

# CHANGING IRELAND

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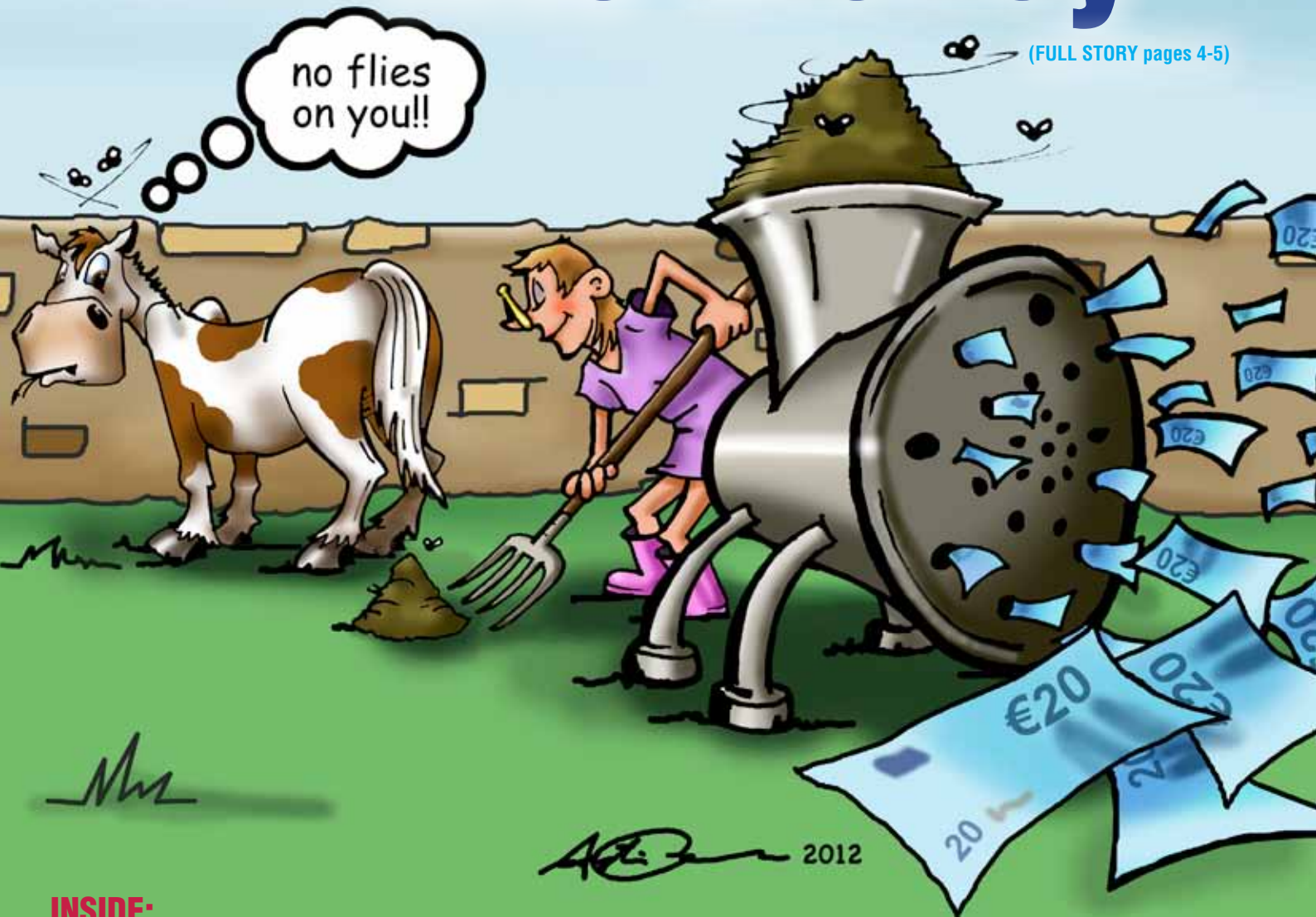
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There are Enterprising  
Unemployed People  
Who Know.....

## How to Turn Muck into Money

(FULL STORY pages 4-5)



### INSIDE:

Asylum Seekers' Rare Victory | Ballyfermot's Snails get People Talking | Union says Enlarge the Programme | Local Govt Reform's promise for communities | Pavee Point Complains to Minister Hogan | Incredible Years in Galway... Reports from Longford, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Cork, Waterford, Ballyhoura...

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## Turning muck into money, saving the Shannon and being glad of the rain - Breakthrough ideas emerging



**O**ur front cover highlights a story by reporter Robert McNamara on breakthrough ideas from unemployed people.

One envisages turning horse manure into heat-emitting pellets for which there is a market. Another idea is to drill for water in house-holders' back gardens while yet another seeks to capture rainwater for use by households. In other words, there are unemployed people with ideas that can literally change Ireland.

This talent is being nurtured nationwide through the Local and Community Development Programme and it's creating sustainable jobs.

The findings of the first progress report on the Programme found the

community workers supported 10,000 extra people in 2011 compared to the previous year despite funding cuts. This is remarkable, but cuts in 2013 will eat into companies' ability to change lives. They've said so themselves.

The most visible outcome for 2011 was the number of people supported to set up their own businesses – over 5000 success stories, as first reported in our Summer edition. Meanwhile, 57,000 young people enjoyed community activities of one sort or another through the Programme. Pobal's 114-page LCDP progress report includes much encouraging data on the impact of local and community development work.

Meanwhile, Minister Phil Hogan Hogan's local government reform proposals promise to increase citizen involvement in the future. However,

most people are for now focused on the next round of budget cuts which, if as harsh as talked about on the ground, will have a great impact.

Our hardest-hitting story in this Autumn edition is from Newbridge where work by volunteers, asylum-seekers and the Local Development Company may have saved lives. A national report has vindicated this work. Unless action is taken nationally, Ireland may see another 'Ryan Report' published in the future, this time relating to child abuse and neglect nationally among asylum-seekers being accommodated by the State.

The highlighting of this issue by the brave people we've interviewed shows it doesn't have to go that far. Let's hope not.

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**Postal address:** 'Changing Ireland', c/o Community Enterprise Centre, Moyross, Limerick.

**Office base:** Unit 3, Sarsfield Gardens Business Centre, Sarsfield Gardens, Moyross, Limerick.

**Tel Editor:** 061-458011.

**Tel Administrator and Journalist:** 061-458090.

**Fax:** 061-325300.

**E-mail:** [editor@changingireland.ie](mailto:editor@changingireland.ie),

[journalist@changingireland.ie](mailto:journalist@changingireland.ie)

and [admin@changingireland.ie](mailto:admin@changingireland.ie)

**Website:** [www.changingireland.ie](http://www.changingireland.ie)

**Also check us out on:** Twitter, Youtube, Facebook and Blogger.

### Production:

**Editor:** Allen Meagher

**Journalist:** Robert McNamara

**Administrator (Mon-Wed):** Tim Hourigan

**Editorial Team:** Viv Sadd, Jim O'Brien, Gráinne Nic Dhonnacha, Kay Flanagan, Gearoid Fitzgibbon, Juan Carlos Azzopardi and Allen Meagher.

**Voluntary Board of Directors:** Viv Sadd, Ellen Duffy, Gearoid Fitzgibbon (Chairperson), Breda Lymer, Rabiya Ali, Kay Flanagan and Jim O'Brien.

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**The views expressed in this magazine are those of the author concerned. They do not, by any means, necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the editorial team, the voluntary management board of Changing Ireland Community Media Ltd, or the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.**

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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.





## Turning Muck into Money

Unemployed people in Ballymun with breakthrough ideas



**BY ROBERT MCNAMARA**

Dig a well in your own backyard, turn your horse manure into money and flush the loo as often as you like without worrying

about the cost.

These are an array of concepts that have grown as a result of a programme that supports entrepreneurs in green business start-ups and aims to provide sustainable employment in Ballymun. It's the only of its kind in the country.

The Green Start programme provides office space, business mentoring, financial and marketing advice, management workshops and networking opportunities - as well as access to funding and grants - to unemployed people with ground breaking ideas that are eco-friendly and economically viable.

The programme is run by Ballymun Whitehall Enterprise Centre, a subsidiary of the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership. 'Changing Ireland' traveled to the Ballymun Enterprise Centre to hear the unique ideas of four of the entrepreneurs and how they can help communities and possibly provide sustainable employment.

**Tina Reid came to Green Start after 10 years in sales.** After her job was made redundant she decided to combine a hobby of hers, horse-riding, with a business idea - turning muck into money.



"My idea is to recycle and re-use horse manure, heat treat it to make it a safe product to be re-used as animal bedding and also as a fuel. It's based around sustainability", said Tina.

Tina has taken an age old idea and developed it for the Irish market

"We have this under-utilised resource in Ireland of waste stable bedding and it could be re-used instead of going to a landfill. It can cut down the cost for a stable yard from an economic and environmental point of view.

"My customer would be my supplier so the relationship would be a continuum. It's a product and an idea that can be exported in the future. It's not new in that the Indians have done it for years, using cow pats to cook. I'm basically taking an idea that is already there and developing it in the modern world."

In April, Tina's idea won first prize of €2000 in the Mason Hayes & Curran 2012 Green Business Plan Competition.



*Tina Reid*

**Damien Howard had been out of the work-place for a couple of years** due to caring for a family member. During this time he developed a new business idea which involves geo-thermal and well-drilling for water in an urban environment - allowing access to previously inaccessible areas in cities to drill private wells.

"What's innovative about the idea is that previously the equipment would be very large and it would only be done in rural

areas. I have sourced and developed a product that will get in through properties or side passages into rear gardens", said Damien.

"It lowers the cost of installations for water and geo-thermal", he added.



*Damien Howard*

**Paul Judge and Alan Anderson were carpenters for 30 years until the downturn forced them out of work.** They have developed a combined system which involves using both rain water harvesting and grey water recycling.

"What we're looking to do is use the water twice, so once harvested it can then be re-used for showers, wash basins and then used again for flushing toilets. It will reduce the amount of water we use by 80 percent", says Paul.

Paul and Alan's idea comes as Dublin city Council plan to take three percent of the River Shannon's water to service the water needs of the capital at a cost of nearly €500 million.

Paul believes that money can be put to better use by using their idea and installing micro systems in domestic homes as an alternative to piping water from the Shannon.

"It would be nearly as cheap to install rain water harvesting systems in houses and

you would have a lot more water at less cost. It makes a lot more sense than shipping tonnes of water across the country just to waste it." he said.

"It costs five euro per cubic metre to produce water and get rid of it and that is just an unsustainable amount of money",



*Paul Judge*



*Alan Anderson*

he added.

Alan thinks the idea is ahead of its time but people will soon come around when they are hit in the wallet with water charges.

"Up to now people didn't have to because they didn't have to pay for it but I guess the mindset has been changed. What

we're trying to get into peoples heads is to think of reusing water in households," he said.

All the participants have now completed the programme and are in the set-up stage. They are confident that their businesses can provide employment as well as benefits for the micro-enterprise sector should they succeed.

Tina hopes to be ready to expand in the near future.

"I hope go into the export markets and employ maybe 20 people, have a brand that is recognized throughout the country and my own fleet of vans."

Damien hopes to have a national presence and a team of people "producing the goods at a reasonable price with very high customer ratings and service".

Paul and Alan are hoping to employ two people on a full time basis.

*Photos by Robert McNamara*

## ***Allowing Green to Grow - How the Green Start Programme Works***

### **ROBERT MCNAMARA REPORTS**

The idea for the Green Start programme is to allow innovative businesses to grow into the set-up stage by providing office space and resources.

"The businesses themselves have free access to this programme. They were selected through an interview process based on their skills and experience and where they actually wanted to go using the Green Start programme - so they wouldn't have to pay for anything", said Fiona Descoteaux, Economic Development Manager at Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership.

"We looked at the innovative ideas that they came up with and also at the motivation behind the individuals. The programme essentially helps them with their business plan and gives them support around an investor-ready pitch", she added.

The participants also have the added bonus of working alongside like-minded individuals.

"The support network when you are going through the start up is key. When

you're looking at your markets, getting your target group right, looking for potential suppliers and customers. The network allows everyone to stay confident and motivated."

The Green Start programme is one of a kind within Ireland and operates under Goal 3 of the Local Community and Development Programme. Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership identified a gap in the market for this type of initiative after the Greenway - a Cleantech cluster organisation in Dublin - was founded in 2010.

"The Greenway is such an important initiative for Ireland", says Fiona. "It's based in Ballymun and we thought why not aid the Green Start programme through the Greenway and get green entrepreneurs here in Ballymun", she said.

Funding for the programme was provided by Pobal with additional funding from Dublin City Enterprise Board and Dublin City University. Resources were provided by Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.

The Ballymun Enterprise Centre

will continue to provide support to the entrepreneurs following the completion of the programme.



*Fiona Descoteaux, Economic Development Manager at BWAP*

## Local Govt Reform: Promises Communities a Stronger Voice

### Community Workers Welcome Report's "New Focus" - While Media Commentators Express Dismay

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan, announced his proposals for local government reform on October 16th.

The 218 report titled 'Putting People First' states that, "Local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level - leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably."

The Community Workers' Co-operative has initially welcomed 'Putting People First' as it "provides an opportunity for a new focus on community development and the marginalised communities and minority groups it serves."

The CWC announced itself "in favour of local government reform that strengthens local and participatory democracy – but not at the expense of civil society or an independent community sector that is free to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality"

"The CWC looks forward to contributing to the discussions and developments which are essential to ensure that 'Putting People First' delivers with the full participation and empowerment of local communities," read the CWC statement.

It said that realising the potential and Putting People First required:

- Independent community development and participation initiatives;
- Recognition that a particular focus is needed on marginalised communities and minority groups;
- Putting tackling poverty, exclusion and

inequality at the core of any implementation strategy;

- Recognition that the local structures, initiatives and programmes already in place are there because general initiatives did not target exclusion;
- Recognition that representational democracy at local level needs to be balanced by participation by the groups and communities it does not reflect.

The Community Workers Co-op held ten regional meetings over recent months to gauge views on alignment.

Minister Hogan said his proposals will "improve... citizen engagement". The report details some participative democracy approaches that can be considered including petition rights, US-style town hall debates, a greater say for citizens in how local authority funds are spent (participatory budgeting) and a vote on big issues (plebiscites).

The report views as mutually beneficial the "development of strengthened relationships between local community groups, local development bodies and local authorities."

In the future, through new Socio Economic Committees, the local authorities will have a greater role in the planning and oversight of programmes such as the LCDP.

It argued that the "enhanced alignment" between Local Development Companies and local government could lead to more citizen engagement and the adoption of participative democracy approaches.

However, not everyone is confident.

A Fianna Fail spokesperson said 'Putting People First' would "further reduce the connection between the citizen

and government" while environment correspondent Frank McDonald said the plans "do little to change the current balance of power."

The Irish Times took the line that "Central Government now holds all the cards", a view echoed by political scientist Dr Aodh Quinlivan writing in the 'Irish Examiner': "It seems like a hollow gesture to make 'Putting People First' the title of your reform plan when, in reality, your aim is to do the exact opposite."

The report acknowledged that Minister Hogan's proposals raised "fundamental questions in relation to the respective advantages and disadvantages of representative and participative democracy" and accepted that decision-making power would ultimately rest with the local authority and its elected councillors.

As we went to press, the CWC held a national meeting in Dublin and the University of Limerick prepared to host a one-day seminar to discuss the proposals.

**'Changing Ireland' would like to hear your views.**

**T: 061-458011.**

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



### What's it all About?

**"Putting People First' asserts that, Local government will have a central role in the oversight and planning of local and community development programmes."**

"The role of local development companies in programme implementation, using the 'bottom-up' approach will be retained given that Local Development Companies have considerable expertise and a proven track record in delivery of services for their communities."

It sees the bottom-up approach as being

when "local actors participate in decision-making regarding the policies for their area and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area."

As the mainstream media focused on the closure of town councils across the State under the plan, some of the finer details were glossed over.

**Key recommendations include:**

- a Socio-Economic Committee in each city/county council local authority area for planning and oversight of local and community development programmes.
- an inter-departmental group to secure a 'whole-of-government approach';

- a national policy to establish a framework for a cross-government approach to local and community development at local level, and a common approach to budgets, costs and targeting of resources;
- a 5-year City/County Local and Community Plan forming a component of the overall City/County Development Plan;
- Planning and delivery for local and community development programmes aligned with city/county boundaries as far as possible."



# A Long Time Coming

## ALLEN MEAGHER REPORTS

For the past year, Minister Hogan and his officials have worked on plans to reform local government structures in Ireland.

He spoke during the summer of measures that would see local authorities elevated to become the “leader of economic, social and community development locally.”

Does this mean community workers will become local authority employees? Not quite.

Minister Hogan sees a continuing role for the stand-alone Local and Community Development Programme which is funded by his Department and administered largely by Pobal.

Prior to publishing ‘Putting People First’ he spoke of “maintaining the expertise of local actors in the delivery of frontline services.”

“This is a particularly important element of my reform agenda. Greater alignment between the sectors is primarily about giving the citizen a better deal. It is about Government providing better services for our communities,” he said, adding that it would also be more cost effective and efficient.

The Minister is proposing, as he put it, “the most fundamental reorganisation of local government structures since the present system was put in place in the 1800s.”

## BACKGROUND

Some stakeholders – the Community Workers Co-op to name one – have been suspicious of any Government moves that might quieten the cough of community workers. State funding for local groups to employ community development workers in poor areas was first seen in the late 1980s as a great idea.

Over the years that followed, the reality of funding people to challenge the State over long-standing poverty blackspots discomforted

the previous Government. It moved to develop a “one-stop shop” for community development and community services in general.

Gradually, faith in the previous Government’s determination to tackle social exclusion was undermined by their pulling of funding for policy workers, their castration of the Equality Agency and the shut-down of the Combat Poverty Agency. The latter had begun to drift a little, but used its €5m budget to effectively hold up a powerful torch to highlight dirt in the dark corners of our unequal society.

Some years on, the interim report of a steering group set up by Minister Hogan stated it was important to retain a community-led, bottom-up approach and to ensure communities and those marginalised have an “opportunity to influence and shape local decisions.” The steering group said that alignment must “recognise the strength, experience and democratic legitimacy of local government”.

Anastasia Crickley - Head of the Department of Applied Social Studies at NUIM told ‘Changing Ireland’ reporter Robert McNamara recently that she was uncomfortable with this: “The picture that’s unfolding is one of local authorities being the centre-piece of the operation, and possibly, the next step could be competitiveness and tendering.”

Phil Hogan had had his plans for a long time, as first expressed in Fine Gael’s policy document ‘Power to the People’ (Ref: interview with ‘Changing Ireland’, Spring 2011).

Now, his proposals have been signed off by Cabinet and published.

The next step is implementation.



Anastasia Crickley



Home is a special place for most of us. We want to continue to live in our own homes as we grow older.

Older & Bolder’s concern is that vital supports – such as home helps, respite care and day care – are being reduced without any proper thought to the real consequences for peoples’ safety and wellbeing in their own homes.

Community and Voluntary groups, along with individuals, are acting through our campaign to resist the distressing cuts to vital home and community care services.

Contact Older & Bolder to request a campaign pack and find out how you can help to protect the supports that allow us to grow old at home.

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# Social Enterprise a Big Employer in Community

## Ballyhoura's 250 Job Social Enterprise One of the Biggest

**- Volunteer-Run Company as Good as Having a Local Factory**

**INTERVIEW: R. MCNAMARA.**

**FURTHER REPORTING: A. MEAGHER**

Harsh cuts to future funding levels for home-care support are almost certain despite the fact that it is arguably less costly to care for people in their homes than in institutions and home-care is something most people prefer.

One company with vast experience in the area is Rural Community Care Network Ltd. Colette Ryan is the general manager:

"We provide care in the community for up to 500 clients and we currently have 250 people working for us, almost all carers," said Colette.

The social enterprise – one of the largest in the country – provides a service in counties Tipperary, Cork and Limerick. It's based, ironically, in a town called Hospital.

Ballyhoura Development Ltd, which receives funding from the LCDP, helped found the company 13 years ago and continues to provide support.

For instance, Ballyhoura provided Colette with mentoring when she took up her post six years ago.

"It got was invaluable," she said. "I came from the commercial sector and I couldn't have done it without the mentoring, it was really important."



*Home care provision is an excellent example of the kind of work social enterprises are geared towards*

"We provide a homecare package that allows people to stay at home. It could include a morning call and an evening call and that allows somebody, for a very small amount of money, to stay in their own home," said Colette.

Only 5% of people in Ireland aged over-65 live in residential care, according to Age & Opportunity. Most people, even older people, imagine the figure is much higher.

"We might come in in the morning with their family, use a hoist and come back in the evening to help," continued Colette. "Today, it's very commercialised and it's the 'grey market' so it's very privatised as well. Groups like ourselves are in a vulnerable position because you have multinationals and franchises coming in undercutting us."

Two years ago, Friends of the Elderly recorded a rise in complaints of elder abuse involving private, profit-making home care companies. People also complained that staff appeared to be untrained and had poor language skills.

"We train our staff to Fetac Level 5, they are Garda vetted and they are from the community. Most are women; we employ about 5 males."

"RCCN is run by a voluntary board of ten members. We are of the community and coming from the community. Our work keeps people at home and provides local employment. We're currently restructuring the company to ensure we remain competitive."

"It's like having a factory in the area, we are a big employer and a lot of our staff are the main bread winners in their family now."

Many women had acted as carers before, but without being trained or paid. Now, 250 people – many of whom left school early – have been trained up over three years through €40,000 that came through the Dormant Accounts Fund. It trained people to Fetac level 5 which is the Leaving Cert equivalent

### Take Six!

Ballyhoura Development Ltd supports 100 social enterprises, the following being examples:

- The Donkey Sanctuary, Liscarroll.
- Friars Gate Theatre, Kilmallock.
- Sli Eile caterers.
- Liscarroll Community Crèche.
- Mobile IT (providing computer services to the community).
- The Animal Welfare and Rescue Centre, Kilfinane.

and they're caring for hundreds of vulnerable people across three counties.

"If the government's strategy is on keeping care in the community, it's essential that the cuts aren't drastic," added Colette.

In recent years, RCCN received support from an EU pilot programme aimed at identifying new job sources for rural areas.

Of the 23 or so companies providing home-care services across the ROI, most are capitalist with less than a half-dozen being community-based, social enterprises.

Elsewhere, Clarecare – also a social enterprise – employs 400 homehelps on a part-time basis. The company has a contract with the HSE.

Its director Fiacre Hensey hit out at a public meeting in Ennis in September at "horrible" Government plans to cut the level of funding for home-help hours for vulnerable people.

He said Clarecare can keep seven to 10 people at home "for the same cost as one person in residential care" and he was "shocked" at cutbacks in this area.



*Colette Ryan*

## Dunhill's Economic Self-Reliance

Dunhill Eco Park in Co. Waterford has been creating jobs since the last recession and aims to have 316 people in work by 2016. They're demonstrating that valuable, local jobs could be created nationwide through community and social enterprise.

Their blueprint is called the Programme for Economic Self-Reliance and, as Senan Cooke, who helped found Dunhill Eco Park in 1992, told RTE recently, "Every rural community could create 10-20 jobs."

He called for more Government support, saying there should be field workers appointed to every community.

Audrey Hassett, who helped found Tastefully Yours and employs 30 people, said, "There were no jobs out there so we created our own." She urged people: "Go talk to your enterprise board."



# **“Madness” for Govt not to Engage Sector**

## **– Minister Sherlock on Social Enterprise Potential**

### **ROBERT MCNAMARA REPORTS**

Sean Sherlock, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation believes it would be “madness of the Government not to engage the Social Enterprise Sector.”

The sector’s potential to create jobs and contribute to Ireland’s economy was highlighted at a community-led conference opened by the Minister at Dunhill Eco Park, Co. Waterford, earlier this year.

The State’s enterprise development think-tank Forfás is currently exploring the potential for job creation through social enterprise.

A model social enterprise is This Is Up (TIU) and founder Karen Frampton told the conference her business was about matching employers to unemployed people who come to her for career development.

Karen set up the TIU after she returned home after a period abroad and grew frustrated with Ireland’s recruitment system. She saw a niche in the market for a model that re-engages skilled unemployed people with

the work environment “and I went for it.”

Within six months of opening, 13% of her pilot project participants signed off social welfare, while 9% got permanent jobs.

“The figures are even higher now”, says Karen. “We bring employers, professionals and job-seekers together.”

Funding for her social enterprise came through Government and private sources.

Across the EU, there are two million social enterprises in Europe, employing 11 million people, which is 6% of the total number of people working in the EU.

Tom Daly from TSA Consultancy drew attention to the establishment last year by the EU Commission of the Social Business Initiative to support the creation and development of social enterprises.

“Recognition for social enterprises at last”, he remarked.

Gerry McKeever of Tosach said that in County Waterford alone there were 200 social enterprise companies ready to launch if given more Government support. He plugged the newly formed Social Enterprise Action

Network and called for Government funding.

The conference was also addressed by Carmel Fox, CEO of Ballyhoura Development - who said that Social Enterprise can work in tandem with the public and private sector - and Emma McEvoy, a senior legal researcher at DCU.

The conference was organised by the Action Pilot Project which is delivered by Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd in conjunction with Waterford County Council.

According to a 2010 report entitled “Adding Value Delivering Change - The

Role of Social Enterprise in National Recovery,” social enterprise has the potential to provide 65,000 Irish jobs and account for 5% of GDP.



*Sean Sherlock*

## **Social Enterprises Mean Much More Than Just Jobs**

### **REPORTING BY ALLEN MEAGHER AND ROBERT MCNAMARA**

Ballyhoura’s support for social enterprise in a rural area straddling the Cork-Limerick border accounts for turnover of €50million among over 120 businesses employing around 1,500 people and providing a wide range of services in local communities.

Not bad going in the midst of recession.

Social enterprises have to make money as a goal but the primary focus is providing a service in the community and Ballyhoura Development is one of the stars among the



*Carmel Fox*

35 rural-based Local Development Companies nationally at doing just that. One of the largest social enterprises in the area is the Rural Community Care Network

(RCCN) which employs 250 people, a mix of part-timers and full-time workers.

“You don’t arrive at that space quickly and you don’t arrive at it without support,” said Carmel Fox, Ballyhoura CEO.

She and the company’s economic development manager Padraig Casey told ‘Changing Ireland’ why Ballyhoura helps start-ups to access multiple levels of support.

This work is supported through the Local and Community Development Programme, among others.

Said Padraig: “For the first time ever communities are raising the issue of - our petrol station is gone, our shop is gone, our pub is about to go. These weren’t issues that were there ten years ago.”

Ballyhoura Development Ltd explores social enterprise potential in two main ways. Firstly, individuals or groups come forward with ideas and, secondly, Ballyhoura looks to match community needs with marketplace solutions.

Padraig said they receive a lot of enquiries from people with small-scale business ideas and not much capital and able to provide those people with valuable support.

And when the company identifies a gap or opening, it puts initiatives in place to support the roll out of a particular service and to support its uptake by communities.

“Social enterprises are usually put in place to respond to a market failure (and) quite a number of them become businesses that grow. Their starting base is often because there isn’t enough population in a rural area to deliver a service commercially,” said Padraig.

Padraig and his colleague believe there is now “a real recognition of the value of social enterprise in Europe” and hope Ireland can capitalise on that interest.

**NOTE: Watch out in our next edition for Carmel’s five keys to unlocking social enterprise potential in your community.**



*Padraig Casey*

# LCDP's First Progress Report

## Nationwide Impact Measured in First Progress Report - 10,000 Extra Citizens Supported, Despite Cuts

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

The first progress report on the Local and Community Development Programme, which is funded to support communities and citizens particularly those experiencing disadvantage, has been published by Pobal.

Covering 2011, it presents an excellent report card in terms of performance outputs last year by workers operating from over 150 offices and centres around the country. Last year, the budget for the Programme was €55.17m. The 'Progress Report 2011' measures output in relation to 90% of that budget (the portion allocated by Pobal to Local Development Companies).

The 53 companies surveyed provided services to over 40,000 people from 18 socially disadvantaged target groups and, at a time when funding to the Programme was reducing, output did increase.

The caseload rose from 30,140 individuals in 2010 to 40,292 individuals supported last year and 45% of citizens supported did not have a Leaving Cert or equivalent education.

The data shows the Programme has succeeded in:

- Promoting access and providing a gateway to education.
- Providing courses directly to a significant number of people.
- Prioritising the long-term unemployed (who now account for 60% of those out of work) and those experiencing the most disadvantage.

Between 2010 and last year, output by companies funded under the Programme

increased substantially. This was partly due to companies focusing in on the four Programme goals and came at a time when demands on services increased due to the recession and despite "significant" cuts.

For example, Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP) recorded an increase over five years of 326% in the number of workshop spaces it provided to people wishing to set up their own businesses.

The number of new business ventures that BAP supported rose by 300%. (Of note, nationally, over 90% of people supported to set up a business availed of the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance).

The Programme nationally supported thousands of local community groups under Programme Goal 4 with 25% of them being new groups. Almost 900 of the groups were successfully supported to have a say in policy and decision-making, mostly locally. The Programme reached over 20,000 people in its effort to "promote active engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes" locally.

In seeking "to increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities" the Programme reached over 57,000 young people.

Most of this work was directed towards providing courses and many of the beneficiaries had left school early. The most popular courses were in IT and Telecommunications (53%).

The report carried warning signs that further cuts will impact on the Programme's capacity to meet communities' needs. Local Development Companies are quoted in the report lamenting the cuts to CE schemes, 21 of which are overseen by LDCs.

Published by Pobal, which oversees the activities of most of the companies in the LCDP on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the 114-page report is recommended reading for anyone seeking a national perspective on the Programme's reach. The data is clearly presented in tandem with case studies from around the country.

Note: There are around 20 other community-focused companies, including for example Women's Aid, Pavee Point and Nascadh CDP, that are directly in receipt of LCDP funding through the Community Section of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Their work will be analysed in a separate report.

It is downloadable from Pobal's website: [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)



### 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.



# SIPTU Hails Programme for Creating Jobs

SIPTU has called on the Government to fund a major expansion of the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) describing it as "the most effective means of tackling unemployment and assisting disadvantaged communities."

The union's community sector organiser, Darragh O'Connor, said: "At a time when our country is facing its worst unemployment crisis in 60 years, Local Development Companies have shown that they can deliver real employment growth and tackle disadvantage, particularly with regard to the long term unemployed."

Referring to the LCDP 2011 Progress Report, recently published by Pobal, Darragh added: "The LCDP offers exceptional value to the taxpayer. The Pobal report indicates that over 4000 local community groups were supported in 2011 in delivering a range of vital intervention services including family support, pre-school support, youth work provision and after school support. In addition the LCDP supported 40,000 individuals, 87% of whom were new to accessing supports from the programme."

SIPTU pointed out that during this period the Programme supported 5,042 people into self-employment and over 1,100 into employment.

The statement drew from Local Development Company feedback quoted in the Pobal report which described the "over-riding challenge" from cuts to funding that impact on frontline services.

The LCDP's budget in 2010, when the Programme was established, was €67.5m and this was reduced to some €55m this year.

Union member, Manus Bree, a Community Development worker with the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership, was quoted by SIPTU. He said, "Nobody can dispute the

LCDP is delivering both in terms of jobs and training but funding for our services has been cut to the bone since 2008."

He said it was obvious that the provision of front line services was becoming unsustainable if further cuts are imposed, especially when public demand for LCDP support rose by 50% for some Local Development Companies over the same period.

"We need is a restoration of funding to tackle the scourge of long-term unemployment and we will be bringing this message directly to our elected representatives in the coming weeks," said Manus.



*Darragh O'Connor  
of SIPTU's  
Community Section.*

## OPINION: Programme not Measuring Life-Changing Work By Juan Carlos Azzopardi

One of the LCDP's primary goals is to improve people's job prospects and help create jobs. It counts for 40% of funding. Community Development project work gets 10% of LCDP funding. However, Community Development initiatives, which are equally important to many people on the margins, are not being properly measured by the Programme. Juan Carlos Azzopardi of Limerick City CDP writes:

***"Despite all the excellent work going on, the Programme seems to be missing the point."***

Is the true impact and effectiveness of the Local Community Development Programme in tackling poverty and social exclusion in disadvantaged communities being captured? I don't think so.

Huge work is being done under the Programme and clear targets are being set and measured under the four Goals, but I believe there's important work being done under the LCDP that's not being given credence and that we're not even trying to measure. Despite all the excellent work going on, the Programme seems to be missing the point.

Access to services, education and increased employment prospects are necessary but, as we saw right throughout the Celtic Tiger, these on their own do not bring about any fundamental

change to communities that are characterised by social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage.

Individual progression does not necessarily correlate to community development and the creation of more vibrant, sustainable, inclusive communities. Equally, the lack of progression on LCDP targets does not mean an absence of positive, tangible outcomes for families, neighbourhoods, schools and the wider community.

For example, unemployment in Moyross, Limerick, fell from over 70% in the 1990's to 25% by 2006. Yet at the time of greatest employment levels ever, we experienced some of the worst instances of anti-social behaviour and criminality. It led to a public outcry. There followed the establishment of Regeneration and the decision to completely knock and rebuild the estate again.

On the other hand, consider one mother who is parenting alone on low income and dealing with a range of issues. She has a couple of boys who are disengaged and disruptive at school and starting to create problems within the area. The Community Development Worker in the area made a connection with this woman last year and built a relationship that led to her taking part in a Strengthening Families course.

The woman has stayed involved with the worker, calls in regularly to the CDP office and has kept links with other parents. But she would not see herself as a client. It has not led

to any referral or to her taking up another service, joining another community group, accessing training or getting a job. Therefore, regarding this person, this year there has been no progress and no outcome under the current programme measurements.

However, in actuality, she's now getting up in the mornings and getting her children out to school. They're not causing grief around the place like before. She gets on better with her neighbours and they help her out now. This work began as a casual connection between a community worker and a resident, but where is the Programme measuring the change in her relationship with her children, her family, the school, her neighbours and the wider community? Nowhere.

There's a layer of work happening underneath the Programme Goals called Community Development work that's not being measured properly. It's not intangible work. You can measure it, but we're not being asked to. If we were, I believe we could double the Programme's recorded impact.

The LCDP would be strengthened if this work was acknowledged and funding accordingly. The review by the Centre for Effective Services is an opportunity to do this and give Minister Phil Hogan the means necessary to widen the emphasis and improve the programme.





## Calmer Kids and Happier Parents

Incredible Years was delivered in Ballymun, Dublin, by the Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and research by NUIG's Dr. Sinead McGilloway found that after parents there completed the Basic Parent Programme:

- Children had fewer temper tantrums.
- Children were less likely to be hyperactive.
- Children were more likely to carry out tasks or obey instructions when asked.

- Parents were less critical and needed fewer and less reactive discipline strategies.
- Parents had a more positive outlook on life and were more confident.

CAFTA and Ballymun and Whitehall Area Partnership which supported the local roll-out of Incredible Years are funded through the Local and Community Development Programme, as is Galway City Partnership.

*More info: [www.youngballymun.org](http://www.youngballymun.org)*



*Photo courtesy of [www.youngballymun.org](http://www.youngballymun.org)*

## Pre-School Programme Should Go National

### **Galway City Partnership's successful pilot makes the case**

**ROBERT MCNAMARA REPORTS**

**Galway City Partnership (GCP) has been lauded in a new report by NUI Galway which makes recommendations to roll out the Incredible Years Programme (IYP) for pre-school pupils nationally.**

The Partnership is the "focal organization" for Incredible Years in Galway and since 2008 has been helping children in the city to better express themselves, solve problems and make decisions.

In spite of its success, many teachers around Ireland are only now beginning to hear about the low-cost programme.

Incredible Years was implemented in six pre-schools in Galway city, through joint work by GCP and the Society St Vincent de Paul. The programme was developed by US-based academic Carolyn Webster-Stratton and it fosters the social skills of children, aged between three and five, through collaborative-style programmes for children, parents and teachers.

Dr. Seamus Morrissey of the GCP was a key player in bringing Incredible Years to Galway.

"The community development-based approach along with the flexible and innovative nature of Galway City Partnership helped the roll out of the

programme in the city," he said.

Over 400 children from the Mervue, Ballybane, Westside and Knocknacarra areas of Galway have been involved in the programme.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

The approach focuses on all the things that children get right – the positives – in the classroom and at home, while teaching parents how to support children's positive behaviour, their problem solving and their social skills.

The Programme also teaches children how to cope with their own feelings and interactions with the help of three giant puppets, Molly, Wally and Dina Dinosaur.

The research on the Programme carried out by NUI Galway, entitled 'Making a Difference', found the children developed better social skills and had less behavioural problems. The report, available through GCP's homepage, provides the figures: [www.gcp.ie](http://www.gcp.ie).

Abroad, a 2009 study in Wales identified a 46% drop in anti-social behaviour among participants in the programme.

### **TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE**

A teacher who was interviewed as part of the research said:

"We've been having more and more really good days. The children have been saying things like, 'You should take a jelly too teacher, you were very good today'. It helps me personally feel like I can cope with anything now."

The report has called for programmes

such as the Incredible Years to be implemented throughout Ireland's pre-school sector.

"The implementation of evidence-based programmes within local and national policy will provide far greater levels of predictable outcomes for individuals, communities and funders", the report states.

It argues that evidence-based programmes must be prioritised within national funding and policy.

Dr. Seamus echoed this sentiment, "The pre-school programme, in particular, meets national guidelines and it should be... rolled out across all pre-schools."

### **MINISTER FITZGERALD'S VIEW**

**Frances Fitzgerald, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, said:** "Incredible Years is one of a number of pilot programmes being supported by the DCYA and is subject to ongoing evaluation."

She hosted the first meeting of an expert advisory group established to advise on preparation of Ireland's first ever Early Years Strategy.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VIEW**

Dr. Seamus said the programme was initiated in Galway as part of a need to address early school leaving in the city.

"The need was identified within the local communities and community pre-schools. GCP decided to fill this need with an evidence-based programme which claimed to meet this need and this evaluation has shown it has done just this."

**Fiona O'Grady, programme manager**



of **Incredible Years at the PAUL Partnership in Limerick** believes the programme shows tangible results “Anecdotal evidence from schools themselves indicates that it improves the culture and the whole environment in the school, not just within the classroom but in the playground as well.”

### **WORTH €100 PER CHILD**

**Dr Sinead McGilloway of the NUI Galway** says the programme would not be expensive to implement.

“It costs €2,000 per teacher, the average class size is about 20 so your looking at a once-off cost of about €100 per child. That’s somewhere between 1 and 2 percent of the total annual expenditure per child according to 2006 figures so it’s a tiny percentage. It’s not something that should cost the earth,” argued Sinead.

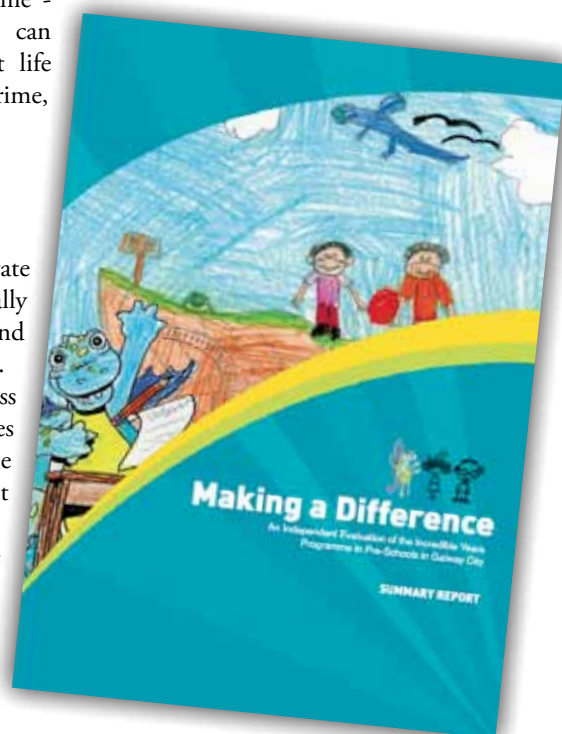
A conference in Ireland was told in 2009 about a US study which found that – and

any teacher here will tell you the same – high-quality preschool programmes can reduce the likelihood in later adult life of someone getting involved in crime, suffering poverty and taking drugs.

### **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAMME**

Strengthening Families is a separate programme – also internationally recognised – that supports children and parents and takes a different approach. It is operating in various places across the country with support from agencies including the HSE, RAPID and the Local and Community Development Programme.

For instance, in Dublin 12 the programme is supported by Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership while in Co. Louth it’s run through interagency co-operation involving Louth Leader Partnership.



## **Volunteers Asked to Run 4th Job-Seekers' Centre - Good News Follow-Up**

A group that has already opened three job-seekers' centres in Co. Cork has announced they are ready to do the same in Macroom, an unemployment blackspot, REPORTS ROBERT MCNAMARA.

As reported in our summer edition, West Cork Development Partnership (WCDDP) are receiving fantastic volunteer support which is allowing them – in spite of cuts to funding – to deliver services that are badly needed in the county.

The latest venture – a job-seekers' centre in Macroom – will seek to assist some of the 1,798 people (end of July figures) on the town's live-register.

“There’s definitely a need for it”, said local councilor, Aindrias Moynihan. “You’d have to go as far as Killarney or maybe Ballincollig for familiar services.”

There are no Local Employment Services Offices or Jobs Clubs in the county.

The three volunteer-powered centres already operating are in Bandon, Kinsale and Clonakilty and Fergal Conlon, Programme Manager at the WCDDP said the onus is now on communities “to provide for themselves.”

“In these difficult financial times we cannot be confident of getting Government funding even with a strong case”, he added.

WCDDP do not currently have a budget for rent and Fergal is asking landlords to consider offering up unused premises in the town.

For more info, contact: Fergal Conlon of WCDDP at 027 55169 or fergal@wcddp.ie



*A Sinn Fein protest in Macroom, Co. Cork, in 2010 outside then Minister Batt O’Keefe’s office. Up to now, Macroom has lacked a dedicated office to welcome in unemployed people and provide support*



# Community Development And Art

## Community Drawn into Crafting Snails with Students *Creative locals get arty in Ballyfermot*

BY ROBERT MCNAMARA

*"Each week they would sit together making snails and talking about themselves... to create an installation consisting of thousands of origami snails."*

**A project organised by the Ballyfermot Partnership has brought locals and artists from a nearby college together to produce striking contemporary art.**

Sharing Space Public Art concluded in an exhibition of the works produced in a collaborative project between residents and students.

"I used to get off the bus and go straight to college and leave the college and get straight back on the bus", said Dominic Thorpe, a student attending Ballyfermot College of Further Education who developed the idea.

"I never in an entire year engaged with the locality. I thought I could address this in some small way to the benefit of the locality and college", said Dominic, originally from Newbridge Co. Kildare.

**Vicky Linnane originally from Dublin but now living in Co. Kildare is also a student at the college.**

"I used to just walk from one part of the college to the other. Although the college is located in the heart of the village it didn't feel like that. It was very detached from the community. Students lived in their own little bubble and similarly the community got on with their day, oblivious to the college", said Vicky.

The project provided a way for the students to access the local community and for the local residents to access the institution on their doorstep.

"As soon as we sat down to introduce ourselves at the "shared space" we couldn't stop the flow in conversation", said Vicky.

"We had lots of questions and the locals had in return. It was such a joy to hear their stories told in such a raw way. Everyone was honest in their approach and I feel this is why projects like this can work out to be more impressionable than a year in a classroom", she added.

**Amanda O'Shea is a Ballyfermot resident who was heavily involved in**

**Sharing Space.**

"The students were lovely, we still keep in contact and they still come to the centre for their dinner. It was nice to meet new people that I wouldn't usually meet. They involved us in all the art, we even went to the college for their opening night," she said.

Amanda was particularly happy with photography skills she learned while producing the art:

"It was great to see my own work at the exhibition, we got them as a present at the end, a smaller version, framed. I took a picture of a woman at the college and everyone said it was one of the best pictures. I never used a camera in my life, I was chuffed."

Dominic added, "It is the first time that residents from the locality engaged with the art department of the college in this way. Everybody had the potential to learn from each other."

**The Matt Talbot Centre and the Japanese Cultural Society offered assistance.**

"They took a leap of faith by trusting that we could deliver this project", Dominic said. "They essentially enabled the project by supporting participants to take part. Students worked with a lady from the Japanese Cultural Society to create an installation consisting of thousands of origami snails. Each week they would sit together making snails and talking about themselves, their lives, experiences and where they came from. For me, the resulting installation is a record of this coming together", he added.

**Vicky feels that the snails were symbolic of the project.**

"The snail was selected as a common everyday creature in both Japan and Ireland. Everyone was very determined to complete as many snails as possible. My favourite was the large white snails that had projections of



old Ballyfermot images. By combining the modern multi cultured Ballyfermot with the old community made for a simple and effected piece."

Dominic believes the project changed many peoples attitude towards fine art.

"It is my experience that people can feel like contemporary art is not for them. This was not the case here", said Dominic.

Dominic, Vicky and Amanda hope to see the project replicated in the future.

Check out the artwork here:  
[www.sharingspacepublicart.com](http://www.sharingspacepublicart.com)



*Amanda O'Shea & Dominic Thorpe.  
Photography by Joseph Carr.*



## ***Pavee Seeks Apology Over “Discrimination” - While Minister Hogan “Resents” Racist Tag***



Phil Hogan, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government has clashed with one of the bodies his department funds to promote equality and challenge discrimination.

Minister Hogan first faced down former Community minister Eamon O’Cui’s claims that he was “racist” and had engaged in “an abuse of power”.

He said he “resented” the accusations: “This has nothing

to do with Travellers at all, this is to do with anti-social behaviour.”

Later the same day, Minister Hogan was criticised by Pavee Point, which operates under the Local and Community Development Programme.

On TV3, Pavee Point director Martin Collins called for an apology and outlined actions the Minister could take “to restore Traveller confidence in the political system”. He said the issue came hot on the heels of recent unwelcome comments from a judge in the West.

As the Minister saw it, he had engaged in valid communications in response to an appeal from members of his constituency and was wholly within his rights to do so.

The issue arose over a letter Minister Hogan posted out opposing the housing of a family – which he identified in

Co. Kilkenny.

The letter from the Minister’s constituency office to local residents read: “Just a note to let you know that the McCarthy family will not be allocated the house in your area. Councillor Billy Ireland and I are glad to be of assistance in this matter.”

As events transpired, the local authority went ahead and allocated the house to the Carthy family (not “McCarthy”).

Patrick Carthy described the Minister’s intervention as “discriminating” and said he should apologise.

The tenant was a child at the time when anti-social behavior occurred and KCLR 96fm presenter Sue Nunn put it to the Minister: “He can’t be held responsible for his parents’ behaviour. That’s not legal.”

The Minister replied that local residents felt the “historic” anti-social behaviour of the

extended Carthy family in the 1990s was an issue and he was obliged to respond.

The local radio presenter put it to him that it was discrimination. Minister Hogan disagreed, saying that local residents “have rights as well.”

Opposition party spokespeople, including Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin, termed it discrimination based on the fact that the family are Travellers, which echoed Pavee Point’s view.

Its statement read, “All politicians and in particular a Minister for the Environment who is responsible for housing and accommodation, including for Travellers, need to show leadership and not pander to prejudice against the Traveller community.”

The debacle prompted much debate in the mainstream media and on social media networks.

## ***The Silence of the Lambs*** ***Martin Collins asks why Sector so mute***

INTERVIEW BY ALLEN MEAGHER

The LCDP works with Travellers as one of the Programme’s 18 marginalised target groups.

The companies carry out their work quietly and tend to avoid engaging in media debates, never mind protests.

So while Minister Hogan expressed himself clearly in relation to his involvement in the allocation of a house to a tenant in Kilkenny, Local Development Companies funded by the Programme were silent on the matter, apart from Pavee Point.

“There’s a history of LCDP projects being very quiet on a range of issues so it’s not unusual,” said Pavee’s Martin Collins. “Generally speaking, they are very mute.”

“However, when it comes to Traveller issues, my own instinct is that there’s something more fundamental going on. I think the discrimination is deeply rooted.

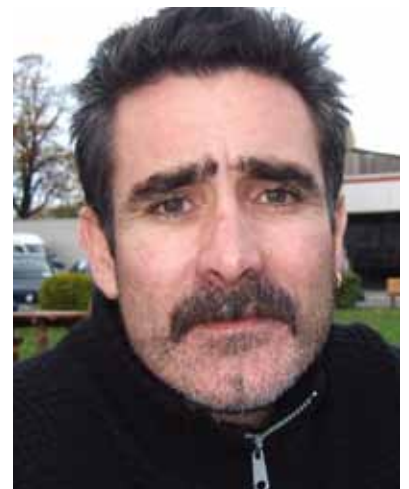
“I don’t think it’s that they’re afraid of losing funding (for speaking out). I think it has to do with how Travellers are generally perceived. Discrimination against Travellers is the last bastion of racism in Ireland. It’s ongoing pervasive, deep-rooted racism – it’s almost normalised and nobody blinks an eye when Travellers’

rights are abused. It’s the opposite to when the Irish are stereotyped as drunkards internationally. Then there’s an outcry.

“It’s disappointing and it cuts across the Community and Voluntary Sector. There were two high profile incidents recently and apart from Traveller groups making a stance, very few organisations have spoken out. There’s very little solidarity from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

“Not one of the 51 Local Development Companies have been in touch with Pavee, even on the quiet. The LCDP is about principles of fairness and equality, but it has to be practically expressed, to be more than mere rhetoric. It’s not enough to just have a commitment to equality written into your mission statement,” he said.

He pointed out that the right to protest and to express dissent was “sacrosanct.”



*Martin Collins,  
Director of Pavee Point*

## Welly Good Dubliner Joins ILDN!

The Irish Local Development Network has appointed a new Policy and Communications Officer – Sinéad Murphy, who started in July.

Sinéad's background is in project development and co-ordination for St. Michael's Estate / St. Teresa's Gardens Regeneration Boards and as co-ordinator of the Write to Read Literacy Project at St. Patrick's Teacher Training College.

Sinéad's first priorities included organising the LEADER Village at the National Ploughing Championship, as well as: Developing a cohesive response to the upcoming Alignment report;

Organising a conference on CLLD in early 2013 to coincide with Ireland's EU Presidency; Developing ILDN's website, using social media and production of internal and external newsletters.

Researching and profiling the work of LDCs.

She also helped produce the Farmers Journal – 'Follow the Leader Supplement' – which had a print-run of over 100,000 copies.

Although a Dub, Sinéad already owned a pair of wellies!



Sinead Murphy

## Profiling the Work of Local Development Companies Nationally

The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) is conducting research to profile the work of Local Development Companies nationally.

The Network wants to capture the full range of what LDCs are doing, who they work with and what makes them different.

Sinéad Murphy, the ILDN's new policy and communications officer, said the research - to be conducted annually - was "crucial" as it would increase the public's and policy-makers' understanding of LDC work.

The aim is to capture not just activity under the LCDP and the Rural Development Programme but also all other programmes and services delivered by the 51 companies.

Survey-results should be published in the Autumn.



Follow the LEADER: Mairead Lavery, Minister Phil Hogan, Marian Vickers

## LEADER Ploughs Ahead

Among the many marquees at this year's National Ploughing Championship, outside New Ross, Co. Wexford, was one called

the LEADER Village that was organised by the Irish Local Development Network and Wexford Local Development.

The marquee housed 85 stalls featuring products from companies that received LEADER funding – everything from hot food and baked goods to hand-crafted children's clothing, jewellery and hurley makers.

Over 100,000 copies of a publication called 'Follow The Leader' were published to coincide with the Ploughing.

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan, was the first to get his hands on a copy. He's pictured here with Mairead Lavery of the 'Farmers' Journal' and Marian Vickers, the ILDN's vice-chairperson.

Since 2009, €87m from the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme has been used to support over 3,320 local enterprises and to create 1,246 full-time jobs in rural communities.

As Marian remarked: "When rural communities are listened to and given the correct supports – they have the innovative ideas and hard work ethic to create jobs and develop their communities."



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# Equality, Jobbridge & Wedding Bells

## Equality Head takes our Story to Brussels

**- Rachel Mullen, ERA, Cites Work as “Model of Good Practice”**

Rachel Mullen, the head of the Equality and Rights Alliance, took one of our stories to Brussels earlier this year and passed on tips from ‘Changing Ireland’ to European NGOs wishing to tackle hate crime online.



*Rachel Mullen.*

Her presentation, at an international seminar organised by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Justice, covered investigative work carried out by ‘Changing Ireland’ that led to a landmark court case over discrimination in October 2011.

The case of the DPP v Patrick Kissane marked the first ever prosecution for online hate speech in Ireland.

While the prosecution did not result in a conviction, Rachel viewed the work that led to the court case as “a model of good practice for others.”

She showcased it as an example of community groups working together and taking collective action on a human rights issue. The collaboration included work by a dozen NGOs, members of the public, pro-active local Gardai, the Garda anti-discrimination unit based in Dublin and this magazine.

As well as leading to a court case, Rachel identified other positive outcomes:

- The investigation identified up to eight people associated with anti-Traveller hate sites that had garnered close to 10,000 “fans”.
- The sites were shut down through concerted action.
- A Traveller woman who spoke as a witness in court “felt empowered to have taken a proactive role in the prosecution.”

An NGO from Lithuania indicated it may publish the case-study in a written report.



## New Support Helps ‘Changing Ireland’

Changing Ireland Community Media Ltd was successful this year in applying for various strands of support to develop in-house management expertise and to build on the company’s potential to become a social enterprise proper.

Training worth over €4000 has been provided free gratis through the PAUL Partnership, Limerick City Enterprise Board, the University of Ulster, Podiem Ltd based in Belfast and Limerick Regeneration.

Over a dozen other organisations have also received this support, key elements of which will continue into Spring 2013.



*Conor Hogan.*

up an intern post with ‘Changing Ireland’ through the Jobbridge Programme.

On completion of his six month work-placement, Conor was offered a full-time job as a Senior Editor with GradIreland. Shortly beforehand, through his work here, Conor was also offered a one-year volunteer opportunity in Finland via the European Volunteer Service.

Conor took up the job offer.

An independent survey published in October reported that 52% of Jobbridge interns who completed their placements secured jobs.

It has been ‘Changing Ireland’s experience of Jobbridge that people who put themselves forward to participate in the scheme greatly increase the likelihood of being called for job interviews. It can also help develop their skill-base, confidence and career prospects.

Conor penned an opinion piece for Politico.ie on the scheme’s merits and in particular its demerits shortly before landing the job with GradIreland.

‘Changing Ireland’ is grateful to Conor for the work he did here and we wish him well in his career.



## Wedding Bells



*Our congratulations! Jenny Tellstrom and Gearoid Fitzgibbon were married in Sweden on September 22. Gearoid is the chairperson of ‘Changing Ireland’.*



## David Versus Goliath: State-Sanctioned Poverty

ASYLUM-SEEKERS SHOW HOW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKS AFTER CHILDREN ARE LEFT GO HUNGRY AND LIVE WITH COCKROACHES; DESPITE THE TAXPAYER FOOTING THE BILL FOR THEIR MEALS

### Asylum-Seekers Make Successful Stand in Kildare - LCDP Support was Crucial

BY ROBERT MCNAMARA AND ALLEN MEAGHER

Up to 30 children were left go without sufficient food and residents were given fictitious menus at an emergency accommodation centre, according to a list of grievances sent to the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) by asylum-seekers in Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

Meanwhile, the company that runs the Eyre Powell Hotel was paid almost €5 million of taxpayers money.

The matter was addressed in the Dail by Justice Minister Alan Shatter who acknowledged that, following the debacle, the RIA had introduced changes to its inspection regime.

This was the first time the residents publicly put their names to a petition and it was complimented by support from County Kildare Leader Partnership (CKLP) and Newbridge Asylum-Seekers Support Group (NASSG).

In 2008, the trio had successfully campaigned for the withdrawal by the "hotel" of cheap and toxic toothpaste that made the residents' gums bleed. The toothpaste in question was banned in most countries.

NASSG represents around 80 residents, all asylum-seekers, at the Eyre Powell Hotel on the town's main street and 41 signed the petition, with others supportive but afraid

#### Myths

Have you heard the following statements?

"I was at a bus stop and the bus driver asked if the Nigerian woman wanted to bring the buggy on but she said no because she would go and get another from the welfare officer."

"They get mobile phones from the welfare."

"The social welfare are buying cars for refugees. I swear it. I had a health board cheque given to me for a car."

*These are the usual myths circulating in Ireland about benefits offered to asylum-seekers by the state. In reality, mothers and children have died – including from malnutrition – while their applications for refugee status gathered dust in Dublin. If you wonder why these myths persist, visit our news blog for Know Racism's explanation*

to sign.

They all lived in unhygienic conditions and were without basic provisions and proper food, until the problems were resolved by cohesive community work.

RIA figures show the company responsible for operating the Eyre Powell, Cherryport Ltd, based in Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow, was paid in excess of €4.8 million to provide accommodation and provisions between May 2004 and March 2009. According to Dail reports, the company received between €189 and €222 per person per week in 2004.

Most alarmingly, it was claimed that toddlers were left to go hungry, as no semi-solid food was provided for them and bigger children had to sometimes go without breakfast.

Parents residing in the Eyre Powell had resorted to spending their €19.10 statutory allowance on basic provisions.

#### CHANGING IRELAND VISITED

John (not his real name) a resident said, "For people who have children, they were

basically spending all the money on food and toiletries."

Cockroaches also appeared in places where food was being prepared and eaten.

Pictures supplied to the RIA, which is an arm of the Department of Justice and Equality, shows the presence of cockroaches in the main kitchen, dilapidated furniture in the common areas, unkempt washrooms. The washing machines were apparently broken.

The ethnic beliefs of residents were also reportedly disregarded, despite the fact that the company's contract with the State obliges it to take cultural and religious practices into account where at all possible in regard to food and its preparation.

The centre's "menu" claimed the centre served a variety of ethnic dishes, but in reality the residents rarely received anything other than chicken, rice, burgers, steamed vegetables and chips.

Thanks to community activism, changes were brought about when NASSG and Community Development workers came together and highlighted the problem by

compiling a dossier and petitioning the RIA.

The RIA reported afterwards that, "The operation of the accommodation centre has improved greatly and the feedback from residents and staff is much more positive."

Nonetheless, Minister for Justice Alan Shatter told the Dail the RIA accepted that the issues were neither "surfaced" quickly "nor addressed as quickly as they might have been."

A follow-up letter sent to the residents from RIA boss Noel Dowling said the facility was now cockroach free, a "deep clean" has taken place and "sufficient staff resources are in place".

The letter also stated that "a good variety of food" is available, and they have addressed "the concerns expressed about breakfast and school lunches".

It goes on to say that these were the outcomes of an inspection by the RIA and two more by an independent company called QTS.

The letter states that problems in accommodation centres are a "fact of life". The protesting residents released a statement to the Leinster Leader in reply stating that standards are slipping again and they will continue to protest if need be.

"The fact that the outcomes achieved were required to be addressed in the first place show a complete system failure by the RIA and of the State to provide adequate provision for vulnerable people in their care," said Mick.

John summed up the Eyre Powell residents' mood.

"It makes you feel worse off then a prisoner," he said, adding that Mountjoy would be an improvement.

Cherryport Ltd's current contract with the RIA was due to end in October and the company was understood to be in negotiations about a new contract.

Despite the state of their living conditions, a number of the residents opted not to sign the petition, due to fears of relocation.

Tom, who has been living at the centre for six years, said, "Our fears were not baseless, it had happened before. The rules are that they can transfer you at anytime."

Ann Daly, a development worker with County Kildare Leader Partnership said, "It was the first letter that was signed by residents and that's a hugely important point. I think the real learning for other hostels is that if the residents sign it, it can't be ignored."



*The Eyre Powell Hotel is no holiday*

"This time I think it was different", said Tom. "We believed we would go all the way and to put your name on the petition, if anything happens to you, the group was prepared to back you up to ensure you will not be victimised if you sign it", he added.

The owner of the hotel, Joseph Germaine, did not reply to repeated calls we made.

"I think he was shocked because we actually stood up to him", said John.

"When he realised we were not backing down, he met with us, but for many years he had always refused to meet with residents in a group", he added.

## **National Report Vindicates Eyre Powell Protesters - Tells of State-Sanctioned Child Poverty and Exclusion**

A national study of children in State-run asylum-seeker accommodation centres has confirmed that families are living in extreme poverty in overcrowded accommodation and people are frequently going hungry.

The national findings echo some of the complaints made to 'Changing Ireland' by residents in one such centre in Co. Kildare.

The report, in effect, vindicates the importance of work carried out by community development workers and volunteers in helping asylum-seekers to defend themselves. This type of campaigning makes it more likely that taxpayers' money spent on accommodating asylum-seekers is well spent.

The report was published in September by the Irish Refugee Council. It is titled 'State Sanctioned Child Poverty and Exclusion: the Case of Children in Accommodation for Asylum-Seekers'.

The study covered the past decade and documented instances of malnutrition among children and expectant mothers.

It told of instances where the parents of six-month old babies were told that no more baby or toddler food would be provided and their offspring would have to eat the same food as that offered to adults.

Overcrowding was commonplace. In one example given, despite repeated complaints, a family of five was confined to a single room with three children made to sleep in one bed.

Families sometimes had to share a room with a stranger and the report warned there was a "real risk" of child abuse.

Author of the report, Samantha Arnold, said the conditions amounted to "child abuse and neglect".

Over a third of the 5,098 people currently residing in reception centres for asylum-seekers around the country are children and many of the children in the centres were born in Ireland.

Typically asylum-seekers spent four years in a system designed, in 2000, to keep people for six months. In some cases, people lived in such centres for seven years.

In Galway, in 2007, an inquest found that a resident, mother of two Brenda Kwesikazi Mohammed, died of malnutrition. The pitiful allowance (€19.10 per week for an adult and €9.60 for a child) caused many families extreme income poverty.

Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness said the report showed up "the failure of the state to vindicate children's rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights."

In 2010, both Fine Gael and Labour committed to reviewing the system of direct provision. The Irish Refugee Council has called on the Government to do so immediately.



*Catherine McGuinness.*

## ***“I think a lot about Irish people – they saved me” - Eyre Powell resident***



**BY ROBERT MCNAMARA**

‘Changing Ireland’ travelled to Newbridge to meet with members of the Newbridge Asylum-Seekers Support Group and the group opened up about the conditions they faced at the Eyre Powell. They were steadfast that they will not back down if standards start to slip again.

Since they compiled their dossier of complaints and sent them to the Reception and Integration Agency, the group has remained articulate and organised.

One resident we’ll refer to as Niall said this was because they had tried, for too long, to reason with the management and proprietor: “But, after the letter, everything kicked off and there have been a lot of talks and a lot of progress.”

Mick Power, a community development activist in Newbridge says collective action is what made the difference.

He said the difficulty for Asylum Seekers generally is that they fear being singled out and victimised, so the strength of these people saying it together and doing it themselves is huge.

“You can see how reasonable these people are, how thoughtful they are, they don’t take action such as this without great provocation, that’s really the basis of what has happened. Decent people being driven to this”, said Mick.

Niall believed that concrete evidence was also an essential element to exposing the conditions.

“When there were pictures of cockroaches, the drainage system, torn carpets and everything, they really couldn’t argue with that. For other groups facing similar challenges, you need an organised support group to work together for a common goal.”

Another resident we’ll call Paul said the residents felt they were being treated as sub-human because of the misconceptions Irish people have about asylum-seekers. He said it’s not that they don’t want to work - they’re not allowed by law to work.

“They think we are less than them. We want to work, we want to do something. I don’t want to stay in my room. I think a lot about Irish people and I ask myself, what am I doing for them? They saved me, they saved my life but I am not allowed to do anything for them. Five years in someone’s life is a very long time.”

A mother in the Eyre Powell said, “They don’t have to keep us here for such a long time – we’re not animals.”

Since our visit, three long-time residents from the Eyre Powell have been accepted into Ireland as refugees. For others, the wait continues, albeit in better conditions.



*Asylum-Seekers have taken to protesting in recent years. This photo is from Mosney, Co. Meath.*

## ***Support from Local TD***

Fine Gael TD, Martin Heydon, wrote to the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter highlighting a litany of problems at the Eyre Powell after meeting with the residents and hearing their concerns.

“While the inspections are taking place, conditions seem to improve around this time but it does not last. The residents are seeking a more long-term solution,” he wrote.

“They (the residents) point out correctly that this is a service funded by the taxpayer at a cost of about €1m a year. We need to ensure that the state is getting for the service it is paying for,” he added.

Minister Shatter replied, “Generally, it must be acknowledged that problems can and do arise in any accommodation system.”



*Martin Heydon.*



# Community Development Principles in Action

The residents of Eyre Powell in Newbridge acted collectively and showed how adopting a Community Development approach can achieve results. The work involved the residents, Newbridge volunteers and community workers from County Kildare Leader Partnership. Principles demonstrated included:

## **Inclusion and Participation:**

Forty-one of the residents signed the petition. Others supported the campaign, albeit privately.

## **Collective Action:**

Nationally, most complaints come from individual residents or families, while only one in ten complaints to the RIA come from groups. The Eyre Powell residents took collective action.

## **Community Voice:**

The residents were encouraged to speak with one voice by the local volunteers (ie Irish natives) and the development workers. The residents are popular within the local community and form a part of the diversity, culture and rich nature of life in Newbridge.

## **Identifying Local Needs:**

The residents of the Eyre Powell are just as important to Newbridge as any other group. Their needs are local needs and it

was the residents who identified what was needed.

## **Mandated Action:**

Based on their human rights, the group had a mandate from the start to campaign for change.

## **Empowerment:**

The residents have been empowered by their success and the group are adamant that individual residents will not be victimised for being involved.

## **Accountability:**

The Newbridge Asylum-Seekers Support Group (NASSG) puts forward a different representative each time it has a meeting with the Government's Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) or with the management of the Eyre Powell, the idea being that many faces are seen, not just one.

## **Change:**

Conditions locally improved. On the national stage, this protest obliged the RIA and local contractor to become more accountable. It also directly spurred the RIA to improve its inspection procedures.



**County Kildare**  
LEADER PARTNERSHIP  
Supporting & Connecting the People of County Kildare



## **Asylum-Seekers have Programme Support**

The LCDP supports initiatives nationwide to support and integrate asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants into Irish society. Here are three examples of work being done with asylum-seekers by Local Development Companies in Longford, Wicklow and Galway:

## **East Meets West in Longford**

Longford Community Resources supports East Meets West which is a women's group focused on integration. At meetings, 20 immigrant women share and learn about different cultures, religions and traditions.

They have taken part in the Pride of Place Competition, a religious exchange, a personal development course and have learned more about local services and local heritage.



## **Galway Refugee Support Group**

Recent years have seen a considerable growth in the number of ethnic minority associations in the city, supported in the main by Galway City Partnership. Groups include Galway Refugee Support Group operating since 1988, the Galway Migrant Service established in 2007 and the Integration Centre which has a regional office in Galway city.



## **Wicklow Welcome for Immigrants**

County Wicklow Partnership collaborates with the VEC, Wicklow Multicultural Group and Glenealy IT Centre to provide English language classes. It also offers the "Fáilte Isteach" informal language training in Arklow and Wicklow towns.



## Cork Communities are Singing in Protest

A 'Concert for Communities' was held in Cork city to showcase the talents of local community groups in early October.

Students from Cork Music Academy and Togher Music Project performed. The Academy receives Community Employment (CE) support and has trained over 700 pupils, every single one of whom have gone onto further education or employment.

The concert was held to highlight the value of CE schemes to our society and to show the personal growth that comes about through CE training.

"The participants' involvement on CE schemes gives them confidence and purpose," said Trevor Quinn of SIPTU, one of the organisers. "We also wanted to bring people together in the one room to reflect on how important it is to speak with a united voice against the draconian cuts in the Community Sector which are far above any other state-supported employment sector."



*Musicians from Togher Music Project in Cork*

## Cloughjordan Wins Green Community Award - Shock-Horror!

The 2012 winner of the "Green Community of the Year Award" is Cloughjordan village in Co. Tipperary, home to Ireland's first eco-village.

North Tipperary Leader Partnership has been supporting community groups and green business initiatives in the village in recent years.

Three years ago, Ballymun won the same category in the Green Awards and is now having an impact on green developments nationally as well as internationally.

For more, read our lead story about the people from Ballymun who have learned, with LCDP support, how to turn muck into money, drill water in your back garden and create green jobs.



*Local resident Davie Philip points out how green Cloughjordan actually is*

## Westport Wins "Best Place to Live", but...

Westport, Co. Mayo, won the Irish Times' "best place to live in Ireland" award.

Overall, the town which is awash with traditional music, swimming pools and cycle paths is very deserving of the award, with one exception - Travellers are not all that welcome.

Ten years ago, publicans in Westport imposed a blanket ban on serving Travellers. Meanwhile, the local authorities provide limited accommodation in the town to Traveller families. The number of families afforded accommodation has varied from one to three in recent years.

## Union Hall Wins Best Community Award

REHAB's Community Group of the Year award has gone to Union Hall in Co. Cork for its community spirit as shown through its efforts to find five fishermen lost at sea.

At the same awards ceremony, Joanne O'Riordan won the Young Person of the Year Award for her determination in highlighting the challenges faced by people with disabilities today.



**Common Purpose** runs programmes which give people the inspiration, skills and connections to become better leaders both at work and in society.

We are currently accepting applications for our November **Meridian** programme – a leadership development programme for **established leaders** from all sectors and backgrounds based in and around Dublin – and would welcome interest from all **LCDP** and **LEADER** companies.

For more information, call 01-8729322 or see:  
[www.commonpurpose.ie/programmes/meridian](http://www.commonpurpose.ie/programmes/meridian)

\* \* \* \* \*

We also hope to develop relationships with **LCDP** and **LEADER** companies on our **Pitstop** offerings that provide leadership development for community groups and organisations of all ages and backgrounds – **from Youths to Over-55's**.

For more information, call 021-4924694 or see:  
[www.commonpurpose.ie/programmes/pitstops](http://www.commonpurpose.ie/programmes/pitstops)

## ***“Social Enterprise in Ireland - A People’s Economy?” Book Review by Claire Gallery\****

*“This book is a must for those already engaged in or who plan on becoming engaged in social enterprise.”*

Social Enterprise is a term we have heard a lot about in the past decade and there have been many books, papers and journal articles published on the concept. This book however, edited by Gerard Doyle and Tanya Lalor is, to a considerable degree, a breath of fresh air. In 160 pages, 17 contributors examine social enterprise as a concept and what role it can play in renewing the Irish economy.

Unlike other books describing enterprise in the ‘third sector’, this one provides an historical background to the development of social enterprise in Ireland. This is followed by up-to-date expert analysis that leads the reader through the issues that surround the concept of social enterprise not only in our fair nation but globally.

Overall, the book presents a well constructed set of perspectives where everything from basic definitions to the serious problems of procurement is discussed. The use of international case studies adds a practical element to the otherwise conceptual discussion.

Three writers provide a ‘Travellers’ perspective on social enterprise, namely

Anne Costello, Margaret O’Riada and Martin Ward from Galway. The rise of co-operatives is discussed, Erdmuthe Klaer reports on developments in Europe and Deiric Ó Broin tackles the difference between “social enterprise” and “social entrepreneurship”.

The book is peppered with nuggets of information. For instance, Ireland’s credit union movement is the world’s largest (per capita) financial co-operative.

For academics, those working in social enterprise, or involved in its development at local or national level, this is an engaging book that covers everything related to social enterprise.

If I could make one minor complaint, it is that the authors address the pitfalls that social enterprises face but don’t go far enough in exploring reasons or solutions to these problems.

It also needs to be pointed out that the contributors, while experts in the field, use professional or academic language. There is nothing wrong with this, but if you as a reader have a pre-existing interest in social enterprise, it helps.

Interestingly, the book succeeds in drawing the readers’ attention to the contradictory ideologies of social enterprise and capitalism.

Overall, this book is a must for those

already engaged in or who plan on becoming engaged in social enterprise. Both the editors and contributors deep knowledge of social enterprise, from concepts and emerging trends to policy issues, shines through on every page.

**\*Claire Gallery has a degree in Psychology and a Masters in European Politics and Governance. She works with the PAUL Partnership in Limerick city and has also worked with Limerick City Enterprise Board on their Community & Social Enterprise Programme.**

**\*\*“Social Enterprise in Ireland: A People’s Economy?” is published by Oak Tree Press and will be available by the end of October from [www.oaktreepress.com](http://www.oaktreepress.com) and from good bookshops nationwide. Buy the online version for a tasty €7.99 or the paperback for €24.95.**



*Claire Gallery*

## ***A Handy Way to Save €200m a Year***

A bunch of puppets could yet save this country €200 million a year.

A new report has highlighted the Incredible Years Programme, which uses puppet dinosaurs in the classroom, as a way to reduce behavioral problems among schoolchildren.

Last year, the Government spent over €200m on additional teaching resources as a result of behavioural issues in schools.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) says that investing €4.4m in children at pre-school age could reduce these downstream costs considerably.

The Council said the Incredible Years Programme “should be an integral

part of the social, personal and health education curriculum in lower primary school classes, along with other evidence-based programmes to promote social and emotional competence.”

CEO Teresa Griffin said it was unacceptable that students were being expelled and dropping out early because schools are unable to manage their behaviour. It was equally unacceptable that pupils were causing injuries to other pupils and staff.

Abroad, pre-school programmes have been successful in cutting down on misbehaviour among pupils.

The NCSE, an advisory group to the

Minister for Education, also recommended that teachers should be “upskilled” to better deal with disruptive behaviours in schools.

*Read pages 12-13 to find out how the ‘Incredible Years Programme’ works.*



*Discredited. This won’t do anymore.*



# 20,000 People, €5 Billion & YOU!

*Dear Reader,*

Each one of you is among approx. 20,000 people\* who regularly read 'Changing Ireland' magazine, in a sector that has a budget of over €5 billion annually.

'Changing Ireland' is read by community workers, volunteers, civil servants, students, social workers, community Gardai, lecturers, prisoners and trade unionists to name but some.

Today, you get the magazine for free by post, online, and it's also sold by Eason's.

Since its establishment in 2001, your magazine has grown tenfold to become the leading Civil Society Sector magazine in Ireland.

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**We know you want to become involved.**

We're doing this in tandem with our main funder\*\* (see below). It's also made possible by our voluntary board of directors who have established the project as an independent, community-based company. We're ready to grow.

**Give us a call – you never know what will happen.**

**Allen Meagher**

**Editor**

Email: [editor@changingireland.ie](mailto:editor@changingireland.ie)

## \* Who reads 'Changing Ireland'?

The magazine reaches the key people active in communities through NGOs, Local Development Companies, LEADER companies, Government departments and agencies, Family Resource Centres, enterprise boards, addiction centres, homeless agencies, disability organisations and many other Civil Society organisations and movements, including many small, voluntary local community groups.

'Changing Ireland' provides solid journalistic coverage and highlights the positives in communities. We offer exceptional value to advertisers, with adverts from as little as €133. Click the link on our website homepage for the full ratecard.

\*\* 'Changing Ireland's main funder is the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and our remit is to promote work carried out under the Local and Community Development Programme.



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