

CHANGING IRELAND

SUMMER 2012

Issue 39

The National Magazine of the Local and Community Development Programme
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INSIDE

You're never too old!



Traveller in business



Village buys butchers



Meath says "Bite the Bullet"
***Changing the world;
changing ourselves***
Ireland Mark II
12 great websites
1 solid book
Classes in pubs
1-in-6 find jobs
***Solutions to long-term
unemployment***

Jobs You Haven't Heard About: **5000 Develop New Businesses** **- While Volunteers Fill The Gaps**



**Reports from: Canada, Sweden, Brussels, Meath,
Donegal, Cork, Offaly, Galway, Limerick & Dublin.**

Cover Image: Karen Moroney, a volunteer helping to run Clonakilty Job-Seekers' Centre

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

5,040 new jobs you never heard about



People want to hear good news and a prominent feature in a national newspaper recently reported on how Jennifer Judge from Clonsaugh, north Dublin, found a job through the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP).

However, the Programme wasn't mentioned in the article about 'The Jobless Generation' and neither was the fact that nationally there are 6,121 'Jennifers' who found work or set up small businesses last year through the LCDP.

Politically, it's important that the public is made aware of the recently compiled national statistics that have been produced covering the Programme's achievements last year.

Exactly 5,040 of the jobs were completely new as they refer to people who were supported to set up small businesses.

It's always a risk starting your own business, but taking Donegal Local Development Company's experience as an example, they reckon that – of 476

businesses set up with their support in the past three years – 60% are still in business. The true figure may be higher.

What the statistics don't tell you is that most of the people the Programme supported were long-term unemployed and/or marginalised citizens, for example ex-prisoners, men over 55 and young people.

Our editorially-independent, not-for-profit magazine is funded primarily through the Local and Community Development Programme, it employs 1.5 staff and is managed by volunteers.

The important volunteer element in the LCDP is also overlooked in the statistics, something that should be corrected.

OPPORTUNITY FOR NATIONAL AGENCIES / ORGANISATIONS

There is a great emphasis on social enterprise in the LCDP and it's worth flagging that 'Changing Ireland' is opening its doors to other national agencies and organisations or NGOs with a social inclusion focus who wish to suggest ideas, collaborate or take up a regular section in the magazine.

'Changing Ireland' has – by default as much as by design – been for some years the biggest, most popular and widely-read Community and Voluntary sector publication in the country.

At the same time, there is a wealth of good news going largely unreported from wider Civil Society in Ireland at a time when there's a growing appetite for good news.

Contact the chairperson Gearoid Fitzgibbon or myself for more details.

- Editor, Allen Meagher
The Irish Times, on Saturday, May 19th, published a feature titled "The Jobless Generation".



Changing Ireland and the Big Issue: CEO of Big Issue Invest, Allen Meagher editor of 'Changing Ireland' and John Bird founder of the 'Big Issue' magazine which has spawned editions in close to 100 countries. The three met in London in April to discuss cross-over interests and collaborative possibilities

Published By:

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ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) is the main community development programme operated by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in support of the voluntary and community sector.

The aim of the LCDP is to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities. The overall funding allocation for the Programme and Community Development Programme in 2012 is just under €55 million.



PROGRAMME GOALS

The Local and Community Development Programme has the following goals, with particular focus given to the delivery of goals 2 and 3, each of which receive approximately 40% of programme funds:

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

Goal 2: Increase access to formal and informal

educational, recreational and cultural development activities and resources.

Goal 3: Increase peoples' work readiness and employment prospects.

Goal 4 : Promote active engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

The Bigger Picture

One in 6 Found Jobs

The Irish Times highlighted the plight of unemployed young people and interviewed one person who received LCDP support, but omitted to mention the 6160 others who found work through the Programme

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

The plight of Ireland's young unemployed people was highlighted in a recent 'Irish Times' feature by Carl O'Brien titled 'The Jobless Generation'. It asked what was being done in the face of a youth unemployment rate of 30.3%.

His feature included an interview with a young woman, Jennifer Judge from Clonshaugh, who found work after receiving support from the Northside Partnership.

It was a superb illustration of the kind of work being done nationwide through the LCDP but the report omitted to mention that the Coolock-based Local Development Company is among 51 nationally that are doing similar work nationwide and that 5,040 jobs were created in 2011. Not just one.

The LCDP spent 40% of last year's €63m in funding on supporting people to find work. This translates roughly into €5,000 per job supported/created.* It costs Enterprise Ireland on average €14,287 for each job position created or supported, according to the latest figures.

The Programme has four aims, one of the chief ones being to "increase peoples' work readiness and employment prospects" and all the work is evidence-based.

Jennifer had the advantage of a Leaving Cert, making her more employable, but just under 10% of the people supported by the LCDP last year had only primary level schooling (8%) or no formal education whatsoever (1%). These people – much neglected during the 1980s recession –

were made up of Travellers, ex-offenders, low income families, people over 55 years and people from disadvantaged areas.

Last year, however, Jennifer was but one of over 6,161 people overall nationally who were supported to find a job (1,121) or start up a small business (5,040). This represents a 20% approx rise on the 4,595 successfully supported last year.

Significantly, more than half these people were unemployed for at least a year.

In total, 29,938 people sought job support through the LCDP last year and, on average, you've better than a one in six chance of finding work if you call into the Local Development Company in your area. To put this in context, at present there are approximately 26 unemployed people for each advertised job vacancy.

Just under a third of the people walk in the door themselves; the others responded to publicity campaigns or were encouraged by state agencies or community groups to make contact.

Of course, your personal and social circumstances determine how high a hill you have to climb, but one of the things the LCDP excels at is in finding work (or education) for the people from 18 target groups, including people with low education, short CVs, people who are parenting alone and people from minority groups and disadvantaged communities.

The Programme excels in building individuals' confidence and confident people are more likely to find work.

This is down to the Programme's underlying community development approach which may recommend personal development classes as the first step on the road to employment.

At the same time, the Programme's own figures highlight weaknesses. It reaches more unemployed men (65%) than women (35%) presently, particularly when it comes to people who want to start their own business (men 78%; women 22%).

Also, the Programme has found work for approx 1% of the approx 430,000 people on the live register. On its own, it isn't the cure-all for poverty. However, when the Programme's outcomes are all measured, there is a high degree of co-operation and collaboration

with other Government-funded programmes and agencies.

Of note, a lot of work goes unreported by community workers, many of whom remain abhorred at the idea of totting up the numbers of people they've helped at the end of each day. Community work is about quality interventions as much as quantity and no graph will ever capture that.

Behind each one-off statistic, you're likely to discover the story of a family pulled from economic ruin, or a marriage perhaps strengthened, depression overcome, confidence restored, a closer community.

It should be said that the LCDP's success in nurturing enterprise is partly due to the existence of the Back to Work Allowance because 92% (or 4,626 people) who have set up in business availed of it. Cuts to the level of BTWA are of real concern.

***The figure of €5000 as an average cost-per-job created relates to the 5,040 people who started their own businesses thereby creating new jobs. The figure does not take into account those who were successfully supported when applying for existing vacancies. The exact figure is probably less than €5000. ['Changing Ireland' calculation].**

Note: The LCDP's 2011 figures were compiled by Pobal which manages the Programme on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.





Robert McNamara, Journalist

Robert McNamara from Corbally in Limerick City, has joined Changing Ireland Community Media Ltd on a long-term work placement as a journalist.

He is currently studying a degree in Journalism and New Media with sociology and politics at the University of Limerick as a mature student.

Robert is the current sports editor at An Focal newspaper and maintains a popular indie music blog. He has a keen interest in current affairs, print journalism, publication design, old and new media. Robert competes in long-distance running and can often be seen hobbling around after a marathon. He hopes to graduate from UL in 2014 and pursue a career in the media industry.

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Jobs & Development: Volunteer-Led

The Huge Satisfaction in Serving Others

Karen Moroney, Volunteer at Clonakilty Job-seekers' Centre

INTERVIEW BY
ROBERT MCNAMARA

Karen Moroney volunteers with Clonakilty Job-Seekers' Centre which was set up under the LCDP because there were no drop-in centres for anyone unemployed in the area between Cork city and Bantry to the west. Karen was herself unemployed for two years (over 20 years ago) and received support that she really appreciated. Today, she counts herself lucky to have a job and at the same time her volunteering is very important to her.

What are you reading at the moment?

I'm reading Tess of the d'Urbervilles. It's set way back in Victorian times and it's about a woman making her way in life.

What's the last film you saw?

Dark Shadows with Johnny Depp.

Person you most admire?

I don't tend to admire people as such. I may admire actions that people take, but I don't have one particular person that I admire. I don't hold any one person up as a role model.

The top 4 issues in Ireland today besides the economy?

The state of the country is effecting tourism. I suppose that would matter more down this part of the country. People's general demeanour and morale, it's all related and it's affecting family lives and it's affecting people in ways we can't even understand.

Nationally, we need more ...

People need to be more open and honest. I have a huge thing about being honest where possible.

We need less ...

Dishonesty.

What's the best thing about your (LCDP-supported) project?

The fact that it's free to use for members of the public. People can access the centre in whatever way makes them comfortable. People have different needs, so they can just use it as a walk-in centre and look at the jobs and whatever is available and walk out. They can engage at their own level. If people are ready to engage at a deeper level, they can do that. People get the support that they need.

What could your (LCDP-supported) project improve on doing?

We are a very new organisation, so at the moment our focus is on becoming established, getting set up properly and then letting people know that we are there. And obviously volunteers, we always need more volunteers.

How long are you volunteering in your local community?

I've been volunteering for a couple of months now.

How and why did you get involved?

It's an area that I worked in before in Kerry. I was unemployed myself a few years ago, I was a lone parent and at the time I needed to get into work. I needed to re-train and I was very appreciative that I got a leg up. There were people to give me advice and help me along the way and I never looked back. To be able to do that for someone else and to give back to the community, I consider myself very lucky and very fortunate. I have work at the moment and to be able to give back something in some small way is important to me.

What difference has being involved made to you?

There's a huge sense of satisfaction to be able to do something for other people, to pass on knowledge that you have yourself that somebody else doesn't have.

How have things changed for your community, since you became involved?

Everything is so tight and funding is being cut back the whole time across the board for any community based initiatives. Even charities are finding it difficult to raise funds.

What motivates you as a volunteer?

I suppose for me personally it's a case of 'What can I do?' The opportunity came up and I thought that this is something that I can do, it's something I can give the time to, I have the expertise and I have skills I can share with people that may help them. That is very simply the way I look at it. I just think that all along my working career, I've come across people that have shared knowledge with me and to be able to do that for someone else is good.



Jobs & Development: Volunteer-Led

3 Job-Seekers' Centres Run by Volunteers

Citizens fill in where there are no staff in West Cork

BY ROBERT MCNAMARA

Three community led job-seekers centres, staffed by volunteers, are currently operating in the West Cork area, with plans for three more to be opened. Only for them, unemployed people in West Cork would be left to swim.

The centres which offer free advice and confidential support in Bandon, Kinsale and Clonakilty are managed by the West Cork Development Board (WCDP) and offer a "holistic" approach to job-searching. A "buddy" system operates, with volunteers assisting the job-seekers in all aspects of the process.

The centres serve a region that comprises of eight mid-size towns, which currently have approximately 10,000 people on the live register. There are no Local Employment Services Offices, or Jobs Clubs, and only 9 per cent of the territory is covered by Local Development Plans.

LCDP manager Fergal Conlon believes

that the centres are an essential resource for those looking for work. "They are hugely important because without job-seekers' centres, a job-seeker would have nowhere to go and no-one to get advice and support from and they'd be left on their own and isolated."

Karen Moroney is a volunteer at the Clonakilty centre: "We talk to people and assess what their needs are and support them through that. Some people may have been with the one employer for a long time and maybe wouldn't know how to put a CV together, so we help them. If they want to delve in further and go through the programme that we offer, then we can do that as well".

The centres mimic the approach of Citizens Information Services by allowing volunteers to deliver information and advice via IT tools.

"They provide volunteers at the front-line to deliver support in a complex area and they're dealing with complicated information. So in that sense we're trying to copy them in some ways with a job-seeking twist obviously", said Fergal.

The idea for the centres grew from an existing website service by the WCDP (www.westcorkjobssupport.com) that offered a range of job-seeking tools and resources. The website proved popular, but ultimately failed to reach out to those who are not IT savvy.

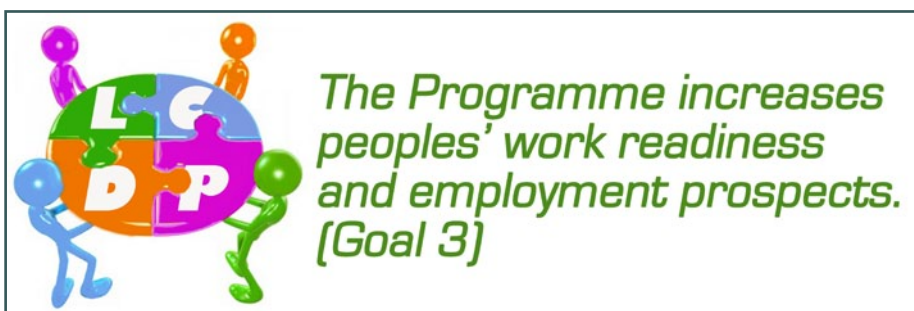
Three more job-seekers' support centres are now planned.

"We're immediately looking at the towns of Macroom and Skibereen and we'll be considering Dunmanway and Castletownbere later in the year as well", Fergal confirmed.

The centres offer a wide range of advice in areas such as rights and entitlements, career decision-making, CV and interview preparation, options and sources of training, course information, identification of job-seeking techniques through networking, publications and the internet, and development of a personal strategy for pro-active job seeking.

Broadband and printing services are also available at the centres.

And every one of the centres depends on volunteers continuing to step forward.



Belfast Unemployed Centre Fuelled by Bar



The John Hewitt, an award-winning bar in Belfast city centre, is owned by and financially supports the operations of the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre. The resource centre had always relied on an unsteady series of grants and 15 years ago decided to generate their own funds by going into business.

A manager runs the bar on behalf of the Resource Centre and the idea has proved a winner.

John Hewitt, the late Belfast poet and socialist opened the Resource Centre in 1983 and the bar is named in his honour. The two premises are located side-by-side on Donegall Street.

W: www.thejohnhewitt.com

Offaly Makes a Start

As 5 People Get a Start

BY ROBERT MCNAMARA

A programme supporting those at risk of social exclusion has, in the past few months, helped 55 long-term unemployed people move towards paid employment in Co. Offaly.

Five of the people who last December completed the 16-month programme gained full-time or part-time employment, five more found seasonal work and most of the remainder went onto advanced courses and programmes.

They had all been long-term unemployed.

'The Way Forward Programme' reached people through locally respected community workers and it helped each person to build up confidence, knowledge and basic education so they had a better chance of landing a job. A third of those who joined the programme had seen their formal education end at the Junior Cert and were out of work during the 'boom' and finding it even more difficult now.

"I'd got into a rut at home," said Michael Egan who is now at FETAC Level 5 and much more confident.

Breda Stewart, LCDP programme leader in Offaly, believes that focusing on personal development and giving the participants a say in the course contents was essential to its success.

"The core elements focused on self-development, self-awareness, career exploration, support and mentoring," she said. "It's about helping each person to identify and develop their innate abilities and thereby develop confidence in themselves. Then they begin to see realistic routes they could take towards the labour market."

Only one in five people in Offaly have a third-level education - well below the national average - and nearly half the county's population left school before doing the Leaving Cert, according to 2006 CSO figures.

The participants chose DIY, painting, gardening, budget and financing and stress management, among others, as practical elements. Core elements of the programme included team-building, communication, IT skills, career options and planning.

Among the 55 participants on the course, 47 were male, 8 were female and there was a good spread in age-groups. They met three mornings a week from September 2010 to December 2011 in local groups of seven-to-10 in various locations. "So far, five were fortunate to find jobs, but so many

more have taken part in further education, training, volunteering and a whole range of activities that all strengthen people's skills and chances of finding work in the future," said Breda.

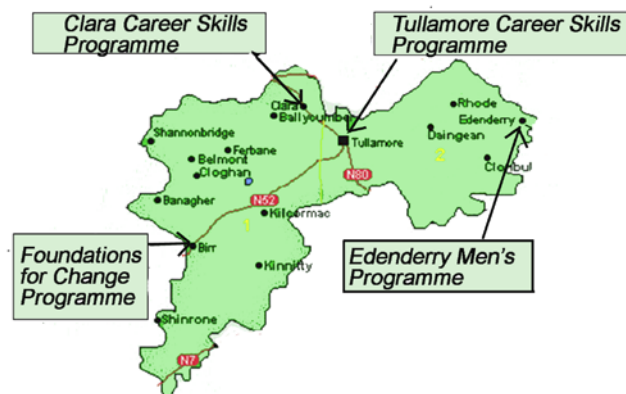
This year, there are another 60-70 people taking part in courses under an Offaly Education programme that has since been developed with the VEC and Department of Social Protection.

Breda said it was "a concerted effort to address the issue of low educational attainment among early school leavers or unemployed people in the county". The latest rollout again allows participants to tailor it to suit their needs.

"Apart from a small number of core modules, the prospective participants again design the programme, identifying the modules they want to complete," said Breda.

- Six programmes commenced in various locations between March and April, aiming to be completed by June or July.
- The expectation or hope is that many of these participants will progress on to further programmes at higher FETAC levels in September.

W: www.offalyldc.ie



In Brief: Offaly's 'Way Forward Programme'

In Brief: Offaly's 'Way Forward Programme'

- Many of the participants in 'The Way Forward Programme' had not found work during the 'boom' and were finding it even more difficult now.
- People who completed the programme told 'Changing Ireland' they were attracted to it because transport wasn't an issue. It was held in their town/area.
- Led by Offaly Local Development Company, the project was set up in September 2010 and lasted until

December 2011.

- Offaly LDC made the connections with local people through the strong bonds of trust built up by community workers in Family Resource Centres and Community Development Projects. This was one of the Programme strengths.
- Four programmes were developed namely: Foundations for Change in Birr, the Career Skills Programme in Clara, the Career Development Programme in Tullamore, and the Men's Project in Edenderry.

- Funding came from the Department of Social Protection, Offaly LDC and the VEC. Many of the key players were on the Social Inclusion Measures committee and this became the steering group for the project.
- For community development workers and students interested to learn more, check 'Changing Ireland's news blog where we've posted a link to a more detailed PDF presentation on what made the programme work and the challenges that it sought to overcome.

Jobs & Development: Offaly & Galway

Offaly Men Changing Their Lives

INTERVIEWS BY ROBERT
MCNAMARA

Keith Walsh (27)



What got you involved?
I wanted to do a course.

How have you benefited from the programme?

I got my FETAC Level 3 and 4 (in Communications, Interpersonal skills,

Computers and Maths) which is something I wouldn't have done. It was a great help on the computers and I'm now designing posters for the Men's Shed.

I've also taken on a new role with Tús.

What were your favourite parts?

The social aspect and the benefit of the education were the best parts. We went on trips to Moate Business College, the FAS Training Centre and the Men's Shed in Galway, places I wouldn't normally get to see. It was good for team-building. Now I've got used to getting involved in things.

Michael Egan (37)



What got you involved?
I attended the course after I was outreached by Karen McDonagh (youth worker) and Catherine Power (development worker) and they asked me to join the course.

How have you benefited from the programme?

It helped me a lot with maths and I picked up a lot of skills on Microsoft Word. It's opened up doors for me to go onto the next level, which is Level 5 in Mechanical Engineering. I will do level 5. I'm ready for the next step and with more confidence. I'm confident to get going again. I'd got into a rut at home.

What were your favourite parts?

Drama was interesting - I was nervous at the beginning but I was surprised how good it was and it built up my confidence. I've recommended the course to other people and the Family Resource Centre is local, a place where young and old can go.

Traveller Beoirs Mean Business!

Galway Traveller Women Entrepreneurs Launch a Toolkit

In Galway, there is a drive underway at local level to support enterprising Traveller women.

Recently businesswoman Liz Cassidy, an EU 'Ambassador for Female Entrepreneurs', was the guest speaker when the 'Empowering Traveller Women Entrepreneurs' programme was launched by the Galway Traveller Movement (GTM).

Liz talked with Traveller women about how to overcome barriers they encounter in trying to set up or run businesses.

Bridget Kelly, a Traveller woman with business experience who works with GTM said, "We're interested in working with Traveller women who are interested in becoming self-employed or getting involved in business. Some women may already be involved in their own business or a family business, but no experience is necessary."

Tanya Lalor of GTM said training and mentoring on the programme is

ongoing: "There are a range of ideas from women interested in setting up their own businesses including, alterations, flower arranging, dress making and importing different products. One woman is even interested in establishing a music career." The programme allows the women entrepreneurs to have a say in how their training is delivered.

"We provide co-facilitation training where the women meet the trainer in advance. This brings in the experience of the Traveller women relative to the training," added Tanya.

GTM and those involved in the entrepreneurs' programme have also launched a new toolkit entitled 'Enterprising Traveller Women - A Toolkit for Enterprise Support' targeted at enterprise support organisations serious about working with Traveller women.

"It identifies barriers and provides a step-by-step guide for organisations. It is hoped it will engage and influence wider practice," said Tanya.

The Galway Traveller Movement is funded through the Local and Community Development Programme.

The Traveller Women Entrepreneurs programme was funded under the Equality for Women Measure and is supported by the European Social Fund.

For more information or to request a copy of the enterprise support booklet, call Tanya Lalor in GTM on 091-765-390 or email tanya@gtmtrav.ie



Traveller entrepreneur Christina Ward displays her shoework. Photo Derek Speirs.



Bridget Kelly, Joanna Corcoran and Anne Marie McDonagh at the launch of the new enterprise booklet. Photo Derek Speirs.

The Government announced in February in its 'Action Plan for Jobs 2012' that it will launch a new "drive" through Enterprise Ireland to support Women in Business Start-Ups.

Jobs & Development: Donegal's Experience

476 New Businesses Sprout in Donegal with a survival rate of 60% after three years

ANN STYLES REPORTS

Entrepreneurs in Donegal have access to a wealth of information and support from their Local Development Company (LDC).

From Start Your Own Business (SYOB) courses to mentoring and workshops, the company provides a comprehensive support system for people, many of who have been long-term unemployed, with a desire to set up their own business. The LDC has two full time project officers who co-ordinate the service which has supported over 1900 people to date. Donegal LDC Enterprise Officer, Louise Brogan said that, since 2009, Donegal LDC has supported 476 people in setting up new businesses with current trends in areas such as sports and leisure, driving instruction and graphic design. Of the 476 businesses, Louise estimates that at least 60% are still in business.

Louise and her colleagues believe that the future for many people lies in self-employment and that one-to-one support is key regardless of the person's background.

One man who would agree is Enterprise Award winner Michael Conway: "Without their support I wouldn't be here, they helped me immensely."

Michael began with window cleaning and has expanded to include light DIY, painting and decorating, and exterior cleaning.

The supports offered to budding entrepreneurs include a SYOB course,

one-to-one appointments, preparation of a business plan and cash-flow projections, mentoring and a bookkeeping course.

The mentoring provided by the enterprise scheme was a vital part of the supports offered said Michael as it prevented you from feeling isolated and gave you the assurance that someone was there to hear your concerns.

"Michael Conway went to every workshop on offer and now employs two more people"

The enterprise scheme also provides workshops to improve awareness of, for instance: Sales techniques, marketing strategies, and how to prepare a health and safety statement.

"These courses and workshops save people money by helping them to do it on their own," said Louise.

Michael agreed, adding that he went to every workshop on offer and found them highly informative, allowing him to garner knowledge in many relevant topics such as tax returns and Internet use.

Returning to work was important to Michael, who had been out of the workplace for some time while battling cancer. He felt it was necessary to alter people's perception of him as 'ill' and instead be seen as capable of contributing to the work sphere. He first contacted Donegal LDC in 2008 and four years on he employs two people, has completed training-for-trainers and regularly passes

on work to other self-employed people in his area. He is also the winner of the Donegal LDC Enterprise Award for 2011.

Donegal LDC faces a number of challenges in delivering this service. The catchment area is vast and predominantly rural which limits employment opportunities in the county.

Another challenge is the high volume of prospective clients, coupled with a wide range of educational backgrounds and life-experiences and there are also issues with viability and displacement due to overlaps in business ideas.

In response, Donegal LDC are putting new structures in place to reach a wider number of people, they're redesigning the business start-ups course and they're running an ideas generation workshop.

Michael encourages people to "look outside the box" and to give Donegal LDC a call.

For more info, contact Louise Brogan on 086-812-4250. E: lbrogan@dldc.org



PICTURED: AIB's Jim McLaughlin, DLDC chairperson Jim Slevin and award winner Michael Conway.

Cut to Back to Work Allowance "A Concern"

The level of State financial support for people starting their own business – critical



Louise Brogan, Donegal Local Development Company

to 5,040 people who did just that last year - has been reduced by two years.

"This is a genuine concern. The four-year allowance added a really big strength to the Start Your Own Business scheme," said Louise Brogan of Donegal LDC. Crucially, the Start Your Own Business course in Donegal, as elsewhere, allows participants to avail of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. This means newly self-employed people can retain their social welfare benefit in full for the first year and receive a 75% payment in their second

year of running a new business.

For example, someone on Jobseekers Allowance gets €188 in the first year and €141 for the following 12 months. Secondary benefits such as medical card and fuel allowance are also permitted.

However, after two years, the allowance stops. Previously, it was spread out over four years.

"The scheme really works, it really turns people's lives around and if people had another year or two to wean themselves off it would be better," said Louise.

Village Buys Business and Saves Jobs

BY EVELYN O'ROURKE

The village of Sangudo in Alberta, Canada, mirrors some of the challenges faced by communities in Ireland.

With a population of 360 people, Sangudo has until recently, experienced a steady rate of economic decline. Businesses were forced to close and the younger population had no option but to leave in order to find work.

Many communities in Ireland are facing similar challenges. With the onset of recession, businesses have been forced to close, and young people are compelled to emigrate.

The community of Sangudo tackled the situation by making positive changes, together.



Sangudo Meat Packers, Jeff and Kevin

In 2005, the education authorities threatened to close the local high school. What followed was a passionate campaign by residents to save their school. Emboldened by their success with the education authorities, community leaders participated in the Active Creative Engaged Communities training.

This provided the community leaders with tools to address the needs of their locality in the hopes of creating a future for their youth. The training led to the creation of the Sangudo Opportunity Investment Co-Operative.

Co-op chairperson Dan Ohler says they aimed to encourage "local money to stay local" and to help retain their younger population by creating employment and business opportunities. In doing so, they enhanced the potential for local businesses to succeed.

In May 2010, a group of close knit residents pooled their resources to create an investment fund, which they used to invest in businesses in the village. To date the co-operative has made a combined investment of \$400,000.

They raised the funds by selling their investments, many of which were invested in the Toronto and New York stock exchanges. The co-operative considered a number of investment opportunities before they decided on the Sangudo Custom Meat Packers (SCMP).

The owner of the meat plant wished to retire but did not have a succession plan. The Co-op found two entrepreneurs who were eager to purchase the business but unable to access credit. The Co-op decided to buy the building and lease it to the entrepreneurs.

By purchasing the assets the Co-op acquired security in the event of business failure. Purchasing to lease also enabled the investors to be active participants in the village economy without having the responsibility of running a business.

The Co-op and the meat packing company signed an agreement

which requires the company to make monthly lease repayments and pay a quarterly bonus, based on gross revenue.

The venture was a success and group members recouped 6.3% of their investment in the first trading year. As an established business with customers, the abattoir did not require the level of promotion that start-up businesses do. Several members of the Co-op are experienced in business and were able to mentor the two novice entrepreneurs. Also, because members of the Co-op had a vested interest in the meat packing company's success they encouraged their friends and family to support the abattoir.

The Co-op have since invested in 'Connections' a coffee house/ community meeting space on a purchase to lease basis. As a direct result of their investment, 12

new jobs were created in the meat packers and four in Connections. Ten of the 12 people employed are under the age of 30, demonstrating the ability of the Co-op to keep their young people at home and increase business opportunities.

The Co-op are considering a number of new opportunities, including a bio mass generator and housing project for older people.

The Sangudo Opportunity Investment Co-Operative is not a government initiative but originated within the community. It is the first co-operative of its kind in Canada. However, there is a history of government supported community investment funds in other Canadian provinces. The Community Economic Diversity Investment Fund of Nova Scotia was created as a cost effective way of encouraging investment in declining rural economies and reintroducing local capital.

Like many communities in Ireland, Sangudo experienced steady economic decline. However, through the Co-op, the community has improved their economic prospects and created employment. Their story demonstrates that by investing in capacity building, a community can use its strengths to shape its own future.

To learn more about similar projects in the UK please see <http://fc-utd.co.uk/communityshares>

To learn more about CEDIF please see: www.gov.ns.ca/econ/CEDIF/

Local community website: www.sangudo.net/index.php

Evelyn O'Rourke

This is the first in a two-part series from Evelyn O'Rourke.

Evelyn works with North Tipperary Leader Partnership, having previously worked with Thurles Action for Community Development. She is currently on leave for a year and is engaged with local communities in Canada.

E: evelyn@saskatoonfoodbank.org

W: www.saskatoonfoodbank.org

Good Practice from Ballymun to Sweden

The Government is planning to extend the law that holds parents to account when their child misses school unnecessarily. The new law would also cover the parents of children under six years of age. Meanwhile, Ballymun has come up with a completely new (and possibly complimentary) approach.

A Local Development Company in Dublin has used computer software and a community development approach to dramatically improve school attendances.

A Lesson for the Country

Ballymun kids lift school attendance by 14,000 days



BY
CONOR HOGAN

In 2008, the attendance rate for primary schools in Ballymun was worse than that of other disadvantaged areas and 3.5% below the national average.

Local community and educational organisations to take action and in the past two years the gap compared to the national average has halved. Last year, 14,000 less school days were missed in all.

Meanwhile, chronic absenteeism for Traveller boys has fallen by over 24% while the attendance rate for Traveller girls actually overtook the national average for schools in disadvantaged areas.

So how did they go about achieving this?

"A lot of work," says Colma Nic Lughadha, Education Programme Manager with Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership which led the initiative. "We knew that educational opportunities was one of the main priorities because of a survey we carried out among 500 local people."

"Education came second on a list of priorities parents had for their children; only apprenticeships were prioritised

more. The survey demonstrated to us that behaviour wasn't matching opinion. But that opinion gave us a good position in which we could hope to mobilise the community."

A more systematic approach than before was taken. Software was provided to the schools to keep track. Attendance Care Teams were established to raise the issue. Meanwhile, home school liaison officers were employed in the schools for two hours each day with the specific task of getting into contact immediately with the absent children, whether that be by text or phone call. These were fully paid local people.

"And it was very important for our attitude to be non-judgmental," Colma says. "It was about rewarding the positive behaviour and encouraging the children to take personal responsibility for their own attendance."

Creative approaches were taken such as rewarding classrooms for full or best attendances and getting classes to compete for the top prize. This made children more determined to come in and motivated parents to bring them in and not let the side down.

A brochure was distributed to the parents as regards child illnesses, written in association with Dr. Tara Conlon, a local GP. The guide 'When is a Child too Sick for School?' is available online, on pages six and seven of the following report: http://www.ballymun.org/downloads/BMUN_School_Att_09.pdf

Recommendations in it included "No need to stay home" for cold symptoms, "No need to stay home unless drooling" for hand foot and mouth disease, "They are a nuisance, not a reason to stay home" for head lice and "Stay home until 24 hours after last bout for diarrhoea." This drastically reduced the number of children taking sick days.

Attempts were also made to make the school experience as positive as

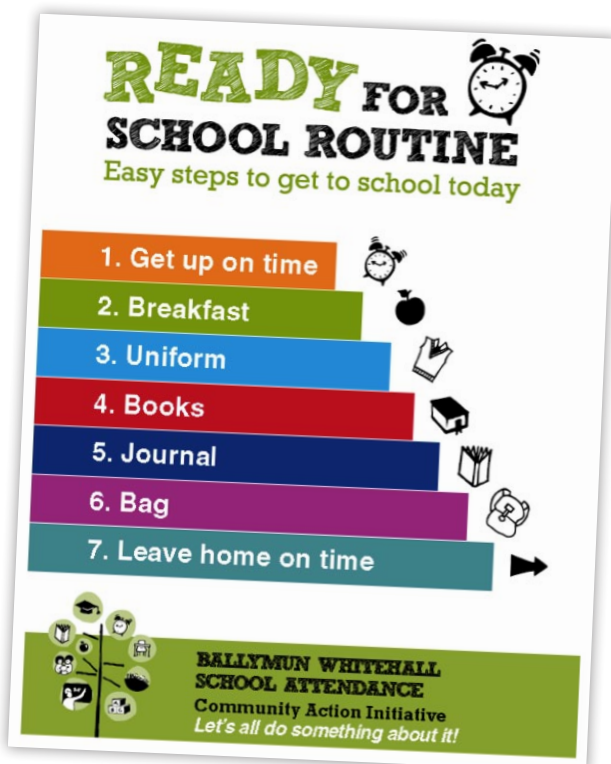
possible for the child, by welcoming each and every one of them in the morning, praising them for their efforts, giving out prizes for attendance achievements and not giving homework at the weekends.

"There are elements any school or community can learn from what we've done," Colma says.

Ballymun's model could provide a prototype for the rest of the country. The average absentee rate in primary schools nationwide, measured in terms of the number of schooldays lost in a school year, stands at 6.2%, according to the latest figures published in May. A total of 9,485,562 days of school were missed by all primary and secondary students across the State in 2009/10

FIND OUT MORE

The Ballymun School Attendance Community Action Initiative was funded by the Dormant Accounts Board in association with Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership and the Local and Community Development Programme. If school attendance is an issue in your area and you wish to learn how Ballymun did it, check out the downloads section of this BWAP's website: www.ballymun.org



Good Practice from Ballymun to Sweden

What Makes Swedish Childcare so Different?

BY JENNY TELLSTROM

Six per cent of those working in childcare in Sweden are men, one of the highest rates in Europe. In Ireland it's less than 1%.

So what makes Sweden different?

Continuing our series on Men in Childcare, Jenny Tellstrom shares the experience of Sweden, where gender equality policies are transforming men's involvement in childrearing.

MEN GET 'MATERNITY LEAVE'

In 1974, "maternity leave" became "parental leave" and it consists of 480 days of paid leave per couple.

Men are given equal opportunities to stay at home and it is up to every family to decide how to use the days.

Over time however, it was found that

men continued to take a much smaller percentage of the leave.

In 1994, "Fathers' Months" were introduced, meaning that 90 days of the total leave became reserved for the parent with the least days (usually the father) so that the couple would lose them if the father didn't use them.

Men currently use 22% of the 480 days and the new generation of young males seems to have a completely different attitude towards their roles in childrearing. For many young fathers, it is now a given that they spend a few months at home with their children. With men spending more time with their children, attitudes in society towards men in childcare are changing too.

GENDER EQUALITY

The Swedish pre-school curriculum is focusing on playing and developing social skills rather than education and an equality development plan for boys and girls to be equally treated is central to the curriculum. Childcare workers are trained to break down unfair patterns, for example by preventing boys from taking all the attention and encouraging girls to participate more.

Much time is spent doing outside activities, regardless of bad weather.

IRELAND'S CALL

It's not strange to see that men in Ireland are significantly under-represented in the childcare sector when they are not given the same opportunities as women to take part in the rearing of their own children. Men who enter childcare often face suspicion.

Society is not just going to change itself. The key thing is really to advocate fathers' right to paternity leave. Fathers would have a stronger bond with their children, share more responsibility in the home, and women could go back to their jobs faster.

In time, we will see more men in childcare.



Join the Public Consultation improving the lives of children and young people Deadline - 6th July 2012

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs wants your help in developing plans to improve the lives of children and young people over the next five years.

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald, TD, would like to hear your views.

This consultation is open to anyone with an interest in improving the lives of children and young people.



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

You can respond to the consultation:

Online: Click on the link below
www.dcy.gov.ie/consultation-2012
and follow the instructions.

In hard copy: By emailing
consultation2012@dcya.gov.ie
or Lo-Call 1890 253352

European Year for Active Ageing

You're Never Too Old

BY HELEN CALLAN

From Townspark, Navan, Co. Meath, Helen Callan, who is now in her 50s, volunteers with young people at risk of drug addiction. She was 40 when she returned to school and she wrote this article "to encourage some of your readers to bite the bullet themselves". It's most apt as we celebrate the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations:

I left school at 14 with no qualifications. I had to mind the house and my brothers and father. To be honest, I was really the woman of the house from the age of 10. My mother had died when I was 5.

Later I got married. I had 6 children and after 15 years my marriage broke down. My whole life revolved around my children and my house. I was a mammy, beginning, middle and end.

As the kids began to get older, I was asked to get involved in a local women's group, which taught cooking and sewing. It got me out of the house and I enjoyed it. This led to taking part in other family related courses like parenting, personal development and confidence building. At this point any courses I was doing were to benefit my children. At the time, Helen as an independent person didn't exist. All the skills and knowledge I was learning were all put to use improving life for my children.

"I was no longer the scared housewife stuck at home with no confidence and no skills."

As time went on the children grew up. A second relationship failed and I began to look at the reasons why I was making bad personal choices. I had come to the stage where I had to start caring for and working on myself. Now was my time. I got involved in the local community project, got a training place in Navan Traveller Workshops and started taking a Parent to Parent Course.

Parent to Parent educates parents on drugs and how to talk to their children about drugs. I got on so well I became a facilitator and set up a local group where parents could find a safe and confidential space to discuss how drugs were affecting their families and offer them the opportunity to listen and learn from each other.

Looking back at the unsure and uneducated housewife all those years ago, did I ever think she would have grown so much in confidence and knowledge? Did she ever think that she would be leading her own support group for parents and be playing a active role in the community and voluntary work in her town?

I was only starting out.

Learning to drive at 50 was a huge achievement for me. I could go anywhere I wanted. It was further proof I could accomplish anything I set my mind to. The amount of women in my area who took to driving for the first time after they seen me in my car was amazing. It was proof that I wasn't the only one benefiting from my new confidence.



Like many of my generation, circumstances when I was young took my out of education. Even during the time I spent building up my confidence on courses and sitting on committees, there was always something in my head holding me back. Being a dyslexic didn't help.

The paid jobs I picked were manual, cleaning, waitressing and anything that wouldn't involve paperwork. I couldn't read and write properly. I never had the opportunity to learn the basics when I was young. I was too busy being a mother figure to my brothers and father. Now that was going to change.

I was 55 when I went back to education. A friend told me about a Social Care course which I felt suited me down to the ground because of my involvement



in the community. I never looked at the contents of the course and never realized how much paperwork would be involved until I started. Essays, reports, exams, everything I used to run a mile from, here it was facing me.

I have to say that the tutors and the VEC were incredibly supportive. The tutors picked up on my difficulties and frustrations and my class also helped me. No-one ever looked down on me. I was never made feel out of place. It was wonderful to be in a group that encouraged me to finish the course, which I did and graduated last year. When I had it all done and finished I was so proud of my achievements.

My new skills and education made me look at myself and my place in life differently. I was no longer the scared housewife stuck at home with no confidence and no skills. Now I could write letters, drive a car and had a qualification. Who was I now? A very proud woman, I'm working out what my next adventure will be!

European Year for **Active Ageing**
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



NOTE:

Helen was until last year a voluntary board of management member of Navan Community Development Project funded by the Community Development Programme, a precursor to the Local and Community Development Programme.

Programme News Brief

Ireland Version 2 – Our Democracy's Due An Upgrade



**BY GEAROID
FITZGIBBON**

Given the scale of the economic crisis in Ireland, it is no surprise that political reform was one of the key issues in the 2011 General Election. There was a sense that the “operating system” of Ireland, our constitution, needed to be upgraded.

Our democracy needed an upgrade and all parties came up with proposals including Fine Gael and Labour.

Nine pages of the 64-page ‘Programme for Government’ were on the topic of political reform.

Along with a number of specific

referendums, the Programme promised to establish a Constitutional Convention. The government has recently begun to sketch the outlines of this convention. It will, we are told, consist of 100 members, 33 elected politicians, and the rest citizens.

It has yet to be decided how these citizens will be selected and the precise agenda for the Convention. With the right focus, such a convention has the potential to begin a radical transformation of politics. It's time for Ireland Version 2.0 and upgrading our country's Operating System will need the advocacy and input of people.

Draft Government proposals say that the Constitutional Convention should report within 12 months on:

Our Dáil electoral system.

Reducing the presidential term from seven to five years.

Amending the clause on women in the home and encouraging more participation by women in public life.

Removing blasphemy from the Constitution

A reduction of the voting age.

Other constitutional amendments can also be considered.

Though the LCDP, community workers can play a role in assisting citizens groups feed into this process through awareness-raising events on the constitutional convention or by other means. Such work comes under LCDP Goal 4 which aims to get people in communities more involved in decision-making.

To read pages 17-26 online of the ‘Programme for Government’ look up: bit.ly/fglpfg2011. And, by the way, the Irish constitution is also now available online and even as an app for smart-phones.

**- Gearoid Fitzgibbon,
community worker,
North Tipperary
Leader Partnership.
Gearóid is chairperson
of ‘Changing Ireland
Community Media
Ltd.’**



Tipp Town's First Jobs & Training EXPO

The South Tipperary Development Company held an information EXPO in Tipperary Town in May to give unemployed people information on the range of local services and supports relating to jobs, education, recreation and training. The Expo also promoted services that sustain wellbeing and positive mental health.

Over 160 people attended while 26 service providers had stalls.

It was organised through funding from the Local and Community Development Programme.



Keeping Dublin Community Workers Talking

Mairead McCann and Kate Walls are pioneering new ways of keeping community workers connected across an area populated by 107,000 people. No point in letting a good idea that works in one part of Dublin slip past another area.

The net.com events organised by Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership are all about sharing best practice, exploring what works best and working together.

For more information, contact Mairead on 01-4965558 or Kate (student community worker) on 01-490-5082. E: mairead@rpcp.ie or katewalls@rpcp.ie

7th Intercultural Week in Louth

Twelve schools participated in the seventh annual Louth National Schools' Intercultural Week which was funded by Louth Leader Partnership through the Local and Community Development Programme.


In some of the schools, 20% or more of the students are non-Irish and the school setting is crucial to increasing awareness about the dangers of racism.

The Intercultural Week involved teachers, students and their families and communities.

Meath Recruits

Meath Partnership in April went about recruiting a Social Inclusion Team Leader. The work will be at local as well as EU level and is in line with LCDP goals with regard to lifelong learning and supporting people who are long-term unemployed.





**The Programme increases
access to formal and informal
educational, recreational
and cultural development
activities and resources.
(Goal 2)**

Keep Your Eye on Brussels!

On the Cusp of a Huge Opportunity



INTERVIEW WITH: RYAN HOWARD IN BRUSSELS BY ALLEN MEAGHER

“We’re standing on the cusp of a huge opportunity here,” claims Ryan Howard, talking about Ireland’s potential to unlock EU funds for communities from 2014 onwards.

From 18 months time, the European Commission (EC) proposes just one “programming tool” for all structural funds.

In doing so, the EC has given official recognition and backing to a process known as Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and Ireland is better prepared than most to make use of the funding that’s been earmarked.

For a country to have access – by the hundreds of million – it needs to have a network of local action groups in place to channel the funding.

Leading the field, Ireland already has a national network in place, namely the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP).

“The EC is excited about this and Ireland is in a hugely unique position, through the LCDP companies, in having the whole country covered, including both urban and rural areas,” says Ryan, who heads up a Local Development Company in County Cork.

His enthusiasm reflects his involvement in a European focus group, that reports to the European Commission in Brussels on

community initiatives that work.

Since most of us in Ireland have grown used to news from Europe of Troika-related directions and spending cuts, this news runs counter to the regular flow of information on Brussels.

Local development experts across Europe have greeted the announcement as “a great opportunity, not to be missed.” (Ref. LDnet.eu). Meanwhile, politicians are awakening to the possibilities and know it will pass by countries that don’t shape up for it.

It challenges States because the method of delivery is not through national Government agencies, but through regional and local community projects.

“We can offer Europe a community-led platform that works towards social inclusion. We’re seen in Europe as a model, our (LCDP) groups are led by civic society and we’re seen as true Community Development bodies,” says Ryan.

“In the EC, people are reflecting in a far more positive way on what we’re doing than we are ourselves. I find it amazing in Brussels – the level of support, acknowledgement and positivity towards us – it’s a different world here compared to when you go home again. We need to start looking at what’s positive about what we’re doing.

Ryan isn’t blind to the difficulties facing the community sector, including his own Programme, which saw its budget cut to €55.3m in 2012, down from €63.3m the year before.

“The LCDP is dying on its feet because the funds aren’t being put into it. It will be in real trouble if we keep cutting.”

Ryan also recognises that we’re “not at the front of the game” in lining up to access the CLLD funds from 2014.

“Finland is one year ahead of us. Structurally we’re in a great place, but in preparation for 2014 we shouldn’t wait for it to come. Even the EC are saying to get moving before it begins. In Finland, they’ve already started getting out there talking to

local community groups.

“This is important because it can’t be accessed through any other structure. To be fair to the Minister (Hogan) – he recognises the importance of the Community-Led process in the future,” said Ryan who met Minister Phil Hogan recently.

“I know other politicians are beginning to become far more aware too – because of the importance Europe will have.”

It’s not easy for everyone, Ryan adds: “We’re not all equal in this; some organisations are very challenged.”

“However, There’s something absolutely critical, amazing and unique about what we’ve done in developing a Community-Led process. And now we’re going to have to start thinking for anew because we can bring value for money that no-one else can.

“It’s not as if everyone’s in the same place. But we’re in a great place for these negotiations. Go look out there because

people are reflecting in a far more positive way on what we’re doing than we are ourselves.

“We need to be talking to our communities, our politicians, our leaders ... and this is my fear – that it might be seen as not worth the bother.”

Ryan Howard is the CEO of South East Cork Area Development. He’s a big Jeremy Clarkson fan and if you want to find out who his greatest hero is (not Jeremy Clarkson thank god) log onto our news blog for more:

**www.changingireland.blogspot.com
Ryan was in Brussels as part of a focus group reporting back to the European Commission about Leader within the Rural Development Programme. Leader is one of the four axis of the RDP and was mainstreamed five years ago.**



Community-Led Local Development

Features of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) are that it is area-based, bottom-up, public-private, integrated, innovative, co-operative and involves the use of networking.

It involves directing funding to local

community projects via partnerships between EU authorities, NGOs and groups on the ground with the overall aim of realising the long-term potential of their area.

The Commission’s recognition of

CLLD is based on the rationale that tackling complex issues such as poverty, deprivation or unemployment, needs an integrated and inclusive approach involving many local actors.

More info: <http://bit.ly/KJ5xXs>

A Dozen Useful Websites

Find Out More About Community

There are a number of useful websites worth recommending to anyone interested in the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland and in Community Development.

1. www.activelink.ie

If you haven't already signed up for Activelink's weekly e-bulletins, do! They cover events, courses, jobs, volunteer-positions, charity announcements, appeals for help and offers of assistance. Pay to advertise.

activelink.ie

2. www.changingireland.ie

Find out about the work of the Local and Community Development Programme and access 11 years of archived magazines about community development in Ireland. An online map links to every Local Development Company and there are links to the 'Changing Ireland' news blog and social media outlets.

CHANGING IRELAND

3. www.wheel.ie

A well-established national network of NGO and charity organisations. The Wheel produces a print magazine called 'Le Cheile' thrice annually which is also downloadable from the website. The site offers visitors a choice of resources that would interest anyone working in communities be it as a worker or volunteer. Courses regularly advertised.



4. www.cwc.ie

The Community Workers Co-op provides political, academic and community insight into what's happening in particular to State-funded community development in the Republic. Informed commentary and analysis. The CWC produces a regular e-bulletin. Member-driven.



5. www.spunout.ie

A lively, interactive site with tonnes of content. For and by young people. Current homepage topics cover everything from "My Volunteer Experience" to "Foreskin and Circumcision".



6. www.ildn.ie

This is the network for the Local Development Companies whose work CHANGING IRELAND is funded to promote. The rural LDCs are also tasked with dispensing funding from the EU's Rural Development Programme (aka LEADER). Note that the website is still in development.

7. www.craol.ie

CRAOL is the official network for the ever-expanding network of community radio stations in the Republic. Links to every station and much more.

8. www.volunteer.ie/

Does what it says on the tin - learn more about how you can get involved as a volunteer anywhere in the country. Tips for volunteers and links to volunteer centres around Ireland.



9. www.tascnet.ie/

A thinktank and policy-driver that seeks to identify and confront national elites. Has made an impact nationally. According to columnist and almost-ran politician Fintan O'Toole, "TASC challenges the existing consensus and offers new thinking and fresh ideas."



10. www.effectiveservices.org/

The Centre for Effective Services website looks at best practice in the implementation of national programmes designed to support children, families and communities.

11. www.nicva.org/

Forget the ROI! Find out what's happening in Northern Ireland's community and voluntary sector NICVA is the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action.

12. europa.eu/ey2012/

Finally, European-wide and with the year that's in it, you should check out the official website of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Lists events across the continent.



It might also help to scan through the organisations 'Changing Ireland' has "liked" through our Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/L7rCON> Also, check out the websites of Government Departments that play a major role in social inclusion. And finally, do let us know what we've left out!

Compilation
by A Meagher



President believes it's time to change the world

President Michael D. Higgins launched the Convergence 2012 programme of events when he visited Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, on a wet June 6th.

The Convergence programme was launched to coincide with the UN Earth Summit 2012 scheduled for June 20-22nd in Rio De Janeiro.

President Higgins was at the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and he recalled his experience there in his speech in Cloughjordan.

'Changing Ireland' filmed the launch and uploaded the President's speech to Youtube. Also visit our blog for ROBERT MCNAMARA's news report on the launch including links to a dozen useful websites.

W: changingireland.blogspot.com



Editor Allen Meagher presented President Michael D. Higgins with a copy of 'Changing Ireland' which featured the President on the cover during a visit to Cloughjordan in June. PHOTO BY ROBERT MCNAMARA.

Community-Based Adult Education

The Powerful Social Value of Classes in the Pub

Research into the Social Value of Community-Based Adult Education in Limerick City

By Mary Flannery & Anita Martin

"You never know what amazing things are happening on your doorstep until you join classes."

This was one comment from an adult learner included in a research report that was published in February titled, 'The Social Value of Community-Based Adult Education in Limerick City'.

There was lots of anecdotal information from learners about how adult education has opened up new worlds for them or marked a turning point in their lives, but it was largely undocumented. The research recorded those learners' voices and it is hoped the 74-page report will influence national policy on community-based adult education. The research is the most comprehensive of its kind conducted nationally to date.

People said they had better mental health, a more positive attitude to learning and a greater sense of connection with the community. Twenty 'social benefits' were identified and these are frequently overlooked and yet they are often the glue that holds communities together.

Classes are delivered in a variety of settings such as Limerick City CDP,

local FRCs and school halls and even in the local pub when no other space was available. Subjects, which can be certified or non-certified, range from gardening and art to reading and writing, English, Maths and Computers.

The social benefits of participation in community-based adult education have many layers.

They benefit the individual learner, their family and the wider community as the following quotes from learners show:

"The missus [wife] had always taken care of the bills and all that so she didn't like it one bit when I could read them myself and see what was what... she started to feel that I had taken over her job, I suppose."

"Like lots of young mothers (I did) a basic assertiveness course. I remember coming down from it and I was buzzing... my family changed, everyone changed, because I changed and all for the better."

"You know the cycle of the mother does not work, does not educate herself, you get to a certain level in education and then you go get a job. I was working at 15, my mother was working at 13 so I was just repeating the cycle and education gave me the ability to break that, to realise that there is more."

"It gave me the confidence and I

just got involved in everything and you know where I'm from and everything. I got involved in things around the community... I live there too you know."

Amongst other recommendations, the research insists that it is vital that community-based adult education is adequately funded so that Ireland does not



Kelly Dawson, Gillian Dawson and Katriona Murphy with tutor Patricia Barrett during a FETAC level 3 family learning module

become a country that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

The research was commissioned by Limerick Community Education Network, Limerick City Adult Education Service and Limerick Regeneration with the support of PAUL Partnership and Limerick City of Learning. It was conducted by a team of researchers from the Sociology Department in UL.

Note: Both Mary and Anita were on the steering group that guided the research.

To download the full report, visit:
<http://www.limerickcityaes.ie/Publications.aspx>

A Flyer Changed Caroline's Life

Caroline Parker lives on Hyde Road, Limerick, and a flyer that came through her door propelled her into enrolling for personal development classes, joining a choir and volunteering in her community.

Caroline had worked away quietly in a factory for many years and community-based education gave her a completely new outlook.

As a result of the classes, Caroline is now volunteering with local groups and as someone who was not used to meetings and committees, she found it daunting at

first: "I didn't know the lingo and I felt very out of my depth but since then I've got involved more."

Caroline says she made new friends, is more confident and now relishes the challenge of being a community voice at different meetings.

She describes community education as having given her "gsomething to get up and get going for".

CBAE report cover



Doris McDermott

OUR AGONY AUNT



Thank God the referendum is over and I don't have to be reminded of the silliness politicians go on with. I mean when they said "Yes for Stability and Jobs" that was silly. Stability means keeping things steady with no dramatic changes and what would be a more dramatic change than jobs. And whoever said "Austerity isn't Working" didn't look it up in the dictionary. Idleness isn't working! Just ask my Maurice - as I mentioned before my son is unemployed.

Right now though, he's at the cinema to see Avengers Assemble. He is a big car enthusiast so he'll be very disappointed when he realizes it's not about life in a vintage car manufacturing plant. Mind you not as disappointed as his friend Chris, when he was a heroin addict and Maurice brought him to Top Gear.

Despite his flaws, though, he's trying to

improve his employment prospects. He's trying to learn a language. Originally he'd checked a book out from his local library that he thought would help his Mandarin, but instead proved to be entirely about small citrus fruits. He exchanged it for a CD collection - How to speak Cantonese - and now spends hours talking about seagulls following trawlers in a French accent while practicing Kung Fu kicks. It's very confusing but no-one ever understood Eric Cantona by all accounts

His eventual plan is to be proficient enough to emigrate to the Chinese province of Athlone because, he read in the paper that plans are afoot to construct a China business hub near there. The last time the Chinese and the Irish linked up on a major construction project they were building railways in America. I suppose it's in the Roscommon side of Athlone

because the new Ming dynasty has already begun to be established there with the election of Luke 'Ming' Flanagan as Mayor and now TD.

China's doing something right as there unemployment rate is 4%, and that doesn't include child labour. It's a considerable advantage because in Ireland our draconian laws prevent our six to 15 year olds earning a decent living. Mind you the only child labour I've seen was giving birth to Maurice and I could never get any work out of my child at any age. He's a very eco friendly son in that he conserves huge amounts of energy by doing nothing.

Still there's a lot we can learn from China. Maurice is so excited; he's even taking cookery lessons. Because when the Chinese come over, they'll surely need some of that Chinese food. Or as they apparently call it over there: food.

New Textbook on Community Development

A new textbook introducing the theories and practices of community development, complimented by case-studies of Irish success stories, has been published.

In 250-pages 'Community Development: Theory, Policy and Practice' achieves a lot, for example it:

Shows how community development tackles social disadvantage and is a powerful force for social change in Ireland.

Looks critically at the relationship between policy and practice.

Shows what's necessary for effective and sustainable community development in our rapidly changing society.

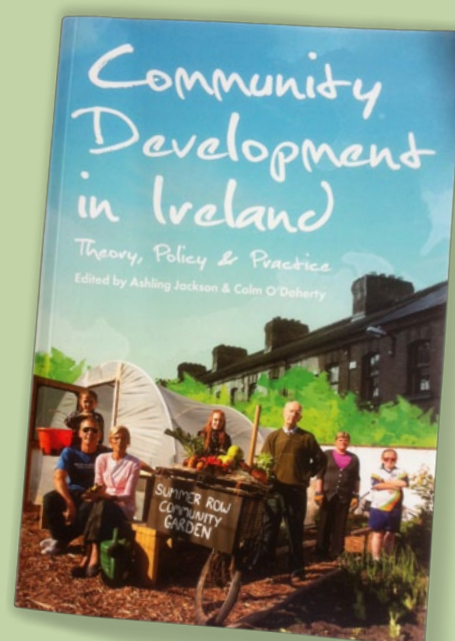
Offers solutions to current issues and

challenges in Ireland.

Showcases models of best practice in various community development settings. It also highlights ideas that are currently shaping community development projects and programmes nationally.

The book was co-edited by Dr Ashling Jackson and Dr Colm O'Doherty with third-level students in mind but it should also be of interest to community workers and volunteers/activists in local communities.

It's published by Gill & Macmillan and was launched recently by Fergus Finlay of Barnardos. There is only one sting in the tail - it's priced at €29.99. Ask your local library to buy a copy.



Community & Voluntary Sector NEWS BRIEFS

More RDP Cash for Communities

The rules for applicants to the multi-million euro Rural Development Programme have been adjusted to increase the level of spend on local projects.

The maximum rate of aid for private promoters has increased from 50% to 75%.

Local Authorities may now act as project promoters – this will only apply to projects that are outside the statutory remit of the Authority and must be carried out in partnership with a community group. The community group is still required to provide at least 5% cash.

Local Development Companies in rural areas can once again consider applications from community groups for flagship projects to a maximum of €500,000 under the Basic Services and Village Enhancement measures.

Meanwhile, food project applications now qualify for 40% in funding support.

The changes were introduced by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Volunteers Rubbing Gravestones



Volunteers are copying headstone information and recording the folklore of cemeteries nationwide as part of a project aimed at reaching out to the Irish diaspora.

The information is being collected using digital cameras, GPS systems, and pencil-rubbing techniques. A grave rubbing is an impression of a headstone

made by rubbing a soft pencil or charcoal across paper taped to the headstone.

Archaeologists have trained up volunteers and the discoveries will be published online as part of a national historic graves survey. The project is being funded from proceeds of the plastic bag tax through the Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.

The Irish Examiner of April 9th carried a full report.

Co-Ops Made Easy

Last year, the Government approved the drafting of legislation to ease the regulatory burden on co-operative societies. The aim – to make it easier to start up and run a co-op as an alternative form of enterprise organisation.

It's still early days on this one in legislative terms but the plan is listed in the Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2012.

In the meantime, read our report from Canada on a Co-op set up to save jobs in a small village. It was written by community worker Evelyn O'Rourke who is currently on leave from the LCDP in Ireland.

Dull and Boring

Town twinning made worldwide news in early June when a US town called Boring in Oregon was asked to twin with a village by the name of Dull in Scotland. The Boring Community Planning Organisation are looking favourably on the proposal from Dull Community Council.



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Mark Twain: "The most interesting information comes from children, for they tell all they know and then stop"