

BANKING ON COMMUNITIES

How to fund projects without having to offer your house as collateral to a bank

INSIDE: P5-8



Targets v. Reality



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INDEPENDENT

'Changing Ireland' is an independent publication core-funded by Government since 2001:



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FRONT COVER

The cover photo features a leader on an outing with members of the 11th Waterford Dungarvan Scouts.

There was an error in the translation of the front cover headline in the Autumn edition which was meant to read "And you are welcome".



SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 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. It has a budget of €28m from April-December 2015.

The programme tackles poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities.

SICAP's aim is to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration."

The Programme is underpinned by a Community Development approach.

Most of the work on-the-ground covered by this magazine is funded through the SICAP. In this edition, we also focus on LEADER and a number of other important participatory initiatives.



Better than banks



There are new ways for community organisations to conduct fundraising and to borrow money. If turned down by mainstream financial institutions, there are two social finance banks in Ireland for starters. There are also a range of options online, including crowdfunding and crowdlending.

These can work better than banks in many cases.

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) was launched on April 1st, last year. A mid-term review (see inside) found some targets were being exceeded, but others were likely to be missed.

However, the review did not blame the grassroots organisations on the ground, who are doing everything they can. In this magazine, we focus on what works best and we highlight best practice. We also provide a space for people at the coalface, who believe they know how things could be done better. People such as Ian Dempsey who makes some very valid-sounding points in this issue. We look forward to responses to his article.

SICAP places an emphasis on making sure any young person who is not in education or training is given the support they need and an opportunity. The programme seeks to offer people a clear pathway towards employment or training.

In Ballyfermot, Dublin, a new network supported by SICAP has impressed. It ensures there is now a co-ordinated response locally to young people's needs and aims to stamp out any duplication. The most appropriate educational service is offered to the individual, be they early school leavers, people in trouble with the law, people snared by the lure of drugs and/or those with literacy difficulties.

Hopefully, we will no longer have a situation where citizens in receipt of social welfare payments are obliged to attend courses that they can barely stay awake for in the classroom, while tutors go through the motions. There were many great people employed by FAS, but this was how many of their courses were described anecdotally.

A fundamental part of the response through SICAP is to offer individuals meaningful courses and the most appropriate route that puts them on a path that will improve their life-chances.

That doesn't take away from the need to deal with stigmatisation of whole areas based on address, ethnicity, age and other stereotyping that exists in society. Community development has always been about seeking social change, taking collective action, involving people (as groups, not individuals) in having a real say in their collective future.

Whoever is in power after the 2016 General Election should ensure community organisations continue to be supported to challenge the State on every occasion where people are discriminated against by its institutions.

Allen Meagher

FILE A REPORT FOR US!

If you believe in Community Development and enjoy writing, why not file a report for us about your community project and what makes it unique. 300-400 words is plenty (and a photo if possible). Certain criteria apply. Your first point of contact should be the editor.



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**MADE IN MOYROSS
LIMERICK**

SOCIAL BANKING

New funding options now open to community organisations

- Latest phenomenon is crowdlending and it's not a fad

BY MARK QUINN
& ALLEN MEAGHER

At some stage almost every person working in the community and voluntary sector finds themselves starting a sentence with: "If only we had the money, we could..."

In a recent report on social banking conducted by Clann Credo, Minister of State for Rural Economic Development and Social Enterprise, Ann Phelan spoke of the importance of social finance provision, "without which many valuable community projects simply would not happen." She said:

"It is sobering to reflect the report's finding that 59% of groups surveyed failed to secure loan finance from conventional financial outlets, with a number having been asked to provide personal guarantees for what was anything but personal benefit."

Nowadays there are a range of funding possibilities available to projects that are of a benefit to the wider community, but do not get support from banks.

MICROFINANCE

Under a partnership between the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) and Microfinance Ireland, business loans are now available through the Local Enterprise Office.

By applying through an LEO you will get:

- Assistance and feedback on application.
- Business advice and support.
- Reduced interest rate 7.5%.
- Flexibility on repayment terms.

The loans are provided and administered by Microfinance Ireland and applications are made through the LEO.

Unlike some of the other financial supports available from the LEOs, various kinds of organisations can apply for a Microfinance loan. Sole traders, partnerships and limited companies with fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover of less than €2m can apply. Loans may be used to fund the start-up of a business, the purchase of stock, equipment, machinery and business vehicles and are also available to existing enterprises.

CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding involves raising funds for a new project by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people. This is done through established crowdfunding websites such as icrowdfund, fundit.ie or for sporting projects, ntra.com.

Crowdfunding is suitable for a range of projects, including capital projects such as the purchase of equipment, building renovations or product design / creation.



It can also work for sporting or charitable projects, but it is important to spend time choosing the right site to run your campaign on.

'KEEP IT ALL' OR 'ALL OR NOTHING'

There are generally two kinds of crowdfunding: 'All or Nothing' or 'Keep it All'.

With 'All or Nothing' crowdfunding, the total amount must be raised before any credit card payments are processed. With All or Nothing the project owners need to be confident that they can reach their target.

With Keep it All crowdfunding projects, the amounts pledged at the end of the project period are processed.

Keep it All, sometimes referred to as Flexible Funding, may be a safer option for most projects. The project owner needs to convince supporters of the campaign that part of the project can proceed with whatever money is raised.

Depending on the type of project, crowdfunding can be donation based or rewards can be offered to people who pay in certain amounts. For example, a branded mug or T-shirt might be offered in exchange for a donation over €20, or naming rights to the project might be offered to a generous benefactor willing to pay the entire cost of the project.

When listing a project, you have full creative licence to decide on the types of award you will offer and at what cost.

Equity-based finance is also emerging as a new way to invest in companies. Equitynet.

com is an US based website that allows users to buy into a company through crowdfunding.

CROWDLENDING

Crowd Lending is a real alternative sort of half-way house between crowdfunding and lending. A business publishes their project proposal online along with the figure they hope to raise. Members of the public register as lenders and then offer to invest their sum of money in the project, in exchange for an annual interest return.

Around the world, crowd lending is becoming a massive industry and people are beginning to consider it as a viable way of borrowing money at lower interest rates.

Linked Finance is an Irish-based crowd lending firm. They offer everyday people the chance to become investors for as little as €50. The investors then bid on the interest rate they want to receive, from between five and 15 percent.

At the end of the bidding process, the borrower is offered a loan based on the lowest percentage rates offered. The borrower can decide to accept or reject the loan at this stage. Linked finance claims to have more than 10,000 bidders, who have bid over €13m on various company projects.

While neither Linked Finance nor Grid Finance, Ireland's two main crowdlenders, are currently offering their services specifically to community groups, the seeming success of the concept is a good indicator of where things are going in the future.

FUNDING FIXES

BANKING – BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

BY MARK QUINN

Nowadays banking is a taboo subject in Ireland. Nobody wants to talk about doing it, we feel ashamed about it and many of us wish we didn't do it.

But there is good news for community development workers who want to get project funding without having to resort to banking.

There are two main social finance providers in Ireland now.

One is Clann Credo, a social investment fund that provides low interest loans to community organisations, charities and social enterprises. They work primarily in the Republic of Ireland but have customers as far afield as Cambodia.

The group was established in 1996 by

Sister Magdalen Fogarty and it acts as a lending bank for organisations that have a social purpose, but may not want or get funding from the private sector banks.

Clann Credo CEO Paul O'Sullivan said: "The essential idea was to see if you can get finance working in a way that has positive social outcomes and that it's not just about making more money for itself."

In the 20 years since they were set up, Clann Credo has provided €75m to more than 500 different organisations. Customers have included: sea and mountain rescue services, Family Resource centres, men's sheds, film and arts groups and sports clubs.

The types of loans Clann Credo offer are:

- Bridging loans in cases where a grant has been approved, but is not yet available to draw down.

- Match funding loans, where a condition of a grant or other payment is that the organisation must come up with a part of the overall funding themselves.

- Capital equipment loans that can buy a minibus, kayaks, a marquee, a lifeboat - virtually any gear that will add to the social impact of your organisation.

- Property loans are available for buying, building or refurbishing your premises.

According to Paul, Clann Credo were instrumental in helping a number of LEADER funded projects become a reality after the banking crisis hit: "They would not have been able to access either the bridging loans or the match finance term loans that were required. It would have been a disaster. Something like 80% of our clients

How we borrowed to buy kayaks and not from a mainstream bank

- Scout leaders would have had to give personal guarantees

BY MARK QUINN

The 11th Waterford Dungarvan Scouts were founded in 1968. Currently they have 100 youth members from six to 16 years old.

In 2012 they set out to build a new Scout Hall, the "Scouts Den". They sought, and were approved for, grant funding for 75% of the cost of the "Den" from Waterford LEADER Partnership.

A condition of the grant was that it could not be drawn down until half of the work was paid for. Since the Scouts only had a quarter of the cost of the building, this left a temporary shortfall of 25% that they would need to find before they could draw down the grant.

Group Leader with the unit Tom Power explains what happened next:

"The interesting thing about the loans we got from Clann Credo is that they were unsecured loans."

"We met with [Clann Credo] and they said to us: 'When do you see the project being completed?' and we gave them a date. In fairness to them, they said: 'We will give you a bridging loan, but not to put you under pressure, we will give it to you for nine months and if you get your grant early then you can pay us off early.' Which is what we did."

Dungarvan Scouts had their loan repaid within 7 months. They found the experience so positive that they returned to Clann Credo again the following year and bought twenty kayaks, life jackets and paddles.



The 11th Waterford Dungarvan Scout Troop now has 20 kayaks and are at sea in summer and winter.

SOCIAL BANKING

HOW IT...

said that their project would not have gone ahead without Clann Credo's support."

An application can be submitted to Clann Credo on their website, or by calling the number listed there. They will appoint a dedicated staff member to help with the process. Their evaluation team will look at your ability to repay the loan and also at the social payout the project itself will have. Like in a Credit Union the team meets every month to look at applications and make decisions on them.

Paul believes that social sector groups return to Clann Credo for finance again and again not just out of necessity or because they have an understanding of the realities of the sector: "Some people consciously borrow from us even though they might be able to get it from the mainstream because they want to support an



Members of the 11th Waterford Dungarvan Scouts on a hike last year.

S, stream bank al guarantees on loans

"The interesting thing about the loans we got from Clann Credo is that they were unsecured loans," said Tom. "If we went to the bank then they would be looking for me to take a personal guarantee on that. With Clann Credo it was a case of: 'You're a community group, we understand that you're doing this for the benefit of the community' and there was an element of trust between us."

"If the likes of Clann Credo didn't exist it would not have been possible for us to have proceeded with the project," he said.

The scouts took out a three-year loan to pay for the kayaks.

According to scout Kevin Joyce, kayaking has now become a regular activity for the group:

"It's a nice skill to know. It's fun to be able to go out every few weekends on the water. We go out six or seven times in the course of the summer, but through the winter we wouldn't go out as much, because it's too cold but we do go out every now and again. We go kayaking into the bay or out to The Cunnigar (sandspit) or sometimes we go out to Ring."

The troop bought different types of kayaks to cater for scouts of different abilities, as Kevin explained: "We have ten of the sit-on kind and ten sit-in kayaks. Sit-ins are covered and they sit a bit lower in the water so they're more balanced. Sit-ons are easier to use for scouts who are just starting."

F: www.facebook.com/DungarvanScouts

CLANN CREDO HELPED WITH 1,000 JOBS

Researchers have concluded that approximately one thousand jobs were created countrywide through projects funded by social investment bank Clann Credo during the period of the outgoing LEADER programme 2007-2013.

According to an independent report published in November, loans were given to 319 different LEADER projects and the total amount loaned by Clann Credo was €34m. This allowed the projects to draw down a further €42m in LEADER grants.

The average LEADER grant was €132,000 and the average Clann Credo loan, for both match funding and bridging loans, was €106,000. The total project expenditure was, on average, €199,000.

According to the report, 80% of the projects who received funding said the loan from Clann Credo was critical to securing the LEADER grant. At least 52 projects with eligible expenditure of €13.4m could not have proceeded without the Clann Credo loans.

As well as the 1,000 jobs created, a further 600 jobs were maintained by project promoters.

The report was launched by Minister of State for Rural Economic Development and Social Enterprise, Ann Phelan.

COMMUNITY FINANCE IRELAND HAS €100M



Recently, Minister of State Ann Phelan formally launched Community Finance Ireland (CFI), a rebranding of the social finance service provided for the past 20 years by the Ulster Community Investment Trust. It is one of the two main social finance providers along with Clann Credo.

Donal Traynor of CFI said they had €100m to invest and were "targeting organisations and social enterprises which are delivering an immediate social impact to the community."

He said "all our profits are retained and recycled for re-investment, which increases the level of available funds for other community organisations."

The social finance provider has to date lent more than €70 million to over 400 community and voluntary organisations.

Mr Traynor claimed CFI's paperwork was "less onerous" on customers than they would find with conventional lenders.

W: communityfinance.ie/roi-home.html

CROWDFUNDING

4 TOP TIPS FOR RAISING FUNDS ONLINE

Digital communications consultant Harry Reid examines if crowdfunding can be a potential lifesaving part of a voluntary organisation's funding efforts:

Done well, a crowdfunding campaign has the potential to raise serious money for specific projects.

If you're serious about embracing crowdfunding as a part of your fundraising toolbox, I suggest that you:

ONE:

Crowdfunding requires investment in staff and volunteers' time. They both need to know what they're doing in terms of mounting an engaging, time-tabled, nuanced campaign and working to a detailed plan (that has been) agreed organisation-wide as a time-limited, bookended priority.

Additionally, resources need to be marshalled and invested in creating professional campaign materials – excellent audio-visual material in particular, such as live action video or animations, are essential (and) require specialist expertise to produce.

TWO:

Study and become familiar with the myriad of crowdfunding platforms, learn from what others have done on them.

THREE:

Plan your campaign by setting agreed start and end dates, ensuring that once up and running you can clearly and concisely convey your messages in terms of:

- what you want the funding for,
- why your envisaged work deserves



Harry Reid was initially sceptical.

support,

- who will benefit and how.

Attention spans are short on the web, so you need to be punchy. (Tell) people (what they) will get (in) reward for specific amounts of donation (and factor) in your costs for fulfillment of each aspect of such offers.

FOUR:

Treat your crowdfunding campaign as the temporary flagship in your digital armada, complementarily working in consort with your website content; social media feeds; Instagram or other photo-sharing output; material on your YouTube channel and in your regular e-zines.

Additionally, while your crowdfunding campaign is live, if you don't already, consider running a dedicated blog on the likes of Tumblr and putting out a podcast through Soundcloud or similar.



PLANNING

TAKE
THREE

Galway City

Six-year Local Economic and Community Plan

BY MARK QUINN

Local Authorities have published their Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) for 2015-2021.

While there is no 'right way' to complete the LECP, Galway City seem to have a good formula. They have published a short and concise plan with very clear actions and in doing so they have created a document that, as well as talking about social inclusion, actually seeks to include people by being accessible and easy to read.

The plans have been drawn up according to guidelines set out by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and uses Europe 2020 targets to set out goals in relation to employment, innovation, climate change, education and poverty.

The plans are a statement of each local authority's economic and community goals and the broad activities that will be initiated to achieve them. The groups involved in implementing the activities will decide on the finer details.

The guidelines recommend that the economic section of the plan is drawn up by the Economic Strategic Policy Committee and the community section is drawn up by the Local Community Development Committee. The process is then overseen by a steering group.

Changing Ireland took a look at the community element of the plans from Leitrim, Offaly and Galway to see what different approaches those councils took.

LEITRIM

Leitrim County Council adopted what they call a "Life-Cycle Approach" taking into account the needs of community members at all stages of their life. The plan includes home, leisure and community as part of its approach.

The plan specifies 13 target groups who should benefit from the community element of the plan including migrants, people living alone, people with disabilities and Travellers.

The objectives are outlined under four themes:

- Living and well-being in Leitrim.
- Learning and training.
- Working and growing.
- Inclusive and welcoming Leitrim.

The actions listed to achieve the goals are not very specific. For example the plan states that the way to increase the capacity of the 13 target groups will be to:

"support existing structures and networks which address exclusion" and "support new capacity building initiatives."

City's plan is short, sweet and specific

Economic & Community Plans published by local authorities nationwide



Participants in an intercultural festival in Galway in 2008. Today, Galway is the most multicultural city in the country (2011 Census).

GALWAY

The draft LECP for Galway City defines all economic and community goals under 5 headings:

- Develop and promote Galway as a world-class, creative city region.
- Develop and promote Galway as an

innovative city.

- Ensure Galway is an inclusive and equal City.
- Encourage a sustainable, resilient urban environment for Galway City.
- Promote health and well being to all people in Galway City.

At 26 pages, Galway's LECP is far shorter than the other two Changing Ireland examined,

both over a hundred pages, but it is packed with specific information that paints a very clear picture of the council's priorities over the next few years.

The approach taken is illustrated by, for example, the objective to "ensure full integration and equality of all people within our community." The following actions are listed:

- Re-establish the Traveller Interagency Group and
- develop an action plan,
- implement the Yellow Flag initiative in schools,
- support Traveller led social housing (CENA).
- Review and develop the "Access for All Group" and support their action plan.
- Support the development of an accessible and safe resource centre for the LGBT community.

OFFALY

Offaly's draft LECP is a heaving 123 page document with the community section alone running to 33 pages but the information is presented very clearly. It does a comprehensive job of covering a large area facing various rural and urban issues.

The community element of Offaly's LECP is organised under three goals:

- Education, training and skills,
- Local and community development,
- Empowering communities.

Unlike the previous two documents, the Offaly LECP does not address issues relating to vulnerable target groups together. Instead, it integrates them throughout the plan; for example Traveller needs are listed under education and disabled peoples needs are listed under housing.



Leitrim Live Craft was a creative training programme supporting economic activity focusing on the creation of craft work imagined, designed and handmade in Leitrim by the people of Leitrim.



Daingain Youth Club members, Co. Offaly.

Sorted!

Pobal video finally makes the connection

Pobal was left slightly red-faced when a website link in a snazzy video telling people where they could find help through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme led visitors to an online brick wall.

The colourful video urges the public to visit Pobal's website "to find your local SICAP provider".

However, when viewers visited the website and clicked on the 'Find your local SICAP provider' button, a log-in password was required.



While the local provider information was available through an obscure link, Dr Catherine Forde from UCC felt compelled to complain.

"The SICAP video that is on all LDC websites suggests that people can access details on their local SICAP implementer from the Pobal website, but how could they do that when this information was password-protected?" she asked.

Dr Forde contacted Pobal twice. She was initially told there wasn't any problem and later informed that there had been "a technical glitch". In the meantime, over 700 people had watched the video.

Pobal stated in a report published in December they have had positive feedback on the video.

The upbeat, three-minute video is titled 'What is SICAP and how can it help me?'.

It features cartoon flowers growing under sunlight and speaks of empowerment and working for change locally.

While comments are "disabled" on the video, you are welcome to send yours to 'Changing Ireland' and we'll make sure Pobal receive your feedback.

View the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dke_WKHrSHQ

- AM



NEW GENERATION OF VO

HOW WE GREW AS VOLUNTEERS

- Three Co-op volunteers explain what motivates them



Limerick's 'Urban Co-Op' is a co-operative grocery store meaning it is owned, controlled and operated by its members. It sells food at affordable prices and is operated for and by the community. It began in 2013 and by last year had 300 members and was on its way to becoming a full-service retail grocery store. W: www.theurbanco-op.ie

Photo: B. Panter

BY BEN PANTER

Managing the symptoms of an autistic child, recovery from a bowel operation and filling the "void" caused by unemployment are just three of the motivations that inspired three volunteers involved in Limerick's 'Urban Co-op', now two years old.

The growth in the lives of the three interviewees as a result of volunteering testifies to the benefits of community development movements.

Each member of the team plays their own role in ensuring the project is a success.

DRAMATIC BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER'S SON

Deirdre McMahon explained her involvement: "I have a special needs child so I was a full time mum and carer, but I have a special interest in food because my son is Autistic, it's difficult.

"I always had an interest in nutrition and when I heard about this project I thought I might actually have a say in where I buy my food and where it comes from, so that was the angle I came at it from. It has resulted in my son improving dramatically.

"Now he is really happy at school so I have some free time and I am very interested in getting the highest quality organic food that I can get.

"I had no idea about Co-operatives and how they worked before but now I just think it is the way to go.

"I had accepted my role as a full-time mum but with the improvement in my son my horizons have expanded massively," she said.

PAT GOT HIS MOJO BACK

Pat O'Sullivan, polite and softly spoken, had been long-term unemployed, another victim of the recession, after a 17 year long career in Roche's stores and then in the construction industry:

"I had become very disillusioned with the way business was done and the amount of corruption it seems the bigger business got the worse the goings on inside of it. I thought yeah this is

something I could get involved in. I could see myself, in a small way working towards an alternative to what is out there.

"When I got involved I couldn't find work... When you are in unemployment it is extremely difficult; you tell yourself 'a man doesn't need to work' but my God it is important. This filled that void, it gave me an outlet.

"The shop is operational two or three days a week, we are testing the water, the response has been fantastic. In a sense it is only beginning now; it is an exciting time and the confidence gained was a real help in getting back into employment."

STEPPING STONE BACK TO NORMAL AFTER ILLNESS

Kathleen Burke has just overcome illness: "I am OK now, this is helping me turn my life around, it is all part of the recovery process. I had a tumour removed and had bypass surgery in the bowel, I was sick for almost a year.

"This is a stepping stone back into normal living."

The former teacher and musician would "love to see the whole street light up with people coming in here" and would like to "see this area keeping its kids... This is my small way of helping."

"It's nutrition, a complete change in lifestyle, it brings communities together, brings networks together, knowledge, and the whole lot spreads out.

"It's different to the traditional business model because it is community driven... It is the energy it is driven with.

In a regular business you have one person trying to make money, this is not for profit, that's the attraction.

Anything made gets put back into the growth of the community; I think that everyone who is part of it has the same wish so it can only grow, it's not for monetary gain, it is for community gain."

"Our vision is that we become a learning hub, an education centre. People can learn voluntarily, in an easy environment how to grow their own stuff, how to preserve foods, how to grow the right foods. You learn stuff here that will stay with you," she said.

How do you begin community work?

"Just go do it!" says Kelly McCarthy



Kelly McCarthy at the West End Youth Centre.

Photos: A. Meagher.

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

How does somebody fresh to volunteering and for instance youth work in their community get started?

"Just go do it!" says Kelly McCarthy.

The 23-year-old, mother of two from Ballinacurra Weston has played a leading role in setting up support services in her area of Limerick city for people who feel suicidal.

"Don't hold back. All ideas are valid. Whatever your idea, just go do it. Advertise it and get people to support you," she said.

Recently, Kelly organised a local 'Hope Hope' Coffee Morning to spread the word that support is available locally for anyone feeling down or suicidal and the event attracted considerable local interest.

Kelly explained her motivation:

"Seven years ago when I was in Presentation Secondary School, we had to do a Leaving Cert project about an issue people don't understand, but one that affects people in their everyday life. I chose suicide."

"That same year, my 15-year-old cousin ended her own life.

"Meanwhile, I went onto college, studied Community and Health Care and became a mother. This year I thought to myself something has to be done as it seems nearly every day in Limerick someone goes into the river. Why, I asked myself."

"I feel it is because people are afraid to ask for help, maybe they're afraid they'll be judged.

"So I decided to set up a local drop-in centre that's open once a week. It's a place where people who are suffering can come and have a cup of tea or coffee.

"We're organising for counsellors to come and give group talks, we provide information and we just let people know that there is support for them and they are not alone.

"We are appealing for volunteers and for counsellors who would donate their time, or for people to help with fundraising," she said.

Meanwhile, the 'Hope Hope Drop-In Centre' is open to all.

While Kelly does most of the groundwork herself, she also belongs to the local Young Mothers' Group and she has received support from community workers attached to Limerick city's Drugs Education and Prevention Strategy (DEPS) which is managed by Limerick City Community Development Project and which is funded under the Young persons Facilities fund.

Last year, DEPS engaged with over 3,800 young people citywide aged between 18 and 25 years.

"Suicide can turn up on anyone's doorstep. I don't get paid for what I do, I don't want to be paid. I just want to help people," she said.

For more information on Kelly's project:

E: mccarthykelly44@gmail.com

F: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010025137437



Kelly McCarthy (centre) with supporters.

REACHING PEOPLE V. REACHING TARGETS

Programme places too much emphasis on jobs and not enough on people

- Ian Dempsey, CEO, West Cork Development Company

- In an interview with 'Changing Ireland', Ian Dempsey, CEO of West Cork Development Company, outlines in stark terms why the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) runs the risk of being of little use to some of the people who most need it.
- Mr Dempsey raises issues of critical importance to the programme's effectiveness.
- Let us know what you think of Dempsey's views. Email: editor@changingireland.ie
- And check back next month when we publish your feedback and afford a right of reply to the programme designers, Pobal, Mr Haase and Cork County Council.

INTERVIEW BY BEN PANTER



Ben Panther

SICAP is in its early days. We started in April, we are making a good fist of it and we are making progress.

But we do have concerns.

One is that we're now operating in a pre-dominantly target-driven environment which

appears to be the overriding concern of policymakers.

The targets are very high and you have to meet them or run the risk of financial penalties being imposed. That leads to a superficiality in terms of engagement with people.

Social exclusion is far more complex than that, it is a long-term process. Our team is working extremely hard but targets can't be the be-all and end-all. It simply emphasizes the quantitative over the qualitative. The LCDP offered more in terms of engagement with people and accommodated a greater developmental focus.

In the transition from the LCDP to SICAP, some of the broader Community Development role has been lost. Three engagements (with a client/citizen) means that an individual target is recorded as having been met so inevitably the service delivery and resourcing focus moves on to another client's needs to ensure the

best possible chance of meeting the overall programme targets. If penalties are levied on us or other organisations, we simply can't operate effectively. Penalties would have a detrimental effect, with reduced staffing and project funds, thus making the delivery of the programme almost impossible. Interestingly, while financial penalties remain a potential sanction, financial bonuses are not provided where targets or caseload is exceeded. One could be forgiven for thinking that SICAP's planning and delivery is not being done in the spirit of partnership.

With SICAP, social inclusion has been defined in a very specific way and I think

"We have eleven areas of designated disadvantage in West Cork, but only one of them is in a rural area. Our contract states that 50 percent of our work has to focus on designated areas of disadvantage."

that's a good thing.

However, the money is so limited and the programme potentially so wide that groups are having to prioritise objectives around a smaller number of actions.



Ian Dempsey, West Cork Development Company.

In time, communities may have a say on the priorities, but I have a concern over the supports for the hard to reach, the disadvantaged, the marginalised, the excluded - will they have anyone advocating for them? There is too much of a particular emphasis on employment, training and education, an area in which many agencies and organisations are active.

The problem with putting social inclusion in the new programme against a backdrop of significantly reduced resources is that now it has to compete with the job creation and the broader community development elements.

Communities will have a say on the priorities, but I have a concern over whether supports for the hard to reach, the disadvantaged, the marginalised, the excluded - will they have anyone advocating for them? The emphasis is on jobs.

There is a lot of social exclusion here, even when you compare West Cork to inner city estates.

However, SICAP seeks to target areas of

much emphasis on people

Company

designated disadvantage. It is almost an urban model placed in a rural context.

You are probably familiar with the Trutz Haase Deprivation index. We have eleven areas of designated disadvantage in West Cork, but only one of them is in a rural area - out on the Beara Peninsula.

Our contract states that 50 percent of our work has to focus on designated areas of disadvantage.

I think the deprivation statistics work very well in an urban area.

However, demographic metrics for education attainment, unemployment, age dependency and lone parents don't tend to cluster in rural areas. They do in Inchicore or Moyross or on Cork City's Northside, but in rural areas disadvantage tends to be more dotted around.

Also, in profoundly rural areas you have real issues with age dependency, particularly among older people. Older people are not a target group under SICAP but their needs should be incorporated into the programme.

There is a significant shift from LCDP to SICAP work. We have had to dismantle things that no longer fit into the programme. For instance, we had to withdraw from a very successful youth project (The Attic Youth Café in Bantry) that now has to be run by the community and volunteers on their own. Staff providing recreational facilities were also providing a lot of counselling, but it didn't fit in with SICAP.

We used to have a community worker engaging full-time with smallholders, often unmarried farmers in isolated communities and people living in difficult circumstances who are maybe a bit removed from the system and supports that are there. But they are not a target group in the new programme. Those guys don't understand that and they're still contacting us looking for support and we can do little for them because the programme of supports has to be geared towards defined target groups, set by policymakers in Dublin.

We did have a conversation with the LCDP reflecting our concerns about SICAP's design and the reality of trying to deliver those supports. In fairness they would have taken some of those things on board. But I don't think we have a voice or a channel that will be heard by the policy makers.

I think that our concerns are reflected by colleagues around the country and I think in time that our concerns are ultimately going

to be reflected in the review process- How this will then be addressed remains to be seen.

Also, in the case of SICAP, had we time, we would have raised concerns (with the programme designers) about data collection. In delivering supports, we have to ask for significant amounts of personal information. People are not always willing to provide this and as such they will not count towards caseload.

How is 'alignment' between the Community Sector and Local Authorities going?

I would absolutely agree that local community groups should be in partnership with local authorities, it makes eminent sense that this would happen. There are numerous ways in which this can be achieved. The key is that structures should be community-led. I remain to be convinced that this is the case. Furthermore I believe that local development needs to be informed by a range of different voices.

What are the challenges with regard to LEADER?

In West Cork irrespective of the LEADER strategy we put in place, the budget available to us is 70% of what it was heretofore. That will deny opportunities for a great many people.

- **Note:** At the time of this interview, a planned review of the Programme's performance in its first six months was underway. (The results have since been published. See page 13 for more. The review is available online at:).



NEWS BRIEFS

HELPLINE GOES 24/7

Women's Aid extended their helpline for victims of domestic violence to become a 24/7 service from January 1. Tel: 1800 341 900.

Women's Aid



COMMUNITIES & FLOODING

'Changing Ireland' produced a special six-page report on how communities and local authorities responded to flooding in 2014 and the lessons to be learned.

We spoke to people who resorted to burning clothes to stay warm in the aftermath of flooding (and the consequent loss of electricity). We looked at the community development infrastructure in King's Island, Limerick and Inishbofin, Co. Galway, and the incredible work of volunteers in both communities.



Inishbofin volunteers. Ref: Spring 2014 edition (Issue 45) available on our archive at www.changingireland.ie

VOLUNTEERING EXCELLENCE

Intel Ireland won a Corporate Social Responsibility award for 'Excellence in Volunteering' in September.

MANAGERS, APOLOGISE!

President Michael D Higgins, in September, urged bodies such as the City and County Managers' Association to apologise publicly for not valuing social housing more in recent decades. (Source: RTE)

THE PRIMARY FORM OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

"Become friends with people who aren't your age. Hang out with people whose first language isn't the same as yours. Get to know someone who doesn't come from your social class. This is how you see the world. This is how you grow."

- Galway City Partnership (via David Wolfe on Facebook).

STUDENT HOUSING CO-OPS

Why not here?

Co-operatives provide affordable housing, food and transport (bicycles) to students in Britain



Alongside bursaries - as reported in our Autumn edition - Ireland could be doing more for students in other ways too.

Noreen Byrne, Centre for Co-operative Studies, UCC, drew our attention to student co-operatives which are popular in Britain. She writes:

The start of the new college year was not an easy one for many students. Media reports presented stories of students having to accept very costly and poor quality accommodation. This of course creates all sorts of vulnerabilities, financial and otherwise, and certainly did not facilitate a supportive learning environment. Although, perhaps it does provide a good introduction to the rough edges of capitalism.

SO WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO?

In the UK and other parts of the world, students have set up student co-operatives so as to gain control over key areas of their lives such as housing, food and transport. The Student Co-operative Movement is one of the leading lights of the UK Co-operative Movement and has been widely reported on in the Guardian and other media.

These co-operatives have set up substantial housing co-operatives, some providing housing for several hundred students. Sheffield, Edinburgh and Birmingham have set the lead in student co-operative housing.

Others have set up food co-operatives, where they buy food in bulk and hence at more affordable prices. Others have set up bike rental co-operatives and so on.

These co-operatives have set up their own federation Students for Co-operation. This umbrella body, formed 2 years ago, now represents 30 students co-operatives across the UK.

The Centre for Co-operative Studies recently welcomed Mike Shaw from the Students for Co-operation to a conference in UCC (October 19th). This event was part of the Co-operative Convergence Week.

Mike spoke about the UK movement and hoped to inspire Irish students to have the courage to set up student co-operatives here in Ireland.

Other speakers at the conference were Duncan Stewart, environmentalist and Dr. Oliver Moore from the EcoVillage in Cloughjordan.

Following the conference, a number of students from the Postgraduate Diploma in Co-operative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development have formed an action group and are in the process of setting up a student housing co-operative in Cork City. At this point all we can say is: Watch this space.

More info: Read how Birmingham Student Housing Co-operative got their first house here: www.uk.coop/newsroom/students-birmingham-launch-first-student-housing-co-op-uk



"The progress made by Birmingham Student Housing Co-operative demonstrates that another way is possible for housing Britain's students – one that is affordable, empowering and free from landlord exploitation. "There is no reason why this model, which is so successful in many other parts of the world, can't work here in Ireland,"

- Mike Shaw, Network Co-ordinator for Students for Co-operation

VOLUNTEERING

Life's voyage made easier with affordable professional counselling

- Sessions cost a tenner / no-one turned away



In Clondalkin, Dublin, a low or no-cost counselling service was set up in recognition of the fact that - nationwide, not just in Dublin - many people need counselling and cannot afford it, **REPORTS BEN PANTER**. Similar models operate in other parts of the country.

YEAR 1 WAS RENT-FREE

Clondalkin Voyage Counselling Service was founded by local people in 2013 and was catering for 51 clients within 12 months.

Grainne Nolan an administrator at Voyage is employed by the CE scheme, which she describes as a "stepping stone back to work." She said: "We generally agree a fee of €10 but would never turn someone away if they couldn't afford that. We are open two days a week and cater for 18 clients in that time."

"Our counsellors are fully qualified, but they need 300 hours accreditation when they finish their training which they do free of charge here," she added. This is an example of the volunteering you don't necessarily hear about, but which happens quietly around the country.

In Clondalkin, the costs are kept to a minimum thanks to the kindness of local GP, Dr Ramiah, who had a vacant surgery available. He donated the premises free of charge during the first year and has only charged a low rent thereafter.

'NO TYPICAL CLIENT'

The service only deals with the clients aged over 18 and addiction issues are referred elsewhere.

Asked what type of issues are presented, Voyage counsellor Kathleen Kiernan replied, "Relationships, bereavement and addiction, it can be anything really. Relationships - they are huge, not just with your partner, but also the people you work with, family, even going to the shop and how you would deal with that."

There is no such thing as a typical client and no such thing as a typical outcome explains Kathleen.

ELICIT CHANGE

"Obviously you are trying to elicit change in their lives so that their lives would be better for whatever reason. But it's the person in front of you, it's their journey, and they leave when they feel they are ready to leave.

"For example with bereavement you wouldn't be expecting change in itself because it is a loss so you would be supporting a journey through grief and loss.

"Re-engagement is important, people can be isolated because of their loss and withdraw and don't always find it easy to get back out there."

Anyone who feels they might need counselling need not be apprehensive.

"All counselling is person centered," says Kathleen, "That is the basis we work from, empathy and total positive regard, respecting differences and just being there to support."

Techniques employed by Kathleen include Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Choice Theory and mindfulness, all of which are "very effective" according to Kathleen.

"Obviously, if you are going to counselling there is something going on, we look at different choices and how they might impact on your life," said Kathleen.

For anyone in the area needing a little help staying afloat the service can be contacted at: voyagecounsellingservice@gmail.com or by phone 086-0424989.

WHO'S WHO? DEVELOPMENT LEADERS IN SOUTH DUBLIN

South Dublin County's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is up and running with 19 members (the norm).

The Public Participation Network (PPN) for South County Dublin was also established in 2015.

The PPN has five nominated representatives who sit on the county's LCDC.

The LCDC's membership also includes three councillors, a staff member of the local authority, State agencies reps, a Local Development Company rep and a community rep, among others.

In South Dublin, the members are:

- PPN reps: Maurice Walshe, Justin Byrne, Doreen Carpenter, Ronan Leydon, Stephen Dunne, PPN.
- Cllrs Paula Donovan, Kieran Mahon and Eoin Ó Broin, all members of South Dublin County Council (SDCC)
- Billy Coman, Director of Housing, Social & Community Development, SDCC
- Loman O Byrne, South Dublin Local Enterprise Office.
- Peter Byrne, South Dublin Chamber of Commerce.
- Larry O'Neill, South Dublin County Partnership (Local Dev't Co).
- Fiona Ward, Department of Social Protection.
- Pdraig Rehill, Health Services Executive.
- Greg Tierney, Crosscare (NGO).
- Paddy Lavelle, Education and Training Board.
- Mary Corcoran, Department of Sociology, NUIM.
- Joe Barry, Trinity College Centre for Health Sciences.
- Anna Lee, Community rep.

**For more information about the PPN or LCDC in South Dublin, contact Anne Byrne or Sarah O'Gorman.
T: 01-4149270.
E: abyrne@sdblincoco.ie
OR sogorman@sdblincoco.ie**

GENERAL ELECTION

Parties at variance over social inclusion & solutions to poverty

MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES GIVE THEIR VIEWS ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BY BEN PANTER

With a general election looming, 'Changing Ireland' asks the political parties in Government and in Opposition where they stand on supporting Community Development initiatives and people on the margins.

FINE GAEL puts great faith in tackling unemployment, main source of inequality

Fine Gael, as the senior party in power, point to the money they have invested in the sector, although they focused in their response on the past 12 months in particular. For instance, they highlight €8m granted to 55 community and voluntary organisations in that period.

They also point to €19m allocated from the Dormant Accounts Fund which has been invested "towards programmes and projects for specific measures supporting children, disadvantaged youth, older people, carers, prisoners, the unemployed and persons with a disability."

Most of their response relates to their record on employment claiming that 100,000 jobs have been created since they came to power. Unemployment, they believe, is "the main source of inequality and unfairness in our society today and that work is the best way out of poverty."

Job creation is Fine Gael's central focus in seeking to support the vulnerable in society and their focus on getting people into work or back to work will continue "restoring the dignity and removing them from the cycle of poverty caused by long-term unemployment."

LABOUR "would always take a 'bottom-up' and community-based approach to local development"

In terms of Labour's approach to community development, the party issued a brief statement to 'Changing Ireland', as follows:

"It's a very broad topic but in general Labour has always been deeply supportive of community development and would always take a 'bottom-up' and community-based approach to local development."

It continued: "Labour in government has worked to protect and enhance the funding and delivery of supports for community development, including through Community Employment, LEADER, the Rural Transport Programme, SICAP, etc."

SINN FEIN would restore multi-annual funding & foster participative democracy

Sinn Féin point out the cuts in a sector in which government expenditure has for example fallen from boom-time levels of €84.7m in 2008 for the Local and Community Development Programme to €48m this year for its successor programme, SICAP.

They promise greater efficiency and some practical measures although they shy away from releasing spending figures.

Multi-annual minimum funding would allow organisations to plan ahead while the immediate release of funds on approval and the relaxation of business plan requirements would, they claim, allow more time to be focused on service delivery.

Regarding employment they believe that the CE scheme fulfils valuable community services and should be extended from being a transitional scheme to an end, in and of itself. Meanwhile social enterprise has the potential to create 5,000 new jobs.

Plans to create an 'All-Ireland Civic Forum' will, they argue, give a greater voice to grass roots movements. On a similar vein they say that, "Sinn Féin believes it is time to move on from 'Partnership' as we currently know it and move towards the greatest possible use of decision making mechanisms involving participative democracy."

FIANNA FAIL would create a Department of Community Support and Development

Fianna Fáil praised the sector for its resilience after a "difficult number of years" and said it was committed to "re-energising" the Community and Voluntary Sector which it believes has a central part to play in drawing together marginal voices to ensure they are represented."

They certainly talk a grand vision: "Community Development working in co-operation with the government will have an integral part in what will be the biggest re-distribution of power the country has ever seen."

If elected, they promise clear leadership, increased funding and a restoration of autonomy. They point to specific measures that they "are committed to implementing".

Under a Fianna Fáil government the sector can expect its very own 'Department of Community Support and Development', the restoration of LEADER, RAPID and CLAR funding, autonomy for Local Development Companies and the restoration of town council structures with a new community council structure.

They acknowledge Government plays an important part in providing frameworks and support for Community Development groups which they describe as "intrinsic" to building strong communities. Their proposals, they say, are part of a "comprehensive approach to give local people power over local decisions."

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS have experience in their ranks & will not outsource community work

The Social Democrats openly admitted that they are still working on policy but they were forthcoming in their attitudes regarding the sector which they believe is "vital to the social infrastructure of Ireland" which has been "decimated".

A party spokesperson pointed out that a number of their candidates have experience as community development and youth workers.

The party believe that "outsourcing responsibility for this sector to private interests is not the way forward and we must ensure that adequate funding for this sector is reinstated and protected."

The party was launched with a vision "of fostering vibrant communities within a vibrant economy".

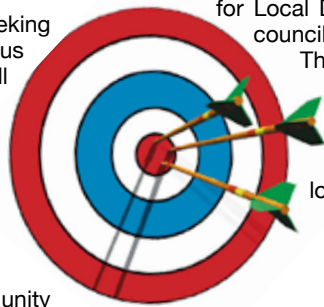
RENUA believe small businesses are the driving force of the local economy

RENUA Ireland claim community development is at the "heart," of their "vision of creating a society that liberates people and talent."

They too want councils to be more accountable to citizens and want to create a society where the interests of everyone are valued by giving local authorities power to develop communities.

RENUA Ireland is "in favour of pragmatic forms of community development" in housing, childcare and small businesses which they say are the driving force of the local economy.

'Changing Ireland' sought the views of other political parties with more than one TD but without receiving replies.



NETWORKING

BALLYFERMOT HAS A NEW SAFETY NET FOR EARLY-SCHOOL LEAVERS

- 'Keep in Training & Education' (KITE) proves enduring value of good networks
- Even the professionals were surprised at what they learned



BY MARK QUINN

Members of a new network in South Dublin are hoping that learning about the web of services available in their local area will prove a safety net for early school leavers.

Youth workers, alternative education providers, school completion co-ordinators and educational welfare officers have set up a network in the Ballyfermot area to support young people who are not in education.

The Keep In Training and Education (KITE) group is a network of 15 organisations that aims to ensure that every young person between the ages of 12 and 21 is linked in with an education service.

Fiona Kearney of FamiliBASE said, "For us the idea of KITE is really important because you might know what goes on in Candle Community Trust or you might know a bit about Kylemore Community Training Centre or Youthreach, but you don't always have all the criteria and all the details. That's what has been brilliant for us to find out."

Declan Markey, education co-ordinator with Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership helped to facilitate the set-up of the network:

"At present, it's mainly made up of alternative education services working on a shared response to young people's educational needs in the area.

"We work with the schools, in particular school completion co-ordinators, to address the acute needs of young people in education and where they might be running into difficulties with formal education.

"In some cases, the work is just about the network's groups extending the services they offer in the community into the schools."

The network wished to make the public more aware of the services available for early school leavers locally.

Chris O'Rourke, co-ordinator at Ballyfermot Youthreach, said:

"A lot of people weren't aware of what sort of supports there were for early school leavers and also there were a lot of misconceptions about the support."

When KITE group members began meeting and talking about their services,



Prospects are now higher for young people not in education or training in Ballyfermot.

it became clear that they themselves were finding out things they didn't know about the other members.

"We realised that we didn't even know what each other did. So over the past couple of months we've been learning about each other and building those relationships," said Chris.

With such a variety of education

"The KITE group also aims to ensure that alternative educational services are not duplicating provision."
- Declan Markey

initiatives in the area, it is important that each organisation is offering something unique to cater to the variety of interests that early school leavers have. To that end, KITE held a networking event in October at which each group set up stalls to inform each other of the services they provide.

Increasing awareness of each other's services also helps youth workers who might want to refer students to an educational service that best suits their abilities and interests.

"The KITE event complies with activity under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme since it develops the structures and network of supports of the education services within the Dublin

10 area," said Declan

"While improving co-ordination, the KITE group also aims to ensure that alternative educational services are not duplicating provision," he added.

The group was set up by members of the Dublin 10 Education Taskforce which includes principals from local primary and secondary schools, other education providers, youth services, community development projects and adult education services.

See the following pages to learn more about some of the groups who have joined KITE.

To contact Declan Markey:

T: 01 8989162.

E: dmarkey@ballyfermotpartnership.ie

W: www.ballyfermotpartnership.ie and www.ballyfermotchapelizodpartnership.blogspot.com

5 Benefits of Networking

1. Information sharing
2. Promotion of services.
3. Sharing good practice.
4. Establishing progression paths.
5. Complimentarity beats duplication.

NETWORKING IN BALLYFERMOT

Youthreach offers a second chance



Age-range: 16-21. **Target group:** Anyone who needs to return to education to get a qualification (including early school leavers and unemployed).

Main funder: Dept of Education & Skills.

Ballyfermot Youthreach offers a second chance to young people who find that mainstream education does not suit them.

It offers an accredited course in general learning which is the equivalent of Leaving Cert Applied or the ordinary Leaving Cert.

Co-ordinator, Chris O'Rourke, said that because he and his colleagues work with small groups of students compared with class sizes in formal schools, they are able to adapt to students' needs, particularly around personal and social development:

"The safest place should always be your home, or with your friends but sometimes they are the most unsafe places. We create a safe place. When they come in, they don't trust you, because the people who were supposed to keep them safe before may not have done a good job. We have the space to work on people's social development to allow them to deal with behaviours and issues that are effecting them and we give them the support."

Terrie Gray (20) left school after completing her Junior Cert:

She said, "The biggest thing around Youthreach is trying to change people's perception of what it is."

"When I turned 18, I decided I wanted to come back to education. My best friend had come through Youthreach, she got her full cert and she was always telling me about it.

"But when my mum first heard that I wanted to go to Youthreach, she hit the roof; she was very worried and disappointed. She had this conception that Youthreach was just a drop-in centre, but it's not like that at all. It's a safe haven for people to come to."

Terry enrolled for a drama programme, took part in the An Gaisce Programme and became president of the student council during her time at Youthreach.

"Youthreach has given me a lot of opportunities to grow and go onto third level," she said. Many of her friends have already done so.

www.youthreach.ie/centres/dublin-city/ballyfermot/

Cherry Orchard Equine Education and Training Centre

Cherry Orchard Equine Education and Training Centre is for early school leavers who have a passion for horses.

Formed around an equestrian centre complete with stables, it runs accredited courses in employability skills and in horsemanship. Cherry Orchard also has an on-site youth service and teaches literacy skills and provides one-to-one support to learners.

Marina Cirillo, life skills instructor at the centre, said that the wide range of programmes available to learners at the centre equips students with the skills to work in a variety of industries:

"A lot of young people have gone on to get experience in beauty, hairdressing and engineering. This is the first year that two young people progressed on to become professional jockeys."

www.cherryorchard.ie



Kylemore Community Training Centre offers vocational training

Age-range: 16-21.

Target group: Early school leavers.

Main funder: City of Dublin Education and Training Board.

Kylemore Community Training Centre is a workplace-orientated training centre that brings students through a more vocational type of training.

Students often arrive into the centre to do a general purpose award to begin with and then specialise in a vocational area like catering or childcare.

According to Estelle Webb, general manager, the centre now has clearance from the City of Dublin Education and Training Board to allow students who show aptitude to accelerate through the programme. For example a student with a poor Junior Cert (Level 3) may really just need help with English and Maths, in which case Kylemore will work with them on just those subjects. This means they can progress to a Leaving Cert level qualification faster:

"If a learner is capable we want to encourage them. We don't want to keep them back at 'Level 3' when they're chomping at the bit to go further. I think this is going to be really good for some of the kids."

www.facebook.com/kylemore.ctc

Candle Community Trust cover multitude of life choices

Candle Community Trust offers students a range of services including: a full time training course in employability skills, an after school programme, safe driving programmes, peer leadership and an options programme which tailor makes full programmes for learners who might be struggling with them.

There is also a part-time programme called 'Connect' for young people, many of whom have been referred from the probation programme or from Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers. The programme aims to help students make healthier and "pro-social" life choices.

Carol Leonard, Co-ordinator of the Connect programme believes that the range and the type of subjects that they offer – which include communications, computer literacy, career preparation, work experience, woodwork and metalwork – is a vital part of achieving a positive outcome for their learners:

"It's so important that the young people are doing practical subjects because the sense of achievement and pride when they finish their projects really stands to them."

In addition Candle runs developmental programmes including crime awareness, sexual health, positive mental health, money management and healthy lifestyles. They have also started offering therapeutic space to give access to counselling, reflexology and acupuncture to the students.



www.candletrust.ie

Life Centre gives one-to-one tuition

The Life Centre runs a Junior Cert programme for children aged 12-16 years.

Each student has an individual education plan and all tuition is one to one. Academic subjects run from nine in the morning until one o'clock when the afternoon programme kicks in. This includes activities such as film-making, spanish and "outward-bounds".

Dublin City Council allocates a sports development officer once a week to help with the afternoon programme. Niamh Kearney, facilitator at the centre believes they have a strong role to play in helping young people to keep their place in the community:

"The academic piece is important but it's the social development that we find to be the most important for these children. It's about integrating back into the community because a lot of their experience within the community, due to their own behaviour and due to different things, is negative." This could involve helping a student come to an arrangement whereby they might be able to join their friends at a leisure centre or other places that they have been barred from in the past.



www.facebook.com/The-Life-Centre-Cherry-Orchard-139195319495720/

FamiliBASE has a specialist reach

FamiliBASE was established when two separate organisations; Familiscope, a family centre, and the BASE, which was a youth centre, merged in early 2014.

The Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) programme is one of the eight programmes that the centre runs.

According to Fiona Kearney of FamiliBASE, despite all of the services available in Dublin 10, there is still a core group of young men in particular who are not working or in any sort of education. The organisation also caters for Traveller children.

She said people are either referred to them by other agencies or come by themselves. They also do outreach work, effectively "chasing" young people to offer them one-to-one support, training, career guidance and help in returning to education.

Follow-up work is often required to ensure "a wrap-around service" is provided for the young person.

"We try to identify their needs," she said.

"For example, we might need to address a substance misuse issue before we can even look at the education issue."

FamiliBASE don't run an accredited education programme; they tie-in with the resources that are already available in the community and for instance often refer young people onto local schools, crèches, youth services and addiction services.



Twitter:@familibase

Ballyfermoters volunteering in Finland & Malta

Age-range: 16-23.

Target group: Early school leavers not in education or training.

Main funder: City of Dublin Education and Training Board.

Ballyfermot Youth Service has five different locations in the locality.

It runs an Outward Bounds centre in Parkwest where there's kayaking, rock climbing, mountaineering, BMXing, mountain biking and more. It also runs a residential centre, a renovated bungalow which sleeps up to 24-30 young people and has access to lakes, forests, walking trails, kayaking activities and mountain biking trails.



BYS runs youth exchanges which this year saw students go to Finland, Hungary, Italy and Malta. It also hosted students from seven different countries here in Ireland and sent young people abroad as volunteers. Young people can go from 4-6 weeks or for a whole year on the volunteering programme.

The youth service are currently recruiting young people in the Ballyfermot area who are not involved in any organisation to take part in their accredited training programme around kayaking, fitness, personal development and personal training.

www.ballyfermotyouthservice.ie

MID-TERM REVIEW

Evaluation of Programme's value to communities has pointers for 2016

BY MARK QUINN

Pobal has released a mid-term review of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) covering the period from April 1 to August 31, 2015.

The programme surpassed its targets in two areas, relating to children and those classed as individuals progressing with education after registering with SICAP.

The review found that while the programme "is slightly behind in reaching (some) pre-set targets", a "bedding down" period is to be expected while all the stakeholders adapt to the new system.

During the period covered, the Programme engaged one-to-one with 15,489 individuals classified as disadvantaged and also with 1,272 local community groups.

This represents 36% and 47% respectively of the Programme's annual targets for engagement.

Based on its findings, the review makes a number of recommendations, sets out details for upcoming training Pobal will provide and outlines literature that they will make available. It also proposes that Pobal will be put in charge of the spot checks that are required under European ESF Regulations.

SOME TARGETS UNATTAINABLE

A number of challenges were highlighted in the review. The report states that: "Some of the [SICAP Programme Implementors, aka 'PI's] indicated that the targets set for self-employment may not be attainable and that there is the potential for negative impacts on beneficiaries if they are encouraged towards self-employment before being ready."

"As SICAP is targeting the most difficult to reach clients, more one-to-one support may be required in order to see progression. Some PIs are requesting that from 2016 onwards, targets are reduced to facilitate them in doing higher quality or intensity work. Concern has been raised that the type of work being carried out at present is 'shorter, sharper and more superficial'."

"The concerns and learning from those delivering the programme on the ground provide us with important information on these issues, which may be valuably considered."

RURAL CONCERNS

The review also states: "Rural based PIs have raised concerns about not being able to meet the requirement that 50% of their caseload come from a disadvantaged area. It has been stated that they do not have the population numbers to meet this requirement."

The review found that nationally, most PIs were meeting the 50% target and noted highs of up to 77%. However, with some areas only finding 4% of their caseload in areas classified as disadvantaged, the national average stands at 23% based on the most recent analysis.

Pobal is preparing options that it will present to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in this regard.

Download the review with this link:

<http://bit.ly/1Nra5yr>



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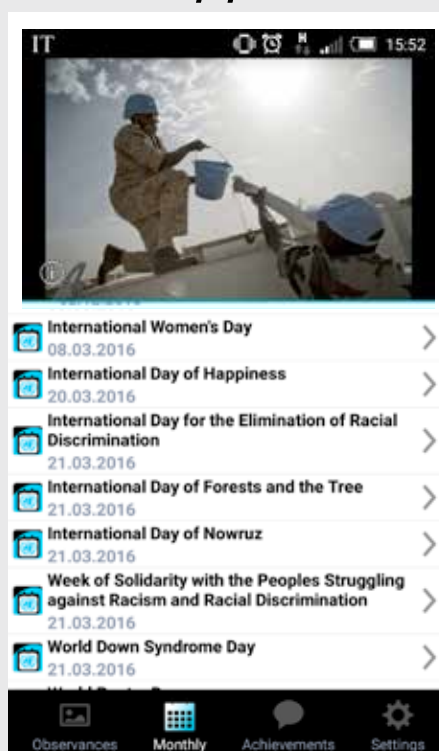
Never again miss UN's international days with awesome new app

Since you read 'Changing Ireland', there's a good chance you are also eagerly looking forward to World Social Justice Day which takes place on February 20th this year. If like many people you weren't aware of the upcoming festivities then the United Nations have developed an awesome new app that will keep you in the loop!

The UN calendar is available to download from the google play store and from itunes. It charts out the year ahead and all the commemorative days and weeks ahead – International Observances to use the lingo.

Thanks to this app you will be able to avert fashion disasters like getting all dressed up for World Book and Copyright Day (April 23rd) only to find out it's actually World Intellectual Property Day (three days later). Never again will you forget to celebrate World Teachers Day (which falls on the second day of Space Week this year.) and plan ahead for what to do when the Day of Vesak, a celebration of the birth of Buddha, clashes with the Global Day of Parents on June 1st.

- MQ



PCI COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

100 hours of free tuition

PCI College has announced a Scholarship competition for the voluntary sector.

The prize will cover full fees for their Certificate in Counselling & Psychotherapy course, beginning in February 2016. The course is a 100-hour foundation in counselling which includes theory and practical learning in personal development, counselling skills and counselling approaches.

The course is taught in Athlone, Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny and Limerick.

The competition is open to anyone who volunteers on a full or part-time basis with a charity or voluntary organisation in Ireland.

PCI College President, Eoin Stephens, said, "PCI College has had a strong relationship with the charity and voluntary sector for many years."

Every year, our Certificate and BSc Honours degree in Counselling & Psychotherapy attracts students who have volunteered with different organisations across the country.

Full details on how to enter the Scholarship competition are available on the PCI College website: pcicollege.ie/volunteer-scholarship

Or contact PCI College directly.

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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Survey of community value of social enterprises due out shortly

The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) is undertaking "a comprehensive survey" to measure the contribution that Local Development Companies (LDCs) make in establishing and supporting social enterprises in Ireland, **REPORTS ALLEN MEAGHER.**

The survey, undertaken by Kemmy Business School in the University of Limerick, will examine the diversity of social enterprise activity across regions.

"It will provide a more informed understanding of the social, economic, and financial value and contributions of social enterprise sector in local communities," said Brian Carty of the ILDN.

The Network hopes that the results will increase awareness of the contribution that social enterprises make in their local communities.

A social enterprise is defined by Forfás as: "An enterprise that trades for a social/ societal purpose, where at least part of its

income is earned from its trading activity, is separate from government and where the surplus is primarily reinvested in the social objective."

The ILDN's survey is focused on LDCs work in particular and the report will be launched in early 2016.

Nationally, earlier studies have found that the Social Enterprise Sector employs over 9,300 people directly and indirectly supports a further 5,100 jobs.

In addition, it is estimated that for every one person employed at least one other person works on a voluntary basis.

Excluding credit unions, which are considered to be social enterprises, a conservative estimate places the annual revenues generated by the sector at over €240 million and its annual spend in the economy at over €230 million.

According to Clann Credo and the Dublin Employment Pact, in a report published in 2010, social enterprise in Ireland had the

potential to grow significantly "to represent 5% of GDP and to generate at least 65,000 jobs."

That report 'Adding Value, Delivering Change - The Role of Social Enterprise in National Recovery', is available on the website: www.socialenterprise.ie

W: www.ildn.ie



Case study: Speedpak



John Murphy, CEO of Speedpak (left). A participant in the training programme run by Speedpak (right).

PHOTOS: ALLEN MEAGHER

Speedpak is a successful social enterprise that provides work experience and training to long-term unemployed people in Dublin's Northside.

It has two main commercial operations: the first manufactures and supplies rosettes while the other provides a contract packing service to businesses.

Speedpak was set up in 1985 and has helped over 500 people into employment.

"At the time, unemployment in the area was very high," said a spokesperson for Northside Partnership which has supported Speedpak from the outset.

"The idea was that Speedpak would be a commercial company which would provide valuable training and work experience to help long-term unemployed people get back to work."

'Changing Ireland' magazine is one of

Speedpak's long-standing customers.

For more information, visit:

www.speedpak.ie

and

www.northsidepartnership.ie/speedpak

PLANNING & PEOPLE

131 community actions in

As one of the first Community Action Plans to be rolled out, other local authorities will be kept

BEN PANTER REPORTS

Rackett Hall on the outskirts of Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, played host to the launch of the town's Community Action Plan (CAP) on Friday, December 4th, by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly.

The town's new plan covers 2016-'19 and brings stakeholders together to tackle inclusion issues within the town.

A total of 131 actions are listed in the 58-page plan, covering environment and security; community wellbeing (with an emphasis on youth and families); enterprise, training and employment; and the overall support structure.

In the devising of County Tipperary's Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), Roscrea was prioritised as being in need of inter-agency focus, to develop a broad-based, community-focused and realistic plan that would meet residents' needs.

Minister Kelly said, "Roscrea has so many positives; a great history, a great heritage unrivalled in many ways and it has great spirit. It has a great tradition of volunteering and a good business environment, but it does face challenges and this plan is going to help address those challenges," he said.

Trisha Purcell, project officer in charge of developing the plan, is new to the area: "When arriving in Roscrea the first job I was tasked with was meeting with as many community activists and agencies around Roscrea as possible, I was welcomed with open arms and people spoke very frankly."

"It struck me immediately how active, caring and passionate the community of Roscrea town is."

According to the accompanying report, written by Trisha, the aim is to provide, "good opportunities and supports...and a sustainable, robust and socially inclusive community."

Opening proceedings was Sinead Carr, Tipperary County Council's Director of Services for Community and Economic Development.

She said, "The official launch formalises the contract between the agencies and the community in terms of the actions that are identified in the plan."

Tipperary Cathaoirleach, Seamus Hanafin, said, "This is a difficult time for rural towns all over the country. Like most rural towns in Ireland, Roscrea over the last decade has suffered significantly from the downturn."

"For this reason, Tipperary County Council has provided the resources for the development of a plan for Roscrea," he said.

"The opportunities developed through the action plan for Roscrea provide a platform for an in-depth study of both the economic and social aspects of the town and the development of the plan has allowed real engagement across all aspects of economic, community and social

inclusion issues," he added.

Ann Ryan, social inclusion officer with Tipperary County Council told 'Changing Ireland', "The plan was modelled on RAPID areas in other parts of the county, they have been very successful and community groups have engaged."

In late September, representatives from 34 community groups attended the opening meeting to come up with the plan.

During this meeting, interested groups committed to the project and discussed their take on opportunities and issues within the town.

Out of this and subsequent meetings three focus groups emerged:

- The Environment and Safety group was tasked with drawing attention to the town's features, enhancing biodiversity and creating a safer environment.
- The Community and Wellbeing group looked at improving supports for families in need, creating opportunities for young people and tackling mental health issues.
- The Enterprise and Training group focussed on up-skilling people from disadvantaged communities. It also seeks to highlight Roscrea's assets as a place to do business for potential employers.

The groups are scheduled to meet three times a year and report back to the council.

The striking thing about the focus groups is the wide cross section of

"It's a good plan as long as the money comes to implement it, we can all make promises... it's a step in the right direction."

- Community activist Derek Russell

civil society within them including volunteers and community activists, healthcare professionals, Gardai, community workers, youth workers and so on.

This diverse make-up prompted Cathaoirleach Hanafin to remark, "That sense of working together augers well for the plan's implementation. This a genuine collaboration between the statutory agencies and local communities."

Minister Kelly acknowledged the importance of working together: "Obviously there are issues in Roscrea that I really feel collectively we can all help with, and this is what this plan is all about."

High profile community activist Derek Russell, who featured in 'Changing Ireland' last year as one of the inspiring people behind



Attendees at the launch of the Community Action Plan in Roscrea in December.

PHOTO: BEN PANTER.

Roscrea plan

keeping a keen eye on Roscrea's progress

'Roscrea Stands Up!' said, "It's a good plan as long as the money comes to implement it. We can all make promises, it's living up to them – it's a step in the right direction.

"You definitely need the council's input, they have finances and you have to have remits, if everyone does their bit there will be no problems, I'm willing to go with it the way it is."

He offered this note of scepticism – a healthy dose some might say.

"The only problem from Roscrea Stands Up's point-of-view is inadequate mental health services and I don't know how much the plan can do in that regard."

"We've been badly let down by politicians over the last twenty years and lost a lot of headline companies, now we have to get them back," he said.

Minister Kelly responded with a broad commitment, "All of us who work in public life want to see this plan implemented across all political backgrounds because collectively it's the best thing for the town."

While resourcing may be an obvious issue, as one of the most eagerly awaited Community Action Plans to be rolled out, hopes are high that the 131 listed actions will be implemented. Other local authorities will be keeping an eye.

The plan was developed by North Tipperary LEADER Partnership.

Roscrea's plan is available online at: <http://www.tipperarycoco.ie>



Minister Alan Kelly and Elaine Cullinan at the launch.
PHOTOS: BEN PANTER.



Clodagh McDonnell (left) and Mary Hurley (right) from the Community Division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government with Michael Murray, CEO of North Tipperary LEADER Partnership.

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Changes boost community workers' pay prospects



MARK QUINN REPORTS

A new forum and legislation passed in July will make it easier for Community and Voluntary Sector workers to seek fair pay and conditions at work.

In recent years, workers' salary rates fell as organisations sought to deal with cutbacks, up to 35% across the Sector, while government departments called, naturally, for funding to be focused on "frontline services".

Now, a new High Level Forum meets quarterly and is made up of representatives from government departments and statutory agencies.

The purpose of the Forum is to allow members to brief each other regularly on changes to public expenditure, relevant issues to the sector and to receive updates on best practice.

The Forum is also tasked with addressing pay and conditions as well as terms of service relevant to the sector.

SIPTU vice president Gene Mealy said that while the Labour Court has provided recommendations in support of the Community Sector in the past, some government departments have failed to honour them:

"This Forum is probably the most important initiative secured for workers in the sector in recent years. It overcomes a major difficulty experienced by unions in resolving any serious industrial relations issues affecting their members."

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 passed last summer allows for the registration of employment agreements between employers and trade unions and also greatly enhances the right of workers to collectively bargain agreements on pay and conditions.

The Act also puts in place a framework that allows the Labour Court to establish minimum rates of pay and conditions within the Community Sector under what are called "Sectoral Employment Orders".

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Eddie Mullins, said:

"Negotiating Sectoral Employment Orders with employers in sub-sectors of the Community Sector such as youth work, childcare, local development, education and training, then registering these with the Labour Court, could provide a very important tool for improving conditions for workers."

Calls to retain Rural Social Scheme

SIPTU have called on the Tanaiste and Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, to preserve the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) rather than merge it into a proposed job activation programme.

SIPTU Organiser, Joan Parker said: "The RSS is a social scheme which supports local communities in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas. To redefine it as a job activation measure is likely to undermine its operation and effectiveness."

The RSS aims to:

- Provide services to rural communities by using the skills and talents available among low-income farmers and fishing communities
- Provide income support to low-income farmers and fishing communities who are in

receipt of specified social-welfare payments.

At present, a single scheme looks likely to replace the Rural Social Scheme, Community Employment (CE), Tús and Gateway.



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