go, no-hope areas populated by thousands of internal refugees, denied either a choice or a chance in life.

Volunteering in communities is valued nationally at anywhere between €500m-€750m. Cut Defence funding to nearly nil and we'll get through. Cut the Community Sector's funding and you abandon a nation.

In recent months, Community activists have led a national campaign from the bottom up, with trade union support. They're not as well organised as they would like but the Community Sector's work does save lives.

Campaigners are fighting so communities remain viable. They also want to retain the Department of Community Affairs. (McCarthy proposed doing away with DCRGA).

I'm probably talking to the converted, but we need to show leadership ourselves, to start thinking outside the box and, working harder and pointing to alternatives, both locally and nationally.

Personally, I'd close one of the banks rather than chop the army in half or more, but maybe the door on that is now shut.

But the Government could use more imagination. Oil was found in June off the West Coast of Ireland, the first black gold found in Irish waters in nearly 30 years. (Source: Reuters 9/6/'09). What's to stop us redrawing the contracts dealing with taxes on oil and gas revenue?

* For 19 years, this escort service was provided to bank cashvans for a nominal fee and they still don't pay in full for the service.