

# CHANGING IRELAND

Winter 2010

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**ONLINE RACISM:**  
Hundreds complain, charges pending



**SUCCESS FOR:**  
Women's CDPs



**THOUSANDS OF  
NEW JOBS:**  
Which you haven't heard about

**PLUS**

- IMF cuts: Multi-billion euro alternatives
- Horace: Outlook is bright!!



## Claiming Our Future People Power Can Prevail

**TAKE A LEAD!**

**THINK BIG!**

**TAKE ACTION! THINK POSITIVE!**

*Photo: Claiming Our Future event on October 30th. Copyright: Derek Speirs.*



This publication and most projects featured are part of the  
**LOCAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**



## Claiming Our Future: PEOPLE POWER MUST PREVAIL



I'm staying positive, but first let's acknowledge the fact that by the time you read this the Irish public may well be thinking of Taoiseach Brian Cowen in the same vein as historic figure Diarmuid MacMurrough.

What actually inspires me is the growing emergence of civil society in Ireland and I've no doubt that among those awakening are some of our future leaders and heroes.

They don't know who they are themselves yet, but many of them would have been at the 'Claiming Our Future' event on October 30th in Dublin. There have been other think-tank conferences, but this one was different because it

captured the public imagination.

In the summer edition we criticised 'Is Feidir Linn', who were among those behind the event, and rightly so at the time, but they've come up trumps, they've broadened out their campaign and we take our hats off to them.

People who wouldn't turn up for an hour-long protest on a Wednesday gave up a full Saturday for the event. The mission was to agree/vote on the values we hold most dear and the policies Ireland should pursue to promote those values and then spread the call for action locally and nationally.

Over a thousand active citizens took part, including people from the Local and Community Development Programme. (One Local Development Company had an exhibition in a corner of the giant hall).

Over two thousand people tried to get tickets to the event and the word is spreading: 'Claiming Our Future' is turning into a new social movement and local branches are springing up.

It promises to be real, to inspire people to take action and to be locally-rooted. Everyone from business people to barristers to homeless people and activists were at the event. It has the potential to become a vehicle for replacing public fear with a sense of national purpose, destiny and collective action.

While there is a danger it could dwindle to become another talking shop, a comfort-blanket for people on the left, people are determined that won't happen.

In a positive sign, many old hands and sceptics have put caution aside and embraced the work. There is a hunger for new ideas and a push for taking action that can lead to positive change.

The event got relatively muted media coverage – understandable given the obsession with the economy. It was however the biggest and widest gathering of civil society in a generation and it's safe to say that the campaign to build a new republic is currently being led by activists in the community sector, the trade union movement, the wider NGO sector, environmentalists, business people and ordinary Josephine and Joe Soaps.

The real surprise for many on the day was to find that most people ranked the environment and sustainable development among the top values a new Ireland should aspire to. That also echoes the findings of a survey of young people conducted recently by Spunout.ie.

It was also invigorating to see that equality ranked very high on the values-chart. Mechanisms for taking control of the economy to serve the greater public good were also valued.

If people power is to prevail, then these values will be afforded the highest merit in the years ahead.

It's a big ask, but not impossible.

One to watch. One to join. One the elite should be nervous about.

### ANTI-RACISM

On another equality note, our readers are due praise for taking swift action following reports in our previous issue about racist websites. Thank you! Hundreds of people, we are told, complained to the Gardaí and the crimes are now under investigation. For more on this, read page 10-11.

### JOB CREATION

There have been no big jobs announcements from Local Development Companies because of the nature of their work, but the Programme nationally is succeeding in getting thousands of people into work, for instance through small business start-ups. Many of the schemes are aimed at the long-

term unemployed and the most marginalised and from our enquiries they are making a real difference and we've the figures to prove it. Monitoring mechanisms incorporated into the Programme will deliver more data on this and other initiatives in the months ahead.

In the future, the Programme's capacity to accurately record and measure inputs and outputs, value for money in other words, on everything from the delivery of jobs to community development, will prove crucial to its development.

### CDPs IN 2010

Finally, as we approach the end of 2010 it brings to a close a turbulent period of time for CDPs across the country. The announcement and creation of the LCDP was met with protest and resistance by CDPs. It has meant CDPs deciding to amalgamate with their Local Development Companies or going it alone. However (as the article on pages 8-9 highlights) many CDPs have collectively come together and been able to successfully argue the case for alternative ways of moving forward.

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**CHANGING IRELAND**







## Our duty to be anti-racist

Pobal director Jerry Murphy has applauded the anti-racism work carried out by community workers over anti-Traveller websites (see pages 10-11) saying:

"That's the kind of work we'd like to see supported strategically at local and national level. Community workers and the boards of LDCs have a duty to confront racism where they see it happening and are well placed to help vulnerable people stand up for their rights."

Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs Pat Carey had a similar view when he commented in the early Autumn on the story: "Social networking sites have a responsibility to ensure that the platforms they provide aren't being abused. Racism should be confronted however and wherever it manifests itself."

A call was made in November 2007 at a Pobal-organised conference on 'Realising Equality' for "the more widespread development of local integration and anti-racism strategies at city and county level."

## €32m fund giving free training to job-seekers

While the effectiveness and cohesion of national economic policies are questioned, there are in fact a raft of minor initiatives aimed at boosting the economy.

Community and voluntary groups, and Local development companies have yet to take full advantage of these initiatives.

Many of them are funded under the €32m Labour Market Activation Fund which is "to stimulate innovation in the provision of training and activation measures for jobseekers seeking to upskill and get back into work."

It was launched in June.

Of 350 tenders received, 25 were selected, from both private and public bodies. These offer everything from free college places, to short term training in specific skills, eg multimedia, tourism, green economy. For further information on these, see the Department of Education and Skills, where a full list of the initiatives can be downloaded.

## 'Defending Ireland's Communities'



150 or so people turned out in Galway and up to 1500 in Dublin on Sept 29th, to 'Defend Ireland's Communities'. The campaigners included people from CDPs and LDCs.

In Galway, activists used street theatre to show how community groups who work together are more likely to be successful in fending off attacks and cutbacks.

The trade unions SIPTU and IMPACT are supporting the 'Defending Ireland's Communities' campaign, as are the Community Workers Co-op, Community Platform among others.

The organisers expected a bigger turnout. 'Changing Ireland' posted a photo-report from the event in Galway on our Facebook page.



## Environment a winner in 'Claiming Our Future' vote

Saturday's historic 'Claiming Our Future' event, the biggest Civil Society gig in the Republic Ireland in a generation achieved its aim of finding out what we're FOR in a new Ireland.

The top 3 values a new Ireland needs to emphasise, according to the final vote, are: equality, environmental sustainability and accountability.

Organisers and indeed participants were pleasantly surprised to see people valued the environment so highly. "It was a mature choice to make," said one seasoned activist.

Also popular were policies leading to better governance and a maximum wage as well as the minimum wage.

More info and reaction on: [www.claimingourfuture.ie](http://www.claimingourfuture.ie) and [www.changingireland.ie](http://www.changingireland.ie)

Also, see our interview with organiser Siobhan O'Donohue on page 5.



## JLT Ireland Charity Insurance

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## Claiming Our Future

*"I don't know 80% of the people in this room. There's a new energy here, new ideas, and I've been around a long time."*

# "We really lit a spark"

*- Interview with Siobhan O'Donohue, organiser*

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

Siobhan O'Donohue believes that Ireland's elite "should be nervous" following the biggest civil society gathering in a generation. She was one of the organisers behind 'Claiming Our Future', an event which took place on October 30th and which promises to give rise to a national movement for positive change.

Her upbeat attitude perfectly captured the atmosphere on the day. There was no need to ask her if she was optimistic. She beamed positivism.

While she couldn't fully explain why people no longer turned out en-masse for trade union and community sector rallies and protests, she felt 'Claiming Our Future' had "lit a spark".

The thousand seats at the event were quickly booked, "and we could easily have filled this hall twice over."

The event was not attended by all the usual suspects. Yes, there were activists, community workers and trade unionists present, but also homeless people, business people, environmentalists, ordinary folk and some nationally known faces.

"I don't know 80% of the people in this room. There's a new energy here, new ideas, and I've been around a long time," said Siobhan.

"It seems to have lit a spark in people's minds and hearts. Today we're giving a space to people to talk about what we actually want in the future, to feel empowered, to feel they have a choice.

"The economy has collapsed, but society has not collapsed and we need to fix the economy to work in the interests of society, not the other way around.

She said that, going back several years – people and organisations like the Community Platform, Is Feidir Linn and the trade unions – were saying that the economic model of development was fundamentally flawed.

Nonetheless she was "surprised by the inability of the Government to even consider alternatives to resolving the crisis. That's deeply disappointing and the people involved in organising this were doubly motivated to come together because there's so little space or interest given by the political parties to real alternatives."

If the organisers knew we were doomed, why didn't they start advocating five years ago for a new Ireland? Why for instance didn't CDPs – charged as they were with being a voice for the disadvantaged – speak out loudly and collectively? Why are the Irish so slow!?

"I don't know. Probably lots of reasons. People



found it hard for a long time to believe that our voice would be heard. But the fact is it's happening now and that's why it's so exciting. And it's not just the community sector here, we've the trade union movement, faith organisations, environmental organisations, business people. This is a civil society movement."

"Ireland's elite should be nervous," she said, "because Claiming Our Future' is creating a critical mass of people who are agreeing a set of policy priorities and values which we're going to take forward. We haven't been allowed to engage in decision-making, up to now."

She said democracy needs engaged citizens and now we have them.

"What makes 'Claiming Our Future' different is that it's putting out an agenda FOR society and that's what's fundamentally different to protest movements."

"Now our challenge is to get a critical mass of people who are very clear what we are for and use every means we can, obviously in non-violent ways, to be heard. The more people saying the same thing and being clear about the values and the policies we want, the more likely the message will be heard."

Did she personally think people should take legal direct action?

"I can understand why people engage in civil disobedience. 'Claiming Our Future' is not advocating

breaking the law let's be clear. But if you're asking me, in my own personal capacity, have I done things that come under the term civil disobedience, yes I have. I've tried stopping evictions at Traveller sites, taking on the Gardai to get them to think and to stop doing what they're doing."

"There is a huge disillusionment with the way society is going and there is also disillusionment with old tactics that don't actually change anything and use up a lot of energy. What 'Claiming Our Future' is harnessing is that sense of the possible, actually believing that change is possible. We're afflicted in this country – because we've been kept away from changing anything – well what 'Claiming Our Future' shows is we can change things."

The thousand people who attended on October 30th pledged a number of things including getting ten more people each involved and their next move is to develop 'Claiming Our Future' as a movement at local level.

"We've got to keep this real for people where they're at," added Siobhan.

Watch the video-interview via our website or our Youtube channel where you'll also find vox-pop interviews with participants who give their verdict and with Niamh McGrath who was 'the elephant in the room'.

More information: [www.claimingourfuture.ie](http://www.claimingourfuture.ie)

*"What makes 'Claiming Our Future' different is that it's putting out an agenda for society and that's what's fundamentally different to protest movements."*





( Participants at the Galway Inter Culture Day as featured on our front cover in 2008

## Galway's 3rd annual intercultural day

Galway City celebrated cultural diversity with its third annual Intercultural festival and 'Barbecue Cook Off' in September.

Galway City Partnership in collaboration with Galway Intercultural Forum organised the event to build on the success of last year's festival which attracted over 4,000 people.

In other work, GCP recently produced a 50-page 'Directory of Services for Older People' which is available locally and online.

And as part of its Social Inclusion Week, GCN highlighted the work and value of the Community and Voluntary Sector's output, which also feeds into its campaign against cuts to communities.

W: [www.gcp.ie](http://www.gcp.ie)

## Kerry Travellers celebrate

Killarney's Traveller Community and Kerry Travellers Development Project held a community celebration day on September 26th in Killarney.

Traveller Celebration Day was free and was open to all. It was held to celebrate and increase awareness around Traveller culture and to promote inclusion by bringing the whole community together through music, fun, and cultural and child-friendly activities.

Support: The Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs supported the community day as part of its funding initiative for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

## Edenderry CDP honoured

The Edenderry Community Development Project was honoured on October 2nd with "Special Recognition for its work with community groups in Edenderry, Co. Offaly."

The award to the CDP which is under the auspices of Offaly Local Development came through the Edenderry Town Council Awards.

Edenderry CDP works with and supports youth groups, older persons groups, local authority residents' groups, a local anti-drugs initiative, ethnic minorities, chairs the Cabin Committee and supports the town's Playground Committee.

## Kildare seeks Transgender people's views

County Kildare LEADER Partnership is carrying out a consultation process across County Kildare to develop a three-year workplan.

"As a new company supporting individuals and groups throughout County Kildare we want to identify the main issues of people among different social groups and geographical communities are facing," said the company in a statement.

Currently, the CKLP is looking for Transgender people's views, having successfully conducted two focus groups with lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

## Addiction work in Mayo and Roscommon

Local Development Companies in Mayo and Roscommon have teamed up to provide "a specialist resource within the community in the area of substance misuse."

A community worker is currently being recruited "to forge interagency collaboration and joint initiatives" on drug abuse across the two counties.

The project will examine the local impact of substance misuse, help groups to

prioritise needs and will raise awareness on substance misuse issues.

South West Mayo Development Company in association with Mayo North East LEADER Partnership, Roscommon Integrated Development Company and the Western Region Drugs Task Force are leading the work.

For more information: T: 098-41950. E: [nfo@southmayo.com](mailto:nfo@southmayo.com)

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

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W: [www.yifm.com](http://www.yifm.com)

**YIFM**  
young irish film makers  
St. Joseph's Studio  
Waterford Road  
Kilkenny



## Equality for Women funds 43 new projects



Monaghan Integrated Development is currently preparing to run an 'Employability Skills Programme' for women who are out of (paid) work, left school early or are otherwise marginalised.

It is one of 43 projects across the country benefitting from funding of up to €50,000 per year to help foster gender equality for women through the delivery of practical customised development supports.

The course in Monaghan, as elsewhere, is aimed at those "most distanced from the labour market" and will help participants to develop skills, competencies, confidence and knowledge to enter employment, education or training.

There are 15 places available in Monaghan and the work is being funded under one of three strands in the EU's Equality for Women Measure (EWM) in this case the Access to Employment strand. The other strands are: Developing Female Entrepreneurship and Career Development for Women in Employment.

The latest phase of the Equality for Women Measure 2010-2013 was officially launched by Mary White, Minister of State for Equality, Integration and Human Rights in May. The EWM is promoted as a positive action programme and is part-financed by the European Social Fund.

Monaghan Integrated Development was set up in late 2008 as part of the process of restructuring of the local development sector nationally. Its core role, as with other LDCs, is to promote social inclusion, support enterprise development and employment creation, enable access to education, training and lifelong learning and assist communities in identifying needs and developing local solutions.

More info on the course in Monaghan from local project leader, Una Gavigan.

E: [ugavigan@midl.ie](mailto:ugavigan@midl.ie)

More info on the EWM nationally from: [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)

## Drug victims remembered in uplifting ceremony

The Mid-West's second annual 'Service of Commemoration and Hope' was held on October 7th in the Augustinian Church in Limerick city.

The event was to "remembering our loved ones lost through drug and alcohol misuse and to support the families left behind" and was attended by workers and family alike.

It was organised by Northstar Family Support Project which was set up by local people with support from the CDN Moyross which is part of the Local and Community Development Programme. Northstar became an independent project in September 2010.

Northstar's name was chosen by activists from Limerick's northside and stands for "Nurturing Our Rights Through Having Support, Training,



Access, & Resources."

Check out the video we shot on the night on our Youtube channel which features a rendition of 'Something Inside So Strong'.

## Moyross has positive hit on the net

A year ago, the first ten items that came up in a Google search for 'Moyross' were all negative in the extreme characterising the estate solely in terms of criminality and gangs.

Now a new website called Moyross.ie is listed at number two in Google's listings for the area.

The website was officially launched along with an accompanying blog in July by the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey. He also launched Changing Ireland's Youtube channel which passed the 10,000 viewer-mark in July (and is now approaching 14,000 views).

The Moyross website and blog are supported by the locally-based 'Changing Ireland' project.

The website builds on the popularity of the local newsletter 'Moywrites' produced by the Community Development Network Moyross and utilises at no extra cost the IT skills and media expertise of 'Changing Ireland' staff.

Meanwhile, work by the PAUL Partnership is ongoing to develop an integrated website for community groups across Limerick City – [www.limerickcommunities.ie](http://www.limerickcommunities.ie) and [Moyross.ie](http://Moyross.ie) will in time become part of and linked with this.

## ILDN train 30 people in mapping

In September, the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) organised training for 30 staff in Local Development Companies (LDCs) in how to use strategic mapping tools to help their companies to prioritise where they invest most of their time, energy and resources.

The ILDN, the umbrella body for the 52 LDCs, establishing the online planning tool (though Cohesion Funding). They began with a pilot in Ballyfermot, Dublin and are expanding nationwide with the work.

"It's a useful tool for strategic planning purposes, in preparing the plans for ... as well as for company-wide strategic plan," said Brian Carty of the ILDN.

"The 2011 data from the CSO will be added to the maps – what's there already is a building block so it will stay relevant for companies serving communities."

In all, 38 LDCs have voluntarily signed up to use the online mapping tool and as Brian says, "the plan is to bring the others into the fold."

The training took place, aptly, in the Digital Hub, Dublin 8.

W: [www.planet.ie](http://www.planet.ie) (temporary site) T: 01-4600091. E: [brian@ildn.ie](mailto:brian@ildn.ie)

## Wellness Workshops

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- ◆ Want to learn how to take control of your busy life?
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This day which comes at no financial cost to you and will be well worth your investment of time as you will hear lived life experiences that will help you change your life for good.

As part of the See Change programme this workshop will be coming to a venue in your county soon.

For details call !890-577577 or email [louise@suicideorsurvive.ie](mailto:louise@suicideorsurvive.ie)

Workshops are funded by Vodafone Foundation Ireland.







## INTRODUCTION

There is a smorgasbord of work initiatives available to companies and individuals to apply to. But are community groups properly taking up these opportunities? Gearoid Fitzgibbon reports what he terms a smorgasbord on schemes available:

### FAS Work Placement Programme – one county's experience

## People will work without pay for experience

By Gearoid Fitzgibbon

It's a telling sign to see over 200 people filled the newly-refurbished Arts Centre in Nenagh to attend an event on work experience opportunities, in other words work that in many instances goes without pay.

The Work Experience Opportunities event was held on November 9th by North Tipperary LEADER Partnership (NTLP) to boost participation in the FAS and Begin Again work experience programmes because take-up of these programmes had been low among both jobseekers and employers.

Working for free is certainly not suitable for everyone, however there are cases where experience can give a jobseeker that edge when

looking for work.

Like many other community development groups, NTLP is looking to support local responses to the economic downturn. According to economic programmes manager, Sean Crowley, "There is a real need to change the national narrative of doom and gloom and employers should take a closer look at these work experience initiatives. They can boost their businesses while giving jobseekers an opportunity to regain their confidence, and broaden their experience."

Participants need to be fully informed about how the programme works, as well as the company that they are joining.

Social Programmes Manager Michelle Putti commented: "This initiative was a real team effort done with Social Protection, FAS, and NTLP staff, and funded under the LCDP programme. We advertised the event widely on local radio, newspapers, and social media. One local employer sponsored the design of the flyer."

While a lot of individual initiatives exist, it's not a political comment to state that there is a lack of coherent policies on the economy at national level. The huge turnout in Nenagh shows that people are really looking for leadership and options.

*\* Gearoid Fitzgibbon is a development officer with NTLP and writes for 'Changing Ireland'.*

## BACKGROUND:

The FAS Work Placement Programme is a Government supported programme that brings employers and jobseekers together for a work experience placement for a maximum duration of nine months.

The Work Placement Programme offers jobseekers, including unemployed graduates, the opportunity to obtain quality work experience. Programme participants will retain their welfare payments and entitlements.

W: [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)

### 'Green Works' upskills people for green economy

'Green Works' offers courses to upskill people to the green economy. These courses, free for anyone over three months unemployed, are offered in four hubs in Cork, Dublin, Sligo and Tipperary.

Again, 'Green Works' is funded under the Labour Market Activation Fund and is as open to community groups to apply as it is to any employer.

For more details please consult the website: [www.green-works.ie](http://www.green-works.ie)

### Community Work Programme

#### – 2 pilot schemes begin

## Communities may get a sudden influx of help

Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Minister, Pat Carey, recently advised off an audience in Cork to prepare for a big influx of people from January as a new community work scheme gets into gear.

The proposed new 'Community Work Programme' is being piloted by Westmeath Community Development and Dublin's Northside Partnership.

Modelled on the existing Rural Social Scheme (principally for small farmers) the new scheme will recruit people from the live register to carry out 19.5 hours/week work with community organisations in return for basic payments that come on top of their social welfare payments.

It is unclear yet how it will be administered, though it would make sense to use the existing Rural Social Scheme structure. Local development companies will need to source community groups with the extra work and capacity to manage further staff.

Referring to the rehousing of work schemes under the revamped Department of Social Protection, economic programmes manager with North Tipperary LEADER Partnership, Sean Crowley, said, "While an expanded community work programme would be very welcome, having multiple schemes seems unnecessarily complex, especially now that they are all under the one department."

It is understood the rollout of the programme nationally is currently on hold while the scheme's details are negotiated with trade unions.

### Labour Market Activation Programmes: Begin Again' in 12 weeks

'Begin Again' is a 12-week work placement and training programme that allows companies take on unemployed professionals to drive specific projects that they may be otherwise unable to afford.

The participant benefits from the experience and the one-to-one mentoring and classroom training.

Community and voluntary groups, and Local development companies have yet to take full advantage of this initiative.

'Begin Again' is funded under the Labour Market Activation Fund and is as open to community groups to apply as it is to any employer.

See [www.beginagain.ie](http://www.beginagain.ie) to apply online.



## INTRODUCTION

There are a range of programmes aimed at finding people employment that are available nationally through the Local and Community Development Programme. The following sample shows how they aim to support the most marginalised of unemployed people in particular.

### Donegal:

#### **LDC started 153+ businesses in 11 months**

Apart from a mini-boom in the building trade Donegal benefited little from the boom times and now most of the construction workers are unemployed and the rural areas they come from are hurting as a result.

In recent months, the Donegal Local Development Company prepared plans to respond to the challenge and in September it launched a six-week programme/course for former builders aimed at finding them new employment.

Dr. Caoimhin MacAoidh, CEO of the DLCC, said the construction sector had become a significant employer and the company needed to respond.

The result is a pilot programme called the Labour Activation Project and it has attracted considerable interest locally.

Fifteen unemployed people, all of them men, have now signed up for the course which:

- offers confidential one-to-one personal assistance to help people re-focus on their path in life.
- includes a combination of action learning and one-to-one sessions aimed at engaging participants, improving their self-confidence and empowering them to make positive choices.
- will help them to update work-based skills, improve their fitness and well-being, participate in skills training and explore employment opportunities.

The course is a pilot and if successful will be expanded. It was developed by project officer Aisling Sharkey to suit participants' individual needs and runs over 8 weeks into December.

DLDC has a good track record in working with the unemployed, in particular helping them set up their own business and providing self-development support/training. It has helped create 153 family-based businesses so far this year through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme.

For more information, contact Aisling on 074 9127056.

E: [asharkey@dlcc.org](mailto:asharkey@dlcc.org).

The DLDC is part of the national Local and Community Development Programme which is managed by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Community Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.

### Avondhu:

#### **supporting jobless people with mental health difficulties**

In North County Cork, the Avondhu-Blackwater Partnership is running a programme for unemployed people "feeling isolated, lacking confidence, (who are) long-term unemployed, with a particular focus on those who suffer from mental health difficulties."

The Elevate Training Programme will among other things help people "to identify their personal occupation requirements and the pathways to achieving them."

It is being delivered through training, guidance and support and will cover life skills, computers, career planning and much more.

It runs from this November to June 2011. All participants on the programme must be in receipt of a social welfare payment or must be the dependent of a social welfare recipient.

More info from: Veronica Gubbins. T: 025-33411.

E: [veronica@avondhublackwater.com](mailto:veronica@avondhublackwater.com)

W: [www.avondhublackwater.com](http://www.avondhublackwater.com) (also on Facebook and Twitter)



### Galway: from beauty to business courses



Galway City Partnership is running intensive three-day 'Start Your Own Business Courses' as well as a jobs club, and advice and support for people out of work through its Local Employment Service.

The service is promoted under the title 'Opportunities in an Economic Downturn'.

The company is also running a programme to help unemployed women find work or start their own businesses, beginning with taster courses in beauty and nutrition, photography, basic computers and jewellery making.

This latter work is funded through the Equality for

Women Measure which sees 43 new projects launched this year across the country (for more, see page 16).

For more information, call Charlie Currie (T: 091-773466 or email: [Charlie@gcp.ie](mailto:Charlie@gcp.ie)) or Oonagh (T: 091-773466 or e-mail: [oonagh@gcp.ie](mailto:oonagh@gcp.ie))

W: [www.gcp.ie](http://www.gcp.ie)

### Clondalkin:

#### **also preparing people for business**

CPLN Area Partnership in County Dublin are recruiting for a Business Studies course due to start in January and rated FETAC 5 level. It's aimed at people who are unemployed for three or more months.

The course covers customer service, communication, business calculations and includes a 3-week work placement so you can apply your skills in a work environment to help gain the experience to get back into the workforce. T: 01-4508748. W: [www.cpln.ie](http://www.cpln.ie)

### Laois:

#### **support for food business start-ups**

Laois Partnership began a new Food Enterprise Development Training Programme in October. It is aimed at people looking into setting up or developing their own food business. The training was to run over 6 evening sessions.

W: [www.laoispartnership.ie](http://www.laoispartnership.ie)

## 146 jobs and more on the way on Dublin's northside

The summer edition of 'Changing Ireland' reported on how the Northside Partnership in Dublin was really getting people back to work.

It highlighted a highly successful 'Preparing for Business' course run by the Partnership which has so far this year helped 146 unemployed people to set up their own small businesses.

"The training programmes continue to be hugely successful, effective and popular," reported Cepta Dowling in mid-October.

"Since January we've now met with and advised 413 enterprise clients and 146 of them have progressed to starting their own businesses."

That's an additional 48 businesses set up in north Dublin since we last spoke to Cepta in July.

"We continue to offer the training programme to all; we're half-way through one at the moment and hope to run another two before year's end," she said.

Interviews with Cepta, the course facilitator Orla O'Carroll and a participant Kevin Hendrick from Coolock are available online at: [www.youtube.com/user/changingireland](http://www.youtube.com/user/changingireland)

To contact the Partnership, call 01-8485630.

W: [www.northsidepartnership.ie/](http://www.northsidepartnership.ie/)

# Gardai investigating racist websites



## ALLEN MEAGHER REPORTS

**A** Garda investigation is “continuing” into three home-grown, racist hate-sites on Facebook that attracted close to 10,000 members before they were shut down during the summer.

The story was highlighted on the front cover of the summer edition of this magazine and led to hundreds of people making complaints, including a second complaint from Pavee Point and another from the Kerry Travellers Development Project which identified some of the culprits.

The campaign to shut down the sites was initially led by community workers.

The sites were “vile, dangerous and unacceptable”, said Martin Collins of Pavee Point. “It needs to be stopped, it needs to be eradicated.”

Gardai have confirmed that files are currently being prepared for the DPP and the Facebook company and a small number of individuals may soon face charges under the Incitement to Hatred Act.

‘I Fucking Hate Knackers’ had over 300 members, another site called ‘Promote The Use Of Knacker Babies As Bait’ had 664 members and the biggest one called ‘Set Aside Monday Afternoons To Hunt Knackers’ attracted over 8000 people to join.

In August, Sergeant Dave McNerney, the head of the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (GRIO) warned that everyone who joined racist websites was open to prosecution. He has since told us, “It won’t be tolerated, there’s no excuse for racism and if anyone isn’t getting the service they

expect from their local Garda station, they should come directly to me and they will be looked after. I’d be very vigorous about this and senior officers take this most seriously.”

He said our coverage generated an “amazing” response and his office and local Garda stations around the country received “hundreds” of phone call complaints.

“We had two days of non-stop calls. Some people took grave exception to the websites and they weren’t Travellers themselves. Members of other ethnic minorities also rang to find out about how to make complaints over racism towards them.”

As far as we understand, formal written complaints in relation to those behind the anti-Traveller sites were lodged in Garda stations in Cork, Waterford, Galway, Dublin and Kerry and an independent source has informed us that a file is “almost certainly” going to the DPP in relation to at least one of the cases.

If prosecutions follow, it would be the first time online racism has led to a court case in Ireland.

In other jurisdictions, online racism is viewed most seriously. In November, in Leeds, England, a man who posted racist videos on Youtube and pleaded guilty to five offences under the Public Order Act was jailed for 15 months.

In the course of ‘Changing Ireland’s own ongoing investigation we’ve also found that people with disabilities are often the targets of bigots among the general public.

Following an incident in County Wicklow, a number of people may face charges, after filming a man with an

intellectual disability falling in a public place and distributing the video by mobile phone.

This was but one of a number of incidents of harassment of people with disabilities we were made aware of.

Thankfully, the GRIO now has responsibility for challenging criminal discrimination under any of the nine grounds under which people are protected. While he holds the office in high esteem, the GRIO is according to Martin Collins “extremely under-resourced” and has suffered from a high staff turnover which has effected operations.

Martin described our hate-crime legislation as “cumbersome and unclear” and has called on the Government to introduce legislation to make it easier to get convictions in the

court: “The Department of Justice has been reviewing the law on incitement to hatred for the last five or six years. Well, they need to get their finger out.”

He added that racism against Travellers should not be seen as just a Traveller problem: “Racism has the potential to destabilise any society.”

Meanwhile, on what seems to be a positive note, the latest official figures for racist crime in Ireland showed a fall, confounding the usual expectation of a rise in bigotry and racism during recession.

The figures only account for recorded crime.

Contact info: Garda Racial & Intercultural Unit –

T: 01-6663150/3817.

E: david.mcinerney@garda.ie

## Prohibition of Incitement To Hatred Act, 1989

**T**he Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1991 criminalises incitement to hatred on grounds on race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, membership of the Travelling community and sexual orientation. The law states:

### Actions likely to stir up hatred:

It shall be an offence for a person —

- (a) to publish or distribute written material,
- (b) to use words, behave or display written material —
  - (i) in any place other than inside a private residence, or
  - (ii) inside a private residence so that the words, behaviour or material are heard or seen by persons outside the residence,
- or
- (c) to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds, if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred.



## LETTER

### Being anti-Traveller in Ireland is NOT Acceptable

By Mary Boyne

Having read issue 33 of Changing Ireland "Community Activists Shut Down Facebook Hate Sites" I was disgusted to learn that up to 10,000 people joined 3 Facebook sites dedicated to hate towards the Travelling community, the more I read the more offended I got. My blood boiled.

I know discrimination is bad and very bad, but it hit like a dagger to my heart after reading that the administrators of the web site 'Promote the use of Knacker Babies for Bait' are my neighbours and are living here in Killarney. I was stunned to know that these people are living without the fear of consequences, while my community, the travelling people, are afraid to let their children out of their sight.

After all one site suggests setting aside Monday afternoons to hunt knackers with our Killarney neighbour commenting that he needs a gun with never ending bullets, who wouldn't be in fear. What has the world come to? This has made me wonder about what kind of society I am bringing my children up in.

This is compounded by the fact that members from all walks of life are not ashamed to join these sites ranging from secondary school students to UCD business and law students, to people in the tourism industry.

The fact that there was still one Facebook site up and running until 2 weeks ago, 'I Hate Fucking Knackers' after a campaign of 8 months to close it down, shows me that I live in a country that views hatred and discrimination against Travellers as acceptable. Being anti-Traveller in Ireland is an acceptable norm.

How are we as Travellers to grow as a community and as a people, in a world that allows people to freely speak so vilely and hatefully against us saying such things as 'they should all be shot in their fucking ugly inbred faces', Who would believe that in the times we live, in our society, discrimination is as widespread as ever.

It has made me think maybe Durkheim was right "there is one law for the rich and another for the poor; or a society that legitimises divisions between rich and poor on the ground that anyone can succeed if they try hard enough, yet systematically discriminates against some groups so they can never succeed no matter how hard they try". Will Travellers ever be treated fairly, or even as human beings?

So tell me, will justice be served? Will these people who created and joined the anti-Traveller Facebook sites be made accountable for the vile and offensive hatred they displayed so freely? Who will answer for this? Will it be the discriminators who set up the sites, will it be Facebook who allowed the sites to exist, our society and institutions where discrimination is allowed, or our government who places a blind eye at the seriousness of discrimination against travellers in this country. Will it be brushed under the carpet like many other forms of discrimination against Travellers? I'd like to think not!!! We as an Irish society should stand firm together to abolish all forms of discrimination against all minority groups within our country, we need to take a stand and make it our business to see that all members of Facebook who participated in these hate web sites be reported and prosecuted.

- Mary Boyne is a member of the voluntary management committee of the Kerry Travellers Development Project, one of approximately 20 Traveller projects in the Local and Community Development Programme.

## CHANGING IRELAND COMBATING RACISM: Editor's Comment

It inspires hope to see that so many people became pro-active and made complaints about the anti-Traveller websites which were on Facebook until recently.

Many ordinary rank and file Gardai are as outraged by racism as community workers. They of course work within a system where the law cannot always provide the justice that people desire. Nevertheless, a dozen or so prosecutions have taken place under the Incitement to Hatred Act in the years since it was introduced and cases can also be taken under the public order acts to combat racism and discrimination.

As we went to press, the DPP had yet to receive a file in relation to the near 10,000 people who set up or connected to the vile anti-Traveller Facebook sites. However, files are expected to be sent to the DPP shortly.

As Martin Collins told us, even if there is a court case but no conviction, it would send out a strong message to others to beware that racism will not be tolerated. Needless to say, he hopes there will be convictions.

Our hope generally is that more and more people will take action to combat racism, which helps build the movement for a more equal Ireland.

Interestingly, you don't have to belong to a minority group that is targeted by bigots or racists to take offence. Anyone can complain.

Across the water, British police take racist crime very seriously.

Meanwhile, Irish society already owes a debt of gratitude to those who have lodged complaints about the recently exposed online racism and who will not stand for it.

On our end, within the Local and Community Development Programme, it is important for us to look at how we can build the Programme's capacity to directly challenge racism online and within communities. Waterford community worker Emma Maguire who spearheaded the challenge in this instance alongside Pavee Point could be consulted.

- ALLEN MEAGHER

## Roscommon marks Combating Poverty year

Many community groups have held events to mark the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

For instance, on Monday, October 18th, Roscommon Women's Network held an afternoon of music, storytelling, mime, art and poetry. Admission was free and the event was held in association with RAPID Athlone and the READ Centre in Roscommon.

# People with disabilities take on video-bullies Gardai take action

Positive action was taken in Bray, Co. Wicklow and Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, recently after two cases of hate crime occurred in the space of one week, reports Allen Meagher.

The first victim, a man with cerebral palsy, was filmed accidentally falling to the ground in a public place in Bray. The video was widely distributed locally by mobile phone and the victim became "extremely distressed" and complained to the Gardai who tracked down the people responsible.

A disability sector worker told 'Changing Ireland' the victim was "really impressed" with the swift Garda action in this instance and that the Gardai fully understood the powers they have to arrest and charge people under the Incitement to Hatred Act.

In the second case, a number of people in Dun Laoghaire set up a Facebook site dedicated to cataloguing the day-to-day appearances in public of a local man with a mild intellectual disability. They photographed and publicly ridiculed the man, focusing on things like the manner in which he walked.

Complaints were made directly to Facebook and the site was eventually removed.

"We were completely horrified to hear that people in Bray could behave like this," said Des North, programme manager with St. John of God's STEP programme which provides support to adults with mild intellectual disabilities.

Des knows the victims, both of whom wish to remain anonymous.

"The man who was videoed falling was very upset. He likes being out and about in his local community and the video-recording had an enormous impact on



him, he was extremely distressed. But he wasn't slow about going to the police. He took a leadership role there for people with intellectual disabilities.

"For us as a disability organisation, this was a first. We're glad action was taken because if people don't stand up for themselves, this keeps going on. The laws are there for a reason and this kind of behaviour isn't a joke."

The man who was a victim of video bullies who recorded him falling told 'Changing Ireland' he hopes those responsible are prosecuted.

"I went to my solicitor, he told me to go to the Gardai and I did. They were very helpful," he said.

While he did not wish to be publicly identified, he urged people to stand up for themselves and for each other and to report such crimes when they take place.

and Dun Laoghaire.

"What has worked well for us is advocates tackling these people directly and getting back up and support where needed from the Community Gardai.

"To be fair the Gardai in Tralee have been very supportive and aware.

"From our point of view we have always involved the greater community in disability/equality awareness, and it has paid off. Promoting disability awareness in schools also helps," added Margaret.

The KNPD is part of the Local and Community Development Programme.

## CDPs UPDATE

### Where CDPs now stand

The Local and Community Development Programme was instigated at the beginning of this year and most CDPs – we don't yet know the final tally – are on schedule to amalgamate their work with that of the Local Development Company in their area by year's end.

At the same time, quite a number of projects proposed alternative models and negotiated successfully in a number of instances with the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.

While most of the 160 CDPs are on course to fully or partially amalgamate with the Local Development Company in their area/county, the following exceptions will apply:

### 13 SPECIAL PROJECTS

From the outset, 13 projects with special responsibility, national roles or providing unique services were allowed to continue independently. 'Changing Ireland' was among them and is the only one that needed to establish itself as an independent not-for-profit company, which it is doing. Other examples include the Men's Development Network.

### 5 CORK AND KERRY PROJECTS

In counties Cork and Kerry, where there are over 20 CDPs, five of them are moving to HSE funding and will not be part of the LCDP, but will continue in existence.

### DUBLIN'S INNER CITY

In Dublin, where funding was withdrawn to the Dublin Inner City Partnership and amalgamation therefore became impossible, the CDPs will continue to operate with direct support and funding from the LCDP via Pobal.

### SIX IN LIMERICK

Six CDPs in Limerick city are amalgamating to become one company, to be known in future as Limerick City CDP.

Note: Documentation on how the plan to amalgamate Limerick CDPs was published on our website during the summer.

### 17 WOMEN'S CDPs

17 Women's CDPs are amalgamating and will operate as one company under the LCDP.

For more, read Elva O' Callaghan's account on page 16. Elva works with the National Women's Collective which is central to the merger.

### TRAVELLER CDPs

The Traveller CDP Network (representing 17 Traveller CDPs) has recently submitted revised proposals for integration of Traveller CDPs within the LCDP. Two different alternative models are proposed and the Traveller Network has asked that both are given equal consideration. It is expected that a decision will be made on the preferred model shortly.

### OTHER CDPs

A small number of (mostly large) CDPs, many of whom receive 85% or more of their funding from sources other than the LCDP may continue to operate, though under new arrangements (still being negotiated) as part of the LCDP.

### INDEPENDENT CDPs

Some projects have declined to become part of the Programme and will continue on independently as local community development projects.

A full list of where each CDP is now, depending on the path chosen, will be published in the next edition of 'Changing Ireland'.

## Promoting disability awareness pays off, says KNPD

Here at the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities, unfortunately some of our members have experienced similar harassment and prejudice," reports project co-ordinator Margaret O'Shea. She was writing in reaction to our news of disability discrimination in Bray



## Minister Carey on CDPs

"In relation to the evolution of the CDPs. I am not attempting to snuff out or to undermine any of the excellent work which is being done the length and breadth of this country by CDPs and by other organisations," Minister Carey told an audience of community workers in Limerick some months ago. "I'm anxious that we work together to develop a process of Community Development that stands the test of time."

"What we are trying to do is help to re-boot, re-imagine and be more creative in the ways that we undertake development initiatives. As long as I'm going to be around, I'm more interested in what we do and in the way it effects people on the ground, than I am in the architecture that's there to develop it."

## 48 companies now have websites

There are 52 Local Development Companies within the Programme and all but four have websites (which they say are "currently under construction").

The majority of the 48 existing LDC websites are user-friendly and laid out in a way that makes them easily accessible to members of the public. Many of them are key websites for their area used frequently by the public, as indeed are quite a number of the CDP websites that the Programme now encompasses.

In the case of three LDCs, however, contact information is poor or completely absent, meaning that the public cannot see who is responsible for running the company or which staff members to contact about particular local services.

"That is a completely inappropriate approach to an important communications tool and part of our role is to up standards on issues like that," said Jerry Murphy, Pobal's programme manager.

Asked did he believe board members' names be published on company websites, he said: "It's something we do. If you're a board member, it should be publicly available information. I can't imagine there's any reason of confidentiality. While I can't say we've ever told companies to do something like that, we probably should have. It's something we'll follow up."

'Changing Ireland' is shortly to upload a full Programme map which the staff are designing so people nationwide can link to any LDC or other company within the Programme at the click of a button. It will be up-to-date and will include all the companies funded under the Programme.

"Our thanks to everyone who has helped us gather up-to-date information and please don't be shy of pointing out any errors we've made ourselves. We're open to pointers on how we can develop the website or other online material to help promote the work carried out under the Programme," said editor Allen Meagher.

'Changing Ireland' is also preparing to publish an online national email/contact list of staff and board members within the Programme, something it believes will be a valuable resource to people within the Programme and outside.

W: [www.changingireland.ie](http://www.changingireland.ie)

## New law to protect volunteers and 'Good Samaritans' - only 'losers' will be insurance companies



Skiploads of food are dumped in Ireland every evening by supermarkets, bakeries and restaurants while families go hungry, because companies fear if they donate food past its sell-by date they could be open to prosecution.

Soon the fear will be negated, due to a promised change in the laws that will also boost volunteering.

The common perception is if you help out, you might just be leaving yourself open to prosecution since volunteers and 'good Samaritans' have no legal protection, unlike in many other countries.

No case has ever been taken against a 'good Samaritan' who inadvertently caused harm, according to the Law Reform Commission, but it nevertheless called last year for the passing of a law to clarify the situation.

That law is now midway through the legislative process and could be enacted before Christmas. It won't cost the country anything and will make life easier for volunteers and community organisations.

The new legislation is included within the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2010 which had reached committee stage in the Dail as we went to press and which has cross-party support. Basically, it protects from liability persons involved in voluntary work for charitable or other purposes for the benefit of society, including sports, recreation and rescue.

Numerous reports had highlighted the fear of litigation as a deterrent to voluntary work and it put people off intervening in an emergency, be it in a flood situation or at the scene of a road crash. The fear factor also made the insurance costs for community groups with defibrillators

unnecessarily high.

Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey, said the new provisions "will help protect volunteers and good Samaritans from incurring liability while engaged in charitable works or assisting others in good faith."

"It is essential that those who give of their time to help others in a selfless and voluntary manner do not fear legal repercussions. In the current climate, it is vital that we encourage active citizenship and volunteering and protect those that partake in such activities," he added.

Justice Minister Dermot Ahern said recently: "In addition to the provisions of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, I recently commenced section 90 of the Charities Act 2009, which will further help to safeguard the position of those charity trustees who fulfil their duties with integrity, but who still may be liable for court proceedings."

"Section 90 of the Charities Act grants power to the courts, in the event of proceedings against a charity trustee, to grant relief to such trustees from personal liability for breach of trust, where it appears to the relevant court that the trustee acted honestly and reasonably."

Minister Ahern said he hoped that the combined safeguards of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2010 and the Charities Act 2009 "will reassure those who are currently acting as charity trustees and will encourage more people to take on this valuable and important work."

Earlier this year, Fine Gael TD, Billy Timmons, spoke about the 'good Samaritans' bill (as it is being called): "I firmly believe it will save lives and further promote active citizenship."

The people protected under the law are those who act "voluntarily and without expectation of payment or other reward".

Welcoming what he termed "a legislative shield" for 'good Samaritans', Labour's Pat Rabbitte said nobody opposed it.

The only 'losers' are insurance companies who may come under pressure to drop their prices for community groups, for example those with defibrillators, in recognition of the lower likelihood of litigation.

Incidentally, the law for 'good Samaritan' work varies from one country to another. In France, citizens are legally obliged to help when they come across an accident. In Italy, to do so is a crime.

Note: The Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2010 will also change the law in relation to the Equality Acts, human trafficking, legal aid, the payment of maintenance, private security services and the sale of alcohol.

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'Changing Ireland's is the most popular magazine in Ireland's Community and Voluntary Sector and has a readership of up to 15,000 people for its printed quarterly publication. 'Changing Ireland' has also built up a considerable online following via youtube (13,000 views and rising), facebook, blogger and its website: [www.changingireland.ie](http://www.changingireland.ie) The project is 9 years old and is now taking advertising.

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

**NOTE:** Our readers are drawn from – to name some, but not all – Community Development Projects, Local Development Companies (aka Partnership or Leader companies), Family Resource Centres, community policing units, elected TDs, Senators and MEPs, students of community development and related courses (eg youthwork, drugs work), university libraries, city and county enterprise boards, disability organisations, NGOs, UN agencies, trade unions, national umbrella bodies, state agencies including Pobal and others, the mainstream media, RAPID, CLAR, and other programmes.

The magazine also goes directly to the homes of hundreds of Community Development workers and volunteers who have subscribed independently over the years.

## Real community representation: Cork produces the goods

### - Toolkits for community reps published and ready-to-use



“Who’s yer wan think she is?” is a common enough attitude volunteers face when they give time to represent their area on a committee.

Often it is the same people who again and again serve on committees and other residents from time to time - I speak from experience - express ingratitude and are downright suspicious.

Part of the problem is that representatives are usually unelected.

However, the mistrust can be addressed if local people are able to truly represent the views of people from their area and have easy ways of reporting back on their voluntary work.

In Cork, the issues were identified as a challenge some years ago and a plethora of people and agencies went to work to tackle the problem head on.

On the agencies' side, they often struggled to find solid representation.

The result is two booklets that if followed step-by-step will markedly improve the levels of representation and consultation.

The booklets are called 'Toolkits for Community Representation and Community Consultation' and they were launched on October 29th by Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey.

The booklets were designed for the community sector in Cork but have nationwide application.

The guidebook on the subject of representation gives advice “on the role of representing a group and outlines ways of achieving effective community representation by having clarity of roles and functions and providing effective feedback.”

It also sets out the role of the host organisation and how it should support the community representative.

The second 'toolkit' on consultation sets out the important principles which should guide a the process, gives tips on preparation, the role of a

facilitator, details of working methods and details of further reading.

\* At the launch, Minister Carey praised the efforts of the group and added that “Community representation is critical for preserving community participation,” adding that communities are best served when all sectors, community and state, work together.

\* The 'toolkits' and other initiatives were worked on by a steering group of representatives from Cork City Partnership, Community Development Projects, Cork City Council, the City Community and Voluntary Forum and community associations.

\* The other initiatives include the development of a community website, supporting local newsletters, supporting the development of community associations and a project to encourage volunteering at local level.



The 'toolkits' work was funded by Minister Carey's Department.

\* Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Michael O'Connell said the kits will be of long term-benefit to community groups and activists.

\* Anne O'Sullivan, CEO of Cork City Partnership, said the work showed everyone's commitment to “real improvement” in community participation and representation in Cork city.

\* Viv Sadd of Cork City Community Development Projects said it was “a great example of agencies working together with practical outcomes for the benefit of the community.”

\* The toolkits idea came from a series of recommendations from an Exodea research report titled “Improving Local and Community Development Structures and Programmes” which was published two years ago.

A limited number of the toolkits are available (without charge) from Con O'Donnell at Cork City Council. T: 021-4924101.



## Disability leader proposes land tax

**I** believe a €5 land tax per acre regardless of the quality of the land could yield a massive €8 billion per year straight into the coffers of Government," says Noel O'Neill, chairperson of the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities.

He argues that the poor can't pay for the banks' collapse, but others can. While his figures don't fully stack up (his scheme would bring in millions rather than billions going by Teagasc figures) he makes the point that there is untapped wealth in this country.

"There are two farmers in North Kildare that I know personally each had well in excess of 2,000 acres of land and they were getting huge sums of money in subsidies from the EU and Government of this country."

He said these two men employed "top class accountants and both admit to paying very little tax. They enjoyed going to the pub to boast whenever they bought up another farm."

Noel says farmers he has spoken to agree with him on his land tax proposal.

Condemning cronyism in this country, he advises the Government to



"go after those who can pay and leave the poor alone."

To read the KNPDP's views on the upcoming budget visit our blog or

Facebook page and click on the link.

The KNPDP is one of 160 Community Development Projects that are part of the LCDP. The

project is currently amalgamating with the North East Kerry Development Company.

## Unemployed propose a tax-the-rich €8bn alternative

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE) in its pre-budget submission called for the removal of tax shelters which it claimed could sort out the hole in the public finances without the need for drastic multi-billion euro cutbacks.

It called for an end to major tax-breaks for high earners and claimed that

introducing a wealth tax would eliminate over half the State's €15bn deficit by the year 2014.

It pleaded for no more social welfare cuts.

A summary of the INOUE's alternatives to cuts is published on RTE's website while the full submission is available on the organisation's website. W: [www.inoue.ie](http://www.inoue.ie)



## Community Platform proposes '4 Steps 2 Recovery'

The Community Platform launched a campaign in mid-September for an alternative to drastic cuts.

The campaign is called '4 Steps 2 Recovery' and promotes "four common-sense initiatives" which would help to deal with the State's budget deficit.

Their four ideas are:

1. Reduce tax breaks for the wealthy
2. Introduce a Wealth Tax for high earners
3. End Tax Exile loopholes
4. Apply PRSI and income levies to all income

The Community Platform rejected the

notion that the only way out for the State was through cutbacks.

More information: [www.communityplatform.ie/](http://www.communityplatform.ie/)



## UNORTHODOX THINKING!

The orthodox view is that the gap in public spending needs to be narrowed by major cuts. However, there are many who argue that the emphasis should be on new and increased taxes and the removal of tax shelters.

The Sunday Business Post's Niamh Connolly points out, "Labour wants an even split in savings between new taxes and public spending cuts, whereas Fine Gael wants €3 in public spending cuts to every €1 secured in tax."

And as TCD economics professor Philip Lane points out, "This is not the IMF of your father's time. (It) has changed with regard to respecting the democratic process."

Only time will tell if he is right, but for now here are but three suggestions from civil society on alternatives to major cuts.

# Success for 17 Women's CDPs

- Women's equality work secured within the Programme



### ELVA O'CALLAGHAN WRITES

**W**omen's CDPs, of which there are 17, have been successful in lobbying to be allowed come together under one company banner but to remain independent.

Elva O'Callaghan, co-ordinator with the National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN) writes about the development:

On the September 7th, Minister Pat Carey approved a proposal for a national/local structure for supporting women's equality through the Local and Community Development Programme.

The proposal was signed by 14 locally-based women's CDPs, NCCWN and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) and was chosen in preference to women's CDPs integrating into Local Development Companies.

What is key to these women's projects is the fact that they are self-run, self-managed and to a large extent self-defined. They often provide the first step for women to get really involved as volunteers in decision-making at local level and the environment is one of learning, growth, safety and empowerment.

The new agreement includes the following key components:

The NCCWN will take on the role of administering and co-ordinating the Local and Community Development Programme to 17 women's CDPs.

9 women's projects will dissolve their legal status and merge with the NCCWN.

8 women's projects will complete a partial transfer of their CDP undertakings to the NCCWN but retain their legal status for the purpose of maintaining other funded work, activities, employees and assets.

One CDP has yet to finalise its decision.

The model developed underpins the importance of local (voluntary) women who experience poverty, social exclusion and inequality, driving the direction of the work of their local projects and this will continue to be reflected through their representation on the re-constituted Board of the NCCWN.

The three main reasons for retaining a specific focus on work with women in the LCDP are:

1) Gender equality in Ireland requires a comprehensive strategy and a coherent local/national

infrastructure to support work with women;

2) The way that local women's projects undertake their work cannot be successfully transferred into the ILDC structure;

3) Women's community based groups and networks and national organisations play a vital role in building women's participation in power and decision making and this needs to be sustained.

Substantial work remains to be done in working out the detail of how the model will operate, but Minister Carey's decision can be seen as a success for women's CDPs and the national women's organisations supporting them.

The process, which began at the end of 2009, has been truly collective and a great reflection of local and national women's organisations' ability to work together and to put aside individual objectives and concerns for the attainment of a collective outcome.

At the core, all parties involved have a true commitment to and belief in the value of the work they do with women who experience poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and this commitment has been recognised and also adopted by the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, throughout the process of negotiation.

Since Minister Carey's approval of this proposal, a further three women's projects have signed up to join, further strengthening the collective model, and the National Women's Council has pledged its support.

The road ahead promises to be bumpy and long with many issues to be resolved regarding funding, employment and governance, but we are resolved that this road will lead to a sustained and strengthened focus on women's equality through community and local development.

The participating projects are:

- Access 2000 (Wexford) Ltd
- Blayney Blades
- Clare Women's Network
- Claremorris Women's Group
- Clondalkin Women's Network
- Dochas for Women,
- Donegal Women's Network,
- Limerick Women's Network
- North Leitrim Women's Centre,
- Ronanstown Women's CDP
- Roscommon Women's Network
- Rowlagh Womens Group Ltd
- Southside Women's Action Network
- Southwest Kerry Women's Association
- Waterford Womens Centre (Access 2000)
- Women Together Tallaght Network
- Women's Community Project (Mullingar)

Ltd

• The National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks

For more information, contact Elva at NCCWN's office in Tallaght, Dublin.

T: 01-4147872.

E: nccwn@eircom.net W: www.nccwn.org



**WHAT IS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CED):**

CED is a mixed-recipe of legal, social policy and community development tools all of which interact to address issues of poverty and disempowerment within communities.

# Lawyers now helping defend Ireland's Communities

BY Maria Antonietta Nestor\*

**C**ampaign groups from the community sector have less room for manoeuvre now that the EU/IMF is pulling the strings, but there's another way to effect change. They can use the law as community groups often do in the USA.

Recently, a group of lawyers, business people and concerned citizens here in Ireland announced they would provide free legal help to struggling householders facing mortgage arrears.

They launched an advocacy group called New Beginning which actively seeks to use the law to protect the home-owner from losing their home to predatory banks. In protecting households from financial ruin, New Beginning is protecting communities.

They also plan to bring a test case shortly to argue that the banks failed in their duty of care because of their excessive lending.

New Beginning has brought a different approach to dealing with the social, economic, legal and political issues that people in Ireland face today, an approach known abroad as community economic development or CED for short.

## CED's BACKGROUND

The CED movement started in the USA in the 1960s, around the same time as the civil rights movement. In time, poverty and public interest lawyers became involved with CED issues, as they saw that communities could always find a voice and find new ways to mobilise and gain resources.

Lawyers learned they could use the law in creative ways by thinking outside the box, especially when community organisations faced funding cuts. Lawyers helped community organisations to improve tactics, to merge, to obtain private funding, and to deal with business, housing and corporate law matters among others.

A few decades later, lawyers had become actors in the process of development and they were no longer bystanders.

This transformation made CED much broader than economic development as it included community building, the improvement of community life and accountability. CED lawyers now acted as facilitators, building and empowering communities by using different legal tools and

approaches, all of which were directed towards the improvement of the socio-economic infrastructure and personal development of the communities they represented.

## ACTION IN LA

To give an example, in the 1990s, communities and low-income residents faced the likelihood of displacement by the development of the Staples Centre in Downtown Los Angeles. So, residents and community organisations formed a coalition to demand accountability from the developer. Otherwise, they planned to disrupt the development with law-suits, protests and media campaigns. This "threat of disruption" created "community empowerment" which made the developer agree to a number of benefits such as jobs, training programmes, and recreational facilities.

In exchange, the coalition agreed to call off plans to disrupt the development. CED lawyers were there from the beginning to give the community its voice and to ensure that the "community benefit agreement" contained the input from the community.

At a glance, some other CED initiatives in Ireland include:

The Legal Education Programme at the Ballymun Community Law Centre.

The work of the Limerick Regeneration Agencies.

The Shell-to-Sea Campaign.

## HOW CAN CED CONTRIBUTE IN IRELAND

In any disempowered community, developments can happen without local accountability. This happens in the absence of CED. If local people are not involved, then no matter how well intended a community project is, it will be built on insecure foundations.

However, when community development workers sit side-by-side with lawyers, and other experts willing to help, then together they can find new ways of solving a community's economic and social problems.

Should Local Development Companies and Community Development Projects be more pro-active in taking a CED approach? This is a question only community development workers and community organisations can answer.

We often look to our neighbours in the USA, but



many times we look without really seeing. Now that more and more community workers, trade unionists, academics, politicians and members of the public are calling for fresh ways to solve the mess we're in, perhaps it is time we began to include provision for taking the CED approach.

*\*Maria Antonietta Nestor is a PhD student at the School of Law, TCD. Her research project is looking at CED lawyering in the USA and comparing it with what is happening on the ground in Ireland.*

*She would like if you would contact her to discuss your experiences, examples or questions about CED. E: nestormaria@tcd.ie*

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## Visit our BLOG for more information

There is lot of information available on the internet about CED lawyering. If you want to have a quick glance at several areas CED practitioners can contribute to, visit our blog ([www.changingireland.blogspot.com](http://www.changingireland.blogspot.com) and find the posting uploaded on Nov 3rd) to quickly link in with any or all of the following:

- Community Benefit Agreements,
- National Day Labourer Organisation Network,
- CLEAN CarWash campaign,
- Taco Trucks (information partly in Spanish),
- For inspiration on how community education can make a difference, visit the Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA),
- Economic justice work of community coalitions,
- Immigrant initiatives in Los Angeles, particularly as reported by Victor Narro,
- For an academic view on CED you can also read the scholarly works of Scott Cummings, Susan Bennett, Susan Jones and Roger A. Clay Jr.

## Just under a billion people are hungry

The Food and Agricultural Organisation estimates that a total of 925 million people are undernourished in 2010 compared with 1.023 billion in 2009. The number of hungry has declined, but remains unacceptably high.

# IFL defends call for leadership, new values

BY MARY MURPHY

**G**earoid Fitzgibbon, in the summer 2010 issue of 'Changing Ireland', argued that the country is crying out for new leadership, new values and an alternative model of development. We agree.

In the same article he gave vent to his frustration with 'Is Feidir Linn'.

He argued it is "typical of what is wrong with Irish civil society" where in Fitzgibbon's word "state-funded radicals" make "imaginary castles, creating visions of rights without emphasis on how to develop the economy."

We disagree.

'Is Feidir Linn' is the name under which a group of people involved in civil society initiatives for community development, equality, human rights and social inclusion organised in late 2008. Recognising in the words of author Anne Marie Smith that political struggle "depends in part on the ability to imagine alternative worlds", IFL wanted to imagine an alternative Ireland. We wanted to see the emergence of a social movement to create and advance this alternative Ireland.

Taking up the ambitious challenge of developing an alternative model of development for Ireland is no easy task and IFL are very aware that any model of development has to be based on developing a sustainable economy.

What we have is a task in progress and we make no apologies for starting this task. At a well-attended conference in June 2009 IFL launched 'Shaping our Future', an initial sketch of a balanced model of development. Again this was a starting rather than an end point.

Contrary to Fitzgibbon's assertions, IFL never believed one segment of society talking amongst themselves would offer change. IFL instead spent the past year talking, listening and building trust with other sectors in Irish civil society to build a wider cross sectoral mobilization of those who want a more equitable, sustainable and thriving Ireland.

Earlier this year, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the organisations from the environmental movement, the Community Platform, Tasc and Social Justice Ireland entered into dialogue. They agreed to explore the potential for wider civil society

co-operation and co-ordination around the search and demand for an alternative to the current response to economic recession.

This process identified shared barriers to building any impetus for change and putting an alternative analysis into the public domain.

It's been difficult to achieve effective connections between organisations and between different sectors that share a concern about the need to bring forward an alternative Ireland.

It hasn't been easy to link our

norm and there has in fact been serious progress in developing a shared cross-sectoral commitment to supporting a wider mobilisation of civil society for an alternative and new Ireland to emerge from this recession.

This progress under the banner 'Claiming our Future' is reflected in an emerging infrastructure of resources, information technology, social media, county-level organisers and spaces for people to come together to mobilise around common values, policy demands and calls for action.

Thousands of people have already engaged in the 'Claiming our Future' initiative and the mobilization extends far beyond what Fitzgibbon calls "state-funded radicals."

There was in fact tremendous voluntary input into the process to date.

There remains much to be done to develop an economic base of an alternative model of development. IFL is not alone in struggling to develop this and to design a sustainable revenue base for the type of public services required to deliver an equitable society and efficient economy. However surely initiatives such as these are what Fitzgibbon means by the 'new leadership, new values and an alternative

model of development' the country is crying out for.

Publications like 'Changing Ireland' have a valuable role to play in providing such leadership and providing forums to develop sustainable economic alternatives. All input is welcome.



national organisation to people on the ground at local level.

Some of the barriers could also be characterised by a mixture of tired skepticism and cynicism. Another barrier can be summed up by Fitzgibbon's assertion that IFL is dominated by "state funded radicals" with "self-serving motivations".

While some IFL members are state-funded employees, others are funded by philanthropies, some are employed outside the community and voluntary sector, others are self-employed or social entrepreneurs, others are unfortunately unemployed and more are at increasing risk of unemployment.

For the record IFL has no state funding; in fact it has no funding at all and no expenses are claimed by anyone involved in IFL.

Is Fitzgibbon seriously arguing that people in NGOs, whatever the source of their income, have no role to play in providing leadership, developing alternative policies or trying to mobilise change?

Is he arguing people should sit back and do nothing?

What is encouraging is that cynicism is not the

## Dublin:

### Ministers launch INOU books

On September 14th, the Minister for Social Protection Éamon Ó Cuív launched the 17th edition of the INOU's flagship publication 'Working for Work'.

Earlier, on September 6th, the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey, launched a number of publications produced by the INOU and funded by his Department.

He applauded the INOU's "important work at community and national levels" as he launched booklets that advise unemployed people on a range of rights, benefits and services available to them.

W: [www.inou.ie](http://www.inou.ie)



# Home truths about the Community Sector

By Gerry McKeever

While the fear of turning on the radio or reading a newspaper is turning us all into rabbits staring straight into those IMF headlights, lets hack our way through the Apocalypse Now wordcount and look at some home truths about the community sector;

1: The community sector is not some quango mushroom crop that grew up overnight when civil servants and politicians were washing their socks instead of tending to the Plain People of Ireland. No, it grew up because of the lack of capacity and the unwillingness of the state sector to take on and craft a response to issues relating to social disadvantage.

2: The community sector was funded by the government through programmes designed, launched and lauded by successive Ministers of whatever party. The fact that the 'programme' bit never took off was due to the preference of the political system to 'stay local' and avoid any serious effort to address persistent social issues at a national and local level.

3: Just when you thought he had gone, like some Freddie Kruger stalking the landscape, Long-Term



Unemployment is back. Only this time he has brought his warped buddy Crippling Debt. Together

they have hitched up with Organised Crime and Drug Abuse to wreck havoc on communities that only barely benefited from the Celtic Tiger. In other words, the need that gave birth to the community sector is back-but more.

4 The community sector is a bit like the GAA- the pitch may be rough and the team might be getting a hiding every week but they are going to be there because they are the country. The hundreds(thousands) of volunteers who sit on management committees, help out with summer projects and generally form the backbone of the community sector aren't going to be going away anytime soon.

So Hope or Optimism? Hope for me is based on some general feelgood factor like moral Readybrek, warming you up but then leaving just as you are feeling good again. Optimism on the other hand is based on a rationality that underpins a point of view. Am I hopeful or optimistic about the future of the community sector? Definitely optimistic. Because of some very important reasoning such as the points above. The community sector needs to be resourceful, innovative and brave. Can it? Yes We Can!

## 'Effective Community Development Programmes' - laden with jargon but lessons from abroad useful

Mairead Kelly Writes

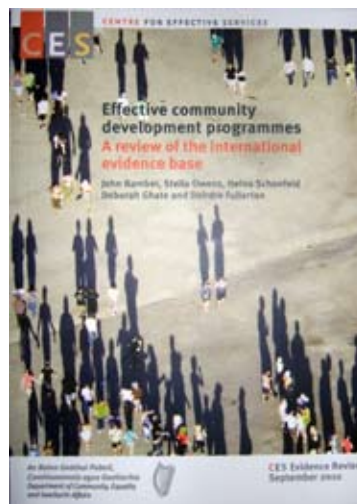
'Effective Community Development Programmes; A review of the international evidence' base was published by the Centre for Effective Services in September 2010. The review attempts to draw lessons from research and evaluations of publicly-funded community development programmes in countries similar to Ireland such as Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, USA and Europe.

Reviewing the book was difficult as this is less of a book and more of a report to a Government department. However, beneath the academic prose and jargon-laden narrative style there is a sound framework for what constitutes a potentially effective community development programme and interesting examples of programmes that have documented areas of good practice.

The authors acknowledge that the nature and speed of the review means that the examples of effective practice are not definitive nor rigorously tested; nevertheless they provide a good insight into what can and should work.

The review gives a workable definition of community development and outlines basic roles and outcomes associated with this endeavour. It identifies four basic overarching aspects of programme management:

- Structure and governance
- Programme design and service content
- Implementation and delivery
- Monitoring and evaluation



achieved by them.

There needs to be a straight-forward way to record and measure the outcomes of the actions undertaken.

In reading the review it struck me that many principles identified in terms of what works were present in the initial set up of the national Community Development Programme under the then Department of Social and Family Affairs in 1990.

Any impression of ineffectiveness within the Community Development Programme stems from (a) the rapid expansion of projects without a strategic rationale in the late 1990s and early 2000s followed by (b) the cohesion process and (c) unilateral changes to the Programme's objectives by Government that undermined its structures and effectiveness. This can be best characterised by the change at policy level that tried to shift CDPs from being catalysts for social change to becoming agents of service delivery.

A summary of the review and a document containing the review's key messages are available to download from the Centre for Effective Services' website: [www.effectiveservices.org](http://www.effectiveservices.org)

In

essence, the review says that:

There needs to be a clear and consistent lead from the top at a policy level.

The vision must be shared by those implementing it.

There must be flexibility within the management of the programme for local interpretation.

Those funding and those implementing the programme need to have a shared understanding of why actions are undertaken and what is expected to be

*Mairead Kelly is on leave as a Youth Officer in Health Promotion with the HSE. Mairead is a graduate of the Department of Applied Social Studies in Maynooth with a H.Dip in Youth and Community Work. She was a founder and management member of the Kerry Travellers Development Project. Mairead also served on the voluntary management committee of Limerick Travellers Development Group for a number of years.*

## IRELAND: NEVER GIVE UP TRYING!

Three boys were found adrift in the Pacific Ocean after 50 days recently. They survived on a seagull and a couple of fish and by collecting the dew dripping off their sail at nighttime. A trawler picked them up physically weak but mentally strong.

In Paris, a 69-year-old woman survived for three weeks in her bathroom, after the key broke on the inside. She drank tap-water and made a lot of noise every day and eventually, someone copped on. She is now recovering.

So there is hope for Ireland even though the Government is about to lock us into an economic deep freeze for ten or 20 years. Since the EU has abandoned us too, it will fall to a Martian spacecraft or suchlike one day coming to our aid.

Alternatively, of course we break out of the deep freeze, find the F\*ckers who locked us in, throw them in instead and give the key to the Martians and tell them keep going!

## BOOST FOR MIDLANDS TOURISM

And in regional news:

Community Workers in the midlands have hit on a great idea to enrich local people and the Midlands Local Partnership Community Development Leader Resources Company (MLPCDLRC) has committed three buses to the venture.

Tourists worldwide are searching for something new and different and the 'Midlands Spooky Tour' offers great value for money.

"Yanks are going to love it. They get to spend one week touring around ghost estates and after they've seen all 35,000 houses, they get to keep one each," said a MLPCDLRC spokesman.

The rules dictate that the tourist will then move into the house and complete it and ask their friends to move over. The Midlands is going to get a boost like never before.

"We thought of giving the houses to homeless people, but that seemed too obvious," added the spokesman.

It's a pilot scheme in that everyone who takes part will arrive by airplane.



## Horace McDermott our good news correspondent

## JOB VACANCIES DOUBLE

Good news from Donegal - job vacancies in early November in one sector doubled overnight.

The roles are well paid and include opportunities for travel and networking along with generous holidays.

The jobs are (usually) long term, renewable, but never actually permanent. If you missed applying for the Donegal post, no worries - new vacancies for similar posts are shortly expected to be advertised for your area.

## MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT UPBEAT

In good news nationally, the Irish public has all but forgotten about climate change and the way we're all going to be wiped out by floods, droughts and famine in the coming years.

A mental health expert told us, "The obsession with the loss of sovereignty is fantastic. It's got people going, gotten them out of the house and it has people talking like never before."

## MINISTER GRATEFUL

And this week, the Minister for Ensuring an Election Doesn't Take Place Soon issued a public statement thanking the 440,000 people who have given up working for the foreseeable future without revolting in the 2 years up to this November.

She expressed "particular gratitude" towards those who have emigrated without complaining that there wasn't a rail service to bring them to Dublin Airport or who had to emigrate without getting to see the finished Terminal 2.

While she acknowledged that some were unhappy with the €5 charge for taking an airplane, she said planes still represent the best value for money if you wish to leave quickly.

The €10 airport charge that applies in the West is higher, the Minister said, to encourage people to stay put and she was happy to report that they were doing that. Unemployment in Donegal, Limerick and other happy places has never been higher.

"If people were really unhappy they'd leave or revolt and they're not doing much of either which is great," she added.

## WORLD LEADER

The economy is flailing, but we are doing well in other areas, I'm glad to report. There were no earthquakes or volcanic eruptions in recent months. The number of people dying in Ireland of snake-bites, crocodile attacks and from falling meteorites remains at zero, keeping us the world leader in this field. One kangaroo did die, but that doesn't effect our standing, an IMF/EU official said.

## EXTRA!

Finally, Horace was delighted to read of the course held in Kerry over the October Bank Holiday weekend.

'Facebook for Councillors' was a 2-day course and cost only €195 per person (not including travel and hotel expenses).

Now our councillors can do a bit of Farmville in their spare time.

Incidentally, there are 1.7 million Facebook users in Ireland and it's still growing. What I don't understand is how the economy is not booming from that expansion?

Surely the 'Facebookers' of the Irish public also need to take the course. In Kerry, on a bank holiday weekend of course.

CUTTING €1 OFF  
OUR MINIMUM  
WAGE WON'T  
SAVE THE  
EURO





# Over 1000 children have raised the rafters - through the Ballymun Music Programme

One thing leads to another and when Ron Cooney started giving recorder classes 12 years ago to children in Ballymun, he never imagined it would lead to days in the National Concert Hall, meetings with Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the setting up of four bands, two orchestras and a choir.

The Ballymun Music Programme has put over a thousand children through its recorder classes and its musicians have performed widely. They were called on in February to help launch the European Year of Social Inclusion and did so in style with a wind band, an orchestra and a choir.

A team of nine musicians deliver the programme and its mission is to "provide a pathway for progress and participation through the arts for the children of Ballymun."

How music benefits young people  
Children who play a musical instrument in a band develop improved:

- Ability to Focus
- Patience
- Self Confidence
- Abilities to relax
- Hand co-ordination
- Discipline
- Ability to learn languages
- They find a means of self-expression.
- They have fun.
- They make new friends.
- They experience achievement.

"It started with recorder classes in one of the primary schools in Ballymun and we plodded away," recalls Ron. "I'd have never really thought there would be the money or interest to bring it beyond the recorder programme, but the diamond is in the rough. We got a few instruments second-hand and we were in the National Concert Hall three months later. Alleluia! We were lucky enough to be funded after that by the Department of Education," recalls Ron. He is a lecturer with the Dublin Institute of Technology and through its Community Links he became the musical director of the Ballymun Music Programme in 2001.

In February of last year, the project got its own dedicated music room in St. Joseph's School, Ballymun and Archbishop Desmond Tutu was present alongside President Mary McAleese for the official opening.

"Ballymun, they always put us down, but look at them kids, they're are going to make us proud in the future," remarked one local woman.

"We give children the wherewithal to read and play music and to sing," says Ron. For him, the idea of starting a wind band from scratch was new but because all the children began together learning ensemble pieces, they were really good when it came to playing gigs."



Ron believes that the lyrics sung by the children really matter. The chorus of one song recorded on CD repeats he lines "My mother says the world is your oyster, 1, 2, 3, 4 now go!" and those lyrics were written by a kid in the programme.

The programme has won widespread praise and indeed awards and the children have met celebrities and stars through their music.

Mary McAleese, said, "These young people have learned what happens when you invest in yourself and they've given themselves better lives and also given such fun."

Minister Pat Carey has paid tribute saying the programme has "played a major role in helping children to develop."

During the summer, Ballymun musicians performed at the Drogheda Arts Festival among other places. One of the programme's aims is that the young musicians get to play in public as often as possible.

The Ballymun Music Programme is a constituent part of the Community Links Programme at the Dublin Institute of Technology and receives funding, among other sources, from the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs through the Local and Community Development Programme.

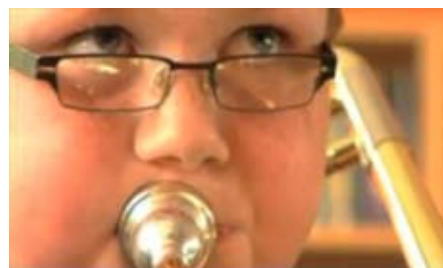
The Music Room was funded through Ballymun Regeneration.

Listen to performances via the programme's website or via Youtube.

For more information, contact: Ron Cooney, Community Links, Dublin Institute of Technology, 23 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. Tel. 01-402-7621.

E: [communitylinks@dit.ie](mailto:communitylinks@dit.ie)

W: [www.communitylinks.ie/ballymun-music-programme/](http://www.communitylinks.ie/ballymun-music-programme/)



## UK cuts to communities, but increases for overseas aid

The budget announced in London on October 19th outlined mostly bad news for marginalised groups as the Department with responsibility for communities is to drop spending by 33%.

NGOs have commented on how the greater democratic involvement of communities promised by the Government will be negated by the loss of essential

funding to communities.

On the plus side, Britain's overseas aid budget is being increased.

For the bigger picture, check out the links we've added to our blog entry (Nov 20th) at: <http://changingireland.blogspot.com/>

## CDPs and FRCs must work harder to reach men

Research carried out in 2008 and 2009 by the Men's Development Network among CDPs and FRCs shows that community groups want to reach more men, but don't always know how.

The research, published recently, found the average percentage of male users of CDP's is 30% while for Family Resource Centres it is 20%.

The research also found that:

- 62% of CDP's stated that they were developing or running programmes for men with a slightly smaller percentage of FRC's at 57%.
- Both CDP's and FRC's rated male gender conditioning as the top barrier to men's participation. Other barriers included Isolation, negative educational experiences and social background.

### PERCEIVED TOP HEALTH ISSUES

48% of CDPs believed that the issue of alcohol and drugs had increased since the economic downturn and 70% of those who responded

believed the recession had increased mental health issues among the men who used their CDP.

The top health issues overall emerged as mental health, physical health and alcohol and drug use, with many of the problems being linked.

### CAPACITY TO REACH MEN

CDPs generally rated their staffing capacity to engage in men's health work as weak, with knowledge rated from medium to strong. Similarly staff's experience in carrying out men's health work was rated as medium to strong. Funding was generally rated as very weak to weak.

CDPs' own interest in carrying out men's health work was generally rated strong to very strong, while men's interest in engaging in men's health development work was variable from weak to medium to strong.

CDPs expressed a clear need and desire to engage in men's work, with 64% saying they were very motivated and expressing a clear need for training in the area.

### FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES

FRCs generally rated as low their



*Mahon men shake hands on the importance of communication (from one of our earlier front covers).*

capacity in terms of time, space, funding, experience, staffing and knowledge. However the interest of the FRCs in engaging men in their services was rated high or very high (79%). Only 3% of FRC's rated their interest in engaging men in their services as low.

The research – which is published in more detail on our website (the document can be downloaded) – demonstrates, say the Men's

Development Network, that FRCs and CDPs expressed a clear need for staff training in the area of men's development work.

The Waterford-based Men's Development Network is part of our Local and Community Development Programme. You can contact them directly as follows. T: 051-844260/1. E: [men@mens-network.net](mailto:men@mens-network.net)

W: [www.mens-network.net](http://www.mens-network.net)

## ***Mass rally in Dublin, November 27th***





## Programme performing “well” according to on the ground assessment

The LCDP has in recent months collected data on the ground and got “very active responses”, people were interested in how the Programme can effect real change and the data showed it was “having real impact”, according to POBAL’S programme manager, Jerry Murphy

A range of indicators showed “what the Programme can do for communities” in helping people exit from long-term unemployment, set up enterprises, and gain further education and training. The results are positive in terms of the Programme’s delivery of advice and guidance to groups and individuals within communities and in community development.

Pobal has also been consulting on new long-term strategic guidance for the programme Jerry said, “People were pointing to where change can make a difference.”

He also said these new guidelines were proving very useful in showing how the €67m Programme can be developed and improved: “A number of groups pointed to the lack of clarity and detail within the documentation around the disability issue and on the need to focus on access within our Programme.”

He said the Programme is “providing the mechanisms for opening much more direct channels of communications” between national agencies and projects on the ground, for instance between the Programme, the Gardai and the HSE.

He believes the county-wide structures will be an advantage in planning interventions: “Our hope is that the Programme can respond more strategically, that our work will be based on a proper analysis of what the gaps are and how to fill them. It should lead to improved effectiveness.”

He acknowledged the power to effect change lay on the ground at local level: “We’ll always be absolutely reliant for speed (of response) on very local work. We’ll continue to need to have that ability to respond to individual issues within local area.



### LOCAL FOCUS

“Where Pobal has been approaching work like developing the guidelines, planning methods and methods for defining what’s delivered by the Programme, our focus is absolutely on the local and on prioritising the areas experiencing the most disadvantage.

“However, for issues of broad significance, I’d hope that the strategic national and county-wide back-up that can be given by the LCDP means that that there’ll be proper back-up for local work and strategic focus.”

“While the structures might be county-wide, the work will have to focus on individual real communities that are suffering from real disadvantage. Having a county-wide company asking ‘Where is the real disadvantage?’ and asking ‘Where should resources and work be focused?’ is intended as a strong back-up to for the people in those communities and to the huge voluntary effort at the heart of the delivery of Community Development.”

### CONGRATULATED PROJECTS

From 1 January of this year, two State-funded community programmes - the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) and the Community Development Programme (CDP) – were amalgamated to form the LCDP. It involved most CDPs integrating with the Local Development

Companies. In a few exceptional cases, the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, agreed with CDPs on an alternative set-up. For instance, 17 women’s CDPs are merging and forming into one independent company within the Programme. In September, the Minister approved the model submitted by the women’s projects.

Pobal are assisting the Department in the integration process and the Department have budgeted for legal and other integration costs.

“I would strongly encourage the community companies involved to move this integration process ahead swiftly,” said Jerry.

The Department has advised all parties to engage constructively in the integration process to ensure that the arrangements are completed over the coming weeks and thereby ensure continued LCDP funding from 1 January 2011.

### BIG QUESTIONS

In relation to concerns some people have expressed that the LCDP might be split and turned into a smaller urban-focused Programme, he said there were “no plans that we’re aware of.”

Meanwhile, as it was a matter of Government policy making, it was beyond his remit to comment on questions raised in the Dail about possible Government plans to move the administration of the Rural Development Programme over to the Department of Social Protection.

He did not yet know to what extent the Programme would be hit in the budget cutbacks.

Pobal is a not-for-profit that works on behalf of the Government and the EU to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality.

W: [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)

## CDP reps press Minister Carey for answers

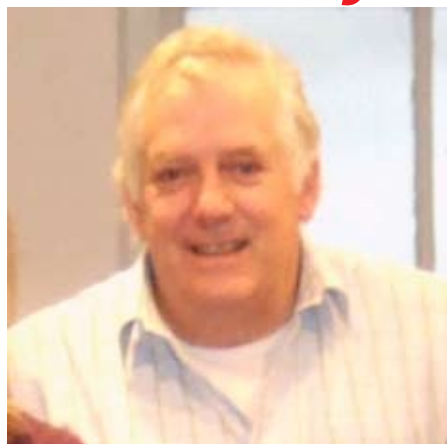
The National Community Development Forum which represents CDPs met with Minister Pat Carey and his officials over the summer in relation to the development of the Local and Community Development Programme. On October 14th, it wrote to him to highlight the following concerns that remained outstanding:

Based on feedback from CDPs who had spoken to their nominated solicitors, the NCDF called for the timeline for legally winding down companies (set at 31st December by Dept) to be extended. They described it as “unrealistic.”

The NCDF asked for clarification around the conditions under which the ‘transitional funding’ option will apply to CDPs.

The NCDF pointed out that it was agreed with the Department that the NCDF would participate in the Programme review group (which would look at any future evaluation) and asked when the group will be meeting.

The NCDF also sought clarification with regard to CDP representation on the boards of Local



Development Companies.

The NCDF expressed “strong concerns in relation to the apportioning of goals (10, 40, 40, 10) which don’t recognise the work CDPs do with very vulnerable groups and individuals.” It said

the Minister and his officials “acknowledged these concerns” and asked about the NCDF’s involvement in a review of the apportioning of the goals.

The NCDF pointed out that it is “still waiting for a memorandum of understanding to be developed and circulated, that could be used as a model of good practice to ensure good communication between Community Development Projects and Local Partnership Companies.

While the NCDF was pleased with the outcome of its July meeting with the Minister, it was unhappy with follow-up meetings with officials because, in its view, there was no progress on developing a service level agreement model acceptable to CDPs: “Instead your officials stated what the acceptable service level agreement model would look like, that it would only be available to large CDPs who would still have to transfer their core staff to the Local Development Company.”

The letter was signed by Larry McCarthy, chairperson of the NCDF.

# Community activists hold a 'Spectacle of Defiance'

A protest with a difference was scheduled for Friday December 10th in Dublin calling on the Government to "stop ripping the heart out of communities and this affects the country as a whole."

The day marked the UN International Day of



Human Rights, an appropriate moment to mobilise said organisers.

Community, youth and trade union activists prepared for the march weeks in advance by designing red outfits featuring broken hearts.

In relation to the economic meltdown, they "demand a stop to this madness of punishing ordinary people for the mistakes of others."

"Our country needs a radical transformation based on values of equality, solidarity and accountability," said Rita Fagan of St. Michael's Estate CDP.

The Spectacle of Defiance marked the beginning of "a participative, imaginative and heartfelt approach to demonstrate that there is another way to a more equal and a more just Ireland."

Guitarists, singers and drummers have become involved and the organisers aim to hold more radical and creative protests in the coming months and have a Facebook page called 'Spectacle Defiance'.

# Frontloading of cuts to Communities of €35m

**€27** million out of a total of €35m in cuts to Communities, the Equality brief and the Gaeltacht will be frontloaded in the first 12 months, according to the four-year plan unveiled by the Government on November 24th.

The Department has an expenditure ceiling of €265m for 2011, dropping to €250m by 2014.

The biggest cuts will be under the heading of 'Developing Communities' (€8.7m) and in 'Non-Pay Administrative Savings' (€5.5m).

Funding under 'Gaeltacht and Island Development' will also take a big hit with €1.4m cut in the first 12 months.

This still stops far short of Colm McCarthy's proposal to abolish the Department.

Nonetheless the combined series of cuts in recent years will hit hard.

## Cuts – impact on communities

Here are some main points from the budget that will impact on communities, for better and for worse:

### UNEMPLOYMENT

The plan promises "increased levels of engagement with the unemployed" through new measures that will include:

A community work placement programme.

A Skills Development and Internship Programme.

Additional placements on the work placement scheme.

### MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage will be reduced by €1 to €7.65.

### HEALTH

While frontline hospital services face cuts, the "Health Service will be reformed to provide a greater range of services in community settings, particularly through primary care teams and social care networks, and to provide such services on a planned basis in the evenings and at weekends."

### ENVIRONMENT/ENERGY

Semi States will invest €8 billion in sustainable energy and in the national grid.

### TRANSPORT

Support for regional air services will be cut from mid-2011.

### CULTURE/LANGUAGE

There will be a reduction in funding to TG4.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE INSTEAD OF PRISON

The plan also said legislation "would" be brought in to impose a legal obligation on judges to consider the imposition of community service in cases where they might otherwise impose a prison sentence of six months or less.

That's up to whoever is in power next year.

## Depth of cuts criticised at home and abroad

The budget and four-year plan launched by the Government on November 24 was criticised, as would be expected, by activists from Ireland's Community and Voluntary Sector for being extremely harsh on the poor, but also by figures working in financial services.

Siobhán O'Donoghue (interviewed on page 4 of this issue) said that Ireland's minimum wage had been "consistently misrepresented" as disproportionately high when this is not the case. It's been cut by €1 to €7.65 per hour.

A SIPTU official pointed out that there was no mention in the Government's four-year plan of any measures to increase the tax take from natural resource exploitation, despite recent good news on finds of gas off the west coast of Ireland.

International commentators from the banking sector also expressed dismay. James Nixon, an economist with the Societe Generale said, "It's a staggeringly austere budget, the cuts are deep and it will hurt." He argued that the growth predictions were hard to believe, adding that overall it "doesn't really add up."

Another private sector analyst, Alastair Newton noted that, "Fine Gael has committed to re-examine any EU/IMF proposals, which implies reopening the budget too."